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Office of Education and Culture (OAS/DEC)

EARLY CHILDHOOD TRANSITIONS: AN INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK

Conceptual framework, situation, progress and challenges

This publication was prepared by the Organization of American States, Office of Education and Culture (OAS/SEDI/DHDEC/OEC); and the National Board of Early Childhood Education (JUNJI) of Chile, under the leadership of its Vice-president, Dr. Estela Ortiz. It is one of the products of the “Policies and Strategies for a Successful Transition of the Child to Socialization and School” project, on the subject of transitions. Professor Maribel Córnick Lynch and Psychologist Erika Dulkenberg contributed with their professionalism in preparing the contents of the texts; Doctors Sara Victoria Alvarado, Héctor Fabio Ospina and Gloria Carvalho, from the Center for Advanced Studies in Children and Youth CINDE oversaw the editing. Translation into English was carried out with contributions from various sources and persons: the Bernard van Leer Foundation—through its relation and commitment to the “Tendencies of Transition Policies in Rural, Indigenous and Border Communities” project; Ms. Jacqueline Araneda, head of the JUNJI International Relations and Strategic Alliances Unit; the Office of Education and Culture (SEDI/DHDEC) Summer 2009 interns, Ms. Michaela Reich and Mr. Joaquim Oliveira; and the OAS Department of Conferences and Meetings Management. Ms. Camila M. Villanueva, Summer 2010 Intern for the Office of Education and Culture, was responsible for the style review in both English and Spanish. Senior Education Specialist, Dr. Gaby Fujimoto, was responsible for the general coordination of the book’s preparation, editing and publishing.

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ISBN 978-0-8270-5618-3

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Presentation

The present study takes on a fairly innovative issue within public policy: the changes children undergo when transitioning from the home to the Day Care Center, and from there, to the educative system. Here, we have compiled and analyzed findings and practices from different geographic areas, and sought to contribute valuable information toward the design and implementation of public policies that promote optimal childhood development.

The study is framed within the “Policies and Strategies for a Successful Transition of the Child to Socialization and School” project, approved by the Organization of American States’ (OAS) Inter-American Committee on Education (CIE¹) in June, 2006 in response to two priority issues that were defined by national early childhood and preschool education directors, civil society and international organizations, as a result of a consultation survey carried out in 2005.

The first issue focused on the comprehensive care of children from birth to age three, and aimed at reviewing the scientific, psychological, cultural and pedagogical bases at the core of this stage in child development, in addition to the lessons learned on policies and care modalities. The Venezuelan government coordinated the project’s actions, and, in conjunction with the OAS Department of Education and Culture (DEC), carried out a survey to analyze the situation of the 34 member countries in relation to this issue. In May of 2007, the “*Inter-American Symposium: Understanding the state of the art in early childhood educational care*” took place at OAS headquarters; videos, presentations, and documents from the event can be found at: <http://www.sedi.oas.org/dec/documentos/simposio/default.htm>.

The second priority concern was that of transitions. The project suggested analyzing the lessons learned about child comprehensive care from birth through primary education, emphasizing the significance of the transitions from the home to the Day Care Center, and from there to preschool and elementary school, for the child as well as for public policy. It likewise intends to identify the knowledge built up on the basis of successful transition experiences. Thus, in August of 2007, Chile’s Ministry of Education, through the National Board of Early Childhood Education (JUNJI), undertook the responsibility of putting together a new survey to analyze the situation of services, programs and policies in preschool education and the first two grades of elementary school. Together with the OAS/DEC, the Ministry also organized the *Inter-American Symposium II: Policies and Strategies for a Successful Transition of the Child to Socialization and School*, which took place in May of 2009, in Valparaiso, Chile.

JUNJI, represented by its Executive Vice-president, Ms. Estela Ortiz and Ms. Jacqueline Araneda, in conjunction with the OAS/DEC commissioned the study to Peruvian specialists Maribel Córnick Lynch and Erika Dulkenberg, to whom we are deeply thankful for their professional work. From their contributions we have been able to delve deeper into the issue thanks to the motivation and support by national directors and Early Childhood government specialists, UNICEF, TACRO, OREALC/UNESCO, OEI, the World Bank, IDB and CAF, who participated in the activities and symposiums programmed for this purpose. We are particularly thankful to the Bernard van Leer Foundation that, through its initial publications on transitions, both motivated and illuminated our path for this study.

Following a bibliographical review, the book highlights and compares how transitions are addressed in Latin America and the Caribbean; and in some countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). It analyzes, compares, concludes and

¹ Inter-American Committee on Education (CIE), a technical policy-related agency, made up by the representative of each Minister of Education, with the power to make decisions. The CIE is in charge of implementing the Ministers’ mandates.

presents reflections on the current situation, conceptual framework, worldwide advances and challenges of policies, curriculums, didactic materials, professional development of teachers, and parental involvement in these transitions. At the end, we have included a specialized annotated bibliography, both in Spanish and English, of interest to the broad public concerned with fostering successful transitions for all boys and girls in the Americas.

Through this study we have sought to contribute to the shared knowledge on early childhood transitions centered around the child and the changes he or she undergoes during the first eight years of life, in relation to his or her access (or lack thereof) to a series of care and educational services.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This study was prepared using a documentary analysis methodology, reviewing both primary and secondary sources. The studies and cases analyzed correspond to 26 of the 34² countries that comprise the OAS. Furthermore, cases were selected from 16 OECD countries³ that have proposals and studies on the subject, the material of which is available for consultation. The following is a description of the contents addressed in the six chapters of this study.

The first chapter presents the theoretical-conceptual framework on transitions, and addresses the foundations and scientific bases originating from various disciplines that underscore their importance. The analysis begins with a theoretical review of what the different disciplines understand as transitions, and proposes a definition centered around the child and the changes he or she experiences during the first eight years of life, as a consequence of the access (or lack thereof) he or she has to a series of care and educational services. These changes are experienced differently depending on factors linked to the child and to his or her surrounding environment (resilience, personality, family support, among others), as well as factors associated with care and educational institutions through which he or she transits (the quality of these services, its policies, teacher training, etc.).

The second chapter analyzes early childhood care and education policies, the way in which the care and educational system for children from ages zero to eight is organized, and how this favors (or does not favor) their transitions. The review mainly focuses on the laws and regulations of the educational and social protection sectors, given the importance of their direct effect on the quality of services, their articulation, and the promotion of specific strategies to help the child in the transition from one institution to another.

The third chapter reviews the countries' curricular frameworks in order to document how they incorporate components intended to make transitions easier. It analyzes aspects related to: the existence of a single curriculum for the whole level (0-6 years old) and the foundations, dimensions and areas of the curriculum, among other elements. The aim of this chapter is to check for the existence of contents or elements that facilitate the transitions from one section to another (0-1 to 1-2 years old), from one cycle to another (0-3 to 3-6 years old) or from one educational level to another (preschool to primary education).

The fourth chapter addresses the professional development of teachers. There is a general review of the training programs for teachers responsible for the various early childhood services. Likewise, it includes elements related to the training of primary school teachers. It considers aspects such as training duration, predominant type of training, and graduate profiles, among other elements. The objective is to check if the training of early childhood service staff includes aspects related to transitions; if it prepares them to help the child in his/her passage through the various levels. There is a comparison between the training of staff responsible for early education and care programs, with that of preschool and primary teacher training.

² Documents from the following countries were reviewed: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Jamaica, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago, Barbados, St. Lucia and Guyana.

³ Documents were reviewed from the following countries: Australia, Canada, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United States of America; mainly because they had documents available in English or French, languages in which the consultants are proficient.

The fifth chapter deals with parental involvement; it analyzes how countries, from the perspective of their care policies, favor parental involvement in their children's learning and development process. As emphasized in the guidelines outlined in the theoretical framework, parental involvement is a key element in policies or programs that favor transitions and seek parental involvement in the child's experience in the center or program, since the influence of family is essential in early childhood. Early childhood is the stage of the life cycle in which the first social interactions take place, the first behavioral guidelines are learnt, habits are consolidated and the first learning takes place. For this reason, when the child enters the care center or school, it is necessary to include his or her parents in the process that is beginning; to promote communication and exchange between parents and teachers in order to favor the continuity of the child's passage from home to school and allow the introduction of the parent's social codes into the school (their language, aspirations for the future, expectations, beliefs, values, etc.) which form part of the child's personal history.

The sixth chapter presents study cases of national or state coverage programs carried out in OECD, Latin American and Caribbean countries. They were selected because they share some of the characteristics mentioned in the theoretical conceptual framework, they have abundant bibliographical information, and address one or more previously mentioned aspects that ease transitions (policy, curriculum, teacher's professional development, and parental involvement). The cases from programs sponsored by national governments are from: the National Board of Early Education - JUNJI, Chile; *Wawa Wasi*, Peru; *Roving Caregivers*, from the Caribbean; *Head Start* from the United States; the Preschool Class, in Sweden; and the *Sure Start Children's Learning* from the United Kingdom. The case sponsored by a state coverage program corresponds to "Centros de Desarrollo Infantil – CENDI" (Child Development Centers) from Monterrey, Estado de Nuevo León, Mexico.

Chapter I. Theoretical Conceptual Framework: Transitions to Socialization and School

The document is based on the premise that every individual, throughout the course of his or her life, experiences the passage through various stages marked by development landmarks and/or socio-cultural rituals. This statement is based on scientific foundations from disciplines such as socio-cultural anthropology, psychology and the neurosciences, which indicate that children go through stages in their development that are marked by landmarks and/or rituals. During these transitions, the child continually adjusts to the demands or opportunities that the new situations or stages present. As established by socio-cultural anthropology, psychology, and the neurosciences, the role of the environment is crucial to facilitating or hindering these adjustments. Each, from its own perspective, indicates the importance of having an environment that provides opportunities and experiences that enables children to develop their potential.

From the perspective of care and education, early childhood transitions are understood as a continuous process—where every action carried out before, during and after is relevant—rather than as an event. When studying them, not only must the child be involved, but also those who accompany him or her throughout this process: the child's parents. This is also true for the constant and continuous efforts made by the educating entity to link the child's natural environment, i.e., the family, with the care and educational environment. Transitions are processes that do not involve just the child, but also the child's family environment and the educational institutions through which he or she transits.

There are multiple factors that affect transitions. According to Peralta (2007), there are internal as well as external factors. Internal factors encompass the child's individual

characteristics (nutritional state, cognitive, social, and emotional development levels, etc.), and his or her family's characteristics (socio-economic status, values and attitudes towards childhood, etc.). External factors encompass the institution's characteristics (be it a care center, preschool or school), and include its curriculum and staff's professional development, among other things. On the other hand, early childhood public policy constitutes the framework on which care centers or nurseries, preschools and schools rely to operate. This policy framework may favor positive transitions or contribute to their hindrance, and as such, an overview of all the elements that ease transitions is necessary in order to work from all these levels.

This paper refers mainly to two great transitions: the one from the home to early childhood care and education center, and the transition to the educational system (be it preschool, a non-formal or out-of-school program, or primary school). The former is one that not all children undergo. In Latin America and the Caribbean not all children experience this transition for various reasons, among them, the smaller supply and demand for these services. In OECD countries, however, where there is high access to educational programs and early childhood care, the first great transition is common. It is the second transition, from preschool to primary school, which has been far more studied and researched worldwide. One line of research focuses on what a child's *readiness or to be prepared for primary school* implies. A wider concept refers both to the child and to the institution, and how prepared the school is to receive the child. At present, a great majority of children attend preschool centers, and access to primary schooling is universal.

Chapter II. Early Childhood Policy: Laws and Regulations Relating to Transitions

The first transition, to an early care and education center, is related to the legislation concerning maternity leave and the care policy for children under the age of three. In OECD countries, maternity leaves fluctuate between a minimum of 12 weeks in the United States and New Zealand, to up to 52 weeks in the United Kingdom. In many OECD countries the policies for paid extended maternity leave (approximately three months past beyond that established by the ILO), as well as additional parental leaves, have contributed to delay this transition until the end of the child's first year of life. In the rest of OECD countries, where there is no paid and extended maternity leave available, this transition to a center takes place earlier in the child's life.

In Latin American countries, working women enjoy a maternity leave of 12 weeks, save for Honduras and Bolivia, which have maternity leaves of ten and eight weeks, respectively. This benefit may be extended in the case of multiple births (Nicaragua) or when the mother has an illness (Chile) or the child is sick. In the event of the mother's death, in Colombia and Chile the leave may be taken by the father, and in Mexico only if the father is financially dependent on the mother. In many countries, a two-week to three-month leave is also granted in the event of a miscarriage (Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Panama and Guatemala). Likewise, leave following adoption of children under the age of seven is granted in Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Venezuela and Brazil to public servants. Health care costs and compensation are borne by Social Security or the employer, and in some cases by both. Subsidy amounts vary from 76% to 100% of the salary received. Paternity leaves are minimal or non-existent, and vary between one and eight days in Chile, Uruguay, Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and El Salvador. Breastfeeding leave allows for the continuation of breastfeeding after the conclusion of the maternity leave, and has been established as a leave of one hour per day, divided into two periods. In Latin America and the Caribbean many children accompany their parents to work, in the case of informal employments, or are otherwise cared for by other household members, which is why this first transition is not so common.

The transition to early childhood care and education centers is affected by the availability, accessibility and quality of said centers. Countries of the European Community have set forth to guarantee that slightly over one third of children under the age of three have access to these types of services by 2012. But policy regarding care and education for children under the age of three (and therefore services) is not equally developed in all OECD countries. There is less and more expensive access in countries like the United States and the United Kingdom, where the supply is mainly private. Another measure that many OECD countries have taken to guarantee female participation in the labor market is to offer these care programs throughout all working hours, that is to say, to establish them as full-time services.

In most Latin American countries, care for children under the age of three features a diversity of low-coverage programs that often are not likely to be replicated or taken over by the Ministry of Education, given the costs involved in their organization and operation. In general, these services are promoted by enterprises, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private associations, churches, offices of the First Lady, or some sectors of public administration. Some governments, like that of Chile and the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development (MIMDES) in Peru, among others, are implementing actions intended to extend the care coverage for this age group. In the case of children under the age of three, whose mothers do not work outside the home or for various reasons lack access to these benefits, countries offer alternatives through non-formal or out of non-academic programs.

With respect to the transition from care centers to preschools⁴, a significant element that has been emphasized in comparative studies refers to the importance of an integrated early childhood policy. In OECD countries such as Sweden, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Australia, changes have been made toward the unification of care policy for children under the age of three, and those from three to six years old, under a single administrative entity that guarantees coordination of services at the different levels, as well as quality care. In most of these countries, integration has been implemented under the educational sector, but in others, like Denmark and Finland, integration is under the social protection sector. The preference to integrate the system with the educational sector is due to the following reasons: (i) acknowledging the importance that learning has throughout one's whole life, and the importance of the learning that children undergo from their very early years, (ii) the better infrastructure available in the educational sector (data collection, training, curriculum, evaluation, research), and (iii) the notion or belief that the educational sector has a better base than the social protection system to provide universal services to all children. Integration policies allow for establishing a minimum standard of quality for all programs (Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, England), and thus the possibility of undertaking common teacher training policies for those who work with children under and over the age of three (as is the case in the United Kingdom), which helps to raise and ensure quality.

In most Latin American countries, education for children ages zero to six, and six to eight, normatively depends on the Ministry of Education. State-promoted centers and programs offer, as part of comprehensive care, complementary health and food services provided by other sectors. According to UNESCO, this situation may sometimes lead to the *"fragmentation of responsibilities and thus introduce inequalities with respect to access and quality."*⁵ Because of this, services need to be incremented following a strategy of programs that, according to Myers (2007), are *"more inter-sectoral, comprehensive and respectful of diversity, with the following characteristics:*

⁴ Throughout the paper, the term 'preschool' is used to refer to all programs aimed at children over 3 years of age in school, since specific terms may vary by country, such as 'kindergarten' or 'pre-kindergarten,' 'initial,' and/or 'daycare,' among others.

⁵ UNESCO (2007) EFA Global Monitoring Report 2007. Strong Foundations. Belgium. Page 187.

(1) “focus on human development and offer a common policy framework with the participation of several sectors; (2) incorporate staff from all sectors; (3) lead integrated actions from the educational sector or from another sector; (4) carry out convergence of programs with a common policy framework, rather than with integrated services; (5) attend to and support the needs and programs for children, family, parents; (6) combine children’s education and care; (7) extend coverage through several strategies that can add up to a national scale, leaving aside pilot or scattered experiences.”⁶

Preschool care policy incorporates specific strategies to promote preschool transitions to primary school, as is the case in various OECD countries. In Finland, the effort to promote positive transitions and provide continuity to the educational process is evident in its policy documents, which explicitly favor learning in their own language, the right to their own culture, cooperation among institutions, and facilitating parental involvement in preschool education. Germany uses stop gap strategies by enrolling children who are not ready for the first grade in primary school classes that are pedagogically oriented in a similar way to preschool. A similar policy is followed by Sweden, Finland and Denmark by locating preschool classes in primary schools, seeking to promote a positive transition by familiarizing the child with the primary education environment, under a program with a preschool pedagogical orientation. Other strategies used by some countries include establishing alliances between those working in the preschool level and those working in primary schools (United Kingdom, New Zealand, Jamaica), among others.

In Latin America, governments and private institutions provide a wide range of educational opportunities for three- to six-year-olds, in attempt to respond to the various social, cultural and geographical contexts in which the children and their families live. Although mandatory ages differ from one country to another, they all develop programs for the various age groups.

In most countries, actions to favor transitions are just now beginning to be incorporated into educational policies, and strategic and developmental plans. In this respect, the first step being taken in some countries consists in articulating curricular designs from preschool to secondary schooling. Meanwhile, in official documents there are proposals for strategies such as: implementing shared actions between preschool teachers and teachers of the first cycle of primary education (Argentina), avoiding a traumatic passage between care centers and preschool education (Brazil), envisioning a continuous process that begins within the family and continues in school (Costa Rica); articulation between preschool and primary education (Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras, Paraguay, Peru), pedagogical continuity (Mexico), curricular continuity, coherence and progression between preschool and primary education (Chile), preparing the child for primary school (El Salvador, the Dominican Republic), and the integration of preschool with primary school (Venezuela).

Chapter III. Transitions from the Curriculum Perspective

With respect to the curriculum, one way to facilitate transition is to articulate the curricula of the various levels. The idea is to have certain “*continuity*,” “*progression*” and “*differentiation*” between the different levels’ curricular framework, not just in terms of content,

⁶ Myers, R (2007). V Meeting of Ministers of Education. Cartagena, Colombia. Lessons learned and commitments in the hemisphere towards Early Education. Fourth Plenary session “Public policy, inter-sector collaboration, comprehensive care, and diversity”.

but also in teaching and learning methods. OECD countries have coordinated preschool and primary school level curricula with those of primary schools (as in the case of Spain, France, the Netherlands, Italy, Portugal, the United States, Canada), or care and educational center curricula with that of preschool, under a single curricular framework for early childhood (as is the case in New Zealand, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Ireland, the United Kingdom and Australia).

In the first case, preschool curriculum guidelines (ages three to six) are outlined in the same documents that establish the curricular guidelines for primary education. It is important to be alert, in the first case, so that the preschool level is not "*primarized*". In the second case, one must be alert that the early childhood curricular framework, in its pedagogical approach, content, and evaluation mechanisms, among other aspects, be different and "distant" from those of primary education. Countries like the United Kingdom, Sweden and New Zealand, have been considering these elements in their revision of curricular frameworks. The United States and Canada, however, have no national curricular framework, and therefore every state or province is free to develop or purchase it, with most using the Creative Curriculum, by Diane Dodge.

In Latin America, the Ministries of Education of most countries have included in their preschool level curricula: objectives, contents, competencies, abilities and attitudes, for the care and education of children from zero to three years of age, even though the services provided to this age group may be developed by institutions other than the Ministry of Education; this is also valid for children between the ages of three and six. Analysis of educational system curricula in the region proves that the curricular document's structure varies between countries with respect to its organization, content, and specificity level. Flexibility varies according to the standards established by each country at the time of preparing the document. This flexibility enables its diversification according to the different contexts in which it is applied.

Some countries present the proposal in a single document that encompasses all Primary Education levels, as in the case of Nicaragua and Peru. Others prepare one document for each educational level, and even one for each Preschool cycle (ages zero to two, and three to six). In many cases Preschool Education and Primary Education share foundations, curricular cores and cross-sectional topics, and present a similar organization in cycles, curricular or development areas, or generating cores, as well as objectives or competencies, abilities and attitudes. This coordination is probably the first approach to achieving children's satisfactory transition from one level to another.

With respect to curricular foundation, in OECD countries, the curricula of Nordic countries and New Zealand are influenced by social pedagogy that combines elements of care, childrearing and educational, and focus on supporting children's current development and interests. On the other hand, in countries such as Germany, France and the United Kingdom, curricula are based on facilitating the preparation for school. In this case, the focus is on the development of cognitive skills, such as reading and writing. This approach is more academic, with a structured program and special attention to the development of language skills from a more individualistic concept of preschool education.

