

Background paper prepared for the
Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2007
Strong foundations: early childhood care and education

Quality in program of early childhood care and education (ECCE)

Robert G. Myers
2006

This paper was commissioned by the Education for All Global Monitoring Report as background information to assist in drafting the 2007 report. It has not been edited by the team. The views and opinions expressed in this paper are those of the author(s) and should not be attributed to the EFA Global Monitoring Report or to UNESCO. The papers can be cited with the following reference: "Paper commissioned for the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2007, Strong foundations: early childhood care and education". For further information, please contact efareport@unesco.org

Introduction

This paper is intended to stimulate discussion about the quality of early childhood programs rather than to try and document the quality of ECCE programs in various countries given differences in definitions of quality, difficulties of making comparisons and the paucity of systematic data.

In April of 2004, I was asked to write a paper dealing with ECCE quality for the 2005 Global Monitoring Review (GMR) that dealt specifically with the theme of educational quality. Inevitably, some of what was included there will be picked up again here. Change has not been so rapid. Since that time, however, the 2005 GMR has been published. The serious effort made in that document to describe educational quality merits attention, in general and as it applies to early childhood care and education (ECCE). It provides us with a framework for examining quality that invites discussion. Accordingly, in the first section of this paper I will take the GMR 2005 as one starting point for a more general discussion of the concept of quality including reflections on the relationship of quality to coverage, efficiency, effectiveness and equity. That section will also examine how the concept is affected when modern and post modern views and the tension between coherence and diversity (Moss 2005) are taken into account. It will suggest some pitfalls that appear when quality is equated with outcomes.

In the second section, I will construct a composite picture of “quality,” drawing on diverse statements of criteria and principals as well as on a set of instruments that purport to describe ECCE quality, developed and utilized in different contexts and with different purposes. This description will extend what was presented for GMR 2005, incorporating information received in response to a general request made to participants in the Consultative Group on Early childhood Care and Development to help out by providing new material.

A third section will look at international influences on the way ECCE quality is being defined, operationalized and used. The final section will present some conclusions.

I The Concept of Educational Quality

Quality and Education for All

From Jomtien to Dakar to the present. Over the 15 years since the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, educational quality has gained in importance within the Education for All (EFA) initiative. That change is reflected by the addition to the Framework of Action in the Dakar Conference in 2000 of a specific goal dealing with quality:

(Goal vi) “Improving all aspects of *the quality of education* and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.”
(emphases added)

Quality is also mentioned specifically in two other goals framed in Dakar:

(Goal ii) All children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education *of high quality*.

(Goal v) Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving general equity in education by 2015, with focus on ensuring girls full and equal access to and achievement in basic education *of good quality*.

Despite these advances, the EFA Framework, as expanded in Dakar, does not specifically attach quality to the goal of “expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education.” (*goal i*).

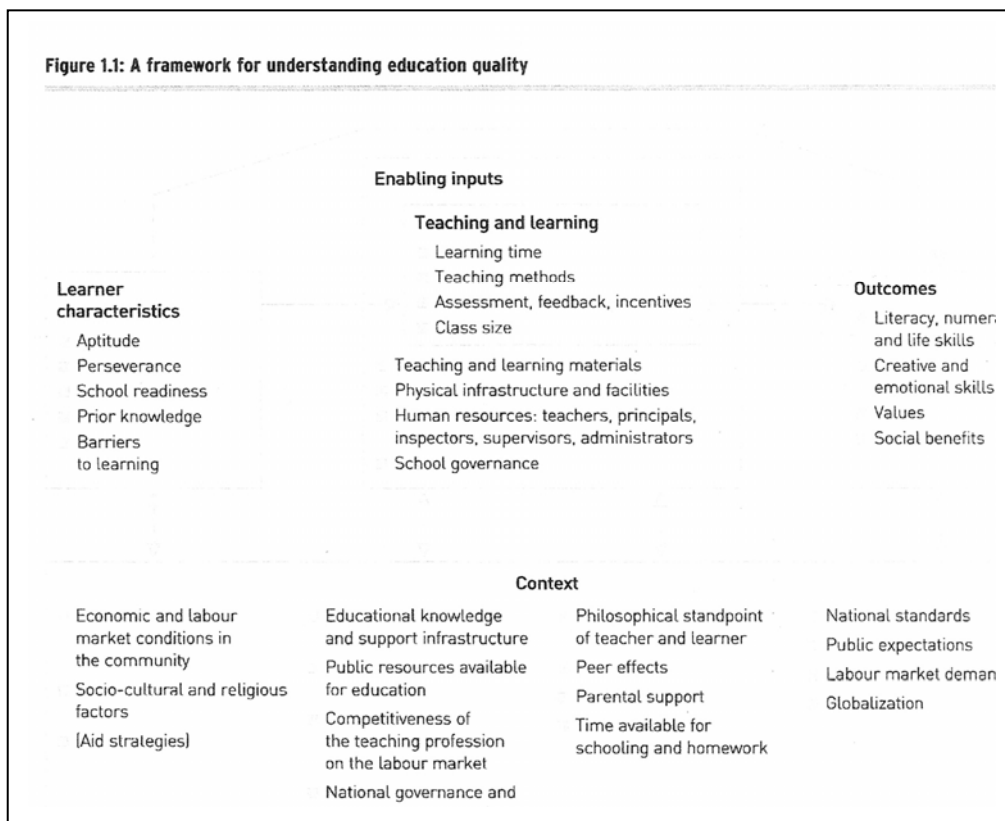
Quality in the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2005 (GMR 2005). Another advance in attention to educational quality within EFA came with publication of the GMR 2005.¹ In its Executive summary, the GMR 2005 notes that:

“Although there is no single definition of quality, two principles characterize most attempts to define quality in education: the first identifies learners’ cognitive development as the major explicit objective of all educational systems. Accordingly, the success with which systems achieve this is one indicator of their quality. The second emphasizes education’s role in promoting values and attitudes of responsible citizenship and in nurturing creative and emotional development. The achievement of these objectives is more difficult to assess and compare across countries.” (p.17)

¹ “Education for All: The Quality Imperative”, also available at www.unesco.com This document should be read in order to appreciate the extensive treatment provided of the topic, going well beyond what can only be summarized and commented on briefly here.

The Report also identifies various approaches to quality that: “. . .have their roots in different traditions of educational thought. Humanist approaches, behaviorist theory, sociological critiques of education and challenges to the legacies of colonialism have each enriched the quality debate and spawned distinct visions of how the objectives of education should be achieved.” (ibid.) While recognizing these distinct visions, the Report suggests that “Common ground is also found in the broadly shared objectives that tend to underpin debates about quality: respect for individual rights, improved equity of access and learning outcomes and increased relevance.” (p.19.)

The first chapter of the report sets out a framework, reproduced below in Figure 1, “The framework is comprehensive, in that the quality of education is seen as encompassing access, teaching and learning processes and outcomes in ways that are influenced both by context and by the range and quality of inputs available. It should be remembered that agreement about the objectives and aims of education will frame any discussion of quality and that such agreement embodies moral, political and epistemological issues that are frequently invisible or ignored.” (p. 37)



Chapter 2 of the GMR2005 presents a review of what research tells us about what affects quality, drawing on studies that relate a wide range of variables to school outcomes, principally to educational achievement test scores and to economic outcomes. The research cited is essentially limited to studies of primary schooling. A long list of related variables emerges from the review, some of which are different for low-income and high-income countries. The review concludes that:

- in low-income countries, studies suggest that cognitive achievement is significantly improved by provision of textbooks and other pedagogic materials, by reductions in class size and by provision of child-friendly remedial education by locally recruited para-teachers.
- successful primary schools are typically characterized by strong leadership, an orderly, safe school and classroom environment and teachers who focus on the basics of the curriculum, hold high expectations of their students' potential and performance, and provide them with frequent assessment and feedback. Other factors that help account for higher student performance are: face-to-face instructional time, structured teaching, the adequacy of textbooks and other materials, and teacher quality (not only formal qualifications but how they spend their time as well as their subject mastery, verbal skills, a teaching repertoire and passion for learning). Presumably, these characteristics of programs pertain to ECCE as well.

In Chapter 3, progress towards better quality is described. The section of the GMR2005 dealing with ECCE treats quality in a very limited way (as compared with what the research evidence suggests may be important) by examining trends in: a) the resources available to schools, b) pupil-teacher ratios and c) qualifications of teachers. Information about ECCE outcomes is not included.

Chapter 4 sets out policy guidelines as follows:

- Start with learners (as individuals, with different aptitudes and learning styles and with personal attributes influenced by their home and social backgrounds. Therefore the learning environment needs to be inclusive, build on strengths of learners and attend to their health and safety.) Interestingly, in this section, ECCE is treated in terms of “learner readiness”, reinforcing the tendency to think of ECCE as preparation for learning in schools rather than as learning.
- Improve teaching and learning (with appropriate and relevant aims balancing national coherence and local diversity as well as cognitive and values goals, by updating curriculum content; by making needed time available and using it well; by making teaching methods more effective, taking into account the particular educational environment; by greater attention to the language of instruction; through regular, timely and reliable assessment, by improving the broader enabling environment of infrastructure and materials and by greater attention to policies for selecting, training, supporting, deploying and rewarding teachers)
- Improve school management (so that schools work better; engage, support and enable teachers; are more “child friendly”; with greater autonomy and improved leadership.
- Provide professional support for schools and teachers (improving the knowledge infrastructure, strengthening advisory work and in-service training; developing

curricula; enhancing the relevance of educational research; and holding schools accountable.)

➤ Build support for systematic reform.

Chapter 5 deals with international commitments (with a discussion that not only considers levels and distributions of funds but also suggests the importance of tailoring aid through policy dialogue to develop coherent sector strategies; and with a comprehensive view of quality and a strategy for monitoring it). Chapter 6 summarizes and emphasizes particular parts of the previous chapters.

This brief summary suggests that the GMR 2005:

1. Is a serious and extensive review that represents an important step forward in attention to and the discussion of educational quality.
2. Links quality to equity.
3. Tries to balance international, national and local contexts and the inevitable tension between respect for diversity and a desire for coherence. However, emphasis is ultimately placed on what can be compared across nations, giving prominence to uncontested “standards” and forced unity rather than to plurality in the view of what is right and good.
4. Shows sensitivity to different approaches to defining quality and tries to look well beyond cognitive outcomes. Nevertheless, the actual analysis leaves values and responsible citizenship on a side burner and treats the quality of educational processes narrowly in terms of effects produced on cognitive outcomes.
5. Provides a broad review and discussion that helps to identify dimensions of quality not always taken into account. This provides a useful base for comparison with results from the analysis to be presented later in the paper of specific efforts to operationalize the concept of quality for ECCE.
6. Continues to view ECCE as a precursor to schooling and to learning in primary school and beyond rather than as an experience that itself produces learning.
7. Pays relatively little attention to:
 - how parents and the relationship between preschools and families relates to quality (beyond a mention of “parental support” in the framework that is not picked up in the text).
 - health, nutrition and safety (discussed briefly in Chapter 4 as part of policy considerations but not included explicitly in the framework for discussing quality in Chapter 1).

8. Demonstrates how limited our information is when trying to make international comparisons of ECCE, by whatever definition.

Quality, Coverage, Efficiency, Efficacy, Equity and Funding

Quality and Coverage. Coverage and quality are distinct dimensions of education. An educational system can boast that it has achieved “education for all” because 100% of the children in the designated age range are enrolled, but some or all of the children may be enrolled in centers providing education of low quality. The interaction between coverage and quality is complex. The drive for coverage may call attention to ECCE and thereby stimulate improvements in quality even as coverage is extended. Or, more commonly, the pressures to provide EFA may create conditions that make achieving quality education difficult, if not impossible, because budget tradeoffs negatively affect salaries, training, the provision of materials, the selection and training and supervision of teachers, class sizes and the ability to work effectively with students.

