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# **Croatia**

## **Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programmes**

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## CROATIA

### Early Childhood Education and Care (ECCE) programs

#### **A. GENERAL INFORMATION, STATISTICS AND INDICATORS**

##### **Starting age of compulsory education (if applicable):**

According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) the compulsory education age range is 7-15 years.

#### **1. ISCED 0 PROGRAMS (USUALLY, PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION)**

(ISCED = International Standard Classification of Education)

##### **1.1. National definition of ISCED 0 programs:**

Pre-school education (kindergarten)

##### **1.2. Normative age group(s) covered by ISCED 0 programs:**

3-6 years of age

##### **1.3. ISCED 0 programs: statistics and indicators**

###### *1.3.1. Enrolment:*

	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Year</b>
Gross enrolment ratio	47.9	2004/05
Net enrolment ratio	47.8	2004/05
Percentage of children entering primary education with previous preschool experience	97.9	2002/03

*Sources:* For 2004/05 data, Ministry of Education, May 2006. For 2002/03 data, UIS.

1.3.2. Enrolment ratio by age group, 2004/05 (percentage, also including the first years of primary education when applicable):

Less than 3 years of age	Age 3	Age 4	Age 5	Age 6	Age 7
...	40.4	43.6	47.0	58.7	...

Source: Ministry of Education, May 2006.

1.3.3. Teachers, 2004/05:

Total number of teachers	Of whom female (%)	Percentage of trained teachers (all)	Percentage of trained teachers (males)	Percentage of trained teachers (females)
7,376	99.5	...	...	...

Source: Ministry of Education, May 2006.

1.3.4. Funding:

	Percentage
Public current expenditure per pupil as percentage of the Gross National Product per capita	22.38 (2004)

Source: UIS.

1.3.5. Main source(s) of financing:

The financial support to pre-school activities is provided by several sources, but the largest financial participation comes from units of local and regional self-governments, as well as from parents. The State co-finances programs of public needs targeting children in the pre-school program (one year before entering primary school), children belonging to national minorities, gifted children and children with special needs (e.g. with development difficulties).

## 2. OTHER ECCE PROGRAMS

(Generally preceding ISCED 0 programs)

### 2.1. National definition of other ECCE programs:

Nursery education conducted in kindergartens caters to children between 6 months to 3 years of age. The professional staff includes kindergarten teachers (Associate Degree holders, two-year programme) and senior nurses, pedagogues, psychologists, *defectologists* (Bachelor's Degree holders, four-year programme), sanitary leaders and senior nurses (Associate Degree holders). The number of children in nursery education groups ranges from 5 to 16, up to a maximum of 18 children.

## **2.2. Normative age group(s) covered by other ECCE programs:**

See above.

## **2.3. Estimate number of children covered by other ECCE programs:**

At the beginning of academic year 2004/2005 there were 463 reporting units having nursery schools (nursery education groups), providing attention to a total of 14,847 children.

## **B. BACKGROUND INFORMATION CONCERNING ECCE PROGRAMS (INCLUDING ISCED 0)**

### **3.1. Legislation concerning ECCE:**

By the Law on Social Care for Children of Pre-school Age (1991) and the Law on Pre-school Education No. 10/97, pre-school education has become a constituent part of the education system and each child is entitled to receive pre-school education.

### **3.2. Official body/bodies in charge of supervision or coordination:**

Ministry of Education and Sports

### **3.3. Other entities involved in the provision (e.g. municipalities, local governments) and main types of providers (e.g. public, private, mixed, community-based, etc.):**

Preschool institutions are managed and funded through local self-governments, while the Ministry of Education and Sports draws up their programmes. They are open to market conditions.

Children may start attending pre-school establishments as early as at the age of 1 year in nursery schools, while kindergartens cater to children between 3 and 6 years of age. About 35% children attend regular preschool education programmes. A high percentage of children attend shortened programmes (100-150 hours) in what are known as "little schools."

