



# The role of early childhood care and education in pre-primary schools

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## DESCRIPTION

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is a topic of intense controversy and interest among governments and politicians throughout the world. International organisations such as UNICEF and UNESCO place a greater focus on providing all children with high quality early childhood education and care. Their views are based on research that shows the long term benefits of providing young children with appropriate care and education in their early years. Many children all around the world have been affected by this widely documented issue, which has no distinction between urban and rural, poor and affluent, black and white individuals. As a result, practical policies must be developed to address the issue. Early childhood care and education policies and programmes in Europe and the Anglo-American nations sprang from very comparable historical streams: child protection; early childhood education assistance for children with special needs; and services to assist mothers in entering the labour market. One overriding element in all of the nations is the shift from individual charity to public duty, which began in the early and middle nineteenth centuries and evolved mainly after World War II. However, the level of public accountability varies among countries. In the early nineteenth century, for example, day nurseries and infant schools emphasising education were created in the United Kingdom. The former was not particularly widespread, but the latter grew swiftly and eventually faded away, to be replaced subsequently by part time kindergartens. According to academics, the primary requirement looked to Australia, like Europe, has developed early childhood care and education services with a narrow focus (e.g., to provide long day care for children for working families, to provide an educational programme for children aged 4-5 years prior to school entry), resulting in a fragmented array of separate, special, and competing services. With this foundation, it is not unexpected that the current system is

diverse. The current Australian service system is divided into two basic categories: formal service and informal service. Formal services include: center-based services such as lengthy daycare, kindergarten, preschool, and after-school care (typically on school grounds); and home-based services such as family childcare. Informal service comprises care offered in the child's home for a charge.

Early childhood care and education is a relatively new phenomenon in most Asian countries, with a strong emphasis on achieving "Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, particularly for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children" goal 1 of the EFA: the Dakar Framework for Action, which was approved in Dakar, Senegal, in 2000. For example, because Vietnam has historically been a largely agrarian culture, all able family members have typically shared equal responsibilities for farm work. As a result, even before substantial economic changes occurred and urban centres arose, Vietnamese women in rural areas need some type of childcare help, a requirement that was most typically provided by grandparents and other senior relatives. Creches, community childcare centres, and day care facilities (for newborns up to three years) home-based childcare (for groups of five to 15 infants up to two years) and kindergartens and pre-schools are the contemporary modes of provision for early childcare and education (for three-to six-year-old). Changes in the Vietnamese economy in the early 1990s had a significant impact on day care attendance rates. Because many parents were unemployed during the early phases of adopting economic reform measures, and many have jobs could not afford the expenses of childcare providers, children might be cared for at home. To counteract the drop in day care enrolment, the government chose to keep current day care centres open rather than open new ones.