

Evaluation and monitoring of the BES(t) 4 Kids program and the law Childcare for the Caribbean Netherlands

Report of the first measurement

Client: BES(t) 4 Kids

Rotterdam, June 2022



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Executive Summary

On Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba live approximately 3.400 children aged 0-12 years old. High quality, safe and (financial) accessible childcare and out-of-school care helps these children in their social and cognitive development, enabling a smooth transition to primary education. Especially children from vulnerable families (e.g., growing up in poverty or dealing with social problems within the family) can benefit from childcare because there they can receive the support and knowledge to develop themselves while not having that at home. In 2019, research showed the quality and financial accessibility of childcare could be improved on all islands¹. More attention is needed on professionalization of pedagogic employees, continuous development of children and on reducing the financial burden for parents.

Research also showed that number of children, number of organizations, type of organizations and use of childcare differ per island. Despite these differences, on all islands similar societal problems, such as poverty and many low income and single parent families, exist. Therefore, a shared approach on improving quality to enhance chances of children and parents on all islands has been formulated within the BES(t) 4 Kids program.

This study evaluates the results of the BES(t) 4 Kids program so far. The program started in 2019 and is in full progress. The goal of this first measurement is to evaluate the process and results so far and to give recommendations for the next phases of the program.

Goal BES(t) 4 Kids program

The BES(t) 4 Kids program is set up by the public entities Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba together with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW), Education, Culture and Science (OCW), Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS) and Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (BZK). The aim of the program is to create a system of high quality, safe and (financial) accessible childcare and out-of-school care in the Caribbean Netherlands. The goal is to ensure that every child has the opportunity to develop themselves to their full potential and enable parents to do their work without having to worry about their children. To realize this ambition the BES(t) 4 Kids program has been set up in 2019. The program focuses on 6 strategic objectives:

1. lay-out of a system for childcare and out-of-school facilities;
2. lay-out of the licensing scheme and supervision;
3. strengthening of the quality;
4. improvement of the (financial) accessibility;
5. integral care structure;
6. improvement of the housing.

Research approach

The data collection for this research consisted of desk research (available documents describing the plans, implementation, results of the program have been consulted) and fieldwork, which was conducted in November and December 2021 on all three islands. The fieldwork included 68 semi-structured interviews with board members, managers and employees of 13 different childcare organizations, parents and other relevant external parties. Additionally, local sounding board groups were established on each island and group sessions carried out in order to make sure that the findings reflect well different local island contexts on a practical level. Next to the local sounding board groups, a supervisory committee was in place throughout the implementation and

¹ Nulmeting Kinderopvang Caribisch Nederland (2019)

development of the study. The supervisory committee consists of representatives of the BES(t) 4 Kids program (including the project leaders of all three Islands) and the involved ministries.

Results

We observe great support for the program by all stakeholders. Managers and employees from all childcare organizations indicate that the BES(t) 4 Kids program was a great stimulation for the professionalisation of the childcare organizations and the improvement of quality and safety. Many organizations worked on increasing quality by training and professionalization of staff. More than half of the parents we interviewed (16 out of 29) know the BES(t) 4 Kids program and are positive about its priorities and goals.

Organizations differ in their starting position and the distance they have to travel to meet quality requirements. Some organizations have been organized in a professional way prior the BES(t) 4 Kids program, whereas other organizations, especially on Bonaire, are organized in a more informal way (for example host parents, hosting less than 6 children). The latter organizations have to bridge a bigger distance to meet quality standards. Therefore, it differs between organizations how much has been worked on the quality requirements.

On program-level and island-level a careful process has been followed to involve all stakeholders in the design and executing of the program, resulting in a program created bottom-up matching needs on the local level. The project-leaders on each island have been crucial in achieving this result. All organizations needed time to adjust to the new subsidy and processes. Most of them adjusted rapidly to this new way of working. Some organizations on Bonaire still experience high administrative burden and face financial problems.

Childcare has become more affordable to parents across all three islands. Since 2018 participation rates increased on Bonaire and Saba. The overall participation in childcare across islands are at around 60% (with higher participation in the daycare – approx. 70%, and lower in out-of-school care – approx. 50%), which points to room for improvement in the (financial) accessibility.

The table below summarizes the progress and results per strategic objective of the program.

Progress and results per different strategic objective			
	Output (scale √ to √√√√√)		Outcome
1. Lay-out of a system for childcare and out-of-school facilities	Island regulations and temporary subsidy scheme	√√√√√	The Childcare Island Ordinances came into effect in 2020. The law proposal has been drafted and parties are gradually working towards the introduction of the law in the course of 2023 and 2024. The activities carried out within the BES(t) 4 Kids program are an integral part in the preparation and the introduction of the new law.
	Draft childcare law	√√√√√	
2. Lay-out of the licensing scheme and supervision	Operating license	√√√√√	The Childcare Island Ordinances stipulate that all childcare organizations must have an operating license. The childcare organizations are with assistance from the BES(t) 4 kids program working on fulfilling the requirements as defined in the Childcare Island Ordinances. First supervisory visits have taken place on Bonaire and are planned for St. Eustatius and Saba to continue in the beginning of 2022 ² .
	Supervisory activities	√√√√√	
3. Strengthening of the quality	Qualification and education	√√√	Childcare organizations, together with the support of the BES(t) 4 kids program made important first steps in strengthening the quality, but understandably, not yet all quality requirements are met. The most important step for moving towards responsible childcare has been made by improving the qualifications of staff. Due to the BES(t) 4 kids program, more pedagogical employees completed further vocational training enabling them to offer a higher quality of childcare. Yet, only a few employees are trained in identifying development and learning disadvantages by children. Second, pedagogical policy plans have not yet been designed nor implemented for all organizations. Third, the majority of childcare organizations do not provide healthy food. Fourth, most but not all childcare organizations seem to respect the children-supervisors ratio for providing stable care. Finally, the involvement of parents in a parent committee or complaints committee remains a challenge.
	Pedagogical vision	√√	
	Healthy food	√	
	Stable care	√√√	
	Parent/Complaints committee	√	
4. Improvement of the (financial) accessibility	Temporary subsidy scheme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost-price reducing subsidy Child-placement subsidy 	√√√	The temporary subsidy scheme was implemented to reduce the costs of childcare for parents and to improve the quality of care. With the implementation of the temporary subsidy scheme childcare has indeed become more affordable to parents across all three Islands as the parental contribution amount was reduced for almost all organizations by the cost-price reducing subsidy. At the same time, the number of parents who besides cost-price reducing subsidy also receive child placement subsidy is relatively low on Bonaire and St. Eustatius. One of the reasons for that might be the insufficient understanding that parents have about the available subsidy possibilities and barriers in the administrative process. The overall participation in childcare across islands are at around 60%,

² Once this report will be published these visits most likely already have taken place.

Progress and results per different strategic objective			
			which could point to room for improvement in the (financial) accessibility (but also to availability issues and socio-economic factors).
5. Integral care structure	Inclusive childcare	√√	The creation of a care structure is a complex matter in which many stakeholders are involved and preconditions need to be fulfilled. Different entities have been working together for the last 1.5 years to agree and create on a structural approach for inclusive childcare. The care pilots in selected childcare organizations have started in all three islands, which is the foundational work in creating the care structure. The integral care structure remains an area for improvement to focus on in the upcoming years, including the financing decisions, the evaluation of different pilots, the financing and offer of needed training/qualification (for early signalling), the role of parents and cooperation with schools/ other relevant partners.
	Pilot projects	√√	
	Early signalling	√	
	Role of parents in early stimulation	√	
6. Improvement of the housing	Housing facilities / renovation projects	√√	On all three islands the number of places available in childcare is lower than the number of children aged 0 -12 years old. The lack of availability remains a challenge and as a consequence issues related to the housing facilities require attention. First actions were already taken to improve the housing situation across all three islands and new plans are being made for building facilities that will meet housing quality and safety requirements.

Remaining tasks

While important first steps have been made, many objectives have not yet been (fully) achieved. Remaining tasks are within those objectives that take more time such as improving of the housing and improving salary of pedagogic employees. The latter is seen as a crucial condition to find and retain qualified pedagogic employees on all islands. A preparing research on salary and working conditions in childcare on all islands has been conducted on this theme and is input for further arrangements. Next to finding and retaining qualified pedagogical employees, investing in housing remains a priority because in all three islands as the number of places available in childcare is lower than the number of children aged 0 -12 years old. On Bonaire this is coupled with a demographic increase of children the last years.

The integral care structure is an area for improvement on all islands. A main challenge is coordination between parties and training employees in identifying development and learning disadvantages by children.

In addition, parental involvement in a parent or complaints committee remains a challenge for almost all organizations. Organizations are looking for simple and effective ways to increase parental involvement.

Recommendations/next steps

Based on the results we identify seven recommendations on the program- and organizational-level.

Program-level

- All organizations have positive attitudes towards the efforts of the BES(t) 4 Kids program assisting them to improve the quality and safety. The project-leaders on each island have been crucial in achieving this result. It is important to maintain this role as a linkin-pin between the organizations and the program. European Netherlands ministries maintain a more facilitating role.
- Childcare has become more affordable to parents across all three islands but improving the financial accessibility remains a point of attention. Because of low income levels, the parental contribution could still be too high for some parents resulting in lower participation rates. The number of parents who besides cost-price reducing subsidy also receive child placement subsidy is relatively low on Bonaire and St. Eustatius. One of the reasons for that might be the insufficient understanding that parents have about the available subsidy possibilities and barriers in the administrative process.
- We observe differences across islands in tempo of meeting the quality requirements. Especially on Bonaire, organizations with various 'starting points' entered the program (from informally organized host parents to large professional organizations). As a consequence, organizations differ in the size of the gap they have to bridge to meet all requirements. Therefore, the pace of implementing the requirements set out in the law should give room for these differences. This could be done in various ways. **First**, by setting up a context-aware supervision system, adjusting next steps to the context/abilities of the organization. **Second**, by postponing the moment of implementation, giving more time to organizations to work on requirements prior to implementation. **Third**, by re-designing the law into a law that sets the framework/ambitions or goals instead of prescribing rules on organizational level, expanding possibilities to work on ambitions or goals in various tempi.

Organizational-level

- Organizing parental involvement is difficult on all islands, but is important in order to stimulate learning and development also at home. We suggest to focus more on the social involvement of

parents and from there work to more formal involvement (parent committee, involving in pedagogic plans).

- On Bonaire, informal organized organizations experience high financial and administrative burden. We suggest to create a support-network of these organizations. They could for example work together in writing a pedagogic plan or share the costs of an accountant.
- Expanding knowledge sharing with Dutch twinning partners and between similar organizations (across and within islands). For example, together developing smart ways to involve parents and working on an instrument to monitor the development of children, in cooperation with pedagogical networks and schools across islands.
- Besides increasing the salaries and creating better working conditions, also strengthening the image of childcare on all islands is important to attract and retain pedagogic employees.

Managementsamenvatting

Op Bonaire, St. Eustatius en Saba wonen ongeveer 3.400 kinderen in de leeftijd van 0-12 jaar. Kwalitatieve, veilige en (financieel) toegankelijke kinderopvang en buitenschoolse opvang helpt deze kinderen in hun sociale en cognitieve ontwikkeling, wat een soepele overgang naar het primair onderwijs mogelijk maakt. Met name kinderen uit kwetsbare families (die bijvoorbeeld opgroeien in armoede of te maken hebben met sociale problematiek in de familie) hebben veel baat bij kinderopvang, omdat ze daar de ondersteuning krijgen die ze nodig hebben om zich te ontwikkelen die ze vanuit huis in mindere mate krijgen. Uit onderzoek uit 2019 blijkt dat de kwaliteit en financiële toegankelijkheid van de kinderopvang op alle eilanden verbeterd kan worden. Er is meer aandacht nodig voor de professionalisering van pedagogisch medewerkers, de continuïteit van de ontwikkeling van kinderen en het wegnemen van financiële drempels voor ouders.

Onderzoek wijst ook uit dat er per eiland verschillen bestaan in het aantal kinderen, het aantal betrokken en type organisaties en het gebruik van kinderopvang. Ondanks deze verschillen bestaat op alle eilanden soortgelijke sociale problematiek, zoals armoede en hoge aantallen gezinnen met een laag inkomen en/of één ouder. Om die reden is er binnen het BES(t) 4 Kids programma gekozen voor een gezamenlijke benadering voor een kwaliteitsverbetering van kinderopvang, om zo te zorgen voor meer kansen voor kinderen en hun ouders op alle eilanden.

Het voorliggend onderzoek evalueert de resultaten van het BES(t) 4 Kids programma tot nu toe. Het programma is gestart in 2019 en nog in volle gang. Het doel van deze eerste meting is het proces en de resultaten tot nu toe te evalueren en adviezen te geven voor de volgende fases van het programma.

Doel BES(t) 4 Kids programma

Het BES(t) 4 Kids programma is opgezet door de openbare lichamen Bonaire, St. Eustatius en Saba, in samenwerking met het ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid (SZW), het ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap (OCW), het ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport (VWS) en het ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties (BZK). Het doel van het programma is het opzetten van een kwalitatief hoogwaardig systeem van veilige en (financieel) toegankelijke kinderopvang en buitenschoolse opvang in Caribisch Nederland. Het doel is te waarborgen dat ieder kind de mogelijkheid heeft zich te ontwikkelen tot zijn of haar volle potentieel en het ouders mogelijk maken te werken zonder zich zorgen te hoeven maken over hun kinderen. Om deze ambities te behalen is in 2019 het BES(t) 4 Kids programma opgezet. Het programma richt zich op 6 strategische doelstellingen:

1. Het inrichten van een stelsel voor kinderopvang en buitenschoolse voorzieningen
2. Het inrichten van het vergunningstelsel en het toezicht
3. Het versterken van de kwaliteit
4. Het verbeteren van de financiële toegankelijkheid
5. Een integrale zorgstructuur
6. Het verbeteren van de huisvesting

Onderzoeksopzet

Het verzamelen van onderzoeksgegevens gebeurde via deskresearch (beschikbare documenten over de plannen, implementatie en resultaten van het programma zijn geraadpleegd) en veldwerk, wat uitgevoerd is in november en december 2021 op alle drie de eilanden. Het veldwerk bestond uit 68 semi-gestructureerde interviews met bestuursleden, managers en medewerkers van 13

verschillende kinderopvangorganisaties, ouders en andere relevante betrokken partijen. Aanvullend is op elk eiland een lokale klankbordgroep opgericht en zijn groepssessies gehouden, om te borgen dat de bevindingen de lokale context per eiland goed weerspiegelen op praktisch niveau. Naast de lokale klankbordgroepen was er een begeleidingscommissie betrokken bij de uitvoering en ontwikkeling van het onderzoek. De begeleidingscommissie bestaat uit vertegenwoordigers van het BES(t) 4 Kids programma (inclusief projectleiders van Bonaire, St. Eustatius en Saba) en de betrokken ministeries.

Resultaten

We zien dat er een groot draagvlak is voor het programma onder alle belanghebbenden. Managers en werknemers van alle kinderopvangorganisaties geven aan dat het BES(t) 4 Kids programma een grote stimulans is voor de professionalisering van de organisaties en het verbeteren van de kwaliteit en veiligheid. Veel organisaties hebben gewerkt aan kwaliteitsverbetering door het geven van trainingen en professionaliseren van de medewerkers. Meer dan de helft van de ouders die we hebben geïnterviewd (16 van de 29) kennen het BES(t) 4 Kids programma en zijn positief gestemd over de doelen en prioriteiten.

Organisaties verschillen in hun uitgangspositie en de weg die af te leggen is om te voldoen aan de kwaliteitseisen. Sommige organisaties waren voor de start van het programma al professioneel georganiseerd, terwijl anderen, met name op Bonaire, meer op een informele manier waren ingericht (bijvoorbeeld via gastouders met minder dan 6 kinderen). Deze laatste organisaties hebben een grote afstand te overbruggen om aan de kwaliteitseisen te voldoen. Het verschilt daarom per organisatie hoeveel er gewerkt is aan de kwaliteitseisen.

Op programmaniveau en eilandniveau is een zorgvuldig proces gevolgd om alle belanghebbenden te betrekken in het ontwerp en de uitvoering van het programma. Dit heeft geresulteerd in een programma dat op lokaal niveau van onderaf behoeften adresseert. De projectleiders op elk eiland zijn van cruciaal belang geweest in het bereiken van dit resultaat. Alle organisaties hadden tijd nodig om zich aan te passen aan de nieuwe processen. De meeste van hen pasten zich snel aan de nieuwe manier van werken aan. Sommige organisaties op Bonaire kampen nog steeds met een hoge administratieve last en ervaren financiële problemen.

Kinderopvang is betaalbaarder geworden voor ouders op alle drie de eilanden. Sinds 2018 is het percentage deelnemers gestegen op Bonaire en Saba. De totale deelname aan kinderopvang op de eilanden ligt rond de 60% (met een hoger percentage in de dagopvang- ongeveer 70%, en een lager percentage in de buitenschoolse opvang – zo'n 50%), wat een indicatie is voor ruimte voor verbetering in de financiële toegankelijkheid.

Onderstaande tabel vat de vooruitgang en resultaten per strategische doelstelling van het programma samen.

Vooruitgang en resultaat per strategische doelstelling			
	Output (schaal √ tot √√√√√)		resultaat
1. Het inrichten van een stelsel voor kinderopvang en buitenschoolse voorzieningen	Regelgeving op het eiland en een tijdelijk subsidieplan	√√√√	De Eilandverordeningen Kinderopvang zijn ingevoerd in 2020. Het wetsvoorstel is ontworpen en partijen werken toe naar de inwerkingtreding van de wet in de loop van 2023 of 2024. De ontplooiende activiteiten onder het BES(t) 4 Kids programma zijn een integraal onderdeel van de voorbereiding en introductie van de nieuwe wet.
	Wetsontwerp Wet Kinderopvang	√√√√	
2. Het inrichten van het vergunningstelsel en het toezicht	Exploitatievergunning	√√√√	De Eilandverordeningen Kinderopvang schrijven voor dat alle kinderopvangorganisaties in het bezit moeten zijn van een exploitatievergunning. Met hulp van het BES(t) 4 Kids programma werken de organisaties aan het voldoen aan de eisen uit de Eilandverordeningen Kinderopvang. De eerste inspectiebezoeken zijn afgelegd op Bonaire en zijn op St. Eustatius en Saba gepland voor het begin van 2022.
	Inspectie op activiteiten	√√√√	
3. Het versterken van de kwaliteit	Kwalificaties en onderwijs	√√√	Kinderopvangorganisaties, met ondersteuning vanuit het BES(t) 4 Kids programma, hebben belangrijke eerste stappen gezet in het versterken van de kwaliteit, maar logischerwijze is nog niet aan alle eisen voldaan. De belangrijkste stap op weg naar verantwoorde kinderopvang is gezet door de kwalificaties van het personeel te verbeteren. Door het BES(t) 4 Kids programma hebben meer pedagogisch medewerkers een beroepsopleiding afgerond, waardoor ze opvang van betere kwaliteit kunnen bieden. Desondanks is echter maar een beperkt aantal medewerkers opgeleid om leer- en ontwikkelingsproblemen bij kinderen te herkennen. Daarnaast zijn er nog niet bij alle organisaties pedagogische beleidsplannen ontwikkeld en geïmplementeerd. Ten derde biedt de meerderheid van de kinderopvangorganisaties geen gezonde voeding aan de kinderen aan. Ten vierde voldoen de meeste, maar niet alle, organisaties, aan de kind-begeleider-verhouding voor een stabiele opvang. Tot slot: de betrokkenheid van ouders in een ouder- of klachtencommissie blijft een uitdaging.
	Pedagogische visie	√√	
	Gezonde voeding	√	
	Stabiele zorg	√√√	
	Ouders/klachtencommissie	√	
4. Het verbeteren van de financiële toegankelijkheid	Tijdelijke subsidieregeling: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kostprijs verlagende subsidie Kindplaatssubsidie 	√√√	De tijdelijke subsidieregeling was geïmplementeerd om de kosten van kinderopvang voor ouders te verlagen en de kwaliteit van de opvang te verbeteren. Met de implementatie van de tijdelijke subsidieregeling is kinderopvang inderdaad betaalbaarder geworden voor ouders op alle drie de eilanden, omdat door de

Vooruitgang en resultaat per strategische doelstelling			
			<p>kostprijs verlagende subsidie de ouderbijdrage bij vrijwel alle organisaties verlaagd is. Tegelijkertijd is het aantal ouders dat naast een kostprijs verlagende subsidie ook een kindplaatssubsidie ontvangt relatief laag op Bonaire en St. Eustatius. Eén van de oorzaken daarvoor zou kunnen zijn dat ouders onvoldoende kennis hebben over de subsidiemogelijkheden en drempels in het administratieve proces ervaren. De totale deelname aan kinderopvang op de eilanden ligt rond de 60%, wat een indicatie kan zijn voor ruimte voor verbetering in de (financiële) toegankelijkheid (maar ook voor beschikbaarheidsproblemen en sociaaleconomische factoren).</p>
5. Integrale zorgstructuur	Inclusieve kinderopvang	√√	<p>Het ontwikkelen van een zorgstructuur is een complexe zaak waarbij veel belanghebbenden betrokken zijn en aan veel randvoorwaarden moet worden voldaan. Verschillende instellingen hebben in de afgelopen anderhalf jaar samengewerkt om te komen tot een structurele benadering van een inclusieve kinderopvang. De opvangpilots zijn gestart bij geselecteerde organisaties op alle drie de eilanden. Dit is het fundament onder de zorgstructuur. De integrale zorgstructuur blijft een punt van verbetering voor de komende jaren, inclusief financieringskeuzes, de evaluatie van de verschillende pilots, de financiering en het aanbod van opleiding en training (voor vroegsignalering), de rol van de ouders en samenwerking met scholen en andere relevante partijen.</p>
	Pilot projecten	√√	
	Vroegtijdige signalering	√	
	Rol van de ouders	√	
6. Het verbeteren van de huisvesting	Huisvestingsfaciliteiten/ renovatieprojecten	√√	<p>Op alle drie de eilanden is het aantal beschikbare plaatsen in de kinderopvang lager dan het aantal kinderen in de leeftijd 0-12 jaar. Het gebrek aan beschikbaarheid blijft een uitdaging en als gevolg hiervan hebben huisvestingsvraagstukken aandacht nodig. De eerste maatregelen zijn al genomen om de huisvesting te verbeteren op alle drie de eilanden en nieuwe plannen worden ontwikkeld voor huisvesting dat voldoet aan de kwaliteits- en veiligheidseisen.</p>

Resterende taken

Hoewel belangrijke eerste stappen gezet zijn, zijn veel doelen nog niet (volledig) behaald. De resterende taken vallen binnen de doelen die meer tijd vergen, zoals het verbeteren van de huisvesting en de salarissen van de pedagogisch medewerkers. Dit laatste wordt gezien als cruciaal in het vinden en behouden van gekwalificeerd personeel op alle eilanden. Een voorbereidend onderzoek naar salaris en arbeidsvoorwaarden in de kinderopvang op de eilanden is uitgevoerd en is input voor aankomende regelingen. Naast het vinden en vasthouden van gekwalificeerde pedagogisch medewerkers, heeft het investeren in huisvesting prioriteit, omdat op alle drie de eilanden het aantal beschikbare plekken lager is dan het aantal kinderen in de leeftijd van 0-12 jaar. Op Bonaire is dit gekoppeld aan een demografische stijging van het aantal kinderen in de laatste jaren.

