

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

Kyrgyzstan

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programmes

Compiled by:
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KYRGYZSTAN

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-primary education

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:

	Percentage	Year
Gross enrolment ratio	11.6	2003/04
Net enrolment ratio	8.4	2003/04
Percentage of children entering primary education with previous preschool experience	13.9	2003/04

Source: UIS.

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
Up to age 3 - 19.7%	From 3 to 5 - 47.7%		23.7%	8.6%	

Source: UNICEF estimation.

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)
3,637	...	45.5

Source: UNICEF estimation. (...) Not available.

1.3.4. *Funding:*

	Percentage
Public current expenditure per pupil as percentage of the Gross National Product per capita	32.20 (2002)

Source: UIS.

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

According to the Report on State of the Preschool System in the Kyrgyz Republic (2004), an amount of 219,500,000 som (equivalent to US\$5,379,901) was allotted by the government in 2003 to maintain the preschool education system. The expenses for the child's maintenance in the state-run kindergarten are mainly covered by the State and through the local governments:

- Nutrition – 50%
- Salaries of the preschool establishment's personnel
- Public utilities (heating, electricity, water, renovation, sewerage, taxes and other expenses)

The daily maintenance of one child is 189 som (some US\$4.6) per day; 3,976 som (about US\$97.4) per month; and 47,714 som (or about US\$1,169) per year. The figure may vary depending on the location of the kindergarten.

Families are required to pay only 50% of the nutrition expenses. It is approximately 9 som (US\$0.2) per day for nursery and 12 som (US\$0.29) per day for

preschools. In kindergartens attached to specific enterprises or companies, the maintenance payment is set by the entity.

2. OTHER ECCE PROGRAMS

(Generally preceding ISCED 0 programs)

2.1. National definition of other ECCE programs:

There are alternative community- and family-based ECCE programmes that provide preschool services in the communities with lack of stat-run kindergartens. These services are mainly supported by the local governments and communities.

The nursery is normally a part of the preschool institution run by the State. The entry age for the nursery is 1.5 years.

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

See above

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 Government started the process of revising the national policies that guide and validate the provision of a broad range of early childhood development and family support activities. In February 2005, the Concept Paper on Preschool Education was ratified. The State Standard of the Kyrgyz Republic on Preschool Education and Care for a Child is currently in the process of endorsement by the Government.

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

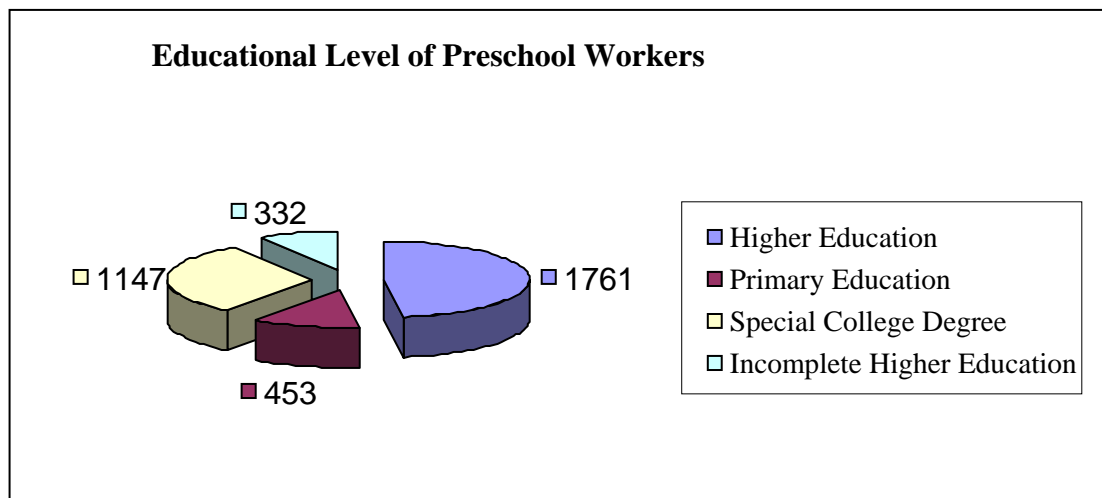
The Ministry of Education, Science and Youth Policy

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.):

In the Bishkek city area, the state-run preschool establishments operate mainly through the State funding. In rural areas, the funding obligations were transferred to the local governing bodies. The main types of providers are public, private, community-based and family-based.