Most early education services complement what is offered in the home and offer benefits to those who participate. However, if the quality of an ECCE service or center is VERY low (for instance, provides a roof and minimum feeding but is not hygienic and provides no stimulation or education) and if that offering is of less quality than attention available at home (where a mother or another may be available to provide affection and respond to basic needs), effects on children of going to an early education center (becoming part of a coverage statistic) rather than staying at home, can be negative. If that occurs, it can be argued that enrolled children would be better off if they did not participate in a particular ECCE program even though “coverage” is increased. That argument gathers force the further down the age spectrum one goes. It may not be realistic or even good, to think that all children should be enrolled in ECCE programs at age 3 (or age 1) particularly if educational quality is very poor. This leads to the position, as recognized, post-Jomtien, that the goal should be not just Education for All but *Quality* Education for All (and for ECCE, we might add, whether that occurs in services or in the home).

Quality and Efficiency. An educational system might be characterized as relatively efficient because it pays teachers on time, delivers materials when promised, moves children through the system, etc. But, salaries may be so low, for instance, that teachers are demoralized and do not perform well. Or movement through the system may occur as a result of automatic promotion, not because children are learning. Some would argue that to be of quality, a system or an educational center must operate efficiently, others separate these two dimensions, feeling that an emphasis on efficiency may even lead to disregard for important dimensions of quality having to do with the way adults interact with other adults or with children.

Quality and Efficacy (or Effectiveness). This topic will be discussed at some length below as part of a reflection on the current tendency to equate quality with outcomes or results. I will suggest that we need to be cautious about how we establish this relationship.

Quality and Equity. The Dakar Framework clearly links quality to equity. As stated, the link is to access and completion of (primary school) programs of high quality

and, in the case of gender, to equal achievement in programs of good quality. The GMR 2005 discusses “rights, equity and relevance” as three principles that should frame the discussion of quality. Those who approach educational quality from a child rights perspective are also very clear that all children have a right to participate in educational programs of equivalent quality. In these cases, *quality becomes an element helping to define equity*, moving the discussion forward by going beyond the previous tendency to look at equity simply as equal access to programs without taking quality into account.

This relationship can be turned around, making *equity part of the definition of educational quality*. At a national or system level, it is sometimes argued, particularly from a rights perspective, that if access (and less frequently achievement), are not equitable, then, by definition and on principle, the system cannot be considered to be of high quality. This argument appears even though by taking equitable achievement as the standard, I doubt if any educational system, including the most advanced, could be judged as to be of high quality.

Another way equity is incorporated into the definition of quality is by taking as a dimension of quality the equitable treatment of children in the educational process. This means that to be of quality ECCE programs should have curricula that do not discriminate, the treatment of children by teachers should be equitable and the learning environment (whether center-based or family-based or in individual homes) should promote equitable relationships with and among children regardless of sex, cultural origin, economic or social status, or their physical or mental needs and capabilities.

Quality and Funding

It is sometimes assumed that the level of funding provided for ECCE is a good indicator of the relative quality of programs. Although there may be a loose relationship between quality and the level of financial resources available, there is evidence, as quoted in the GMR2005 that “better programs are not necessarily more expensive.” (p.60) As will be evident later in the paper, inputs (or resources) figure in almost all definitions of quality and most inputs cost real money that needs to be budgeted. However, the effect of money and purchased resources on quality is tied to how they are used. If all resources are used to build buildings, for instance, and little support is provided to teachers to help them develop and improve their practices, quality defined by appearance will improve but there will be little or no effect on quality defined in terms of the educational process and/or outcomes.

Contrasting views of quality

“Modern” and “post-modern” perspectives. GMR 2005 notes that various approaches to quality rooted in different traditions of educational thought have enriched the quality debate and spawned distinct visions of how the objectives of education should be achieved. Let me briefly expand that idea by looking at modern and post-modern views. A so-called “modern” perspective of quality is rooted in the idea that quality is inherent, objective, absolute and able to be discovered by applying logic (or through research). This perspective, of a tidy, coherent and predictable world subject to control, derives in great measure from an industrial tradition which determines and sets standards of quality for products. It has dominated much of our thinking about educational as well as industrial quality. But as Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (1999) have pointed out so well, this idea contrasts with a “post modern” view that emphasizes multiple and changing truths, diversity, subjectivity and experience and uncertainty in a changing, messy and unpredictable world.

In a modern view of quality, it is common for “experts” to set standards and develop instrument that can be applied nationally (or internationally) to judge the quality of programs. In a post-modern view, the relative and subjective nature of quality requires definitions to be negotiated through a contextualized process of “meaning making” in which all interested parties have a say. From this perspective, speaking generically about quality makes little sense; it would seem that establishing a national definition of quality, a national set of standards, and an instrument to monitor quality in all settings is impossible, unless all those who think differently can somehow magically attain agreement about the meaning of quality through dialogue.

Diversity and coherence. More recently, Moss (2005) has set out cogently the tension between diversity (at the core of post-modernism) and coherence (a key feature of a modern view) that can either breathe life and balance into, or unfortunately restrict, the process of defining and evaluating quality. He notes that:

“The value of diversity lies in its recognition and welcoming of otherness, its resistance to any form of referential norm, and its insistence that there are alternative perspectives, other ways of understanding the world and practicing life. It creates space for the construction of individual, group and local values, identities and knowledges. In education, valuing diversity enables a pedagogy of difference, the creation of new knowledge and new thought through the provocation of an encounter with otherness. It is a profoundly democratic value, welcoming participation of all on their own terms and with their own perspectives. The risk of diversity lies in its possible reduction to a disconnected individualism or a group self-interest, which has no room for interdependence and relationships of responsibility for others, and no interest in the common good. A further risk arises from reducing opportunities for encounter, if different groups withdraw, or are pushed back into, their territory and selective or segregated institutions. Then diversity is a recipe for endless reproduction of values, identity and culture.” (p. 1)

“Coherence involves shared beliefs, principles and objectives across groups of people and fields of human endeavor. Its value lies in its contribution to solidarity: a relationship of shared understandings, responsibility and purpose that permits a sense of common identity and enables collective action to further shared interests and goals. Coherence is ... a necessary condition for fighting injustice and inequality. Yet the risk lies in coherence becoming a consensus smothering difference and dissent; or an imposed set of beliefs and goals expressing the interests and perspectives of a hegemonic group that leaves no space for diversity and creates, rather than resist, injustice and inequality.”
(Ibid.)

Can a balance be achieved? I believe it is possible to move beyond the modern-post-modern dichotomy in defining quality and even possible to move that definition into a process of evaluation and monitoring. To do so it is necessary to²:

- Put an on-going process of discussion and dialogue in the centre, involving parents, teachers, educational authorities, researchers, funders and other stakeholders, at national and local levels. This process will probably need to be guided by people versed in the arts of dialogue and negotiation.
- Begin that process with discussions of the kind of society desired and the kind of citizens needed to people that society. From this discussion can be derived areas of minimal agreement and complementary notions about the nature of the children desired and the kind of formation they should receive, with implications for the content, process and organisation of educational programmes. The results of such discussions will undoubtedly be more important than the specific conclusions reached.
- Use results from quantitative and qualitative ECCE research studies and evaluations as well as lessons learned from on-the-job experience as key inputs to such discussions.
- Make value positions explicit.
- Take the minimum areas of agreement as starting points to construct a definition of major categories and indicators of quality.
- Build outward by including in any operational definition and instrument, categories and indicators which may be important to some but not all stakeholders, allowing different groups to identify their own definition of quality within a broader view. Doing so will expand horizons of all participants and foster new reflection and dialogue. It will also begin to create a common language and common referents for different groups.

² I think these points are sufficiently important that I have lifted them verbatim from my previous GMR paper.

- Distinguish national and local purposes of monitoring and for applying descriptive instruments. Allow local additions to instruments created for use at a national level.
- Search for qualitative ways to evaluate children in context and over time that reflect personal and contextual differences but that feed into a broader, system-level process of monitoring.
- At the local level, introduce an element of self-evaluation by individual centres to serve as a basis for discussion and dialogue between “internal” and “external” evaluators who may have different views of quality.
- Make evaluations available to the public.
- Try to reach a workable level of agreement through successive approximations. Do not take any definition or instrument as final.

The foregoing may seem utopian to some readers. However, New Zealand’s review process provides evidence to the contrary. (New Zealand, Education Review Office 2004). The European Commission, through its Children’s Network, has proposed a set of objectives, or criteria, that quality ECEC services should be expected to pursue if not fully attained. That proposal starts from a view that “quality is a relative concept based on values and beliefs and defining quality should be a dynamic, continuous and democratic process. Quality should be found in the equilibrium between certain common objectives, applicable to all services while recognizing and respecting the diversity among individual services. There cannot be one final and static point of view about quality. The countries that reach, or are reaching, all or the majority of the objectives will want to continue developing their services.” (Comisión Europea, Red de Atención a la Infancia 1996, p. 9)

A view of quality which values diversity contrasts with one that, for instance, defines quality in terms of standardized results on international comparative tests. These tests carry an implicit if not explicit assumption that common outcomes can be determined which, in turn, represent the inherent nature of educational quality. That international and comparative view seems particularly restrictive when applied to early development and learning and leads us to a more direct discussion of quality defined primarily in terms of outcomes.

Quality defined in terms of Outcomes

We know, as recognized in the GMR 2005, that outcomes can be defined in many ways. When educational quality is linked directly to outcomes the focus is usually on what happens to children as a result of their being in a learning environment, whether at home or in an educational service. These outcomes may be defined at different points in time in the life cycle ranging from immediate effects to those appearing well into the adult years. But there may be social as well as private and individual benefits from improvements in these child-related outcomes.

Developmental outcomes. When the discussion is of outcomes for children in primary schools, emphasis is placed on “achievement” outcomes (see below) For children in ECCE programs, the tendency has been to think more in terms of integral “development” along various related and interacting dimensions. This development allows a child to handle ever more complex levels of physical, intellectual, social, emotional and moral activity. The way in which development is defined, both conceptually and operationally varies widely reflecting theoretical as well as social and cultural differences. Although considerable emphasis has been placed on intellectual development (the closest parallel to cognitive test outcomes), some developmental tests have been heavily weighted toward physical development (fine and gross motor development) while others stress emotional development. More recently, developmentally-related “competencies” are being defined that emphasize the ability and motivation to apply knowledge and developmental advances in daily life; outcomes are observed in context. Yet another approach to defining developmental outcomes has been in terms of the relation of children to self, others and the broader world.

Most developmental tests, whatever their theoretical base, have been created with the notion that they represent a kind of scientifically-arrived at and coherent representation of the inherent nature of development that can be applied equally to all children and that will help us determine, among other purposes, whether the education of the tested children is of quality or not. However, the fact that such a wide variety of developmental definitions and instruments co-exist and that consensus about how to best describe development is elusive seems to contradict the essentially “modern” point of view being applied when defining quality in terms of developmental outcomes. Moreover, this lack of agreement has left the ECCE field without accepted equivalents of the national and international tests applied widely at the primary school level. It also leaves a hole in public accounting and makes it difficult to put before policy makers and programmers the state of the practice so they can make indicated adjustments. These observations take us back to previous reflections about how a bridge might be built between modern and postmodern perspectives.

School progress and performance outcomes. A second set of child-related outcomes for ECCE programs focuses on school progress and performance. These outcomes are not as useful for defining quality when children are in ECCE programs as they are to look at what happens when they move on to the primary school. School “progress” measures are relatively standard and accepted -- age of entrance, repetition, dropout, and school completion. For most, the idea of “repeating” in an early childhood education program is an anathema. However, quality is often judged by whether participation in the program has an effect on these outcomes in primary school. If so, in addition to benefiting children, these translate into cost savings and measures of educational efficacy and efficiency in primary school.

The story is somewhat different when school “performance” or “achievement” is the desired outcome. Measures of achievement have varied widely from place to place depending on what children are expected to learn. Nevertheless, during the last 25 years or so large international studies (IEA, TIMSS, PISA) using common criteria to measure

outcomes have become much more prominent, consolidating attention to sameness at the expense of diversity.³ In the GMR 2005, emphasis is placed on instruments that try to measure achievement as indicated by these standardized tests, precisely because they provide international comparisons.

