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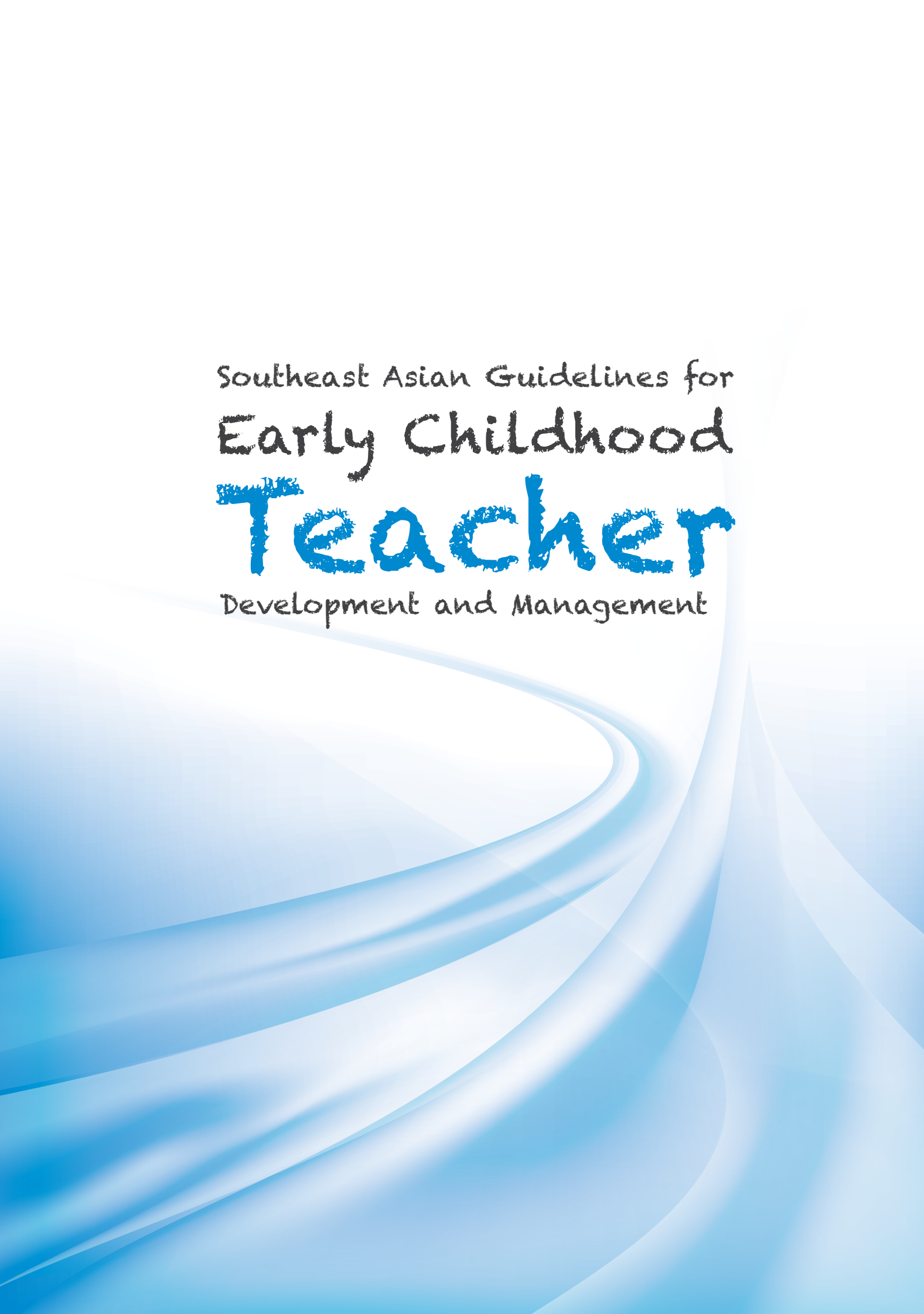


Japan  
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Southeast Asian Guidelines for  
Early Childhood  
**Teacher**  
Development and Management



The background of the cover features several overlapping, wavy, light blue lines that create a sense of movement and depth. The lines are smooth and have a slight gradient, giving the overall design a clean, modern, and professional appearance.

Southeast Asian Guidelines for  
Early Childhood  
**Teacher**  
Development and Management

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# Background

Since the 45<sup>th</sup> The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Council Conference, which was held in Cebu, in the Republic of the Philippines, in 2010, the importance of early childhood care and education (ECCE), particularly in promoting quality education for all, has been at the forefront of development agendas across the region. Among policy-makers, educators and parents alike, there has been an increased awareness of the need for quality ECCE as a foundation of lifelong learning and human development. Research evidence, particularly in the fields of neuroscience, cognitive psychology and education, has likewise underlined the need for quality ECCE. We now know that significant brain development occurs during early childhood, and as a result children's social and educational environments, particularly as reflected in their interactions with other people, influence how their brains get "wired," which has an impact on how they grow, mature and develop intellectually, socially and emotionally. That is why participation in quality ECCE programmes is a strong predictor of academic achievement, as well as of improved social, economic and health outcomes at both individual and societal levels.

UNESCO's Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education and SEAMEO's Secretariat have explored ways to collaborate on a project that focusses on profiling and analysing policies and systems for early childhood teachers in Southeast Asia, with a view to developing regional guidelines to support SEAMEO Member Countries' further efforts to strengthen their ECCE workforce by supporting the professionalization and capacity development of pre-primary teachers. As part of that collaboration, UNESCO proposed a project entitled "Early Childhood Teacher Development in Southeast Asia," and the Government of Japan agreed to provide financial support to this project through the Japan Funds-in-Trust. The 36<sup>th</sup> SEAMEO High Officials Meeting (Bangkok, February 2014) unanimously agreed that SEAMEO and UNESCO would collaborate in implementing this project and endorsed the participation of SEAMEO Member Countries.

In March 2014, the UNESCO-SEAMEO joint project titled "Early Childhood Teacher Development in Southeast Asia" was launched. As part of this project, UNESCO and SEAMEO devised a questionnaire to gain a more comprehensive understanding of ECCE personnel in Southeast Asian countries, including the current status, educational levels, qualifications and professional development of early childhood teachers. In July 2014, the first workshop of the Early Childhood Teacher Development project in Southeast Asia was organised in Bangkok, Thailand, where SEAMEO Member Countries' achievements and challenges in the field of early childhood teacher education and professional development were discussed; a draft framework for the regional guidelines was also developed. Similarly shared during this workshop were some of the global guidelines and frameworks related to early childhood teachers; in particular the 1966 ILO-UNESCO Recommendation Concerning the Status of Teachers, the ILO Policy Guidelines on the Promotion of Decent Work for Early Childhood Education Personnel (adopted in March 2014) and the World Bank's Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER).

Taking into account the suggested framework for the guidelines drawn from the workshop, further information gathering through a revised questionnaire and a synthesis of responses concerning the status of early childhood teacher development in Southeast Asia were carried out by UNESCO and SEAMEO, in collaboration with the Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC). All 11 SEAMEO Member Countries responded to this questionnaire: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor Leste, and Viet Nam. Through the reiterative process of verifying the data collected, the first draft of the *Southeast Asian Guidelines for Early Childhood Teacher Development and Management* was prepared, which was then revised by the representatives of SEAMEO Member Countries who participated in the second workshop held in March 2015, followed by a formal verification process by Member Countries between July and September 2015.

# Introduction

The international definition of “early childhood” is the period from birth to eight years of age. This period represents an absolutely critical stage of a person’s life: that is why ensuring that a child passes through this stage successfully requires integrated, comprehensive, and multi-sectoral support encompassing health, nutrition, education and protection, with a view to enhancing the child’s development and learning in a holistic manner. Given this definition, early childhood care and education (ECCE) becomes not only a preparatory stage facilitating a child’s transition to formal schooling and an important determinant of eventual success at higher levels of education but also an essential factor in the broader context of social development, gender equity and poverty reduction. Several Southeast Asian countries, such as Myanmar, the Philippines, and Viet Nam, have adopted this international definition, while others use the age range of 0-to-5 or 0-to-6 years.