In Latin America, either implicitly or explicitly, all curricula contain theoretical frameworks or bases that sustain the proposal. Among the foundations, the ones most usually considered are: legal, philosophical, psychological, pedagogical, sociological and biological. To this list, other, more recent disciplines have been added such as the neurosciences, cultural anthropology and the environment. It is worth noting that the curricula recognize that children are individuals, social subjects with rights, with learning potential, and builders of their knowledge. Most documents favor playing as a methodological strategy. This strategy should be incorporated into the curricula of primary school's first grades as a coordinating element between

the different levels. Countries where the spoken language differs from the official one rely on Intercultural Bilingual Education programs, which have contributed by encouraging other countries to formulate this type of curricula. Curricular proposals are complemented with other documents that generally express the intent to establish mechanisms to ease the transition from Preschool Education to Primary Education.

A common element to all curricular frameworks in OECD countries is the importance given to playing as a means for learning, and to child-focused learning. OECD countries have a clear notion that young children learn actively and through play strategies. This is an element that facilitates transitions and that curricular frameworks have incorporated in order to foster development and learning on the basis of what the child knows how to do best.

Another element pertinent to transitions is the degree to which the curriculum may be adapted to children's needs depending on the contexts. OECD countries evidence a tendency toward curricular frameworks with general guidelines that must be locally developed by educational establishments. There is no pre-established and prescriptive curriculum, although the level of detail varies by country. There are some countries like Sweden, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands and Portugal, where the curriculum is quite general and each center is responsible for developing its own educational plan and associated curriculum. In other cases, the curricular framework provides a greater level of detail and includes not only objectives and methodological principles, but also the goals to be reached and the dimensions or areas to address. On the other hand, for example in New Zealand, the curricular framework was developed with the participation of minority groups (such as the Maori), which helped bring the curriculum closer to the context of these populations.

Chapter IV. Professional Development of Teachers Working in Early Childhood

As set forth in this chapter, training of staff working with children is a key element linked to the quality of the service. A well-trained teacher has many theoretical and practical elements to tackle difficult situations, as well as to bring the child and parents closer to the center or program in a positive manner, facilitating transitions. This document, though it does not analyze teacher training program or early childhood staff training curricula, does identify some formal aspects of training and the strategies used by countries, which could help in making transitions easier. For example, a common training program for preschool and primary teachers may have positive elements if the training gives equal importance to both levels and no priority is given to training in primary contents.

In OECD countries, preschool and primary school teachers in France and the Netherlands receive the same formal preparation, and are trained to teach indistinctly in any of the two levels. In Spain and Italy, preschool and primary school teachers receive the same basic initial training, specializing in one of the two levels during their final years. In Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Portugal, though preschool teacher training differs from primary school teacher training, in the first three countries, according to their legislation, preschool teachers may also teach the first grades of primary school. The requirements for preschool teacher training are usually lower than for primary teacher trainees, and the requirements to work in early childhood care and education programs are even less demanding. In Germany, there is no higher education (university) training for those who work with preschool-age children, rather it is solely vocational as a community worker, and in Finland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden, preschool teacher training is usually shorter than the training required for primary school teachers. Those wishing to work with this age group in the United States, Canada, Australia, and Italy, require a two-year vocational

education. Likewise, the requirements to work in services aimed at children under the age of three are minimal in most countries.

In most Latin American countries, initial teacher training takes place in higher pedagogical institutes and in universities, where the duration of their studies fluctuates between three and five years. In Bolivia, Guatemala and Nicaragua, preschool and primary teachers used to receive their training regular schools in the diversified cycle of secondary education, which are currently in a transition process to tertiary level institutes. In Honduras, initial teacher training requires a teaching degree for primary school obtained from a diversified secondary school, followed by two more years of study. In rural and marginal urban zones, the education of children from zero to six years old is generally carried out in non-formal or non-academic programs, where the educational agent is a member of the community, preferably having completed secondary schooling, although in very rural areas the educational level is lower. Faced with the lack of a pedagogical degree, these educational agents are trained, advised and supervised by a preschool education professional in order to ensure a better performance in their duties.

Another key element in the professional development of teachers, and not early childhood teachers, is the profile regarding what they must know, do and have adequate knowledge on, in order to practice as such. Countries such as England, New Zealand, and the United States, have developed professional standards for early childhood workers, which are usually brief statements describing what a professional needs to know, be familiar with, and be able to do. They are usually based on level of experience, on a scale, and are part of the process that countries have been developing to implement a system of professional development and competency profiles. The interesting part is that they are similar to the profiles for primary teachers, and as such, without losing its individuality, somehow seeking to homogenize requirements that permit giving continuity to the teaching process.

As for teacher training in Latin America, the organizations responsible for Education Ministries or Secretariats, have also established profiles for preschool teachers upon completion of their careers that are most likely in accordance with the corresponding curriculum. However, it would be wise to review them to ensure that they have been adjusted to meet the demands of 21st century society and, therefore, the duties that teachers must assume as agents of change, as well as to guarantee quality and equity in education.

Chapter V. Parental Involvement in Education and Care Services

Family influence is central throughout early childhood. Therefore, when the child enters a care center or school, it is necessary to incorporate the parents in the process that is beginning, and to promote communication and exchange between parents and teachers in order to favor the continuity of the child's experiences. Orientation toward the family, participation and coordination of actions between the family and educational institution, are concerns that have been present since the beginning of preschool education. The effort and commitment to involve parents in the educational process of their children is a contributing factor to facilitate transitions and is evident in policy documents.

In Finland, Norway and Sweden, policy documents not only indicate that parents must be informed about the educational process followed by their children, but also promote various types of participation, either at the center's management-administrative level (Denmark, New Zealand), or in curricular development (Finland, Norway). As such, parents may have an influence in budget management and staff recruitment (Denmark), and participate through Parent Councils

and Coordinating Committees in the preparation of the center's curricular plans, as well as in individual plans and activity content (Finland and Norway).

English-speaking countries also promote the inclusion of specific strategies such as the creation of resource centers, or counselor appointments (New Zealand, U.S.A. and the United Kingdom), and parent involvement in the formulating early childhood policies. An OECD study (2007) indicates that this involvement has been limited, considering that early childhood is one of the most adequate levels for it. A significant exception is Sweden, where in the 1960s, civil society as a whole, but mainly parents, advocated for a universal care policy for children under the age of three.

In Latin America, family involvement in the education children under six has been present in every program, formal or non-formal, since the very beginning. Currently, most of the countries have an assortment of programs promoted by the State, civil society, mass media, NGOs and international organizations, among others. These programs can be attended through meetings, household visits, doctors' offices, workshops and play centers, or through the radio, brochures, newspaper inserts, bulletins, or videos. Programs aimed at parents have the purpose of strengthening childrearing practices, as well as offering theoretical and practical information to promote the comprehensive development of their children, both at a cognitive level and in relation to health, nutrition and emotional development.

Another form of participation consists in the formulation of the Institutional Educational Project, which is the medium-term, strategic planning mechanism that guides and leads institutional life. However, parental involvement, particularly in rural and marginal urban zones, is much broader as it includes the construction or assignment of premises, participation as educational agents, in the preparation of food, growing vegetable gardens and raising small animals, and in the preparation of didactic material and construction of furniture, among the most important. On the other hand, in some countries Parent Associations contribute to the maintenance of premises, furniture and educational material of the institutions, while at the same time exercising social monitoring to ensure compliance with the Institutional Educational Project (IEP) and complementary services.

Caribbean countries have extensive experience with pilot programs aimed at parents. These programs focus on providing parents with the necessary support to exercise their parenting or childrearing duties, and place household visits as their priority. One such program is the *Roving Caregivers*, which has been implemented in five Caribbean countries (Jamaica, St. Lucia, Grenada, Dominica, y St. Vincent and the Grenadines). Based on the research on experiences of household visits in Jamaica, some key elements of these programs have been documented, such as: frequency of the visits, session duration, curriculum and content, as well as the type of training and facilitator needed. At a regional level, countries have even expressed the need to have exclusive policies on work and programs for parents that include aspects on training, and information collection on childrearing patterns.

Chapter VI. Case Studies: Programs That Incorporate Transition Strategies

Three care program cases aimed at children under the age of seven were selected from OECD countries. Two of these, Head Start from the U.S. and Sure Start from the United Kingdom, are national programs focused on children from their respective country's most impoverished sectors, by means of care and education centers. Another case, in Sweden, is a program aimed specifically at preschoolers (for children in the last year of their preschool education), and has universal coverage. These experiences allow us to see how some aspects

linked to transitions from the home to socialization and school are addressed, in both targeted and universal cases at a national level.

The Head Start⁷ program, in its conceptualization and management and implementation policy, attempts to respond with strategies and initiatives to the difficulties that children generally experience upon moving from the home to an educational and care center, and subsequently from the care center to preschool and then to school. It simultaneously encompasses two programs: Early Head Start (EHS) (for children from zero to three years of age) and Head Start (HS) (for three- to six-year-olds), as 'sister programs' with the same policies, strategies and quality parameters. Likewise, it sets forth a series of strategies to facilitate the transition process from EHS to HS, and later to primary or basic education. It incorporates specifically designed orientation and training guidelines in the process, aimed at teachers and directors. Another key component is its effort in promoting parental involvement in the activities carried out, and providing services for them in the same premises.

The Swedish preschool model approaches transitions from different angles. One is from the curriculum, in which the primary education curriculum has incorporated concepts and methods of the approach used in preschool education, such as an emphasis on playing, exploring and creativity, as well as using teachers as a model for working in teams. Likewise, the preschool curriculum does not exclude learning in the children's first language, but rather, is facilitated in preschool centers. In this manner, transitions for children from minority populations are eased. Lastly, the creation of preschool classes for six-year-olds within primary schools seeks to familiarize the children with school culture, while at the same time introducing primary school pedagogical approaches in order to minimize the differences. Locating preschool classes in primary schools allows for a more coordinated effort and collaboration between teachers from both levels, while familiarizing the children with the next level. The preschool class was created as a strategy to make transitions easier, and to establish the link between preschool and school experiences.

The Sure Start program, also addressed to young children from the poorest sectors in England, favors successful transitions by providing comprehensive services to the children, as well as providing services for parents in the same premises.

The cases selected in Latin America meet some of the characteristics mentioned in the theoretical conceptual framework developed in this study, and there is a wide range of bibliographical and virtual information about them. Although the application of strategies to achieve the child's successful transition to socialization and school is still very recent, and therefore there are no results available in this respect, it should be noted that there are some actions being implemented in relation to the transition process, such as articulation of curricular designs, that build bridges, as it were, between the educational cycles and levels through which the child will transit.

Among the selected centers, the Earth and Freedom Popular Front's Early Childhood Development Centers (CENDI) from Monterrey, Nuevo León, Mexico, implements an education and care strategy in which special emphasis is given to accompanying the child and his or her family to guarantee transitions from the home to the educational center and, subsequently, from one section to another. The CENDIs provide care and education services, in marginal zones, from the time the child is 45 days old until his or her entrance to primary school, guaranteeing continuity to the programs and a comprehensive care of the child; for these purposes, a multi-

⁷ Currently, this program reaches 908,412 children (10% of which are under 3 years old) in 18,275 centers. Further information on the Head Start program may be found on the website:
http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/About%20Head%20Start/headstart_factsheet.html

disciplinary team participates in this work, using evaluation parameters and indicators for the children's assessment. A follow-up of school graduates is also implemented in order to evaluate their academic performance, as are non-formal programs such as the School for Parents, to treat and guide processes including: adjustment, sphincter control, nourishment and first aid, among others. Health and nutrition workshops are also held, and individual advisory is provided. For children who do not attend the center, non-formal programs are developed, such as "*Aprendiendo Juntos*" (*Learning Together*); for those needing nutritional support, there is the workshop "*Rescatando Inteligencias*" (*Rescuing Intelligent Minds*), and "*Construyendo un Mañana Mejor*" (*Building a Better Future*) for expectant mothers, a pre-natal program that provides care to women from marginal communities starting in their fourth month of gestation.

The National Program Wawa Wasi (WW) ("Children's House," in English) in Peru, under the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development (MIMDES), offers direct comprehensive care for children under the age of four, living in conditions of extreme poverty, in urban human settlements in the periphery of cities. The program is jointly managed by the State, the community and municipal voluntary workers, and looks after the child's comprehensive development in health, nutrition and early childhood learning on a full-time basis. It offers three food rations per day, and health control in the health center close to the WW. With respect to education, it has instruments available to evaluate child development, to plan actions based on the curricular plan and the articulation matrix. It furthermore applies a monitoring and evaluation strategy that enables identifying the program's and the children's achievements to guarantee satisfactory performance in their subsequent schooling. The WW may be managed by families, the municipality, or by an institution (by agreement in labor centers). In rural zones, where parents do not leave their children, a program with the parents is developed, denominated *Qatari Wawa* (roughly "On Your Feet, Kids!" in English) and led by a multi-disciplinary team. The Program's components are: development of abilities, promotion of communal management and promotion of development.

In Chile, the Programs of the National Board of Early Childhood Education (JUNJI) are implemented nation-wide by means of various formal and non-formal strategies. They offer comprehensive care to children under the age of six, which includes food, social assistance, and education. One of the Programs is the Early Childhood Day Care Center ("Jardín Infantil") that cares for children from 85 days after birth until their entrance to primary education, constituting a significant support for working mothers and their children. The sections are: "*sala cuna*" "*menor*," and "*mayor y transición*" (pre-kinder and kinder). They are established in urban or semi-urban areas, and have differentiated schedules or hours of operation. They may be managed by JUNJI, by municipalities or by non-profit institutions. Strategies consist in working with children and their families, who participate in meetings, workshops, and educational work in the home.

JUNJI's alternative or non-formal programs provide free-of-cost comprehensive care to children from the age of two until they enter primary school, and are also located in urban and semi-urban areas. In them, family involvement is an important factor, since they are involved from the beginning in their child's educational process. Non-formal programs are the following: "*Jardín Infantil Familiar*" (*Family Preschool*), where programs for children and parents are developed; "*Jardín Laboral*" (*Working Preschool*) for children whose mothers work outside the home; "*Jardín Estacional*" (*Seasonal Preschool*), for children whose mothers have temporary jobs in productive areas; "*Jardín Intercultural*" (*Intercultural Preschool*) for children from indigenous communities, where an intercultural curriculum is applied and the teacher is indigenous; and the "*Programa de Mejoramiento de Atención para la Infancia para niños en situación de riesgo*" (*Early Childhood Care Improvement Program for children at risk.*"

Furthermore, JUNJI has specific programs for families that can be implemented in their own homes (“*sala cuna*” at home), in a health care center, and by means of radio programs.

In the Caribbean, the program selected was *Roving Caregivers*. This program is being implemented in St Lucia, St. Vincent, Grenada, Dominica and Jamaica, and is a good example of a program aimed at children under the age of three that incorporates elements that favor transitions. Among these elements is that of gradually familiarizing parents with the type of services that can be obtained at the care and educational centers, beginning in the home with visits to the house and through activities aimed at both the child and his or her main caregivers.

Chapter VII. Conclusions

Definition of Transitions

Early childhood transitions refer to the change processes experienced by children during their first 8 years of life, linked to the access (or lack thereof) to various educational services (early childhood care and education center, preschool and primary school). Transitions are processes that imply adjustments by the child and by the environment, in which what happens in the previous setting and in the one the child is entering both matter. They affect not only the child, but also the child’s environment and the setting through which he or she transits. The home, care and education center, preschool and school constitute sub-systems of passage for the child, and are in turn affected by the child’s passage through them. There is a shared responsibility between the child and the child’s peers, family, teacher, and community.

A successful transition is described as the child’s passage from one educational institution or care facility to another, accompanied by his or her parents and teachers; a step for a child who is ready, and one in which the child experiences proximity and continuity with the new environment, thanks to a curriculum that adapts to the his or her level of development and to qualified teachers that are interested in knowing the child and his or her past experience. In this passage, parents must feel welcome and supported by the new care facility or educational institution, according to policies that promote their involvement. A successful transition in early childhood is more likely to take place if there is a common regulatory and policy framework conducive to the continuity of these experiences. An integrated early childhood care system (for children under the age of seven) under a single institution facilitates the coordination of services, the creation of common standards of care, and competency-based profiles for staff working in these programs.

Theoretical Foundations according to Various Disciplines

According to psychology, we know that as a child grows, basic affection, nourishment, care and education needs must be satisfied in order to develop the potential he or she was born with. It is not the same child with the same capabilities that moves from one educational level to another. It is instead a conceptualization of a child who is not static, but rather in constant growth and development, so that the demands and stimuli from the environment must adjust accordingly.

From the neurosciences we know that both genetic factors and experiences, the environment, affect the development of the child’s brain. Therefore, it is becomes clear that the experiences which the child lives during the transition from one care and educational environment to another, has an impact on that child. It is thus important to address transitions in early childhood in order to provide continuity and progression to these experiences in different environments.

Factors that Influence Transitions

In this respect, authors such as Peralta (2008) identify both internal factors, linked to the child and his or her family, and external factors, linked to the institution through which the child transits. Internal factors include the child's nutritional state, level of cognitive and socio-emotional development achieved at the time of transition, as well as factors related to his or her family environment: socio-economic level, the value given to education and early care, among others. External factors include the quality of the educational or care institution through which the child transits and, therefore, all the elements that constitute a quality service (staff training, curriculum used, type of parental involvement promoted, conditions of infrastructure, educational materials, among others). These factors are regulated by early childhood care and education policies, and as such, policy analysis is also relevant.

How Transitions are Addressed in Care Policies for Children Under the Age of Eight

In addressing the issue of transitions, care policy seeks to offer both children and their parents an integrated system of quality care that, as Peralta (2008) indicates, has “continuity,” “progression” and “differentiation.” An element that has been considered in many OECD countries is that of integrating the responsibility of early childhood policy under the educational sector. This trend is seen as an effort toward continuity (and positive transitions) in the educational process. Integrating care policy under a single sector facilitates the coordination of education proposals of services for children under the age of three and in primary school, by dealing with a common notion of childhood, care and education, and supervision of the quality of services. Countries that have an integrated system are: New Zealand, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Finland, Norway, the Netherlands and Australia.

In Latin America, care and education for children in the first cycle (from birth to age three) is promoted, with other standards, by institutions other than the Ministry of Education. The second cycle (ages three to six) and primary schools, however, do report to the Ministry of Education, hindering continuity between the first and second cycles. Moreover, in the context of comprehensive care, complimentary health and nutrition services are offered to early childhood by other sectors. Such situations can sometimes lead to disparities in the access to and quality of services, as it is possible that they may not be coordinated with the education sector.

In most countries, transitions between the second cycle and primary education are addressed at the level of strategic and development plans, and in some cases, in the legislation of the education sector. However, its incorporation to pedagogic practice is still in the early stages; a first step in this direction is the articulation of curriculum documents and methodological guidelines that, to a certain extent, helps to provide continuity to learning in the different levels of the educational system. Another important element, common to all countries in the region, is parental involvement. Their involvement in education will contribute to the child's successful transition from the home to the different care and education services.

The policy of OECD countries specifically and explicitly addresses the issue of transitions, highlighting the importance of actions aimed at facilitating them. Strategic plans for early childhood even have specific sections on transitions or are organized by cross-sectional issues that include them (as is the case in the United Kingdom, Finland and New Zealand). In other countries, including Denmark, Ireland and France, although not explicitly mentioned in the plans or legislation, there are references to aspects or elements related to transitions such as encouraging parental involvement.

Characteristics of a Curriculum Favorable to Transitions

Based on the information from OECD countries, a curricular framework that can be adapted to local contexts is viewed as an element favorable to transitions. Understanding said adaptation not as a mere diversification of content, but rather as the development of the curriculum itself at the center or program level, allowing it to fit the specific needs, interests and characteristics of children. This is the case in Sweden, where the curriculum is developed by each center or program based on general principles, whereas in Latin America, Peru sets forth the possibility of curricular diversification.

In OECD, Latin American and Caribbean countries, an important element is that curricular framework include not only aspects related to learning and school readiness, but those related to the child's comprehensive development, considering and giving a central role to child-centered methodologies and the way children learn, through play. An additional element is that the curriculum include specific contents for indigenous or migrant populations (Sweden, Finland), or even that they be developed with the participation of these groups, as was the case in New Zealand, and in most Latin American countries that have different ethnic groups (Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Paraguay, among others).

Another feature is that the preschool curriculum share common elements with the primary school curriculum. There must be coordination not only in the contents of the entire early childhood level and between the last preschool level and first grade (as in the United Kingdom), but also in the methodology, organization of the environments, educational materials, etc. In the operative part, one should opt for a functional organization of the objectives competencies or skills in areas, or spheres, or dimensions, etc., that will enable the continuity of learning from one section to another and from one cycle to another, further coordinating the preschool and primary education curricula.

The foundations supporting the proposal should include updated information from the various disciplines, in order to guide the pedagogical approach, methodology, strategies and evaluation criteria, specifying what is for the first cycle and what is for the second, given the specific features of each age group.

It would be good to include, as is being done in the United Kingdom, the graduate profiles of children, so as to serve as reference for teachers on the achievements the children are expected to have reached at the end of each cycle. Lastly, the curriculum should encourage and enable parents to participate in the educational process of their children, even in the formulation of the institution's curriculum.