Social outcomes. A third set of results is defined by social outcomes. These may be assessed during the educational process (in ECCE programs or primary and secondary school) or as children become young adults. Social outcomes include those listed in the GMR 2005, related to acquisition of certain global or local values, or to becoming contributing citizens and not delinquents. Measuring these outcomes is not only difficult because the definition of desired outcomes varies so much from place to place but also because, to the extent that they occur in the future, longitudinal research is required to assess them and a host of intervening circumstances appear that can affect the outcomes.⁴

As indicated in my GMR 2005 paper,⁵ this is not the place to discuss at length the controversial topic of assessing developmental or learning results during the early years. The reader is referred to the extensive literature on that theme.⁶ However, the topic is crucial because one key test of quality is indeed whether or not it has desired effects on children. The problem is to negotiate agreement about what effects are desired, in the short and longer run, not only at an abstract, but also an operational level. This becomes more and more complicated as one moves from a local to a national perspective (or beyond to an international level). It becomes more complicated when, instead of using results immediately in a particular local classroom to guide direct work with children, the use is for monitoring in a national or international context. At the micro level, qualitative assessments (learning stories and children's portfolios and other techniques) and observation can be used effectively but these individualized, diverse results are hard to aggregate to a system level. Such detailed and individualized assessment is not something that can be done easily using a national sample in which the observers are external evaluators. Accordingly, at the macro level, the tendency is to seek standardized quantitative measures using tests and scales which may or may not be equally appropriate for assessing all children, particularly in the short term when children are still in an early education programme. The argument is that these provide a rough indicator of how the system is doing. But some would argue that the narrow and imposed measures that characterize such tests are not adequate to describe learning and developmental outcomes.

³ The IEA pre-primary project tried to moderate the difficulties associated with standardized testing by bringing together representatives from participating countries to negotiate the construction of a common test. A core set of questions was agreed upon but each country could then add on what it thought necessary to reflect the particularities of their context.

⁴ In my April 2004 paper for the GMR 2005 I review evidence from longitudinal studies tracing comparative samples of children who have and have not participated in ECCE programs into primary school and sometimes into adult life.

⁵ This paragraph is taken almost directly from my GMR 2004 report.

⁶ One might consult, for instance: Meisels and Atkins-Burnett (1998), Grigorenko and Sternberg (1999), Landers and Kagitçibasi (1990), Epstein et. al. (2004), Airasian (2002).

National (or even sub-national) agreements about priority outcomes and how to assess them are few and far between.⁷ Solving this assessment problem remains a major challenge for the ECCE field. An example of how UNICEF has been trying to help countries meet that challenge is provided in Box 1.

Box 1: A Standards Approach to Monitoring Early Learning
(Kindly contributed by Pia Britto and Sharon Lynn Kagan)

Going Global is an ongoing global project being conducted in close partnership between UNICEF and Columbia University and Yale University. The aim of the partnership is to assist countries in developing early learning and development standards (ELDS). The Standards Approach begins with the values specific to a country and leads to the creation of statements that describe expectations for young children's learning and development, from a holistic perspective, across several dimensions, such as physical well-being and motor development, cognition, social and emotional development, language and literacy, and approaches towards learning (Kagan & Britto, 2005). The central premise underlying the development of standards is that they are rooted in the cultural and national expectations of what children of a given age, residing in a given country, should know and be able to do. The standards are based on research and scientific knowledge of the processes and consequences of early learning, taking into consideration cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic differences, as well as children with special needs.

EDLS have multiple uses. They can be used to help families understand children's developmental status; inform instruction for young children; for national monitoring of child outcomes and to inform program and policy decision making. In other words, early learning standards are a set of statements that inform various audiences about children's behavioral accomplishments. The major strength of the ELDS is being a participatory process involving the countries ECD experts, policy makers, planners, parents and children in identifying the standards according to their cultural and social values of child development.

Beginning in 2003, UNICEF in partnership with Columbia University coordinated the Going Global project, the aim of which was to assist 6 pilot countries (Brazil, Ghana, Jordan, Paraguay, Philippines, and South Africa) in developing national Subsequently, this approach has been introduced to and is being implemented in several regions around the world including South America and the Caribbean; East Asia and Central Europe. In some of the countries that began the process in 2003, the standards are close to be endorsed nationally and used for several purposes from revising preschool curricula, teacher training models, and national monitoring. In countries that began the development process in subsequent years, they are in the process of drafting and validating the standard for national acceptance and endorsement.

Pitfalls of equating quality with outcomes. We would all like, of course, for our children to develop better, achieve at high levels, improve their well-being and become contributing citizens. But even if we could agree upon desired outcomes and achieve some

⁷ In the 1980s, in Chile, agreement was achieved on a locally-developed instrument to measure psychosocial development using a Test de Desarrollo Psicomotor, 2-5 Años (Haussler and Marchant 1985). This test was administered through the national health system to monitor development over approximately a 10-year period. The results showed that although children improved their health, that did not automatically bring an improvement in psycho-social development.

of them, should programs that produce such results be deemed to be of high quality simply because they produce those outcomes? Should RESULTS (particularly cognitive learning and test scores) be accepted as THE indicator of quality? Is it possible that programs can be judged as of good quality and NOT produce the desired results? Conversely, is it possible that desired outcomes can be obtained in programs that might not be considered, by other measures, of good quality?

The following anecdote illustrates the difficulty of relying exclusively on results to define quality. Two men bearing the same name lived in the same village, one the village taxi driver, the other the parish priest. The taxi driver was known not only for his disregard of rules of the road and wild driving but also for his abusive ways with passengers (and it was rumored, with his wife). The priest, on the other hand was a model member of the community, dedicating his days to serving his parishioners with good works. As coincidence would have it, both died on the same day and presented themselves at Heaven's Gate. There, the taxi driver was received with trumpets, presented with the keys to the Kingdom and allowed to enter with all privileges. The priest, however, was denied entrance. Upset, the priest protested, noting that there must be some mistake related to their identical names. But the Keeper of the Keys assured him that was not so. He explained to the priest that when people came to his church they were bored and slept through mass. By contrast, the same people, upon entering the taxi of his namesake, immediately began to pray.

A real case illustrating problems associated with reliance on narrow outcomes is an evaluation of ECCE programs in the United States financed by the Westinghouse Corporation in the late 1970s (Smilansky 1979). The study traced children who did and did not participate in early education programs into the early years of primary school to see what the outcomes would be. The conclusion was that the effects of ECCE programs "washed out" by the second or third grade. The implication of the findings was that investing in early education does not pay off because the results did not last. The study did not differentiate programs of greater or lesser quality, but, if we adhere to the idea that a program of quality must produce desired and lasting outcomes, then the ECCE programs evaluated could not have been, by that standard, of high quality. A closer look at the study reveals that the outcomes that "washed out" were gains in IQ scores. As in the anecdote, the definition of outcomes was very narrow. We now know that when the time period over which outcomes are expected to appear is extended and when the definition is broadened out to include such outcomes as repetition, participation in remedial courses, the rate of school completion, juvenile delinquency rates, earning capacity, home ownership, better health, allowing women to earn and learn, and enhancing parenting skills of parents, among others, the outcomes of ECCE programs can be very high (Schulman 2005).

Can programs be of good quality and not produce the desired results? It is difficult to think that an ECCE program can have many or most of the attributes of what is considered to be a quality program but does not produce the desired results. Nevertheless, that remains a possibility in cases where the contexts of family and community are not supportive and moderate or counteract what an ECCE program offers. In addition, it is possible that primary school programs are of such poor quality that the results achieved in ECCE programs do indeed wash out. In this case, two sets of outcomes compete to define

quality, one suggesting that a desired outcome has been achieved, indicating quality, and another that it has not.

Can programs considered to be of poor quality produce results? To the chagrin of many ECCE colleagues, my answer is “yes”. Some results may be artificially produced. For instance, where automatic promotion has become a feature allowing children to complete certain levels without mastery of the content of the program, it would be possible to label a program as of quality because progress by children through the system was regular, despite the fact that neither the educational process nor achievement outcomes suggest quality.

If the standards set by, for example, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), were to be applied systematically to look at many large scale programs of early education now operating in the Majority World, many or most would be judged to be of low quality. Education agents often lack training and turnover is high. Curricula are often integrative, active and meaningful in name but not in application. Most group sizes and ratios of children to adults are high. The learning environments are frequently makeshift, often without sanitary facilities and far from secure. Supervision, if present at all, is usually equivalent to inspection; rarely is it associated with continuing on-the-job training of the adults who work directly with the children. The systematic application of validated evaluation methods to adjust educational activities is virtually absent. Parental participation is at best weak and at worst, absent. In spite of this, for example, recent work in both Nepal (Bartlett, Arnold and Sapkota 2003) and Bangladesh (Aboud, 2004) shows important outcomes of participation in ECCE programs which, by many definitions, would not qualify as programs of high quality.

The conclusion from this is not that one should be content with programs of lesser quality but it does suggest that: 1) outcomes can be obtained in less than high quality programs and 2) in certain circumstances where budgets are extremely limited but inequities are great, the “excellent” may be the enemy of the “good” because promoting high quality programs available to only a few can only increase inequities.

In brief, it would be unfortunate to put all our emphasis on quality defined in terms of outcomes, however measured. Many factors and multiple environments influence outcomes and it is hard to know how much to attribute to programmes and how much to family and community environments. It is hard to sort out whether self-selection to programs may account for achievement more than the excellence of the educational process. It is difficult to know to what extent the early and positive effects of an ECCE program may fade because of intervening conditions. It would also be unfortunate to place all of our assessment in the future because a child lives in the present and should be entitled to positive and enjoyable experiences in the immediate environments in which she or he learns and develops.

With these caveats in mind, we turn, then, from definitions of quality in terms of outcomes to definitions of quality focussed on the structures and processes that characterise educational services and programmes.

II Program Quality: A Composite View⁸

The characteristics of “enabling environments” and of educational processes identified in the GMR 2005 are based in the main on a review of research done on primary school education looking at how various features of schools relate to cognitive outcomes at that level. Similar work has been done on the effectiveness of preschools, linking characteristics of programs to developmental or other desired outcomes (Tiana 1999). Some results from that approach were reviewed in my previous GMR paper.

In this section, rather than try, inappropriately, to extract what seem to be “universal” features of quality or determine what seem to be the most important features of a program according to effectiveness research studies, I will try to build a composite definition of quality based on what people in a wide variety of settings have suggested ought to be included as part of the definition of quality. My intention is not to determine what should be the dimensions of quality but rather to present a broad view or composite of what people in different places think should be included. .

I have chosen to place emphasis on the quality of services and particularly the educational process because I think this part of a definition of educational quality is important in and of itself, not only because it produces certain outcomes in children. Why? A learning environment and process, to be of quality, should reflect the society in which we want to live and to which we want to socialize our children. If we cannot organize our learning environments in ways that model the social outcomes we desire then we are failing. If the process is not democratic or does not respect diversity or treat children equitably; if it continues to use physical punishment or fails to foster creativity or ... (pick your own value) it may not be judged to be of excellent quality, regardless of what cognitive outcomes it produces. Evaluating the quality of the educational process, then, should let us know how well we are trying to affect those difficult-to-measure but desired outcomes mentioned in the GMR2005 that are too often set aside.

The information base

To help construct the composite I will draw upon a variety of sources that include national statements and sets of principles and criteria as well as upon a review of instruments that try to define quality in an operational way.⁹ Included in the statements of objectives and criteria are:

⁸ This section has benefited from the work of Anna Smeby who took a close look at 11 quality scales during a summer internship in 2005.