A major assumption behind the development of these guidelines is the realisation that in Southeast Asia and throughout the world, governments have become increasingly aware both of the importance of ECCE and of their responsibility for providing quality ECCE services, either through public provision or by ensuring access to affordable and quality private ECCE programmes. Much of this increased understanding concerning the importance of ECCE has come from ever more convincing research evidence which links good quality early childhood care and education not only to immediate health and nutrition outcomes, but also to longer-term outcomes such as brain development, academic success, education system efficiency, future earnings and social cohesion. As a result, the demand for and supply of ECCE programmes are steadily increasing as demonstrated by growing numbers of ECCE programmes being offered across the region and the increased enrolment of children in these programmes.

In a national study in Thailand of 11,442 third-grade students, researchers found that children who had previously attended kindergarten academically outperformed their peers of the same age, sex and socio-economic status who did not attend an early childhood education programme.<sup>1</sup> In another example, researchers

in the High/Scope Perry Preschool Study explored the lifetime effects of education, or lack thereof, on people born in poverty by following 123 children in low-income households in the United States from preschool to age 40. Of the participants, 58 in the treatment group received high-quality early childhood education (ECE), while 65 in the control group did not receive the same quality of ECE or did not attend an ECE programme (Schweinhart, Barnes, & Weikart, 1993). Findings revealed that individuals who were provided with high-quality ECE went on to commit less crime as teenagers and adults (36% of programme participants vs. 55% of non-programme participants), acquired higher-earning jobs (60% of programme participants vs. 40% of non-programme participants), managed to graduate from high school (77% of programme participants vs. 60% of non-programme participants) and had higher overall IQ scores (67% of programme participants vs. 28% of non-programme participants). It was also found that children who took part in ECCE programmes, even for just one year, had better language and literacy skills, math skills and overall school achievements than children who had not attended any early childhood programmes. The cost-benefit analysis from the High/Scope Perry Preschool Study revealed a return on investment ratio of 7:1, which meant that for every dollar spent on children attending an ECE programme, there was a benefit of seven dollars back to society in the long run.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the benefits of and the progress in programme provision and enrolment, however, two major challenges will need to be tackled: (1) decreasing the disparities in ECCE service provision both across and within countries — by location (rural-urban), socio-economic status, ethnicity and language (majority and minority), sex (male-female), and disabilities; and (2) increasing the quality of the services provided in terms of their curricula, pedagogy, facilities and personnel.

It is the latter which is the major focus of these guidelines: recommendations based on both regional and international experiences concerning how best to manage and further enhance the quality of early childhood teachers in terms of their recruitment to the profession,

<sup>1</sup> Raudenbush, S., Kidchanapanish, S., & Kang, S. J. (1991). The effects of preprimary access and quality on educational achievement in Thailand. *Comparative Education Review*, 35(2), 255–273.

<sup>2</sup> Schweinhart, L. J., Barnes, H. V., & Weikart, D. P. (1993). *Significant benefits: The HighScope Perry Preschool study through age 27* (Monographs of the HighScope Educational Research Foundation, 10). Ypsilanti: HighScope Press.



pre-service education, certification, deployment, continuing professional assessment and development, career progression, and working conditions and environments. In Southeast Asia, the momentum has been building for early childhood teacher development and management. During the Strategic Dialogue of Education Ministers held in Vientiane, Lao PDR, in September 2014, SEAMEO Member Countries decided to make achieving universal early childhood education by 2030 one of the seven priority areas for cooperation. They also prioritized teacher education through the comprehensive, strategic, and practice-based reform of teacher development and management systems, with a view to making it a profession of first choice for qualified and dedicated professionals.

For the purposes of these guidelines, the term “early childhood education” is used to refer to Level 0 of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) to emphasise the intentionally educational aspects of early childhood care and education programmes, while understanding that quality programmes for young children must take a holistic approach to child development and learning. The ISCED Level 0 recognizes both programmes for children aged 0–2 years and

early childhood education for children aged 3 years until the age for entering primary education. The latter, whether publicly or privately run and whether centre-, community-, or home-based, are primarily designed to support early cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development through play-based and child-centred approaches. These guidelines for early childhood teacher development and management, therefore, focus largely on the years of education immediately prior to formal primary schooling, which are more and more commonly coordinated and implemented by Ministries of Education across the region.

Once endorsed by the Ministers of Education in Southeast Asia, the expectation is that these guidelines will be useful to “those engaged in devising international, national, regional, local, sectoral, workplace (private and public), and home-based ECCE policy and practice and organization of ECCE services” as with the aforementioned ILO Policy Guidelines (p. 1) — and will be of particular use in assisting Education Ministries, as well as other relevant ministries and agencies in both professionalizing early childhood teachers and promoting better working conditions for them.



# I.

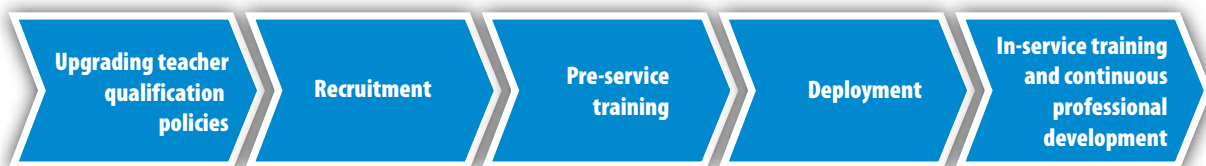
## Qualification, certification and licensing or accreditation

Different educational systems across the region use different terms (*qualification, certification, licensing, accreditation*) and often very different processes for ultimately deciding who is qualified to be an officially recognized early childhood teacher — whether in terms of permanent government employment or some kind of equivalent status in private early childhood programmes. Terms such as *academic* and *professional* qualification can differ in countries in the Southeast Asia region. For instance, Singapore differentiates these terms to mean different things, such as academic qualifications (e.g. GCE 'O' levels) versus professional and early childhood

care and education qualifications). The standardisation of qualification across private and public sectors can ensure consistency in expectations and quality standards.

It is also important to note throughout the following guidelines that the teaching competencies can be gained through on-the-job training and experience, rather than only through formal pre-service schooling and/or higher education qualifications. Figure 1 represents the recommended process for countries embarking on ECCE reform and/or early childhood teacher development and management.

**Figure 1:** Teacher Development and Management Process



### 1. Southeast Asian countries need to ensure that there is a clear understanding among all relevant stakeholders, including the general public, as to the definition of the terms and steps in the process of officially recognising early childhood teachers.

Countries must, therefore, clearly define the following:

- a) The required “**qualifications**” for potential recruitment into early childhood teaching in terms of required completed education levels (degree, diploma, etc.); the time generally required to gain this qualification; and the organisation or agency responsible for deciding if the qualification has been gained, such as a university providing pre-service training. These qualifications ensure that candidates have achieved the essential knowledge and skills required of early childhood teachers;

The ILO policy guidelines consider, as a minimum, some kind of first-level tertiary degree, including two-year post-secondary. Countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand fulfil this minimum requirement with a wide range of options, such as two-to-three-year diplomas and certificates and four-year BA/BS Education degrees). Most of these qualifications require some kind of specialisation in

early childhood instruction. The Philippines offers the greatest variety of pathways towards becoming a Child Development Teacher (CDT) and Child Development Worker (CDW), including a Bachelor’s degree in Early Childhood Education, a BS in Preschool Education, and a wide range of other Bachelor-level programmes in Elementary Education, Special Education, Psychology, and Art and Music, with at least 24 units in ECE/child development. However, the Commission on Higher Education of the Philippines is finalising the Policy Standards (PSG) and Guidelines, so that all tertiary schools which offer ECE or pre-school related courses will have uniform PSG and even course titles by SY2018.

On the other hand, Viet Nam requires a secondary education (12 years of schooling); in addition, pre-service teachers need to complete two years of vocational schooling to be qualified as teachers. Certified pre-primary teachers can also take an examination to become civil servants. In Timor-Leste, the Basic Education Law of 2008 set the minimum

requirement for pre-school teachers as a three-year Diploma or Bachelor's degree, although most of practitioners are yet to fulfil this requirement.