3.4. Type of personnel involved:

The state-run preschool services employ more than 3,693 preschool workers. 1,761 workers have a higher education, 1,147 workers have a special college degree, 453 workers have primary education and 332 workers have incomplete higher education.



The personnel of the preschool institutions include:

- Principals – 416
- Methodologists – 126
- Teachers – 2 260
- Music teachers – 350
- Defectologists - 23
- Speech therapists – 85
- Other staff – 372

The decrease in the number of qualified preschool specialists is partially explained by low salaries and low social value for this profession.

3.5. Type of staff training (requirements):

All personnel with a higher education are required to undergo professional upgrading trainings at least once in five years.

3.6. Recent national policies and reforms:

The Law on Protection of the Kyrgyz People's Health clearly stipulates the state's responsibility for protecting children's right to living conditions required for sound

physical, cognitive, and psychosocial development, and the obligation of citizens to take care of children's health, physical, cognitive, and psychosocial development. Investing in ECD is directly relevant to the basic human development needs of the country, as stated in the Government's poverty reduction strategy and also the Education Strategy for 2010.

The government is implementing a wide-scale project on Early Childhood Development at the community level supported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), which assumes wide involvement of civil society, the family, health care institutions in education and development of low age children. This ADB-supported project will promote the development of a national Early Childhood Development (ECD) program to improve the health, nutritional, educational and psycho-social development of pre-school children (i.e. from birth to approximately 5 years of age).

Within the frameworks of this project, pre-school children development programs are being introduced in 12 experimental regions.

Several alternative preschool programs have been piloted in the Kyrgyz Republic and the community-based early childhood development project will support systematic development of alternative preschools in the community or at home to extend the access of poor children to preschools, and improve grade 1 teaching. Pedagogy used at the conventional preschools also need to be updated and made more child-centered. The combination of increasing preschool opportunities and better grade 1 teaching will contribute not only to children's psychosocial development but also to increasing the primary school completion rate and learning achievement.

Even with increased availability of preschool programs, families will continue to be the primary child care providers, and the quality of child care at home will have significant impacts on child development. The Project will also aim to improve child care practices at home. Most ECD interventions by the Government or international organizations remain isolated and narrowly focused pilots, small in scale, often covering only a few *raions*. The Project will consolidate successful pilot interventions as an integrated package of ECD services, take them to scale, and coordinate multiple agencies to achieve tangible effects.

The President's office has been selected to be the Executing Agency to lead this multisectoral Project and to coordinate different ministries. A substantial part of project activities will take place at the *ayil okmotu* (AO, village authority) level. The AO and the community will be entrusted with organizing community-based preschools. AO and community initiatives will be supported by providing grants from a village initiative fund (VIF).

3.7. Efforts targeted at vulnerable or disadvantaged children:

Not available

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

The Ministry of Education, Science and Youth Policy, under the framework of its general education reform programme, initiated developing a 100-Hour School Readiness Programme. This programme obligates the preschool establishments and primary schools to provide learning opportunities for children and prepare them for

further socialization at school. It stipulates that 100% children have to pass this programme before entering primary school.

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

The Standard Programme of Education and Development of Children of Preschool Age (1998) needs to be reformed and updated to be in accordance to recently developed ECD policy documents.

3.9.1. Objectives and aims:

The basic purpose of pre-school education is the preparation of children for school, i.e. training in literacy, numeracy, drawing, and music. The number of pre-schools providing foreign languages is also growing. The objectives of pre-school education are as follows:

- Nurturing physical, psychological, cognitive, language and social abilities of children.
- Reflecting children's cultural and individual diversity.
- Selecting resources and providing activities, play sessions and practical experiences, which allow children to develop to their fullest potential.
- Creating optimal conditions for comprehensive motor activity and health improvement of children.

