

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

Iran

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programmes

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ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

Early Childhood Education and Care (ECCE) programs

A. GENERAL INFORMATION, STATISTICS AND INDICATORS

Starting age of compulsory education (if applicable):

Compulsory education starts at age 6 and in principle covers five years of primary school and three years of orientation (or guidance) school.

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:

In principle, 5 years of age (see point 3.3)

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

1.3.1. Enrolment:

	Percentage	Year
Gross enrolment ratio (GER)	36.7	2003/04
Net enrolment ratio (NER)	27.0	2003/04
Percentage of children entering primary education with previous preschool experience	26.4	2003/04

Note: According to government statistics, GER is 35.5% for centres affiliated to the Ministry of Education and 10.5% for other non-related organizations, for an overall percentage of 46% at the pre-primary level. Furthermore, in 2002/03 some 26% of the primary level students had benefited from basic pre-school services.

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	1.5	2.5	26.9	0.0 80.2(**)	0.0 86.5(**)

UIS estimation. (**) 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)
24,820	89.2

Source: UIS. (...) Not available.

Note: Since planning for and implementation of teachers education in-service programme is decentralized to the provinces, detailed statistics on the percentage of trained teachers against the total number of the teachers are not available.

1.3.4. Funding:

	Percentage
Public current expenditure per pupil as percentage of the Gross National Product per capita	7.45 (2004)

Source: UIS.

1.3.5. Main source(s) of financing: Not available

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:

In 2004, the statute regarding the pre-school level was approved and adopted by the Supreme Council for Education. The EFA national document also has a part dedicated to this subject. With the adoption of the mentioned EFA document by the Cabinet and the importance attached to pre-school education in the Fourth National Development Plan, this level of education has also become legally binding. Based on prevalent laws, pre-school period is seen as compulsory also for children with visual, hearing, mental, physical and behavioral problems.

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

It is upon the bureau for Text Book Planning and Developing to design and prepare a curriculum guideline based on which educational content is defined. Educational content development is itself upon the Committee for Generating Teaching-Learning Activities established within the provincial Education Bureaus.

The procurement of equipment for pre-school centres is a responsibility of the General Directorate of Cooperation and Welfare, which takes care of the children who are almost all under 5. Equipping kindergartens, on the other hand, is carried out by primary education experts.

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.):

The first kindergarten was established in Iran in 1303 Hegiral Calendar (1924) and the Supreme council for Culture adopted the first statute for kindergartens in 1312 Hegiral Calendar (1933). In 1334 HC (1955) an independent bureau was established within the Ministry of Culture for kindergartens. In 1340 HC (1961), the government, taking into account, the different dialects prevalent in the country as well as the fact of taking care of the children of employed women in various organizations, authorized the private sector to the quantitative development of pre-school education. In 1352-6 HC (1973-77), that is during the fifth construction plan both the qualitative and quantitative development of the kindergartens was given prominence to and kindergartens were built in bilingual regions enjoying local dialects, such that the number of like centers increased from 53 to 2,481 in the governmental sector.

Since 1354 (1997) kindergartens were also set up in different ministries. Some two years later, all ministries and governmental organizations allocated a budget to the establishment of kindergartens. The women's organization was authorized to set up and to supervise them.

Kindergartens take care of and educate children between the ages of 4 months and 6 years. In such centers, children are classified according to the following criteria:

- 4 to 18 months old: Infant
- 18 month olds to 3-year olds: Toddler
- 3 to 5 year old: Very young child
- 5 year olds: Pre-school age (*Amadegi*)

Today, different institutions provide pre-school education services. These include: the Ministry of Education, State Welfare Organization, Municipalities, NGOs, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, as well as different governmental, non-governmental, private, and charity organizations.

Pre-school education matters, coordinating and supervision over the Education For All (EFA) programme, Planning and development of textbooks and supervising the condition of kindergartens are all taken care of within specialized related offices located in pre-school and primary education bureaus. Based on the type and nature of the activity undertaken, the bureaus of the Ministry of Education are responsible to follow up on issues related to the pre-primary stage as well as other educational levels and periods. In the provinces and their related areas, bureaus for education are active in the field of pre-primary education as well. This is also true about other related sectors. Taking care of the affairs related to the management of kindergarten classes (those affiliated to both private and public primary schools) is the responsibility of the principal.

3.4. Type of personnel involved:

Teachers, principals and other staff

3.5. Type of staff training (requirements):

Human power training, which is based on the training of trainers is planned and will be implemented in the following framework:

- Courses that require the full presence of the participants to be held in the form of workshops.
- Planning for the trainers' visit of sample pre-primary centres, meeting the staff and exchange of experiences.
- Preparation and production of educational materials.
- Organizing festivals on the implementation of modern educational techniques at a regional, provincial and national level.

Apart from the trainers, special courses are also to be organized for the experts and principals of the pre-primary centres.

