

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

Egypt

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programmes

Compiled by:
UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE)
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EGYPT

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 6-13 years.

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

(ISCED = International Standard Classification of Education)

1.1. National definition of ISCED 0 programs:

Pre-primary education (kindergarten)

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

4-5 years of age

1.3. ISCED 0 programs: statistics and indicators (*source: UIS*)

1.3.1. Enrolment:

	Percentage	Year
Gross enrolment ratio	14.4	2003/04
Net enrolment ratio	7.6	2003/04
Percentage of children entering primary education with previous preschool experience	...	

Note: The enrolment ratio is estimated at 15.57% in 2004/05. (...) Not available.

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
0.0	1.1	12.0 0.0(*)	13.0 2.9(*)	1.2 91.6(**)	0.1 94.1(**)

Note: UIS estimation. (*) Enrolled in primary education. (**) Primary education enrolment ratio.

1.3.3. Teachers, 2003/04:

Total number of teachers	Of whom female (%)	Percentage of trained teachers (all)	Percentage of trained teachers (males)	Percentage of trained teachers (females)
19,425	99

(...) Not available.

1.3.4. Funding: Not available

	Percentage
Public current expenditure per pupil as percentage of the Gross National Product per capita	...

Note: The unit cost per child was 417 L.E. in 2001.

1.3.5. Main source(s) of financing:

Government, NGOs, parents. Compulsory free education starts at age 6. Parents have to pay for pre-primary education even in governmental schools. Average fee per child is 120 L.E.

2. OTHER ECCE PROGRAMS

(Generally preceding ISCED 0 programs)

2.1. National definition of other ECCE programs:

Nurseries

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

2-3 years of age

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

Total number of children = 655,602

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

3.1. Legislation concerning ECCE:

- Child Law No. 12, 1996 and its bylaw decree No. 3452, 1997 and its amendment No. 151, 2000.
- MOE Decrees: Decree No. 252, 2005. Decree No. 65, 2000 and its amendment Decree No. 15, 2003 (age 4 on 1 October). Decree No. 94, 1985 (experimental schools) and its amendment Decree No. 251, 2005.

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

- Ministry of Education (MoE)
- Ministry of Insurance and Social Affairs (MISA)
- Ministry of Health (MoH)
- National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM)
- Ministry of International Cooperation (MIC)

A Committee at the Governorate level (under the umbrella of NCCM) monitors the provision of ECED and submits evaluation reports to the Governorate.

The Nurseries Affairs Committee functions at the Governorate level and is chaired by the Governor. The Committee includes members of all related sectors.

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.):

Total number of nurseries supervised by MISA is 10,434 (June 2004). The NGO sector operates 55% of nurseries, while the private sector 42%. The remaining 3% is affiliated to Local Government Units, Youth Centers, Companies, and Universities.

Formal ECE provision is divided between the public sector (slightly less than 50 percent) and the NGO and private sector (slightly over 50 percent).

Kindergarten (KG) refers to pre-primary classes for 4-5 years old children, prior to transitioning to grade 1. KG programs are a form of early childhood education that takes place in a formal classroom setting, with a teacher, a curriculum, and a group of approximately 25 children. Preschool or nursery school programs are usually

tailored for younger children, ages 2 to 4, and can also take place in a formal classroom setting, with a teacher, and a curriculum.

About half of KG enrollment is in private schools; most programs in the private sector are developed and managed by NGOs, religious schools in the Al-Azhar system, workplace child care centers, non formal-child care in organizations and private homes. About two-thirds of nursery services are provided by NGOs, with the balance covered by an active private sector. There are no estimates of the numbers of children in these settings.

There is also an extensive public nursery system that enrolls thousands of 4- and 5-year-olds, providing custodial child care. The MISA currently has responsibility for 7,525 nurseries that care for over 600,000 children. Seventy-three percent of nurseries are located in Upper and Lower Egypt, in poorer, rural areas. Although nurseries are intended to cater for children until 4 years of age, it has been estimated that as much as 40 percent of nursery enrollments may be 4- and 5-year-olds, or approximately 252,025 children. The nursery program of the MISA currently is tailored to provide care for poor children. According to a World Bank assessment team that reviewed the nursery system, the quality of the current program should be improved to promote early stimulation and education. MISA programs include thousands of 4 and 5 year olds, even though regulations specifically denote MISA programs for younger children, and it is unlikely that older children are receiving an educational program preparing them for school.

ECE services have been steadily increasing in Egypt, but those governorates that need it most—those with the highest poverty rate and lowest income level—have the least access. There is currently an oversupply of ECE teachers in urban areas, and an undersupply in rural areas.

3.4. Type of personnel involved:

- MoE staff: The majority are specialized (either Faculties of Education or Faculties of KGs graduates).
- NGO staff: High school or university graduates (mostly non-specialized).

