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*Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2007*  
*Strong Foundations: Early Childhood Care and Education*

# **British Virgin Islands**

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

### **programmes**

**Compiled by:**  
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## BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

### 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:**

Early Childhood Education

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

3 months – 3 years

3 years – 4 1/2 years

**1.3. ISCED 0 programs: statistics and indicators** (*source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Data refer to 2003/04. If available, please kindly provide the most recent figures*)

##### *1.3.1. Enrolment:*

	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Year</b>
Gross enrolment ratio	90.0	2003/04
Net enrolment ratio	79.4	2003/04
Percentage of children entering primary education with previous preschool experience	88.3	2004/05

*Source:* Department of Education, February 2006.

1.3.2. Enrolment ratio by age group (percentage, also including the first years of primary education when applicable):

Less than 3 Years of Age	Age 3	Age 4	Age 5	Age 6	Age 7
33.7	84.3	80.1	...	...	...

Source: Department of Education, February 2006. (...) Not available.

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)
89	100			

1.3.4. Funding: Not available

	Percentage
Public current expenditure per pupil as percentage of the Gross National Product per capita	...

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:

“Early Childhood Education means education and care suited to the requirements of a child under five years of age provided within a primary school or in an early childhood education facility specially designed for that purpose.” (Virgin Islands Education Act, 2004.)

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

Age group: 3 months – 3 years  
3 years – 4 1/2 years

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

There is no other ECCE programme, below 3 years, + 3 years to 4 years old, total 731 children (2003/2004).

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

### **3.1. Legislation concerning ECCE:**

Legislation for ECE is a component of Virgin Islands Education Act 2004. Draft Regulations for children aged 3 months to 3 years and for the age group 3 years – 4 1/2 years are being merged at present.

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

An Education Officer is assigned to coordinate the programme while an Officer from Environmental Health Department and the said Education Officer supervise the centers.

### **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.)**

There are approximately twenty-six Early Childhood Centres distributed on three islands. Two are owned and administered by government. One center caters for age group 3 years to 4 1/2 years and is located on Anegada. The other caters for the age group 4 1/2 - 7 years and is located in the capital, Road Town. It feeds mainly into the largest primary school also located in Road Town. The other centers are privately owned but receive a monetary grant and learning materials from the government and professional training in the form of seminars and workshops.

### **3.4. Type of personnel involved:**

Daycare workers, preschool facilitators are the participants.

Presenters vary: Personnel from Health, Education, Social Development, Fire & Rescue, Environmental Health, H.L.S. Community College facilitate workshops and seminars.

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

Academic courses, Methodology, Psychology

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

Before the mid-1990s, there were no standards to guide the operation of ECD centers and, although licences were required for the operation of centers, the procedures required that a proprietor simply apply to the Department of Trade & Investment Promotions for a licence to start an Early Childhood Centre just as any other business did. There were no criteria to be met and no evaluations to be done.

The new information that practitioners were gaining through the training seminars and workshops led to increasing requests to establish minimum standards of operation for early childhood facilities on the grounds that “the commodity in these businesses was too important to be treated like products.”

The requests for minimum standards culminated in the development of a document “Proposal for Day Care Standards for the British Virgin Islands” which was produced by the Department of Education and Culture in 1993. The Proposal was developed by a working committee consisting of person from the Social Development, Health, Public Works and Education Departments, as well as proprietors of various centers and the principal of the government owned ECE Centre.

The proposal was accepted by the Government and was forwarded to the Attorney General’s Office to develop the bill. A long delay occurred but a draft Bills were released for discussion during 1995 for preschools and 2001 for daycares.

After the proposals were accepted, a recommendation was made that the persons who were members of the committee become the Early Childhood Education Advisory Committee. This was accepted by the Ministry of Education & Culture and the Early Childhood Advisory Committee was appointed in 1993.

The Early Childhood Advisory Committee recommended that the main strategy for implementing these standards was to include them as prerequisites in the process for licensing the centers, but no initial action was taken to this proposal. A follow-up request was made to the Ministry of Education & Culture from Trade and Investment Department in 1995. That request emphasized the need for the centers to be regulated “[...] particularly from a health and child development perspective”.