⁹ Although research results will not be consulted directly they will presumably be incorporated into

- national statements from Canada (Canadian Child Care Federation 1991) and Sweden (Andersson 2004)
- quality objectives and criteria set out by the European Commission, through its Early Childhood Network (Comisión Europea 1996)
- a presentation of quality criteria for day-care from Brazil (Campos and Rosemberg, 1995)

Instruments to measure quality:

A. International

1. International Step by Step Association (ISSA): 27 countries, mostly E. Europe (ISSA 2002)
2. Association for Childhood Education International Self-Assessment Tool (ACEI) (2002)
3. IEA (Hayes, Montie and Claxton, n.d) 14 countries
4. Save the Children(UK), East Africa, 8 countries (2004)

B. High-income countries

5. United States: NAEYC Accreditation Performance Criteria; (NAEYC 2005)
6. United States: Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-R); (Harms, Clifford and Cryer 1999)
7. United States: High/Scope PIP (----)
8. United Status: Qualistar Early Learning (NCCIC 2005)
9. Australia: (National Childcare Accreditation Council 2004)

C. Low- and middle-income countries

10. Chile: Guía de Autoevaluación de la Escuela; (Ministerio de Educación, Chile, 2002)
11. Caribbean countries (The Bahamas, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Monserrat, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines) (Williams, 2000 to the present)
12. Costa Rica: V.A.I. Instrumento de Autoevaluación; (UNIPRIN/UNICEF 1999)
13. Colombia: Hogares (ICBF 2005)
14. Ecuador: Estándares de Calidad; (Nuestros Niños, et.al., 2001)
15. India: Tamil Nadu Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-TECERS (Isely, 2000);
16. Kenya: Madrasa Evaluation Instrument
17. México: ECCP 4.0 (Proyecto Intersectorial, 2005)
18. Pakistan: CLEF (Teachers Resource Center, 1998)
19. Singapore: Pursuing Excellence at Kindergartens (PEAK); (Ministry of Education, Singapore, n.d.)

what others have drawn upon as part of their process of arriving at a definition, moderated by their particular philosophical, social and political viewpoints

20. Vietnam (Center for Early Education Research, n.d.)

In addition information is available from:

- Applications of the ECERS-R in various states of the United States (Wisconsin) and, with additions, in England (Sylva, et. al 2004)
- Application of a version of the High Scope PIP in México.
- A report from meetings of the ASEAN nations (UNICEF 2003)

Finally, a number of other scales being used for various purposes in the United States have been brought to my attention that have not been incorporated into the analysis in this paper. These include the Early Literacy Classroom Observation Toolkit (Smith, Dickinson, Sangeorge and Anastasopoulos, 2002), The Assessment Profile for Early Childhood Classrooms (M. Abbott-Shim and Sibley, 1998), the Early Childhood Classroom Observation Measuremet (Stipek (1996), and the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) (La Paro, Pianta and Sthulman 2004). In addition, a number of scales focusing specifically on teacher-child interactions and children's play have been created, including the Caregiver Interaction Scale (Arnett 1989), The Adult Involvement Scale (Howes and Steward 1987), the Teacher Interaction Scale (Phillipsen, Burchinal, Howes and Cryer 1997), and ORCE (ECCRN 2001).¹⁰

Before moving to the composite description of quality, I will look at the varied purposes for which educational quality instruments and documents have been created and the frameworks that underpin them.

Purposes for which instruments and documents on quality have been created

1. To promote discussion. This purpose dominates the work of the European Commission but is also made explicit in some other scales (e.g., the Mexican ECCP.) It is consistent with commitment to respect for diversity and the idea of “meaning making” as being more important than setting general standards. Other scales undoubtedly include this purpose among those the scale is to serve, while also serving other purposes presented below. The discussion to be promoted can be at a national, state (or sub-system) or center level.
2. To license or accredit. Accreditation can be mandatory or (see below) requested on a voluntary basis by centers or programs that want to improve the demand for their services. In a mandatory system, centers that do not live up to an accreditation standard either have to improve or be punished. Punishment may mean they have to stop offering a service or, as in the case of Australia, that it cannot receive funding by enrolling parents who are subsidized to send their

¹⁰ These references come from a thoughtful paper by David Dickinson (2004) in which he argues the need for a variety of instruments to look at quality, linked to different purposes and perspectives. He suggests that recent theoretical shifts and research findings (related, for instance to social construction of knowledge, to the importance for learning of emotional supports and self-regulation, to “school readiness” and how children acquire verbal and reading skills) require a broader approach to describing quality than is now provided by general instruments.

children to an ECCE center. It is argued that by having a system of accreditation, centers of poor quality are obliged to improve and centers of good quality must maintain that quality. (Taylor 2002) In low-income countries it has been suggested that, rather than exorcise low-quality centers, a concerted effort should be made to help them become better because they represent a nascent and important contribution to ECCE in conditions where federal budgets cannot carry the burden alone. A goal and incentive for improvement is accreditation. However, linking improvement to accreditation can have a perverse effect of enhancing inequities rather than reducing them because centers in a position to be accredited are often those serving the privileged whereas centers in fault are those serving the poor. The PEAK from Singapore is also used to accredit. The minimum standards created by ASEAN countries are also linked to licensing.

3. To provide consumers with information that will inform their choices of services and programs. This purpose is related to accreditation but stops one step short of setting standards that determine whether an educational center can continue to operate or is ineligible for funding. The NAEYC quality instrument falls in this category even though it carries “accreditation” in its title, its use is optional; the scale provides the basis for an “independent” review and certification of centers (if they meet 80% of the conditions set out in the scale). It is not surprising that accreditation and review are both more characteristic of high-income countries, particularly the United States, than of low-income countries.
4. Monitoring, diagnosis and evaluation to improve planning and performance. Several scales have this as their primary purpose. This may be done at the level of a center through self-evaluation (ACEI, Chile) or in a sub-system (ECCP in México to evaluate the Schools of Quality Program; ECERs as applied in Wisconsin to help establish policy and improve programming) or at a national level. When applied at the level of individual centers, the culture of evaluation shifts from one based on inspection and control to one of accompanying centers in their efforts to improve.
5. As part of public accounting, sometimes associated with an advocacy purpose. This purpose is related to promoting discussion but is singled out because this is a feature of democratic systems that is made explicit in some cases. This may be attached to a child rights perspective.
6. Research. The IEA scale has its primary purpose to provide cross-cultural research results.

Many of the instruments in the above list have multiple purposes making it difficult to classify them in any one category. For instance, PEAK and the ISSA scales are used by centers to evaluate and monitor their own quality so as to improve it, but both are also used as part of a certification process. The Mexican scale has been appropriated for an external

evaluation of a national program but is also used to accompany individual centers in a dialogue about their quality linked to the planning process in their center.

Frameworks

The principles underlying definitions of educational quality, as suggested by the GMR 2005, may be linked to different ways of thinking. The instruments and documents reviewed reflect that diversity, but often incorporate several starting points when constructing their vision.

1. The world I want to live in. Some scales and documents begin by identifying goals derived from a vision of the particular world or country the creators of the instrument think they want to live in. The goals may come from an independent discussion or, more commonly in the case of the instruments and documents at hand, are taken from national statements or from international documents such as the Convention on the Rights of Children. The scale created by Save the Children for East Africa and the Colombian scale are two examples of quality operationalized explicitly in terms of children's rights. Some authors (Moss, for instance) have put the concept of democracy at the center of their vision of quality.

2. The basic needs of children. This starting point differs from that of the rights of children but often involves the same categories to discuss what a program should include to assure healthy child survival and development. This view helps to set content.

3. What we think we know about how children develop and learn. Another starting point for developing educational quality instruments is a posture linked to theoretical and practical work on how children develop and learn. If creators are convinced that theories of Vygotsky or Piaget or Skinner should guide teaching and learning, which will be reflected in the definition of quality. In the GMR 2005, a structured approach to teaching (with an eye to primary school?) gets a great deal of play; by way of contrast, in much of the early development literature, a less structured, more active learning approach is prominent. It is common for local discussions of environments to enhance child development and learning to bring in a strong dose of experience; teachers often develop their own "theory of practice" which takes into account real conditions (for instance the number of children per teacher, lack of materials or parental pressures) that other theories do not.

4. What we think we know about how organizations function. Most of the attention to educational quality is focused on centers which are embedded in larger organizational structures or on programs or services. Consequently, what one thinks about what makes organizations effective comes into play. There is an increasing tendency to think that failures to improve learning outcomes can be attributed to management as well as to (or rather than?) pedagogical failings. Again, particular theoretical positions come into play some of which emphasize leadership, others of which put the quality of the working environment or the idea of efficiency in the center.

In a useful formulation that combines these various elements, Maria Victoria Peralta (Peralta 2002), based in part on her analysis of ECCE curricula in Latin America, has set out the following principles that she thinks should be reflected in any definition of ECCE quality: an active child, an integral view of development, participation, pertinence, cultural relevance and flexibility. The European Commission believes “that high quality services for young children should aim to ensure that children have the opportunity to experience: a healthy life; spontaneous expression; esteem as an individual; dignity and autonomy; self-confidence and zest in learning; a stable learning and caring environment; sociability, friendship and cooperation with others, equal opportunities irrespective of gender, race and disability; cultural diversity; support as part of a family and community; and happiness.” (European Commission Childcare Network, p.7).

In some cases it was possible to determine how the definition of quality and the corresponding instrument were created. With rare exception, the process was carried out by experts, with little or no direct involvement of practitioners or parents.

ECCE service quality: a composite view¹¹

In an appendix to this document the reader will find a table that summarizes, for each instrumental definition of quality, the major categories used. (Two brief descriptions of instruments are provided as examples in Boxes 2 and 3.) The major categories used vary in number and in importance assigned, as indicated by the number of items dedicated to each category. From a glance at this table it will be obvious that, even at this very general level of definition, the view of quality is rich and varied.

Box 2

Mexico: Quality Scale for Preschool Centers (Escala de Calidad para Centros Preescolares- ECCP)

The ECCE is the result of several years of intermittent work by an inter-sectoral group including people from various parts of the Education Secretariat, the Health Secretariat, Family Welfare, two universities and two non-governmental organizations. It is now in its fourth version, product of reflections based on literature reviews, interviews, reviews of policy documents, experience of participants, two field trials and applications to evaluate a national program called Schools of Quality (PEC) as well as an NGO program supporting 100 community preschools. The definition of quality that has emerged is organized around 7 dimensions: available resources, educational management, the educational process, relations with families and community, health, accompaniment, and children with special needs. The scale consists of 52 indicators, each operationalized as an “item”, with descriptors to guide observations of evaluators along a five-point continuum as follows: 1 (inadequate), 2 (Incipient), 3 (Basic), 4 (Good), 5 (Excellent). Of these, 23 items pertain to the center as a whole and 29 to what happens in classrooms. Results of the various studies and evaluations using the scale suggest, among other things, huge inequities in quality exist (in a system that has virtually full coverage for 5-year olds) and that improvements in available resources and educational management do not bring about equivalent improvements in

¹¹ In the 2004 paper a first attempt was made to describe these dimensions. This will be extended here. A fifth category (Health) has been added. The list of features within each category has been extended.

the educational process which continues to lag in quality. The results have been shared with policy makers, programmers and participating centers with some evidence of improvements, especially when the evaluations are inserted in a broader process of accompaniment and planning.

Box 3
Singapore: Pursuing Excellence at Kindergartens (PEAK)

PEAK is a self-appraisal tool has been created to help kindergartens become effective organizations by working towards the Ministry of Education's "Desired Outcomes of Pre-School Education". By the end of kindergarten, children should : 1) Know what is right and what is wrong; 2) Be willing to share and take turns with others; 3) Be able to relate to others; 4) Be curious and able to explore; 5) Be able to listen and speak with understanding; 6) Be comfortable and happy with themselves; 7) Have developed physical co-ordination and healthy habits; and 8) Love their families, friends, teachers and school.

The PEAK, which is to be applied annually, is organized around six key criteria: leadership (purpose and direction, professional development and partnership with parents and community), administration (operation, financial management and use of technology), staff development and management (deployment, training, work environment), planning (planning, monitoring, evaluation), curriculum (integral curriculum, quality teaching and learning, feedback on children's progress, resources) and environment (safety, health, hygiene, facilities). The 55 indicators are each rated on a five point scale characterized as follows: 1 (not meeting expectations); 2 (approaching expectations), 3 (meeting most expectations), 4 (exceeding some expectations) and 5 (exceeding most expectations). The results of self-appraisals are used by Ministry of Education inspectors as a basis for talking with directors (principals) when they conduct compliance visits at the kindergartens.

