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Strong Foundations: Early Childhood Care and Education

Malaysia

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programmes

Compiled by:
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MALAYSIA

Early Childhood Education and Care (ECCE) programs

A. GENERAL INFORMATION, STATISTICS AND INDICATORS

Starting age of compulsory education (if applicable):

Primary education entrance age: 6 years. According to Section 29A(1) of the Education Amendment Act 2002 (Act A1152), effective January 1 2003, the government has made primary education compulsory for all children aged 6+.

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) for children in the age group 4-6 years and Child Care Education for children aged 0-3+.

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

See point 1.1 above.

1.3. ISCED 0 programs: statistics and indicators (*source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics-UIS*)

1.3.1. Enrolment:

	Percentage	Year
Gross enrolment ratio	107.5	2002/03
Net enrolment ratio	75.2	2002/03
Percentage of children entering primary education with previous preschool experience	78.4	2002/03

1.3.2. *Enrolment ratio by age group, 2002/03 (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	0.1	26.7	71.9	0.0 92.4(*)	0.0 91.3(*)

UIS estimation. (*) Primary education enrolment ratio.

1.3.3. *Teachers, 2002/03:*

Total number of teachers	Of whom female (%)	Percentage of trained teachers (all)	Percentage of trained teachers (males)	Percentage of trained teachers (females)
28,198	98.8

(...) Not available.

1.3.4. *Funding:*

	Percentage
Public current expenditure per pupil as percentage of the Gross National Product per capita	2.34 (2003)

Source: UIS.

1.3.5. *Main source(s) of financing:*

The Government provides all financing for ECCE programs under the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development, the National Unity Department and the Department of Social Welfare.

2. OTHER ECCE PROGRAMS

(Generally preceding ISCED 0 programs)

2.1. National definition of other ECCE programs:

According to the Report of Malaysia for the Education For All Conference (2000), ECCE programs are divided into home-based centres (what some would call family daycare homes) serving fewer than 10 children and targeted largely on children under age 4, and pre-schools for 4-5-year-olds, disproportionately available in urban areas.

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

Children under age 4 (0–3+ years old) and children under age 6 (3+ to 4+ years old and 4+ to 5+ years old).

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

Agency	Under age 4 (0-4)	Under age 6 (4-6)	Total
Ministry of Education		78,623	78,623
Ministry of Rural Development (KEMAS)	2,926	213,051	215,977
National Unity Department		37,819	37,819
Department of Social Welfare	44,575		44,575
Private Agencies		287,922	287,922
TOTAL	47,501	539,960	664,916

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

3.1. Legislation concerning ECCE:

The 1984 Child Care Act (308 Act) refers to all ECCE programmes for children under age 4. The Education Act (1996) has included pre-school education as part of the national school system. All kindergartens (3+ to 5+ years old) have to follow curriculum guidelines provided by the Ministry of Education.

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

The Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development and the National Unity Department for children under age 6 (3+ to 4+ years old and 4+ to 5+ years old).

The Department of Social Welfare and the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development for children under age 4 (0 to 3+ years old).

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.):

Pre-school education is provided by government agencies such as the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of National Unity and Community Development as well as the private sector and non-governmental organizations. All pre-school centres are registered with the Ministry of Education. The government operated 81.6% of the pre-school programs in 1995. Of these, 61.8% were operated by the Community Development Division of the Ministry of Rural Development, 9.5% by the Ministry of National Unity and Social Development, and 10.3% by the Ministry of Education. The other 18.4% were operated by the private sector. Public pre-school programs are free to parents and funded by the Government. Private programs charge fees.

3.4. Type of personnel involved:

Not available

3.5. Type of staff training (requirements):

Both teacher-training colleges and universities offer pre-service training programmes. The universities offer two types of pre-service teacher training programmes: a one-year post-graduate diploma in education, and a four-year integrated bachelor's degree course. Similarly, teacher-training colleges offer a six-semester (three years) diploma in teaching programmes, and a one-year (two semesters) post-graduate diploma in teaching for university graduates who wish to enter the field of education.

