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*Strong Foundations: Early Childhood Care and Education*

# **Saint Lucia**

## **Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programmes**

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## SAINT LUCIA

### 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 5-16 years.

#### **1. ISCED 0 PROGRAMS (USUALLY, PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION)**

(ISCED = International Standard Classification of Education)

##### 1.1. National definition of ISCED 0 programs:

Pre-Primary education

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

3-4 years of age

##### 1.3. ISCED 0 programs: statistics and indicators

###### 1.3.1 Enrolment:

	Percentage	Year
Gross enrolment ratio	84.8	2004/05
Net enrolment ratio	67.8	2004/05
Percentage of children entering primary education with previous preschool experience	<i>Not available</i>	

Source: Ministry of Education, January 2006.

1.3.2. Enrolment ratio by age group, 2004/05 (percentage, also including the first years of primary education when applicable): Figures are for 2004/05

Less than 3 years of age	Age 3	Age 4	Age 5	Age 6	Age 7
9.4	70.3	67.2 20.3 (*)	8.7 91.7 (**)	0.0 96 (**)	0.0 100.0 (**)

Source: Ministry of Education, January 2006. (\*) Enrolled in primary education. (\*\*) Primary education enrolment ratio

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)
344	99.7	58	0.3	57.7

Source: Ministry of Education, January 2006.

1.3.4. Funding:

	Percentage
Public current expenditure per pupil as percentage of the Gross National Product per capita	0.97 (2004)

Source: UIS.

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

## **2. OTHER ECCE PROGRAMS**

(Generally preceding ISCED 0 programs)

### **2.1 National definition of other ECCE programs:**

Day care services and pre-schools

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

0-2 years of age

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

1,253 (includes 612 3-4-year-olds accounted for in Tables 1.3.1 and 1.3.2).

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

**3.1. Legislation concerning ECCE:**

Draft Minimum Standards and Policy documents have been developed and are waiting to be ratified.

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

Currently, Early Childhood Education is under two separate Government Ministries: Daycare Services (children aged 0-2) is under the Ministry of Social Transformation, Culture and Local Government. Preschool services (age group 3- 5) is under the Ministry of Education, Human Resource development, Youth and Sports (MOE).

A Preschool Unit within the MOE is responsible for supervising the Preschool centres and for providing training for preschool operators/practitioners. The Unit also plays a leading role in the development of preschool curricula and teaching materials.

**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.):**

Preschool education is mostly provided through privately operated preschools. Daycare services cater to children from birth to two (0-2 yrs.) years of age. From 1999 to present, the total number of early childhood institutions has increased to one hundred and twenty-eight (128) privately-owned and operated preschool, twenty-one (21) government and twenty (20) privately owned and operated daycare centres.

**3.4. Type of personnel involved:**

Secondary school graduates, primary school graduates, retired school teachers.

### **3.5. Type of staff training (requirements)**

Certification in Early Childhood Education

### **3.6. Recent national policies and reforms:**

Not applicable

### **3.7. Efforts targeted at vulnerable or disadvantaged children:**

Community outreach programmes, focusing on literacy, numeracy and general parenting issues.

### **3.8. Special Projects/programmes aiming at expanding or improving ECCE:**

Currently a three-year pilot parenting programme, the Roving Caregivers Programme (RCP) a replica of a programme initiated in Jamaica is being facilitated in a few communities in various sections of the island. The programme utilizes secondary school leavers to provide early stimulation to children from birth to age 3. This family intervention project also attempts to equip parents/guardians with appropriate/necessary skills to assist in their children's overall development.

### **3.9. Information concerning the curriculum (if applicable) or the contents of ECCE Programmes:**

There is not a formal curriculum in place. Plans are in place for a curriculum project to be implemented. Meanwhile, to address the issue of content, training emphasizes the need to plan, facilitate and implement activities that are child-focused/centered, meaning that key issues such as the child's development, culture and interests are of paramount concern.

#### *3.9.1. Objectives and Aims:*

The main goal of early childhood education is the provision of an enriched environment in which dignity, self-worth, discipline and national pride at an early age. The programme includes a number of specific objectives, which are intended to meet the developmental needs (physical, intellectual, social-emotional, spiritual & creative) of each child within the context of culture and family involvement. The ability to relate to others in various social contexts is also a major focus of such programmes.

### *3.9.2. Learning areas and teaching-learning methods:*

The curriculum is expected to be broad based and non-prescriptive, providing the flexibility and creativity of meeting the children's level of development and preparing them for life-long learning. These areas include:

- Physical development – Fine and gross motor skills
- Cognitive development – Literacy, numeracy, science, language and other related areas
- Creative development – drama, art and crafts, musical experiences, dance and movement
- Spiritual development – recognition of the existence of a Supreme Being and developing a relationship with that Supreme Being.
- Social-Emotional development – understanding of self, others and the world around them, the ability to interact and communicate with peers and others.