De integrale zorgstructuur is een punt van verbetering voor alle eilanden. Een grote uitdaging ligt in de coördinatie tussen verschillende partijen en het herkennen van leer- en ontwikkelingsproblemen bij kinderen.

Aanvullend blijft ook de betrokkenheid van ouders in een ouder- of klachtencommissie een uitdaging voor vrijwel alle organisaties. Organisaties zoeken naar eenvoudige en effectieve manieren om de betrokkenheid van ouders te vergroten.

Aanbevelingen/ volgende stappen

Gebaseerd op deze resultaten kunnen we op programma- en organisatieniveau zeven aanbevelingen doen.

Programmaniveau

- Alle organisaties staan positief tegenover de pogingen die het BES(t) 4 Kids programma doet om hen te helpen de kwaliteit en veiligheid te verbeteren. De projectleiders op elk eiland hebben een cruciale rol gespeeld om dit doel te bereiken. Het is van groot belang deze rol als spin in het web tussen de organisaties en het programma te behouden. De Europees-Nederlandse ministeries moeten een meer faciliterende rol spelen.
- Kinderopvang is betaalbaarder geworden voor ouders op alle drie de eilanden, maar het verbeteren van de financiële toegankelijkheid blijft een punt van aandacht. Vanwege lage inkomensniveaus, kan de ouderbijdrage voor sommige ouders nog altijd te hoog zijn, waardoor de deelnamecijfers dalen. Het aantal ouders dat naast een kostprijs verlagende subsidie ook een Kindplaatssubsidie ontvangt is relatief laag op Bonaire en St. Eustatius. Eén van de mogelijke oorzaken daarvoor kan zijn dat de ouders te weinig kennis hebben over de subsidiemogelijkheden en drempels in het administratieve proces.
- We zien verschillen tussen de eilanden in het tempo waarmee aan de kwaliteitseisen voldaan wordt. Met name op Bonaire begonnen organisaties vanuit verschillende uitgangspunten aan het programma (van informeel georganiseerde gastouders tot grote professionele organisaties). Als gevolg hiervan verschillen organisaties in de grootte van het gat dat te overbruggen is om aan alle eisen te voldoen. Daarom zou er voor het voldoen aan de eisen in de wet ruimte moeten zijn voor deze verschillen. Dit kan op verschillende manieren. **Ten eerste** via een inspectiesysteem dat rekening houdt met de context en de volgende stappen aanpast aan de context van de organisatie. **Ten tweede** door het moment van implementatie uit te stellen. Hierdoor krijgen organisaties meer tijd om te werken aan de vereisten voorafgaand aan de implementatie. **Ten derde** door de wet te herschrijven naar een wet die het raamwerk en ambities of doelen beschrijft, in plaats van regels stelt op organisatieniveau. Zo worden de mogelijkheden verruimd om te werken aan ambities en doelen in verschillende tempo's.

Organisatieniveau

- Het organiseren van ouderbetrokkenheid is op alle eilanden moeilijk, maar het is belangrijk om leren en ontwikkelen ook thuis te stimuleren. We stellen voor om meer te focussen op de sociale betrokkenheid van ouders en van daaruit te werken naar meer formele betrokkenheid (oudercommissie, betrokkenheid bij pedagogische plannen).
- Op Bonaire kampen informeel georganiseerde organisaties met hoge financiële en administratieve lasten. We stellen voor om een ondersteuningsnetwerk op te zetten voor deze organisaties. Zij kunnen bijvoorbeeld samenwerken in het schrijven van een pedagogisch plan of de kosten voor een accountant delen.
- Het delen van kennis met Nederlandse twinning partners en tussen gelijksoortige organisaties (tussen en op eilanden). Bijvoorbeeld: het gezamenlijk ontwikkelen van slimme manieren om ouders te betrekken en het werken aan een instrument waarmee de ontwikkeling van kinderen gemonitord kan worden, in samenwerking met pedagogische netwerken en scholen op de eilanden.
- Naast het verhogen van de salarissen en het creëren van betere werkomstandigheden, is het ook van belang om het imago van kinderopvang op de eilanden te verbeteren om pedagogisch medewerkers aan te trekken en te behouden.

Kompilashon di maneho

Na Boneiru, St. Eustatius i Saba ta biba mas òf ménos 3.400 mucha den e edat di 0-12 aña. Kuido di mucha i guia despues di skol di kalidat, ku bon seguridat i (finansiero) aksesibel ta yuda e muchanan aki den nan desaroyo sosial i kognitivo, loke ta fasilitá mas mihó e traspaso pa enseñansa primario. En partikular muchanan ku ta bini di famianan vulnerabel (ku por ehèmpel ta krese den pobresa òf ku tin di haber ku problemanan sosial den e famia) tin hopi benefisio na kuido di mucha, paso einan nan ta haña e sosten nesario pa nan por desaroyá nan mes paso kas nan no ta haña esaki. For di investigashon na 2019 a resultá ku e kalidat i e aksesibilidat finansiero di e kuido di mucha riba tur e islanan por wòrdu drechá. Mester tin mas atenshon pa e profeshonalisashon di e kolaboradónan pedagógiko, e kontinuidat di e desaroyo di muchanan i pa kita e limitashonnan finansiero pa e mayornan.

Investigashon a demostrá tambe ku riba kada isla tin diferensia den e kantidat di muchanan, e kantidat di organisashonnan enbolbí i e tipo di organisashonnan i e uso di kuido di mucha. Apesar di tur e diferensianan aki riba tur e islanan ta eksistí problemanan sosial similar, manera pobresa i un kantidat haltu di famianan ku un entrada bou i/òf un mayor. Pa e motibu ei den e programa di BES(t) 4 Kids a skohe pa un aserkamentu konhunto pa drecha e kalidat di kuido di mucha, pa asina sòru pa mas posibilidat pa e muchanan i nan mayornan riba tur isla.

E investigashon aktual ta evaluá e resultadonan di e programa BES(t) 4 Kids te ku awor aki. E programa a kuminsá den 2019 i ainda ta kanando. E meta di e promé midí aki ta pa evaluá e proseso i e resultadonan te ku awor aki i duna konseho pa e siguiente fase di e programa.

Meta di programa BES(t) 4 Kids

E programa BES(t) 4 a wòrdu establese dor di e entidatnan públiko Bonaire, St. Eustatius, i den koperashon ku e ministerio di Asuntunan Sosial i Empleo (SZW), e ministerio di Enseñansa, Kultura i Siensia (OCW), e ministerio di Salubridat, Bienestar i Deporte (VWS) i e ministerio di Asuntunan Interno i Relashonnan den Reino (BZK). E meta di e programa BES(t) 4 Kids ta pa stabilisá un sistema di kalidat haltu di seguridat i (finansieramente) aksesibel di kuido pa mucha i guia despues di skol den Karibe Ulandes. E meta ta pa garantisá ku kada mucha tin e posibilidat pa desaroyá su mes òf pa sòru pa su potensial máksimo ta wòrdu desaroyá i ku ta duna e mayornan e posibilidat pa traha sin ku nan mester prekupá pa nan yunan. Pa por logra e ambishonnan aki a instituí na 2019 e programa BES(t) 4 Kids. E programa ta dirigí su mes riba 6 meta stratégiko:

7. Diseña un sistema pa kuido di mucha i proveé guianan despues di skol (ku legalmente regulá)
8. Diseña e sistema di pèrmit i e supervishon
9. Fortalesé e kalidat
10. Drecha e aksesibilidat finansiero
11. Un struktura di kuido integral
12. Drecha e alohamentu.

Diseño di e investigashon

Kompilashon di datonan pa e investigashon a tuma lugá pa medio di deskresearch di dokumentonan ku tabata disponibel (tokante di e plannan, implementá i resultadonan di e programa) i trabounan den vèlt ku a wòrdu hasí den novèmber i desèmber 2021 riba tur e tres islanan. E trabou den vèlt a konsistí di 68 entrevista semi-struktura ku miembronan di direktivanan, mènèdjernan i kolaboradónan di 13 diferente organisashon di kuido di mucha, mayornan i otro partidonan relevante embolbí. Adishonal a instituí lokalmente un grupo di konsulta i a tene dos

seshon nan di grupo, pa asina sigurá ku e rekomendashonnan lokal, pa kada isla individual, ta wòrdu bon reflehá riba nivel práktiko.

Resultadonan

Nos ta mira ku tin un apoyo grandi pa e programa bou di tur esnan embolbí. Mènedjernan i trahadónan di tur e organisashonnan di kuido di mucha ta duna di konosé ku e programa BES(t) 4 Kids ta un stimulashon grandi pa e profeshonalisashon di e organisashonnan i pa drecha e kalidat i seguridat. Hopi organisashon a traha na drechamentu di e kalidat dor di duna treinen nan i profeshonalisá e kolaboradónan. Mas ku mitar di e mayornan ku nos a entrevistá (16 di 29) konosé e programa BES(t) 4 Kids i nan ta optimista pa ku e metanan i prioridatnan.

Organisashonnan di kuido di mucha ta diferencia den nan posishon inisial i e kaminda ku nan mester kana pa por kumpli ku e eksigensianan di kalidat. Un par di organisashon tabata, asta promé ku a inisiá e programa, ya profeshonal bon organisá, kaminda otro nan, tabata mas organisá na un manera mas informal (por ehèmpel via di mayornan di bishita ku ménos ku 6 mucha). E último organisashonnan aki tabatin un distansia grandi pa kubri, es desir mester a hasi hopi mas kos, pa por a kumpli ku e eksigensianan di kalidat. Ta p'esei e ta diferensia di organisashon pa organisashon kuantu a traha i mester a traha na e eksigensianan di kalidat.

Riba nivel di programa i nivel di isla a sigui un proseso kuidadoso pa enbolbí tur interesadonan den e diseño i pa ehèkuta e programa. Esaki a resultá den un programa ku riba nivel lokal mester a wòrdu atendé ku e nesidatnan di parti abou. E lidernan di proyekto riba kada isla tabatin un balor krusial pa por a logra e e resultado aki.

Tur organisashon tabatin mester di tempu pa adaptá nan mes na e prosesonan nobo. Un mayoría di nan a adaptá nan mes basta lihé na e manera nobo di traha. Un par di organisashon na Boneiru ainda tin problema ku ku gastunan haltu atministrativo i tambe nan tin eksperensiando problemanan finansiero.

Kuido di mucha a bira mas pagabel pa mayornan riba tur e tres islanan. For di 2018 e porsentahe di partisipantenan a subi na Boneiru. E partisipashon total na kuido di mucha riba e islanan ta banda di 60% (ku un porsentahe mas haltu den e kuido di dia- mas òf ménos 70%, i un porsentahe mas abou den e kuido despues di skol – mas òf ménos 50%), ku ta un indikashon ku ta duna espasio pa mehorashon den e aksesibilidat (finansiero) (i posibel problemanan rondó di disponibilidat).

E tabla akibou ta kompilá e progreso i e resultadonan di kada meta stratégiko di e programa na Boneiru.

Progreso i resultado di kada meta stratégiko			
	Produksjon (eskala √ te ku √√√√√)		Resultado
1. Diseña un sistema pa kuido di mucha i proveé guianan despues di skol (ku legalmente regulá)	Regulashon riba e isla i un plan di supsidio temporal	√√√√	E ordenansa isleño ku ta trata Kuido di mucha, den kua e eksigensianan di kalidat i e areglonan di supsidio temporal a wòrdu fihá, a drenta na vigor na 2020. E proposishon di lei a wòrdu trahá i tur partido ta trahando pa e por drenta den vigor i wòrdu implementá den transkurso di 2023 òf 2024. E aktividatnan desplegá bou di e programa BES(t) 4 Kids ta un elemento integral di e preparashon i introduksjon di e lei nobo.
	Proyekto di lei Kuido di mucha	√√√√	
2. Diseña e sistema di pèmit i e supervishon	Pèmit di eksplotashon	√√√√	E ordenansa isleño Kuido di mucha ta preskribi ku tur organisashon di kuido di mucha mester ta den poder di un pèmit di eksplotashon. Ku ayudo di e programa BES(t) 4 Kids e organisashonnan ta traha pa por kumpli ku e eksigensianan di e ordenansa isleño di Kuido di mucha. E promé bishitanan di inspeksjon a wòrdu hasí na Boneiru i ta planiá pa tuma lugá na St. Eustatius i Saba na komienso di 2022..
	Inspeksjon di e aktividatnan	√√√√	
3. Fortalesé e kalidat	Kualifikashonnan i enseñansa	√√√	Organisashon di kuido di mucha, ku sosten di e programa BES(t) 4 Kids, ya a dal pasonan importante pa fortalesé e kalidat, pero lógikamente ainda nan no ta kumpli ku tur eksigensia. E paso di mas importante den direkshon di un kuido di mucha responsabel ta tumá dor di drecha e kalidat di e personal. Dor di e programa BES(t) 4 Kids mas kolaboradónan pedagógiko por a finalisá nan estudio, pa asina na por ofresé kuido di un mihó kalidat. Apesar di esaki ta un kantidat limitá di kolaboradónan a sigui e estudio pa rekonosé señalnan i problemanan di siñamentu i desaroyo serka muchanan. Banda di esei te ainda no ta serka tur organisashon nan a desaroyá i implementá plannan di maneho pedagógiko. Na di tres lugá, un mayoria organisashon di kuido di mucha no ta ofresé kuminda saludabel na e muchanan. Na di kuater lugá, un mayoria di, pero no tur organisashon, ta kumpli ku e balansa di, mucha-guiadó, pa un kuido stabil. Finalmente: e embolbimentu di mayornan i den un komishon di mayor òf komishon di keho, ta keda un reto.
	Vishon pedagógiko	√√	
	Kuminda saludabel	√	
	Kuido stabil	√√√	
	Komishon di mayor/Keho	√	
4. Drecha e aksesibilidat finansiero	Areglo di supsidio temporal: • Preis rasonabel pa medio di supsidio • Supsidio di alokashon di mucha	√√√	E areglo di supsidio temporal tabata implementá pa baha e gastunan di e kuido di mucha pa mayornan i pa drecha e kalidat di e kuido. Dor di implementá e areglo di supsidio temporal kuido di mucha en bèrdat a bira mas pagabel pa mayornan, paso dor di e supsidio de reduksjon di gastunan e kontribushon di mayornan a baha kasi serka tur organisashon. Na e mesun momentu e kantidat di mayornan ku a haña, banda di e preis

Progreso i resultado di kada meta stratégiko			
			rasonabel, tambe e un supsidio pa alokashon di mucha, tabata relativamente hopi abou na Boneiru i St. Eustatius. Un di e kousanan por ta ku e mayornan tin tiki konosementu di e posibilidatnan di supsidio i ta eksperensia limitashonnan den e proseso atministrativo. E partisipashon na e kuido di mucha riba islanan ta ront di 60%, loke por ta un indikashon riba espasio pa mehorashon den e aksesibilidat (finansiero) (pero tambe pa e problemanan di disponibilitat i faktor nan sosial ekonómiko).
5. Un struktura di kuido integral	Kuido di mucha inklusivo	√√	Desaroyá un struktura di kuido ta un kos basta kompliká, kaminda hopi partido di interes ta enbolbí i mester kumpli ku hopi kondishon. Durante di e aña i mei ku a pasa diferente partido a traha huntu pa yega na un aserkamentu struktural di un kuido di mucha inklusivo. E pilotonan di kuido a kuminsá serka e organisashonnan selektá riba tur e tres islanan. Esaki at e fundamentu bou di struktura di kuido. E kuido integral ta keda un punto di mehorashon pa e añanan benidero, inkluso e eskohonan finansiero, e evaluashon di e diferente pilotonan, e finansiamentu i e estudionan ku ta wòrdu ofresé i treinen (pa rekonosementu trempan), e ròl di e mayornan i kolaborashon ku skolnan i otro partidonan relevante.
	Proyektonan piloto	√√	
	Siñalamentu trempan	√	
	Ròl di e mayornan	√	
6. Drecha e alohamentu	Fasilidatnan di alohamentu / proyektonan di renovashon	√√	Riba tur e tres islanan e kantidat di lugánan disponibel den e kuidonan di mucha ta ménos ku e kantidat di mucha den e edat di 0-12 aña. E falta di lugánan disponibel ta keda un reto i komo konsekuensia di esaki problemanan di alohamentu ta rekeri atenshon. Ya kaba e promé medidanan a wòrdu tumá pa drecha e alohamentu riba tur tres isla i plannan ta wòrdu desaroyá pa alohamentu ku ta kumpli ku e eksigensianan di kalidat i seguridat.

Sobra tareanan

Apesar ku a tuma e promé pasonan di mas importante, ainda hopi meta no a wòrdu alkansá (kompletamente). E sobrá tareanan ta kai den e metanan ku ta eksigí mas tempu, manera:

- Drecha e salarionan di e kolaboradónan pedagógiko, ku ta krusial pa por haña i mantené personal kualifiká. Un investigashon preparativo pa ku e salario i kondishonnan laboral den kuido di mucha riba e islanan ta wòrdu ehekutá i ta aportá na e próksimo areglo ku ta na kaminda.
- E desaroyo i implementashon di un struktura di kuido integral. Un reto grandi ta sinta den e kordinashon entre diferente partidonan i rekonosementu di problemanan den siñamentu i problemanan den desaroyo serka muchanan.
- E embolbimentu di mayornan. Organisashonnan ta buska manera efektivo pa por amplia e embolbimentu di mayornan.
- Invertí den alohamentu, paso e kantidat di lugánan disponibel ta mas abou ku e kantidat di muchanan den e edat di 0-12 aña. Na Boneiru esaki ta mara na un subida demográfiko di e kantidat di muchanan den e último añanan.

E struktura di kuido integral ta un punto di mehorashon pa tur e islanan. Un reto grandi ta sinta den e kordinashon entre e diferente partidonan i rekonosementu di e problemanan di siñamentu i problemanan di desaroyo serka e muchanan.

Ademas ta keda ainda e reto di embolbimentu di mayornan den un komishon di mayor òf komishon di keho pa kasi tur organisashon. Organisashonnan ta buska manera simpel i efektivo pa amplia e embolbimentu di mayornan.

