



IBE/2006/EFA/GMR/CP/25

Country profile prepared for the
Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2007
Strong Foundations: Early Childhood Care and Education

Czech Republic

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

programmes

Compiled by:
UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE)
Geneva, (Switzerland)

2006

This profile was commissioned by the Education for All Global Monitoring Report as background information to assist in drafting the 2007 Report. It has not been edited by the team. Information included in the series of profiles has been compiled by the IBE. In several cases data have been revised and/or expanded thanks to the helpful support of Ministries of Education and UNICEF offices worldwide. The views and opinions expressed in the present document are not necessarily those of the EFA Global Monitoring Report or UNESCO. The profile can be cited as follows: "Country Profile commissioned for the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2007, Strong foundations: early childhood care and education". For further information, please contact: efareport@unesco.org

CZECH REPUBLIC

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 6-15 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:

3-5 years of age

1.3. ISCED 0 programs: statistics and indicators

1.3.1. Enrolment:

	Percentage	Year
Gross enrolment ratio	104.4	2004/05
Net enrolment ratio	87.9	2004/05
Percentage of children entering primary education with previous preschool experience	93.5	2004/05

Source: Ministry of Education, January 2006. In 2004/05, there were 280,487 children attending kindergarten.

1.3.2. Enrolment ratio by age group (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
26.2	76.4	92.8	94.8	22.5	Not available

Source: Ministry of Education, January 2006.

1.3.3. Teachers:

Total number of teachers	Of whom female (%)	Percentage of trained teachers (all)	Percentage of trained teachers (males)	Percentage of trained teachers (females)
22,932	100	94	–	94

Source: Ministry of Education, January 2006.

1.3.4. Funding:

	Percentage
Public current expenditure per pupil as percentage of the Gross National Product per capita	15.33 (2002)

Source: UIS.

1.3.5. Main source(s) of financing:

Kindergartens are funded by their founding (governing) bodies, the Ministry of Education (MoEYS) and parents. The funding of kindergartens differs depending on the governing body. Most kindergartens are governed by municipalities which cover their running costs. Direct educational costs are financed from the state budget, and part of the finance is provided by parents (with the exception of the final year which is free) up to 50% of non-capital costs, except the costs covered from the state budget.

2. OTHER ECCE PROGRAMS

(Generally preceding ISCED 0 programs)

2.1. National definition of other ECCE programs:

Not available

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

Not available

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

Not available

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

3.1. Legislation concerning ECCE:

The main legal regulations include: Law No. 561/2004 on pre-school, basic, secondary, tertiary professional and other educational programs (Schools Act) and Decree No. 14/2005 on pre-school education.

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

Kindergartens/nursery schools (*mateřská škola*) that provide pre-school education for children, generally from the age of 3 to 6 years, are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. Education of children under the age of 3 takes place in crèches/nursery schools that are administered by the Ministry of Health.

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.):

Kindergartens provide institutionalised pre-school education to children generally from 3 to 6 until they enter compulsory education. In some cases younger children can be admitted, for whom the Ministry of Health otherwise arranges crèches, if parents have no alternative. There are currently also a rather high percentage of children aged six and more who have had their compulsory schooling deferred. Most common in kindergarten are 5-year-olds, for whom pre-schooling is considered beneficial in helping them adjust to compulsory school attendance. In 1999, an estimated 92.2% of 5-year-olds were attending kindergartens.

Attendance in kindergartens is voluntary. Various special and specialised classes operate as part of some kindergartens that are designed for children with disabilities, learning and behavioural difficulties. Disabled children may be integrated into mainstream classes.

The main task of municipalities as regards self-administration in education is to establish kindergartens, basic schools, basic art schools, centres for leisure

activities of young people and other school facilities. Municipalities therefore execute the powers of founding bodies, but may only appoint directors of schools and school facilities upon approval by the relevant regional authority. Municipalities are also obliged to establish conditions for implementation of compulsory schooling. They also cover the operational and capital costs for schools and school facilities over which they exercise the powers of the founding body.

Ensuring accessibility is financially demanding for municipalities as the founding bodies of kindergartens. Because the numbers of children are decreasing, the kindergartens are small and their operations expensive. Parents can be asked to pay a maximum of 50% of the running (not educational) costs covered by the community, with the exception of the pre-school year that must be accessible to all free of charge.

In 1995/96, most kindergartens were run by municipalities (97.6%), followed by private schools (1.9%), church-run schools (0.2%), and state-run schools (0.3%).

3.4. Type of personnel involved:

Kindergarten teachers. There are also teacher's assistants who assist in the education of children with special learning needs.

3.5. Type of staff training (requirements):

Kindergarten teachers are not required to attend the university. They obtain their qualifications at the end of a four-year course culminating with the *maturita* examination, offered at 15 secondary teacher training schools. They also have the opportunity to study at higher teacher training schools and universities, where they enroll in the short bachelor's degree course.