Constraints Faced by Countries in Implementing Curricula Favorable to Transitions

In the authors' opinion, the constraints faced by countries in the implementation of curricula favorable to transitions lie in the following: (i) Staff ability and competence to implement a non-prescriptive curriculum that demands greater effort from them as teachers, or from the staff in charge, to translate it into activities that have meaning and relevance for children in each particular context. (ii) The conciliation of the preschool methodology that privileges playing, with that of the primary level that has a more cognitive approach. (iii) Conditions of poverty and exclusion that affect families of the more deprived areas; a situation that prevents them from offering the necessary opportunities and experiences for children to develop the basic skills that will enable them to successfully face school challenges. (iv) The lack of inter-sectoral coordination among the sectors that provide health and nutrition services, which usually prevents them from reaching more remote areas, where rates of child malnutrition and morbidity are

higher. (v) The lack of bilingual teachers in areas where the spoken language differs from the official one, which prevents children from understanding and contributes to increasing numbers of repetition and dropouts. (vi) The frequent changes made to curriculum documents, the poor training of teachers to handle them, and the lack of adequate infrastructure and materials.

Elements that Should be Incorporated in Teacher Training to Facilitate Transitions

The professional development of teachers working in early childhood should aim to achieve a graduate profile that considers all the functions they will have to perform not only with children, but with the parents and community as well, in the different geographical, socio-economic and cultural contexts of the respective country. It is necessary to have a competency curriculum, accompanied by an evaluation design that will permit validating the curricular proposal. In this way, every so often (three or four years) the necessary changes can be introduced based on the results and the progress of science and technology.

It would be important that the teacher training for early childhood cover the period from birth to age eight, which would enable teachers to accompany the child during the transition to primary school, to the first two grades – as in the case of OECD countries like France, Denmark, Norway and Sweden; Colombia in Latin America; and Guyana in the Caribbean.

In Latin American countries where several languages or dialects are spoken, it is necessary for the teacher to be proficient in the children's first language. Furthermore, initial teacher training requires ongoing training through *diplomados*, training courses, specializations, and Master's and Doctorate degrees that will contribute to the continuous improvement of the teaching staff. Ongoing training must be scheduled by the institutions in charge, taking into consideration the results of the assessments made through monitoring and supervision, in order to: guide the management of new curricular documents or methodological guidelines; analyze recent research on early childhood growth and development; master the application of learning strategies and curriculum planning, and other content requested by the teachers. Courses may be either completed in person or online, with each session lasting no less than one month, using a practical theoretical approach. Learning groups may also be organized, in which teachers meet to exchange experiences, analyze documents, plan activities and do internships, among other things.

In the case of staff working in non-formal or non-academic programs, ongoing training is necessary to ensure quality of service. It would also be necessary to develop competency profiles for non-teaching staff working in programs aimed at under the age of three. This would contribute to the implementation of professional development for teaching and non-teaching staff in early childhood. In Latin America, Mexico—through CONAFE—has been implementing a development system for non-teaching staff.

Policies Favoring Parental Involvement in the Education and Care of their Children

Early childhood policies in OECD, Latin American and Caribbean countries, explicitly favor parental involvement in the learning and development process of their children. The level of involvement promoted, however, depends on each country, ranging from full participation, in which parents manage the care and education center and contribute to the development of curricular content, to a participation of informative nature, in which they provide (and receive) information about their children to (and from) teachers. As we have seen, parental involvement in their child's educational process is a key factor in the accompaniment of their children during the transition from one level to another. In the specific case of rural areas in Latin America, parents participate in the construction and maintenance of premises for non-formal programs, and

in the preparation of the didactic material and furniture, and furthermore exert social control over the operation of nutritional and educational services.

In OECD and Latin American countries, materials have been designed to inform parents about their children's educational process and encourage them to partake in it, as well as to instruct them in certain specific content. In Latin America, the education and health ministries have prepared guidelines related to care, education and prevention, directed at parents. Most OECD and Latin American countries publish magazines and produce radio, television and video programs aimed at parents with children under the age of six, with greater emphasis on the period from birth to age four.

Elements that Favor Transitions in the Selected Cases

A number of elements favorable to transitions were found in the OECD experiences reviewed, namely: (i) a coordinated and articulated curriculum, in which there is continuity in the content and methodology, that places the child at the center of the learning process; (ii) parent involvement policies in which parents are invited to participate in program activities and are provided with information; (iii) programs that have continuity and are aimed at children under and over the age of three; (iv) the use of strategies that promote integration with primary schools, such as incorporating preschool classes in primary educational centers as a means of familiarizing children; (v) ongoing teacher training in teams, with staff from the different levels (preschool and primary school); and (vi) providing comprehensive services for children and their parents in a single premise.

Though Latin American programs have only recently begun to implement the focus on transitions in the educational system, selected cases like the CENDIs in Mexico are incorporating criteria for the transition from one section to another for children under the age of three, and preparing six-year-olds for the transition to first grade in addition to following up on institution graduates to obtain information regarding their performance in primary school. Parental involvement in the educational process is also incorporated, as is the ongoing training of staff.

Wawa Wasi and Qatari Wawa in Peru, the CENDI in Mexico, and the programs of the National Board for Preschools and Day Care Centers in Chile share a common element: parental involvement in the education of their children from an early age. This strategy, along with comprehensive care and ongoing assessment of early childhood growth and development, guarantee a good start for subsequent schooling. These programs also have a multidisciplinary team that promotes comprehensive care through monitoring and supervision activities.

OECD Policy Trends on Transitions

According to the reviewed information, the tendency in OECD countries is to address transitions not only from the perspective of legislation and regulation, but rather from the curricular framework, and policies of teacher training and parental involvement. Finland, New Zealand, Spain and the United Kingdom regulate transitions in their documents on early childhood policy, indicating that they must seek and provide continuity to the educational process throughout early childhood and the beginning of primary school. In the remaining countries, while policy documents make no explicit reference to transitions, they do highlight elements that favor them.

With respect to curricular frameworks, countries such as Sweden, Finland, Norway, New Zealand and the United Kingdom have them for all of early childhood, with separate standards for children under and over the age of three, but providing continuity. On the other hand, countries

like France, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom have prepared articulated curricular frameworks for the preschool and primary levels. In Finland, Sweden and Denmark, preschool classes are located in primary schools—a strategy that seeks to bridge the gap between preschool and primary school. In the case of Norway and Sweden, the primary school curricular framework incorporates methodological concepts from the preschool level. Italy promotes the use of portfolios at the preschool level, which accompany the child during his or her passage through primary school.

With respect to teacher training, there is a tendency to conduct training for the preschool level and for the first two grades of primary school under the same formation, as is the case in France, the Netherlands, Australia, Denmark and Norway. Lastly, with respect to parental involvement, all countries studied have policies that favor parental involvement in the educational process. This participation is seen as an element that favors and facilitates transitions. The degree of involvement promoted depends on each country, and in Norway and Finland parents even participate in designing the center's curricular content.

Policy Trends on Transition in Latin America and the Caribbean

At the legislation level (development plans, general education laws), all Latin American countries regulate transitions, especially the one from preschool to primary school. In Brazil and Uruguay, legislation addresses the transition from the care center (children under the age of three) to preschool (children over three). The concrete and specific actions of Argentina and Chile are highlighted, where complementary methodological guidelines have been developed that sustain continuity. In the case of Bolivia, what the child has learned at home needs to be continued at school, and in Colombia, teacher training encompasses those who attend school from birth through the age of eight.

In Caribbean countries, there is a growing trend to address transitions in policy documents, teacher-training strategies, and particularly in parental involvement policies. According to the Regional Plan for Caribbean Early Childhood, countries should strive toward the goal of developing comprehensive care systems with elements that favor transitions, such as: common parameters, parental involvement, and the certification and development of standards.

Reflections

A common policy framework for early childhood is an element that favors work on transitions and an integrated early childhood care system facilitates coordination and provides continuity to the services. For these purposes, it is necessary to unify the care and education of children under and over the age of three under a single sector. How to do so will depend on each country, as there are elements to be evaluated, including which is the stronger sector, which has more resources, and which could carry out coordination activities. If countries opt for the welfare sector, it is important to bear in mind the educational component of care as Denmark and Finland do.

Though there is no single model for curricula, it is important to take into account the factors that favor transitions. The curricular approach taken will depend on the values and objectives established by States for preschool education, and the respective national project countries have in mind. However, it is important to not give importance solely to school readiness, that is to say, the cognitive view, because this may distract from valuable elements of the socio-pedagogical approach that seeks the comprehensive development of the child.

In countries such as those in Latin America, it is equally important to note that in many cases, children come from disadvantaged socio-economic conditions where they have received little stimulation, and will need more preparation to reach the goals expected of them so as to perform satisfactorily in primary school. Lastly, it is better to develop a curricular framework resulting from solid research, in consultation with teachers and specialists and accepted by all, than to make constant modifications and reforms to national proposals in order to update them, without carrying out the necessary research and examination. In OECD countries, curricula have sometimes been valid for approximately ten years.

The selected case studies illustrate the different elements considered essential for transitions. Study tours are suggested in order to understand in greater detail how these programs work, and to learn about the strategies they implement to favor transitions. A common element to the case studies of OECD programs is that they have been—and continue to be—evaluated. Much has been learned from impact assessments in relation to the way they function, and this has resulted in program improvements. In Latin America, although programs have been awarded for the quality of their services (CENDI and Wawa Wasi), research has yet to be conducted to evaluate the results of the transitions from the home to the care center or preschool, and from there to school.

It is suggested that nationwide case studies be carried out to understand which aspects of the educational establishments contribute to (or hinder) children's transitions. Studies such as those undertaken by the Save the Children organization, with the Children of the Millennium in Peru, which track the transitions of a group of children from primary to secondary school. It is necessary not only to study the policy, but also to conduct field research to collect data on the children, their parents, and the institutions they attend, to later do a cross-sectional study with information from national census or assessments on learning and performance.

This document expects to have raised some general issues on what is being done in both OECD countries and those in Latin America and the Caribbean, with respect to transitions in order to enrich the national and regional debate. While the topic of transitions in the "*Policies and Strategies for a Successful Transition of the Child to Socialization and School*" project constitutes an important contribution to the debate on early childhood education and the formulation of policies, it is still necessary to delve deeper into the subject, either through a more in-depth study of one of the several aspects addressed, or in the programs of some countries that are seen as leaders in this area. Greater diffusion is required regarding the importance of transitions, so as to generate greater debate and achieve a better and greater understanding of the transition process that starts at the moment of birth. It is also necessary that countries continue searching for better and more relevant practices to promote successful transitions for all children, to learn from them.

**I. THEORETICAL CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:
SOCIALIZATION AND THE TRANSITION TO SCHOOL**

In the first eight years of life children go through many different settings of care and education. Early childhood care policies affect the quality of the services provided in these settings and can either aid or impede the process of transition from one setting to the next. At the same time, children pass through different stages of development in the early years, and the way they experience their passage through the different care and education settings will depend on factors inherent in their own development and their family circle. This chapter discusses the theoretical framework of transitions, on the basis of the leading research and literature.

1. Transitions as viewed from different disciplines

In **etymological** terms, the word "transition" means a change from one state or situation to another.⁸ It implies a process, the action of moving, and the effect of that action. The term is used to explain sociological and psychological processes of change from one stage or state to another. Anthropology and psychology theorize about the stages, rites and changes that children experience in their social and cultural settings and internally, as they develop. Anthropologists have studied such "rites of passage" in different societies and social groups to demarcate stages or changes of status. Psychologists study the different stages in personal development, the specific capacities that are developed in each of those stages, and how these affect subsequent development.

The meaning of transitions in socio-cultural anthropology

Socio-cultural anthropology views rituals as the forms in which the passage from one status to another reveals itself; they occur throughout people's lives. In the course of life there are many rites of passage, such as birth, youth, marriage and death, that mark the move from one state to another, and every culture facilitates these with different rituals.

In his book *Rites of Passage*, Van Gennep (1909) identifies three phases of rituals: a) the *pre-liminal or separation* phase, involving separation of the person or a group from a previous situation or status; b) the *liminal* – transitional or marginal – phase, in which the individual is in neither the previous nor the subsequent phase; c) and the *post-liminal* or "aggregation" phase, where the person finds himself in the new state, i.e. the transition is complete.

Turner (1969), following in the line of Van Gennep's work, holds that the initiation rites performed in different cultures offer the best description of transitions, because they include broad and clearly demarcated pre-liminal and marginal phases. In Peru, for example, Moromizato (2007) describes a girl's passage to womanhood in the Asháninkac community, which begins with the first menstruation, marked by a ritual known as *Pankotantsi* in which the girl is presented to society:

“A first stage of the process is the separation of the girl from her home; she is taken to a hut with her mother and grandmother. For a month the girl will learn the basic tasks she will perform as a woman, mother and wife. At the end of this learning stage the girl is bathed in herbs to cleanse her body and she drinks a beverage to purify herself internally. Next she is returned to her home and family, in a festival in which she is presented to society to show that she is ready to form a household.” (p. 52)⁹

The meaning of transitions in psychology

Developmental psychology describes the development stages through which children pass. It identifies various stages in the life of young children: the stage that runs from birth until the child begins to walk, the “toddler” stage from one year to two or three years, and the preschool stage that runs from three years to five or six years. The transition from one stage to

⁸ Merriam-Webster's 11th Collegiate Dictionary defines transition as "a passage from one state, stage, subject, or place to another; a movement, development or evolution from one form, stage, or style to another".

⁹ Moromizato, R. (2007). *Buscando nuevos rumbos para mejores oportunidades. Transiciones exitosas del hogar a la escuela en comunidades asháninkas*. Lima: Editora & Comercializadora Cartolán E.I.L.R, p. 52

another is marked by milestones, generally of physical development, but also of cognitive and socio-emotional development. As the child reaches these different stages, he or she acquires skills and abilities and a new, more elaborate level of mental and emotional development.

Cognitive development, according to Piaget, involves the “sensory-motor” stage (from birth to around two years) and the “pre-operational stage” (from two to seven years), during which a child’s thinking is magical and egocentric. The transition from preschool to school coincides with the end of the pre-operational phase and the beginning of the “concrete operations” stage, which runs from seven to 12 years. During these years children’s mental processes change dramatically, from magical, egocentric and intuitive thinking to logical and concrete thinking. These are internal processes of which people working in both preschool and school establishments must be aware.

To ensure that children’s transitions to preschool and primary school are positive, it is important to bear these processes in mind and take them as benchmarks in programming the curriculum and in the teaching and learning processes. In some cases the people developing preschool and school curricula have taken these considerations into account,¹⁰ but for the most part this has not been the case in the region. If we consider the instances of overage preschoolers and first-graders and recall the maturing – “growing up” – process, many children will find the preschool or school experience either boring or highly complex, and this helps explain the high repetition and dropout rates in the first years of primary school.

In **psychoanalysis**,¹¹ a discipline related to psychology, the first great transition is that of the fetus from the womb to the outside world, to its mother and its family, and to a society and a culture. Psychoanalysis studies this first transition and stresses the presence of the mother, who through breast-feeding and constant care helps the newborn adjust to the world. The baby needs certain conduct on the part of the mother to help it adapt to the world. At the same time, the mother goes through a period of adjustment and accommodation for responding to the baby’s characteristics and needs, and she requires the support of others. The family setting plays a central role, assisting the mother to answer the baby’s needs. The baby and the mother form a duo that allows the child to survive while it develops the basic and more complex mental functions. These theories about this first transition hold that it is not the child alone who makes the transit from one stage to another but rather the child and his or her immediate circle, accompanied by the mother, the father and the family. These are bidirectional processes, where it is the interaction between the child and the mother and the family circle, each with their own characteristics, that helps the child.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) approaches child development from a different angle, the **ecological focus**, in which the environment also plays a central role. A person transits through development stages but is always immersed in an environment that has a direct influence on his development. The transition, from the ecological viewpoint, is seen as the changes of role or of setting that occur throughout life. According to Bronfenbrenner (1987, pg. 118), “an ecological transition occurs whenever a person’s position is altered as the result of a change in role, setting or both.”¹² He goes further, in fact, noting that official policy has the power to affect the well-being and development of human beings by determining the conditions of their lives.¹³

¹⁰ For example, the High/Scope (<http://www.highscope.org>) and Creative Curriculum (<http://www.creativecurriculum.net/>) in the United States.

¹¹ Ver Stern, D. (1998); Winnicott, D. (1960); Mahler, M. (1975).

¹² Bronfenbrenner, Urie. “The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design”, 1979, Harvard University Press, p. 26.

¹³ Ibid., p. xiii

According to Amar, Abello and Acosta (2003), this **ecological vision of human development** highlights the importance of studying the environments in which human beings develop. It considers four systems, spheres or levels, arranged concentrically, which affect development, directly or indirectly.¹⁴ The interactions are bidirectional and reciprocal, and they both influence and transform each other. In the microsystem, the child interacts with his or her mother or the person caring for him or her. As he or she grows his or her circle expands to include his or her peers from the neighborhood, day care center, preschool or school. The mesosystem is where interactions take place between two or more microsystems: the home, day care center, preschool, school, and friends from the neighborhood. The interaction between the home and environments beyond the family can constitute solid experience for the transition, to the extent that the parents are involved, share their values, and establish a good level of communication. The exosystem is the context in which the child does not participate directly but in which events or situations occur that influence him or her, such as the parents' work, family friends, health services, or the extended family. The macrosystem is the level that influences all the other systems horizontally. It refers to the ideological and cultural frameworks,¹⁵ to which it gives uniformity and identity.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory of ecological development offers a better understanding of the educational transitions that the child experiences depending on the setting, his or her interaction with his or her parents, school etc. Even the non-immediate or indirect environment – that of public policy – will have an effect on the process of moving from one educational institution to another. Consequently, transitions must be examined from all the different levels: the child, his or her family, community, educational institutions, and public policy.

The contribution of the neurosciences to understanding transitions

In recent years the **neurosciences** have helped to improve our understanding of the development of the brain and the factors that facilitate or impede development and learning. These sciences examine the functioning of the brain and explain how cerebral functions and capacities develop throughout life.¹⁶ The 1994 Carnegie Corporation report provided information demonstrating how much of the brain's development takes place in these first years of life. Subsequently, Shonkoff and Phillips (2000) shed new light on the importance of the early years. The first months and years, in fact, are a time of intense cerebral activity characterized by sensitive periods in which development is centered on certain functions, for example vision, hearing, and language.

Brain development goes on continuously on the basis of the learning the child incorporates. The "wiring" of the brain takes place in a hierarchical way, where subsequent learning is superimposed on what has already been consolidated and on the basis of simpler functions developed. What has been processed and learned constitutes the basis for further development.

Another important factor in brain development is the role of genetic and environmental factors. The genetic load is a given, but the environment (understood as the child's experiences in his or her interaction with the caregiver) can affect this genetic load. Experiences affect not only the quantity of neuron connections and synapses that will be formed but also the quality of those

¹⁴ Amar, J., Abello, R. & Acosta, C. (2003). Factores protectores: un aporte investigativo desde la psicología de la salud. *Psicología desde el Caribe*, 11, 111. Universidad del Norte, Colombia

¹⁵ Such as the media, the economic situation (crisis, recession, unemployment etc.) and the promulgation of new laws and provisions relating to child protection, childcare and education services, maternity leave, breast-feeding breaks, etc., which can have an impact on the child's life.

¹⁶ This paper will not delve deeply into mental development, but will highlight key elements or principles of mental development in early childhood.

synapses. Experiences influence the synapses and the neural "wiring" through two channels: that of the senses and that of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis (HPA). Experience also affects the chemical makeup and the genetic expression of the brain, which mediates cognitive, emotional and social conduct. Environment and experience then have a central role in the development of the brain and its associated functions in the first years of life.

A child with an impoverished upbringing and little stimulation will have functional development problems. It is essential then to give young children opportunities to develop their full potential. That is why the quality of early childhood programs is so important. The environments in which the child grows must be rich and stimulating to encourage enriching experiences. Babies and children living in deprived environments or subject to abuse or abandonment are at greater risk of not developing their full potential or of seeing their development impeded; hence the importance of ensuring that early childhood education and care programs promote positive transitions.

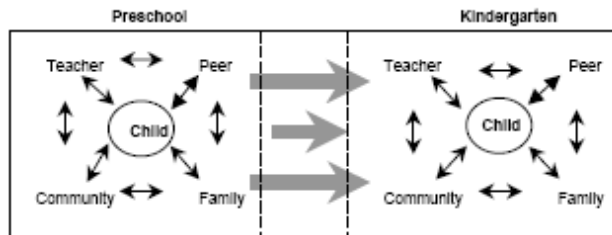
2. The meaning of early childhood transitions

There is a wide literature on educational transitions. Researchers such as Kraft-Sayre and Pianta (2000), Fabian and Dunlop (2007), Vogler, Grivello, and Woodhead (2007) and, in Latin America, Peralta (2007) and Reveco (2007) have theorized about these transitions. In this section of the paper their concepts are summarized. While there are some differences among researchers, there is a greater degree of concurrence as to what transitions are, how they occur, and what affects them. According to Peralta (2007), transitions in education imply processes of change from an initial situation to one that is to be achieved; they are culturally regulated, and they take place over time. An educational transition is seen as a step that the child takes from an initial institution to a subsequent one. The initial setting may be the home, day care center, nursery or preschool.