Rekomendashonnan/ siguiente pasonan

Basá riba e resultadonan aki nos por duna riba nivel di programa i organisashon shete rekomendashon:

Nivel di programa

- Tur organisashon ta optimista pa ku e esfuersonan ku e programa BES(t) 4 Kids ta hasi pa por yuda nan drecha e kalidat i seguridat. E lidernan di proyekto riba kada isla tabatin un ròl krusial pa por a logra e meta aki. Ta di sumo importansia pa mantené e ròl aki ‘manera un araña’ entre e organisashonnan i e programa. E ministernan Ulandes Oropeo mester bai hunga mas un ròl di fasilitá.
- Kuido di mucha a bira mas pagabel pa mayornan riba tur e tres islanan, pero drechamentu di e aksesibilidat finansiero ta keda un punto di atenshon. Pa motibu di e nivelnan di entradanan abou, pa sierto mayornan ainda e kontribushon di mayor ta keda haltu, kousando kue sifranan di partisipashon ta baha. E kantidat di mayornan ku ta haña un preis rasonabel pa medio di supsidio tambe ta haña un supsidio di alokashon di mucha ta relativamente abou na Boneiru i St. Eustatius. Un di e posibel kousanan por ta ku e mayornan tin tiki konosementu di e posibilidatnan di supsidio i ta eksperensia limitashonnan den e proseso atministrativo.
- Nos ta mira diferensianan entre e islanan den ritmo ku nan ta kumpli ku e eksigensianan di kalidat. Partikularmente na Boneiru organisashonnan a kuminsá for di diferente puntonan di salida ku e programa (di mayornan di bishita organisá informal te ku organisashonnan profeshonal grandi). Ku e konsekuensia ku diferente organisashon tin un buraku grandi pa kubri, pa por kumpli ku tur eksigensia. Ta p’esei, pa por kumpli ku e eksigensianan, mester tin espasio den e lei pa e diferensianan aki. Esaki por na diferente manera. [Na promé lugá](#) pa medio di un sistema di inspekshon ku ta tene kuenta ku e konteksto i ta ahustá e siguiente pasonan na e konteksto di e organisashon. [Na di dos lugá](#) dor di suspendé temporal e momentu pa implementá. Asina aki organisashonnan ta haña mas tempu pa traha na e eksigensianan preliminar na e implementashon. [Na di tres lugá](#) dor di skirbi e lei di nobo den

direkshon di un lei ku ta deskribí e kuadro i e ambishonnan òf metanan, na lugá di stipulá reglanan riba nivel di organisashon. Asina aki e posibilidatnan ta wòrdu ampliá pa traha na ambishonnan i metanan den diferente ritmo.

Nivel organisatorio

- Organisá embolbimentu di mayornan riba tur isla ta difísil, pero tambe ta importante pa stimulá siñamentu i desaroyo na kas. Nos ta proponé pa enfoká mas riba embolbimentu sosial di mayornan i for di e punto di bista ei traha pa yega na un embolbimentu mas formal (komishon di mayor, embolbimentu den e plannan pedagógiko).
- Na Boneiru organisashonnan informal tin un problema grandi pa loke ku gastunan finansiero i atministrativo haltu. Nos ta proponé pa instituí un ret di sosten pa e organisashonnan aki. Por ehèmpel nan por traha huntu ora di skirbi un plan pedagógiko òf repartí e gastunan di un akountent.
- Kompartí konosementu frekuentemente ku partner Ulandes (Twinning) i entre organisashonnan similar (entre i riba e islanan). Por ehèmpel: desaroyá konhuntamente un manera sabí pa enbolbí mayornan i traha na un instrumento ku kua por vigilá e desaroyo di muchanan, den kolaborashon ku retnan pedagógiko i skolnan riba e islanan.
- Banda di halsa e salario i krea mihó situashonnan laboral, ta importante tambe pa drecha e imágen di e kuido di mucha riba e islanan pa asina por atraé i mantené kolaboradónan pedagógiko.

1 Introduction

The public entities Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba (hereafter referred to as: the public entities), together with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW), Education, Culture and Science (OCW), Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (BZK) (hereafter referred to as: The Central government) expressed its ambition in 2018 to create a system of high quality, safe and (financial) accessible childcare and out-of-school care in the Caribbean Netherlands. This system aims to ensure that every child has the opportunity to develop themselves to their full potential (incl. a smooth transition to primary education) and will enable parents to do their work without having to worry about their children.

To realize this ambition, the BES(t) 4 Kids program has been set up in 2019. The public entities develop plans for each island in consultation with the local stakeholders. The Central government supports the islands in developing the plans by providing financial resources and expertise. In the period from 2019 to 2023, the BES(t) 4 Kids program works on the following objectives: (1) Setting up a system for childcare and out-of-school facilities; (2) Setting up a licensing system and supervision; (3) Strengthen the quality; (4) Improving the (financial) accessibility; (5) Creating an integrated care structure; and (6) Improving housing. In anticipation of the law for Childcare on the Caribbean Netherlands (hereafter referred to as: the Childcare law), a Childcare Island Ordinance has been established on each island, which includes quality requirements for childcare centres. There is also a temporary subsidy scheme to reduce costs for parents and to improve the quality. In 2023, the Childcare law is expected to come into force. This law aims to create a structural basis for childcare in the Caribbean Netherlands to improve the quality and realize that childcare is accessible to all parents. The long term goal is to create an optimal continuous development and future perspective for children and increase contribution to labour participation and tax relief / reduced financial burden for parents in the Caribbean Netherlands.

Within the context of the BES(t) 4 Kids program and the Childcare law that will come into force in the upcoming years, the ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) has commissioned a multi-year study to evaluate and monitor the process and effects of the BES(t) 4 Kids program and the Childcare law for the Caribbean Netherlands. Within the multi-year study three measurements have been distinguished. The three-phase approach provides the possibility to provide insights and incorporate learnings. The aim of the *first and current measurement* (2021 – current report) is to look at the process and outcomes of the BES(t) 4 Kids program and to gather input for improvements and the implementation of the Childcare law in the upcoming years. The aim of the *second measurement* (intended to take place in 2024) and *third measurement* (intended to take place 2026) is to provide an evaluation on the process and effects when the Childcare law for the Caribbean Netherlands has come into effect. The findings of the first measurement will be used as a basis for comparison for the second and third measurements.

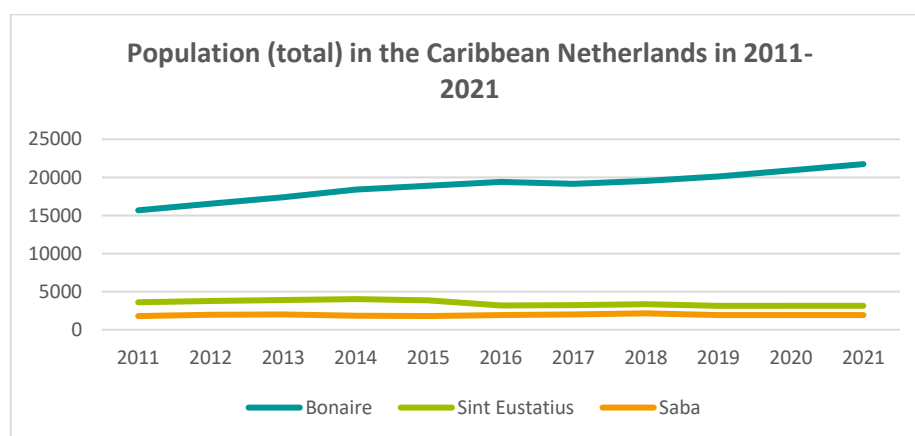
1.1 Local context: Demographic situation and socio-economic context in the Caribbean Netherlands

The BES(t) 4 Kids program has been set up on the three islands. Based on the baseline measurement of Childcare in the Caribbean Netherlands³, it is known that the organizations and use of childcare differ per island, which means that the cultural sensitivities and different contexts and dynamics per island when evaluating the program need to be taken into account. In the below section, we outline the socio-demographic situation on the islands. It will be important to see how the situation evolves on the macro-level in the upcoming years.

1.1.1 Population growth

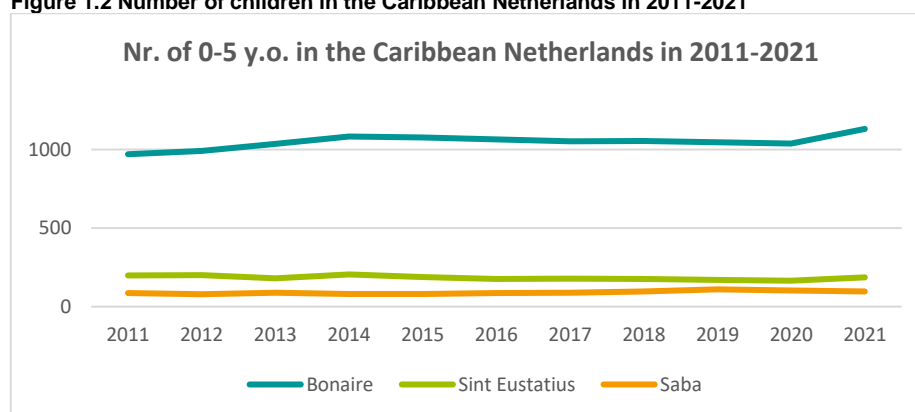
In the past 10 years, the population size on St. Eustatius and Saba has remained largely unchanged, while on Bonaire it has been steadily growing (from 15.679 in 2011 to 21.745 in 2021) (see Figure 1.1). This demographic change on Bonaire is also reflected in the growing number of 0-5 y. o. (see Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.1 Population size in the Caribbean Netherlands in 2011-2021



Source: CBS, retrieved on 02/02/2022.

Figure 1.2 Number of children in the Caribbean Netherlands in 2011-2021



Source: CBS, retrieved on 02/02/2022.

³ https://www.eerstekamer.nl/overig/20190711/eindrapport_nulmeting_kinderopvang/meta

1.1.2 Labour participation, income levels and income inequality

The developments of labour participation in the last years differ per island (see Table 1.1). On Bonaire, the labour participation in 2020 has slightly decreased compared to 2018, yet looking at the longer time period (since 2012) it has remained unchanged. This holds true for total population as well as for households with children. On St. Eustatius labour participation has also remained rather stable since 2012. Noticeable change on St Eustatius is the increase in labour participation for two-parent households in recent years (increased by 11,6% from 2018 to 2020), while for single-parent household it slightly decreased (by 2% from 2018 to 2020). On Saba the overall labour participation has been increasing, which is also reflected in the two-parent households. However, parents in one-parent family had lower employment rate in 2020 vs 2018.

Table 1.1 Labour participation in the Caribbean Netherlands in 2012-2021

Labour participation (Netto)		2012	2014	2016	2018	2020
Bonaire	Total (15-75 y.o.)	68,5%	68,9%	69,9%	73,1%	69,8%
	Parent in one-parent family	80,8%	80,2%	81,7%	80,5%	78,6%
	Partner in pair with child	80,3%	80,7%	82,8	85,5%	79,8%
St. Eustatius	Total (15-75 y.o.)	70,1%	67,8%	66,2%	71,5%	71,0%
	Parent in one-parent family	88,3%	78,0%	83,4%	88,4%	86,4%
	Partner in pair with child	78,6%	80,4%	85,7%	75,7%	87,3%
Saba	Total (15-75 y.o.)	63,1%	59,3%	61,6%	65,8%	73,4%
	Parent in one-parent family	.	.	.	91,0%	82,1%
	Partner in pair with child	80,8%	86,3%	80,8%	86,8%	89,8%

Source: CBS, retrieved on 02/02/2022.

The overall income levels (standardized income) in the three islands has slightly increased since 2011, while in the last couple of years it has been stable without significant changes⁴ (see Table 1.2). Single-parent households continue to have significantly lower standardized income, compared to all households as well as two-parent households. If we look at the Gini coefficient (measure which shows the level of income inequality), during the period of 2011-2019 it has also remained stable without noticeable developments⁵.

Table 1.2. Standardized income of different households per island

Average standardized income x \$1,000		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019*
Bonaire	Private households	19,0	19,6	19,8	20,6	21,0	21,9	22,3	21,8	21,7
	Single-parent, all children < 18 y.o.	11,9	11,7	11,5	12,0	12,6	12,0	13,2	12,7	13,5
	Couple, all children < 18 y.o.	19,2	19,1	19,8	20,9	21,4	21,9	22,1	22,3	21,6
St. Eustatius	Private households	20,5	21,9	22,3	23,0	24,9	23,6	25,7	25,2	25,2
	Single-parent, all children < 18 y.o.	.	.	.	.	.	11,5	13,1	12,0	11,6
	Couple, all children < 18 y.o.	21,2	21,6	23,7	22,1	27,4	27,8	27,9	26,4	26,6
Saba	Private households	19,4	21,0	21,0	21,3	21,8	22,4	23,0	23,7	23,8
	Single-parent, all children < 18 y.o.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
	Couple, all children < 18 y.o.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.

Source: CBS, retrieved on 02/02/2022. *Provisional figures

⁴ Data available up to 2019.

⁵ Gini coefficient on Bonaire was 0.39 in 2011 as well as 2019, on St. Eustatius 0.42 in 2011 and 0.43 in 2019, on Saba 0.41 in 2011 and 0.38 in 2019. (Source: CBS, retrieved on 02/02/2022). The higher Gini coefficient the greater income inequality (0 coefficient expresses perfect equality).

1.2 Report reading guide

The report is structured in the following parts. In [Section 2](#) the methodology that forms the basis of this evaluation is described. We do this by presenting our research questions and the analysis framework, which includes intervention logic, and providing details on the data collection approach: which selections were made and what data sources were used to gather information and answer research questions. The study results are presented in [Section 3](#), by looking at each of the six strategic objective of the BES(t) 4 Kids program. The strategic objectives 1 and 2, which largely relate to the upcoming law, are briefly covered, which is then followed by the analysis of strategic objectives 3-6 that include quality, finance, integral care structure and housing situation. For each objective we look at which actions/measures were taken, what the results (outputs) are so far and what the overall outcomes are (if they are possible to identify at this point in time). [Section 4](#) presents different ways in which the development of children can be measured and how that can be best adapted to the local context of the islands. The report concludes with final conclusions and recommendations for future improvements, including the discussion on the effectiveness and efficiency of the measures taken ([Section 5](#)).

2 Methodology

2.1 Evaluation questions

This report presents the results of the first measurement. Within the context of the BES(t) 4 Kids program and the Childcare law that will come into force in the upcoming years, the ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) has commissioned a multi-year study to identify the following research questions, which guide the analysis of this evaluation study:

1. *How is the implementation of the measures of the program/law (the process) progressing?*
2. *What are the outputs and outcomes of the measures of the program/law (results achieved and consequences thereof)?*
3. *What is the effectiveness and efficiency of the measures of the program/law?*
4. *What is needed to monitor child development in 4-5 years in order to assess the effect of the BES(t) 4 Kids Program on the development of children?*

2.2 Analysis framework

The intervention logic framework (see Annex I) forms the basis of the analysis, allowing us to approach the evaluation in a systematic, transparent and as objective way as possible. The intervention logic (which is designed following the Policy Theory concept for the BES(t) 4 Kids program) describes the input, activities, output, outcome and intended impact of the program, taking into account the external factors and context of the three islands. We focus on the *process/implementation, efficiency and effectiveness* criteria⁶. Below you can find the conceptualization of the key building blocks and description of associated indicators and data sources for each element of intervention logic.

Input and activities

To achieve the intended goals of the program a number of activities need to be undertaken, which require the deployment of resources and people (input). The BES(t) 4 Kids program intends to cover the following set of activities:

- *setting up a system for childcare and out-of-school care;*
- *setting up the licensing system and supervision;*
- *reinforcing the quality of childcare (good professional/child ratio, well-trained staff, good pedagogical policy, a good educational program, good material, good and safe housing);*
- *improving (financial) accessibility;*
- *setting up a care structure for childcare;*
- *improved housing.*

In this evaluation we are looking into each of these strategic objectives.

Output and Outcome

Output, defined as the performance of activity, in the context of the BES(t) 4 Kids program entail the realization of better quality, safety and (financial) accessibility of childcare in the Caribbean Netherlands (the improvement of quality and financial accessibility). This should be apparent from, among other things, a higher participation of children in childcare. When it comes to childcare

⁶ This evaluation does not cover the *relevance* (likely to be addressed in the ex-ante evaluation) and *impact* criteria. Although we are addressing how the impact on children's development can be measured in the long term (see EQ4).

quality, it is important to consider the professional/child ratio, the group size and the educational level of the pedagogical staff (Slot, 2014).

Desired **outcomes**, i.e. the longer-term results of the output of undertaken activities, include (1) an optimal continuous development and future perspective for children and (2) contribution to labour participation and tax relief / reduced financial burden for parents in the Caribbean Netherlands. An important part of the program is the childcare cost reduction (by means of a subsidy scheme), which is expected to result in reduction of the burden for parents who want to take their children to childcare. The idea is that as a result of this tax reduction, more parents will bring their children to childcare, so that more children can have an optimal development.

External factors

The BES(t) 4 Kids program cannot be evaluated in isolation without taking external factors into account. Evolving policy context, changing economic, demographic situation, COVID-19 pandemic, shapes the outcomes of the intended program and policy measures.

Process/Implementation

In this evaluation we are looking at the process and implementation of the measures of the program. We review the process of each of the strategic objectives and associated actions, linking it with the external factors and relevant context and developments of each island. We provide:

- **status update** on what has already been done and activities that have not yet started / still need to be taken.
- **process update** on how this has been implemented (what went well and what are the main issues in the process of carrying out these activities as experienced by different stakeholder groups).

Effectiveness/Efficiency

Effectiveness in the context of this evaluation addresses the extent to which the measures of policy contributed to the intended goals. **Efficiency** covers the questions of whether the program with the resources made available for it is moving in the right direction, leading to the intended outcomes, i.e. more children experiencing optimal and continuous development and reduce financial burden for parents, increased contribution to labour participation.

2.3 Data collection

The data collection is part of a multi-year monitoring and evaluation, which covers 2021-2027 period and is divided into three measurements (first, interim and final evaluation). The mixed-method approach, used during the multi-year monitoring and evaluation, is characterised by the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods (incl. desk research and fieldwork) and multiple sources of data (incl. multiple stakeholders). By using different methods and a variety of data sources, the strengths of one method or data source can be compensated for the weaknesses of another. This so-called method and data triangulation has been used to confirm findings. In addition, using the mixed-methods approach provides a more comprehensive perspective on the BES(t) 4 Kids program and enables to draw conclusions for each measurement (over time).

This first measurement aims to get a comprehensive overview of the process and results achieved so far by the BES(t) 4 Kids program on Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba. Additionally, the findings from this first measurement will be an important reference point for comparing the results during the interim and final evaluation. For the first measurement, we conducted a data and document analysis, fieldwork (incl. a survey with managers, pedagogical employees and parents, interviews

with board members and local stakeholders) and local sounding board sessions. Each step of data collection is described in the following sections.

2.3.1 Data and document analyses

During the first measurement we have systematically created an overview of information provided in the reviewed documents. This overview served as important input for the creation of the surveys and interview guides. The following documents and data sources have been analysed:

- *Progress reports BES(t) 4 Kids (January - April 2021 and May - august 2021);*
- *Management information BES(t) 4 Kids (July 2021 and September 2021);*
- *Program plan BES(t) 4 Kids (May 2021);*
- *Plan of approach Bonaire (July 2021);*
- *Plan of approach St. Eustatius (July 2021);*
- *Memo integral care structure (July 2021);*
- *Memo stakeholder management (May 2020);*
- *Road map 2021-2022 (May 2021);*
- *Administrative agreements and collaboration BES(t) 4 Kids (2019-2020);*
- *(updated) BES(t) 4 Kids financial overview;*
- *Presentation of first findings Inspectorate of Education;*
- *Rapportage Ex ante review Childcare Caribbean Netherlands;*
- *Brochure supervision on childcare;*
- *Island-broad pedagogical vision St. Eustatius;*
- *UNICEF reports childcare Caribbean Netherlands;*
- *Temporary Childcare Financing Subsidy Scheme Caribbean Netherlands;*
- *Island Ordinance Childcare Bonaire / St. Eustatius / Saba;*
- *Dashboards and website BES(t) 4 Kids program (including documents/brochures available via the website);*
- *CBS data.*

2.3.2 Fieldwork

The fieldwork has been conducted in November and December 2021. Visits were scheduled for each of the islands. Due to COVID, face-to-face visits to the childcare organizations on Bonaire and St. Eustatius have not taken place. Instead interviews on Bonaire and St. Eustatius have been conducted online in the same period as the visits were scheduled. The physical visits to childcare organizations on Saba has taken place in November 2021.

The fieldwork consisted of 1) semi-structured interviews with pedagogical employees and managers; 2) semi-structured interviews with parents; and 3) in-depth interviews with local stakeholders and board members of childcare organizations. In total, 13 organizations were included and 68 interviews were conducted. Within each childcare organization, parents were asked by the managers and pedagogical employees to participate in the multi-year study by means of answering interview questions. If parents were willing to participate, the researchers have contacted them by phone.

Table 2.1 Overview of interviewed stakeholders per island

	St. Eustatius	Saba	Bonaire	Total
Pedagogical employees	6	4	4	14
Managers	7	2	4	13
Parents	14	4	13	31
Board members	5	2	1	8
Other stakeholders	2	1	2	5
Total nr. of interviews conducted	34	13	21	68
Total nr. of organizations included	6	2	5	13

The semi-structured interview guidelines have been developed based on the input of the data and document analysis. The guideline has been made available into three languages (English, Papiamentu and Dutch) (See Annex). On Bonaire, the researcher was able to speak Papiamentu during the semi-structured interviews if preferred by the participant. Local sensitivities were taken into account when conducting interviews.