Teacher training for pre-school (kindergarten) teachers is also provided by the Ministry of Education, whereas training for child minders is provided by Ministry of Rural and Regional Development and the Department of Social Welfare.

3.6. Recent national policies and reforms:

In 2001, the Ministry of Education (MOE) and other relevant ministries had increased access to preschool education. The private sector had also complemented the government's effort. The MOE further improved education at this level by institutionalizing it and making the National Preschool Curriculum compulsory in all pre-schools beginning 2003.

3.7. Efforts targeted at vulnerable or disadvantaged children:

Expanding provision of preschool classes throughout all areas (more sub-urban and rural areas). Disable/special children expansion to 100 classes under MOE.

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

Expand preschool classes throughout the nation by 2010.

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

The pre-school programme is based on a curriculum which is appropriate for 4–6 years old and compatible with their development, interests and unique needs. The curriculum is dynamic, child-centered and responsive to the diversity of populations that are represented in each classroom. Basically, the principles of the pre-school curriculum are: (a) the understanding of children’s characteristics (they are active, curious and they need love, attention and security); (b) the aim is to expose children to a rich and stimulating environment; and (c) the programme provides a variety of support materials, such as concrete, printed, multi-sensory, interactive and user-friendly materials.

3.9.1. Objectives and aims:

The aim of the preschool education is to strengthen the acquisition of basic skills such as socialization process and personality development. The basic skills taught at this level are communication, social and other skills (3Rs) in preparation for primary schooling. The general objectives of pre-school education are to enable the children to:

- develop love for their country;
- be well mannered and practice moral values;
- master basic communication skills;
- respect the national language;
- master the basics of the English language;
- appreciate physical activities as a basis for good health;
- develop physically and practice good health and safety measures;
- develop critical thinking skills through enquiry and the use of all the senses

(Based on: Education Aspiration and Preschool Education Goal).

3.9.2. Learning areas and teaching-learning methods:

The above-stated objectives are materialized through respective learning areas. They are:

- Language and communication;
- Cognitive development;
- Socio-emotional development;
- Spiritual and moral development;
- Physical development;
- Aesthetic and creative development.

Evaluation of children performance is part of the pre-school programme. It is informal and permanent. Teachers evaluate the children through on-going assessment. Evaluation is carried out through various means which include observation, children’s work projects and folio. Individual’s progress and development is kept in the pupil’s personal record.

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

The recommended amount of instructional time is three and a half hours per day, five days a week. The suggested timetable is as follows:

Class activities: 90 minutes (inside and outside classroom);

Group activities: 60 minutes;

Free activities: 30 minutes; and

Break/snacks/rest: 30 minutes.

3.10. Any other relevant and pertinent information

Not available

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 -Through Parent Teacher Association Preschool Platform (PTA); and Ministry of Health.	
Parent groups that meet to discuss issues of their young children, including health, nutritional status, and development	YES -Through Parent-Teacher Association	
As component of adolescent, livelihood or literacy programmes	YES	
Media broadcast, such as <i>Sesame Street</i> , with media for and with children	YES e.g. mass media [RTM, TV3 and ASTRO (TVP)]	
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).

Yes. For example Mass Media (RTM) always give current information to parents on Early Childhood Special Education. Some NGOs and Community Groups also collaborated with the relevant agencies to develop ECCE programs.

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

Yes. Evaluation and assessment are important and compulsory in preschool as stated in the Education Act (1996) [550 Act]. The Student's Personal Record must be given to Year 1 teacher to monitor the student's ability.

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

Yes. The Government has a policy on ECCE. The cabinet accepted the ECCE programs and it is included in Education Act (1996) [550 Act].

[Information revised by the Ministry of Education and UNICEF, December 2005.]