Kraft-Sayre and Pianta (2000) propose an ecological and dynamic model to explain the transition from preschool to school. They highlight the shared responsibilities of the many individuals in the child's circle and the dynamic nature of the relationships between those individuals (other children, family, teachers, and community) in which the child influences and is influenced by those people. It is a process that involves and affects not only the child but also the circle represented by the family and day care center or school in which the child finds itself, as illustrated in the following diagram. The teacher and school are affected by the child's presence. This view is based on the ecological model, for it considers the different levels or systems. The home, day care center, preschool and school constitute distinct subsystems through which the child passes and which in turn are affected by the child's passage. Hence the importance attached not only to the degree to which children are prepared to move from one educational institution to another, but also the degree to which those institutions are prepared to receive them.

Figure 1. Kraft-Sayre and Pianta: The Ecological and Dynamic Model of Transition

The Ecological and Dynamic Model of Transition



From Kraft-Sayre, M. E., & Planta, R. C. (2000). *Enhancing the transition to kindergarten: Linking children, families, and schools*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia, National Center for Early Development & Learning.

Fabian and Dunlop (2007) see transitions as "the process of change that children (and their families) experience in moving from one scenario to another," for example when the child moves from home to preschool or from preschool to school. Transition includes the period of time it takes to make this change, from the first pre-enrollment visit to the point where the child is fully integrated as a member of the new environment. This is typically a time of intense and accelerated demands, and is socially regulated. Transitions involve not only the child but his or her family as well. The young child moves through educational and care institutions with his or her parents, who accompany him or her in the process. The parents give continuity to the child's experience as he or she transits from home to the nursery or school.

Vogler, Grivello and Woodhead (2007) offer what is perhaps one of the most complete definitions of transitions. They see transitions as key events or processes that occur at specific moments and are linked to personal changes (in appearance, activities, status, roles and responsibilities). Transitions involve psychosocial and cultural adjustments, and the way children experience them will depend on their vulnerability or their resiliency.

Peralta (2007) suggests that there are three sub-processes involved in education transitions: continuity, progression and differentiation. Continuity processes give stability and include the application of principles. Progression processes have to do with the "increasing complexity of aspects that have been developing (abilities, skills etc.); and differentiation processes involve new aspects that become part of the next stage: the practice of new standards, roles, relationships, attitudes, codes etc."¹⁷ Peralta uses these concepts to identify factors that facilitate or impede transitions. Thus, to understand the transition from the family environment to school she posits the factors of continuity (such as instruction in the mother tongue), factors of progression (empowerment of the child, product of the child's development), and factors of differentiation. Citing the concepts of Vigotsky, Peralta also argues that the educational transition process is facilitated if the experience and the new surroundings are familiar to the child, and is impeded if that experience is remote.

In summary, transitions are processes of change that children experience in the first eight years of life, related to access (or lack thereof) to various educational and care services, and the move from one to another. Transitions are understood as a *process*, where both the "before" and the "after" are important. In the transition process there is a notion of continuity, progression and differentiation that facilitates or impedes the transition. This process affects not only the child but also his or her parents, teachers and school, and is closely related to early childhood education and care policies and to basic primary education policies, as well as the overlap between them.

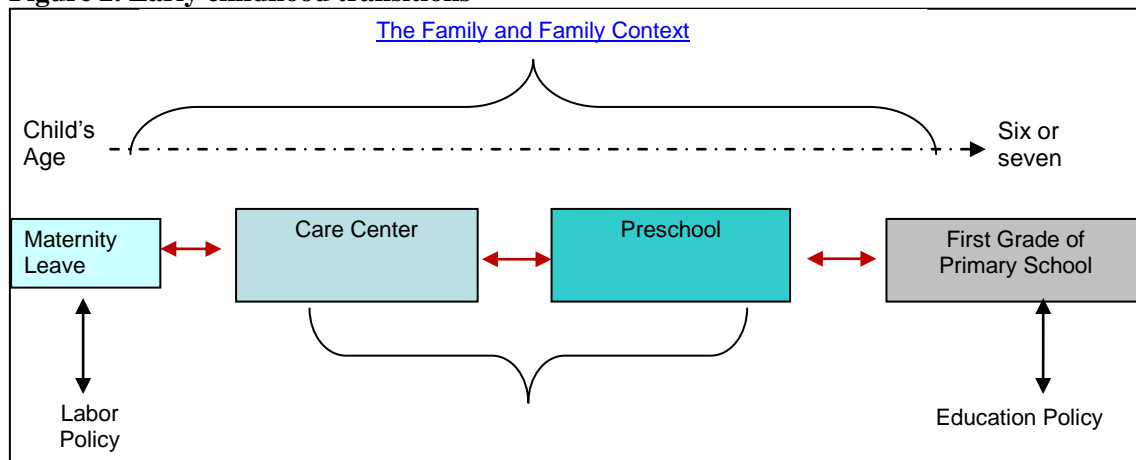
¹⁷ Peralta, M. V. (2007). "Transiciones en Educación Infantil: Un marco para abordar el tema de la calidad", pg. 5.

In this way, studying educational transitions involves not only all the specific activities that programs and institutions offer at the end of the year in order to introduce the child to his or her next setting, but the entire set of activities in the initial setting, which will be continued in the following setting and which will incorporate a degree of progression and differentiation. This set of activities translates into a curriculum and is a result of a policy for teacher training, parental participation, etc.

3. Early childhood transitions

What are these educational transitions? Peralta (2007) identifies the first transitions as those that take place in the family setting, while the second great transition is that from the family social environment to that of some external institution. A third transition takes place with the move to primary school. Table 1 illustrates the main transitions that are the focus of this study: (i) the transition that children experience when they leave their mother's care for that of another person (relative) or an external institution, which may be a nursery or daycare program; (ii) the transition that takes place when the child enters preschool, where the emphasis is on education more than on care; (iii) the transition to primary school. The child, accompanied and supported by his or her family, transits from one level to the other, from the home to daycare center or preschool, and from preschool to primary school. These transitions are addressed below.

Figure 2. Early childhood transitions



Source: authors' preparation

The transition from home to the day care center or program

This transition represents the first introduction to a social environment distinct from that to which the baby and his or her family are accustomed. If the mother has formal employment and has taken maternity leave, she has the option upon expiry of that period to leave the child in the care of a relative or another person. The service may be provided in that person's own home, or it may be more structured (the latter case will be discussed in further detail in the following chapters). The timing of the child's placement in care programs will vary according to the child's family and its social, economic and cultural context. It will depend on the mother's employment situation, or economic situation, child-rearing patterns, the parents' awareness of the importance of stimulation in the early years, the availability of this type of care program, and the quality of the service offered.

In OECD countries, most children experience this initial transition. The moment in which they do will depend largely on the length of the mother's maternity leave. In Nordic countries such as Sweden and Norway, where the law grants an extended period of paid maternity leave, this transition occurs when the child is between one and two years old. In countries where maternity leave is shorter and the mother must return to work, the transition will come earlier. In Latin America and the Caribbean the proportion of children experiencing transition to a care center is much lower. First, because there is a greater family support network, in which children will be cared for by a grandparent or an older sibling. If the mother has formal employment or works on a farm she will typically take her child with her to work, as Quisumbing, Hallman and Ruel (2007) found in Guatemala, because there is no universal and subsidized daycare center or nursery available. One response to the problem of access to childcare services has been the organization of non-formal community-based programs.¹⁸

The transition to preschool

In OECD countries few children enter preschool without having first been socialized in a day care program or center. For children who have been placed in such a center, the move to the preschool program will be easier because they have already been through an experience of this kind, but it will still be felt as a transition, for the child finds him or herself in a new setting, with different policies, people, and demands from those of the day care center.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, for most children entry into preschool will be their first experience in a setting outside the family, as the proportion of children attending day care programs is much lower than in OECD countries. For the parents of children enrolled in formal preschool programs, this will be their first experience with the education system.

The transition to primary school

The transition to school is the one of greatest concern to parents, teachers and principals as well as to those who design and implement policies. It is also the transition that has been most thoroughly studied, since the experience (be it positive or negative) may affect future performance in school and subsequent success or failure. Arnold, Bartlett et al. (2007) define transition as the period of time before, during and after a child's move to primary school, either from home or from an early childhood program. When the child enters school he or she has probably already been through other transitions that have obliged him or her to adapt to rules of behavior and teaching styles, and to share spaces and materials with his or her classmates, establishing patterns of learning and behavior that can help in this transition.

The literature on transitions to primary school, especially in the United States,¹⁹ frequently refers to the notion of "readiness." But what does it mean for children to be "ready?" In the studies reviewed, it means that children have achieved the maturity level and have developed the specific cognitive, linguistic and social abilities and skills needed to go to school and be able to take advantage of it.

Researchers and experts such as Janus and Offord (2007), Woodhead and Moss (2007) and Young (2007) have drawn a distinction between "school readiness" and "readiness for

¹⁸ One response to the problem of access to daycare or nursery facilities in the region was the organization of non-formal, non-educational programs such as Wawa Wasi in Peru. Many communities have organized their own programs to care for young children. These programs were subsequently taken over by governments as part of their policies to expand access to early childhood care and education.

¹⁹ We refer here especially to the literature on transitions in the United States and Canada and publications by the van Leer Foundation on transitions.

learning." "Readiness for learning" has to do with how prepared the child is to learn specific material. On the other hand, "school readiness" is generally used in relation to the school, and focuses on the abilities needed to cope with the demands of the school, such as how to hold a pencil, how to listen and ask questions, how to play with other children, and how to follow instructions.

According to Woodhead and Moss (2007) the concept of "readiness" must be viewed in a comprehensive way, i.e. including not only the child but also the school he or she attends: it is the *encounter* between the child and the school. "Readiness" is defined in function to the child's physical capabilities and activity level, cognitive ability, learning style, knowledge base, and social and psychological competencies. According to Myers and Landers (1989), these characteristics reflect the child's nutritional, health and emotional status. The family helps "ready" the child for school by satisfying his or her basic needs, offering experiences and opportunities that will foster his or her cognitive, social, emotional and linguistic development, and generating expectations about his or her entry into school. On the other hand, the school must be ready to receive the children; it must have the necessary strategies, for example, for connecting the family to the school and must be able to adapt to the needs of each child.

In Latin America, the concept of transitions has been approached primarily in terms of coordination. Coordination is provided by institutions, between levels of schooling (the preschool level with the primary level), primarily through the curriculum. One way to promote transitions from one level to another is to coordinate the curriculum so as to ensure continuity. Yet from the viewpoint of the researchers for this paper, coordination is not enough to facilitate transitions. The way children experience different transitions will depend both on the child's own individual and family factors, and on external factors that have to do with the level of education and with the policies (labor, early childhood and education) through which the service is coordinated. Strategies are needed at all levels to give support to the child and the family in the transition to a new educational setting. As Peralta (2007) notes, "to foster transitions (which are internal processes) there must be an external coordinating process through which we intervene."

4. Factors influencing transitions

What makes for a successful transition? According to Peralta (2007), there are two groups of factors that can facilitate or impede a transition from one social setting to another. These are factors that relate directly to the child (internal factors) and to the education or care institution through which it passes (external or "coordinating" factors). Thus, there are factors that relate to the child and its surroundings, and factors that relate to the institutions themselves. The factors internal to the child that contribute to a positive transition to primary school are similar to those that aid or facilitate learning in school.²⁰ In addition there is a third factor, constituted by the education and early childhood policy framework that governs education and care institutions and establishes a benchmark for the quality of services.

Studies cited by Zill and Resnick (2005) provide useful information on the requirements for a successful transition, insisting that education which begins in the earliest years will help "ready" children to begin primary education successfully, especially in children growing up in poverty. Important factors here are the quality of the programs, professional qualification of the teacher, and the length of the school day.

²⁰ Vegas & Petrow (2007) identify the following factors: the age of the child, its cognitive development, its prior experience in ECD programs, and its innate ability. Under cognitive development, the authors of this report would add social and emotional development, as well.

A transition will be positive or successful, according to Ladd (2007, pg. 3), when the child "1) develops positive attitudes and feelings about school and learning; 2) establishes supportive social ties with teachers and classmates; 3) feels comfortable and relatively happy in the classroom rather than anxious, lonely or upset; 4) is interested and motivated to learn and take part in classroom activities (participation, engagement); and 5) achieves and progresses academically each school year."²¹ From another perspective, Peralta (2007), citing Vigotsky, explains that a transition will be positive if the child experiences a new environment as familiar and manageable. Otherwise, if the environment is remote and strange and requires great adaptations, the transition process may be unmanageable and even negative. The experience of moving from one level to another can be successful, i.e. positive, and will depend on a combination of factors. The literature generally tends to consider transitions as processes that are apt to be difficult (Peralta, 2007) because the conditions or factors for success are missing.

Individual and family factors

The child's nutritional state and his or her cognitive and emotional development, mother tongue, bonds of trust with a significant adult, his or her resiliency and previous learning opportunities at home, are all factors that will determine whether a transition is positive. Unfortunately, in Latin America and the Caribbean malnutrition rates are high. Consequently, children's cognitive and emotional development in early childhood is often compromised. For this reason, these children are likely to be less "ready" for meeting educational challenges.

The effect of the family's socioeconomic level on early childhood development is undeniable. Poverty affects parents' capacity to support and provide for their children. Exclusion from services in early childhood is an obstacle to success in school and affects more than half the children in developing countries, with adverse consequences for their quality of life. Bellamy (2005) reports that "over 16% of children under five lack adequate nutrition and 13% of all children have never been to school."²² These indicators are much higher in rural areas where malnutrition and anemia affect not only children's health, but also their learning. Such living conditions have an adverse impact on the youngest children, who are at a stage of life where the human organism is most vulnerable because of its accelerated pace of development.

The level of parents' understanding and appreciation of early childhood, and their attitude towards education will determine whether they send their children to preschool programs. Children who have not attended preschool or daycare programs may be at a disadvantage when they enter school, for lack of any previous experience of socialization in an educational environment. Impact assessments in the region²³ show that young children's experiences in preschool and daycare centers lay the basis for subsequent learning, and that their achievements there extend to the first years of school, with an impact on subsequent years. It is clear that there is a close relationship between school readiness and school success.

External factors relating to educational institutions

According to Myers and Landers (1989), a school or preschool that supports the child's transition is one that offers quality service and includes recognition of and adaptation to local needs. A quality education is understood as one that is purposeful, relevant and inclusive, and that promotes equality and participation. A school must be able to recognize, adapt and respond

²¹ Ladd, G.W., "School Traditions/School Readiness: an Outcome of Early Childhood Development", Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development, 2003.

²² Bellamy, C., "The State of the World's Children: Children under Threat", UNICEF, 2005.

²³ Vegas and Petrow (2007) have reviewed the latest impact assessments in Latin America and conclude that participation in early childhood education programs has a positive impact on school performance.

to the specific characteristics, needs and interests of each child and his or her context in order to provide quality services. It must also be governed by a series of minimum parameters or standards of care that include such aspects as class size, curriculum, family participation, and teacher and staff training.

Class size and the teacher-pupil ratio are regulated in OECD countries and also in Latin America. These ratios are lower in early childhood programs than in primary school. Latin America's public schools are typically overcrowded in the early grades of primary education, which interferes with learning and makes for unmanageable classes with limited access to educational materials.²⁴ If there are too many children in the class, especially in primary school, it is difficult to provide personalized instruction and to address children's different paces and learning styles. The situation is even more complex in multi-grade classes, where the teacher is responsible for instructing children in three or four grades in the same classroom.

One factor that favors the transition to the daycare center is to have the center's staff involve the parents in the process their children are living, and to maintain constant communication with them from the outset so that staff are aware of the child's previous experience and any important factors concerning the his or her nutrition, health and routines, as well as be able to offer a safe environment that will guarantee their well-being. As Arnold et al. (2007) and Fabian and Dunlop (2007) report, parents' confidence in the teachers and school affects the child's transition process. Schools that are ready to receive children establish links with the families; they maintain open communication with parents in order to familiarize them with the school system and to keep them informed of their children's activities and progress (Pianta, Cox, Taylor & Early (1999) and Fabian & Dunlop, (2007)). An important factor for predicting transition success is the way the school relates to the family and involves them in the educational process. If parents and teachers are to contribute to a smooth transition to school, they must have information on the characteristics of child development, the school, on performance expectations, and the type of support each child requires. Parents and teachers must help the child acquire skills for coping with transitions.

Continuity in the working methodology (in the curriculum) in primary and preschool is another factor for consideration. The methodologies used in primary school and preschool are generally different, which makes the transition from one level to the other more difficult. While primary education generally uses teaching methods that focus on transmitting information and knowledge, preschool education by contrast is centered on the child, who builds his or her knowledge through interaction with his or her surroundings. On this point, Sensat (2004)²⁵ notes that parents and teachers often treat children as "works in progress, which must be shaped, trained, modeled, filled, in short taught everything," instead of seeing them as active beings pursuing their own learning, so as to offer them experiences that will allow them to develop their full potential.

Another factor that favors transitions is to have common elements in the training of preschool and primary teaching personnel. This does not usually happen, for as a general rule preschool teachers in most countries stress aspects related to the child's development, while primary school teachers focus on learning and on the teaching and learning processes. These different focuses tend to accentuate the differences between the two levels. In some countries, efforts are now being made to develop joint training strategies for preschool and primary teachers so as to familiarize them with the different theoretical and practical approaches.

²⁴ In smaller classes, children are more likely to participate in cooperative, creative and intellectual activities, there will be more frequent interaction between teacher and pupils, and the children will perform better in development tests, according to Ruopp and Traver (1982, cited by Arnold et al., 2007).

²⁵ Sensat, A. M. (2004). La educación infantil un derecho. *Revista Infancia en Europa*, 7, p. 3.

Researchers such as Pianta, Cox, Taylor and Early (1999), and Fabian and Dunlop (2007) report that successful transitions occur in schools or preschool establishments that encourage specific learning activities that facilitate transition. These strategies may include having the children visit the school, developing the child's thinking to anticipate changes in the learning model, learning activities based on games at one level (in preschool) that will continue in the next level (kindergarten), and the use of stories that help to create insight into the following level. Social and emotional support for the child during the transition is also an important factor. Establishing links with the child and his or her past experience before classes begin, as well as reaching out to children with the appropriate intensity, can facilitate the transition to school.

Another important element is the child's mother tongue and the language used in daycare and preschool programs. It must be recalled that many children grow up in households where the mother tongue is not the dominant or official language. When they enter preschool or school, children from minority groups find a teacher who speaks a different language than theirs—one they cannot understand—which impedes communication and learning. Moreno and Van Dongen (2006) maintain that reading and writing should be learned in the mother tongue. However, many children around the world begin their schooling in a language or dialect different from their own, with the handicap this poses for their learning and reading and writing. This is considered one of the factors behind high repetition and dropout rates, and constitutes a frustrating experience for both the children and their parents.

Factors related to education and early childhood policies

Early childhood care responds to the need for places where young children can be cared for during the day while their mothers work. The increase in women's participation in the workforce creates the need for places where mothers can drop off their babies or young children. Over time, such centers have become institutionalized. Among the better-off population groups, and in countries such as Germany and Italy, famous teachers have created model centers where children, generally three years or older, can receive an enriching educational experience. These programs have expanded and become universal, and over time have positioned themselves differently. From bridging programs for school or mere babysitting centers, they have become programs that are valuable in their own right. Recent advances in the social and neurological sciences have shown the importance of early childhood as a key stage of development in which the child plays an active role. This has contributed to positioning early childhood in a different way, and has brought with it new challenges such as developing curricula appropriate to children up to the age of six, and adopting a policy for differentiating this level from primary education (UNESCO, 2007).²⁶

Early childhood policy and education policy determine the type of care that children should receive in care and education institutions before they enter school. They establish guidelines for the quality of services. Policy sets standards for curriculum content, standards of care, teacher training, and parents' participation. These elements of early childhood policy will be reviewed and examined in the following chapters. They have an effect on the external factors that impact transitions, and on the specific policies in the classroom or center that are pursued in the different levels and modalities of care.

5. International and regional debate on transitions

²⁶ UNESCO (2007), EFA Global Monitoring Report, pp 129-130.

In recent years there have been a number of international and regional meetings dealing with early childhood transitions. The OECD's Starting Strong (Early Childhood Education and Care) Network²⁷ focused its third international meeting on transitions. It worked on specific issues such as the transition from preschool to primary school, the development of a common policy framework to promote transitions, and the identification of best practices in transitions. The annual meeting of the European Early Childhood Education Research Association (EECERA)²⁸ in Norway in 2008 also addressed this issue. Together with the van Leer Foundation, the OAS has been sponsoring meetings, research and publications in Latin America and the Caribbean on this matter.