3.9.2. Learning areas and teaching-learning methods:

The learning environment should:

- Provide materials for learning and comprehension of the surrounding world in an accessible way for children.
- Provide conditions so that children are physically and emotionally protected.
- Provide conditions for vigorous activity of children, which allow children to move freely around the room and stimulate them to make choices.
- Include the use of multi-purpose materials, corresponding to the level of children's development, to support plays, experiments and explorations of children.
- Provide toys and learning materials for children with special needs.

Teaching-learning methods are based on the following principles:

- The early years of life are of critical importance and to a large degree affect the future progress of the child as a social and economic actor.
- Interaction with a child must be based on a positive mood, benevolent attitude, which is demonstrated in physical, emotional, verbal and non-verbal contact.
- Preschool teachers and caregivers should meet individual needs of children and promote their well-being.

- Preschool teachers and caregivers should plan and carry out activities and play sessions with the purpose of development of physical, psychological, cognitive, language and social abilities of children.

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

Prior to independence, preschool institutions comprising full-day nurseries and kindergartens offered a package of child nutrition, health, and education services free of charge. However, many preschool institutions have been closed down and preschool enrollment declined overall from approximately 40% (for children 1-6 years old, with lower rates for the youngest children and much higher rates for older children) to less than 10% nationwide.

Rural areas are especially hard hit. In 2000, only 7.1%, 3.6%, and 2.3% of preschool-age children in Jalalabad, Osh, and Naryn, respectively, attended preschool. Recent studies estimated the rate of pre-school enrollment about 16% in urban areas, 8% in *raion* (district) centers, and less than 5% in rural villages. Of the 468 kindergartens still in operation, 63% serve cities and towns, 37% serve rural areas, generally raion centers rather than villages. These data capture only state-supported full-day kindergartens and a handful of private kindergartens.

The surviving preschools have started charging small fees to compensate for reduced state support and have become unaffordable to poor children. Parents have not been able to replace the functions of preschools. A study conducted during the preparation of the community-based early childhood development project, revealed that many young children in the Kyrgyz Republic are left unattended for most of the day. Four-year-olds were with some caretaker only for 5 hours a day and spend the rest of the day alone.

With the earlier extensive provision of preschool and early childhood education in kindergartens, the majority of the children joining the school system already knew how to read and write. In contrast, most children now enter grade 1 unprepared either academically or socially. In addition, preschool enrollment fees as well as the reduced availability of meals in schools and closure of milk kitchens and preschools, especially in rural areas, aggravated the problems of poverty.

The lack of kindergarten facilities may result in overcrowding the early grades of primary school, particularly in rural areas. Before independence, when kindergartens provided care for 1 to 6-year-olds, most children started grade 1 at 7 years of age. In 1991, 27,200 6-year-olds attended grade 1; in 1999, 40,000 6-year-olds were attending grade 1, suggesting that families are using grade 1 as kindergartens. The result is added pressure on grade 1 teaching.

[Main source: Asian Development Bank. Technical assistance to the Kyrgyz Republic for the community-based early childhood development project. September 2003.]

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 Parenting education is provided by trained preschool workers as a part of their training programme.	Approximately 1,500 parents
As component of health and nutrition programmes, such as information about child development included in health and nutrition visits	Yes Through the IMCI component (5 rayons supported by UNICEF)	47,065 families with children under 5 years of age
Parent groups that meet to discuss issues of their young children, including health, nutritional status, and development	Yes Parent Support groups were arranged in 3 UNICEF supported community-based centers	90 parents
As component of adolescent, livelihood or literacy programmes	No	
Media broadcast, such as <i>Sesame Street</i> , with media for and with children	No	

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).

All of these programmes address the needs of vulnerable and poor population.

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?

No

[Information revised and additional data provided by UNICEF, December 2005.]