The number of operating childcare organizations differs per island, corresponding to its size. In total there are 40 organizations on Bonaire, 6 on St. Eustatius, and 2 on Saba, which participated in the BES(t) 4 Kids program in the period of July 2020 – June 2021. Given the allocated resources and timeframe, the researchers were able to speak with representatives of all participating organizations on Saba and St. Eustatius. Due to the large number of existing organizations on Bonaire, it was not feasible to include them all. For this reason, a selection of 5 (out of 40) representative childcare organizations were chosen in close collaboration with the project leader of the BES(t) 4 Kids on Bonaire. To ensure a representative sample, which would lead to reliable outcomes reflecting Bonaire's situation, several selection criteria were included: (1) **type of organization** (variation in host parents, daycare and out-of-school care), (2) **size** (variation in organizational size, incl. number of children and number of pedagogical employees) and (3) **attitudes** (variation in attitudes towards the BES(t) 4 Kids program as known by the project leader of BES(t) 4 Kids on Bonaire). Next to these criteria, some ethical implications played a role when assessing the sample size, such as the participants' valuable time. This was particularly taken into account, as the stakeholders on Bonaire were already asked to participate in multiple visits and studies in the same period or prior to the planned visits, including the visits of the inspectorate and the cost price study. This could also be the reason why more stakeholders on St. Eustatius were keen to participate in an interview than on Bonaire.

It is worth noting that the prevailing concept for sample size in qualitative studies is 'saturation'. The re-occurring themes and points of view were reached at approx. 12-17 interviews across different stakeholder groups, which was considered as the point of saturation that was particularly important to reach during the fieldwork on Bonaire.

2.3.3 Local sounding board sessions

On each of the three islands a local sounding board has been established, which will remain involved in the implementation and development of all three measurements of the study. All sounding board members have a lot of experience with childcare, can reflect on the local context from a broad perspective and are aware of issues encountered and potential bottlenecks at different childcare organizations on the island. Compared to the stakeholders in the sounding board of Saba and St. Eustatius the sounding board of Bonaire consists of representatives from the childcare organizations themselves as part of the LOKB. The role of the local sounding board group is to reflect on research in order to create a support base on practical level. By doing so the local sounding board groups enhance the quality and relevance of the study for the local context. Within

the first phase of this study two sessions with each local sounding board were held in which the members of the local sounding board groups were able to provide their inputs and reflect on the first (preliminary) findings.

2.3.4 Supervisory committee

As part of this evaluation a supervisory committee is in place throughout the implementation and development of all three measurements of the study. The supervisory committee consists of representatives of the BES(t) 4 kids program (including the project leaders of all three Islands) and the involved ministries. During the first measurement three online sessions have taken place with the supervisory committee (in September 2021, December 2021 and April 2022). Within these sessions the committee was updated on the study design, the approach of the first phase and the process and planning. In addition, during the second and third session (preliminary) results were shared to verify and validate the results found during the data and document analyses and fieldwork. In December 2021, a separate meeting has taken place with the Inspectorate of Education in which first results have been exchanged⁷. Next to the Inspectorate of Education, meetings have taken place with CBS and RCN-unit of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW).

2.4 Limitations

Within each childcare organization that participated in the study, managers asked their employees to participate. Also employees asked parents to participate. It is likely that the most involved employees and parents agreed on an interview, meaning an underrepresentation of less-involved respondents who might have more negative attitudes towards the program. On Bonaire 21 interviews were held within a selection of 5 (out of 40) childcare organizations. Therefore, unlike for Saba and St Eustatius the organizations do not represent the total sector of organizations on the island. As a consequence we cannot give quantitative statements for all organizations on Bonaire. The interviews on Bonaire were aimed at getting rich information from different perspectives within these organizations. To test if the findings from these organizations represent the sector as a whole we added an extra validation session with representatives of the childcare sector and the LOKB on the island. On the basis of the results of this validation session we sharpened our results.

⁷ Based on the first visit of the Inspectorate of education, in collaboration with the local inspectors, on Bonaire in 2021.

3 Findings Evaluation of the BES(t) 4 Kids program

In this section the inputs, outputs and outcomes of the measures taken in the context of the BES(t) 4 Kids program are described, by reviewing measures/activities included in the program and the results and consequences of these measures/activities so far. This is presented for each of the six strategic objectives, which the BES(t) 4 Kids program is set to achieve. The first two strategic objectives (Strategic Objective 1: Statutory scheme and Strategic Objective 2: Licensing & Supervision) are related to the introduction of the upcoming law, which is not yet in place but for which the preparations are in progress. For these objectives we describe activities/measures as they are identified in the project plan and Island Ordinances and provide brief update on the status so far. The following Strategic Objectives 3-6, which relate directly to the activities carried out by the BES(t) 4 Kids program, are described in more detail.

3.1 Strategic Objective 1: Statutory scheme: Lay-out of a system for childcare and out-of-school facilities

Strategic objective 1:

In 2023, the Caribbean Netherlands system for childcare and out-of-school care will be laid down in legislation and regulations and will come into effect.

3.1.1 Input: The set of measures for creating statutory scheme

Childcare Law Caribbean Netherlands

Collaborating partners aspire to strengthen childcare and out-of-school facilities in the Caribbean Netherlands and to arrive at an integrated approach for children in the Caribbean Netherlands in conjunction with education and youth care organizations. This is expressed in the development of the Caribbean Netherlands system for childcare. The Caribbean Netherlands Childcare Law (WKO BES) is aimed at:

1. the quality of childcare in the Caribbean Netherlands;
2. the supervision (and enforcement) of childcare in the Caribbean Netherlands; and
3. the financing of childcare in the Caribbean Netherlands.

Island regulations and temporary subsidy scheme

Childcare Island Ordinances include local elaboration of the law accounting for island-specific circumstances. Public entities of the three islands already introduced Childcare Island Ordinances, which include a set of quality requirements for childcare centres and host parents. They can be further adjusted in relation to decisions surrounding Childcare Law.

In addition, the [Temporary Subsidy Scheme](#) for Childcare in the Caribbean Netherlands has also been introduced. The subsidy scheme is aimed at providing the childcare organizations an opportunity to improve quality and safety of the childcare and reduce costs for parents.⁸ Once the law (gradually) comes into effect, the temporary subsidy scheme will be replaced with the structural financing, earliest in 2024, with the aim to systematically ensure good-quality, safe and affordable childcare.

Strengthening the role and cooperation between the different partners involved

One of the goals of the upcoming law is to implement monitoring of the development of children and timely intervention, for which it is essential to strengthen the cooperation between the various partners (e.g. consultancy offices, expertise centres for educational care, GGD, centres for youth and family). It must be clear to every childcare organization, school and chain partner involved how the chain is set up and what is expected of the relevant organization in relation to its role.

Development of integrated childcare centres (IKC)

A number of schools in the Caribbean Netherlands have taken the first steps in the development of Integrated Child Centres (IKC). The upcoming law aims to further support the integrated centres by removing any obstacles in the existing legislation and regulations and embedding them in the childcare system in the Caribbean Netherlands.

3.1.2 Output: what are the results of the actions taken so far

Island regulations and temporary subsidy scheme

Childcare Island Ordinances for each island, which specifies childcare quality requirements, and Temporary Subsidy Scheme, set to improve the quality of childcare and to reduce costs for parents, came into effect in 2020. The Childcare Island Ordinances are made publicly available and all involved stakeholders can have access to them.

Draft Childcare Law

The expectation is that the law and regulations are gradually introduced in 2023 and 2024. A Childcare legislation [roadmap](#) in the Caribbean Netherlands is prepared and made available on the BES(t) 4 Kids webpage.⁹ After the consultation activities with different stakeholders, including childcare organizations, parents and schools, the Law Proposal has been drafted. By the end of 2021, the feedback has been processed and the draft Law proposal is ready for next steps. Special materials (brochures) are also prepared for both childcare organizations as well as parents, which explain in an accessible way what the Draft Childcare Law covers and what the relevant implications / changes are to different stakeholders.¹⁰

The key points currently included in the Draft Childcare Law cover the following areas:

1. The quality of childcare in the Caribbean Netherlands:

- The proposal for the new law specifies various quality requirements for childcare centres and host parents. They are mandatory and include the already existing quality requirements. A number of new quality requirements is also introduced

⁸ For more information about the Temporary Subsidy Scheme see section '3.4 Strategic objective 4: Improvement of the (financial) accessibility'.

⁹ See: <https://www.best4Kids.nu/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/BES4Kids-Tijdpad-ENG-2021-11-19.pdf>

¹⁰ Information for childcare organizations: <https://www.best4Kids.nu/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/BES4Kids-Folder-Wetsvoorstel-Organisaties-ENG-2021-10-28-Webversie.pdf> Information for parents: <https://www.best4Kids.nu/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/BES4Kids-Folder-Ouders-Wetsvoorstel-ENG-1.2-2021-11-16-Webversie.pdf>

2. **The supervision (and enforcement) of childcare** in the Caribbean Netherlands:
 - The Law Proposal stipulates that the quality of the childcare is being monitored by the Inspectorate of education, which collaborates with the public entities' local inspectors in carrying out supervisory duties.
 - The inspector(s) are expected to visit children's centres and host parents on the annual basis. During this first measurement, inspector(s) are in the process of supervising all childcare organizations for the first time. The nature of supervision is designed to be motivating and aimed at improving the quality of care¹¹.
3. **The financing of childcare** on the Caribbean Netherlands.
 - The proposal for the new law states that parents will make arrangements with childcare organizations as it is currently done, which will be recorded in a written agreement.
 - The Central Government will be paying the childcare organizations and will offer organizations with an operating licence, a compensation for childcare costs.
 - Childcare organizations will not be allowed to charge parents an additional or voluntary contribution.

3.2 Strategic Objective 2 Licensing and supervision: Lay-out of the licensing scheme and supervision

Strategic Objective 2:

- In 2021 the licensing, supervision and enforcement system for childcare and out-of-school care as laid down in the Childcare Island Ordinances is set to come into effect.
- In 2023, the supervision and enforcement policy for childcare and out-of-school care as laid down in the Childcare Law is planned to come into effect.

3.2.1 Input: The set of measures for licensing and supervision

Operating License / Island Decree Temporary Exemption

The childcare Island Ordinances stipulate that in order to be able to offer childcare and/or out-of-school care, the organization must have an operating permit. The licence is issued by the public entity if the organization meets the required quality criteria. The public entity asks the island quality committee for childcare to investigate whether the proposed childcare is in accordance with the requirements of the Island Ordinance. The public entity decides on the license application after the advice of the quality committee. Grace periods may apply to certain requirements, giving organizations time to work on improvements and meet the quality requirements within a predetermined time period (Island Decree Temporary Exemption).

Collaboration agreements / Research and valuation framework / Motivating Supervision

The Island Ordinances stipulate that the supervision of the quality of childcare in the Caribbean Netherlands is entrusted to the Inspectorate of education, which work in cooperation with local inspectors. The inspectorate of education, in collaboration with the local inspectors, is expected to visit the childcare organizations annually and investigate whether all the requirements and regulations as included in the law are met. This allows for the stricter supervision and enforcement of the standards (e.g. safety-related). The basic principle is that the supervision by the Inspectorate will be 'motivating supervision', aimed at compliance of regulation and improvement of the pedagogical climate and educational quality.

¹¹ On aspects of safety a stricter supervision regime is followed.

First supervisory activities

The first visits of the Inspectorate of education, in collaboration with the local inspectors, are planned to take place, starting with organizations on Bonaire in 2021. As of 2022, the childcare organizations on St. Eustatius and Saba are planned to be investigated. This provides an initial picture of the quality of childcare in the Caribbean Netherlands.

Supervision when the law comes into force

After the law comes into effect, supervision will be carried out by the Inspectorate of education, affiliated to the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW), which will assess whether the legal requirements are met.

3.2.2 Output: what are the results of the actions taken so far

Operating License

Organizations offering childcare services have been in the processes of fulfilling the quality requirements, which are defined in the new Childcare Island Ordinance drawn up by public entities. It covers multiple requirements, including aspects such as (1) pedagogical policy plan, (2) domestic violence step-by-step plan, (3) safety and healthcare policy.¹² Those organizations which have a valid license can participate in the BES(t) 4 Kids program and be a part of temporary subsidy scheme.¹³

First supervisory activities

In 2021 on Bonaire first supervisory visits have taken place, in which 25 daycare organizations were visited to assess the quality of the childcare. The first conclusions and recommendations were given. Since only 34% of all childcare organizations operating on Bonaire were visited, the overall conclusions had to be taken with caution. Considerable differences across visited organizations were identified (including the level of quality, housing situation, education level, materials and resources) and it was noted that most of the daycare organizations were not yet fulfilling all the quality requirements. However, the original target of having 80% of organizations achieving quality standards within the period of 5 years was still seen as achievable. Among other considerations, issues with working conditions on Bonaire were highlighted (due to insufficient remuneration talent and expertise are not retained, and MBO students are less willing to be trained as pedagogical employees), and the recommendation to look for ways to improve the situation was given.

3.3 Strategic objective 3: Strengthening of the quality

Strategic Objective 3:

- In 2023, all organizations that offer childcare and/or out-of-school care will meet the basic quality, as laid down in the Childcare Island Ordinance or clear agreements have been made with organizations that do not yet meet these standards as of when they will be able to do so.
- In 2026, all organizations that offer childcare and/or out-of-school care will meet the basic quality, as laid down in the Childcare Act CN (12 standards in the assessment framework).

¹² The list of requirements and explanation for each criteria can be found in the following document: https://www.best4Kids.nu/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/BES4Kids-Folder-Vergunning-Kinderopvang_ENG-Webversie-2019-12-02-compressed.pdf

¹³ For more information about the Temporary Subsidy Scheme see section '3.4 Strategic objective 4: Improvement of the (financial) accessibility'.

Evaluation Question 2A:

Has the quality and safety of childcare improved between 2021 and 2026?

3.3.1 Input: The set of measures to improve the quality and safety

To evaluate whether the quality and safety has been improved over time, we should have a clear definition of what 'quality' and 'safety' means. To define quality and safety, we use the quality standard which has been established and laid down in the Childcare Island Ordinance. These requirements are defined as¹⁴:

- Trained staff in order that 'responsible childcare' is offered at children's centre and host parents
- Each children's centre has a pedagogical policy plan
- All adults working at the children's centre or host parents care must submit a certificate of conduct (Verklaring Omtrent Gedrag, VOG) (not included in output section)
- A children's centre or host parent care will provide healthy food
- All children's centres must have a step-by-step plan on domestic violence and child abuse
- Children will have stable care, for a maximum of 11 hours per day in one master group and the number of professionals is matched to the age and the number of children in the master group.
- The indoor and outdoor areas of a children' centre or host parent care must be safe, accessible and appropriate to the age of the children and the size of the group (sufficient space) (see section 3.4)
- All children' centres and host parents have their own safety and health policy
- A children's centre with more than 50 children must have a parent committee
- All children's centres must have an independent complaints committee

The Childcare Island Ordinance is in force, meaning that all childcare organizations and registered host parents must have an operating license to provide care. In order to obtain and maintain this license, one should already meet several quality requirements as laid down in the Childcare Island Ordinance¹⁵ (including a certificate of conduct not older than two months of the applicant and professionals)¹⁶. The quality requirements in the proposal for the new law largely correspond with the requirements from the Childcare Island Ordinance, but also contain a limited number of new requirements focused on the monitoring of the development of children and arrangements about transition to schools¹⁷.

To meet these quality requirements, the childcare organizations (who are responsible for strengthening the quality) receive funding (cost-price reducing subsidy, see section 3.4) and assistance from the BES(t) 4 Kids program¹⁸. The BES(t) 4 Kids program includes a set of measures to improve the quality and safety of childcare in Caribbean Netherlands, namely (1) training and exchange opportunities; (2) training and/or coaching of directors and managers; (3) knowledge development with regard to Kaleidoscope/ High scope; and (4) other quality improvement requirements (such as the collaboration with UNICEF for an island-wide pedagogical approach). Moreover, the BES(t) 4 Kids program aims to promote better working conditions (incl. collective salary increase) to attract sufficient well-trained staff.

¹⁴ <https://www.best4Kids.nu/quality/?lang=en>

¹⁵ <https://www.best4Kids.nu/statutory-scheme/?lang=en>

¹⁶ https://www.best4Kids.nu/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/BES4Kids-Folder-Vergunning-Kinderopvang_ENG-Webversie-2019-12-02-compressed.pdf

¹⁷ <https://www.best4Kids.nu/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/BES4Kids-Folder-Wetsvoorstel-Organisaties-ENG-2021-10-28-Webversie.pdf>

¹⁸ <https://english.rijksdienstcn.com/latest/news/2019/december/16/new-best-4-Kids-regulations>

3.3.2 Output: what are the results of the implemented set of measures

Professional qualifications, education and trainings (quality requirement: Trained staff in order that 'responsible childcare' is offered at childcare organizations and host parents)

On all three islands there is a diverse amount of years of experience that pedagogical employees have, ranging from less than a year to more than 20 years. On average the pedagogical employees who have been interviewed had 8 years of experience. In addition, there is a broad variation between the level of education of pedagogical employees ranging from lower secondary education to a bachelor's degree.

One of the main focus areas of the BES(t) 4 Kids program is to improve the qualification of staff. The 2021 plans of the BES(t) 4 Kids program focused on:

1. the (re)certification of pedagogical employees in Kaleidoscope (or High Scope) and training trainers in Kaleidoscope (or High Scope);
2. training pedagogical employees in the MBO (or CVQ);
3. training pedagogical staff in early identification of development learning disabilities;
4. educating/training employees in ensuring safety; and
5. education/training of employees in the provision of first aid to children.

In addition, on St. Eustatius and Saba the Twinning program (an exchange program where organizations on St. Eustatius and Saba can work and exchange knowledge with different organizations in the Netherlands) has started in 2021.

Due to the BES(t) 4 Kids program, more pedagogical employees completed further vocational training enabling them to offer a higher quality of childcare. The majority of pedagogical employees who have been interviewed indicated to have completed further vocational training(s) and completed it with a diploma. Among the vocational trainings included most pedagogical employees mentioned trainings provided by the BES(t) 4 Kids program such as the Kaleidoscope/High scope training, first aid courses, CVQ2 and training, language courses and courses as part of the Twinning program.

The (re) certification of pedagogical employees in Kaleidoscope (High scope)

In 2020, the BES(t) 4 Kids program has provided Kaleidoscope/High scope training on Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba. The central belief of the High scope approach is that: *'children construct their own learning by doing and are being involved in working with materials, people and ideas'*. The High scope training was offered in all organizations included in this research (13 organizations). 70% of pedagogic employees interviewed followed the training.

On all three islands we have heard positive reactions from pedagogical employees on the Kaleidoscope/ High scope training. Managers have noticed that the training was enlightening for their employees due to the structure which the training has provided by the use of daily routines. The training encouraged pedagogical employees to think about what they want to learn the children and take responsibility for scheduling different activities. Childcare organizations try to work according to the Kaleidoscope/ High scope method by implementing the core of the method 'active learning', by supporting the children in their learning throughout the process of planning and playing.

Answers given by pedagogical employees when asking how they encouraged children to discover new things and have new experiences? (October 2021)

"Kaleidoscope allows to work in small groups in which we can encourage children to explore on their own"

"We let children choose what they want to do in the program, during certain timeslots of the day"

"We have large and small group time"

“Due to the influence of High scope, children can choose themselves in which play corner they want to play”¹⁹

Due to the BES(t) 4 Kids program a great number of employees have been trained in using Kaleidoscope/High scope in their practices. In one organization on Bonaire employees are trained in becoming a trainer in Kaleidoscope (or High Scope) themselves. These employees are able to train other employees in a way that is fitting local context.

Training pedagogical employees

On all three islands trainings to improve the qualification of staff to a minimum required level²⁰ have been provided and followed by pedagogical workers (see Table 3.1). Almost half of all pedagogical workers on the three islands (48%) is following a training and also almost half all pedagogical workers on the three islands (47%) is complying with diploma requirements²¹.

Table 3.1 Pedagogical workers qualification (% of pedagogical workers)

	Pedagogical workers who were following a training course (Q3 2021)	Pedagogical workers who comply with diploma requirements (Q3 2021)
Bonaire	46%	52%
St. Eustatius	43%	57%
Saba	65%	-
Total	48%	47%

Source: Public entities, retrieved on 04/03/2022 from: <https://www.best4Kids.nu/?lang=en>

Training pedagogical staff in early identification of development learning disabilities²²

The Childcare Island Ordinance also specifies that within the teams there is sufficient expertise in the field of early identification of developmental and learning delays and the presence of an adult qualified to provide first aid to children (MBO-4 level or CVQ3). On Saba and St. Eustatius, the CVQ3 trainings have not yet been provided. While on Saba, none of the pedagogical employees were trained aimed at identifying development and learning disadvantages, on St. Eustatius two organizations have one professional who had completed MBO-4 or CVQ3 level training (on Bonaire or the Netherlands). On Bonaire the overview of the number of pedagogical employees who have followed MBO-4 training is missing, yet the MBO courses are available and can be followed on the island. While all pedagogical employees on Bonaire who were interviewed were very much willing to follow a training, they indicated not to have the time to follow such a course.

On St. Eustatius there are some pedagogical employees who already had a higher level of education and they are now looking at opportunities that would provide them with more responsibilities, for example giving assistance to the management in their transition.