In 2007, at their fifth meeting in Cartagena, Colombia, education ministers from Latin America and the Caribbean approved the Declaration of Cartagena. In it they agreed to establish comprehensive early childhood care and education policies and to develop inter-institutional and inter-sectoral coordination strategies to promote successful transitions for children between the different stages of childhood up to the age of eight.²⁹

On the research front, OECD countries such as the United States, Australia and New Zealand have, since the late 1990s, published numerous studies dealing with transitions. In Latin America, work on transitions has involved primarily the coordination of preschool (ages three to six) and primary school curricula.³⁰ Recently, Reveco (2008) conducted a theoretical review on transitions, with contributions from a cultural education perspective, based on children and their experiences, while Peralta (2007) presented a paper on early childhood education transitions as a framework for addressing the issue of quality.

Conclusions

The word "transition" means a change from one state to another, from an initial situation to a subsequent one, and implies a process, the act of transiting, and its effect. The term is used to explain sociological and psychological processes. Anthropologists have investigated rites in different societies and social groups to demarcate stages or changes of status. Psychologists look at the different stages of personal development, the specific capacities developed in each of those stages, and how they affect subsequent development. The neurosciences also contribute to the understanding of transitions by highlighting the role of experience (environment) in the development of the child and his or her brain.

With respect to educational transitions, researchers agree on what transitions are, how they occur, and the factors that affect them. Early childhood transitions are processes of change that children experience in the first eight years of life, related to access (or lack thereof) to various educational services (daycare centers and nursery school, preschool and primary school). Transitions must be seen as a process, where what happened in the previous stage is as important as what happens in the new stage. They affect not only the child, but also his or her surrounding

²⁷ These meetings followed publication of the OECD document, Starting Strong II Early Childhood Education and Care. http://www.oecd.org/findDocument/0,3354,en_2649_39263231_1_119808_1_1_37455,00.html

²⁸ For further information visit [http://www.uis.no/samfunn/naeringsliv/konferanser/18th_european_early_childhood_education_research_association_\(eecera\)_annual_conference/](http://www.uis.no/samfunn/naeringsliv/konferanser/18th_european_early_childhood_education_research_association_(eecera)_annual_conference/)

²⁹ In it they recommended a joint hemispheric commitment to quality education and comprehensive care for the very young, with a view to considering, in the Declaration and Plan of Action from the Fifth Summit of the Americas, in 2009, guidelines for strengthening policies for early childhood that may contribute to the integral development of member countries.

³⁰ Another aspect addressed in the region, with important implications for the transitions process, involves working with parents. In Latin America there is a long tradition of working with parents and involving them in their children's education.

circle and the institution through which he or she passes. The home, the daycare and nursery facility, preschool and school constitute subsystems through which the child passes, and these in turn are affected by the child's passage. Responsibility is shared between the child, his or her peers, family, teacher and community. This implies adjustments in the child and in these subsystems. Educational transitions involve processes of continuity, progression and differentiation that promote or impede transitions.

The transitions examined in this study are the one the child experiences when leaving his or her mother's care and attends an early childhood education and care center, and the transition that occurs when the child enters the education system, either at the preschool or the primary school level, as well as the passage from preschool to primary school. The child will thus move from the home to the care and education center, to preschool, and then to school. These are subsystems through which the child moves, and in this move the child and the subsystems must make adjustments. Educational transitions involve processes of continuity, progression and differentiation that promote or impede transitions.

The way transitions are experienced will be influenced by the interaction of a series of internal and external factors. The internal factors (individual and family factors) relate directly to the child and his or her immediate surroundings. They involve the child, his or her personality, level of development, nutritional state, resiliency, prior experience, and immediate surroundings: the family's socioeconomic level, understanding of early childhood and attitude toward the child. The external factors have to do with the educational institution the child enters. Among these factors are the center or program's teaching approach, the training of its staff, and the types of family involvement encouraged. An important factor for predicting transition success is the way the school establishes bonds with the family and involves them in the educational process; continuity in the methodology used at each level is another factor (in primary school and in preschool the working methodologies will generally be different, and this impedes transitions to some extent); and specific activities and experiences intended to sensitize the child, the teacher and parents to the question of transitions. Finally, a third factor that embraces all of the above is the public policy for early childhood, which has a direct impact on the external factors, the curriculum, quality standards, teacher training, and so forth.

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II. EARLY CHILDHOOD POLICY:

LAWS AND REGULATIONS RELATING TO TRANSITIONS

This chapter reviews legislation relating to maternity leave, care and education policy for children from birth to the age of three, and care and education policy for children from three to five years. The first great transition in a child's life is the one from home to day care, and is influenced by policies relating to maternity leave and care for children under the age of three. The second transition comes when the child moves into the education system, either at the preschool or first grade level, or when he or she moves from preschool to first grade, and is affected by education policy. The information presented below is organized for three groups of countries: OECD,³¹ Latin American³² and Caribbean countries.³³

³¹ This group does not include all OECD member countries. The authors worked with a group that includes Germany, France, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, New Zealand, Australia, United Kingdom, Canada and United States.

³² The countries covered are Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela

³³ The Caribbean countries covered are Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. This document refers to countries for which information is available via the Internet.

The First Transition

Maternity Leave

The mother-baby relationship is formed from the beginning of pregnancy, when the mother starts to dream about her baby, and is essential for the survival and development of the child. For this reason, the time that a mother devotes exclusively to her baby, as well as the quality of the care she provides, is vital for the baby's development. In the modern world this time is increasingly short, primarily because the modern mother works outside the home (either by choice or by necessity).

To protect the rights of mothers and their children as well as of employers, the International Labour Organization (ILO)³⁴ recommends the following: (i) extension of maternity leave to 14 weeks; (ii) increase in cash benefits to 100% of the worker's pay; (iii) protection from dismissal during pregnancy and for up to one year after childbirth; (iv) the mother's right to be reinstated in her job at the end of her leave; (v) changing her job when the tasks involve conditions or hazards that would prejudice the health and safety of the mother and the child. Other benefits stipulated include a daily breast-feeding break of one hour, which may be divided into two periods, and the establishment of a daycare center for the children. The ILO Convention 183 on maternity protection was adopted in 2000, and came into force in 2003.

While the ILO has formulated recommendations, not all countries observe them and some (15) have not signed the conventions.³⁵ Every country has its own policies, which are guided as much by economic as by social interests. Beyond maternity leave, there is generally no policy targeted specifically at mother and child, but rather policies that seek to address such issues as the declining fertility rate or to promote gender equality and women's participation in the labor market, and economic growth. In very few cases will these policies be based on the welfare of the mother and the development of the child, or form part of poverty reduction strategies.

Generally speaking, the length of maternity leave is determined by the vested interest of employers. From the firm's perspective, the optimum length is between four and six months. Granting longer leave may be considered disruptive, because it will take the mother more time to readapt to the working environment and to any changes that may have occurred in the interval. At the same time a shorter leave would be undesirable because the mother will not generally be in a condition to return to work, and her productivity will suffer. Studies on the impact of maternity leave, such as those by Tanaka (2005) and OECD (2007), show important effects on human development indicators. Maternity leave has been found to help lower child mortality and low birth-weight rates, encourage breast-feeding and reduce postpartum depression. It has also been shown to contribute to the well-being of the mother and of the child, and to foster the mother-child relationship. Research has not, however, managed to shed much light on the ideal length of maternity leave, and so the ILO regulations constitute the rules to be followed at this time.

1. Maternity Leave in OECD Countries

³⁴ The ILO offers an international regulatory framework for defining maternity leave policies, among others. Those formulations are contained in Conventions 100 (Equal Remuneration), 103 (Maternity Protection), 111 (Discrimination in Employment), 156 (Workers with Family Responsibilities), and 183. According to the ILO, the majority of countries have not signed the conventions.

³⁵ Electronic bulletin no. 2, May 2007. <http://www.mujiresdelsur.org.uy/xboletin2.htm>

Many OECD countries, primarily the European ones, seek to postpone children's transition from home to day care by offering extended maternity leave. The European Commission's DG for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (ESAEO) developed the directive whereby all member countries of the European Union should offer maternity leave of these 14 weeks with pay equal at least to that received by workers on sick leave.³⁶

The ESAEO recently submitted a proposal³⁷ to extend maternity leave to 18 weeks (six of which must be taken after childbirth). The intent is to encourage policies that will facilitate reconciliation between work and family life, particularly for mothers, who according to recent statistics cited in the proposal are not participating in the labor market.³⁸ The proposal seeks to increase maternity leave with no loss of income (although countries may establish limits), giving women greater flexibility over the timing of non-compulsory leave (before or after childbirth). This proposal was to be discussed in the course of 2009 and was expected to become law within two years.

In OECD countries, maternity leave pay is financed by the government, employer or by social security. In Canada, Finland, Italy and the Netherlands it is the social security system that covers the amount. In Spain, Ireland, Norway, New Zealand, Portugal and Sweden, it is the State budget. In Denmark and the United Kingdom it is the employers who must cover the costs. In Germany, it is a combination of social security and the employer, as social security covers only up to a certain amount. The only country where maternity leave is not paid is the United States.

Table 1. Maternity and paternity leave in selected OECD countries

	Length of Maternity Leave	Maternity Leave: Payment (% of Salary/Duration)	Paternity Leave: % of Salary/Duration
Germany	14 weeks	100%	
Canada	15 weeks, extendable to two years	55% of insured earnings	35 to 37 weeks parental leave (mother or father), 55% of insured earnings
Spain	16 weeks	100%	100%, two days
Denmark	18 weeks	100%	90%, two weeks
United States	12 weeks in firms with more than 50 employees	Not paid	
Finland	105 days or 17.5 weeks	100-60%, decreases with earnings	100-60%, 18 weeks
France	16 weeks, with 26 weeks for the third child	100%	100% for first three days of two weeks
Ireland	26 weeks	70% for 18 weeks	No statutory leave
Italy	21 weeks or five months	80%	In special circumstances: single father or ill mother
Norway	9 weeks (embedded within parental leave)	Varies: 100% for 42 weeks, 80% for 52 weeks	80-100% for four weeks out of 52 weeks parental

³⁶ All these countries grant paid maternity leave. The benefit, however, varies from country to country, and ranges from 70% to 100% of salary.

³⁷ See the announcement "Longer and better maternity leave for millions", published October 3, 2008 at the ESAEO website : <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=es&catId=89&newsId=402&furtherNews=yes>

³⁸ The participation rate is 65.5% for women with dependent children, compared to 91.7% for men with dependent children, according to the ESAEO report

			leave
New Zealand	12 weeks	50%	
Netherlands	16 weeks	100%	100%, two days
Portugal	17 weeks	100%	100%, five days
United Kingdom	52 weeks	100% first 26 weeks, 0 for remaining 26 weeks	90%, two weeks
Sweden	7 weeks pregnancy leave +60 days parental leave	80%	80%, 10 days

Source: OECD (2007). *Babies and bosses: Reconciling work and family life. A synthesis of findings for OECD countries.*

In European countries, mothers who are studying or unemployed have the same right as working mothers to take maternity leave. In the Netherlands, maternity leave is also granted to mothers employed in temporary or part-time work; in Scandinavian countries, maternity leave covers all mothers whether employed or not, and in Germany it includes mothers who are in university or are unemployed.

In OECD countries there is another type of leave to care for small children. Fathers are eligible for paternity leave at the birth of the child. This leave covers a brief absence from work (between three and ten days). The longest leaves are those granted by Norway and Finland (42-52 weeks and 18 weeks). The shortest are for two days (Netherlands and Spain). Compensation generally amounts to 100% of the father's earnings for the first three to five days.

Another type of leave is parental leave, which is granted indiscriminately to the father or mother for a longer period, generally after the maternity or paternity leave has expired. Most European countries grant this during the first years of a child's life (usually the first three years, and up to eight years). In the United States, the UK, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Ireland it is not paid.

Table 2. Parental leave in selected OECD countries

Country	Length of Parental Leave	% of Salary or \$ Coverage	Age of Child
Germany	3 years per parent per child; during the child's 2 first years of life, and the 3rd year before the child is 8	Max. €300 per child and month during first 24 months; or €450 during 12 first months	3
Canada	35 weeks	55% (max CAD\$330/week)	.
Denmark	32 weeks per child	90%	9
Spain	3 years per parent per child	Unpaid	3
United States	12 weeks per parent	Unpaid	.
Finland	158 days (approx. 26 weeks)	60%	Under 1
France	3 years per parent per child	€521 Euros per month	3
Ireland	14 weeks per parent	Unpaid	5
Italy	11 months per child to be shared: 6 months max for the mother and 6 for the father, extendable to 7	Child under 3: 30% for 6 months; 30% over 6 months if	8

		income below a maximum; Child aged 3-8, unpaid	
Norway	42 or 52 page weeks per child; can be shared (9 mother, 4 father)	42 weeks at 100% or 52 weeks at 80%	3
New Zealand	35 weeks	55% (CAD\$ 300 per week)	First year of the child's life
Netherlands	3 months per parent or child; one parent at a time (mother has priority)	Unpaid, except civil servants	8
Portugal	3 months per parent	Unpaid	6
United Kingdom	13 weeks per child; max 4 weeks per year	Unpaid	5
Sweden	480 days to be shared between the parents; 60 days reserved for each parent	First 390 days at 80%; thereafter at daily rate	8

Source: OECD (2007). *Babies and bosses: Reconciling work and family life. A synthesis of findings for OECD countries.*

2. Maternity Leave in Latin America

A review of maternity leave legislation shows that most countries, recognizing the social changes the world has seen in the last few decades, have issued laws and regulations providing remunerated maternity leave for women working outside the home. However, the fact that legislation exists does not guarantee that it will be applied: indeed, many working women in Latin America are still excluded from the system or receive only partial benefits, because of the labor regime to which they belong, such as informal work, seasonal farm work, domestic work, non-personal service contracts, etc. In Colombia, for example, the percentage of female workers in the informal sector is 52%, and in Peru it is 48%.

The maternity leave provided working women by law in Latin America varies from country to country. The norm is 12 weeks, except for Bolivia (eight weeks), Peru and Argentina (13 weeks), Panama (14 weeks), Brazil and Costa Rica (ten and six weeks), and Chile and Venezuela (ten and eight weeks). Leave may be extended for multiple births (Nicaragua) or for illness of the mother or child. If the mother dies, the father may take the leave in Colombia and Chile, and also in Mexico, but only if the father was economically dependent on the spouse. In some countries leave will also be granted for adoption of a child under the age of seven (Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Venezuela, and Brazil (only for civil servants)),³⁹ and leave of two weeks to three months is granted for miscarriage in Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Panama.

Table 3. Maternity leave in Latin American countries

Country	Legal Basis	Length of Leave	Nursing Time	Paternity Leave
Argentina	Law 20.744; art. 183	13 weeks ⁴⁰	2 periods of ½ hour during 1	2 days

³⁹ Loli Espinoza, S. (2007) Importancia de la ratificación de los convenios OIT. Powerpoint presentation at the Seminario Regional de la Coordinadora de mujeres trabajadoras andinas (November 2007)

⁴⁰ The teachers' statute provides for 135 days of maternity leave.

			year	
Bolivia	Labor Code Law 975	8 weeks	1 hour	1 to 5 days
Brazil	Federal Constitution 1988; Law 8213 amended by Law 10710; Law 6136; Law 10421	28 days before and 92 after/16 weeks	2 periods of ½ hour	5 days
Chile	New Labor Code. Law 19759	18 weeks	2 periods not to exceed 1 hour	5 days
Colombia	Law 755 Decree 960	12 weeks	2 periods of ½ hour for 6 months	4 to 8 days
Costa Rica	Labor Code Law 17 and Regulation and Law N° 2	16 weeks	15 minutes every 3 hours or 1/2 hour twice a day	Draft Reform art. 95 would grant this
Ecuador	Labor Code	12 weeks	2 hours daily via collective bargaining for 9 months	10 days; In case of cesarean 15 days (2009)
El Salvador	DL 15	12 weeks	1 hour daily	2 days
Guatemala	Labor Code D. N° 1441 Art. 151 to 154	12 weeks	2 periods of 1/2 hour	No information
Honduras	Social Security Law and Regulations Labor Code 189 Art. 135-147	10 weeks	2 periods of ½ hour	No information
Mexico	Law of the Instituto Mexicano de Seguridad Social (IMSS) Latest DOF/2006	12 weeks	1 hour daily	No information
Nicaragua	Social Security Law Decree 974 R.M. 289/96	12 weeks	No information	No information
Panama	Decree-Law 14, of 1954, as amended	14 weeks	No information	No information
Paraguay	Law 98/92, Carta Orgánica of the IPS	12 weeks	1 hour divided in two periods	2 days
Peru	Law 26790, on Social Security in Health Art. 12 and Regulation L. 27606 and 27409	13 weeks	2 periods of ½ hour /1 year	No information
Dominican Republic	Law 87, Dominican Social Security System	12 weeks	No information	No information

Uruguay	Decree-Law 15084/ 80, Decree 227/81	12 weeks	1 hour divided in two periods	1 to 2 days; 10 days for civil servants
Venezuela	Organic labor Law, Reform to the Social Security Law	18 weeks	1 hour daily for 6 to 9 months	No information

Source: Gómez Hoyos, D. M. (2005). Legislación laboral referente a la protección de la maternidad en países de Centro y Sudamérica. *DIK Colombia*, (.14). Taken from <http://biblioteca.unisabana.edu.co/revistas/index.php/dikaion/article/view/400/1006>

With the exception of Bolivia and Mexico, where paid leave covers all female workers, such leave generally covers only women with workers' insurance. The costs are generally borne by the Social Security system or by the employer, and in some cases by both. The amount paid averages 76% of salary, although in some countries it is as high as 100% (UNESCO, 2007).⁴¹

Paternity leave is minimal or nonexistent in Latin America: Argentina and El Salvador allow two days; Brazil and Chile five days; Colombia four to eight days; Ecuador ten days (15 days in case of a cesarean); and Uruguay one or two days, and ten days for civil servants.

All Latin American countries comply with the ILO provision for reinstatement of the woman in her job, provided she has informed her employer of her status, in writing and with a medical certificate. Nursing time (one hour daily divided into two periods) allows for continuity of breast-feeding after maternity leave terminates. In many countries this has been established as a variable time that fluctuates between six months and two years. However, for mothers who have no daycare or nursery facility near their place of work, the time allowed for nursing is very short. In some cases, unions have been able to extend nursing time to two hours through collective bargaining, and to cover transportation costs to the daycare center. In countries that encourage breast-feeding other alternatives are being considered, such as extending maternity leave to six months after birth (Costa Rica) or even seven months (province of Buenos Aires, Argentina).

The ILO provision for having businesses arrange daycare centers is largely unobserved, probably because of the costs entailed. In Chile, Paraguay and Venezuela employers are required to have a nursery for children under the age of two. In some countries (Colombia and Mexico), daycare centers are financed by the State, and in other countries (Brazil and Costa Rica) jointly by the State and the employer. However, Costa Rica's labor code takes into account the employer's financial capacity to provide this service. In Paraguay, the provision is transitional, pending assumption by Social Security of the costs involved in this service.⁴²

3. Maternity leave in Caribbean countries

The countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM⁴³) are supposed to grant paid maternity leave, pursuant to article 19.3 (g) of the Charter of Civil Society for the Caribbean

⁴¹ UNESCO, EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2007.

⁴² ILO. *Género, formación y trabajo. El principio de igualdad y no discriminación por razón de sexo en las constituciones y en la legislación laboral*. <http://www.ilo.org/public/spanish/region/ampro/cinterfor/temas/gender/doc/cinter/equidad/cap2/ii/index.htm>

⁴³ CARICOM embraces 20 countries of the Caribbean (15 member states and five associate members) including Antigua, Bahamas, Belize, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. Its mandate is to harmonize and standardize programs throughout the region and to serve as implementing agency for regional programs.

Community. That article commits member states “to provide an adequate period of leave with pay, or with adequate social security benefits for women before and after childbirth and to make it unlawful for an employer to terminate a woman's employment ... by reason of her pregnancy” (CARICOM, 2002).⁴⁴

In these countries paid maternity leave varies between 12 and 13 weeks, with remuneration amounting to between 60% and 100% of pay and is covered by social security, the employer or both. In the Bahamas and Barbados, and in some cases in Haiti, Grenada and Jamaica, coverage is 100%. In most countries, it is required that the woman have been working for at least 12 months in the same company in order to qualify for maternity leave.

Table 4. Maternity leave in Caribbean countries

Country	Length of Leave	% of Salary*/Duration	% Source of Benefits
Antigua & Barbuda	13 weeks	60	Social Security
Bahamas	8 weeks	100	40/ Employer and 60/ SS
Barbados	12 weeks	100	Social Security
Belize	12 weeks	80	Social Security
Dominica	12 weeks	60	Employer and SS
Haiti	12 weeks	100 for 6 weeks	Employer
Guyana	13 weeks	70	Social Security
Grenada	3 months	100 for 2 months and 60 for 3 rd month	Social Security / Employer
Jamaica	12 weeks	100 for 8 weeks	Employer
Saint Lucia	13 weeks	65	Social Security
St. Kitts and Nevis
Suriname
St. Vincent
Trinidad & Tobago	13 weeks	60-100/	Social Security/ Employer

Source: International Labour Organization (ILO) (1998). Taken from:

http://www.ilo.org/global/About_the_ILO/Media_and_public_information/Press_releases/lang--en/WCMS_008009/index.htm

*information also taken from

http://www.apesma.asn.au/women/maternity_leave_around_the_world.asp

When maternity leave concludes, or when the mother must join the workforce, there is a series of options for mothers and their children, depending on the socioeconomic status of the family and their country of residence, which include access to daycare and early childhood education.⁴⁵ This will constitute the first great transition both for the child and for the mother.