- b) The process of "**certification**" that guarantees that an *academically qualified* individual is also *professionally competent* to be an early childhood teacher. That is, candidates should meet some minimum entry requirements and qualification/competency standards.
- c) Any further required steps for **licensing/certification**, often through a standardised examination (theoretical and/or practical) that officially accredits the teacher candidate. For example, Cambodia requires an examination at teacher training institutions. In the Philippines, passing the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) is the first requirement for being able to teach in public schools, including kindergartens.
- d) Larger **qualification frameworks** that lay out the different levels and qualifications required for different kinds of early childhood education, such as Singapore's teacher registration framework. Countries may wish to

consider how teachers can be best trained to use and understand the different frameworks.

- e) Whether any of these steps require periodic **re-certification** throughout an early childhood teacher's career. For example, Brunei Darussalam, Lao PDR and Viet Nam do not yet have re-certification options or requirements.

There is a need to have more competent teachers for younger children beginning with infant care. Therefore, teachers of all children in the early childhood age group (0-8 years) are encouraged to have the same qualifications, regardless of the type of service they are providing (e.g. childcare, day care, pre-school, kindergarten and early grades of primary). Standards should be consistent and continuous across different programmes of ECCE agencies and age groups, including across countries/ministries in charge of early childhood services in particular country contexts as early childhood issues are normally handled by multiple government agencies rather than only one.

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## 2. Southeast Asian countries are encouraged to establish a dedicated early childhood accreditation and licensing body/authority based on a recognised qualifications framework to improve education and training standards, and accredit or license early childhood personnel.

Most countries in the region have already established such authorities, and some of these are national in nature, such as:

- The Early Childhood Development Agency in Singapore, which oversees all aspects of children's development ages six and below;
- The Teacher Council of Thailand, which licenses teachers;
- The Board for Competency Certification in Indonesia;
- The Professional Regulation Commission in the Philippines, which conducts the Licensure Examination for Teachers that must be passed before even experienced teachers can get a permanent post and the improved salary that goes with it.

Other countries, such as in Lao PDR, give this responsibility to provincial or district-level Ministry offices.



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## II.

# Recruitment to the profession

In the early evolution of education systems in much of Southeast Asia, teachers — often the most educated people of the community — were seen as playing an essential role in the development of not only the children they taught but also of their local communities, their country, and consequently the *global community* at large. Although their pay was usually small, the status of their profession was high, as children and their families saw teaching as an honourable career choice. Yet as other more profitable and higher-status careers became readily available in ever-expanding and diversifying economic systems, teaching as a profession lost much of the elevated status it once held.

This relative lack of status, coupled with low remuneration and often poor working conditions, is even more marked with regard to teachers working outside of what is usually seen as the formal start to education: the primary school. Thus, childcare and day-care centre workers and even kindergarten teachers, who are often employed by local communities or government Ministries other than Education, have routinely been seen as needing less education with lower qualifications (if any) than primary school teachers. As a result, their conditions of work have often been less satisfactory with lower pay and fewer

benefits than those of teachers working in the formal education system.

However, such trends are now changing as the importance of early childhood development becomes more obvious, both for children themselves and for the nation as a whole. In all Southeast Asian countries, ECCE is considered to be the first educational level with the pre-school system expanding mostly under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. Their quality, however, is variable and often questionable as many settings have too many pupils per teacher or per school; unhealthy learning environments (for example, limited square footage per child and no running water in pre-school sites as reported by Timor-Leste); differing curricula; and the inexperience and/or insufficient training of personnel who interact on a daily basis with children, their parents and the larger community. The status of and demand for ECCE may fall if early childhood programmes are of such variable quality. A critical step to ensure high-quality delivery of early childhood educational services lies in attracting the best possible candidates into early childhood education and then in providing good training, so that all prospective teachers are able to deliver quality services to their students.

### 3. Southeast Asian countries need to consider a range of strategies to promote early childhood teaching as a profession and attract competent and motivated candidates to early childhood teacher education programmes.

Some of the strategies to attract and retain competent and motivated candidates are:

a) Organise campaigns to attract eligible and qualified individuals to early childhood education. For example, in contexts where recruitment is difficult, retired primary school teachers might be encouraged to apply for re-training as early childhood teachers. In Singapore, explicit ways of engaging pre-service teachers and recruiting teachers have included inviting potential professional candidates to annual early childhood conferences and job fairs for the sector, as well as conducting recruitment campaigns to raise awareness of a career in early childhood education. In Brunei Darussalam, there are opportunities for volunteer teaching assistants for O- and A-level students (secondary school students) to gain experience and learn of teaching opportunities so as

to encourage them to see teaching as a viable long-term career option. Malaysia offers early childhood education programmes in vocational colleges for students who have successfully completed lower secondary education (nine years of schooling) and relevant examinations, so that they can pursue further studies and receive a certificate (after two years of vocational training) or a diploma (additional two years of vocational training) to become an early childhood educator. In the Philippines, some tertiary institutions conduct career orientation and recruitment campaigns in secondary schools for education courses that include early childhood education. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education in Viet Nam has launched a campaign to recruit teachers from the community level. This effort was an admirable start to the recruitment process; however, there is still low interest in the ECCE teaching



profession owing to low salary prospects, which is an issue that will be discussed later in the guidelines.

b) Make early childhood teaching equivalent in status, qualifications and remuneration to primary education teaching. In theory, this has largely been achieved in most countries in the region, such as Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines and Timor-Leste; however, this often applies only to early childhood teachers in official Education Ministry posts and with qualifications equivalent to those of primary teachers. Therefore, in practice, the equivalency of early childhood teachers to primary education teachers is limited to a small number of individuals.

c) Establish diploma/degree/certificate programmes (depending on the qualification required) specifically focussed on early childhood education, with a particular emphasis on the linkages between early childhood development and pedagogical approaches, which, ideally, would also train early grade primary teachers.

d) Ensure that the selection of potential candidates for early childhood teacher education is rigorous with specific criteria in regard to previous academic experience and qualifications, as well as personal characteristics, such as enthusiasm, patience, respect and love for children, creativity, sense of humour, resourcefulness, sensitivity to children's needs and interests, etc.

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#### **4. Southeast Asian countries are encouraged to have an inclusive policy towards recruitment to diversify the composition of the early childhood teaching force in terms of sex, ethnicity/language, socio-economic status and (dis)abilities.**

If governments genuinely wish to promote inclusive education systems, which attempt to overcome all barriers to access, participation and learning achievement, this effort must begin at the early childhood level. This in turn requires an inclusive policy towards the recruitment of early childhood teachers. It is especially true in regard to the sex of early childhood teachers because the huge majority of them are female: 95% or more in virtually all Southeast Asian systems, except in the Philippines (88%) and Timor-Leste (83%). Some children may lack a positive male role model at home, which male early childhood teachers can provide. Having a balance of men and women in the early childhood workforce can also serve to promote different approaches, outlooks, and styles to working with young children. Redressing this imbalance requires specific approaches to seeking out male candidates (e.g. through affirmative action policies directed at men with specific targets for increases in the percentage of males), while addressing both policies and stereotypes, which often turn men away from the profession.

Moreover, diversity should also be encouraged in regard to other characteristics, such as culture/ethnicity/language, socio-economic status and disability. In some cases, such as in remote populations or ethnic minority groups where few people reach higher education, financial assistance might be provided (e.g. by providing scholarships), coupled with lowering qualification requirements for entry into teacher education programmes — accompanied by in-service training and continuous professional development (CPD) — if necessary. Timor-Leste and Viet Nam, for example,

actively attempt to recruit teachers from remote/disadvantaged communities and from specific groups to ensure a diverse teaching staff that is representative of the larger society. Also, there may be a need for discussions around the strategies and recruitment of teachers with disabilities. In the Philippines, the Early Years Act of 2013 (R.A. 10410), which institutionalises the National System for Early Childhood Care and Development, specifies the provision to employ teachers, including teachers with disabilities, who are qualified in sign language and/or braille. Providing scholarships or temporarily lowering qualifications for indigenous groups who wish to enter the profession is something that is currently being discussed in certain countries.

