



IBE/2006/EFA/GMR/CP/31

Country profile prepared for the
Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2007
Strong Foundations: Early Childhood Care and Education

Fiji

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programmes

Compiled by:
UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE)
Geneva, (Switzerland)

2006

This profile was commissioned by the Education for All Global Monitoring Report as background information to assist in drafting the 2007 Report. It has not been edited by the team. Information included in the series of profiles has been compiled by the IBE. In several cases data have been revised and/or expanded thanks to the helpful support of Ministries of Education and UNICEF offices worldwide. The views and opinions expressed in the present document are not necessarily those of the EFA Global Monitoring Report or UNESCO. The profile can be cited as follows: "Country Profile commissioned for the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2007, Strong foundations: early childhood care and education". For further information, please contact: efareport@unesco.org

FIJI

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 6-15 years.

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

(ISCED = International Standard Classification of Education)

1.1. National definition of ISCED 0 programs:

Pre-school education

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

3-5 years of age

1.3. ISCED 0 programs: statistics and indicators (*source: UIS*)

1.3.1. Enrolment:

	Percentage	Year
Gross enrolment ratio	15.7	2003/04
Net enrolment ratio	14.1	2003/04
Percentage of children entering primary education with previous preschool experience	...	

(...) Not available.

1.3.2. Enrolment ratio by age group (percentage, also including the first years of primary education when applicable): Not available

Less than 3 years of age	Age 3	Age 4	Age 5	Age 6	Age 7

1.3.3. Teachers, 2003/04:

Total number of teachers	Of whom female (%)	Percentage of trained teachers (all)	Percentage of trained teachers (males)	Percentage of trained teachers (females)
414	99.0

1.3.4. Funding:

	Percentage
Public current expenditure per pupil as percentage of the Gross National Product per capita	1.26 (2004)

1.3.5. Main source(s) of financing:

Since 1998, government has provided to the 468 recognised ECE learning centres which caters for some 6,900 children in rural areas:

- salary grants
- building funds
- materials – teaching and learning resources, etc.

Recognised ECE learning centres are those that have followed government guidelines for such centres.

2. OTHER ECCE PROGRAMS

(Generally preceding ISCED 0 programs)

The papers are currently being developed in these areas and should be available in 2006.

2.1. National definition of other ECCE programs:

Not available

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

Not available

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

Not available

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

3.1. Legislation concerning ECCE:

The papers are currently being developed in these areas and should be ready for presentation to Cabinet in 2006.

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

Not available

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.):

Not available

3.4. Type of personnel involved:

Not available

3.5. Type of staff training (requirements):

Not available

3.6. Recent national policies and reforms:

Official interest in pre-school began in 1961 when the Education Department of the then colonial administration drew up a set of regulations and standards relating to education at this level. These were implemented in 1962.

The Ministry of Education, in a brief policy statement, affirms its intention to continue encouraging private organizations to develop and manage pre-schools. It is clear that the Ministry is not yet prepared to assume greater responsibility for this level of education; rather it has a laissez-faire approach in allowing the continuing growth of all types of ECE centres. Regulations for approving pre-school education centres relate only to their physical facilities.

There is a widespread and increasing interest shown by local communities in ECE; they are primarily responsible for ECE. It is likely that the sector will continue to grow, even without government funding. However, due to the absence of official guidelines on the development and implementation of an effective curriculum for ECE, the quality of programmes offered in Fiji is highly variable.

Since 2002, efforts are going on to develop a national ECCE action plan, within the framework of the Pacific Islands Forum Basic Education Action Plan.

3.7. Efforts targeted at vulnerable or disadvantaged children:

Government policy is targeted at rural areas.

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

Special programs will start in 2006 with all the funds from the PRIDE project to Fiji is being put into the ECD/ECE area.

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

The papers are currently being developed in these areas and should be available in 2006.

3.9.1. Objectives and aims:

Not available

3.9.2. Learning areas and teaching-learning methods:

There are no national guidelines regarding curriculum but there are operational and procedural guidelines for the establishment and operation of pre-school centres. Those preschool that follow these guidelines are eligible for salary grants and other support from government. However, only around 6,900 children attend these schools. This means that, in practice, non recognised pre-schools often function either as mere extensions of primary schooling or 'baby sitting centres' where teachers replace mothers for the day.

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

Not available

3.10. Any other relevant and pertinent information

Most of the early kindergartens were established in the late 1940s and early 1950s by ECE qualified expatriate wives, initially for their own expatriate children. The YWCA was a pioneer in the field of ECE in the 1960s, setting up the first multiracial kindergarten. It was also the first organization to send people overseas for teacher training in ECE and the first to build a purpose-built kindergarten, which has run two sessions daily until the present. It has served as a model kindergarten for over three decades.

As ECE spread throughout the country, some untrained local women began establishing their own centres. These were often overcrowded, given the absence of regulations governing facilities, curriculum or management of such centres at the time. Many early centres were teaching a “watered down” Class 1 curriculum with much rote learning.

Currently, there are many schools of nine and early learning centres being run as private enterprises. The government has put in place guidelines for the operations of such centres. The Early Learning Development Standards are to be piloted in Fiji in 2006.

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

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

Type of programme	Yes or No (note for each programme)	Please estimate the number of beneficiaries (if possible)
Parenting education through early learning centres and child care centres	Yes, Piloting of Pacific children's programs	
As component of health and nutrition programmes, such as information about child development included in health and nutrition visits	Yes.	
Parent groups that meet to discuss issues of their young children, including health, nutritional status, and development	No, but are planned for 2006.	
As component of adolescent, livelihood or literacy programmes	Yes	
Media broadcast, such as <i>Sesame Street</i> , with media for and with children	Yes	
Other (please specify)		

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

The major target area for Fiji in this area is rural communities.

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

No but work is currently underway to have this done in 2006. This work started in the last quarter in 2005.

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

Yes, there is some work under development in this area. The recent Fiji Education Summit highlighted the importance of ECD/ECE in the country. Policy documents are being developed.

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