Care Policy for Children Under Three

⁴⁴ CARICOM, 2002. Charter of Civil Society for the Caribbean Community.

⁴⁵ The terms day care and early education are used without distinction to refer to a nursery, daycare center or comprehensive care program.

The availability and accessibility of daycare and early education services offered by the State, and their quality, will have an influence as to how and when this first transition takes place. It can be an abrupt experience if the mother goes back to work full time and the child is placed in a daycare center, or it may be less abrupt if the mother works part-time and the baby remains in the care of a familiar person at home. The transition will also be abrupt if the service is of poor quality and does not pay attention to the transition process. The quality of the service will not only contribute to the child's healthy and integral development, but will also facilitate and support the transition from home to daycare.

1. Care Policy for Children in OECD Countries

Coverage

With respect to care and early education services for children under the age of three, there are three factors that influence their use: policies governing the coverage and quality of services, policies concerning maternity and paternity leave, and family and cultural traditions.

The accessibility and use⁴⁶ of these programs is not uniform in OECD countries. In Nordic and continental European countries, the service is generally public and subsidized, and thus highly accessible. In other countries, such as the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom and New Zealand, access is lower and services for children under three are provided by the nongovernmental sector (religious associations, NGOs, community groups, and the private sector), and the cost is generally high for the bulk of the population.

In 2002 the European Community, as part of its growth and employment strategy, established a 2012 target of education and care coverage for 33% of children under the age of three. This target has been exceeded in Denmark, where although childcare is not compulsory, the coverage rate is the highest of all, followed by the Netherlands and Sweden, with slightly over 40%, and then Norway and Spain. However, most European countries have yet to meet this target (ESAEO, 2008).⁴⁷ Germany and Italy have the lowest coverage rates, at around 20% and slightly over 25% respectively.⁴⁸

Unification of early childhood care policy within a single sector

In a significant number of OECD countries, including Sweden, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Australia, there is now a tendency to combine early childhood care policy, i.e. care for children under three, with the care policy for three- to six-year-olds.

The social affairs sector is responsible for early childhood policy in Denmark and Finland. In Denmark, the Ministry of Family and Consumer Affairs serves children from six

⁴⁶ In the use that is made of care and education services it is not only coverage that counts but also the number of hours the children remain in the centers. The more time they spend there, the greater flexibility the mothers will have to work. In Denmark, more than 65% of children with access to such programs spend more than 30 hours a week there. By contrast, in the Netherlands coverage is around 40%, but only 5% spend 30 hours or more in the centers. Another important example is Portugal, where nearly 100% of children served (coverage rate of slightly over 30%) spend more than 30 [?? *Translator's note: not "3"*] hours in the centers. See the report of the European Commission (2008). Taken from <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=es&catId=89&newsId=404&furtherNews=yes>

⁴⁷ More than 6 million women between 25 and 49 years are obliged to stay at home or to work only part-time because of family responsibilities, due principally to the lack of access to childcare facilities.

⁴⁸ See ESAEO Notice (October 3, 2008). Taken from <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=es&catId=89&newsId=404&furtherNews=yes>

months to six years, through daycare facilities known as kindergartens; in Finland, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health provides care from ages one to six in private or municipal daycare facilities, or in homes organized by parent groups.

Care for young children is handled by the education sector in Sweden, Norway and the Netherlands. Sweden brought early childcare under the same Ministry in 1985, with the Education Act, designed to construct a single, unified system with common coverage objectives, financing, regulations and personnel.⁴⁹ In Norway this integration occurred 20 years later, in 2005, when the Ministry of Research and Education became responsible for childcare policy for the ages of one to five. In the Netherlands, care for children under three was shifted to the education sector more recently, in March 2007.⁵⁰

A similar situation occurs in New Zealand, Australia and the United Kingdom. New Zealand was the first country to integrate care for children under and over the age of three within the same system (and sector), in 1984. Since then, childcare policy for children under five has been the responsibility of the education sector. This system covers financing, regulations, curriculum, and staff training and hiring requirements, standardizing criteria in order to guarantee quality and continuity. Australia and the United Kingdom had an uncoordinated system for early childhood care, but in recent years have adopted a series of legal provisions and rules that moved early childhood care to the education sector. The objective is to integrate the care and education dimensions for children under three. In Australia, the Department of Education now has policy responsibility for regulating early childhood care.⁵¹ In England, the "Every Child Matters" policy laid the basis for childcare from birth to nine years, and the Childcare Act (2006) together with the Plan for Children (2007) unified care policy for children under and over the age of three within the "Sure Start" Unit of the new Department for Children, Schools and Families.⁵² This unit is responsible for all early childhood education and care programs.

Other countries present different scenarios. In Spain, education legislation (LOE, 2006) establishes rules for childcare and education from birth to three years, and from three to six years. However, the government is not responsible for services to children under three. In Germany, on the other hand, the social sector is responsible for all services to children under three, and from ages three to six, pursuant to the Child and Youth Welfare Act (1990). In Portugal and Italy, care for children under three, and application of the childcare policy from three to six years, is by law the responsibility of different agencies (see table).

In the United States and Canada, care for children under three is the responsibility of the health and social welfare system. In Canada, the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care (2003) recognizes the importance of early childhood, from birth until entry into school, but there is no integrated system.⁵³ The federal government sets general guidelines, while the responsibility for regulating, financing and providing this care lies within the provinces. The government provides benefits to families with children under six so that they can attend daycare centers, and provides subsidies to the provinces to open such centers. In the United States,

⁴⁹ In Sweden, services for young children (preschool, home care, free preschool for children whose parents are not working) is varied.

⁵⁰ Previously this responsibility fell to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor and the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports.

⁵¹ Previously responsibility for children under three years lay with the Department of Family, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

⁵² In 2006 the Department for Children, Schools and Families was created to replace the former Department for Education and Skills (DCSF) in order to provide integrated, high-quality services for children.

⁵³ This document reiterates the federal commitment to strengthen early education and care programs as one of four areas of early childhood development policy. The other are promoting healthy pregnancy, improving parenting, and strengthening community supports. Mustard, McCain and Shanker (2007) find that this framework has not been very effective.

childcare policy for children up to three years is the responsibility of the Department of Health and Human Services, while that for children four years and older falls to the education system. Perhaps the only comprehensive early childhood care strategy at the federal level is the Head Start program (see the following chapter for a detailed description), which falls under the Department of Health and Human Services.

When there is a single system of early childhood care and education, the tendency is to keep the services similar, with standardized principles and quality criteria ensuring continuity, progression and differentiation. As ESAEO reports, those countries that have an integrated early childhood care system have enhanced the quality of services for children under the age of three. Generally, training requirements and salaries are comparable to those for personnel working with children from three to six years. This has a positive impact on quality, thereby facilitating transitions and giving continuity to the education and care process experienced by the child and his or her family.

Table 5. Organization of early childhood care systems

Age	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Denmark	Childcare center for children 6 months to 6 years					Preschool		
Finland	Childcare center					Preschool		
Sweden	Preschool					Preschool		
Norway	Kindergarten							
Netherlands	Childcare center			Group 1 in primary school				
Spain	Initial education		Initial education					
France	Nursery	Kindergarten (“Maternelle”)						
Italy	Nursery		Kindergarten					
Portugal	Nursery		Kindergarten					
Germany	Nursery		Kindergarten					
Australia	Accredited centers			Reception				
Canada	Childcare centers			Kindergarten				
N. Zealand	Childcare centers and other arrangements							
Ireland	Childcare centers			Early Start				
United Kingdom	Nursery/ playgroups		Foundation stage		Key stage 1		Key stage 2	
United States	Childcare centers		Preschool					
Social protection, health, family sector		Education sector		Free and compulsory education – education sector		Combination of sectors, including education		

Sources: OCDE (2007) *Babies and bosses Reconciling work and family life. A synthesis of findings for OECD countries*; Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research (2007). *Education from Kindergarten to Adulthood* available at <http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/kd.html?id=586> accessed in July 2008; European Commission Directorate General for Education and Culture (no date). *Eurydice The Information Database on Education Systems in Europe. The Education system in Germany 2006/2007* accessed at

http://ec.europa.eu/education/linkhomepage/linkhomepage342_en.htm in August 2008; Heinamaki, Lisa (2008) *Early Childhood in Finland. Occasional Paper #3. National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health STAKES. Liberal Institute. Accessed at www.freiheit.org in June 2008.*

Standards of care and accreditation systems

In English-speaking OECD countries there is a variety of programs and arrangements to care for children under the age of three (home care services, regulated care centers (licensed or accredited), unregulated centers, playgroups), including specialized services for ethnic minorities and disadvantaged groups. In Australia there are aborigine playgroups (also targeted at other children up to school-age), New Zealand has special programs for the Maori population,⁵⁴ Canada has the Aboriginal Head Start Canada program, and in the United States the Head Start program has special arrangements for the migrant population.

To regulate the quality of private services, these countries have created minimum standards or operating criteria. These generally address aspects relating to personnel training, group size, and health and hygiene conditions, and are included in laws and supplementary ministerial provisions. These elements have an impact on the quality of service and on the transition process.

In Germany, the Care Center Expansion Act requires higher qualifications for daycare workers. In the Netherlands, the Childcare Act sets a series of specific requirements, including: health and safety inspections of facilities, Dutch as the language of instruction and communication, and information to parents about program policies. In Norway, the Education Act sets requirements for all preschool institutions, including the rule that staff must have qualifications as preschool teachers. In Sweden, the Swedish National Education Agency has issued quality guidelines for early childhood programs, including targets for reducing group size to 15 children, with three full-time employees.

In addition to quality standards, accreditation systems have been established to certify services. Australia has a Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS) for accrediting childcare centers, which contains seven quality areas and 33 principles.⁵⁵ Programs are eligible for a state subsidy if they meet the quality standards established by the QIAS.⁵⁶ New Zealand has introduced a new early childhood education regulatory system that applies to the different forms of care, which must achieve and maintain the established standards in order to operate with a license or to be certified.

In the United States there are no common national standards for programs for children under the age of three. Each state sets minimum requirements for service providers seeking a license. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC⁵⁷) is the

⁵⁴ As in Australia, these early education and care programs are not exclusive to children under three years, and generally cover children from 3 to 6 years as well.

⁵⁵ The standards serve as a benchmark for appropriate quality practices, they establish minimum levels, and they cover infrastructure, health and safety, programs and administration, as well as professional staff.

⁵⁶ The National Childcare Accreditation Council visits facilities every 18 months to check for compliance. New programs must go through a five-stage accreditation process. Taken from the webpage of the Department Of Education, Employment and Labor Relations, http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/early_childhood/programmes_funding/quality_child_care.htm

⁵⁷ The NAEYC was founded in 1926 and has 100,000 members. It is the largest US organization working with children under eight years.

accreditation authority and has established minimum care standards,⁵⁸ while the “Zero to Three” Association trains personnel working with children under three, and conducts policy advocacy for infants, toddlers and their families.⁵⁹ Having accreditation and standards common to all young children tends to guarantee quality and a degree of homogeneity in services, making it easier to ensure continuity and therefore to facilitate transitions.

2. Care Policies for Children in Latin America

Coverage

In most Latin American countries, children under the age of three are cared for through a diversity of programs. They tend to be of narrow coverage and they are often not replicable or cannot be provided by the State because of the high costs involved. This diversity of care often responds to community needs and expectations, as well as to the geographic, socioeconomic and cultural characteristics of each social group.

The review of research and statistics on education and care for children under three shows that, in Latin America, institutional care for this age group (generally the children of mothers who work outside the home) may be sponsored by businesses, NGOs, international agencies, private associations, churches or municipal governments. Some examples of service providers are: the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (Colombia), the Office of the First Lady (Guatemala), JUNJI and Integra (Chile), the Office of the First Lady (Panama), the Ministry of Women and Social Development and the Ministry of Health, as well as by other Government agencies (Peru).

Although there is no specific information on the number of children in programs for this age group, in most Latin American countries the percentage of government-sponsored care until the age of two is low; it fluctuates between 3% and 18%, far below the rate of coverage for children from ages three to six, or those in other levels of education. After the age of two there is a significant increase in care coverage, probably because at this age the child has acquired some autonomy in various aspects such as feeding and sphincter control, and caring for them requires fewer staff and hence lower costs.

Care policies for children under three

Early childhood care policies reveal a variety of provisions and laws for the different sectors involved in comprehensive childcare, which includes health, nutrition and education aspects. This dispersal of services, and the lack of coordination between sectors, often impedes delivery of care, especially for children in more remote and inaccessible areas. Some countries are now trying to overcome this problem through social programs such as *Juntos* and *Crecer* in Peru, *Chile Crece Contigo*, in Chile; *Bolsa Familiar*, in Brazil; and *Oportunidades*, in México, which provide comprehensive care to the most vulnerable populations.

With respect to education ministries, laws and regulations have been adopted relating to education, curriculum design for programs from birth to three years, and standards for the organization and operation of childcare or nursery facilities, setting out parameters governing

⁵⁸ There are five standards, relating to: (i) promotion of child development and learning, (ii) networking with families and communities, (iii) observation, documentation and measurement, (iv) learning and teaching, and (v) professional development. The standards can be found at the website of NYAEC.

⁵⁹ Information on “Zero to Three” can be found at the organization’s web site:
<http://www.zerotothree.org/site/PageServer?pagename=homepage>

infrastructure, equipment and personnel and teaching materials modules, in order to guarantee the safety and comfort of the children. There are also rules for program monitoring and supervision.

For children under three whose mothers do not work outside the home or who for various reasons lack access to this benefit, there are non-formal, non-academic programs that are flexible in their organization and functioning with respect to timetables, duration, contents, environments, educational agent, etc. There are toy libraries and playgrounds, and parents are offered programs to strengthen their child rearing practices, using various strategies such as meetings and home visits. Other strategies involve using the media, such as television and radio spots, magazines, bulletins and newspaper columns.

Quality standards and indicators

In most countries there are no criteria or indicators for assessing the quality of services. What is clear is that in many cases attention is focused more on aspects of survival—health, nutrition and care—than on basic aspects such as education and development. This is probably due to the poverty or extreme poverty in which nearly 50% of Latin America's child population lives, and which is reflected in high rates of chronic malnutrition and anemia, a situation of concern to governments because of its impact on children's health and learning. However, there are signs that this approach is changing and that countries are establishing curricula specific to this age group, and incorporating the education component into social programs for young children, which as we have seen, are being developed by the majority of Latin American governments.

In this age group it is important to consider the strategies needed for the child's transition from home to daycare, particularly if the child is already six months old and beginning to differentiate familiar faces from others. The family and the institution's staff must coordinate activities in order to avoid problems of transition that will stress the child and impede his or her social and emotional development.

In this regard, researchers have raised concerns that many infants under the age of one may suffer from lack of parental interaction and attention if they spend as much as eight hours or more in a daycare center. Such a situation can hold back the cognitive and linguistic development of younger children and can cause long-term damage, such as depression, inability to concentrate or aggressiveness. "Report Card 8" expresses concern over the possible weakening of the parent-child bond, with its attendant impact on the child's sense of security and trust in others, which according to Erikson, develops in the first year of life.⁶⁰ The problem may be greater the younger the child, and the more time he or she spends in daycare, particularly because of "possible long-term effects on psychological and social development [... which] may be associated with a rise in behavioral problems in school-age children."⁶¹ For this reason, some countries have reduced the working day for mothers during the first year of a child's life.

On the other hand, after the age of one or two years placement in a care center has a positive impact on the child's development, because he or she benefits from interaction with other children, which promotes the development of cognitive, social, emotional and linguistic abilities and skills and offers equal opportunities for all.

⁶⁰ UNICEF: "Report Card 8. The Child Care Transition: a league table of early childhood education and care in economically advanced countries", Innocenti Research Centre (formally known as the International Child Development Centre), Florence, Italy. http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/rc8_spa.pdf (Consulted 3 August 2008).

⁶¹ Bernard van Leer Foundation (2008), Early Childhood Education: Questions of Quality. The Report Card 8, in brief. *Early Childhood Matters* June 2008, No. 110.

As for the standards for measuring the quality of programs, the EFA Global Monitoring Report notes that Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Mexico have national standards. Likewise, UNESCO's Regional Bureau for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean has issued a document proposing indicators for monitoring each stage of early childhood education in Latin America. The purpose of those indicators, according to the document's authors (Blanco et al., 2008), is to have data available for international comparisons. The analytical model is "intended to construct indicators of the education system's capacity to provide a quality education with equal opportunities to children from birth to six years"⁶² for use in preparing education policies for such children as part of an integral approach to early childhood care. The following categories have been selected for formulating the indicators: general context, family context, and education system.

3. Care Policies for Children in the Caribbean

According to Charles and Williams (2006) care policies for children under three in the Caribbean have been led primarily by the health sector, with little attention to the education component. Early childhood care and stimulation programs are provided by the private sector, and are not necessarily regulated. These programs have been developed outside the government sector to meet the daycare needs of working mothers. Many of these programs have developed the care aspect but have not incorporated other elements related to health or education.

In 1997 the Caribbean countries adopted a "Caribbean Plan of Action for Early Childhood Education, Care and Development, 1997-2002". The document presents a general framework for developing programs and policies in the Caribbean for children under the age of three, and recognizes the importance of early development and the need for comprehensive programs for young children⁶³. In 2002, the new "2002-2015 Regional Action Plan for Children" was adopted, which obliges Member States to develop a regional strategy to meet the needs of children from birth to three years of age⁶⁴. While the plan makes no specific mention of transitions, the steps or goals it sets indicate that the objective is to develop a comprehensive system of care with common parameters, parental participation, certification, and standards development, elements that as we have seen are favorable to transitions.⁶⁵ The plan was presented in Georgetown, Guyana in 2008 to education ministers at the 17th Meeting of the Council on Human and Social Development (COHSOD), where they reaffirmed their commitment to an integral approach to early childhood care and education, with greater investment.

⁶² Blanco, R. et al. (2008.) *Indicadores de la educación de la primera infancia en América Latina*. Santiago de Chile: OREALC, p.16.

⁶³ It proposes nine key objectives: (1) legislative framework for coordinated provision of services and monitoring standards; (2) integrated social planning and implementation of initiatives; (3) adequate financing; (4) equitable access to quality programs; (5) education and training for all service providers; (6) appropriate curriculum and materials; (7) increased parent, community and media awareness and involvement; (8) coordinated action at both national and regional levels; and (9) increased research to inform development of the sector.

⁶⁴ The priorities are: (1) to develop and adopt comprehensive early childhood development policies; (2) to develop and establish regulatory frameworks with standards in keeping with CARICOM guidelines; (3) to establish mechanisms to provide training and qualification for early childhood teachers and caregivers; (4) to strengthen poor children's access to early detection and prevention services; (5) to develop strategic plans for increasing poor and vulnerable children's access to quality services; (6) to ensure access to quality education in the first two years of primary school; (7) to develop a regional policy mandating at least one year of early childhood education prior to formal primary schooling.

⁶⁵ Countries are to achieve the following: (1) formulation of comprehensive policies; (2) establishment of a regulatory framework with standards in keeping with CARICOM guidelines; (3) mechanisms to provide training and qualification for early childhood teachers and caregivers; (4) a regional strategy to expand access especially for vulnerable children and to meet the needs of children under three years; (5) studies on techniques for working with parents, communication policies, and advocacy.

Countries have been pursuing significant actions in relation to early childhood policy within the framework of CARICOM. In 2006, regional guidelines were approved for developing early childhood policy, regulation and standards, and these were recently published by CARICOM. The purpose of those guidelines is to align and standardize early childhood development services, to establish a common methodology and a set of principles that can be used by member countries in developing early childhood policy, regulatory and standards regimes. The document focuses on two aspects: the policy framework and the regulatory framework. The policy framework clarifies the direction in which the sector is expected to develop, and what the expected outputs will be. It indicates the elements that must be included and the steps needed to prepare the policy framework. The regulatory framework, for its part, embraces legislation, standards, mechanisms and provisions for monitoring compliance with the standards, and describes the steps needed to prepare the regulatory framework. At the 2008 meeting in Guyana, it was agreed that CARICOM member countries should adopt an early childhood development policy by the end of 2009.

At the last meeting of CARICOM countries in July of 2008, it was agreed to hold a regional workshop for developing a regional strategy on policy for children under three in the context of available studies and experience. That strategy will be aimed at all sectors, including health and welfare and social protection, and will have financial support from UNICEF, CCSI and PAHO, among other institutions.