It is important to encourage the practice of using mother tongue languages in an early childhood setting to help young children develop language and literacy skills early in life (Benson, 2004).<sup>3</sup> The knowledge of multiple languages, including the mother language of a child is highly valued in countries such as Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam. The Indonesian government guarantees the use and development of mother tongue languages in education. In the Philippines, from the pre-school to the first three years of elementary education instructions, teaching materials and assessments are provided in the native languages of the learners, and a language transition programme has also been formulated. In 2014, the Ministry

<sup>3</sup> Benson, C. (2004). *The importance of mother tongue-based schooling for educational quality*. Paper commissioned for the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2005, *The Quality Imperative*. UNESCO. Retrieved from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001466/146632e.pdf>

of Education (MOE) in Singapore provided a Nurturing Early Learners (NEL) Framework for Mother Tongue Languages (MTL) to guide the teaching of the three other official languages of Singapore (Chinese, Malay and Tamil). The Framework and other related resources provide a common set of professional terms for teaching and

learning that can be used to facilitate dialogue amongst MTL early childhood educators. These MTL resources are part of the NEL Curriculum, a comprehensive toolkit of kindergarten curriculum resources developed by MOE for early childhood educators in Singapore, with targeted teaching and learning goals and objectives.

## 5. Southeast Asian countries can also support recruitment into the early childhood profession by developing programmes to upgrade teacher qualification.

In order to enhance the early childhood education workforce, governments can recruit practicing but underqualified early childhood personnel and enable them to become fully qualified as early childhood teachers. This often provides opportunities to less qualified workers in, for example, community-based day care centres to increase not only their competencies but also their status and remuneration. This could also be beneficial for mid-career professionals and back-to-work mothers to be recruited into the early childhood field.

For example, in rural and remote areas in Viet Nam, where high school graduates are often recruited to become early childhood teachers, provincial ministries have spearheaded a campaign to upgrade non-degree early childhood teachers. After high school, students can study at a two-year vocational education training college to earn a teaching certificate/qualification. These additional, upgraded qualifications consequently increase salary levels. If students want higher qualification, degrees can be obtained in a three-year university or master's programme. Financial support from the Viet Nam local governments is provided to train teachers, and if the head master permits training, teachers can also receive scholarships.

In Indonesia, as per the Ministry of National Education and Culture Teacher's Certification decree (2012), the process of teacher certification requires individuals to pass a competency pre-test (Ujian Kompetensi Awal). Those who obtain a certain score on this initial test can then become certified teachers through a portfolio assessment. However, those who do not pass the competency pre-test have the opportunity to undergo professional training (Pendidikan Latihan Profesi Guru), which includes lectures, workshops and peer teaching that can better prepare them for the competency test.

In Lao PDR, teachers receive two months of training per year for three years to earn a teaching certificate/diploma with the total amount of in-service training of 30 weeks. In 2013, however, the first four-year degree programme was created in Lao PDR at one of the teacher training colleges and two additional teacher training colleges started such a degree programme in 2015. On the other hand, at the Universiti Brunei Darussalam, only a Master of Education course is currently offered and no certificate/diploma programmes are currently available to upgrade teacher qualification.



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### III. Pre-service teacher education

Assuming more focussed and inclusive recruitment processes lead to a better qualified and more motivated cadre of early childhood teacher candidates, the next critical step is to **enhance the overall quality of pre-service teacher education programmes**. If these programmes are not of high quality, the education system will always need to “catch up” in terms of improving teacher quality through what often turns out to be expensive, not systematically planned and poorly delivered in-service programmes. But improving the quality of pre-service teacher education programmes, at all levels, is a difficult process because it usually involves a wide range and variety of institutions and programmes (both public and private) with: (a) curricula that may lag behind new content and methods being used in classrooms; and (b) training staff who may never (or not recently) have had experience teaching at the level for which they are training new teachers.

This process is often even more complicated for the early childhood level where there may also be a range of ministries and other agencies involved in pre-service training. Additional complications include different curricula and pedagogical approaches between developmental stages of young children, which are not always similar in terms of content, thereby making seamless transitions more difficult. In order to enhance the quality of pre-service education for early childhood teachers, governments should be encouraged to establish and ensure the quality standards of pre-service training providers. Moreover, while private schools are typically autonomous in how they operate and manage programmes, when it comes to pre-service teacher education, they have the options of following and adapting similar best practices and guidelines.

#### 6. Southeast Asian countries are encouraged to develop quality standards for pre-service and in-service early childhood teachers (for specific competencies, refer to Section VI).

These standards will differ from country to country and by level of qualification (e.g. degree, diploma, certificate) for which they are preparing teachers. However, in general they should be developed and assessed by a relevant regulatory authority, which should ensure the following:

- a) Qualifications and experience of pre-service education personnel (e.g. teacher trainers/educators) are adequate in terms of their academic and professional experience in early childhood development and appropriate to the level for which they are training prospective teachers; pre-service education lecturers should themselves have taught in early childhood programmes and continue to have regular exposure to such programmes — for example, through mentoring of teaching practices and exchanges with early childhood schools;
- b) Curriculum content is appropriate to both subject matter and pedagogical practice in the early childhood curriculum framework mandated by the relevant

ministry/agency; in other words, the teacher education curriculum should match the curriculum currently being promoted in early childhood classrooms;

- c) Teaching methods provide a large percentage of time for hands-on, classroom-based training through lengthy teaching practices, internships and apprenticeships;
- d) Length of pre-service education provided to teacher candidates match that of what is required for qualification/certification/licensing of early childhood teachers;
- e) Facilities are adequate in terms of space and specialized purposes (e.g. libraries, resource rooms, etc.) and accessible to prospective teachers with various special needs;
- f) Resources and instructional materials are adequate in quality and amount, and appropriate to the curriculum being taught in early childhood education.

**7. Countries are encouraged to ensure that the above requirements for accreditation as pre-service providers are met — and continue to be met — by establishing monitoring and evaluation institutions and mechanisms.**

These institutions can be existing accreditation bodies, such as the national accreditation boards for education, and they should clearly set the minimum standards required for accreditation and lay out the process by which early childhood training programmes will continue to be monitored, evaluated, and re-accredited. In the Philippines, the Commission on Higher Education monitors all teachers' pre-service training providers against the prescribed standards, while the government

of Viet Nam has provided standards for vocational schools and colleges. The Malaysian Qualification Agency has implemented the accreditation policy for diploma, pre-service and postgraduate programmes, while the Ministry of Education in Lao PDR monitors and evaluates teacher training institutions and provides monitoring tools as well. It is suggested that teachers across disciplines and departments follow a common set of standards.



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## IV.

# Deployment and retention

Assuming an individual is considered qualified to be an early childhood teacher, the next step in the process of teacher development and management is initial assignment or **deployment to an early childhood**

**programme.** Teachers in government employment may be deployed according to the needs of the government, and those who are not yet employed may need to look independently for work in private or public programmes.

## 8. Countries need to develop systematic deployment strategies to ensure a balanced and equitable distribution of ECCE workforce.

In so doing, particular attention needs to be paid to the following:

- a) Acute teacher shortages (e.g. by training underqualified community members or re-training retired primary school teachers);
- b) Balanced workforce deployment (e.g. between urban and rural areas, and also high-demand or highly populated areas);
- c) Regulations and criteria for initial assignments and later mobility to other postings including special considerations for teachers' family situations.

Systematic planning also needs to take into account

projected demand shifts owing to demographic trends and policy changes. In Viet Nam, the Prime Minister signed a new law for compulsory early childhood education programmes for children ages 5-6, and thus early childhood education is attracting more children and creating increased demands for teachers. In some cases, such planning might include strategies of teacher deployment for private, non-profit and community-based programmes. In the Philippines, too, with the implementation of the K to 12 Program and the approval of the Early Years Act of 2013, there is an exponential demand for qualified teachers for kindergarten that has become the mandatory entry to the basic education system of the country.

## 9. Where applicable, Southeast Asian countries may need to develop incentives to encourage teachers to move to difficult postings.