Conscious Discipline program

Childcare organizations and schools in the Caribbean Netherlands are working with the Conscious Discipline program, which is focused on conscious positive parenting, both by parents and by childcare and schools. Conscious discipline method provides guidance in how to positively interacting with the children. Conscious discipline training happened in 2019 and in 2020 across all islands, providing teachers and parents tools, which they can use when communicating with children. At the end of 2019, approximately 20 professionals from childcare and out-of-school care from the BES(t) 4 Kids program have participated in a week long workshop. In 2020, work

¹⁹ Ecorys questionnaire for employees and managers (October 2021)

²⁰ Childcare workers who work with children have to have at least a diploma at Senior Secondary Vocational Education (MBO) level.

²¹ There might be overlap between these groups. Further research is needed to assess the size of this overlap.

²² See section “3.5 Strategic objective 5: Integral care structure” for further information.

continued on the implementation of the Conscious Discipline program by the professionals in their organizations and with the parents.

Educating/training employees in ensuring safety

We have not received any signals of a separate training for employees in ensuring safety at the childcare organizations. Yet, we have heard that attention has been made to child-adult interactions as part of the MBO3 or CVQ2 training as well in the Kaleidoscope/High scope method.

Education/training of employees in the provision of first aid to children.

During the interviews with 27 pedagogical employees and managers from 13 different organizations on Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba we have asked whether there was expertise within their teams in providing first aid to children. They all indicated that they or their team members had followed this training.

Twinning program

A Twinning program has started in 2021 on St. Eustatius and Saba. The program is an exchange between professionals from the Caribbean Netherlands and the Netherlands in which knowledge and skills can be exchanged. The professionals can choose themselves on the content of the program as long as it aims to make sure that employees on the work floor and in the management of the organizations work together and learn from each other. Twinning is implemented on St. Eustatius and Saba between childcare organizations in the Caribbean and European Netherlands. There is no Twinning program on Bonaire (yet).

The childcare organizations on St. Eustatius participate in a twinning program with 'Op Stoom' from the Netherlands since august 2021. The focus of the twinning program on St. Eustatius is on the pedagogical policy plans. The policy plan of each organization has been based on the island-wide pedagogical vision on St. Eustatius, the input from each center and coaching by the director of 'Op Stoom'. As part of the twinning program, information sessions for managers have been scheduled about how to best implement the pedagogical policy plans. In September 2021, 4 childcare directors from St. Eustatius visited the childcare organization 'Op Stoom'. During this visit a program of training sessions and visits to various locations was put together. In December 2021, the pedagogical employees of childcare 'Op Stroom' visited the childcare centres, preschool and out-of-school programs on St. Eustatius. The pedagogical employees participated in pedagogical trainings and workshops organised by local experts.^{23 24}

On Saba, the twinning program started in November 2020 with two childcare organizations in the Netherlands, Hestia and Kindernet. With the assistance of Hestia and Kindernet, the childcare organizations on Saba took part in a virtual first aid training specifically for children and infants. As part of the continuation of the Twinning program two employees of Kindernet came to Saba for three months to coach and empower the pedagogical employees on Saba. In November 2021, a group of employees of the childcare organizations on Saba travelled to the Netherlands to visit Kindernet. In December 2021, three Kindernet representatives came to Saba to help drafting a pedagogical vision for both childcare organizations on Saba.

During our interviews in October 2021, managers were very enthusiastic about the Twinning program.

"The twinning program really helped to get a better understanding of the process and transition intended by BES(t) 4 Kids. Now a year later, it is easier for us to understand the process and to explain to parents"

²³ <https://www.best4Kids.nu/blog/2021/08/26/best4Kids-participates-in-twinning-program-with-haarlem/?lang=en>

²⁴ <https://www.statiagovernment.com/news-and-tenders/news/2021/12/09/childcare-centres-on-st.-eustatius-share-knowledge-and-experience-with-colleagues-from-the-netherlands>

Pedagogical vision (quality requirement: Each children's centre has a pedagogical policy plan)

As laid down in the quality standards each children's centre needs to have a pedagogical policy plan, which describes how: (1) 'responsible childcare services' are understood and performed, (2) child's development monitored and stimulated; (3) continuous line of development ensured, (4) social safety for children and staff maintained, (5) development and learning disadvantages prevented; (6) children with a special need for care are dealt; (7) the activity program and daily routine is organized; (8) tasks to professionals in training, trainees and volunteers are allocated.

In collaboration with UNICEF island-wide pedagogical sessions were held to develop an island wide pedagogical approach. Only on St. Eustatius such an island broad pedagogical vision was developed. This vision focuses on behaviour of care-providers and/or parents (affection, communication, interaction, expectations, protection) and the provisions that professionals and policy advisors should have in place (parenting support programs, professional development programs and a safe and enabling environment for child development across the island)²⁵. In line with the island broad pedagogical vision all organizations on St. Eustatius have defined their pedagogical vision. The organizations are currently working on the implementation in which they are assisted by their Twinning partner.

On Bonaire most children's centres are still developing and redefining the pedagogical policy plans of their own organizations. Until now, it seems that only the big organizations have a pedagogical vision, while smaller organizations seem to work on vision or do not have one at all.

On Saba an island-wide pedagogical vision has not yet been established. The children's centres are assisted by their Twinning partner when writing this island-broad vision and the separate pedagogical visions for their organizations²⁶.

Table 3.2

	Island broad pedagogical vision	Pedagogical vision for each children's centre
Bonaire	No, work in progress	No, work in progress
St. Eustatius	Yes	Yes, implementation in progress
Saba	No, work in progress	No, work in progress

Healthy food (quality requirement: A children's centre or host parent care will provide healthy food)

The minority of childcare organizations serve children only healthy food (e.g., whole grains, no juice)²⁷. The childcare organizations who had such a policy were able to afford this by the subsidy provided by the BES(t) 4 Kids program. While there were some initial concerns on whether the children would eat the healthy food, according to managers, this goes smoother than thought. The Figure 3.1 below shows that about three quarters of the parents is satisfied with the nutrition in the childcare organizations. Only a few parents seem to be aware of the importance of offering healthy food, of which most also do understand the budgetary consequences for organizations. As one parent put it:

"Offering healthy food is a challenge for the organization. They offer very little vegetables as it is expensive and kids generally don't like to eat vegetables and fruit".

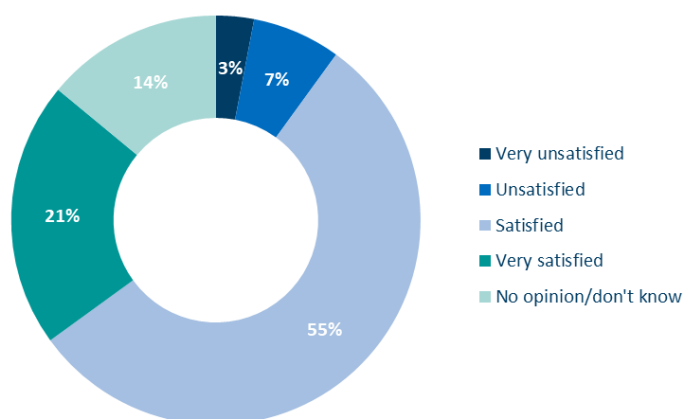
²⁵ Pedagogical vision St. Eustatius (received 26/012022)

²⁶ The establishment of an Island broad pedagogical vision and separate pedagogical visions for organizations on Saba was planned for December 2021, and will most likely be developed once this report will be published.

²⁷ More organizations are currently in transition towards implementing a policy serving healthy food.

Figure 3.1 How satisfied are parents with the nutrition at the childcare (N = 29)

How satisfied are you with the nutrition at the childcare?



Safety (quality requirement: all children's centres and host parents have their own safety and health policy and quality requirement: All children's centres must have a step-by-step plan on domestic violence and child abuse)

In interviews with managers and employees we did not specifically ask if organizations have safety and health policies or a step-by-step plan on domestic violence and child abuse because we prioritized other aspects in this first measurement. We did not discuss this topic so we cannot assess if this quality requirement is sufficiently met by organizations. Local inspectors on each island are responsible for supervising safety and health within organizations.

Stable care (quality requirement: Children will have stable care, for a maximum of 11 hours per day in one master group and the number of professionals is matched to the age and the number of children in the master group)

According to the Basic Island Ordinance Childcare, certain ratios children-supervisors should be respected. This ratio depends on the group composition (i.e. horizontal vs. vertical groups) and on the age of the children (e.g. babies, toddlers, young school children or older school children). From the eight horizontal and two vertical groups named by employees and managers, only one (vertical) group did not meet the norm and had too many children per supervisor.

Parent committee (quality requirement: a children's centre with more than 50 children must have a parent committee)

Childcare organizations make a lot of effort to form a parent committee or to look at alternative forms of parental participation. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, when organizations were restricted to include parents, organizations thought of creative ways of how to cooperate and communicate with parents (e.g. walk-in Wednesdays, muffins with mums, parent meetings in the morning instead of evening, newsletters, sport days). Yet, including parents and supporting parents in their parenting role remains a point for further improvement, including the establishment of parent committees. The parents who were interviewed mostly indicated that the organizations and professionals were easily accessible. However, managers and employees indicated that most parents seem not interested in what exactly happens at the childcare, not showing active interest in the activities that happen in the organizations and the pedagogical vision behind it.

"Most parents see it still as a place where child can be busy and play. Parents show no further interest"

"Unfortunately, we do not have a parents committee, although it is highly desirable"

Organizations face difficulties in establishing a well-functioning parent committee as it is hard to find enough parents willing to engage and commit themselves to a parental commitment. Only on Saba, they were able to organise a parent committee. This parent committee is dedicated to both daycare and out-of-school. The parent committee consists of seven parents (of which four mothers and three fathers). On St. Eustatius one childcare organization located at a primary school has a combined PTA established.

Complaints committee (*quality requirement: all children's centres must have an independent complaint committee*)

Only two organizations (one on Bonaire and one on Saba) have indicated to have a separate complaint committee to protect the interests of the children and pedagogical employees. On St. Eustatius, organizations have indicated to work on the establishment of such a complaint committee. In general, the childcare organizations think of combining the parent committee and complaints committee, once the parent committee has been established.

Table 3.3

	Parent committee	Complaints committee
Bonaire	No, most bigger organizations are working on the establishment	No, not in all organizations
St. Eustatius	No, most organizations are working on the establishment (except for one organization where a PTA has already been established)	No, most organizations are working on the establishment
Saba	Yes, for all organizations a combined parent committee has been established	No, not in all organizations

3.3.3 Outcomes: How has the program so far contributed to the improved quality and safety of the childcare in the respective islands? What is still missing?

We conclude that the childcare organizations, together with the support of the BES(t) 4 Kids program, made important first steps in improving the quality and safety in line with the formulated objectives.

In November 2021, all stakeholders (board members, managers of childcare organizations, pedagogical employees and parents) had positive attitudes towards the efforts the BES(t) 4 Kids program assisting them to improve the quality and safety of childcare organizations. The majority indicated that the BES(t) 4 Kids measures were a great stimulation for the professionalisation of the organizations and childcare on the island. As one manager stated:

“Without the BES(t) 4 Kids program, the organizations should have closed when the law entered force as they wouldn't have met the quality requirements”.

In all organizations, employees were trained by the means of the BES(t) 4 kids program. The increased qualifications of staff have already made childcare more responsible, stimulating children's personal and social competencies. In addition, the improved qualification of staff can accelerate the process of further improvement (e.g. the development and easier implementation of a pedagogical vision, the implementation of several other quality standards).

Understandably, not yet all quality requirements are met, as it is not possible for organizations to focus on all aspects of quality improvement at the same time. First, only a few employees are trained in identifying development and learning disadvantages by children. Second, the involvement of parents in a parent or complaints committee remains a challenge for almost all organizations.

Organizations are looking for simple and effective ways to organize increased parental involvement. Third, the majority of childcare organizations do not provide healthy food. Finally, pedagogical policy plans have not yet been designed nor implemented for all organizations. Struggle which particularly smaller organizations face due to the lack of resources and time constraints.

Organizations differ in how they are organized and how easy it is for them to meet the quality requirements. Many organizations on Bonaire are organized in a more informal way, for example host parents hosting less than 6 children. Meeting these quality requirements and the administration accompanied is a totally different way of working for these organizations. They have to invest relatively more time with less means than an organization which had already a more professionalised organization before the start of the BES(t) 4 Kids program. Consequently, they have the feeling that they can spend less time with the children which they see as a big disadvantage of the program. So, for these smaller and more informally organized organizations, the program does not directly lead to improved quality.

Besides the high administrative burden felt especially by more informal organized organizations, managers from all organizations, as well as external stakeholders, indicate that higher salary and better working conditions are essential to keep on improving quality. A higher salary and better working conditions are necessary to find and retain employees within the childcare sector. The salaries have been increased until the minimum wage and steps have been made towards the development of a system in which salaries are based on the certification of staff and which allows for financial growth accordingly. These are important first steps made, but may not be enough to make sure employees do not start working elsewhere (e.g. on another island or as an education-assistant).

3.4 Strategic objective 4: Improvement of the (financial) accessibility

Evaluation questions:

- (1) Has the childcare became more (financially) accessible to parents since the start of the program?
- (2) Is there a tax relief and reduced financial burden for parents in the Caribbean Netherlands?

Strategic objective:

The goal is to make childcare and/or out-of-school care financially accessible for all parents with children from 0 to 12+ in Caribbean Netherlands in 2023.

3.4.1 Inputs: The set of measures for improving the (financial) accessibility

Temporary subsidy scheme

Making childcare and out-of-school care financially accessible to parents in Caribbean Netherlands is included in the Childcare Law for the Caribbean Netherlands. Until the law comes into force, temporary financial means are arranged to reduce the costs of childcare for parents of children in the Caribbean Netherlands and to improve the quality of care. The implementation of the temporary subsidy scheme is carried out by the Policy Implementation Directorate (in Dutch: Uitvoering van Beleid (UVB)) of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment²⁸. Every organization in the Caribbean Netherlands that holds an operating license under the Childcare Island Ordinance is eligible for a subsidy. The subsidy scheme consists of two parts:

²⁸ This includes the available budget of the ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports which has been transferred to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, which continues the funding via the temporary subsidy scheme

1. Cost-price reducing subsidy

The financing of the childcare organizations is provided in the form of a cost-price reducing subsidy. The organizations can use this subsidy to reduce the parental contribution for parents and to take measures to improve the quality of childcare²⁹. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW), on the basis of proposals from the BES(t) 4 Kids steering committee and the public entities, determines the level of the cost-price reducing subsidy. Organizations that wish to receive cost-price reducing subsidy have to submit an application to the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment. Childcare organizations that receive cost-price reducing subsidy are also obliged to charge parents a set parental contribution (unless parental contribution is fully compensated by the supplementary child placement subsidy, see section below).

2. Supplementary childcare subsidy (child placement subsidy)

In principle childcare is not free but must be financially accessible to all parents. All parents of children between 0 and 12 years pay a fixed general parental contribution. Parents with a low income can then be granted partial or full compensation. Within the framework of the poverty policy, the public entities of Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba, can determine whether and to what extent they want to make childcare available free of charge to parents living in poverty. The public entities provide child placement subsidies based on a socio-economic indication and/or labour participation of parents, with the set maximum number of places per island. Those parents who cannot afford the parental contribution, can apply for a supplementary childcare subsidy at the public entity. If the subsidy is granted, it is paid out by UVB (on behalf of the public entity).

It is worth mentioning that until 2018 organizations on St. Eustatius that offer out-of-school care were already subsidised by the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (which was not the case on Bonaire and Saba), allowing parental contribution to be low (30 dollar per month). As of 2019, these resources have been transferred to the public entities and added to the BES(t) 4 Kids program. The condition which out-of-school organizations that were financed until 2018 on St. Eustatius received, is that in order to continue getting financial support they have to be a part of and participate in the BES(t) 4 Kids program. The agreements were made with the organizations about their role in the program, the implementation of the BES(t) 4 Kids plans and the way in which this will be financed. Parental contribution increased to 50 dollar per month.

Cost-price study

A multi-year cost price survey, conducted by the consultancy SEO, started in 2020 in order to gain insight into the cost structure and pricing of childcare organizations in the Caribbean Netherlands and the factors that determine the differences in the cost of different types of care (daycare / out-of-school care / host parent care) and between the islands. This study was undertaken as an important starting point for determining the future (long-term) financing structure, which would offer optimal conditions for financially accessible and high quality childcare.

3.4.2 Outputs: what are the results of the implemented set of measures

Process update of the implementation of temporary subsidy scheme

Childcare organizations across all three islands recognize that the temporary subsidy scheme was implemented at a fast pace and came with a high amount of administrative work and requirements for them to comply with. This caused a (difficult) transition period at the beginning, as organizations

²⁹ Improvements in the housing facilities are also taken into account in the cost-price reducing subsidy for childcare organizations (for more information about the housing situation see section 3.6 Strategic objective 6: Improvement of the housing).

were faced with having to quickly comprehend the changes and take needed actions, as well as sufficiently inform and explain the changes to the parents.

Yet childcare organizations are adapting to the new structure, finding solutions to the challenges that they come across in the process. A good example of improvement in this process is adapting to how the financial information is arranged. Participation in the subsidy scheme requires to provide well organized financial and administrative documents, which are often missing. On Saba organizations adjusted by running administration via an accountant, who is able to keep the needed records in place. Same outsourcing possibility is being explored on St. Eustatius. On Bonaire however, where the childcare has always been an informal sector, it has been mentioned that organizations often lack a professional administration, which remains a point of improvement for the future. Another example of the positive adjustment in the administrative process has been mentioned on both Saba and St. Eustatius, which is the formal agreements between UVB and the organizations for a reduced number of registration rounds organizations have to go through per year (i.e. every half a year instead of every three months) to simplify the process.

While organizations are learning and adapting to the new requirements, some process challenges still remain. On both Saba and St. Eustatius it was mentioned that the UVB database could be made more user-friendly, the administrative requirement and the process of registration can be further improved (e.g. registration portal).

On Saba, for example, organizations have difficulties with filling in applications/forms based on the day parts as they only work with full days (children are mostly brought to daycare for the full day, 5 days a week). This is an example of how the administration process could be adjusted to make it easier and more applicable for the local island context. Organizations on Saba also identified difficulties in dealing with child placement subsidy, as they are the ones who have to make a first assessment about the parent's eligibility to be included in the scheme. Organizations need to reach out to social work/affairs institution to get the needed information, thus becoming the middle man. They do not have a visibility up front about the parents who are lacking behind their payments. Childcare organizations are dependent on the government and are not able to keep track and follow up with parents on time.

On Bonaire, it was mentioned that organizations feel too little involved in policy making, e.g. the amounts received per child are determined by the government. When it comes to the subsidy scheme implementation on Bonaire, it was also pointed out that some parents lack understanding of the functioning of subsidy scheme: (1) parents are often not aware that part of the parental contribution is covered by the cost-price based subsidy, (2) families with low income that are eligible to receive child placement subsidy do not always understand the process and which steps need to be taken when. Parents being late to apply for the subsidy results in organizations not receiving the funds and in parents having a debt. More information/awareness of the exact process of the child placement subsidy scheme would be beneficial.

Outputs of the implementation of the temporary subsidy scheme

Cost-price reducing subsidy

Due to the cost-price reducing subsidy the parental contribution rates decreased, making childcare more affordable across islands.

As shown in the below Table 3.4, in the course of 2021 the parental contribution amount was reduced for almost all types of childcare organizations on Bonaire and on St. Eustatius. While on Saba it remained the same in 2021, it decreased compared to the rates that were in place before

the introduction of the subsidy scheme.³⁰ As of January 2022, the minimum/maximum amounts of parental contribution remain the same across the islands.

Table 3.4 The average amount of parental contribution for childcare per month

Parental contribution		01/01/2021	01/07/2021
Bonaire	Daycare	\$175	\$112.50
	Out-of-school care	\$150	\$87.50
	Daycare at host parent care	\$163	\$100.00
	Out-of-school care at host parent care	\$150	\$87.50
St. Eustatius	Daycare	\$150.00	\$100.00
	Out-of-school care	\$30.00	\$50.00
Saba	Daycare	\$100.00	\$100.00
	Out-of-school care	\$50.00	\$50.00

Source: Uitvoering van Beleid (UVB)

There is a steady increase in the amounts of cost-price reducing subsidy in the period July 2020 – Dec 2022 on all three islands that childcare organizations receive, as defined in the Temporary Childcare Financing Subsidy Scheme Caribbean Netherlands (see Table 3.5). This should provide organizations with more resources to meet requirements and implement needed improvements. There is a plan to continue monitoring the price development on the islands in 2022 and if necessary adjust the subsidy amounts as of 1 July 2022.

Table 3.5 The amount of the cost-price reducing subsidy per half-day session per child

Cost-price reducing subsidy (half day, per child)		July 2020 - June 2021	July 2021 - Dec 2021	Jan 2022 - Dec 2022
Bonaire	Daycare	\$5	\$6.88	\$7.63
	Out-of-school care	\$7.50	\$11.25	\$12.50
	Daycare at host parent care	\$2.50	\$4.38	\$4.88
	Out-of-school care at host parent care	\$5.00	\$8.75	\$9.75
St. Eustatius	Daycare	\$2	\$3.88	\$4.38
	Out-of-school care	\$10	\$11.25	\$12.50
Saba	Daycare	\$3.90	\$3.90	\$4.38
	Out-of-school care	\$11.25	\$11.25	\$12.50

Source: Temporary Childcare Financing Subsidy Scheme Caribbean Netherlands, Regulation by the State Secretary for Social Affairs and Employment of 8 May 2020.

