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Strong Foundations: Early Childhood Care and Education

Romania

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programmes

Compiled by:
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ROMANIA

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 7-14 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) is a public education service that is addressing children from 3 to 6/7 years of age providing a national curricula and qualified educational staff.

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

3-6 years of age

[The compulsory pre-primary class (preparatory group, 5-6-year-olds) will be established gradually.]

1.3. ISCED 0 programs: statistics and indicators

1.3.1. Enrolment:

	Percentage	Year
Gross enrolment ratio	73.0	2004/05
Net enrolment ratio	72.6	2004/05
Percentage of children entering primary education with previous preschool experience	86.0	2004/05

Source: NIS, 2005.

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*
0.0	55.2	75.9	86.2	70.3

Source: NIS, 2005.

(*) The Law no. 268 modifying the Education Law no. 84/1995 was published in the Official Monitor no. 430/19 June 2003. It instituted the 10 years compulsory education, reducing the beginning age from 7 to 6 years old.

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)
35,288	99.8	94.7	97.1	94.7

Source: NIS, 2005.

(*) The data refer to the qualified teachers.

1.3.4. Funding:

	Percentage
Public current expenditure per pupil as percentage of the Gross National Product per capita	10.41 (2002)

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:

There are alternative education programmes that are developed within the public system that promote a different educational philosophy, such as:

- Step by Step Program that addresses children from birth to 7 years of age
- Montessori Program that addresses children from 3-7 years of age,
- Waldorf Program that addresses children from 3-7 years of age
- Jena Plan that addresses also children from 3-7 years of age.
- Freinet Program that addresses children from 3-7 years of age

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

Birth to 7 years of age

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

By the end of the school year 2003 there were 13,720 children enrolled in other types of ECCE programs, according to the Evaluation Report of the Ministry of Education and Research, *Educational Alternatives in Romania*.

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

3.1. Legislation concerning ECCE:

At present the following provisions exist:

Legal provisions for early education for children (0-3 years). There are a number of existing laws and regulations for protecting the rights of children under 3 years of age. However, all of them relate to child care, health, nutrition and social protection. Many of the Governmental Acts specifically address issues of protection of children at risk and children's rights. There is no specific law or provision for early education for children at large.

Law on Education. The present Law on Education addresses issues related to the educational needs of children between 3 to 6 years of age who are enrolled in pre-schools. There is no education policy for children between 0-3 or for institutions catering to this age group.

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

The official bodies in charge of the supervision and coordination of the public preschool education are: the Ministry of Education and Research and the School Inspectorates.

For services that address children from birth to 3 years of age, the local authorities are the bodies in charge.

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-primary education is provided in special institutions—kindergartens (*grădinițe*) and nursery schools—, most of them public. Attendance is free of charge in public institutions.

The inspectorates supervise the activities of private institutions. Pre-school education includes institutions where the Romanian language is the medium of instruction, and institutions where teaching is in the languages of the national minorities.

3.4. Type of personnel involved:

The personnel involved in preschool education are teaching staff and administrative staff. Although it is required to have medical staff also, only some kindergartens have nurses and medical doctors.

The crèches have mainly medical staff and only some NGO initiatives like Step by Step have provided also educational staff.

3.5. Type of staff training (requirements):

Teachers in pre-schools must have completed five years of studies in upper secondary teacher-training schools, after completing compulsory education. Pre-schools also have *institutori*, teachers trained in teacher-training colleges in a two-year course (for those who have completed an upper secondary teacher-training school) or, in a three-year course (for those who have completed another type of upper secondary school).

3.6. Recent national policies and reforms:

In 2006 the Ministry of Education and Research will launch a national program that will address early childhood education, based on the “National Strategy for Early Education as part of the ECD Convergent Framework” (developed and adopted in 2005). This program aims:

- To rehabilitate the kindergarten infrastructure
- To train the preschool educational staff
- To create resource centers for parents who have children with special educational needs
- To assist early educational services in providing early intervention for children from birth to 7 years of age
- To provide integrated early childhood education services for children from birth to 7 years of age

The program will address all children from birth to 7 years of age, focusing on children from disadvantaged areas, children from Roma minority and children with special educational needs.

The organization and functioning of the pre-primary education is based on the following general principles, as provided by the in-force legislation:

- The principle of global and individualized education – referring to the valorization of the full potential of the children, of all dimensions of their personality;
- The principle of integral respect of the children rights – referring to guaranteeing equal opportunities to all children;
- The principle of social protection of the children in need – referring to ensure social services within the prolonged and weekly programme, organisation of time for children from disadvantaged areas, mono-parental families or socially disadvantaged families;
- The principle of cooperation with the family and the community as equal partners in the education of the children – referring to ensuring real support from the parents and social partners for the harmonious development of the children;
- The principle of ensuring the respect of the child – referring to the right of the child to protection, instruction and education as well as supervision, love and sensibility from the part of the adults.

The current framework curricula for pre-primary education and the corresponding syllabi were established in 2000 (Order of the Minister of National Education n° 4481/2000).