If a country tries to expand ECCE – especially to more remote, poorer and more disadvantaged regions of the country – steps must be taken to ensure that qualified teachers are deployed to these regions. This can be done in one or more of the following ways:

- a) **By fiat**, that is, all newly certified/hired/promoted early childhood teachers could serve a fixed amount of time in a remote/difficult posting before being able to transfer to a more urban setting that is considered to be a more attractive location to live and work. This could also serve as a possible pre-service training experience. In Brunei Darussalam, graduate teachers are bonded for a minimum of three years to work with the government, and the Ministry of Education determines where they will teach. Some are posted in remote areas;
- b) **By recruiting prospective teachers from these disadvantaged regions for pre-service education** and ensuring that they are willing to return to their original communities. In Viet Nam, more teachers from targeted remote, impoverished and disadvantaged

regions are being recruited to return eventually to their regions after receiving higher-quality teaching qualifications, based on the knowledge that many teachers (both new and experienced ones) are often unfamiliar with local cultures and languages in these regions to practice their profession effectively;

- c) **By offering positive incentives**, such as extra salary and hardship allowances (such as in Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand), housing and/or transportation allowances, family benefits, "life experience" credit towards an advanced degree, and the encouragement of strong community support for teachers in such postings. These incentives could also be available to non-profit organisations that provide ECCE services. Viet Nam provides housing and transportation allowances for those who serve in hardship locations, and Malaysia establishes a different hardship allowance scale for each of the three different categories of remote areas. Brunei Darussalam, too, provides transportation allowance and housing for teachers serving remote areas.



## 10. Southeast Asian countries could develop policies to ensure the longer-term retention of teachers in the early childhood profession.

In addition to pre-service education to prepare new teachers for the challenges they may face in their first teaching assignments, a systematic induction programme provides continuous support for new teachers to ease their entry into the profession. These programmes are seen as critical to preventing many teachers from quitting in the first few years of their careers. Countries can facilitate the retention of teachers through better teacher preparation, more systematic induction and a clearly visible path for further professional development and career progression. For example, Singapore has structured, competency-based career pathways for early childhood educators.

In Brunei Darussalam, peer support and a network of teachers in hardship areas are provided to share teaching pedagogy. The Teacher Education Institution (TEI) in the Philippines has provided an induction programme, as well as a continuous awareness-raising programme for teachers. According to the Philippines Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, induction programmes are important for the survival and wellbeing of teachers and should focus on the following objectives:

- a) To strengthen the continuum from pre-service to in-service education and training;
- b) To promote excellence in public education by enhancing teacher effectiveness, particularly by reinforcing the content knowledge and instructional skills of beginning teachers;
- c) To enhance the socialization process and ensure the smooth immersion of beginning teachers into the school environment;
- d) To safeguard the personal and professional wellbeing of the teachers by providing them with a peer support network and familiarising them with stress management techniques;
- e) To assist the teachers in discovering for themselves the joy and satisfaction that can be derived in the teaching profession, thereby increasing the retention rate among beginning teachers.



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## V.

# Continuous professional development

Pre-service education is critical but cannot anticipate all the challenges new teachers will face in the classroom and prepare them fully for these challenges. Moreover, new curricula and pedagogical approaches are continuously introduced into the system and numerous teachers, including many practicing but unqualified/

uncertified teachers, may need and want further professional development towards a more permanent career. It is essential for countries to develop systematic and comprehensive systems of continuous professional development (CPD).

## 11. Southeast Asian countries may need to develop systematic induction, mentoring and probationary processes.

a) **Induction and mentoring:** A smooth introduction to the first teaching assignment is an important beginning to the retention of teachers in the profession. School principals and supervisors tend to assume that “qualified” teachers can do anything required of them — which is a perception that many teachers also share. However, the challenges of real classrooms are very different from those found even in excellent teaching practice programmes, so it is very important to put in place a process of induction with the principal and senior teachers providing mentorship, advice and assessment to new teachers with a period of observation of good practice before being given a full teaching schedule.

For example, Brunei Darussalam has a generic week-long induction programme for all new teachers — not just early childhood teachers — including a one-day visit to a model school. There is also a probationary period of three years. The Philippines offers a school-based mechanism called Learning Action Cell (LAC), in which senior teachers provide regular mentorship

for junior teachers. Lao PDR also provides similar mentorship by senior teachers.

b) **Probation:** Also important to consider is a probationary process to weed out those teachers who are simply not suited or motivated enough to remain teachers. This probationary period may last six months to one year, perhaps extendable if needed. The probationary process is an important part of the teacher development and management process. In Brunei Darussalam, during a probationary period teachers are paid on a daily basis for one year. There is a monitoring and assessment period after that year to determine a salary arrangement. In both Brunei Darussalam and the Philippines, it is difficult for teachers to be fired once they are taken in as civil service employees; therefore, it is very important to monitor teachers closely during a probationary period, so as to correct specific behaviours as well as to help them adjust in the classroom environment and ease their transition into the teaching profession.

## 12. Southeast Asian countries need to design and implement a wide range of CPD programmes to meet the needs of diverse ECCE contexts and programmes.

In general terms, CPD programmes can be described by some or all of the following:

a) Tailor-made to the needs of teachers identified through assessments;

b) Provided across an entire system in order to introduce new curricula and teaching methods. As examples, this might include: how to teach early, pre-literacy skills; work in a mother tongue; or, as in Malaysia, master the National Preschool Curriculum, gain basic knowledge of ICT, become more proficient in English and gain more in-depth experience with play-based learning;

c) Ranging from a few hours to several weeks or more per year, such as five days per year in Cambodia and two months per year in Viet Nam. Yet, CPD opportunities are not available for all teachers, and they may be limited to those who seek higher qualifications. In the Philippines, the ECCD Council embarked on a programme to send child development workers (CDWs) to scholarship programmes, such as the Early Childhood Teacher Education Programme (ECTEP) and the Early Childhood Education Programme (ECEP) by partnering with teacher education institutions and state universities. ECTEP is a six-week training programme intended for

graduates of a four-year course in education to earn 18 units for a Master of Arts in Education, while ECEP is a six-week programme intended for CDWs, especially for those assigned in centres identified for conversion into Child Development Centres;

- d) Being an expected part of a teacher's professional development, so that every teacher must take a certain number of hours/days of CPD every year in order to maintain his or her certification. For example, Singapore recommends 20 hours of CPD per year and Malaysia enforces 7 days per year of CPD for government teachers. In Timor-Leste, every three months during school holidays, teachers are required to attend a five-day CPD course based on the country's teacher competency framework.
- e) Provided at the pre-school or cluster level both as a collaborative exercise as communities of practice among teachers facing similar challenges, and by external providers, such as sponsors of private pre-school systems

or local teacher education institutions. In the Philippines, for example, the Commission on Higher Education authorises particular higher education institutions to provide summer in-service courses for early childhood teachers, some of whom receive scholarships to attend such courses. These are based on both National Competency-Based Teacher Standards and Individual Plans for Professional Development;

- f) Providing opportunities for teacher exchange programmes in different countries.

As mentioned earlier, CPD programmes can also be designed to upgrade practising but underqualified early childhood teachers. Yet, there should be mandatory professional development days for all early childhood teachers, regardless of whether they are qualified, underqualified, or underperforming, although there may be additional/specific programmes for underqualified and underperforming teachers.

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### 13. Southeast Asian countries are encouraged to ensure that CPD opportunities are systematically and equitably provided.

Providing a wide range of CPD programmes does not mean engaging in random activities, such as having a few days covering or reviewing one topic and a few days covering or reviewing another, depending on the interests of the local education office or else the funder or sponsoring agency of the CPD programme. In the Philippines, for example, the Department of Education created a CPD framework consisting of conceptual, theoretical and operational frameworks based on a needs assessment. It is important to ensure that CPD systems do not favour the already favoured urban, easy-to-reach institutions. For remote and other disadvantaged regions where access to CPD activities may be difficult, a variety of distance education approaches — such as by correspondence, online courses and the like — can be implemented to ensure that all practising pre-school teachers have an equal opportunity for CPD.