3.6. Recent national policies and reforms:

Not available (see also point 3.8 below)

3.7. Efforts targeted at vulnerable or disadvantaged children:

Although the major emphasis in pre-primary education is on the development of the one-year pre-primary period, in places where there are limitations in the implementation of the full period, such as the bilingual and deprived areas of the country, to further prepare the children for primary education a one-month pre-primary course is planned and implemented. This is done to train children in basic skills. The one-month pre-primary classes of the country's bilingual areas are always held in summer, during which children will undergo an average of 100 hours of training. All costs of this period are covered by the government. Each year, one fifth of the first graders benefit from these training courses

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

For the qualitative and quantitative development of pre-primary education, the provincial bureaus for education have defined certain strategies based on their needs, conditions and facilities. As a whole, the following are the strategies defined and programmes planned for pre-primary education:

- Qualitative and comprehensive development of the activities of the pre-primary stage of education for a greater number of children through the application of flexible methods, such as the organization of in-house pre-primary classes, directing parents towards educating children at home and making use of the unused capacities of educational environments in primary education.
- Providing of, preserving and comprehensive planning for human forces.
- Decentralized development of educational content by areas and centres for pre-primary education.
- Development of a comprehensive system in the field of family education, to further facilitate their participation.
- Application of participatory methods for the management of pre-primary centres.

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

Pre-primary education is a one-year programme aimed at preparing 5-year-olds for the primary stage.

3.9.1. Objectives and aims:

The main objectives of pre-primary education (kindergarten) are as follows:

- to contribute to the physical, mental, emotional and social growth of young children, based on religious and ethical principles;
- to develop the abilities and talents of children in order to prepare them for future studies;
- to prepare children to easily comprehend scientific concepts;
- to promote the Persian language, particularly in the provinces where different languages are spoken;
- to prepare children to adapt themselves to Islamic principles in their personal and social life; creating in them the sense of cooperation and partnership in social activities and imbuing in them a respect for laws and regulations and to be responsive;
- to help low-income families by creating a safe educational atmosphere to train their young children.

3.9.2. Learning areas and teaching-learning methods:

Educational guidelines are prepared by the Provincial Committees for Teaching-Learning of each of the country's provincial bureaus for education with respect to ethnic and local differences and based on the curricular guidelines of each educational stage and distributed among the provincial-related centres. Educational activities include observation, scientific expeditions and tests, group discussion, singing, playing and arts (creative plays, handicrafts, drawing and making clay/dough sculptors). Apart from training activities for the children, guide books are developed for the trainers to further familiarize them with methods of conducting the named activities.

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

Owing to language problem in the first grade of primary schools in some regions of the country where people are bilingual, the high repetition rate of first graders lacking enough mastery to communicate in Persian language, and unavailability of sufficient number of pre-primary education centers, month-long preparatory classes are being annually held in such regions prior to the beginning of the school year since 1989. The Ministry of Education provides the ground to prepare the children residing in these regions to enter primary education through presenting the required plans and issuing the relevant circulars.

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)
<p>Parenting education through early learning canthers and child care canthers. The Better Parenting project is launched to expand IECD services through capacity building /empowerment and focused interventions</p>	<p>1-Parents of children who had enrolled in child care canthers in 3 provinces (Hormozgan, Sistan and Baluchestan and West Azerbaijan) educated and trained in 2004 (training sessions were done by State Welfare Organization trainers). 2- Parents of children who had enrolled in child care canthers in 3 provinces (Hormozgan, Sistan and Baluchestan and West Azerbaijan provinces) educated and trained in 2005 (training sessions were conducted by State Welfare Organization trainers).</p>	<p>At least 12,500 families in these provinces</p> <p>At least 25,000 families in these three provinces. 50 Rural Child Care Centers in 12 disparity districts ` Was established</p>

As component of health and nutrition programmes, such as information about child development included in health and nutrition visits	To be implemented by the Health and Nutrition Departments of Ministry of Health and Medical Education	<p>Launching community based nutrition project in four disparity districts of S&B province</p> <p>Conducting training workshops for Child Nutrition with participation of relevant sectors</p> <p>Epidemiological survey about malnutrition and child growth and organizing training groups in the 4 districts</p>
Parent groups that meet to discuss issues of their young children, including health, nutritional status, and development	Parents' discussion and training sessions re nutrition and health has been done countrywide under the supervision of the Nutrition Department of Ministry of Health and Medical Education.	Under IECD programme, educators, teachers and religious leaders are trained in selected districts to reach families, integrated to child health and nutrition project
As component of adolescent, livelihood or literacy programmes	Although the type of programme is not related to the IECD but there are numbers showing in the next column based on the status from the Literacy Movement organization.	Under 30 years of age in 2005: 1-Total No. countrywide: 375,432 2-Total No. in Sistan and Baluchestan province: 61129 3-Total No. in Hormozgan province: 14957 4-Total No. in West Azerbaijan province: 24893
Media broadcast, such as <i>Sesame Street</i> , with media for and with children	1-Nutrition teasers for children and for parents to be aware of their children's feeding and nutrition (broadcasted on TV in 2003) 2-Growth monitoring teasers with children for parents in order they measure and check their children's growth (broadcasted on TV in 2002)	It is countrywide and no number is available.
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, all the above targeted programmes are active in 3 deprived provinces (Sistan and Baluchestan, Hormozgan and West Azerbaijan) and 12 districts (4 districts in each province) and covers children's parents in rural areas to enroll their children at the rural child care canter and women in deprived areas to be aware of their children's nutrition and health.

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

This monitoring take place through the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Medical Education and Welfare Organization and also private care canter.

There is no particular nationwide system for monitoring children's growth and development or their preparation for entrance at the primary level. Nonetheless, educational research has been carried out at the level of higher education as well as the Centre for Educational Research, Research Councils of the provincial bureaus for education and other research centres. Through the conduction of research projects, the issue of pre-primary education and its effects on the different dimensions of children's growth as well as their educational progress in the primary period are studied.

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

There is an CD Policy drafted in 2004 by an international consultant but it needs to be adopted and finalized with IECD counterparts. Hopefully, the policy will be in 2006.

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