3.6. Recent national policies and reforms:

Although attendance in kindergartens is not compulsory, the Ministry of Education seeks to ensure that as many children as possible take part in pre-school education, and to make such arrangements as prevent, for example, the exclusion from attendance of children whose mothers are on maternity leave. The new education bill should stipulate the right of the child to a placement in a kindergarten in the final year of pre-school education, and this education should be free of charge. One of the reasons for this is the effort aimed at overcoming or alleviating various disadvantages that may cause problems after entering primary education.

3.7. Efforts targeted at vulnerable or disadvantaged children:

Special kindergartens, which are attended by 2.2% of children, create conditions for pre-school education of children with severe disabilities. In 2004 a total of 5,565 disabled children and 208 children without disabilities have been placed in 221 special kindergartens. There is a challenging trend to provide comprehensive care for children with special learning needs beginning with early care – both of the child and his/her family.

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

In March 2005 the Framework Educational Programme (curriculum) for Pre-school Education was issued. According to this programme kindergartens develop their own school-based curricula. In line with their circumstances and focus they may specialise, for example, in ecology, creative arts, physical education, etc. There is no other generally binding curriculum for kindergartens. Kindergartens may also operate according to model curricula such as Montessori, “Step by Step”, a health-supporting curriculum, and Waldorf pedagogy.

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

The Framework Programme for Pre-school Education was completed in 2004 and came into force from March 2005 as a binding document for education in kindergartens/nursery schools, special nursery schools and in preparatory classes for socially disadvantaged children.

The framework programme serves as a basic curriculum for kindergartens / nursery schools. This document requires pre-school institutions to develop their own educational programmes that best suit the local conditions and possibilities on the basis of the Framework Programme.. Hence, the education plan (curriculum) is almost completely a matter of the individual kindergarten / nursery schools.

The teachers obtained guidelines which facilitate the implementation of the new programme. Seminars for teachers are organised in cooperation with the educational guidance centres and educational departments of Regional Authorities. This should help teachers to create effective educational programmes for their school and to adapt to methods of working of the Framework Programme.

The Framework Programme is the basis for educational programmes in pre-school institutions and contains:

- general objectives of pre-school education;
- general content of pre-school education in five areas (biological, psychological, interpersonal, socio-cultural and environmental) in form of a description;
- fundamental characteristics of each single area and its educational objectives;
- educational objectives specific for each single area;
- main activities which should be offered and ensured in particular areas.

3.9.1. Objectives and aims:

Pre-primary education is supposed to support the healthy perceptual, physical and mental development of the child; to prepare ideal conditions for the individual development of his/her personality; to contribute to better social and cultural care of children; and to prepare basic prerequisites for their further learning.

3.9.2. Learning areas and teaching-learning methods:

There is internal differentiation and individualization in the content of educational activities. Programmes in foreign languages, swimming, art and speech therapy are offered, as well as courses for gifted children. However, the framework programme abandons the traditional structuring of educational content, and rather stresses that education always involves the whole personality of the child. Thus the content is structured in such a way to reflect the child's natural development. Individual areas of education are based on different relationships that a child gradually forms towards him/herself, other people, and the rest of the world. For each of these components partial learning objectives are defined, as well as expected competencies to be acquired, and activities and opportunities that should be offered. No generally applicable standards of evaluation have been introduced in pre-school education.

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

There may be kindergartens with half-day operations, full-day operations or “boarding” kindergartens. Kindergartens with half-day operations provide education up to 6.5 hours per day on the average; full-day ones operate from 6.5 to 12 hours per day (both five days a week), and “boarding” kindergartens also operate at night up to 7 days a week.

3.10. Any other relevant and pertinent information

Not available

[*Main Sources: EURYDICE Website, August 2005. EURYBASE, 2002/03. National Report on the Development of Education, 2004.*]

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		
As component of health and nutrition programmes, such as information about child development included in health and nutrition visits		
Parent groups that meet to discuss issues of their young children, including health, nutritional status, and development		
As component of adolescent, livelihood or literacy programmes		
Media broadcast, such as <i>Sesame Street</i> , with media for and with children	Czech TV broadcasts programmes for children – e.g. <i>Kostičky</i> and <i>Kouzelná školka</i>	
Other (please specify)		

(Co-operation with parents is one of the conditions set out in the Framework Educational Programme for Pre-school Education. However, programmes for parents do not operate centrally at the national level. Each kindergarten co-operates with parents. They organise, for example, meetings with experts, joint events for parents

and children, children's performances for parents, parents get involved in the kindergarten's activities, etc.)

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).

There are preparatory classes at basic schools for children with social disadvantages. The education is in line with the Framework Educational Programme for Pre-school Education.

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

The level of children's preparedness for school is not monitored at the national level. If the child's legal guardian applies for postponement of the beginning of compulsory education, the child undergoes examination at an educational/psychological guidance centre or a special pedagogy centre.

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

Pre-school education is part of the education system, and kindergarten is a type of school. The long-term strategy for pre-school education is set out in the National Programme for the Development of Education in the Czech Republic (White Paper) approved in February 2001, and the Long-Term Plan for Education and the Development of the Education System of the Czech Republic, which is developed by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

[Information revised by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, January 2006.]