If possible and where applicable, it is encouraged that CPD be:

- a) Free of charge to teachers, which is not to say that CPD should be free of cost to the centre/early childhood service provider;
- b) Purposefully designed to include the active participation of those receiving the additional training;

- c) Provided with enough space and time for “reflective practice,” peer learning and class-based exploration, such as action research;

- d) Developed to ensure the effectiveness of cascade systems of training, also known as train-the-trainer models, in which master trainers at the top of the system train a layer of trainers below, who then train another layer below and so on. Quality assurance must avoid a situation in which the message received at the bottom becomes much less detailed or accurate than that at the top.

A prime example of a systematic CPD system is the Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA) in Singapore, which has a CPD Masterplan to provide professional development opportunities for early childhood centre leaders and teachers based on a roadmap that outlines key competencies of various jobs in the ECD sector and support measures, such as flexible staffing requirements on days set aside for such training. Anchor operators which receive funding support from ECDA in Singapore must send their early childhood educators for 30 hours of CPD each year by private providers. In Cambodia, six full days of professional training for government schools is available from the Ministry, but is not mandatory.



The content of the pre-service and in-service education provided to early childhood teachers must be designed to enhance their knowledge, skills, competencies,

behaviours and attitudes, which in turn foster the desired outcomes in the children they teach.

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**14. Southeast Asian countries need to ensure that the early childhood education curricula and pedagogical approaches that form the basis for the professional development of all ECCE practitioners are grounded in a holistic, child-centred and developmentally appropriate framework.**

Such a framework should include the following goals:

- a) To promote physical, cognitive/intellectual, socio-emotional, linguistic, cultural and moral development;
- b) To encourage play, creativity, exploration, social interaction and communication skills;
- c) To foster ethical values in life, respect for differences and diversity, gender equality, the use of mother tongues, peace and conflict resolution, and sustainable development;
- d) To pay special attention to children from disadvantaged and marginalised population groups, those living in poverty and conflict or emergency contexts and those with disabilities.

Many Southeast Asian countries recently prepared or revised their national early childhood curricular frameworks: the Preschool Education Curriculum of Lao PDR, 2012; the Nurturing Early Learners Curriculum of Singapore, 2013; the Early Childhood Education Curriculum in Indonesia, 2014; and the Pre-Eskola Kurikula in Timor-Leste, 2014. In the Philippines, too, the Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum Guide (0-4 years old) and the Kindergarten Curriculum Guide were aligned to the curriculum for Grades 1 to 12 in 2015. It is essential that early childhood teachers have a strong understanding of the new early childhood curricula and are able to facilitate effective teaching-learning processes, so that children achieve the expected developmental and learning outcomes. Therefore, pre-service teacher training curriculum and the content of CPD must be updated.

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**15. Southeast Asian countries are encouraged to ensure that the efforts to improve the quality of pre-school teachers, from initial recruitment through pre-service training, induction and CPD, are based on a clear set of professional standards or minimum qualification competencies.**

Professional standards should include the knowledge, skills, values, behaviours and attitudes which pre-school teachers are expected to possess. These will differ from country to country. For example, in the Philippines, these standards are known as “Standard and Competencies.” There is a competency framework across countries that include various terms (*see glossary*). While standards should be based on a particular vision and specific objectives for each country’s education system, they should generically include the following:

- a) **Subject (curricular content) knowledge and competencies:** having content knowledge in areas such as early childhood development including various theoretical understandings of child development and psychology, early learning, and special needs; young children’s health and safety; and the specific learning and development standards expected of young children at various stages of their development;

- b) **Pedagogical competencies:** having the ability to organise class time and the classroom environment effectively; knowledge of different teaching methods and approaches, especially in the individualisation/personalisation of child-centred teaching methods at different levels of development and characterised by different ways of learning;
- c) **Assessment and evaluation competencies:** having the knowledge of various child development and learning assessment tools, feedback mechanisms and data collection systems; the assessments should be mainly formative and supportive of children's individual learning needs; while teacher competencies in identifying and responding appropriately to children with special needs, such as those students with delays and disabilities, are also essential in order to promote inclusive classrooms and communities;
- d) **Language and cultural competencies:** not only in regard to the teaching of language through various levels of pre-literacy skills but also, where appropriate, having the ability to use the mother tongue language and utilise teaching-learning processes appropriate to the culture of the children;
- e) **Competencies in using information and communication technologies:** having an understanding of how to communicate and gather/use/synthesise information using technology for both the teachers' own further education, and when appropriate, for use in their classrooms;
- f) **Ability to deal with emergencies:** having the ability to anticipate, respond to and mitigate emergencies of various kinds, including disaster-risk reduction and response;
- g) **Social competencies, including inter-personal and communication skills:** having the ability to interact effectively with students, collaborate with other teachers and engage with parents and the community, especially in regard to advocating enrolment in early childhood programmes and sensitising (and even educating) parents in the knowledge and skills they might need to support their child's learning and development at home. This could also include self-reflective and self-assessment practises and strategies, such as action research.

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## 16. Southeast Asian countries also need to pay attention to the enhancement of their teachers' professional ethics, including criminal background checks.

This issue remains generally neglected in teacher education programmes. Some education systems and individual schools do insist on the development of professional codes of conduct. These should be universal and formalised through the involvement of qualification authorities and professional associations.

**Ethics:** Ethical behaviour around young children, especially those who are vulnerable and come from disadvantaged population groups and conflict- and stress-filled family and community environments, is particularly important and should focus on the following:

- an understanding of the rights of the child;
- protection of children from abuse and exploitation;
- devotion and commitment to providing quality care and education to all children;
- equal treatment and expectations of all children;
- respect for differences and diversity;

- dignity, integrity, fairness and transparency;
- responsibility and accountability towards children, the profession, parents, the community and the larger society.

**Criminal background checks:** It is recommended that teachers be screened for criminal records before they become licensed/registered. Within the school codes of conduct/ethics, there should be a requirement for all teachers to provide personal references and have background checks upon entering the profession to ensure the safety of all children, as well as other teaching staff and school personnel. Mandatory or voluntary routine checks, self-reporting via yearly teacher surveys, annual teacher reviews and/or evaluations conducted by school administrators are some suggested ways to monitor teachers' professional ethics on a regular basis.

## VII.

# Monitoring and quality assurance for performance appraisal

### **17. Southeast Asian countries are encouraged to put in place ongoing monitoring and evaluation standards and mechanisms of in-service early childhood teacher performance in order to detect, reward and support satisfactory teachers, as well as to support or sanction underperforming teachers.**

Such monitoring and evaluation range from daily monitoring of teacher attendance, punctuality, classroom preparation, curriculum implementation and child-teacher interactions to more formal performance assessments at regular intervals to be determined by each country. The preference would be to use officially sanctioned evaluative instruments based on established competencies, with both face-to-face and written feedback, reporting and follow-up. Such assessment tools should include self and peer evaluations, as well as those from direct supervisors. The use of a standardised assessment tool that includes a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) instrument could provide a standard set of baselines that could be tailored towards individual teachers or institutions. This could be used by both internal and external party assessors, and the assessments could be linked with the results being used for such things as promotion, tenure and so on, as well as to ensure consistency and quality of teaching. Assessment schemes, however, should avoid those based on student learning outcomes, as the direct impact of the teacher, especially at this early developmental stage, is undetermined.

In Viet Nam, along with many countries in Southeast Asia, these performance assessments are done largely within the local education system by pre-school principals and district- or provincial-level supervisors. In other countries, higher and even external agencies are involved, such as monthly Inspectorate visits to schools in Indonesia and the Office of National Education Standards and Quality Assessment in Thailand. In Malaysia, while periodical inspections are carried out by the Inspectorate and Quality Assurance Division of the Ministry of Education, this Ministry also introduced and implemented in 2015 the online

self-assessment of pre-schools using the National Preschools Quality Standards to measure the quality of pre-schools, including the Teacher and Assistant Teacher component. The quality of training received by inspectors/officers/evaluators/supervisors prior to completing teacher performance assessments is a critical aspect of the evaluation and performance appraisal process that is oftentimes given less attention. Proper training of inspectors/supervisors is important to ensure that they know how to use assessment tools consistently and correctly across different schools and contexts, and know exactly what they are assessing/evaluating, so they can assess teacher performance appropriately.