In 2005, there were 503 preschool institutions in the Republic of Croatia: 290 established by units of local self-government, 49 private kindergartens established by religious communities or parishes (46 catholic, 1 evangelical, 1 of the Chavely Chapel

religious community and 1 Jewish), 100 private kindergartens established by legal persons, 28 preschool programs conducted in elementary schools, 28 preschool programs, and 8 shorter programs conducted in the libraries—Medveščak Library, Društvo Naša djeca Association, Djeca prva Association, Brodski Stupnik Library, Zlatna Kobra Romany Association, Romany Association of Istria and Romany Association of Croatia in Čakovec.

#### **3.4. Type of personnel involved:**

See previous sections.

#### **3.5. Type of staff training (requirements):**

Teachers are trained in teacher-training faculties. Educators in pre-school establishments follow a two-year (four semesters) programme.

#### **3.6. Recent national policies and reforms:**

*Not available*

#### **3.7. Efforts targeted at vulnerable or disadvantaged children:**

*Not available*

#### **3.8. Special projects/programmes aiming at expanding or improving ECCE:**

*Not available*

#### **3.9. Information concerning the curriculum (if applicable) or the contents of ECCE programs**

##### *3.9.1. Objectives and aims:*

The preschool curriculum focuses on encouraging personality development by boosting a positive and realistic self-image in the child, and encourages children to notice and accept differences and internalize basic moral values.

##### *3.9.2. Learning areas and teaching-learning methods:*

Pre-school education has three important curricular components: health-protective, educational and cognitive. The cognitive element is based on the acquisition of basic

notions and categories of perception and experience of objects and situations in the nearest natural and cultural environment and it comprises:

- communication forms and content;
- cognitive content;
- and specific forms of games and exercises (language learning, music, playing, sports) which vary from one pre-school institution to another.

Some preschool institutions are also introducing foreign language teaching. Kindergarten curricula incorporate up-to-date educational approaches, and make use of foreign alternative experiences (Waldorf, Montessori etc.), which meets with the approval of users and the support of the educational authorities.

*3.9.3. Average number of hours per week and average amount of weeks per year:*

*Not available*

### **3.10. Any other relevant and pertinent information**

*Not available*

*[Main source: Ministry of Education website, August 2005]*

**C. SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION REGARDING ECCE (TO BE COMPILED IN COLLABORATION WITH UNICEF OFFICES WHERE POSSIBLE)**

**4.1. Parenting programmes are usually addressed to parents and families of children less than 6 years of age. Please provide information about any parenting programmes in your country according to the table below:**

Type of programme	Yes or No (note for each programme)	Please estimate the number of beneficiaries (if possible)
Parenting education through early learning centres and child care centres	Yes	
As component of health and nutrition programmes, such as information about child development included in health and nutrition visits	Yes	
Parent groups that meet to discuss issues of their young children, including health, nutritional status, and development	Yes	
As component of adolescent, livelihood or literacy programmes	Yes	
Media broadcast, such as <i>Sesame Street</i> , with media for and with children	Yes	
Other (please specify)		

**Are any of these programmes targeted specifically toward the vulnerable, poor, disadvantaged or excluded? If so, which ones? (Please provide/attach any additional and relevant information if available).**

The Program of the Decade intended for children of Roma national minority is carried out in line with the National Program for the Roma. Special benefits intended for the children from socially and economically disadvantaged families consist of using the right of free attendance in kindergartens (costs of accommodation covered by municipalities and cities), and the inclusion and the integration of the children with special needs (children with development difficulties) are especially taken into account.

**4.2. Is there a national-level system for monitoring children's development or school readiness prior to entering primary school?**

Information is not available.

**4.3. Is there a policy on early childhood (ECCE, ECD, etc.) that has been accepted? If not, is there one under development?**

Information is not available.

[*Information revised by the Ministry of Education, May 2006.*]