3.5. Type of staff training (requirements):

Faculties of Education are in the process of developing pre-service training for non-specialized KG teachers, and university faculties are developing in-service packages; neither of these new efforts is presently coordinated with MOE in-service training. New applicants for public KG teacher positions are required to have at least a bachelor's degree with specialization in education and early childhood development.

3.6. Recent national policies and reforms:

The main focus of ECE policies is education, but programs reflect health and nutrition conditions of the age group 3-5 as well. An integrated approach, including the improvement of children's health and nutritional status will have an important impact on early as well as future education. Partnerships between education, health, and social welfare systems are, therefore, necessary to ensure that multiple needs of

children are met. Egypt has taken an initiative in this regard through the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM) and the integrated conceptual framework for child development.

In 2001, the government announced its intention to promote the improvement of children's health and education by increasing the enrollment rates for KG programs, and reforming early childhood education. The specific aims are to provide a place for each child in a preschool institution; integrate preschool into the compulsory education system for the age group 4-5; and increase the percentage of children in preschool from 13 to 60 percent by 2010.

Two centers have been established in order to provide training opportunities for kindergarten teachers and to prepare suitable educational media for kindergarten children.

3.7. Efforts targeted at vulnerable or disadvantaged children:

- The national program Early Childhood Education Enhancement Program–ECEEP funded by Government of Egypt, WB, CIDA and WFP is targeting the most disadvantaged children in 152 administrative districts from 18 governorates.
- Rural Child project, funded by the Government of Egypt, targeting the poorest and most disadvantaged children in 21 governorates
- Inclusion of children with special needs in nurseries, a joint project between MISA and CARITAS in three governorates
- Feeding programs
- Shelter nurseries
- Social Assurance Program (exemption of fees)

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

In addition to the above:

- ECE component of the Education Reform Program (ERP) funded by USAID and covering 7 governorates
- Community Day care Centers established in Upper Egypt Governorates jointly between MISA and a number of international NGOs and donors such as Save the Children, Italian Cooperation and Unicef
- Nursery Improvement Program, funded by MISA to upgrade existing facilities
- ECD project, supporting 32 NGOs in 10 governorates to provide healthy environment for children through the dissemination of best practices in ECD
- Exchange program between GOE and JICA: Egypt receives Japanese volunteers specialized in ECD to work in Egyptian Nurseries in 8 governorates to enhance capacities.
- ECD Center, established by GOE, AGFUND and UNESCO. The center provides model KG classrooms and training for teachers and supervisors
- Sustainable Development Project, funded by GOE and Italian Government (dept swap program)

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

3.9.1. Objectives and aims:

Pre-primary education aims at achieving the comprehensive development of children and preparing them for school.

3.9.2. Learning areas and teaching-learning methods:

Teachers currently rely on a collection of 23 books, authorized by the MOE, that cover a series of topics: general teacher guides; a selection of guides on personality development, child behavior development, and music education; subject guides for the promotion skills in language, art, math, story telling, and writing. The remaining ten are workbooks for KG children, five each for KG1 and KG2.

The MoE, in collaboration with UNESCO, is currently developing a new curriculum for students aged 4-5 years

The MISA developed Curricula for children below 4 years of age which are based on Frobel (learning through playing, Portage Kit and Montessori).

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

MOE:

- Average number of weeks per year = 34 weeks (32 – 36 weeks)
- Regular government schools: 6 hrs / day – 6 days a week
- Experimental government schools and private schools: 7 hrs /day – 5 days a week

MISA:

- In upper Egypt: 9 months per year
- Elsewhere: 12 months per year
- 7 hrs /day – 5 days a week

3.10. Any other relevant and pertinent information

Not available

[Main source: World Bank. Report No. 24772-EGT. Arab Republic of Egypt. Strategic Options for Early Childhood Education. Human Development Sector, Middle East and North Africa Region, September 2002.]

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:

There are no records of available parenting programs, however, they are limited and usually implemented at the local level. UNICEF has been implementing a parenting education program for the past 10 years in 6 districts in Upper Egypt (a manual will be printed in 2006).

The National Institute for Nutrition conducts awareness programs targeting nurseries and parents.

Literacy programs for women include topics on maternal and childcare.

MISA established specialized centers to provide guidance and consultations to parents on family affairs including child care. MISA also conducts seminars on child care for parents through a number of its projects, e.g. Rural Child project.

The National Campaign on dental care included messages for children and parents.

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		
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).

- Parenting Education Program developed by UNICEF and targeting the most vulnerable families in Upper Egypt.
- Literacy programs for women include topics on maternal and childcare.

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

No

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

The Child Law No 12, 1996 and its bylaws is the national framework for all bodies targeting early childhood. Throughout the reform activities underway, the bylaws and ministerial decrees will be revised.

[Information revised by UNICEF, December 2005.]