When one looks inside what seem to be similar categories used in different contexts, the picture becomes more complicated.

To construct a composite view of educational quality as expressed in these instruments and documents I will use as an organizing device, five very general categories that seem to be represented consistently in statements and instruments, although with different emphases and with variation in the specific phrases or words used to label the dimension. For each of these categories I will highlight sub-categories that are included in different treatments of the general category. By moving to the level of individual items, the composite could be made much more complicated; however, what is presented below will give a fairly complete picture of dimensions included.

1. Available physical and human resources.

This category is usually includes;

- infrastructure and space (indoor and outdoor, design and maintenance, safety)
- materials (sufficiency, cultural pertinence, variation, organization and accessibility, appropriateness to age or development)
- teaching staff and directors/administrators, and sometimes with auxiliary personal or, as in the case of GMR 2005 framework, supervisors and inspectors. (knowledge, orientation and training – pre- and in-service -- health, motivation and commitment, ability to communicate with children and adults).

Group size and adult-child ratios commonly appear in this category as well.

Sometimes “curriculum” is treated as a resource or input and sometimes it is treated under the educational process. I will discuss it below as part of process. These structural variables and conditions may be at the heart of a definition of quality or they may be treated as “contributing” or “enabling” factors and treated separately, with emphasis on the use of resources rather than their presence and on the interactions and processes that occur in the learning environment.

2. Educational management (Organization and Administration).

This category looks at how the physical and human resources are organized and mobilized. In some cases, management is linked closely to administration and paperwork but in most cases a broader view prevails that includes leadership and planning for the future, working in teams, setting the tone for the work environment, and managing resources. The sub-categories that appear related to management include:

- Leadership (setting purpose and direction, aiding professional development, promoting work as a team, taking initiative to obtain resources)
- Policies and procedures (written, related to: moral and ethical conduct/respect, fees, development and use of resources, staff job descriptions, insurance)
- Working environment and staff needs (a positive, healthy environment that provides recognition, opportunities for professional improvement, orientation for new staff)
- Adult-adult interaction (respectful, teamwork)
- Supervision and continuing evaluation of staff (administrative, pedagogical assistance, personal accompaniment)
- Evaluation of center and its programs (for improvement, as part of accountability)
- Planning (for those who advocate strategic planning, this includes writing and making public a mission and vision, to be done collectively)
- Financial accountability (budget planning, monitoring and reporting)
- Maintaining the infrastructure
- Good relations with families and communities

- Keeping up technologically

3. The educational process

This dimension is sometimes described exclusively in terms of the interaction between teachers and children, but in most formulations includes also elements of planning and evaluation at the classroom or group level as well as a look at the content of what is actually being covered. Other terms used to describe this general dimension of quality are “pedagogy” and “learning environments”. Each of these labels implies a somewhat different weight to what is included within the category. In some cases the description is organized around daily routines or activities. Categories of indicators include:

- Pedagogical methods (most indicators are based on a child-centered approach and on active learning -- children initiate, explore, play, communicate; variation in individual, small and large group activities)
- Adult-child interaction (respectful, responsive, affectionate, treats children equitably)
- Adult-child interaction related to discipline (no physical punishment, uses conflict resolution)
- Child-child interaction
- Attention to special needs
- Evaluation of children and feedback to parents
- Classroom management/administration (organization of space and time, planning)
- Classroom environment that is attractive, caring
- Daily routine
- Time spent on educational matters

The quality of the classroom learning environment and educational process is tied to the curriculum offered. Curriculum is evaluated in the scales along two main dimensions, one dealing with the more general characteristics that it is believed a curriculum should embody as it is put into action and the other with specific curricular content that should be covered. With respect to the general nature of curricula, the particular words or phrases appear and often reappear. A curriculum should, for instance, be: coherent, multi-dimensional and integral, predictable but allow for flexibility, culturally pertinent, child-centered, responsive and interactive, active, based on play and exploration and discovery. It should allow for assessment, incorporate technology, use relevant materials, be consistent with a child rights perspective, and respect diversity and individuality.

Many instruments include specific indicators/items that evaluate whether various aspects of the content of a curriculum are actually being included in the educational process observed. In addition to specifying the importance of activities directed toward language development/early literacy and verbal communication and toward early mathematics and scientific inquiry, most instruments include in a quality curriculum something to do with understanding self and self-regulation and with social relationships. Less often mentioned, but still common are indicators related to physical development and health (including rest) or personal care. Still less frequently mentioned are activities directed toward creative

expression through various forms of art and music, ethics and moral values, and understanding cultural diversity).

4. Relationships with families and communities

Sometimes the emphasis within this category is on communication with families and community, often stressing the need either to provide feedback to parents about how their child is doing. But sometimes indicators are framed in terms of information exchange.

Another major dimension within this category evaluates the level of parental (and community) participation in a program or service, usually on a scale that runs from no participation at all through passive participation to active involvement in committees, planning and even classroom activities. Rarely is quality linked to activities by the school in the community (beyond celebration of holidays) that are expected to lead to community improvement.

Additional dimensions for judging a school in this category have to do with links to services offered in/by the community or to the education of parents.

5. Health, safety and hygiene

This dimension is sometimes incorporated into others but usually appears as a dimension in its own right. Indicators of quality include:

- Health of the staff (periodic checks)
- Toilet facilities and availability of drinking water
- A healthy and clean environment (regular cleaning, proper conditions for food preparation)
- Personal care routines (washing hands, brushing teeth, independence to go to the bathroom, grooming)
- Safety (of the premises, emergency procedures for accidents – someone trained in first aid -- or for natural disasters)
- Diagnostic and referral procedures for children
- Attention to nutrition (growth monitoring, providing for a proper diet and hygienic facilities if cooking is involved, not allowing children to bring or buy junk)

Some general observations:

- It should be evident from a glance at Appendix 1 that the weight given to each category varies from instrument to instrument.¹²
- The dimensions of quality dealing with the relation to families and communities and to health often have a minor place in the overall definition of quality.

¹² In most scales, each indicator is given an equal weight in which case the importance of one dimension or another is determined by the number of items (indicators) in a scale devoted to each theme. However, in some scales, particular indicators are given an additional weight when creating the total.

- The detail and complexity of instrumental definitions varies widely. At one extreme is the NAEYC definition which includes over 400 indicators or points to be taken into consideration.
- In several definitions, a special category is added for the treatment of children with special needs.
- The format used to guide assessments of quality also varies. Some instruments use check lists from which indices are constructed. Others place each indicator of quality on a sliding scale with 3 or 5 or 7 divisions running from very poor or inadequate to high or excellent. In these cases, a center is assigned points for each indicator. These can then be analyzed indicator by indicator or aggregated into scores representing the quality in general for a center or the quality of particular dimensions (such as management or the educational process).¹³ Scores can also be aggregated to program or national levels.
- Most of the definitions of educational quality depend on observations of centers¹⁴ in action, usually complemented, however, by interviews and reviews of documents. Observations depend on the observer so efforts have been made in some cases to provide training that results in inter-observer reliability; in others this has been disregarded. The research-oriented IEA instrument is somewhat different from others because it tries to reduce subjectivity by requiring observers to make systematic counts of activities and behaviors observed.
- Instruments are sometimes divided into observations made for the center as a whole and observations in classrooms, or, into program observations and teacher behaviors.
- Most instruments are established for pre-school levels (ages 3-5) but they may include items that can be used to observe learning environments toddlers or infants (NAEYC) or even be conceived as pertaining to primary school as well (Step-by-Step for the first 2 years of primary; Chile for pre-school and all of primary). This link into primary is particularly interesting because it suggests that there are general educational practices and/or suggests that the more exploratory, active, play-related methods used in preschool are equally relevant for at least the early years of primary school.

¹³ This aggregating process assumes that the distance between points on the scales used are equal (e.g., it is as easy to move from a qualification of 2 to one of 3 as it is from 4 to 5 on a five-point scale).

¹⁴ The time of observation varies from a few hours to a day or two. In the IEA study, the particular days selected are selected randomly.

III International influences in the definition of ECCE quality

It would be interesting and informative to carry out a systematic study of international influences on ECCE and, particularly, on the definition of ECCE quality.¹⁵ Here I will present some impressions based on my own work in the international realm.

Knowledge generation and transfer. Among the many features of globalization that might be cited as influencing ECCE (including the oft-cited pressures to adopt values related to being more productive, competitive, consumer-oriented, independent, etc. that come with a neo-liberal economic view) is the astounding change since Jomtien in the general availability of information about ECCE. This has meant, for instance, that findings from brain research with their implications for attention to the early years have been made available rapidly and widely through the internet and other communication channels. It means also, that program models and results of program evaluations are more readily available. Instruments used in other countries to assess both children and programs can often be obtained easily.

This availability of information can open up debates about quality and be used as a stimulus to arrive at locally satisfying and negotiated definitions of quality, or, as is sometimes the case, the easy access to information can provide results taken out of context and boiler plate definitions adopted and applied without going through a process of recreation and reinvention that fits local conditions and ways of thinking. To the extent that international organizations adhere fervently to the efficiency criterion of “not reinventing the wheel” they show little respect for diversity and local creation. In most of the cases that have come to my attention in which international organizations have helped with the creation of scales (or have created their own scale) there seems to have been some attempt to respond to local views. Nevertheless, there is evidence that definitions of quality and their operationalization in many low-income countries have been heavily influenced by knowledge from high-income countries and the availability of instruments such as the ECERS and the High/Scope Foundation’s observational scale. These have been adapted to local circumstances, for instance, in India, Ecuador, Bangladesh and Kenya (to name the examples that have come to my attention).¹⁶

Some instruments used in low income countries have been influenced by the fact that the experts involved in developing them have studied abroad and have brought home ideas about what quality is or should be. Their focus, however, depends on where they have studied and with whom.

The mere fact that the treatment of educational quality by some international organizations seeks a definition that allows international comparison limits even as it

¹⁵ For a fascinating study of globalizing and international influences on ECCE in one country (Palestine) and attempts by an NGO to mediate such influences, see Rachael Christina (2006).

¹⁶ In April 2006 a meeting on “Measuring Early Child Development” is scheduled to be held in Canada, hosted by the Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development. Among the items on the program is “Identification of Canada’s Educational Development Instrument (EDI) as a potential candidate for a worldwide standard.” Within a post-modern framework or one emphasizing the importance of diversity, that global attempt to meet the measurement challenge would not be acceptable.

further the ECCE cause. On one hand, the search for indicators that can be compared across countries has helped to call attention to educational outcomes; at the primary level, international test results have been a source of both pride and embarrassment, generating sometimes heated policy debates. At the other hand, that international practice tends to reduce thinking to narrowly defined, and quantitatively measured outcomes; it has tilted thinking about quality away from recognizing diversity and has limited the way we think about results. At the ECCE level, the drive toward internationally comparable indicators of cognitive development may even have curbed (or at least biased) alternative efforts to develop national or more local descriptions of developmental outcomes, tailored to particular contexts and based on different methodologies.

The Role of International Organizations. My own positioning within the international community has undoubtedly led to a bias in the examples of thinking about quality I have been able to obtain and in the instruments designed to operationalize that thinking. It may be for that reason that a large number of the educational quality scales and observational guides collected have been created with help of various kinds from international organizations (UN organizations, International NGOs and Foundations), often because the organization wants to evaluate the quality of a particular program they have funded. That is the case, for instance, for program quality evaluation scales from: Bangladesh and Vietnam (Plan International), Kenya (Aga Khan Foundation) and Pakistan (USAID and AKF), a regional scale for Latin America (Christian Children's Fund), Ecuador (the World Bank), Eastern European countries (Step by Step), a scale to monitor programs in Nicaragua (Pueblito). Other assistance has been provided as part of general country programming by the international organization and not linked to support to evaluate a particular national program receiving funds (p.e., Mexico, UNICEF and UNESCO) but my impression is that this is less frequent.