The maximum amount of cost-price reducing subsidy that different types of childcare organizations are able to receive per child in a given month is provided below (see Table 3.6).

³⁰ On Saba before the introduction of the subsidy scheme the childcare cost for parents was 140\$ for daycare and 85\$ for out-of-school care, which in 2021 dropped to 100\$ and 50\$ respectively.

Table 3.6 The maximum cost-price reducing subsidy per child per month

Cost-price reducing subsidy maximum amount (per child, per month)		Per January 1st 2022
Bonaire	Daycare	\$305
	Out-of-school care	\$250
	Daycare at host parent care	\$195
	Out-of-school care at host parent care	\$195
St. Eustatius	Daycare	\$175
	Out-of-school care	\$250
Saba	Daycare	\$175
	Out-of-school care	\$250

Source: Bes(t) 4 Kids website: <https://www.best4Kids.nu/?lang=en>. Retrieved on 04/03/2022

The number of children participating in the cost-price reducing subsidy (and therefore parents who pay lower parental contribution each month), have increased on Bonaire in 2021 compared to 2020. On St. Eustatius it remained relatively even in 2020 – 2021 period, with some increase in Q1 2021. While on Saba there was a slight decrease in Q2 2021 vs Q1 2021 (see Table 3.7).

Table 3.7 Participation in the cost-price reducing subsidy (nr. of children)

Cost-price reducing subsidy (nr. children)	Q4 2020	Q1 2021	Q2 2021
Bonaire	1.820	1.899	1.896
St. Eustatius	251	268	247
Saba	-	144	127

Source: Uitvoering van Beleid (UVB)

Supplementary childcare (child placement) subsidy

During the 2020 – 2021 period the number of children receiving supplementary childcare subsidy has shown a steady increase in all three islands.

Table 3.8 Number of declared child placement subsidies (nr. of children)

Child placement subsidies (nr. children)	Q4 2020	Q1 2021	Q2 2021
Bonaire	385	410	431
St. Eustatius	8	2	18
Saba	53	63	67

Source: Uitvoering van Beleid (UVB)

The below overview (see Table 3.9) provides the average amount of child placement subsidy which parents, who are eligible for this type of support, received in 2021.

Table 3.9 The average amount of child placement subsidy in 2021

Average amount of child placement subsidy (\$)	2021
Bonaire	\$173
St. Eustatius	\$150
Saba	\$61

Source: Uitvoering van Beleid (UVB).

If we look at the proportion of parents who besides cost-price reducing subsidy also receive child placement subsidy, we see that the highest % is on Saba (approx. 50%), on Bonaire it is approx. 20% and lowest on St. Eustatius (approx. 4%) (see Table 3.10 below).

One of the reasons why Saba has the high % of child placement subsidy is the fact that most parents who bring their children to the childcare come from low income households with multiple

children in the family. Compared to Saba, on St. Eustatius child placement subsidy is barely used. There might be multiple reasons for this, including the fact that in order to get the supplementary subsidy parents are required to provide private information to the authorities (labour office). Parents might be hesitant to do that as they do not want to enclose private information. There might also be certain barriers in the administrative process, which result in less parents applying for the subsidy. At the same time organizations on St. Eustatius indicate that they have to deal with parents who are unable or can hardly afford childcare / there are delays in receiving parental contribution. This is an area of improvement to make childcare more accessible and reduce financial burden not only to parents but also childcare organizations on St. Eustatius. On Bonaire the % of children receiving supplementary child placement is also relatively low. One of the reasons for that might be the insufficient knowledge / understanding that parents have about the available subsidy possibilities and what actions they need to take to receive it.

Table 3.10 The % of children receiving supplementary child placement subsidy out of the nr. of children who receive cost-price reducing subsidy

% child placement vs cost-price reducing subsidy	Q4 2020	Q1 2021	Q2 2021
Bonaire	21%	22%	23%
St. Eustatius	3%	1%	7%
Saba	-	44%	53%

Source: Uitvoering van Beleid (UVB), authors calculations

Cost-price study

Besides the introduction of the temporary subsidy scheme, a multi-year cost price study was initiated in 2020 as a part of the set of measures and activities taken to increase financial accessibility of childcare in Caribbean Netherlands. The results of this study were delivered in 2021 providing a first picture of the cost structure of childcare and differences between organizations. However, the information provided was considered not complete. On Bonaire some of the required information was not found in the administrations of all childcare organizations. Also, for Saba and St. Eustatius the research data was considered insufficient to be able to draw conclusions. It was decided to postpone the introduction of the new funding structure for the islands until 2024. A summary of the cost-price study is planned to be made available in early 2022 and the next phase of the Cost-price study is planned to take place.

3.4.3 Outcomes: How has the program so far contributed to improved (financially) accessibility of childcare to parents

In order to assess the outcomes of the actions taken to make the childcare in Caribbean Netherlands more (financially) accessible, we take a look at the childcare participation rates and how they developed since 2018. Participation is not only the outcome of financial measures taken (i.e. temporary subsidy scheme), but also a result of actions to improve the quality and safety of childcare, as well as external factors, such as changes in the population size. While we look at the numbers at the point in time when this study is being carried out, it will be important to continue monitoring the participation rates in the upcoming years to see the longer term trend, along with the future developments of the BES(t) 4 Kids program and the introduction of the upcoming law.

Participation in the childcare in Caribbean Netherlands

When it comes to the participation in childcare, on Bonaire the rate has increased in 2020 compared to 2018 (from 48% to 60%) and then remained unchanged (in the period of Q4 2020 – Q2 2021). On St. Eustatius the overall participation in the childcare was stable (at 57% in both 2018 and Q2 2021). While there was some fluctuation in participation on St. Eustatius in the 2020-2021 period it can be seen as a natural in- and out- flow of children in a particular age group (which is

expected given a small population size of the island). On Saba there has been an increase in the overall childcare participation in Q1 2021 (from 47% in 2018 to 55% in Q1 2021), while in the second quarter of 2021 it returned to the 2018 level (48% in Q2 2021). The increase came from high participation rates in the daycare, while out-of-school care on Saba remained unchanged (see Table 3.11).

On all three islands the participation % in daycare is higher than in out-of-school care. The difference between the type of organizations is particularly apparent on St. Eustatius and Saba. The relative low participation rate in out-of-school care in Saba might be caused by limited places available.

Table 3.11 Participation of children in childcare

% of Children in childcare		2018	Q4 2020	Q1 2021	Q2 2021
Bonaire	Daycare (Dagopvang)	62%	74%	71%	69%
	Out-of-school care (BSO)	42%	54%	55%	56%
	Total	48%	60%	60%	60%
St. Eustatius	Daycare (Dagopvang)	80%	83%	77%	77%
	Out-of-school care (BSO)	49%	37%	41%	48%
	Total	57%	49%	52%	57%
Saba	Daycare (Dagopvang)	67%		91%	78%
	Out-of-school care (BSO)	36%		41%	37%
	Total	47%		55%	48%

Source: Uitvoering van Beleid (UVB) and public entities

Overall conclusions

Affordability

First improvements in financial accessibility as a result of introducing the temporary subsidy scheme can be identified. The decreased parental contributions due to the cost-price reducing subsidy and the increased number of children receiving supplementary child placement subsidy, [made childcare more affordable to parents across all three islands.](#)

Participation

Since 2018 the increase in childcare participation can be observed on Bonaire and on Saba in the case of daycare organizations. On St. Eustatius participation rates remained stable. Yet the overall participation in childcare across islands are at around 60% (with higher participation in the daycare – approx.. 70%, and lower in out-of-school care – approx. 50%), which points to room for improvement in the (financial) accessibility.³¹ It is important to mention that participation rates are impacted not only by the financial accessibility but also by a number of other factors, such as improved quality³², whether there is enough availability in childcare organizations (availability issues related to housing conditions and child/employee ratio), as well as external socio-economic factors (e.g. increasing population size).

Financial situation on Bonaire

While the investments have been made to improve financial accessibility for parents, many organizations on Bonaire experience a lack of financial resources to improve quality or housing-conditions. Although the amount of funding that childcare organizations receive was based on *the organizations with the highest level of parental contribution prior the implementation of the BES(t) 4 Kids program*, many organizations have indicated to face a lack of financial resources to create

³¹ On St. Eustatius it was mentioned that the goal would be to reach around 80% of participation.

³² On Saba parents admit that even before the parental contribution was lowered the reason for not bringing children to the childcare was often not the cost but rather the low quality expectations that parents had.

better working conditions for the staff and to invest in quality improvements. As one of the staff members of childcare organizations stated:

"Much has been invested in improving (financial) accessibility for parents, but too little has been invested in the organizations themselves".

The funding amounts that childcare organizations receive are the same for all age groups, with no differentiation made between the funds available for babies/toddlers vs older children. Since youngest age group require higher expenses, it is particularly challenging to provide appropriate high quality care for this group. Another pressing issue is the low salaries of staff. As a result, organizations cannot have a sustainable continuation of staff and are faced with high turnover and dissatisfied employees. Currently, there is no Collective Labour Agreement (CLA) and no guidelines on how much a pedagogical employee should earn at various levels. Since the start of the BES(t) 4 Kids program, there has been no structural increase in the salaries of childcare employees according to the interviewed childcare organizations.

The experienced lack of financial resources is currently a challenge as it creates a barrier for achieving the goals of the program and creating high-quality, safe and accessible childcare on Bonaire.

3.5 Strategic objective 5: Integral care structure

Strategic objective:

The goal is that children from 0 to 12+ receive appropriate care and support, based on medical, pedagogical, psychological and organizational point of view. The organizations for childcare and out-of-school care should cooperate with the schools and other partners in order to offer every child the care they need.

3.5.1 Inputs: The set of measures for creating integral care structure

In the Caribbean Netherlands children who go to school and have developmental or behavioural issues are supported by the Expertise Centres Educational Care. A similar care structure is however missing for childcare. BES(t) 4 Kids is working on a statutory care structure for childcare and out-of-school care, which is planned to be included in the legislation and regulations (including Island Ordinances) in 2023. Together with the public entities, the central government is developing a broad, integrated care structure for appropriate care and support for children, both in childcare and at home and at school. The design of the integral care structure falls outside the scope of the BES(t) 4 Kids program, but takes place in coordination with the program.

Inclusive childcare

Childcare organizations are expected to pay attention to monitoring the development of children and identifying possible development problems, using standardized observation instruments. Organizations for childcare and out-of-school care should be able to draw on the specialist, expertise and facilities for the children to counsel children with development and/or behavioural issues within the organization.

Pilot projects

Pilot projects are initiated on each island to find out how inclusive childcare can be given shape. This way public entities can take temporary measures in order to support certain groups of children with additional support or care needs. Information is used for policy solutions with regard to setting up the care structure with regard to childcare specifically and the integrated care structure.

Early signalling

Partly in relation to the pilot projects, the public entities were expected to map out the training needs of (pedagogical) employees in 2021 and draw up a training and education plan, which would enable childcare staff to provide adequate guidance to children that need extra support and identify these needs as early as possible. The lack of expertise in early signalling, was recognised as a point for improvement.

Support parents' role in early stimulation

The BES(t) 4 Kids program wants to enhance parents' understanding of the importance of early stimulation of children and ensuring that their children receive the correct support if needed at the earliest possible stage. Concrete actions to reach this goal are now being investigated.

3.5.2 Outputs: what are the results of the implemented set of measures

Inclusive childcare

The progress in creating and delivering inclusive care in childcare organizations are in the early stages of development. When it comes to using the standardised observation tools that help in guiding children with developmental and/or behavioural issues, it was mentioned that on Saba the High Scope tool is used for this purpose. It is added to the curriculum for 3-5 year olds and is expected to improve the continuous learning line for children transitioning from daycare to primary School. Daycare on Saba uses High scope to assess the development and write a transition report for school (e.g. *"for children with autism, the transition plan is custom made"*).³³

Pilot projects

The care pilot projects have started on all three islands:

- On Saba the daycare organization started first in 2020, which was followed by the out-of-school care at the end of 2021.
- On St. Eustatius one organization is currently involved in the pilot. A qualified pedagogical employee is hired to specifically focus on children with special needs, who are able to receive more structure, special materials. Parents are also being involved in the process. In other organizations, the training is being followed.
- On Bonaire 5 out of 40 childcare organizations have started with the care pilot, which include 42 children, 2 childcare coaches and 1 remedial educationalist who guide children in the pilot (with specific focus on autism). Pedagogical coaches support pedagogical employees on the floor, observe, and draw up action plans.

Early signalling

On all three islands, the majority of pedagogical employees, when asked about the number of children with the special needs in their group, indicate that there are either none or that they do not have ways to signal and identify when might that be the case. This indicates that early signalling is a practice which is yet to be developed across islands. There are however first steps made in this area, with some organizations starting to use tools and establishing implementation procedures:

- On Saba there is a procedure and ways of working with children who require extra support. In daycare, team meetings take place to discuss behavioural issues of children (including EC2, caregiver, preschool and daycare manager). Out-of-school care also collaborate with EC2 and had a couple of meetings to see how they can best work together. It was also noted that for

³³ This is also recognized by some of the parents on Saba who noticed that staff, after following the training, have learned more about how to deal with children that have behavioural issues and how to apply adequate tools and activities to provide the needed care.

children who need extra care an adapted plan is created to fit their needs. While they receive an adjusted set of schedule, they are not separated and work along with the rest of the group.

- On St. Eustatius all organizations make use of Expertise Center Education Care (ECE) for their expertise with special needs children. ECE, which aides and guides schools, is also supporting pre-school care in practice. Yet this has not been formally established. The plans are made to implement it in the upcoming law.
- On Bonaire, when it comes to early identification of development and learning delays, a number of organizations indicated that they currently do not have expertise in this area. This especially applies to the small organizations. Some organizations work with the signalling-list KIJK, which helps with children observation. Behavioural issues are being discussed within the team.

Role of parents in early stimulation

No concrete actions were identified which would specifically focus on the role of the parents in the early stimulation as a part of creating an integral care structure.

3.5.3 Outcomes: How has the program so far contributed to creating integral care structure in the Caribbean Netherlands

The care pilots in selected childcare organizations have started in all three islands, which is a foundational work in creating the appropriate care structure. Other external organizations, like the Expertise Education Care centres (EC2 on Saba, ECE on Eustatius) and organizations for parent support and/or youth health care are being consulted and provide their expertise to the childcare.

For example on St. Eustatius it was mentioned that they are now in the middle of setting up the new structure and discussing different ways how to best organise it. Inputs from the Dutch ministries (e.g. WWS, SZW) are needed, financing decisions need to be made, the pilots need to be evaluated, how the needed training/qualification can be offered and financed (e.g. SPW3 has a specific module on how to work with children who have developmental delays).

Currently, many pedagogical employees across islands are not aware, do not have expertise required in identification and guidance of children with special needs to provide them with optimal care.

To conclude, while in schools the integral care structure is largely in place across all three islands, the same still needs to be created for the childcare organizations. As the creation of a care structure is a complex matter in which many stakeholders are involved and preconditions need to be fulfilled, different entities have been working together for the last 1.5 years to agree and create the structural approach. The main challenge is the coordination between different parties and agreement on how the responsibilities are divided (which organization(s) or institution(s) would be taking a lead etc.). It will be important to monitor what is being done on early stimulation and the role of parents, cooperation with schools/other relevant partners for the smooth transition and how the training of pedagogical staff in early identification of learning disabilities are progressing.

3.6 Strategic objective 6: Improvement of the housing

Strategic objectives:

- The goal is to make the accommodation of all organizations offering childcare or out-of-school facilities of good quality and safe.
- In 2023, all organizations that offer childcare and/or out-of-school care are expected to meet the health and safety housing standard, as laid down in the Childcare Island Ordinances.
- In 2026, a place in childcare and/or out-of-school care should be available for every child aged 0 to 12+ (no waiting lists).

3.6.1 Inputs: The set of measures for improvement of the housing facilities

Housing program 'regio-envelop'

Childcare organizations are themselves responsible for realizing housing that meets the requirements. For the realization of (better) housing, 'regio-envelop' funds are available from the central government. In 2020, the central government made agreements with every public entity about their housing program and the conditions under which the funds would be made available. This concerns the new construction for daycare and out-of-school care IKC Pelikaan on Bonaire, out-of-school care MDYF, DOTK & A+ on St. Eustatius and daycare LLDCC and out-of-school care SB&GSS on Saba. These plans were expected to be further implemented in 2021.

Quality framework for childcare accommodation

The requirements for childcare accommodation are described in the quality framework for childcare accommodation in the Caribbean Netherlands, which contains a series of quality criteria with regard to the experience, use and technology of childcare. The public entities are expected to use the framework when drawing up the schedule of requirements for the new-build plans and to determine the island's visions of housing.

Housing quality inventory

In 2021 and 2022, an inventory is planned to be made of the quality of childcare accommodation on the basis of the quality framework. All locations where childcare is offered should be visited and the inventory should form the basis of the island vision on housing and the island housing plan.

Island housing plans – interim solutions to capacity problems

There are childcare locations on all three islands that do not meet the quality and safety requirement (e.g. spaces are too small for the number of children attending the childcare). The public entities were expected, in consultation with the quality committee, the Inspectorate of education and local inspector(s), to take concrete measures in 2021 and 2022 to solve this problem.

Financing new and/or renovation projects

The (initial) financing of new and/or renovation projects should be elaborated on the basis of the housing plan. Housing costs are taken into account in the cost-price reducing subsidy for childcare organizations. Central government and the public entities are expected to investigate whether agreements can be made with financiers for the financing of the investments.

3.6.2 Outputs: what are the results of the implemented set of measures

Interim solutions to capacity problems, implementation of new and/or renovation projects

On Saba, both operating childcare organizations have taken the steps to improve the childcare facilities. Daycare was moved to another location and out-of-school care was renovated using the BES(t) 4 Kids program funding. The layout of classrooms was re-arranged creating more space. Parents also recognize that the safety measures are now in place, which was not always the case in the past. As a temporary solution for the daycare, temporary housing (containers) was added to increase the amount of space. For the past two years there are ongoing negotiations with OCW and SZW to improve the situation. Yet the housing facilities and safety is still a challenge on Saba. Organizations recognised that the housing situation needs to be further improved by increasing the amount of space for groups and more outside room where children could play. The plans are currently being made to build a new facility that will house both the daycare and the out-of-school care together. This will increase the current capacity and will meet the new target of available places for babies' group for the daycare.

On St. Eustatius, first steps were also made in terms of the housing quality improvements. One organization (Buzzy Bee) mentioned that their space was expanded, which accommodates baby-rooms across different sections, the safety measures are followed up better, creating a child-friendly housing. Yet organizations mention that more space is needed (with more facilities like showers and toilets) and fully meeting safety requirements is the goal that still needs to be reached. Currently, the works are done on building a large facility that will house multiple organizations on St. Eustatius (DOTK, A+, Mega D), which is an opportunity created by the BES(t) 4 Kids program.

On Bonaire, the investments are being made in new housing in a number of places (e.g. at the Pellikaan where a new crèche will be built and the Professional Childcare Foundation is also in the process of being built). However, this is still an important issue as currently there is insufficient suitable housing available. Both parents and organizations recognise challenges with location and safety of the childcare facilities (e.g. daycare center being too close to a busy road), as well as the size / space of the facility (size of the rooms) to house required amount of children while meeting new housing quality requirement.³⁴ It was also mentioned that smaller organizations or host parents have fewer opportunities to invest in the housing because they do not own but rent a house, leaving them with insufficient resources that could be allocated.

3.6.3 Outcomes: How has the program so far contributed to improving the housing

Availability in the childcare in Caribbean Netherlands

Across all three islands there are more children aged 0-12 y. o. than the available places childcare organizations are able to offer. If we compare the number of available places with the number of children attending the childcare in 2021 we see that on Saba there is a lack of availability (-4 places), on Bonaire there are only a few available places left (+4 places), while on St. Eustatius there is more room for new children to join the childcare (+129) (see Table 3.12)

³⁴ Some organizations indicated that they have had more children in the past but had to reduce the number due to new quality rules. The limitations in the current housing stops them from creating more available spaces, which would also be more desirable for organizations financially.

On Saba availability of childcare places is an issue (particularly in the out-of-school care which runs at its full capacity, while in the daycare there are some places left). Not being able to offer enough spots for children to attend the childcare is related to the issues with the housing facilities. On Bonaire availability is also a challenge as a result of increasing population size, as well as stricter housing requirements (square meter required per child and pedagogical employee-child ratio). On St. Eustatius currently there is enough room for new children to join the childcare.

Table 3.12 Nr. of children (0-12 y. o.), available and used places in childcare

	Nr. of children aged 0-12 (In 2021)	Nr. of available places for children in childcare (In 2021)	Nr. of children attending childcare (in 2021)
Bonaire	2.705	1.907	1903
St. Eustatius	477	397	268
Saba	234	140	144

Source: Uitvoering van Beleid (UVB) and public entities (numbers are based on the numbers included in the operating licenses)

Overall conclusion:

In all three islands the number of places available in childcare are lower than the number of children aged 0 -12. The lack of availability is a consequence of the housing issues, especially when the stricter housing requirements were introduced as part of the quality standard, laid out in the Childcare Island Ordinances. On Bonaire it is coupled with an increasing population size. First actions were taken to improve housing situation of childcare organizations across all three islands. Currently plans are being made for building new facilities that will allow childcare organizations meet housing quality requirements. Yet at this point in time, housing is still seen as a challenge and area for improvement. There is a need for better locations with more space inside and outside (outdoor playgrounds), making sure that all safety requirements are being met.