Among Caribbean countries, Jamaica has made the greatest progress with policy for the development of children under the age of three, and early childhood in general. Jamaica has an Early Childhood Commission,⁶⁶ which is an agency of the Ministry of Education. It is responsible for all care and education programs,⁶⁷ not only those of the Ministry, and has a coordinating role with the different institutions and sectors involved with early childhood. Its functions include advising the cabinet through the Minister of Education and Youth on matters relating to early childhood development policy, assisting in the preparation of plans and programs, monitoring and evaluating them, and developing quality standards.

Suriname also has an Early Childhood Commission that operates under the Ministry of Education and Community Development. However, responsibility for children under the age of four falls to the Ministry of Social Affairs, which prepared the 2002-2006 Childhood Plan pursuant to the 1997 Caribbean Plan of Action. That plan has been approved by the government and has been supplemented by the Ministry of Education and Community Development in a policy paper, recognizing that it was not a comprehensive plan. The Ministry of Social Affairs has also drafted a law on childcare centers, which has not yet been approved. The Early Childhood Commission, established in 2002, is responsible for coordinating early childhood development policy and preparing the regulatory framework for it.

The Second Transition

Care and Education Policy for Children Ages 3 to 5⁶⁸

1. Care and Education Policy for Children in OECD Countries

⁶⁶ Created under the Early Childhood Act (2003) and the Early Childhood Regulations (2005).

⁶⁷ Jamaica has some 2500 institutions that serve children from birth to five years (infant schools, infant departments, recognized and unrecognized basic schools). Care for children under three years is limited, reaching only 4% in 403 institutions).

⁶⁸ This section looks more closely at policy aspects related to facilitating transitions to the immediately higher level, i.e. the move from preschool (3 to 5 years) to primary school, which generally occurs at six years.

Coverage

In OECD countries, coverage for children from ages three to five is high, in most cases above 80%. France, Italy and Spain have participation rates of 100%, followed by Denmark, Sweden and Norway. Even in countries where school attendance by children ages three to five is not compulsory, as in Australia, Canada and the United States, participation is quite high because coverage is broad and education is free. In Canada, 95% of five-year-olds are enrolled in kindergarten and 40% of four-year-olds are in pre-kindergarten. In the United States, kindergarten coverage for five-year-olds is nearly 90%. These countries offer at least two years of free preschool education. The length of the school day varies, ranging from three hours to five and even eight hours. Governments subsidize education for children ages four and five, and preschools are financed and provided generally by the State through the public school system.

Legislation

In Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, Italy, Ireland, England, Canada and France, services for children ages three to five are covered by the primary education law. For example in Ireland, the Education Act (2000) regulates infant classes and basic schooling, and requires that schools develop their own plans and promote parent associations. In England, the Education Act (2002) and the Childcare Act (2006) regulate services for children under five. In Canada, education for children under five is a provincial matter, and is regulated by each province's education legislation. The legislation sets minimum requirements with respect to age, number of hours, days of instruction, and teacher qualifications.

Education is generally compulsory from the beginning of primary school, which may start at five, six or seven years, depending on the country. While current legislation recognizes the importance of preschool as the first level of education, in most cases it is not compulsory. In Portugal, Spain, Italy, Germany, France, Norway and Denmark compulsory education begins at six years, with primary school. In Portugal the law establishes preschool (for children ages three to six) as the first level of education, but it is not compulsory. In Spain initial education covers the range from one to six years and is divided into two cycles,⁶⁹ but is not compulsory. In Italy, preschool (*Scuola dell'Infanzia*) covers the ages from three to six, and while it is part of the education system, is not compulsory. German law provides that all children entering school from three years on are entitled to a place in the kindergarten, but attendance is not compulsory. In France preschool education is provided through kindergarten-type schools (*maternelle*) for children ages two to five years and constitutes the first cycle of basic education.⁷⁰ However, compulsory schooling begins only at the age of six, with the preparatory course. Norway's kindergarten programs are targeted at children from ages one to five, and education is compulsory from six years on. In Denmark, since August 2008, compulsory education begins at six years with preschool.⁷¹

On the other hand, in the United Kingdom, New Zealand and the Netherlands, education becomes compulsory at the age of five, when primary school begins. In the UK, education for children from ages three to five is known as the Foundation Stage and is offered in nursery schools or child care centers. Primary school begins with Key Stage 1, which covers children

⁶⁹ The first cycle is 1 to 3 years, and the second cycle is 3 to 5 years inclusive.

⁷⁰ The law provides that all children must be admitted to an *école maternelle* or to the infant section in primary school. That section extends to two-year-olds in schools located in socially disadvantaged environments. However, compulsory education begins at six years.

⁷¹ The kindergarten class was part of the primary schools. This class was created to facilitate children's transition from home life or daycare to school.

from five to seven years. In New Zealand, most three- and four-year-olds attend preschool programs, although many continue in early childhood care and education programs and playgroups. In the Netherlands, compulsory education begins at five years as well, with the first year of primary school. A significant percentage of children, however, will enter school at four years, as the same public schools offer preschool programs for four- and five-year-olds. Finally, in Sweden and Finland, compulsory education begins at the age of seven with the first year of primary school, and there is a preschool class⁷² that is offered free-of-charge to six-year-olds.

The objectives of preschool education

Preschool objectives generally give priority to preparing the child for school and for life. France is one of the countries that place priority on school readiness. Preschool is supposed to equip children with the basic cognitive tools, and prepare them for primary education by teaching them the principles of life in society. Specifically, it is intended to initiate children into this fundamental stage of learning so that they can begin to read, and to assess and identify children with learning problems so as to facilitate their adaptation to primary school activities. On the other hand, preschool objectives in the Nordic countries have to do with preparation for life, citizenship, democracy, and integral development. In Sweden, for example, the objectives at this level are to stimulate the child's development and help create conditions favorable to its growth and learning through group pedagogical activities. In Denmark the objective is to work with the parents to facilitate pupils' acquisition of knowledge, skills, working methods and ways of expressing themselves, thereby contributing to their integral development as individuals.

In Italy and Portugal both objectives are pursued. Italy defines early childhood as a formative period in which the child strengthens his or her personal identity, independence, and developmental skills. The *Scuola dell'Infanzia* contributes to the child's emotional, psychomotor, cognitive, moral, religious and social development, and helps empower each child by establishing relationships of autonomy, creativity and equal opportunity for learning. In Portugal, the preschool level seeks to promote inclusion for children from different social groups, to help families in their educational role, to give children opportunities to develop their own autonomy, social contacts and intellectual development, while promoting their gradual integration into society and successful integration into school.

How transitions are addressed

Policy documents for OECD countries deal explicitly with transitions. In Finland, the government resolution establishing the National Early Education and Care Policy (2002) gives the teacher the role of promoting the transition and the continuity of the education process by working with parents and collaborating with the different institutions involved with children. It also defends policies for learning in the mother tongue, and the right to the child's own culture, so as to help children make the transition to the new environment. The document stresses the importance of forging alliances with parents, in mutual and committed interaction for the care and education of the child, through two strategies: the design of the program's local curriculum content with participation and collaboration by parents, and the development of an individual plan for each child at the beginning of the year.

Policy documents make explicit reference to a series of strategies for facilitating transitions. In the United Kingdom, for example, the early childhood education plan calls for: (i) revising the FS and KS1 curricula to guarantee a successful transition from one level to the other; (ii) establishing partnerships between those working in First Years and KS1 teachers; and (iii)

⁷² Preschool programs are offered both in the primary schools and in the childcare and education centers. The preschool class is subject to the same general regulations as the primary grades.

working on the basis of child profiles that are prepared at the end of the stage preceding primary school, and are used for determining the level and type of support that the child will need to move on to the next level (KS1).⁷³ A series of studies has identified challenges that still remain in the transition to first grade. As a result, induction strategies have been adopted for helping children entering the first grade of primary school, ensuring continuity of practice between preschool and first grade, and encouraging communication between staff, parents and children. In New Zealand, the "Pathways to the Future" strategy mentions the need to foster coherence in education from birth to age eight in order to facilitate the transition to school through better understanding between preschool and primary teachers, as well as through the curriculum, pedagogical approaches, and the distribution of information on effective transitions.

Sweden, Finland and Denmark offer a *preschool class that is integrated into primary school*: it follows preschool curriculum guidelines but within the primary school infrastructure. Since 1998 Sweden has physically separated six-year-olds from the preschool level (ages one to five), integrating them through preschool classes located in primary schools. In his speech promulgating the law, the Prime Minister stressed that the objective was not to "primarize" the preschool section but to ensure that the first three grades of primary school would be influenced by the concept of work used in the preschool section or the preschool level. The preschool section was seen as the bridge between preschool and basic school, allowing children to become accustomed to primary school.

In Germany, preschool policy has adopted two strategies for promoting successful transitions from preschool to primary school. One of these involves enrollment in *Vorklassen*, the equivalent of a preschool class in primary schools, for children of primary school age who lack the maturity needed for that level. The objective is to bring the children up to standard, and the school authorities are authorized by law to ask that a child attend *Vorklassen*. The other strategy is to introduce a preschool class for five-year-olds, who have not reached the compulsory age but whose parents want to help prepare them for primary school. Both programs are the responsibility of the education sector. In the Netherlands, one policy for promoting the transition to primary school is to have children attend school for up to five days during the two months prior to their fourth birthday.

In the United States, the Bush administration placed special emphasis on reading and writing readiness through the *No Child Left behind Act* (2001), which offers a vision for ensuring that third grade children know how to read.⁷⁴ In previous policy documents, however, the concept of school readiness was understood more broadly, to include not only the readiness of children to perform specific school tasks, but also the readiness of schools to receive children.⁷⁵

⁷³ Woodhead and Moss (2007) say that while services have been integrated, the terminology has not changed, and the change is therefore not at all palpable when the terminology of the daycare center is still used.

⁷⁴ Children should enter kindergarten with the necessary linguistic, cognitive and pre-reading skills (oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness and alphabetic knowledge). Under this legislation numerous programs have been launched, including "Early Reading First" and "Good Start/Grow Smart -- Early Learning Initiative". Taken from <http://www.ed.gov/programs/earlyreading/index.html>

⁷⁵ In a document prepared in 1997 by the National Education Goals Panel the first goal for 2000 was "Ready to learn," referring primarily to the readiness to learn to read, but also including a broader meaning (as explained by the specialists who prepared the NEGP tracking document "Ready Schools") that included a child's health and physical development, social and emotional development, approaches to learning, language and communicative skills, and cognition and general knowledge. The "Ready Schools" report stressed the readiness of schools to receive children. It offered a series of recommendations for transition policies and referred to 10 key attributes of a "ready" primary school. Ready schools are those that (1) smooth the transition between home and school; (2) strive for continuity between early care and education programs and elementary schools; (3) help children learn and make sense of their complex and exciting world; (4) are committed to the success of every child; (5) are committed to the success of every teacher and every adult who interacts with children during the school day; (6) introduce or expand approaches that have been shown to raise achievement; (7) are learning organizations that alter practices and programs if they do not benefit children; (8) serve children in communities; (9) take responsibility for results; and (10) have strong leadership.

The academic and nongovernmental sector has worked actively on the transitions theme. For example, the National Preschool Center at the University of North Carolina developed a framework of guidelines for states in establishing preschool services. That framework spoke of transitions to kindergarten and primary school, and recommended strategies for preschoolers such as maintaining open communication with parents to inform them of their children's academic progress, and facilitating meetings between pre-kindergarten and kindergarten staff to coordinate the curriculum.

Recently, the EPERC report (2008), "Quality Counts", graded states' performance in promoting quality education in six policy areas, one of which relates to transitions and is measured by the following indicators: states should have (i) early-learning standards aligned with elementary grade academic standards; (ii) a formal definition of school readiness; (iii) require districts to assess the readiness of entering students; and (iv) programs for children not meeting school readiness expectations. The report concludes that progress in the states varies, and that many have adopted initiatives to address transitions into while others have yet to do so.

Australia has been making efforts to develop a more comprehensive early childhood policy that facilitates transitions. The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations has given priority to universalizing care for five-year-olds as a central strategy of the early childhood development policy. Another step has been to prepare a framework for learning in the first years, linked to quality standards, so as to integrate what was formerly the responsibility of the Department of Families for childcare and education centers. The Department's Office of Early Education and Child Care reports that one focus of its activities will be to connect early childhood and primary schools. Similarly, the Council of Australian Governments refers in a press release to the importance of giving children the best start in life, and it is reviewing significant reforms to that end.

Some countries have also addressed the problem of *horizontal transitions*, i.e. those that children make every day when they leave a preschool program and transfer to a care center. These transitions are also important, for in many countries the school programs do not fill the parents' entire working day, and children must attend other care centers in the afternoon. Sweden is one country that offers after-school care in primary school facilities. In France, municipal governments supplement the services of the *écoles maternelles* by providing lunches and before- and after-school care in support of working parents. German law calls for developing and strengthening the relationship between education, care and supervision in order to meet the needs of working parents.

Table 6. Legislation on the care for children under and over the age of three in selected OECD countries

Country	Legal or Regulatory Provision	Contents
Denmark	Schools Act (2007)	As of August 2008 the last year of preschool is compulsory (Grade 0). The law makes education the responsibility of the municipalities. It provides that the schools, in cooperation with the parents , must help children acquire knowledge, skills and ways of expressing themselves that will contribute to their integral development.

	Child Care Act (2007)	Sets out the legal rules governing childcare centers (six months to three years) and kindergarten (three to five years). The objective of both services is to create, in cooperation with the parents , a framework that favors the development, well-being and independence of the child. Municipalities establish targets and a working framework and are responsible for providing these services.
Finland	Childcare Centers Act (1973). Act on Childcare in Private Homes and Care Centers (1996)	Makes it the responsibility of the municipality to guarantee access to early childhood education and care services, and gives children the right to participate in those services before they reach compulsory school age. The teacher has the role of promoting transition and continuity in the education process, working with parents and the various institutions involved with children and the family.
	Government Resolution Defining the National Early Childhood Education and Care Policy (2002)	Preschool is free and voluntary for children six years of age. Its objectives are to promote personal well-being, strengthen pro-social conduct, and gradually build autonomy. This resolution addresses transition aspects directly.
	Basic Education Act (1998)	Governs the compulsory year of preschool education.
France	Framework Education Act (1989)	Requires admission to a nursery school (<i>école maternelle</i>) for all three-year-olds. Ensures that two-year-olds are given priority in schools located in socially disadvantaged environments. Compulsory primary education begins at age six, with the preparatory grade.
	Protocol Relating to the Small Child (1990)	Signed by the various ministries, this provides the framework for childcare and education from birth to six years. It states the intention to guarantee adequate education facilities, complementarity of activities among different ministries, and promote active parent involvement .
	Framework Law and Program on the Future of Schools (2005)	Makes it the mission of preschool education to equip children with the basic cognitive tools and prepare them for primary school by teaching them the principles of life in society.
Germany	Child and Youth Welfare Act (1990) and	Early childhood covers the period from birth to six years. The law makes it a right of all three-year-olds to have an assured place in kindergarten.

	subsequent amendments	
	Day-Care Expansion Act (2004)	Declares the need to extend the hours of programs for children under three years to 2020 in order to meet the needs of parents, guarantee quality, and develop pedagogical contents and evaluation instruments. It also calls for raising the minimum qualification requirements for persons working in daycare programs.
	<i>Laender</i> education acts	These provide that education is to be compulsory for children six years and over. There is <i>collaboration between daycare centers and primary schools to give flexibility to the school entrance phase</i> , allowing children to be enrolled during the course of the school year whether or not they have reached the necessary age.
Italy	Legislative Decree 59 (2004) Ministerial Decree (1991)	Reforms nursery school (three non-compulsory years for children ages three to six). This decree introduces national indicators as one of its reforms; states that nursery school contributes to the child's integral development; implements the child education profile through its pedagogical methods; and thereby gives continuity to the educational experience children receive in the different services.
	Legislative Decree 59 (2004)	Primary education begins at six years, with the first grade. This grade is linked to the nursery school ⁷⁶
Netherlands	Childcare Act (2005)	Regulates the quality and financing of daycare centers (for children under four, and for children between four and 12 years attending primary school). The municipalities must regulate the quality of programs and subsidize the costs for working and immigrant parents, among others. This act establishes a series of minimum quality standards and requires service providers to establish parents' committees. It targets primary education of children from four to 12 years.
	Primary Education Act (1981)	Regulates the provision of education services for children from four years on, through the "junior years" (grades 1 to 4, for children four to eight years old) and the "senior years" (grades 5 to 8).
	Primary Education Act (1998)	Schools are required to focus on cognitive, emotional and physical development, and to provide individual attention to children with special needs.
Norway	Kindergarten Act (2005)	The law regulates kindergarten programs for children under six years old. It establishes requirements and rules for all preschool institutions, including personnel, who must be qualified preschool teachers. It regulates the licensing, operation and

⁷⁶ The Eurydice document does not explain how this linkage operates.

		<p>supervision of kindergartens, and requires the municipalities to guarantee that kindergartens meet national objectives. Kindergartens have a dual purpose: they contribute to the education of preschoolers and they provide care during parents' working hours.</p>
	Education Act (1998)	Governs basic education. It calls for cooperation and communication between the school and the home, parents and teachers and students, among other aspects.
Portugal	Framework Preschool Education Act (Law 5 of 1997)	Defines the preschool level (ages three to five) as the first level of education for life, and describes the principal role that parents have in education, with state support. It sets the objectives of preschool education: to promote the inclusion of children from different social groups; to help families educate their children; to provide opportunities for children to develop (autonomy, social networks, intellectual development); to promote gradual integration into society and prepare children for a successful experience in school. On the basis of this law, decrees have been promulgated establishing the basis for expanding the preschool network and financing mechanisms.
Spain	Organic Education Act (LOE) of 2006, Organic Law Regulating the Right to Education (LODE) of 1985	Early childhood education is the first stage of the educational system. The LOE declares the educational nature of the first cycle (birth to three years of age) and the second cycle (three to six years) of early childhood education, thereby bringing unity to the education process from birth to age six. It provides that, in order to ensure the transition between the initial and primary levels of education, there must be rules for joint action through permanent coordination.
	Royal Decree 806/2006	Establishes the schedule for applying the provisions of the LOE relating to the first and second cycle of early childhood education, which are to be implemented in the academic year 2008/09.
Sweden	Education Act (1985)	Regulates activities of preschool, the preschool class and primary school, as a step towards their integration. These are to stimulate the child's development and help create conditions favorable to its growth and learning through group pedagogical activities. It calls for the physical separation of programs for six-year-olds and their incorporation into primary school through the preschool class. Access to preschool for children four and five years old is universal.
Ireland	Education Act (1998); Education Act (2000)	Primary education is compulsory from six years of age, but a high percentage of four- and five-year-olds are enrolled in the infant sections of primary school. The law regulates infant classes and basic school, and provides that schools must develop their own plans and promote parent associations.

	National Framework for Early Childhood Education (2006)	Prepared by the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (CECDE), it establishes a series of principles to guarantee the quality of the early childhood experience in different types of care and education programs. It sets national standards for ECD [Early Childhood Development] program quality, the evaluation and measurement of quality, and support for service providers.
	Government White Paper "Ready to Learn" (1999)	Establishes government policy for early childhood as a comprehensive strategy for raising and maintaining standards with respect to professional skills, curriculum and methodologies. It embraces the entire period, including the infant sections of the primary schools. The focus is on quality and how to ensure strategies for providing quality services. <i>There is also a section on the importance and strategies of working with parents.</i> The objective is to support children's academic development and achievements through high-quality early education programs with a particular focus on children who are poor or have special needs.
England	Children's Plan (2007)	Published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families, this plan contains guidelines covering early childhood development policy for the next 10 years. It cites service standards and the developmental and learning achievements expected of children by the end of early childhood, grouped under five dimensions, to ensure that children are healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, and achieve economic well-being. It speaks of ensuring a smooth transition from daycare to primary school (from a play-based learning environment to an education environment) by means of a coordinated curriculum. It calls for revising the preschool and primary curricula, fostering a series of strategies such as forging partnerships between those working in "Early Years" (EY) and grade 1 of basic education, working on the basis of profiles at the end of EY, and on the basis of this profile determining the type of support the child needs in primary school. The key elements of the plan include ensuring that schools are the centers of the community, renewing the primary curricula to facilitate transition from preschool, strengthening mathematics and English, and allowing greater flexibility in the school timetable, establishing more effective linkages between schools, health centers and other services, and helping parents play a more active role in their children's education.
	Childcare Act (2006)	Calls for reform and simplification of the regulatory framework of programs for children under five years. The Childcare Act simplifies and regulates early childhood development policy, unifying care and education services under the Sure Start unit of the new Department for Children, Schools and Families, and it simplifies the processes of regulating and inspecting early childhood programs under the Ofsted Childcare Register. It provides that the local authorities must improve the five

outcomes indicated in the Every Child Matters program and reduce inequity of outcomes, guaranteeing better and greater access to services through the network of Sure Start centers. It introduces the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) as the new framework for the first years.

Every Child Matters (2003, 2004) This constitutes the framework for policies from birth to age nine. The document is organized on the basis of the outcomes that children are expected to achieve, in five dimensions: they are to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, and achieve economic well-being. It sets general guidelines for integrating daycare and education centers under the education sector. This document was the basis for the Childcare Act.