The support provided by the international organizations to low-income countries includes financial support or technical assistance to create and test instruments and even occasional direct involvement by staff in creating scales as well as support for particular program evaluations. Various international organizations have also contributed to the general debate by funding studies or think pieces on quality (Bernard van Leer Foundation). Others have created scales to be used in a variety of settings: ACEI (worldwide), Save the Children (for Africa) and CCF for countries where it has programs.

The perspectives of International organizations on quality vary but because some are very large organizations they may also house multiple perspectives on quality within the same organization. UNICEF, for instance is working simultaneously on several fronts. At the center is a rights perspective. From its Headquarters, the right to full development is being fostered through the multi-nation project directed to creating standards of measurement and instruments that will allow countries to see how their children are developing (see Box 1). Work has gone ahead also on defining indicators to look at the quality of parental practices, with a selection of a few such indicators to be included in Multiple Cluster Surveys in many countries. Within its rights perspective, a UNICEF paper titled "Defining Quality" (2000) takes a broad view, recognizing five dimensions of quality: learners, environments, content, processes and outcomes. In the various field offices of UNICEF activities have been supported that approach quality in different ways.

In Colombia, for instance, the rights perspective has led to supporting development of a scale to evaluate community day care that has been organized around the rights to survival, protection, development, and participation. In South East Asia, support to an ASEAN early childhood network has led to joint recommendations for minimum standards, licensing and monitoring of child care services. In Mexico, support has been given to a project on indicators of the well-being of children under 7 years of age, one part of which is devoted to creating a scale to describe children's competencies and another to the local creation and testing of a hybrid instrument to describe preschool quality.

The World Bank tends to see quality in terms of outcomes. It has supported a review of instruments to measure child development (Grigorenko and Sternberg 1999). A model developed in 1994 (Heneveld) drawing on educational effectiveness studies, looks very much like the GMR 2005 framework. Evaluation efforts in several countries (Mexico, the Philippines and Argentina, for instance) are looking at the effects of different kinds of early childhood programs on nutrition, health and psycho-social development outcomes.

The Bernard van Leer Foundation has approached quality from a different angle than most internationals, with emphasis on diversity, helped by a conceptual document from Martin Woodhead (1999).

UNESCO, as suggested in the GMR 2005, derives its definition of quality from the work of Jaques Delors (1996) which defined outcomes desired to include learning to know, do, live together and be. UNESCO also supports a rights-based approach to all educational activities.

The Aga Khan Foundation has helped institutions it funds (Kenya, Pakistan, for instance) to develop local instruments for evaluating quality, drawing on international experience.

The Christian Children's Fund is developing and testing its own scales for developmental outcomes and for evaluating educational processes.

There are undoubtedly many more examples that could be cited but these must wait for the more systematic study.

EFA. This Global Monitoring Report forms part of an important set of international influences on ECCE stemming from the EFA initiative. Education for All has given a boost to ECCE by including it as a goal, calling additional attention to the importance of education during this period of life. Opening the debate about educational quality with publication of with the GMR 2005 has been fruitful. At the same time, ECCE within EFA apparently continues to be thought of as preparation for later learning; there seems to be resistance to taking ECCE on its own terms, GMR 2007 notwithstanding.

IV Conclusions¹⁷

1. An increasing literature, as well as common sense, suggests that the quality (defined in different ways) of the attention a child receives, whether at home, in school or in other settings is positively related to healthy development and to learning outcomes. *At the same time, there is evidence from some settings that programs of modest quality, as well as those of high quality, can make a difference. This suggests that when resources are very scarce, the excellent may be the enemy of the good (and may even lead to exacerbating major inequities instead of moderating them).*

2. The tension continues between definitions of quality and methods of describing quality that start from a “modern” way of thinking and those that begin with a “post-modern” view. Most definitions of quality continue to be made by groups of “experts” and are based on a scientific position that quality is inherent, identifiable and universal, stress is placed on coherence. This contrasts with a vision of quality as uncertain, variable and contextual, requiring negotiation among different stakeholders. This latter viewpoint is gaining ground with the recognition that the definition of quality varies and must be negotiated, involving parents and teachers as well as administrators and researchers; stress is on diversity. *The idea that definitions of quality are, and should be, diverse poses a challenge to international (and even national) comparisons.* (See recommendations 11 and 12 below,)

3. The treatment of quality in the 2005 Global Monitoring Report (GMR) opens out the discussion, but, although broad in theory, is unnecessarily limited in practice to equating quality with academic outcome measures. *This narrow practice needs to be complemented by greater attention to the quality of educational environments and processes.*

4. A number of potentially interesting efforts are underway to arrive at national agreements about desired early developmental outcomes and to operationalize those in instruments and standards that can be used to monitor the status of children. *In most settings, however, we are far from reaching such an agreement.*

5. When defining quality in terms of outcomes it is advisable not only to take as broad a view of outcomes as possible but also to look over the long run.

6. Descriptions of the quality of educational environments not only provide information helping to understand why ECCE outcomes are as they are; they are also important indicators of quality in and of themselves because they represent a first approximation of difficult-to-measure outcome variables. *If the characteristics and processes of an educational environment are not consistent with the kind of world, country and citizenry desired, as set out in national documents and curricula, and/or with widely agreed-upon rights for children, it is difficult to say that the program is of high quality.*

¹⁷ The conclusions presented here reflect a value position that seems to be gaining ground but which will not be shared by all readers. That position allows for multiple truths and, while recognizing the need for both coherence and diversity, tends toward an emphasis on diversity.

From this perspective, to be judged as of high quality a program should, for instance, treat children equitably, allow participation, expose them to peaceful means of resolving conflicts etc. Moreover, *an ECCE program that achieves desired outcomes (for instance, successfully preparing children to read) should not be deemed a quality program if it uses undesirable methods (for instance, fear of, or actual physical punishment) to reach that goal.*

7. Many examples can be found of attempts to define and measure the quality of early education environments but:

- most definitions and their instrumentation are limited to particular, often small, interventions, many of which are linked to support from international organizations.
- the most commonly-found indicators of educational quality in reports of governments seem to be teacher certification (or qualification) and the number of children per adult at different age levels for children in programs of attention to young children. These measures are very limited. They emphasize resource availability and structural conditions leaving aside use and process variables and may not correlate highly with other dimensions of quality. *A quality profile is preferable to isolated indicators.*
- there are few attempts to define and measure the quality of educational environments outside the school although some promising efforts are appearing which are intended to evaluate child-rearing practices in the home and home environments. These do not, however, look at the quality of interventions intended to change these practices and environments.

8. Although national systems may exist in the Majority World (developing countries) that periodically evaluate young children and/or ECCE programs, no example of such was found in this review outside the Minority World. Approximations include one-off (but not periodic) national research studies evaluating a sample of children and examining effects of ECCE on children over time. Also, examples exist of periodic evaluations of children at local levels carried out in virtually all localities, but differences in the form of evaluation or simple failure to aggregate results means no national picture is available and reported.

9. An examination of instruments used to describe and/or to evaluate the quality of programs suggests that there are several general and reappearing dimensions of quality but that the specific ways of naming and operationalizing these dimensions to create indicators of quality differs substantially from place to place. Dimensions found with frequency, although sometimes with variations in terms, include: the physical environment (space, infrastructure, materials); the knowledge and experience of human resources; the nature and organization of the educational process (planning and evaluation, pedagogical practices and strategies for learning, adult-child interactions); organization, management and administration; the work environment (relationships among staff; established policies); relationships with family and community; and, attention to health, hygiene and safety. It is

common to hear words or phrases describing educational quality such as: child-centered, active learning, broad and varied goals and activities, holistic and integral, responsive, interactive, relevant, culturally pertinent, participatory, structured but flexible, human, ethical, collegial. Nevertheless, each instrumental definition of quality puts its own touch on how these are operationalized.

10. International organizations are taking an active role in promoting attention to quality, usually within a “modern” (as contrasted with post-modern) perspective and with experts taking the leading role. These efforts are motivated variously by: 1) attention to children’s rights, 2) the search for an internationally-comparative set of indicators of the quality of ECCE programs that would help advocacy; 3) a perceived need to evaluate quality in the specific programs they help to support so as to improve the programs.

11. International comparisons of ECCE program quality based on standardized outcomes will be, at best, difficult to create and interpret and at worst, ill advised. Nevertheless, international monitoring of national quality can be carried out and an internationally comparative indicator can be created that shows where nations are in the process of monitoring.

- A first step in such monitoring would be to see whether national results of evaluations of quality are available and reported. Countries participating in EFA could be asked to respond to a set of questions (present information) about how they define, in conceptual and operational terms, quality in their ECCE programs as well as about how they utilize the results. The reader will note that this approach differs radically from one that tries to compare outcomes using a standardized instrument for all children in all countries. It does not require that all countries apply the same instrument to assess and compare the quality of programs. It would, however provide an indicator of a country’s commitment to taking seriously quality in ECCE programs. Moreover, having to answer these questions should promote dialogue and move the discussion of quality to a different level.
- The set of questions to be answered might look something like the following:
 1. Has a national definition (or multiple definitions) of quality been produced for ECCE programs?
 2. Does the definition take into account diversity of viewpoint and allow for adjustments when used in particular contexts?
 3. Does the definition (do the definitions) guide a systematic and periodic process of evaluating and monitoring programs?
 4. Are the results of that monitoring fed back to centers so they can use them to improve their programming and planning?
 5. Are the results of that monitoring taken into consideration when reviewing policy?
 6. Are the results of that monitoring made public?
- Assuming that some national description (measure?) of quality has been established, a second step could be to see how quality changes over time, using the national

measures and baselines, defined and operationalized in each country. The comparison would not be against an international standard but rather against the country itself (much as growth monitoring shifted from looking at a moment in time classified in red, yellow or green to looking at whether a child is improving or faltering). Internationally, countries could be classified according to whether or not they are improving their level of quality.

12. Meanwhile, it would be possible to continue to collect and compare information about such suggestive features of ECCE as:

- whether a national policy exists for the development of young children during their early years;
- the relative resources being devoted to ECCE;
- the number of children per teacher;
- teacher qualifications.

The interpretation of such information should be cautious in the extreme, making explicit the basis for choosing such indicators, taking into account variations in contexts and adhering to the idea expressed in the body of this text that a profile of quality is much more reliable than individual indicators of quality.

References

- Abbot-Shim, M and Sibley, A. (1998) *Assesment Profile for Early childhood Programs*. Atlanta: Quality Assist, Inc.
- Aboud, F. (2004) "Evaluation of Early Childhood Preschool Programmes of PLAN Bangladesh." Bangladesh, ICDDR,B. Mimeo.
- Aboud, F. and D. Llewellyn. (2004) "A Scientific Case for Early Childhood Care and Education for Development in Bangladesh." Dacca, Mimeo.
- Airasian, P. (2002) *Assessment in the Classroom*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Andersson, B. (2004) "What is good daycare? A Swedish Perspective." A presentation made at the Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development, Regina, SK, Canada, June 2-4, 2005 (Mimeo).
- Aránguiz, G., et. al. (2002) *Guia de Autoevaluación de la Escuela*. Santiago: Ministerio de Educación, División de Educación General.
- Arnett, M. (1989) "Caregivers in day care centers: Does training matter? *Journal of Applied Development Psychology*, 10, pp. 541-552.
- Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI) (2002). "ACEI Self-Assessment Tool". Olney, Maryland, ACEI.
- Bartlett, K., C. Arnold and Sapkota. (2003) "What's the Difference? Impact of Early Childhood Development Programs. Kathmandu, Nepal: Save the Children (USA).
- Campos, M.M. and F. Rosemberg. (1995) "Our day-care centers respect children: Quality criteria for day-care." Sao Paulo, Brazil, Fundação Chagas.
- Canadian Child Care Federation (CCCF). (June 1991) "National Statement on Quality Child Care." Ottawa, CCCF.
- Center for Early Education Research, Institute of Education Sciences. "Checklist for a quality pre-school/class." Mimeo. Plan International, Vietnam. Instrument and translation provided by Hua Phoung Tran
- Christian Children's Fund, Inc. (CCF). (2005) "CCF Developmental Scale." Richmond, Virginia, CCF.
- Christina, R. (2006) *Tend the Olive, Water the Vine: Globalization and the Negotiation of Early Childhood in Palestine*.
- Comisión Europea, Red de Atención a la Infancia. (1996) "Objetivos de Calidad en los Servicios Infantiles." London, University of London, Institute of Education, Thomas Coram Research Unit.
- Dahlberg, G. P. Moss and A. Pence. (1999) *Beyond quality in early childhood education and care: postmodern perspectives*. London: Falmer Press.
- Delors, J. (1996) *The Treasure Within, Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Dickinson, D. K. ((2004). "Toward a Toolkit Approach to Describing Classroom Quality." A paper delivered at the School Readiness Conference at the University of North Carolina, Nov. 30, 2004. Vanderbilt University, Peabody College of Education. Mimeo.