Such formative and summative assessments are important both for teachers' continuous professional development and career progression. They can be used, for example, to identify teachers potentially capable of being promoted to senior teacher or principal positions, and/or deployed to more challenging contexts that require particularly competent and experienced teachers. As such, they should be based on clearly defined competency standards, which should also be the basis of pre-service education and accreditation/licensing processes. For example, Viet Nam has teacher standards for all levels of teachers, while Malaysia has introduced a new unified instrument for teacher evaluation based on their competencies and student outcomes. The Philippines has the National Competency Based Teacher Standards with the following domains: social regard for learning, learning environment, diversity of learners, curriculum, planning, assessing and reporting, community linkages, personal growth and professional development.

Although enhancing the quality of early childhood teachers is an essential prerequisite for increasing the quality of the education they deliver, the nature

and range of the benefits they receive and of the environment in which they work are also a major contributor to educational quality.

**18. Where applicable, Southeast Asian countries may need to make efforts to ensure that status, employment benefits and working conditions of early childhood teachers are equivalent to those of primary school teachers with the same qualifications and experience. They are also encouraged, where applicable, to ensure that early childhood teachers have the same civil service and contractual status as well as salaries that are commensurate with their primary education counterparts.**

Achieving this goal, of course, requires consideration of the relative working hours (hours spent with children and non-contact hours) as well as the qualifications and competency requirements of teachers in early childhood and primary education.

a) **Contract status:** One of the major ambitions of many aspiring teachers is to attain civil service status and employment stability, with the work and retirement benefits this usually entails. This possibility is often less likely for early childhood teachers since many are working in private, NGO-sponsored or community-funded programmes. In Malaysia, for example, 20% of early childhood teachers are reported to be civil servants, compared to 80% of primary teachers. However, as government-funded early childhood systems expand in number and size, a major condition that can attract more and better applicants into early childhood education is the awarding of a status equal to that of primary education counterparts. For example, in Cambodia, pre-schools/kindergartens are formally attached to primary schools, thus providing stability and equality in status and pay. It is also the case for the Philippines, where kindergarten is compulsory and the mandated first stage of elementary education. In trying to improve early childhood teachers' employment terms, full-time and long-term contracts — if not permanent — are clearly preferable to part-time and shorter-term contracts, which many teachers accept, in the absence of other options. Countries are encouraged to work with relevant government agencies or bodies to establish guidelines and

contracts that use fair terms and do not exploit teachers. Although the class time of ECCE programmes in some countries may be shorter than that of primary education, at the very least a set amount of teachers' non-contact time for planning, class preparation, assessments and/or participation in CPD should also be considered as working hours. This will vary from country to country. For example, the Philippines and Thailand provide early childhood and primary school teachers with 10 hours of non-class time per week for lesson planning, class preparation, staff meetings, etc. Early childhood and primary school teachers in Brunei Darussalam and Cambodia are allowed 4 and 4.5 hours of non-class time per week for planning, respectively.

b) **Salary:** both the amount and the regularity of their payment are obviously a very important incentive for attracting more qualified teachers into ECCE. Salaries can be relatively generous in high-quality, private early childhood systems, which often attract effective teachers away from the government system. However, not all private early childhood schools provide higher salaries. For example, in the Philippines, teachers in the private sector mostly receive about 75% of a public school teacher's salary. In general, salaries are lower for programmes run by communities, NGOs, faith-based organisations and not-for-profit private systems. The latter systems, on the other hand, often provide other non-material incentives for teachers, such as community support, solidarity, and opportunities to reinforce ethnic,

linguistic and religious identities. Providing higher salaries, ensuring their regular payment and providing clear mechanisms and pathways for salary increases and professional promotions across different types of pre-school provisions are some of the ways in which employment conditions for early childhood teachers can be improved.

- c) **Employment benefits:** A range of benefits that can be applied to all levels of the teaching profession can also be applied to the early childhood teaching profession to make it more attractive. Concretely, these benefits can include age and/or service pensions. For example, Cambodia offers a pension of 80% of a salary after 30 years of service and a six-month lump sum at retirement. Other benefits might include social security rights, overtime payments, leave entitlements, such as annual leave and maternity/paternity/parental leave (e.g. three months of maternity leave in Myanmar), vacation pay, bonuses,

uniform costs, regular technical meetings focussed on peer consultation, access to housing, car and education loans, etc. Benefits can also include awards and recognition as master teachers from the relevant ministry and/or professional association, as well as a sense of professional autonomy in the responsibilities delegated to them.

In 2015 the Civil Service Commission of the Philippines revised policies on the performance management system for the Department of Education to implement the Results-Based Performance Management System, which will be linked to the payment of performance-based bonus from 2016. In Viet Nam, bonuses depend on teaching experience — after five years of work, teachers can receive an annual bonus of 2% of salary per year. Brunei Darussalam also provides bonuses depending on the teaching position (salary, plus a minimum of one month's salary).

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## 19. Southeast Asian countries are encouraged to further enhance the attractiveness of early childhood teachers as a career by facilitating a supportive and comfortable working environment.

Southeast Asian countries may wish to include the following guidelines in regulations or legislation to ensure that operations meet the minimum standards and quality to provide a good start for every child. Such supportive and comfortable working environments could focus on the following:

- a) **Class size:** Southeast Asian countries are encouraged to establish a maximum class size, perhaps different sizes for different age groups if the ECCE programme covers more than one year; the ILO policy guidelines suggest a maximum of 20 children in a class or learning group.
- b) **Child-staff ratios:** Southeast Asian countries are encouraged to establish maximum child-staff ratios, especially in regard to fully trained/qualified staff, which includes teaching assistants. The ILO policy guidelines mention that research-based evidence points to the child-qualified staff ratio of 10:1 or less as being most effective for learning outcomes in developed countries, while other international organisations recommend a ratio of 15:1 or less. Care and education of younger children (such as 0-12 months or 1-2 years of age) would require much lower child-staff ratios: Brunei Darussalam has child-to-staff

ratios of 12:1 for childcare/playgroup and Lao PDR has ratios of 15:2.

This indicator ranges greatly in the Southeast Asia region, from 50:1 in Timor-Leste to 25:1 in Malaysia, the Philippines and Viet Nam and from 20:1 in Brunei Darussalam to 15:1 in Lao PDR, Thailand and Indonesia. Malaysia has a specific measure for classes for children with special education needs: each class is staffed with a teacher and a teacher's aide, and the maximum child-class ratio is 6.5:1 at the preschool level.

Assistant teachers are vital in supporting early childhood teachers. Yet, not all countries have teaching assistants/aides. For instance, Brunei Darussalam does not always have teaching assistants/aides. In Indonesia, according to the Ministry of National Education Academic and Competencies Standard of Teachers decree (2007), those who wish to work in ECCE programmes as teaching assistants must have completed high school and hold an ECCE training certificate, but do not need to have an accredited, four-year university ECCE or psychology degree. Caregivers in day care centres must at least hold a high school diploma.

c) **Working hours:** Southeast Asian countries are encouraged to establish and create guidelines for private operators to establish manageable working hours, which may vary for different age groups. These guidelines may include defined work hours so that early childhood teachers are not compelled to work double shifts without assistance, have their overtime paid at overtime rate in accordance with law, and have enough paid non-contact hours for preparation, assessment, parent consultations in addition to both school-based and off-site professional development (as in the Philippines and Thailand, which mandate 10 paid hours of such non-class time per week).