#### *Typical Daily Schedule:*

The early childhood schedule is planned to ensure that children are engaged in activities that are both physically active and quiet. These activities should be planned and implemented to include both Indoors and Outdoors.

Meal times include two snack periods and a lunch period. Rest period for children who are in need of sleep is allotted for one hour and quiet activities are to be planned for children who do not require sleep.

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

Early Childhood Education programmes generally operate as per the school calendar year, which includes three terms of a total of approximately thirty-eight (38 wks.) weeks. As per the number of hours per week, generally, programmes operate for approximately seven hours daily.

## **3.10. Any other relevant and pertinent information**

Early childhood Education Care and Development in Saint Lucia evolved from the traditional public school system. In 1976, Canada Save the Children Fund submitted a proposal to the Minister of Community Development to make community centres available for pre-schools and learning playgroups. In 1979, UNICEF responded to the government's request for assistance with the expansion and focusing on educating and developing children from birth to five years, six government sponsored daycare centres were established. In 1980, centres catering

to the children of agricultural workers, operated by the Ministry of Community Development became fully operational.

[*Main Source*: 4<sup>th</sup>. International meeting on Initial and pre-school Education, Monterrey, Mexico, May 2004, co-sponsored by OAS.]

**C. SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION REGARDING ECCE (TO BE COMPILED IN COLLABORATION WITH UNICEF WHERE POSSIBLE)**

**4.1. Parenting programmes are usually addressed to parents and families of children less than six (6 yrs.) years of age. Please provide information about any parenting programmes in your country according to the table below:**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Type of programme</b>	<b>Yes or No (note for each programme)</b>	<b>Please estimate the number of beneficiaries (if possible)</b>
<b>A.</b>	<b>Parenting education through early learning centres and child care centres</b>	Yes. Parenting education programmes are conducted at the preschool centres. Administrators and staff of these Institutions plan and make available programmes with the assistance of resources persons from the Early Childhood Education services Unit or other collaborating agencies.	
<b>B.</b>	<b>As component of health and nutrition programmes, such as information about child development included in health and nutrition visits.</b>	Yes (*) Weekly clinics are held at all community health centres throughout the island.	
<b>C.</b>	<b>Parent groups that meet to discuss issues of their young children, including health, nutritional status and development.</b>	Yes (*) Weekly clinics are held at community health centres throughout the island.	
<b>D.</b>	<b>As component of adolescence, livelihood or literacy programmes</b>	Yes (**) A Daytime rehabilitation programme for adolescent girls from age twelve to sixteen (12 – 16yr.) who have behavioural problems or are victims of abuse.  The programme focuses on providing training in social/life skills. Some programme components include teen parenting, vocational skills training, job training and job placement, and a remedial programme to address basic literacy issues. Higher learning opportunities are also promoted.	
<b>E.</b>	<b>Media broadcast, such as Sesame Street, with media for and with children.</b>	NO This area is one that is under great demand. There is a need for local media children's programmes specifically to address matters of cultural relevancy which is absent in the programmes children are exposed to, especially on television.	

*Note:* Re: 4.1. The Roving Caregivers Programme (see 3.8.) also addresses areas of B & C of this table.



*(\*) Information indicated by single asterix was made available from the Ministry of Health, Community Nursing Service. Including response to 4.2.*

*Public Health Services are available in all communities, persons are encouraged to utilize and take maximum advantage of these services.*

*(\*\*) Information indicated by double asterix was made available by the Upton Gardens Girls Centre.*

**Are any of these programmes targeted specifically towards the vulnerable, poor, disadvantaged or excluded? If so, which ones (Please provide/attach any additional and relevant information if available).**

Another programme, which serves the needs of vulnerable persons in remote communities, is the Early Childhood On Wheels Programme. This programme focuses to a large degree on Literacy aspects of the developing child. The programme is geared to provide children with a variety of activities, whilst their parents/guardians simultaneously attend programmes that are geared to their needs as per their request and from what was identified as a need.

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

Presently there is a system in place. Children from birth and at various intervals (6 wks, 8mths, 3 yrs and 5 yrs.) undergo a developmental screening assessment (Gross and Fine Motor, Language, Hearing, Vision, Social and Physical). Referrals are also done whenever necessary.

Additionally, the Ministry of Education in September of 2006 will officially start a School Readiness Programme.

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

A draft national ECCE Policy exists and is awaiting ratification.

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