- Early Child Care Research Network (ECCRN). "Child care and children's peer interactions at 24 and 36 months: the NICHD study of early child care." *Child Development*, 72, pp. 1478-1500.
- EFA Global Monitoring Report Team (2004). *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2005. The Quality Imperative*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Epstein, A.S., L.J. Schweinhart and A. De Bruin-Parecki. (2004) "High/Scope Information Paper on Preschool Assessment" Ypsilanti, MI: Mimeo.
- Evans, J. (1996) "Quality in ECCD: Everyone's Concern," *Coordinators' Notebook*, No. 18, pp. 1-26.
- Grigorenko, E.L. and R.J. Sternberg. (December 1999) "Assessing Cognitive Development in Early Childhood". Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, Human Development Network, Education.
- Haeussler, I. and T. Marchant. (1985) *Test de Desarrollo Psicomotor, 2-5 Años*. Santiago, Chile: Ediciones Universidad Católica de Chile.
- Harms, T., R. Clifford and D. Cryer (1999) *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale- Revised Edition*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Hayes, N., J. Montie and J. Claxton (n.d.) "New Process Quality Indicators from the IEA Primary Project Observation Systems." (mimeo).
- High/Scope Educational Research Foundation. (2004) "The IEA Preprimary Project Age 7 Follow-up." Ypsilanti, Michigan: High/Scope. This two-page project summary was created for release to the press.
- _____. (2003) *The Preschool Program Quality Assessment, Second Edition*. Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press.
- Howes, C., D.A. Phillips and M. Whitebook. (1992) "Thresholds of quality: Implications for the social-development of children in center-based child care." *Child Development* 63 (2): 449-460.
- Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar (2005). "Sistema de Supervisión." Santafé de Bogotá: ICBF
- International Step by Step Association. (2002) *Step by Step Program and Teacher Standards for Preschool and Primary Grades*. New York: International Step by Step Association.
- Isley, B.J. (2000) *Tamil Nadu Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (TECERS)*. Madras: M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation.
- Kagan, S.L. and Britto, P.R. (2005). "Going Global with Indicators of Child Well-being: Using a Standards Approach. UNICEF Final Report." New York, Colombia University. (Mimeo)
- Keating, D.P. and C. Hertzman, eds. (1999) *Developmental Health and the Wealth of Nations*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Landers, C. and C. Kagiçibasi (1990). "Measuring the Psychosocial Development of Young Children." Summary Report of a Technical Workshop, May 7-10, 1990. Florence, UNICEF International Child Development Centre.
- La Paro, K.M., Pianta, R., and Stulman, M. (2004) The Classroom Assessment Scoring System: Findings from the Prekindergarten Year. *Elementary School Journal*, 104 (5), pp. 409-26.
- Lazar, I. and R. Darlington. (1982) "Lasting Effects of Early Education: A Report from the Consortium for Longitudinal Studies," *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*. No 195.

- Love, J. et. al. (2003) "Child care quality matters: How conclusions may vary with context." *Child Development* 2003; 74 (4): 1021-1033.
- "Madrasa Evaluation Instrument". (2003) Mimeo obtained from the Aga Khan Foundation which funds a Madrasa project in Kenya.
- Martínez, J.P and R. Myers (2003). "En búsqueda de la calidad educativa en centros preescolares," Un informe presentado a la Dirección General de Investigación Educativa. México, Distrito Federal. (Manuscrito no publicado).
- Maura, P. (2004) "Cognitive Performance as a function of learning climate: A case study of the Madrasa Resource Centre Early Childhood Development Programme in East Africa." Nairobi, Madrasa Resource Centre Regional Research Programme. Mimeo.
- Meisels, S. and S. Atkins-Burnett. (1998) "Assessing Intellectual and Affective Development before Age Three: A Perspective and Changing Practices." A paper prepared for presentation at the UNICEF Meeting on Early Childhood Development, Wye College, Kent, England, April 4-7, 1998. Ann Arbor, MI, Michigan State University. Mimeo.
- Ministerio de Educación, Chile (2002). "Guía de Auto-evaluación de la Escuela". Santiago, Chile, Ministerio de Educación, División de Educación General.
- Ministerio de Educación de El Salvador, Dirección Nacional de Evaluación e Investigación. (2000) "Guía de Observación de una Jornada de Trabajo en el Nivel Parvulario" y "Cuestionario para maestros y maestras" en *Características Básicas de la Educación en el Salvador*. San Salvador: Ministerio de Educación.
- Ministry of Education, New Zealand (1996). *Te Whāriki. Early Childhood Curriculum*. New Zealand, Learning Media Limited.
- Ministry of Education, Singapore (n.d.) "Pursuing Excellence at Kindergartens (PEAK)". Singapore: Ministry of Education. (Information from UNICEF program officer, Junko Miyahara based on conversations with Ministry officials).
- Moss, P. and A. Pence (eds.) (1994) *Valuing Quality in Early Childhood Services: New Approaches to Defining Quality*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Moss, P. (1990) "Quality in Services for Young Children. A Discussion Paper. Brussels, European Commission Childcare Network. Mimeo.
- Moss, P. (2005) "Diversity and Coherence". A paper presented at the 40th Rosa Sensat Summer School, Barcelona, Spain. (Mimeo)
- Myers, R. (2003) "Notas sobre 'la calidad' de la Atención a la Infancia." *Revista Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, Niñez y Juventud*, Vol 1. No. 1 (Enero-junio de 2003), pp. 60-83.
- _____. (2004) "In Search of Quality in Programmes of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), a paper prepared for the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2005." Available at the UNESCO web site.
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (2003) "Early Childhood Curriculum, Assessment and Program Evaluation: Building an Effective, Accountable System in Programs for Children Birth through Age 8," Washington, D.C.: Authors. Available on line at: www.naeyc.org/resources/positionstatements/pscape.asp
- _____. (1998) *Accreditation Criteria and Procedures of the NAEYC*. Washington, D.C.: NAEYC.

- National Childcare Accreditation Council (2001). *Quality Improvement and Accreditation System Handbook*. Denver, Colorado: NCAC
- National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC). (2005) *Stair Steps to Quality: A Guide for States and Communities Developing Quality Rating Systems for Early Care and Education*. Fairfax, Virginia: United Way. Available at: <http://www.nccic.org>
- National Research Council (2001). *Eager to Learn: Educating Our Preschoolers*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press., particularly Chapter 4, “Preschool Program Quality.”
- New Zealand, Education Review Office. (2002) “Education Reviews in Early Childhood Services”, downloaded from the internet: <http://www.ero.govt.nz/Publications>
- Nuestros Niños, et.al. (2001) “Estándares de Calidad para los Centros Alternativos de Desarrollo Infantil” (Quality Standards for Alternative Child Development Centers). Quito, Ecuador: Programa Nuestros Niños.
- Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2001) *Starting Strong: Early childhood education and care*. Paris: OECD.
- Peisner-Feinberg, E.S., et.al. (2001) “The relation of preschool child care quality to children’s cognitive and social development trajectories through second grade. *Child Development* 72 (5): 1534-1553.
- Peisner-Feinberg (2004). In: Tremblay, R.E., R.G. Barr and R. DeV. Peters (Eds.) (2004) *Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development* [online]. Montreal, Quebec: Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development. Available at: <http://www.excellence-earlychildhood.ca>
- Peralta, M.V. (Setiembre de 1992) “Criterios de Calidad Curricular para una Educación Inicial Latinoamericana, Santiago Chile, Junta Nacional de Jardines Infantiles. Mimeo.
- Peralta, M.V. (Noviembre de 2002) “Una propuesta de criterios de calidad para una educación inicial latinoamericana.” En: Peralta, M.V. y R. Salazar (compiladores) *Calidad y Modalidades Alternativas en Educación Inicial*. La Paz, Bolivia: CERID/MAIZAL.
- Phillipsen, L.C., Burchinal, M.R., Howes, C. and Cryer, D. (1997). “The prediction of process quality from structural features of child care.” *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 12, pp. 281-303.
- Piaget, J and B. Inhelder (1969) *The Psychology of the Child*. New York: Basic Books.
- Proyecto Interdisciplinario (2004). “Escala de Evaluación de la Calidad Educativa en Centros Preescolares (Versión 3). Departamento General de Evaluación Educativa. Mimeo.
- Rutter, M. H. Giller and A. Hagell (1998) *Antisocial Behaviour by Young People*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Samms-Vaughan, M. (2004) *The Jamaican Pre-school Child: The Status of Early Childhood Development in Jamaica*. Kingston, Jamaica: Planning Institute of Jamaica.
- Save the Children (UK). (2004) “Quality Indicators for Child Care Programmes. East and Central Africa.” London, Save-the.Children (UK). Mimeo.
- Schulman, K. (2005) “Overlooked benefits of prekindergarten.” New Brunswick, New Jersey. See: <http://nieer.org/docs/index.php?DocID=123>

- Schweinhart, L.J., H.V. Barnes and D.P. Weikart, with S. Barnett and A.S. Epstein. (1993) *Significant Benefits. The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study through Age 27*. Ypsilanti, Michigan: High/Scope Educational Research Foundation.
- Sindh Education Foundation (2004). *Children's Learning Environment Format (CLEF)*. Karachi, Pakistan: Sindh Education Foundation.
- Smilansky, M. (1979) "Priorities in Education: Pre-school: Evidence and Conclusions." Working Paper No. 323. Washington: The World Bank.
- Smith, A.B. and N.J. Taylor. (1996) *Assessing and improving quality in early childhood centers. National Seminar proceedings*. Dunedin, New Zealand: University of Otago, Children's Issue Centre.
- Smith, M.W., Dickinson, D.K, Sangeorge, A. and Anastasopoulos, L. (2002) *The Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation Toolkit (ELLCO)*. Baltimore: Brookes Publishing Company.
- Sylva, K. (1995) "Research on quality in early childhood centers". A paper presented at the Mother Child Education Conference, Istanbul, October 19-20 , 1995. Mimeo.
- Sylva, K, I. Siraj-Blatchford, and B. Taggart. (2003). "Assessing Quality in the Early Years. Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale. Extension ECERS-E. Four Curricular Subscales." London: London Institute of Education.
- Sylva, K., Melhuishi, E., Sammons, P., Siraj-Blatchford, I., Taggart, B., & Elliot, K. (2003) "The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project: Findings from the Pre-school Period", London: Institute of Education, University of London.
- Teachers' Resource Center (1998) "Childrens' Learning Environment Format (CLEF). Karachi, Pakistan, Teachers' Resource Centre.
- Tiana F., Alejandro. (1999) "La Evaluación y la Calidad: Dos Cuestiones de Discusión." En Secretaría de Educación Pública, *Seminario Internacional de Evaluación de la Calidad de la Educación Básica*. México, D.F.: SEP, Dirección General de Evaluación, pp. 3-22.
- Tietze, W., K.M. Schuster and H.G. Rossbach, (1997) "Kindergarten Einschätz Skala (KES) Deutsche Fassung der Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale von T. Harms & R.M. Clifford (Neuweid, Kriftel, Berlin, Luchterhand), Reported in: Pamela Oberhuemer. (2004) "Controversies, chances and challenges: reflections on the quality debate in Germany." *Early Years* 24(1) March 2004: pp 1-19.
- Tremblay, R.E., R.G. Barr and R. DeV. Peters (Eds.) (2004) *Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development* [online]. Montreal, Quebec: Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development. Available at: <http://www.excellence-earlychildhood.ca>
- UNICEF (2003) "Second Regional Seminar for the ASEAN Project on Early Childhood Care and Development, Phase II. March-3-6, Bangkok, Thailand. Bangkok: UNICEF.
- UNIPRIN/UNICEF (1999). "Factores que Favorecen la Calidad de la Atención a la Niñez." San José, Costa Rica, UNICEF.
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1962) *Thought and Language*. Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press.
- Weikart, D., P. Olmsted and J. Montie (Eds.) (2003) *IEA Preprimary Project, Phase 2: A World of Experience. Observation in 15 Countries*. Ypsilanti, Michigan: The High/Scope Press.