Half of the countries in the region have set maximum hours of work for early childhood teachers: eight hours per day, five days per week in Lao PDR and Viet Nam, while the usual work day in Lao PDR is six hours. Though teachers in Brunei Darussalam and Viet Nam are meant to teach 31-40 hours per week (7:00am-4:30pm, with an additional three hours of non-contact/lesson preparation time), the median range is 21-30 hours, which is generally the same number for primary school teachers (lunch and child nap hours — two hours — are not counted as working hours). The regulation of such hours, of course, is often problematic, especially for non-government and community-based programmes. In Timor-Leste, for example, the maximum teaching hours per week is 24 hours, plus an additional 16 hours of non-contact time. However, some teachers reportedly go home after their classes end, spending fewer hours in school than is officially required of them.

d) **Facilities:** Southeast Asian countries are encouraged to ensure adequate facilities with space designed to be developmentally appropriate for young children; healthy, hygienic, safe and violence-free; compliant with international standards related both to accessibility for people with disabilities and disaster-resistant construction. Myanmar, for example, has set standards for 18-square feet per child, 30 children per latrine and at least six learning corners per class.

e) **Healthy and safe environments:** Southeast countries are encouraged to establish healthy and safe spaces, which can include an occupational safety and health framework for each pre-primary institution adapted to the specific needs of young children, appropriate monitoring and reporting mechanisms, and polices

around water, sanitation and health (WASH), psychological support and HIV/AIDS education and prevention, and a workplace free of any form of abuse and violence.

f) **Learning resources and materials:** Southeast Asian countries are encouraged to establish adequate play and learning resources and materials that are developmentally and culturally appropriate and include assistive facilities and devices for children with disabilities. Countries in the Southeast Asia region vary greatly as to the resources and materials that are provided in their schools. Indonesia uses play tools, such as blocks that stimulate moral, cognitive, language, social, emotional, physical and art skills, as well as utilising objects from nature. Lao PDR and the Philippines use curriculum and lesson plans, activity guidebooks, pre-writing and pre-reading books, colouring and game books and various manipulative toys. The resources that Viet Nam schools provide to ECCE children are big picture books, pencils, stories, toys as well as number, writing, discovery/science and social materials.

g) **Supervision and support:** Southeast Asian countries are encouraged to ensure provision of adequate supervision and support, including the professional competencies and personal characteristics of the early childhood programme managers who supervise the teachers. These should include necessary skills in instructional development and management, such as mastery of the mandated curriculum and recommended pedagogies and the ability to transmit them to teachers, budgeting and planning, personnel and facilities management, and community engagement both to further the professional development of their teachers and to provide supportive working conditions under which their teachers can flourish. One example in this regard is Singapore's Advanced Diploma in Early Childhood Leadership to be offered through polytechnics in 2016. Cambodia offers seven days of training on monitoring and evaluation and school management to early childhood school principals. In Malaysia, too, the Ministry of Education supervises and provides support to government pre-school teachers, while the ECCE Council is responsible for supporting the ECCE teachers for the private sector.



## IX. Governance

### 20. Governments must ensure that their ECCE system, including ECCE programmes and pre-primary education, is governed effectively, transparently and efficiently, and supported with adequate resources, both public and private.

In order to achieve the holistic development and learning of all children, policy coherence, strong governance and the coordination of multiple sectors, agencies, and public and private providers involved in ECCE are indispensable. Evidence also suggests that good governance of ECCE requires a strong link to research and data that encompass multiple sectors and programmes to ensure coherence and equity not only in ECCE service provision but also in ECCE personnel's professional standards and employment terms. Ultimately, such effective governance will help (a) early childhood teachers to become more professional; (b) create more supportive conditions of employment; (c)

enhance the quality of teacher performance; and (d) improve child outcomes and achievement.

The ILO policy guidelines suggest that specialised support agencies or units should be established and/or strengthened within government institutions responsible for early childhood education, so as to undertake specific tasks and maintain standards and accountability. Depending on the available resources, these agencies or units may include the following:

- policy, budgetary and human resource units;
- standards, professional training and curriculum authority;



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- independent monitoring and evaluation bodies;
- a research unit, council or institute, with statistical capacities;
- a corps of pedagogical advisers and inspectors;
- a team of dedicated specialists or units for workforce management, labour relations and social dialogue.

A research and statistics unit is especially important in this framework both (a) to identify and analyse effective (and non-effective) practices and therefore

improve early childhood service delivery, and (b) to develop an early childhood/ECCE management information system. Such a system should collect and analyse data related to a wide range of relevant indicators, including enrolment rates (disaggregated to capture disadvantaged population groups); disparities in the availability and quality of service provision linked to social-economic class, sex, urban/rural location, ethnic/linguistic minority status and disability; teacher qualifications, distribution and capacity development needs.

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**21. Governments could consider establishing a target for public ECCE investment, implicating all relevant government sectors and agencies as well as levels of authority — national, regional and local — and catalyse private investment in order to support holistic ECCE and learning of all children, particularly the most disadvantaged, marginalised and vulnerable populations.**

Sustained public funding, combined with standard setting and regulations, has been found to be an essential factor of successful ECCE systems. In order to make these Southeast Asian Guidelines for Early Childhood Teacher Development and Management achievable and to ensure that all children access, participate in, and benefit from quality ECCE, policy needs to be put in place to ensure equitable provision

of quality ECCE — free of charge, if possible. The ILO policy guidelines cite the benchmarks of at least 1% of GDP and 10% of public education funding devoted to early childhood education. Reliable information about public investments in early childhood is incomplete with most countries reporting less than 1% of the total education budget being devoted to early childhood education.

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**22. Southeast Asian countries may need to encourage regular mechanisms for dialogue among education authorities, legislators, public and private employees and trade unions or other organisations representing early childhood personnel.**

Such mechanisms are important in encouraging information sharing, consultations, negotiations, collaboration and consensus-building around what is needed to enhance the professional development and working environment of early childhood teachers. ECCE personnel should enjoy the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining, as set out in national law. In Southeast Asia, these are national early childhood teachers' professional associations, such as those in Malaysia and Singapore. However, the mechanisms of discussion tend to be informal except in some cases, as in Singapore, where the government consults the Education Services Union, which represents teachers, and the Association of Early Childhood and Training Services, which represents pre-school operators.

The role and participation of families and their communities in ECCE is particularly important, and therefore these actors need to be supported, consulted and engaged so that they have the necessary capacity to live up to their responsibilities as children's first caregivers and educators. Civil society, including non-governmental organisations and the private sector, also play important roles in ECCE provision; hence, they need to be included as stakeholders and consultants in ECCE policy development. Partnerships should be encouraged between such stakeholders, and they should recognise and respect the early childhood profession as an essential step in building the foundation for lifelong learning.

# Glossary

**Certification** = a process that guarantees that an academically qualified individual is also professionally competent (i.e. meets some minimum entry requirements and qualification/competency standards) to be an early childhood teacher.

**Early childhood care and education (ECCE)** = Programmes that, in addition to providing children with care, offer a structured and purposeful set of learning activities either in a formal institution (pre-primary or ISCED 0) or as part of a non-formal child development programme. ECCE programmes are usually designed for children from age 3 and include organized learning activities that constitute, on average, the equivalent of at least 2 hours per day and 100 days per year. This term is oftentimes referred to as pre-school and/or early childhood education (ECE).

**Early childhood teacher** = A qualified, certified, licensed, or accredited teacher of ECCE.

**Licensing** = the granting of a license/certificate from a government or other authority that permits someone to carry out a business or profession (i.e. early childhood teaching).

**Pre-primary education** = ISCED level 0; programmes at the initial stage of organized instruction, primarily designed to introduce very young children, aged at least 3 years, to a school type environment and provide a bridge between home and school. Various referred to as infant education, nursery education, pre-school

education, kindergarten or early childhood education, such programmes are the more formal component of ECCE. Upon completion of these programmes, children continue their education at ISCED 1 (primary education).

**Pre-service teacher education** = training that occurs before teachers enter the teaching profession and/or take up employment in a range of different education institutions.

**Primary education** = ISCED level 1; programmes generally designed on a unit or project basis to give pupils a sound basic education in reading, writing and mathematics, and an elementary understanding of subjects such as history, geography, natural sciences, social sciences, art and music.

**Qualifications** = requirements for potential recruitment into early childhood teaching in terms of education level (e.g. degree, diploma, etc.).

**Qualification frameworks** = a model that lays out the different levels and qualifications required for different kinds of early childhood education.

**Re-certification** = to renew a teaching certification or license.

**Recruitment** = the process of adding new individuals to a population or subpopulation.



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