Through the collaboration of the Early Childhood Advisory Committee and personnel from Trade and Investment, this request was acted upon and culminated in the establishment of “Procedures for Registering and Licensing ECE Facilities” which were established in 1996 and revised thereafter.

These procedures were intended to ensure that all licensed centers were operating at the minimum standards as described in the proposal. All centers should have been upgraded by July 2003. During 2004, the preschool curriculum was implemented. In

2005 the Virgin Islands Education Bill 2004 was in acted and regulations for ECE is being worked on to be implemented in 2006.

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

There is a 'Children's Home' operated by the Social Development Department that cater for such children. The Department has recently introduced an Early intervention programme with an officer assigned to this project.

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

At the Department of Education & Culture there is also an Early Intervention project implemented by the Special Needs Education Officer. The 3-4 years age group received speech therapy and reading remediation. Social Development and Education Department collaborate for the Early Intervention project and other projects.

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

A pre-school curriculum was implemented in September 2004.

#### *3.9.1. Objectives and aims:*

*See Appendix*

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

Learning Areas:	- Cognitive Development	Method:
	- Socio Emotional Development	Child Centred
	- Physical Development	Constructivism

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

3 months – 3 years: 9 hours day (45 hours per week, 45-50 weeks per year)  
3 years – 4 1/2 years: 7 hours day (35 hours per week, 45-50 weeks per year)

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

*Not available*

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

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

Type of programme	Yes or No (note for each programme)	Please estimate the number of beneficiaries (if possible)
Parenting education through early learning centers and child care centers	Parenting programme on child development and developing literacy was done during 2003/2004. This was preparation for the implementation of the preschool curriculum. (Sponsored by the Department of Education & Culture).	About 250 parents attended Workshops were done at 10 centres
As component of health and nutrition programmes, such as information about child development included in health and nutrition visits		
Parent groups that meet to discuss issues of their young children, including health, nutritional status, and development		
As component of adolescent, livelihood or literacy programmes	The Alternative Secondary Education Programme included a literacy component. This is a programme designed for young people who have not completed secondary education. They have a second chance to attend classes and write exams in	Approximately 125 students are registered yearly

	five subjects including Mathematics and English to be certified (3yrs programme)	
Media broadcast, such as <i>Sesame Street</i> , with media for and with children		
Other (please specify)	<p>Sponsored by Social Development Department:</p> <p><i>Topics:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How are we to learn to be parents. Section 1 &amp; 2 (6 weeks)</li> <li>- Families have many faces Sections (1 &amp; 2) 6 weeks</li> <li>- Coping with motherhood and becoming a father</li> </ul> <p><i>Duration</i> 2001- 2005</p>	43 parents

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

Yes: The Alternative Secondary Education Programme

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

One is being developed

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

The Virgin Islands Education Act 2004, of which Early Childhood Education is a component, was in acted in January 2005.

*[Information revised by the Department of Education, February 2006.]*



## **APPENDIX**

### **Goals**

- The curriculum is set for the child to:
  - Develop communication skills: listening, speaking, reading readiness and writing readiness.
  - Use words related to sight, smell, taste, hearing and touch.
  - Identify letters of the alphabet by shape
  - Understand the use of numbers and use them where necessary.
  - Understand that people are alike but still different.
  - Develop a positive self image
  - Develop respect for others
  - Develop rhythmic skills and feelings for music
  - Develop and express creativity through different mediums: crayon, paint, play-dough and so on
  - Use different tools: crayon, markers, scissors, pencils and so on
  - Use the natural environment to help him/her to learn
  - Understand and follow instructions
  - Complete simple tasks

### **Objectives**

- Cognitive
  - Acquire learning and problem solving skills
  - Expand logical thinking skills
  - Acquire concepts and information leading to a fuller understanding of their immediate world
  - Demonstrate skills in make-believe play
  - Expand verbal communication skills
  - Develop beginning reading skills
  - Acquire beginning writing skills
- Socio-emotional development
  - Provide opportunities for the child to experience a sense of self esteem
  - Exhibit a positive attitude towards life
  - Demonstrate cooperative and pro-social behaviour
  - Enjoy and appreciate aesthetics and creative activities
- Physical development
  - Enhance gross motor skills
  - Enhance and refine fine motor skills
  - Use all senses in learning
  - Acquire good eating habits
  - Develop good hygiene practices