4 Monitor child development

There are currently no or limited resources available that provide a picture of how children who have participated in BES(t) 4 Kids develop during the following years. Currently objective information about children's' development is not available to childcare organizations. Yet in the next 4-5 years more information should become available, with more organizations implementing a child monitoring system. This information will help to assess the effect of the BES(t) 4 Kids program on the development of children.

In this first measurement we investigated how organizations keep track of the development of children and their needs on this topic. Based on these local results we give an advice what is needed to monitor child development in 4-5 years in order to assess the effect of the BES(t) 4 Kids program on the development of children.

4.1 Local findings

We asked organizations if they follow the development of children in a systematic way and for what purpose. 7 out of 13 organizations on all islands use such a system/method or indicate it is under development. They all use different systems to monitor the children's development (motor, social-emotional, language, cognitive). They do this by means of informal or structured observations, a self-developed monitoring system, or by using a formal monitoring system developed elsewhere. 6 Organizations do not have such a system. Most of these organizations do have files of all children or track presence and results but do not have a child tracking monitoring system.

All organizations would like to develop this further and in a more professional way. They are looking for a good and user-friendly system. Managers state it should help their employees in the process of supporting children and not hinder them or give them much extra administrative burden. Smaller organizations lack financial resources to buy and implement such a system.

Organizations indicate they would like to learn from each other and state this as the main topic for the pedagogical network per island to focus on. They see the importance of investing in this, as it helps them to signal early development problems and give the child the right care (matching his/her developmental level).

4.2 Advice for further research

Organizations see the benefits of a system to track the development of children. However, the use of such systems vary widely across organizations. Also, many organizations lack financial resources or know-how to implement such systems. When all organizations use different methods it will be more difficult to collect reliable data in order to assess the effect of the BES(t) 4 Kids program on the child-level. Moreover, organizations could benefit from each other's expertise and know-how when developing a system together. Also efficiency gains could be made. Therefore, we suggest to develop an instrument for all organizations to use. The choice of this instrument must be made in close cooperation with the organizations themselves and the pedagogical networks per island.

There are several key aspects that need to be considered when choosing an instrument for child monitoring. In the textbox below a brief overview is given of some of the considerations that could be taken into account when developing such an instrument for all organizations.

Developmental domains. Extent research has identified key domains of development that have shown predictive value for later social emotional functioning and school outcomes: physical and motor development; cognitive development; self-regulation, executive functions, approaches to learning; language and communication; social and emotional development; pre- and early academic skills (such as pre-math or pre-literacy). In addition, attention for cultural socialization, citizenship, philosophy, or religion may be considered as important aspects of child development. It should be noted that the predictive value of these domains is stronger for the 3-5-year-olds as compared to 0-2-year-olds. Development in the first two years of life shows strong variability due to the interaction between biological and environmental factors in the family and childcare context among others. This early period is characterized by rapid development, growth spurts and plateaus in which development tends to occur in one domain at the time. After these two years, development shows more continuity and stability.

The instrument used to assess child development should adequately measure the underlying constructs of interest in a way that matches the local context.

Applicability in local cultural context. Although there are instruments that have been used in cross-cultural research, it is strongly recommended to consider the cultural appropriateness in another context. The underlying constructs that are measured in an instrument should remain the same, but local adaptations can be made to ensure appropriateness and alignment with the local expectations and norms regarding child development. It is important that local stakeholders value the instrument and recognize how it can contribute to the improvement of experiences of children.

Feasibility and low-cost. The administration of the instrument should be easy, quickly and at low cost. Especially in low- and middle-income countries where resources are scarcer, these practicalities weigh heavily in choosing an instrument. It is important to consider the background of professionals who will administer the instrument and the daily workload when choosing an instrument.

Our advice is to set up a process to choose a good fitting instrument matching needs of the organizations and making their work easier. The pedagogical network per island could play a role in this, in close cooperation with schools. When the choice for an instrument is made, it is important to investigate the reliability and validity of the instrument in a pilot phase prior to large scale implementation. In this pilot phase, researchers can collaborate with the local professionals to gather their experiences in using the instrument and supporting them where needed. Based on pilot data, some analyses concerning the reliability and validity of the instrument can be conducted. In case this is satisfactory, a plan can be made for implementation at a larger scale together with the participants in the local setting.

When the instrument is used on full scale, monitor data can be withdrawn periodically in order to follow child development as one of the indicators for the effectiveness of the program³⁵.

³⁵ Only results on aggregated level, indicating changes in development (no individual scores).

5 Conclusions and recommendations

In this chapter we answer all research questions and give recommendations for improvements on different levels.

5.1 Process and progress of program implementation

In this paragraph we answer the following research question: *How is the implementation of the measures of the program/law (the process) progressing?*

All stakeholders are **informed** about the BES(t) 4 Kids program and the upcoming law. Much attention has been given to informing parents and childcare organizations via website and newsletters. More than half of the parents we interviewed (16 out of 29) know the BES(t) 4 Kids program. The parents who knew about the program tended to be positive about its priorities and goals. All managers and employees we interviewed (total 27) knew the program. They were all positive about the program mainly because it enables them to invest in the professionalization of staff and the organization as a whole.

On the program-level a careful process has been followed to **involve** all stakeholders in the design of the program and the upcoming new law. The requirements for license and supervision are created bottom-up. They match the requirements that have been designed earlier in the Childcare Ordinances of all three islands. Also, different consultation activities with stakeholders, including childcare organizations, parents and schools have been taking place when designing the new law. The inspection works in close collaboration with local inspectors on all island in order to connect to local practices and context. Organizations on Bonaire that were visited by the inspection were overall very positive about the inspections and the recommendations they received and they appreciated the motivated way of working by the inspectors.

5.2 Outputs and outcomes of the measures of the program

In this paragraph we answer the following research question: *What are the outputs and outcomes of the measures of the program?*

The table below summarizes the progress and results per strategic objective of the program.

Progress and results per different strategic objective			
	Output (scale √ to √√√√√)		Outcome
1. Lay-out of a system for childcare and out-of-school facilities	Island regulations and temporary subsidy scheme	√√√√	The Childcare Island Ordinances came into effect in 2020. The law proposal has been drafted and parties are gradually working towards the introduction of the law in the course of 2023 and 2024. The activities carried out within the BES(t) 4 Kids program are an integral part in the preparation and the introduction of the new law.
	Draft childcare law	√√√√	
2. Lay-out of the licensing scheme and supervision	Operating license	√√√√	The Childcare Island Ordinances stipulate that all childcare organizations must have an operating license. The childcare organizations are with assistance from the BES(t) 4 kids program working on fulfilling the requirements as defined in the Childcare Island Ordinances. First supervisory visits have taken place on Bonaire and are planned for St. Eustatius and Saba to continue in the beginning of 2022 ³⁶ .
	Supervisory activities	√√√√	
3. Strengthening of the quality	Qualification and education	√√√	Childcare organizations, together with the support of the BES(t) 4 kids program made important first steps in strengthening the quality, but understandably, not yet all quality requirements are met. The most important step for moving towards responsible childcare has been made by improving the qualifications of staff. Due to the BES(t) 4 kids program, more pedagogical employees completed further vocational training enabling them to offer a higher quality of childcare. Yet, only a few employees are trained in identifying development and learning disadvantages by children. Second, pedagogical policy plans have not yet been designed nor implemented for all organizations. Third, the majority of childcare organizations do not provide healthy food. Fourth, most but not all childcare organizations seem to respect the children-supervisors ratio for providing stable care. Finally, the involvement of parents in a parent committee or complaints committee remains a challenge.
	Pedagogical vision	√√	
	Healthy food	√	
	Stable care	√√√	
	Parent/Complaints committee	√	
4. Improvement of the (financial) accessibility	Temporary subsidy scheme: • Cost-price reducing subsidy	√√√	The temporary subsidy scheme was implemented to reduce the costs of childcare for parents and to improve the quality of care. With the implementation of the temporary subsidy scheme childcare has indeed become more affordable to parents across all three Islands as the parental contribution amount was reduced for almost all organizations by the cost-price reducing subsidy. At the same time, the number of parents who besides cost-price reducing subsidy also receive child placement subsidy is relatively low on Bonaire and St. Eustatius. One of the reasons for that might be the insufficient understanding that parents have about the available subsidy possibilities and barriers in the administrative process. The overall participation in childcare across islands are at around 60%,

³⁶ Once this report will be published these visits most likely already have taken place.

Progress and results per different strategic objective			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child-placement subsidy 		which could point to room for improvement in the (financial) accessibility (but also to availability issues and socio-economic factors).
5. Integral care structure	Inclusive childcare	√√	The creation of a care structure is a complex matter in which many stakeholders are involved and preconditions need to be fulfilled. Different entities have been working together for the last 1.5 years to agree and create on a structural approach for inclusive childcare. The care pilots in selected childcare organizations have started in all three islands, which is the foundational work in creating the care structure. The integral care structure remains an area for improvement to focus on in the upcoming years, including the financing decisions, the evaluation of different pilots, the financing and offer of needed training/qualification (for early signalling), the role of parents and cooperation with schools/ other relevant partners.
	Pilot projects	√√	
	Early signalling	√	
	Role of parents in early stimulation	√	
6. Improvement of the housing	Housing facilities / renovation projects	√√	On all three islands the number of places available in childcare is lower than the number of children aged 0 -12 years old. The lack of availability remains a challenge and as a consequence issues related to the housing facilities require attention. First actions were already taken to improve the housing situation across all three islands and new plans are being made for building facilities that will meet housing quality and safety requirements.

5.3 Effectiveness and Efficiency of program

In this paragraph we answer the following research question: *What is the effectiveness and efficiency of the measures of the program/law?*

Effectiveness in the context of this evaluation addresses the extent to which the measures of policy contributed to the intended goals. **Efficiency** covers the questions of whether the program with the resources made available for it is moving in the right direction, leading to the intended outcomes.

Effectiveness

The goal of the BES(t) 4 Kids program is to ensure that every child has the opportunity to develop themselves to their full potential and enable parents to do their work without having to worry about their children. In this first measurement we have assessed how the measures of the BES(t) 4 Kids program, organized in 6 themes/objectives, contributed to these goals. We focused on collecting experiences in relation to the measures of the program from a wide group of stakeholders across all islands by performing 68 interviews. The overall finding is that the program has added value for organizations and parents. It helps organizations to invest in the professionalization of their organizations and puts the subject of childcare higher on the agenda of public entities. In this first phase of implementation of the program the focus has been on improving quality and investing in training of employees leading to higher qualified staff in organizations. In the next phases of the program, organizations tend to work further on:

- Integral care structure. On all islands the 'Pilot Care' has started. A main challenge is coordination between parties and training employees in identifying development and learning disadvantages by children. Who is responsible for what part of care for children with special needs? How is funding organized and is information between organized shared on a 'safe way' (meeting privacy requirements)? Finding an answer to these questions will be important when creating a care structure on all islands.
- Working conditions and salary: on all islands finding and retaining employees is a challenge. A more professional organization of the childcare sector is needed.
- Housing plans, in order to find more suitable spaces for children matching quality requirements. In all three islands the number of places available in childcare are lower than the number of children aged 0 -12 years old. On Bonaire this is coupled with a demographic increase of children the last years.
- Parental involvement in a parent or complaints committee remains a challenge for almost all organizations. Organizations are looking for simple and effective ways to increase parental involvement.

Efficiency

Due to the program the childcare has become more affordable to parents across all three Islands. The participation in childcare has increased in two of the three islands.

All organizations across the three islands struggled in the beginning with higher administrative burden due to the program (e.g. the plans that need to be drafted and procedures that need to be followed due to the subsidy scheme). There was expected a lot from organizations, for example designing a pedagogical plan and other quality requirements. In the beginning organizations lacked time/resources to meet all requirements. This changed for almost all organizations after the first phase when adapting to new circumstances with much help from the project organization on the islands. Especially organizations on Bonaire who are organized in a more informal way still struggle with meeting quality requirements and a high administrative burden. They experience not having sufficient financial resources to meet all requirements. Financial challenges that organizations face

on Bonaire create a barrier for achieving the goals of the program and significantly improving quality, safety and accessibility of childcare.

5.4 Monitor child development

In this section we answer the following research question: *What is needed to monitor child development in 4-5 years in order to assess the effect of the BES(t) 4 Kids Program on the development of children?*

Organizations vary in the way they monitor child development. Few organizations use professional instruments. All organizations would like to develop this further and in a more professional way. They see the importance of investing in this, as it helps them to signal early development problems and give the child the right care (matching his/her developmental level).

When all organizations use different methods it will be more difficult to collect reliable data in order to assess the effect of the BES(t) 4 Kids program on the child-level. Moreover, organizations could benefit from each other's expertise and know-how when developing a system together. Also efficiency gains could be made. Therefore, we suggest to develop an instrument for all organizations to use.

Our advice is to set up a process to choose a good fitting instrument matching needs of the organizations and making their work easier. The pedagogical network per island could play a role in this, in close cooperation with schools. When the instrument is used on full scale, monitor data can be withdrawn periodically in order to follow child development as one of the indicators for the effectiveness of the program³⁷.

5.5 Recommendations

Based on the results we identify seven recommendations on the program- and organizational-level.

Program-level

- All organizations have positive attitudes towards the efforts of the BES(t) 4 Kids program assisting them to improve the quality and safety. The project-leaders on each island have been crucial in achieving this result. It is important to maintain this role as a linkin-pin between the organizations and the program. European Netherlands ministries maintain a more facilitating role.
- Childcare has become more affordable to parents across all three islands but improving the financial accessibility remains a point of attention. Because of low income levels, the parental contribution could still be too high for some parents resulting in lower participation rates. The number of parents who besides cost-price reducing subsidy also receive child placement subsidy is relatively low on Bonaire and St. Eustatius. One of the reasons for that might be the insufficient understanding that parents have about the available subsidy possibilities and barriers in the administrative process.
- We observe differences across islands in tempo of meeting the quality requirements. Especially on Bonaire, organizations with various 'starting points' entered the program (from informally organized host parents to large professional organizations). As a consequence, organizations differ in the size of the gap they have to bridge to meet all requirements. Therefore, the pace of implementing the requirements set out in the law should give room for these differences. This could be done in various ways. **First**, by setting up a context-aware supervision system,

³⁷ Only results on aggregated level, indicating changes in development (no individual scores).

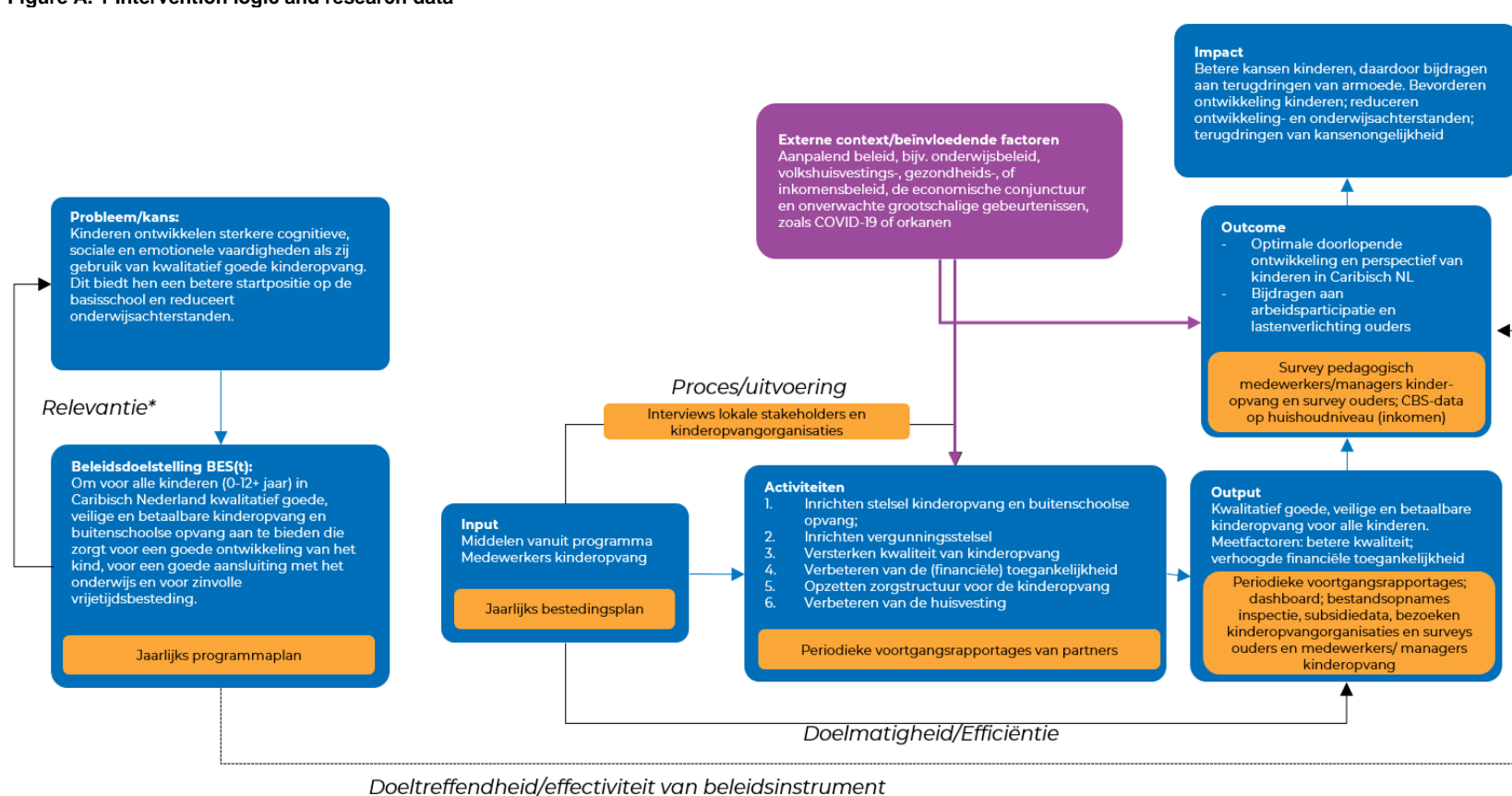
adjusting next steps to the context/abilities of the organization. **Second**, by postponing the moment of implementation, giving more time to organizations to work on requirements prior to implementation. **Third**, by re-designing the law into a law that sets the framework/ambitions or goals instead of prescribing rules on organizational level, expanding possibilities to work on ambitions or goals in various tempi.

Organizational-level

- Organizing parental involvement is difficult on all islands, but is important in order to stimulate learning and development also at home. We suggest to focus more on the social involvement of parents and from there work to more formal involvement (parent committee, involving in pedagogic plans).
- On Bonaire, informal organized organizations experience high financial and administrative burden. We suggest to create a support-network of these organizations. They could for example work together in writing a pedagogic plan or share the costs of an accountant.
- Expanding knowledge sharing with Dutch twinning partners and between similar organizations (across and within islands). For example, together developing smart ways to involve parents and working on an instrument to monitor the development of children, in cooperation with pedagogical networks and schools across islands.
- Besides increasing the salaries and creating better working conditions, also strengthening the image of childcare on all islands is important to attract and retain pedagogic employees.

Annex I Intervention logic and research data

Figure A. 1 Intervention logic and research data



Annex II: Questionnaire Phase 1 Childcare (Parents)

<Ask a control question: What is your relationship with (one of the) child(ren) in the childcare?

Continue with: are you guardian or parent, grandfather or grandmother?

<Research Introduction>

<Time only for a survey or also for the in-depth questions in between>

<Give the consent form and have it signed>

Background

1. How many children do you have at this childcare?
2. How old are your child(ren) who are going to the childcare? How many parts of the day your child(ren) go to the childcare? One part of the day is 4 hours. And do you also use other types of childcare? If so, how many hours per week? **Routing: numbers based on question 1**

	First youngest child	Second child	Third child	Etc.
Age				
Childcare centre	--- day parts per week	--- day parts per week	--- day parts per week	
Care provided by family	--- hours per week	--- hours per week	--- hours per week	
Care provided by babysitter/nanny who comes to your home	--- hours per week	--- hours per week	--- hours per week	
Care provided by childminder	--- hours per week	--- hours per week	--- hours per week	

3. What language(s) do you speak with your child(ren) at home? (multiple answers possible)
 - a. Dutch
 - b. Spanish
 - c. English
 - d. Papiamentu
 - e. Chinese
 - f. Other, specify <open answer>
 - g. I don't want to say
4. What language(s) is spoken with your child(ren) at childcare? (multiple answers possible)
 - a. Dutch
 - b. Spanish
 - c. English
 - d. Papiamentu
 - e. Chinese
 - f. Other, specify <open answer>
 - g. I don't want to say

Tax relief for parents

5. Please indicate to what extent you agree with the statements below. I use childcare for my child/children, because...

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	No opinion / Don't know
A	Because my child can then play with other children					
B	Because then my child can learn new things (such as counting, colouring, recognizing shaped)					
C	Because otherwise I can't go to work					
D	So that I can work more					
E	Because the childcare is nearby					

6. Are there also other reasons why you make use of childcare, which I did not mention?
- Yes, specify <open answer>
 - No
7. Some parents do not use childcare. What do you think are the reasons why parents do not use childcare? *This is an 'open question' and then click on what is being said (multiple answers possible)*
- Cost (too expensive)
 - Quality of the childcare
 - Accessibility
 - Religious belief/culture
 - Other, specify <open answer>

Factors that parents consider important for childcare

8. Do you think that the staff at the childcare teach your child enough new things?
- Yes
 - No
 - Don't have an opinion
9. Do you think there are enough toys at the childcare for the children?
- Yes
 - No
 - Don't know / Don't have an opinion
10. Do you think there are enough other items (books, pencils, sports equipment) at the childcare for the children?
- Yes
 - No
 - Don't know / Don't have an opinion

11. How satisfied are you with....

		Very unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	No opinion /Don't know
A	... the location? (Is the location easily accessible?)					
B	... the space? (Is there enough space for the children?)					
C	... the indoor climate (air conditioning?)					
D	... the safety at childcare?					
E	... the hygiene at the childcare? (is the room clean? Are playground equipment and toys clean?)					
F	... the quality of the materials used (toys, books, pencils, sports equipment)?					
G	... the activities during the day?					
H	... the creativity of the activities?					
I	... the nutrition?					
J	... the language(s)?					
K	... the number of staff for the number of children?					
L	... the guidance of the employees?					