- Williams, S. (2006) *National survey of the quality of learning environments in early childhood basic schools in Jamaica*, Early Childhood Commission/Dudley Grant Memorial Trust, Jamaica. Report Forthcoming.
- _____. (2005) *National survey of the quality of learning environments in preschools and day care centres in Grenada*. Ministry of Education, Grenada.
- _____. (2005) *Survey of the quality of learning environments in early childhood basic schools in three parishes in Jamaica*, Bernard van Leer Foundation/Dudley Grant Memorial Trust.
- _____. (2004) *Report of the national survey of quality of learning environments in early childhood centres in the Commonwealth of the Bahamas*, Child Focus II Project/IADB.
- _____. (2002) *Report of the national survey of quality of learning environments in early childhood centres in St. Lucia*, Government of St. Lucia/UNICEF Caribbean Area Office.
- _____. (2001) *Report of the national survey of quality of learning environments in early childhood centres in Montserrat*, Government of Montserrat/UNICEF Caribbean Area Office.
- _____. (2000) *Report of the national survey of quality of learning environments in early childhood centres in Grenada*, Government of Grenada/UNICEF Caribbean Area Office.
- _____. (2000) *Report of the national survey of quality of learning environments in early childhood centres in the Commonwealth of Dominica*, Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica/UNICEF Caribbean Area Office.
- Williams, S. and J. Brown. (2000) *Report of the national survey of quality of learning environments in early childhood centres in St. Vincent and the Grenadines*, Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines/European Union.
- Woodhead, Martin. (1996) *In Search of the Rainbow: pathways to quality in large scale programmes for young disadvantaged children*. The Hague: The Bernard van Leer Foundation.
- Worthan, S. (n.d.) "Self-Assessment Tool, adapted from the Global Guidelines for the Education and Care of Young Children" Wimberly, Texas, Association for Childhood Education International.
<http://www.acei.org>

Appendix 1. Instruments to Describe ECCE Quality

The summaries that are provided in the following table are rough at best and I apologize in advance to the creators if I have not adequately reflected the content or purposes of their scales. I would like to thank Anna Smeby for helping me to systematize and analyze the information contained in the scales.

APPENDIX 1. INSTRUMENTS TO DESCRIBE ECCE QUALITY

Country	Scale	Major categories y # of indicators	Purpose	Scoring
International				
27 countries, mostly in Eastern Europe	International Step-by-Step Association (STEP), Program and Teacher Standards	Program standards: - Teacher-Child Interactions 4 - Family Participation 9 - Planning a Child-Centered Program 5 - Strategies for Meaningful Learning 4 - Learning Environment 3 - Health and Safety 4 Teacher standards: - Individualization 4 - Learning Environment 3 - Family Participation 6 - Teaching Strategies for Meaningful Learning 5 - Planning and Assessment 7 - Professional Development 4	Planning and Improvement Tool. Accreditation to Step-by-Step Program	Each indicator is evaluated as Rarely Evident (R), Sometimes Evident (S) or Consistently Evident (C). All indicators not rated C require written comment. There is no qualification of score by domain or program as a whole.
26 countries participated in the construction	ACEI Self-Assessment Tool	Environment and Physical Space 17 Curriculum Content and Pedagogy 39 Educators and Caregivers 13 Young Children with Special Needs 24 Partnership with Families and Communities 5	Self-assessment by centers	Each indicator is scored as on a five descriptor continuum from inadequate to Excellent. Spaces are allowed for examples and comments.
14 countries	IEA PrePrimary Project (IEA/PPP)	The observation system focuses on process using three dimensions: - Management of Time (e.g., time in 3 categories of proposed activities, group structure, pacing of activities) - Child Activities (e.g., children’s verbalization, Child-child interaction, adult-child interaction, children’s non-active engagement, time on task) - Adult Behavior (e.g., behavior in major categories, directive teaching, degree of involvement, listening behavior, child management)	Research	Observers recorded observations in each category using a time sampling procedure. These were converted into percentages and distributions.
Africa	Save the Children (UK)	Professional Practice (clear aims, protection policy, good Practice, referral, care plan, periodic review, continuum Of care 7 Personal Care (Health & Nutrition, Recreation, Privacy, Informed Choices, Respect, + relationships, sense of Identity, control and sanctions, voice opinions, ed. According to needs) 12 Caregivers 4 Resources (accessible/ adequate; promotes health/dev 2 Administration (records, confidentiality, accountability) 3	Planning and Improvement Tool (staff development, assessment, monitoring) Advocacy and policy development	Each indicator includes a description of the indicator, a standard and “contra-indicators. The evaluator uses these to decide whether conditions are being met or not.

High Income Countries					
USA	Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, Revised Edition (ECERS-R) Similar instruments have been created for infant/toddler programs and family day care.	Space and Furnishings Personal Care Routines Language-Reasoning Activities Interaction Program Structure Parents and Staff	8 6 4 10 5 4 6	Research and program improvement. Now used as qualification criteria for some programs.	Each indicator has multiple dimensions which are observed in order to assign a score on a 7-point scale from 1 (minimal) to 7 (excellent) [If each dimension were counted as an indicator the total number of indicators would be 432]
USA	NAEYC Accreditation Performance Criteria	Relationships Curriculum Teaching Assessment of Child Progress Health Teachers Families Community Relationships Physical Environment Leadership and Management	40 89 69 28 39 16 30 18 49 54	Accreditation by an independent organization (not required by the state)	Each indicator is
USA, various states	Quality Rating System	Staff Qualifications and professional development Learning environment Family Involvement Licensing status and/or compliance history Group sizes and ratios Program Evaluation Compensation Administrative policies and procedures Different states use the categories to construct their own rating system.		To give families clear information about the relative quality of ECCE in different settings. To provide benchmarks for improvement. For accountability.	Different scoring systems
USA	High/Scope	Physical Environment Daily Routine Adult-Child Interaction Adult-Adult interaction	10 6 8 6	Program improvement	A five point scale is used with examples at 1, 3 and 5 to guide scoring
Australia	National Childcare Accreditation Council	Quality Areas Relationships with Children Respect for Children Partnerships with Families Staff Interactions Learning and Development Protective Care	Principles 2 4 3 1 6 4	Accreditation (a rating of Satisfactory or higher in all Quality areas) Self-Evaluation (validated by an external reviewer) and Program Improvement	Unsatisfactory Satisfactory Good Quality High Quality

Australia (continued)		Health 4 Safety 3 Management 4 For each of the “quality areas” several “key concepts” are also defined which help observers to evaluate a center. In addition “contributors” to quality are identified, including: - the number of staff and their level of training - the size of the play area - the equipment provided for play and development		
Low and Middle Income Countries				
Chile	Auto-evaluación de la Escuela (School Self-Evaluation)	Institutional Management 20 Pedagogical Practices 26 Pedagogical teamwork 6 Integration of Family and Community in ed. Improvement 6 (Each category includes space for centers to create their own indicators in addition to those provided)	Self evaluation in support of discussion and annual planning	Each indicator categorized at one of four stages: beginning, establishing, implementing or consolidated
7 Caribbean countries	ECERS-R	Same as described above for ECERS-R, No major adjustments were made in the scale but in each country each item was “translated culturally”.	Policy development Program evaluation and improvement Advocacy, Training	Same as ECERS-R
Costa Rica	VAI Self-Evaluation Inst.	Mission and Philosophy 7 Care and Services for Children 8 Community Relations 8 Organization of Children and Staff 17 Resources 12 Evaluation 4	Self-evaluation and program improvement	Various methods: All/some/none Frequencies Scale of 1 to 10
Colombia	Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar (ICBF)	Administrativo 4 Técnico - Organización del proceso de Atención (higiene, space, furniture and materials, documentation, evaluation of children) 18 - Care and health 13 - Education and Development 8 - Protection 5 - Participation 3	Program evaluation and supervision	Points are assigned to each category, some given extra weight, to create totals for the various categories and overall.
Ecuador	Estándares de Calidad para los Centros Alternativos de Desarrollo	Infrastructure and Physical Environment 20 Availability, Use and Accessibility of Materials 12 Human Resources: Organization, Training, Development 23 Strategies, Services and Process 4 [Cross-cutting themes are: Services (Health, Nutrition and Education) ; Participation]	Self-evaluation and program improvement. Requirement for federal funding	Each indicator scored on a scale from 0 to 3. Some weighting

India	Tamil Nadu Early childhood Environment Rating Scale (TECERS)	<p>Infrastructure: Equipment and Physical setting 10</p> <p>Personal Care and Routine 8</p> <p>Physical Learning Aids 7</p> <p>Language and Reasoning Experiences 9</p> <p>Fine and Gross Motor Activities 7</p> <p>Creative Activities 8</p> <p>Social Development 11</p>	Not stated	Most indicators on a 3-point scale (0 to 2). Some counts of the number of times an activity occurs.
Kenya	Madrassa Evaluation Instrument	<p>The Quality of Teaching/Learning Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Physical Environment 14 - Daily Routine 8 - Adult-child interaction 22 - Adult-adult interaction 21 - Islamic culture and tradition 5 <p>Quality of School Management & Community Involvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School Administration 19 - Financial management 14 - School Maintenance 6 - Community Involvement 14 	Program monitoring and improvement	3-point scale, from 1 to 3
Mexico	ECCP	<p>Resources (physical plant, materials, educational Agents) 12</p> <p>Management (leadership, organization and help) 5</p> <p>Educational Process (Diagnosis, planning evaluation, Daily routine, forms of teaching, affective environment) 19</p> <p>Relationship with family and community</p> <p>Accompaniment 3</p> <p>Attention to health 4</p> <p>Attention to children with special needs 5</p>	Program evaluation, planning and improvement	Each indicator is evaluated on a scale of 1 (inadequate) to 5 (excellent) with 3 (basic) intended to provide a minimum that all centers should meet
Pakistan	Children's Learning Environment Format (CLEF)	<p>Physical Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - physical condition 5 - seating/space/storage 6 - Teaching-learning resources 11 <p>Teaching-Learning Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meeting children's needs 5 - Activity-based teaching/learning 4 - Lesson planning 4 - Assessment: monitoring progress and attainment 8 	Program evaluation and improvement	<p>The evaluation range for different indicators varies from 2 categories to 5 categories. Room is allowed for comments.</p> <p>The instrument also includes a format to evaluate children's learning (language and literacy, innumeracy, personal and social development and problem solving).</p>
Singapore	Pursuing Excellence at Kindergartens (PEAK)	<p>Leadership 7</p> <p>Administration 4</p> <p>Staff Development and Management 13</p>	Self-appraisal and reflection, toward achieving Ministry goals. Used during compliance	Each indicator evaluated on a scale of 1 to 5. Raw scores converted by weighting with

		Planning Curriculum Environment	10 13 8	visits.	curriculum having highest weight (35%)
Vietnam	Checklist for a quality preschool	In and out-door environment (space usage, maintenance, hygiene, materials, equipment) Safety, health, nutrition and hygiene Qualification/training of teachers and for teachers and Teacher:child ratios Daily program and planning Administration	5 10 4 9 6	Evaluation Supervision and improvement	Each indicator is evaluated on a 3-point scale: 1 = Hardly met 2 = Met 3 = Well met