3.7. Efforts targeted at vulnerable or disadvantaged children:

In the last years there has been a program that addressed children from disadvantaged groups who were provided with a *summer kindergarten program*. This program aimed to assure a good start for school for children who did not attend kindergarten.

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

Not available

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

3.9.1. Objectives and aims:

The in-force curriculum for pre-primary education sets the following goals for the educational level of pre-school:

- To ensure normal and full development of the child, valorizing each child's psychological and physical potential and considering the child's rhythm and needs as well as the fact that playing is the fundamental activity for this age group;
- To enrich the child's capacity to interact with the others and with the environment;

- To support each child in discovering his/her identity and to develop a positive self-image;
- To support each child to acquire the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes required by the future activities in school and in general in life.

To attain these goals, the curriculum establishes the following educational objectives:

- Education of the language: development of the oral communication, understanding and correct utilization of the oral structures; education of correct phonetic, lexical and syntactic oral communication; development of creativity and expressivity in oral communication; development of the skill to understand and transmit intentions, thoughts and significances through writing;
- Mathematics activities: development of pre-mathematic intellectual operations; development of the capacity to understand and use numbers; development of the capacity to recognize, name, construct and use geometrical forms; development of the capacity to use correctly the measurements units, using an adequate vocabulary; development of the capacity to solve simple arithmetic problems through the acquisition of adequate strategies;
- Knowledge of the environment: development of the capacity to know and understand the environment and stimulation of the investigative curiosity; use of an adequate language when presenting natural phenomena; development and exercise of basic skills for the protection of the environment and education of a positive attitude towards protection of the environment;
- Social education: knowledge and respect of the behaviour norms in society; education of the skills to interact with the others; education of positive willingness and character features and building a positive attitude towards oneself and the others; knowledge of history, geography and religious elements defining the Romanian people;
- Aesthetic education: development of skills required by drawing, painting and modelling; understand some relations between various elements of the aesthetic language and objects from the environment; stimulation of expressivity through drawing, painting and modelling;
- Practical and home activities: knowledge of materials and their use; development and consolidation of practical skills; development of practical and aesthetic sense; development of home-practical skills and use of the specific words and expressions;
- Physical education: development of the sanitary-hygienic skills for a healthy life; development of the basic motor and applicative skills; stimulation of the intellectual qualities in order to voluntarily use the acquired skills.

3.9.2. Learning areas and teaching-learning methods:

The current frame-curricula by age-level group and educational programme set the following categories and number of activities per week, valid throughout all the school year:

Category	Low and middle group (3 to 5 years old)	High school-preparatory group (5 to 6/7 years old)
Normal programme activities		
Common activities:	7	10
Language education	1	2
Mathematics activities	1	2
Knowledge of the environment	1	1
Social education	1	1
Practical and home activities		1
Aesthetic education	2	2
Physical education	1	1
Chosen activities, playing and other activities	17	14
Extensions	0-1	1-2
Optional activities	0-1	1-2
Minimum no. of activities	24	26
Maximum no. of activities	25	28
Supplementary activities for prolonged and weekly programme (in the afternoon)		
Recreational activities	10	5
Development and exercising individual aptitudes	15	15
Remedial teaching	-	5
Minimum no. of activities	49	51
Maximum no. of activities	51	53

The classes are organized according to age group (3- to 4- / 4- to 5- / 5- to 6-). They comprise an average of 15 children. The length of the above-mentioned activities depends on the age level: 15-20 minutes for the low and middle groups and 30-35 minutes for the high, school-preparatory group. All activities organized in pre-primary education have to respect the right of the child to play—as a form of activity, method, procedure and means to attain educational objectives.

No assessment of pupils is undertaken in pre-school education, although their mental and physical development is monitored. Pupils are not required to repeat a class. Children with mental or sensory disabilities are referred by psycho-medical commissions to special forms of education.

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

Private and public pre-schools offer various types of programme: normal (four to five hours in the morning); long (eight to nine hours); and weekly programme (five days per week).

3.10. Any other relevant and pertinent information

Not available

[*Main Sources:* EURYDICE Website, Last updated: 2005. EURYBASE 2002/03.]

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	30,000 parents
As component of health and nutrition programmes, such as information about child development included in health and nutrition visits	Yes	120,000 mothers of infants
Parent groups that meet to discuss issues of their young children, including health, nutritional status, and development	Yes	4,000 parents
As component of adolescent, livelihood or literacy programmes	Yes	400 students in the 10 th grade (in 6 high-schools) which are involved in the pilot project for the development of the “School for Future Parents” high-school curriculum (this curriculum was included in the National Strategy for Early Education)
Media broadcast, such as <i>Sesame Street</i> , with media for and with children	No	
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).

Both the *National Program of Parenting Education in Kindergartens* and the *Parenting Education Program through the County Directorates for Child Rights Protection* are targeting the parents from the most vulnerable communities (including Roma communities)

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

In the health system there is regulated a monitoring system (through the kindergarten physician or family physician) which checks if the children are fit from a medical point of view for schooling. Yet the system is not fully used.

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

In 2005 a draft "National Strategy for Early Education as part of the ECD Convergent Framework" was prepared with UNICEF support and was adopted by the Ministry of Education and Research.

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