Parent Involvement

12. What applies to you?

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	No opinion / Don't know
A	I am informed about the development of my child					
B	I can easily get in touch with the staff					
C	I can participate in a parent committee					
D	I am involved in the activities at the childcare					
E	I am familiar with the pedagogical vision of childcare					

If A = agree or strongly agree: How does this information look like? (Conversations, reports, etc.)

(Financial) accessibility of childcare

13. Have you heard about the special financial arrangements to pay for the childcare (e.g. partial compensation of parental contribution or free offer for a certain income level)?

- Yes, I know about this
- No, I didn't know about this
- Other, specify <open answer>

14. If yes, do you make use of special financial arrangements to pay for the childcare? **Routing: if question 13 = yes**

- Yes, lower parental contribution
- Yes, free offer of childcare
- No

15. How much money do you spend on childcare per month? Assume the amount that you pay the childcare center on average per month (also include costs for food and transport)

- a. 0 dollars
- b. 1- 50 dollars
- c. 51 – 100 dollars
- d. 101 – 150 dollars
- e. 151 – 200 dollars
- f. 201 – 251 dollars
- g. 251 – 300 dollars
- h. 301 – 351 dollars
- i. 351 – 400 dollars
- j. 401 – 450 dollars
- k. 451 – 500 dollars
- l. 501 dollars or more
- m. Don't know/don't want to say

Background

16. What is the highest level of education that you completed with a diploma?

- a. No formal education (not completed primary school)
- b. Primary school
- c. Lower secondary education (lbo, vsbo, mavo, mulo)
- d. MBO, mts, sbo, havo/vwo
- e. Bachelor's degree (HBO)
- f. Master's degree (WO)
- g. Post graduate (WO+)
- h. Other, specify <open answer>

17. How would you describe your current employment situation?

- a. I work, paid, 32 hours or more per week
- b. I work, paid, 20 hours per week, but less than 32 hours per week
- c. I work, paid less than 20 hours per week
- d. I am on (early) retirement
- e. I am unemployed and looking for a job
- f. I have a permanent work disability (incapacity to work)
- g. I receive support
- h. I do household chores (househusband/wife)
- i. I am following education/I am studying

18. How many people (including yourself) does your household consist of?

- a.persons, out of which child(-ren) and adult(s).

19. Who are these adult(s)?

- a. (....)

20. What is the average monthly income (gross) of your household?

- a. Less than 1000 dollars
- b. Between 1000 and 1999 dollars
- c. Between 2000 and 2999 dollars
- d. Between 3000 and 3999 dollars
- e. Between 4000 and 4999 dollars
- f. Between 5000 and 5999 dollars
- g. 6000 dollars or more

h. Don't know/don't want to say

21. What is the highest level of education that father/mother of the children have completed with a diploma?

- a. No formal education (not completed primary school)
- b. Primary school
- c. Lower secondary education (lbo, vsbo, mavo, mulo)
- d. MBO, mts, sbo, havo/vwo
- e. Bachelor's degree (HBO)
- f. Master's Degree (WO)
- g. Post graduate (WO+)
- h. Other, specify <open answer>

22. How would you describe the current employment situation of the father/mother of the children?

- a. He/she works, paid, 32 hours or more per week
- b. He/she works, paid 20 hours per week, but less than 32 hours per week
- c. He/she works, paid less than 20 hours per week
- d. He/she is on (early) retirement
- e. He/she is unemployed and looking for a job
- f. He/she has a permanent work disability (incapacity to work)
- g. He/she receives support
- h. He/she does household chores (househusband/wife)
- i. He/she is following education/ is studying

23. In the past 12 months, have you had difficulty making ends meet on your household income?

- a. No, no trouble at all
- b. No, no trouble, but I do have to watch my expenses
- c. Yes, some difficulty
- d. Yes, great difficulty
- e. I don't want to say

Ending

24. Is there anything else you would like to say?

25. Would you like to be kept informed about the research?

- a. Yes, I can be reached on telephone number <open answer> and/or e-mail address: <open answer>.
- b. Yes, through the local project manager
- c. No

To be completed by researcher:

26. What is the gender of the respondent?

- a. Male
- b. Female
- c. Other

27. is Name of island where childcare center is located

- a. Saba
- b. St. Eustatius
- c. Bonaire

28. Childcare organization name
- Dropdown menu per island

29. Survey conducted in year
- 2021
 - 2024
 - 2026

Separate interview questions (all open):

- Have you experienced any change in the childcare organization in the past year? If yes, what?
- Are you familiar with the BES(t) 4 kids program?
** If, no, a brief explanation of the purpose of the program including priorities (quality, affordable childcare organisations, appropriate support for children (care), safety and hygiene).*
- How do you think this is getting attention?
- Do you have your own ideas about possible points for attention or points for improvement for childcare? E.g.:
 - the supervision by the pedagogical staff? If so, what (..)
 - the quality of the materials used? If so, what (..)
 - the safety? If so, what (..)
 - the hygiene? If so, what (..)
 - the accessibility/affordable childcare? If so, what (..)
 - Other, specify ...
- Do you have any additional comments to this conversation?

Annex III: Questionnaire Phase 1 Childcare (Managers and Employees)

<Research Introduction>

<Time only for a survey or also for the in-depth questions in between>

<Give the consent form and have it signed>

Background

1. What is your first and last name? If known in advance, to be completed by the researcher
<Open answer>
2. What language(s) do you speak? Multiple answers possible
 - a. Dutch
 - b. Spanish
 - c. English
 - d. Papiamentu
 - e. Chinese
 - f. Other, specify <open answer>
 - g. I don't want to say
3. Do you work for other childcare organisations?
 - a. Yes, specify <open answer>
 - b. No
4. What is your position at this childcare organisation?
 - a. Director-owner
 - b. Branch/Location Manager
 - c. (Pedagogical) employee
 - d. Other, specify <open answer>
5. Do you work here based on...
 - a. A temporary contract
 - b. A permanent contract
 - c. Other, specify <open answer>
6. How many years of work experience do you have at this organization as a pedagogical employee or manager/director?
 - a. <Open answer>
7. How many years of work experience as a pedagogical employee or manager/director do you have in total?
 - a. <Open answer>

Trained and qualified personnel

8. What general prior education have you followed and completed with a diploma?
 - a. No formal education (primary school not completed)

- b. Primary school
 - c. Lower secondary education (lbo, vsbo, mavo, mulo)
 - d. mbo, mts, sbo, havo/vwo
 - e. Bachelor's degree (HBO)
 - f. Master's Degree (WO)
 - g. Post graduate (WO+)
 - h. Other, specify <open answer>
9. Have you completed further vocational training(s) and completed it with a diploma?
- a. No
 - b. Yes, specify <open answer>
10. Have you followed any additional training or education to fulfill your role as a pedagogical employee?
- Routing: not for managers**
- a. Yes, specify <open answer>
 - b. No, why not? <open answer>

11. What training and exchange opportunities are offered within your organisation?

Training	Offered	Followed
Kaleidoscope/high scope or any other HOA program		
UNICEF training		
Communication4 development		
Twinning program		
Other, namely (open answer)		

12. Are there any trainings you would like to follow? Or areas in which you would like to develop further? (open text box)
13. How many hours per year have been budgeted on average per pedagogical employee for training/coaching? **Routing: only for managers**
- a. I don't know
 - b. Hours per year: <open answer>
14. Have you used available resources from BES(t) 4 kids for training and/or coaching purposes? **Routing: only for managers**
- a. Yes, specify (open)
 - b. No
15. Is there expertise within the team in the field of early identification of development and learning delays?
- a. a. Yes, namely <open answer>
 - b. b. No, why not <open answer>
16. Does the team have expertise in providing first aid to children?
- a. Yes, namely <open answer>
 - b. No, why not <open answer>

About the group

Introduction: The group you spend the most time with.

17. How is the group composed by age on the busiest days of the week?

If interviewee does not know, enter 999. **Routing: not for managers**

- a. Babies (0 to 1.5 years) <number>
- b. Toddlers (1.5 to 2/2.5 years) <number>
- c. Toddlers (2/2.5 to 4 years) <number>
- d. Toddlers (4 to 6 years) <number>
- e. Young school children (6 to 9 years) <number>
- f. Older school children (9 to 12 years) <number>
- g. Other please specify <number>

18. How big is your group with children at the busiest time of the day and with how many qualified supervisors are you? Trainees or assistant parents not included. If no childcare is provided by the interviewee, enter 0. If interviewee does not know, enter 999. **Routing: not for managers**

Day of the week	Number of children	Number of supervisors
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		

19. What is the distribution of children in your group according to special care needs? Children can be counted in multiple categories. If interviewee does not know, enter 999. **Routing: not for managers**

Children with...

- a. Need for language support <number>
- b. Physical or intellectual disability or chronic health problems <number>
- c. Special care needs related to behaviour (busy behaviour, aggressiveness, autism, behavioural problems) <number>
- d. Refugee status <number>
- e. Other care need, specify (fill this in) <number>

20. Can you indicate how you deal with children with special care needs? **Routing: not for managers**

		yes	no	N/A
A	Have adjustments been made to the space and materials for one or more children?			
B	Is there sufficient knowledge available at your location to take care of these children?			
C	Can you ensure that other children interact well with children with care?			
D	Do you or your location consult with an internal or external expert or outpatient care provider?			
E	If D = yes Is it possible to put external advice into practice?			
F	Are you or is one of your colleagues trained in dealing with children with special care needs?			

21. Does the organization participate in the pilot 'care' of BES(t) 4 kids to gain insight into the division of tasks between childcare organization and care provider? **Routing: only for managers**
- Yes, specify (leave an open answer here to fill in the added value and points for improvement of this pilot)
 - No, specify (why not)
22. What language is spoken at the childcare organisation? *Multiple answers possible*
- English
 - Dutch
 - Papiamentu
 - Other, specify <open answer>
23. Do you offer the possibility to teach employees one or more different languages? If yes, which ones? **Routing: only for managers**
- English
 - Dutch
 - Papiamentu
 - Other, specify <open answer>

Quality

24. Do you have a fixed daily program with a clearly recognizable sequence of different activities for the children?
Routing: not for managers
- Yes, there is a full day program
 - Yes, a fairly fixed day program
 - There is a partly fixed, partly flexible day schedule
 - No, a flexible daily schedule
 - No, a very flexible daily schedule: every day is completely different
25. How do you encourage children to discover new things and have new experiences?
- Open question
26. In addition to joint and organized fixed activities, is there room for free activities (free play, children who choose their own activity, free outdoor play) **Routing: not for managers**
- (Almost) never
 - Rarely, if so can you give an example? (Open)
 - Regularly, if so can you give an example? (Open)
 - Often, if so can you give an example? (Open)
 - (Almost) always, if so can you give an example? (Open)
27. Does the organization have a parents' committee? **Routing: only for managers**
- Yes, specify (leave an open answer here to fill in how the parents' committee works)
 - No
28. What else do you do to involve parents in your activities at the day-care? What are the results of that? What could be done better? (open question) **Routing: only for managers**
29. Does the organization have a complaints committee? **Routing: only for managers**
- Yes, specify (leave an open answer here to fill in how the complaints committee works)
 - No

Continuous development line

30. Is there a pedagogical vision/pedagogical policy plan with regard to the care, upbringing, guidance, support and education of children? **Routing: only for managers**
- Yes, specify (leave an open answer here to fill in the core of that vision)
 - No, why not?
31. Do the employees act sufficiently in accordance with this pedagogical vision/pedagogical policy plan? **Routing: only for managers**
- Yes, specify (open answer here to fill in showing this)
 - No, why not? (open answer)
32. Do you think an Island-wide pedagogical network is useful? Within this network you can discuss with other managers and organisations about programs for development stimulation and you can learn from each other. **Routing: only for managers**
- Yes, it is useful (open answer to specify WHY and also HOW it should function)
 - No, not useful (open answer WHY)
 - Don't know
33. Could you explain how you work together with primary schools in order to make sure there is a continuous direction of development for children? **Routing: only for managers**
- Open answer (Regular meeting with schools? For every child a report when it enters school? Etc)
34. Do you use a special educational program or another method of development stimulation?
- Yes and is it useful? And what could be done better? (open answer)
 - No, should there be and why (open answer)
 - Other, specify <open answer>
35. Do you follow the development of children in a systematic way? For example with observations, a child tracking system or tests.
- No
 - Yes, by regular informal observation of the group
 - Yes, with a self-developed child tracking system
 - Yes, with a child tracking system developed elsewhere
 - Other, specify <open answer>

36. What do you use the tracking system for?

		No	Somewhat	Yes
A	To monitor children's motor development			
B	To monitor children's social-emotional development			
C	To monitor children's language and cognitive development			
D	For the creative, artistic and musical follow the education of children			
E	To monitor the well-being of children			
F	To determine the care needs and plans of action for individual children			
G	For conversations with parents about their child			
H	For the transfer of children to primary school, for consultation with the school			
I	To evaluate our offer			
J	To plan our pedagogical policy			
K	Other, specify <open answer>			

37. If 36.F = Yes: Is the treatment plan for individual children also shared with the parents?

Work experience and professional development supervisor.

Routing: if someone is a manager, he will not get these questions

38. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	I don't know/no opinion
A	I feel valued in my work					
B	I get paid well for the work I do					
C	Pedagogical employees determine the policy of the organization together with management (joint decisions)					
D	I systematically evaluate, improve and innovate (annual or more often) the pedagogical policy and offer					
E	I structurally involve parents in shaping the (educational) policy and offer					
F	I work with and learn from other types of professionals (For example from education, care or childcare)					
G	I have discussions with schools about continuous development of children					
H	My job gives me great satisfaction					
I	My work is exciting and stimulating					
J	This job gives me the opportunity to specialize in something what I'm good at					
K	I keep learning new things to develop myself					
L	I am offered enough forms of (re)training or professionalization from my organization.					

Financial accessibility of childcare

39. Do you inform parents about the subsidy schemes to which they are entitled? Routing: only for managers

- Yes, I will mention this when registering
- Yes, when they specifically ask for this
- No, that's not my responsibility
- N/A, I am not involved in the application process
- Other, specify <open answer>

40. Do you ever have to deal with parents who are unable or can hardly afford childcare? Routing: only for managers

- Yes, and how do you deal with that? And what does it take to solve this? (open answer)
- No
- N/A, I am not involved in the application process

BES(t) 4 kids program

41. Have you experienced any change in the childcare organization in the past year? If yes, which one? (Open)

42. Are you familiar with the BES(t) 4 kids program? (Open)

43. What do you think of the priorities of the BES(t) 4 kids program (quality, affordable childcare organisations, appropriate support for (care) children, safety and hygiene).
44. How do you think this is being addressed? (Open)
45. Do you have your own ideas about possible points of attention or points for improvement for childcare? E.g.:
- a. the supervision by the pedagogical staff? If so, what (..)
 - b. the quality of the materials used? If so, what (..)
 - c. the safety? If so, what (..)
 - d. the hygiene? If so, what (..)
 - e. accessibility/affordable childcare? If so, what (..)
 - f. Otherwise, specify ...
46. Are there possible points for improvement for the BES(t) 4 kids program? (Open)

Closing

47. Is there anything else you want to say?
48. Would you like to be kept informed about the research?
- a. Yes, I can be reached at e-mail address: <open answer>
 - b. Yes, through the local project manager
 - c. No

To be completed by researcher:

49. What is the gender of the respondent?
- a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Other
50. Name of island where childcare centre is located
- a. Saba
 - b. St. Eustatius
 - c. Bonaire
51. Childcare centre name
- a. Choice menu per island
52. Survey in year
- a. 2021
 - b. 2024
 - c. 2026

Annex IV Information letter



INFORMATION ON THE BES(t) 4 KIDS MULTI-YEAR STUDY

What is the BES(t) 4 kids multi-year study?

The multi-year study BES(t) 4 kids is an evaluation of the effect of the BES(t) 4 kids program and the (upcoming) Childcare (in the) Dutch Caribbean Act. The study looks at the results achieved and the consequences of the BES(t) 4 kids program. The study will start at the end of 2021 and will run until 2027. During this study period the researchers plan three visits to Bonaire, Saba and St. Eustatius. During these visits, they will conduct interviews with directors, managers, employees, parents, and other involved parties with knowledge of childcare organizations. In addition, existing results from other research and monitoring activities will be used as much as possible during this study.

What will we ask childcare organizations during the first measurement?

We would like to visit your organization during the first visit of this study. This will take place at the end of 2021. The next visits will not take place until 2024 and 2026.

The following visits are scheduled for 2021:

- On **Bonaire**, the researchers will visit 5 organizations in the week of **November 29th**.
- On **St. Eustatius**, the researchers will visit 6 organizations in the week of **November 1st**.
- On **Saba**, the researchers will **visit 2** organizations in the week of **November 8th**.

During this visit, the researchers would like to talk to the various parties involved about the quality, safety and (financial) accessibility of childcare and out-of-school care. These interviews will last a maximum of 40 minutes.

The following people from the childcare organizations are invited for an interview:

- 1. Director (1)**
- 2. Manager (1)**
- 3. Pedagogical employees (2)**
- 4. Parents (3 to 4)**

We hope to speak to the parents when they drop off or pick up their children. The interviews with parents will last between 5 and 10 minutes. Some parents will be asked to elaborate on the answers given (additional 5-10 minutes).

Your organization will be contacted to invite people to the interview and to schedule a visit. If visits cannot take place due to local COVID restrictions, you will be contacted to schedule online interviews in that week.

Why is participation so important?

We certainly hope that this study will also allow us to make a contribution to your work as well. We would like to discuss the options for implementing the insights gained in childcare and out-of-school care. We focus on what works well and what we would like to see more of, instead of focusing on what is not working. Your contribution will help us to match the results of the research to your needs, daily practice, and the local environment.

When will the results be available?

The study will run until 2027. Over the course of the entire study the results will be put to the test against the daily practice. To this end, a sounding board group will be set up for each island. The sounding board group consists of local people who have insight into the daily practice. The kick-off meeting of this sounding board group will take place during the first visit at the end of 2021. During the second meeting in early 2022 the first results will be shared and validated. The organizations that do not participate in the sounding board group will receive the first results in February 2022.

Who is conducting the study?

This study is to be conducted on behalf of the Public Bodies of Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba and the Ministries of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW), Education, Culture and Science (OCW), Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS) and Home Affairs and Climate (BZK).

An independent and multidisciplinary research team has been assembled for the study. This team consists of:

- researchers from research firm Ecorys (this firm was also involved in the 2018 childcare baseline measurement);
- researchers and experts in the field of childcare from the University of Utrecht;
- local policy researcher at MGL Research & Consultancy.

For questions about the study, please contact study project leader: Annejet Kerckhaert (Email: annejet.kerckhaert@ecorys.com, Tel: + 31 6 51 938 792).

About Ecorys

Ecorys is a leading international research and consultancy company, addressing society's key challenges. With world-class research-based consultancy, we help public and private clients make and implement informed decisions leading to positive impact on society. We support our clients with sound analysis and inspiring ideas, practical solutions and delivery of projects for complex market, policy and management issues.

In 1929, businessmen from what is now Erasmus University Rotterdam founded the Netherlands Economic Institute (NEI). Its goal was to bridge the opposing worlds of economic research and business – in 2000, this much respected Institute became Ecorys.

Throughout the years, Ecorys expanded across the globe, with offices in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Our staff originates from many different cultural backgrounds and areas of expertise because we believe in the power that different perspectives bring to our organization and our clients.

Ecorys excels in seven areas of expertise:

- Economic growth;
- Social policy;
- Natural resources;
- Regions & Cities;
- Transport & Infrastructure;
- Public sector reform;
- Security & Justice.

Ecorys offers a clear set of products and services:

- preparation and formulation of policies;
- program management;
- communications;
- capacity building;
- monitoring and evaluation.

We value our independence, our integrity and our partners. We care about the environment in which we work and live. We have an active Corporate Social Responsibility policy, which aims to create shared value that benefits society and business. We are ISO 14001 certified, supported by all our staff.



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