Education Act (2002) Emphasizes the division of basic education at key stages. Incorporates the basic level (foundation stage) into the national curriculum of England. The foundation stage begins at three years and continues to the end of the school year in which the child reaches his or her fifth birthday. The foundation level is available through nurseries, schools or centers, or private programs. Many children spend the last year of the foundation stage in reception classes in primary school.

Australia Communiqué of the Council of Australian Governments (March 2008) The COAG announcement indicates that a broad strategy for early childhood will be prepared and put to public discussion. It calls for a series of substantive reforms in the area of education and early childhood in order to improve Australia's human capital, and it sets a series of objectives, achievements, progress measurements, and policy guidelines.

National Quality Framework for early childhood education and care (2007-2009) The document is still a draft, and has been put to public consultation. The July 2009 version includes a framework of national quality standards, and learning benchmarks that will be linked to those standards. It will establish minimum care quality criteria.⁷⁷

Canada Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care (2003) This communiqué recognizes the critical importance of the early years of life in the development and future well being of the child. It reiterates the government commitment to strengthen early childhood education and care programs as one of the four priority areas of childhood policy (the others are healthy pregnancy, improved parenting and family supports, and community supports). It calls for pooling efforts to promote early childhood development and to support parents in the workforce by broadening the coverage and accessibility of programs for children under the age of six.

⁷⁷ The document will propose stricter quality standards, a rating system from A to E, and proposals for strengthening staff qualifications at this level.

	Provincial education laws	Care and education policy for five-year-olds is the responsibility of the provinces and territories and is regulated by provincial education acts. In some cases the province also regulates care and education for children between three and four years old.
New Zealand	Pathways to the Future: A 10-year Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Education (2002)	This strategic plan outlines the strategies and objectives for early childhood. The document is centered on three strategies: better access, better quality, and strengthening collaborative work. This last strategy means to promote consistency in education from birth to age eight, in order to ease the transition from this level to primary school through a better understanding between teachers of preschool and primary school with regards to the curriculum, pedagogical approaches, and the distribution of information about successful transitions, among other things. Another promoting policy is that of better assessing when and how to incorporate English when teaching children whose mother tongue is another.
United States	No Child Left Behind (2001)	This law focuses on readiness for school and sets minimum learning standards that children must achieve before they enter kindergarten (specifically in relation to reading and arithmetic). It aligns those standards with those of the school system, which runs from kindergarten to grade 12. Its goal is to ensure that children in grade 3 can read at the level expected for that grade.
	Head Start Act	This Act governs the Head Start (HS) program, setting rules for its functioning, financing, monitoring and evaluation. It contains a specific section on transitions and articulation with education from kindergarten to grade 12. It calls for taking the necessary steps to coordinate with the local education agencies where HS children will attend, developing systematic procedures for transferring academic records, maintaining constant communication to facilitate coordination and continuity in the curriculum, participating in joint training activities with primary school personnel, establishing transition policies and procedures for children going to school, developing programs targeted at parents and promoting their participation in HS activities, linking HS services with other services, and helping parents understand the importance of involvement in their children's education and teaching them strategies for becoming involved.

Source: Eurydice, Database on Education Systems in Europe. Extracted in August- September, 2008, from <http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/Eurydice/EuryPresentation>

2. Care and Education Policy for Children in Latin America

Coverage

Governments and private institutions in Latin America offer a wide range of educational opportunities for children between the ages of three and eight, seeking in this way to respond to the varying social, cultural and geographic situations of children and their families. Although their compulsory school starting age may differ, all countries offer programs for different age groups, as shown in the following table.

While school is compulsory, the average enrollment rate for children in the three to five year age bracket is only 62% across the region, although it is generally higher for five-year-olds than for three- and four-year-olds. This pattern stands in contrast to Spain and France, for example, where enrollment for this age group, while not compulsory, is 90% or higher, demonstrating that it is not legislation that limits access to preschool education, but other factors.

Among the most important factors are: the lack of education services in some rural localities, the lack of information for parents on the importance of early childhood education, the cost to poor families of sending their children to school, and long or arduous trips from home to school, especially in rural areas. Another frequent obstacle in low-income rural and urban areas alike is that children are expected to help out with household tasks or fieldwork as a contribution to the family economy, and for this reason some social programs pay parents a bonus for sending their children to school and health services (Brazil, Mexico, Peru).

Table 7. Early childhood care in Latin America

Age	Care and education in educational centers or programs provided by the State or by private institutions, or international agencies	Programs for children channeled via their parents or family
8	Primary education, mainly in schools (first and second grades)	Direct: through meetings with parents, home visits, health controls, other,
7		
6	School programs for children 3 to 6 years.	Indirect: via the communications media: radio, TV, press, others
5	Non-school programs for children 3 to 6 years, using different strategies suited to the characteristics and needs of the children, their family and their context	
4		
3		

Source: Authors' preparation, based on available information

National development and education plans include strategies to expand coverage with quality and equity for children ages four and five, with priority to low-income rural and urban areas, recognizing the positive impact that the care and education provided through these programs can have on disadvantaged children. The intention is that all children should be able to develop the potential and acquire the skills necessary to make a satisfactory transition between the two levels, thereby reducing dropout and repetition rates in the early grades of primary school.

Legislation

Most countries have provisions making one or two years in a preschool education center or program compulsory, from the age of four or five years; in fact, children are often enrolled at the age of three and even earlier, although this is not compulsory. According to the 2007 UNESCO monitoring report, compulsory schooling begins at age three in Peru; at age four in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Panama, Mexico and Venezuela; and at age five in Argentina, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Paraguay, Nicaragua and Uruguay. However, even though it may be compulsory,

children who have not taken preschool education can still enroll in the first grade of a regular school or an non-formal or non-academic program.

Primary school, on the other hand, is compulsory and free in all countries from six or seven years of age. According to the 2007 UNESCO monitoring report, the average enrollment rate in primary school in Latin America varies between 90 and 95%. Yet the statistics show that there are children of five, and more than seven years of age, enrolled in first grade. In the case of five-year-olds, their enrollment frequently reflects pressure from parents, who may insist that their child is "ready for first grade" or who worry that, if its birthday is in midyear, it would "lose a year of school." In the case of children over the age of seven, it will frequently be found that they are repeating a year, or that their parents did not send them to school sooner for one of the reasons mentioned above. To avoid repeating the first grade, many countries provide for automatic promotion to the second grade, thus transferring the problem to the second or third grade.

The care and education of children aged three, four and five years in Latin America is provided, as in the case of children under the age of three, through formal school programs and non-formal or non-academic programs. The formal programs may be financed or subsidized by the state, or through private arrangements. The state schools offer free instruction during schooldays of four to five hours, although in some cases the schedule may extend to eight hours in order to care for children whose parents work outside the home.

Preschool centers have the facilities needed for children's care and education, with furnishings and materials that meet regulatory standards and guidelines for the organization and functioning of such centers. Classes are run by a teacher that holds a pedagogical degree, generally with a specialization in preschool education. The teacher-pupil ratio is one teacher for every 25 to 30 children, depending on demand.

Children of six and seven years attend primary school, which as with preschool classes, must be organized in accordance with regulations. In rural areas, classes are generally multi-grade or multi-age. In multi-grade classes, children of different ages and grades are in the care of a teacher who must divide them into differentiated groups, a situation that sometimes impedes personalized attention, especially in the early grades of primary school when the child needs it most.

Non-formal or non-academic programs are alternatives to education centers, and they are characterized by their flexibility with respect to environments, educational staff, hours, frequency, methodology, educational materials and curriculum. The educational agent may be a family mother, or a community member who has been trained by a teacher with a preschool teaching degree. That person belongs to the community and shares the cultural patterns, parenting standards and mother tongue of the child and family, which allows for a more contextualized education. These programs are usually located in rural and in low-income urban areas, and play an important role in providing care for young children, with parental and community participation.

There is however a limitation in that these non-formal facilities frequently lack the necessary resources in terms of infrastructure, equipment and teaching materials, since it is generally the parents and the community that must supply them. It is often difficult for the program promoter to coordinate the child's entry into school with the first grade teacher. In this case the teacher responsible for the training and supervision of education agents will have to work out with the parents ways of supporting the child through the transition process: visiting the

school with the children, engaging in dialogue with the teacher, and identifying the prior knowledge that the child must have to cope with the demands of the school.

As with state-run facilities, private programs have expanded significantly, particularly in the middle and upper-class sections of cities, where parents are more aware of the importance of preschool education for a successful transition to school, and are concerned that their children should be prepared to pass the admissions test for entry into first grade in a private school. According to a UNESCO classification, the proportion of private education is low (between zero and 32%) in Mexico, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Panama, Venezuela, Uruguay, El Salvador, Guatemala, Peru, Honduras, Bolivia and Paraguay, while it falls in the medium range (between 33 and 66%) in Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Chile and Ecuador.

It is the responsibility of the education sector and intermediary agencies to set standards for the organization and functioning of education at its different levels. In this respect the regulations, guidelines and other documents establish minimum requirements for the comfort and well-being of children, as well as the quality of services. However, under the impact of decentralization, in some countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Mexico, for example) the task of monitoring programs is shared with regional, municipal or local governments. These administrative bodies are also supposed to adjust standards of infrastructure, equipment, staffing and operating schedules for all education levels, bearing in mind the local geographic, social economic and cultural characteristics.

The objectives of education for children from ages three to five or six

In most countries, the first and principal objective of preschool education is to provide comprehensive care for children, in its biological, social, emotional and cognitive dimensions. Comprehensive care also means addressing other aspects that do not depend on the education system, such as health (growth monitoring and vaccination) and supplementary nutrition; with priority for children deemed at risk because of their family's socioeconomic situation, and also for those attending school for a full day (six to eight hours). This requires coordination among the sectors responsible for these services in order to ensure proper targeting and delivery.

Another objective common to most countries is to prepare children for entry into primary school or for the transition from one level to another. This objective is explicit or implicit in programs for five-year-olds such as those offered in Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, the Dominican Republic and Venezuela. Costa Rica on the other hand, treats early childhood education as a continuous and permanent process that begins in the family and continues in school.

Great importance is also attached to family and community involvement in the education of children, involving them in joint work with the teacher to support the academic progress of their children. This is the case in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Peru and the Dominican Republic.

Countries where different cultural or ethnic groups coexist (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela) offer a bilingual intercultural education that values and respects the culture, language, traditions and childrearing patterns of different peoples, treating diversity as an asset and not a problem. Many researchers, such as Lopez (1999) and Pozzi Escot (1997), explain that given the diversity and number of languages and dialects spoken in some countries such as Peru, we must speak of Latin American multilingualism. The proportion of

vernacular-speaking people in Peru is estimated at 25% (approximately 6 million),⁷⁸ while the percentage is lower in other countries. Nevertheless, everyone has the right to receive bilingual intercultural education, in accordance with the principle of equity.

Quality standards and indicators

Blanco et al. (2008)⁷⁹ define indicators as "the index or signal that helps to define and explain a phenomenon and to make forecasts about its future evolution."⁸⁰ They present a series of indicators dealing with care and education of children from birth to six years, and these have been applied and validated experimentally in Brazil, Chile and Peru. The researchers point out that, although early childhood embraces the ages from birth to eight years, the sample used in their study excludes seven- and eight-year-olds because they are already in primary school. The categories and indicators selected refer to the general context, family context, and the educational system. The purpose of the research is to provide useful information for understanding the real situation of young children in Latin America and for allowing comparisons across the region. To some extent, it is also designed to contribute to the formulation of comprehensive care policies and the allocation of resources.

Central American countries (Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama) have also set standards for early childhood education in order to identify what pupils should know and be able to do. They also seek to evaluate what teachers must teach and what pupils must learn, the knowledge and skills they must achieve, and the learning conditions that must be present. These standards make it possible to obtain useful information for improving study programs, advising pupils of what they are expected to learn, and providing continuous guidance to teachers. The goal is to achieve high-quality and equitable education for all children and to design education policies focused on the quality of learning and on improving curriculum management at all levels and institutions.

The UNESCO global monitoring report shows that Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Mexico have adopted national quality standards for care and education programs. In Mexico, the Child Development Centers (CENDI) program has received numerous citations for the quality of the care and education it provides. Reflecting countries' concern to expand the coverage and quality of the education system, the Education Ministry or Department has created a quality measurement office, whose function is to assess how the education system is operating and to identify successes and shortcomings. The results of the experiments mentioned in previous paragraphs can be useful to countries in identifying problem areas as part of their effort to improve program quality.

How transitions are addressed

Most countries recognize in their legislation the impact that preschool education has on subsequent learning, especially in the early grades of primary school; one of those impacts is to reduce repetition and dropout rates. Education laws and development plans generally set objectives for expanding the coverage, improving the quality and equity, and facilitating access to the first grade, and ensuring continuity of learning. One of the first steps taken in this respect has been to articulate curricula and to empower parents so that, together with teachers, they can support their children's educational progress. Recognizing the mandate of the Convention on the

⁷⁸ López, L. E. (1999). *La educación intercultural bilingüe: balance y perspectivas*. Based on the conference on Multilingüismo y Educación en América Latina: <http://www.rieoei.org/rie20a02.htm>

⁷⁹ Blanco, R. et al. (2008). Indicadores de la educación de la primera infancia en América Latina. Chile UNESCO. http://portal.unesco.org/geography/es/ev.php-URL_ID=10233&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

⁸⁰ op. cit. p. 11

Rights of the Child, most countries have the equivalent of a "juvenile code" or an "action plan for children and adolescents," developed under UNICEF sponsorship, for the purpose of enforcing children's rights.

In terms of the organization and management of preschool education, the Organization of Ibero-American States (OEI)⁸¹ as well as EFA, OAS, CARICOM, OECD and others have produced various documents with information on the legislation and regulations governing this level of education in countries of the region.

Table 8. Legislation on care and education for children under the age of six in Latin American countries

Country	Legal provision	Contents of the legislation
Argentina	National Education Law 26206/2006 ⁸²	Establishes as one of its objectives to promote the learning and development of children from 45 days to five years of age, as individuals with rights who are actively involved in the process of integral development, members of a family and a community. Confirms that education is compulsory at five years, as established in the Federal Education Law.
	Action Plan 2008-2011 ⁸³	The action plan has three general policy themes: to improve management of the education system in ways that will lay the institutional conditions for implementing the National Education Law; to improve academic performance with attention to the contents of instruction and to institutional models that will ensure conditions of access, permanence and graduation with quality; and to generate institutional and collective responsibility for evaluation in order to facilitate improvements.
	Federal Education Law 24195 ⁸⁴	Sets out basic guidelines for transforming education. Considers reorganization of the national education system from initial to higher education; establishes new objectives and a new academic organization structure; and the need for new contents at all levels. In setting rules for the decentralization of education, it gives the national government the role of making policy, controlling the quality of education, and compensating for differences.
	Education Finance Law 26075 ⁸⁵	Proposes extending initial education to 100% of the five-year-old population and incorporating growing

⁸¹ Organización de los Estados Iberoamericanos. *Educación inicial atención a la primera infancia. Información por país*: <http://www.oei.es/educacioninicial.htm>

⁸² http://www.me.gov.ar/doc_pdf/ley_de_educ_nac.pdf

⁸³ http://www.cessi.org.ar/documentacion/Plan_de_Accion_2008-2011.pdf

⁸⁴ <http://www.portalargentino.net/leyes/124195.pdf>

⁸⁵ <http://www.region11.edu.ar/documentos/ley26075.doc>

numbers of children ages three and four, with priority to the most disadvantaged. The goal is to produce pedagogical and organizational changes that will enhance the quality and equity of the national education system at all levels and forms, so as to guarantee that all pupils in initial/basic/primary education will master the core curricular subjects. To guarantee a minimum of 10 years of compulsory schooling for all children. To ensure the inclusion of children with special education needs. To ensure that at least 30% of pupils in basic education have access to extended or full school days, with priority to at-risk children from the most disadvantaged social sectors and geographic areas.

Bolivia National Development Plan 2006-2010⁸⁶

This plan sets forth the general guidelines for education, without specifying the education levels, but indicating that one purpose is to keep rural children in the school system through to graduation. Although it does not say so, it probably nullifies Law 1565/1994, which made the state responsible for offering one year of preschool education to prepare pupils for primary school.

Draft of the Avelino Siñani and Elizardo Perez New Education Law⁸⁷

This law provides that "communitarian family education" runs from birth to five years of age and includes:

Communitarian family education, from birth to age three, has the objectives of preserving the child's health through proper nutrition and stimulation in sensory-motor and emotional-cognitive development. Education must be relevant to the child's culture, particularly through maternal and paternal love. Care is to be provided through support programs with responsibility shared between the state and the community.

School-based communitarian family education for children ages four and five has as its objectives: to develop the cognitive, linguistic, psycho-motor, social-emotional and artistic capacities that foster independence, cooperation and decision-making in the process of constructing their thinking, through the symbolic function and the progressive structuring of various logical-mathematical, spatial and temporal and other operations.

Brazil Law on the Directives and Bases of Education (LDB)

This law provides that early childhood education is the first stage of basic education and its purpose is the

⁸⁶ <http://www.planificacion.gov.bo/BANNER/PARA%20PAG%20WEB/pnd1.html>

⁸⁷ <http://www.constituyentesoberana.org/info/?q=node/403>

9394/96⁸⁸

integral development of the child to six years in his or her physical, psychological, intellectual and social dimensions, supplementing the efforts of the family and the community.

Education is offered in day nurseries up to the age of three, and in preschool facilities for children ages four to six years.

Early childhood education is to be assessed by monitoring and recording the child's development, without giving it the purpose of promoting or providing access to basic education. Basic education runs for at least eight years, is free and compulsory in public schools, and its objective is to educate the citizen.

Law 10172/2001 National Education Plan 2001-2011⁸⁹

This law declares that within ten years Brazil will have an early childhood education system for children from birth to age six, or from birth to age five. It proposes to guarantee compulsory basic education for all children from seven to 14 years, ensuring that they enter and remain in the education system until conclusion of the cycle.

Chile Organic Constitutional Law on Education (LOCE) 18964/1990⁹⁰

Establishes that nursery school is to provide integral care for children from birth until they enter basic education, but it is not a compulsory precedent for entering primary school. The intention is to promote systematic, timely and suitable learning that will be relevant and meaningful for children, supporting the family in its fundamental and irreplaceable role as the primary educator. There are no minimum requirements for enrolling in nursery school, and arbitrary distinctions are banned.

Draft New General Law on Education

This has been presented to Congress for approval. Its distinctive feature is that it establishes a new regulatory framework for public and private education, with higher quality standards.

National Policy for Childhood and Adolescence 2001-2010⁹¹

Establishes the need to promote timely and pertinent education of high quality that will encourage relevant and meaningful learning in terms of well-being, full development and progress of the child as a person, in close and complementary relationship with the educational efforts of the family, in order to foster the continuity of learning and continuance in the

⁸⁸ http://www.oei.es/quipu/brasil/Lei_Diretrizes_9394.pdf

⁸⁹ http://www.oei.es/quipu/brasil/Plano_Nacional_Educ.pdf

⁹⁰ http://www.umce.cl/biblioteca/Ley%2018.962_LOCE.pdf

⁹¹ http://www.oei.es/quipu/chile/politica_infancia.pdf

		education system.
	<i>“Plan Enlaces al Bicentenario 2007-2010”</i> ⁹²	Seeks to improve the student/computer ratio by providing schools with equipment and Internet access and basic conditions for using the equipment. It calls for placement of a computer in the nursery school activities room, and having nursery school children attend "linkages laboratories" to introduce them to the learning that they will pursue in primary school.
	<i>Chile Crece Contigo</i> ("Chile grows with you") ⁹³	This is a comprehensive protection system that follows young children and their families from gestation to enrollment in the school system (pre-kindergarten). It begins with a medical checkup for the pregnant mother, and from then on provides comprehensive services and care for children to support their development at each stage and promote their harmonious and integral development.
Colombia	Education Sector Revolution Plan 2006-2010 ⁹⁴	Guides and regulates the articulation of initial education with the basic primary cycle so that the transition will have elements of continuity. To this end it promotes pedagogical projects adapted to the shifting realities in which children develop, incorporating elements from their context.
	General Education Law 115/1957 ⁹⁵	Refers to basic education, without specifying preschool and primary. Sets as the principal objective at all levels of education the integral development of pupils through structured actions detailed elsewhere in the text.
Costa Rica	National Policy for Childhood and Adolescence ⁹⁶	Proposes the establishment and development of a set of national guidelines relating to childhood and adolescence in order to guarantee the rights of children and their integral development at the different stages of their lives. The policy is based on three theoretical aspects: the humanistic focus, the rights focus, and integral human development.
	Education Policy for the 21st Century (1994) ⁹⁷	This document has its focus on preparation for first grade and adopts the vision of a continuous and permanent process that begins in the family and

⁹² <http://portal.enlaces.cl/?t=44&i=2&cc=298.218&tm=3>

⁹³ <http://www.crececontigo.cl/>

⁹⁴ <http://www.mineduacion.gov.co/1621/article-85273.html>

⁹⁵ http://www.unal.edu.co/secretaria/normas/ex/L0115_94.pdf

⁹⁶

[http://www.sedi.oas.org/dec/documentos/simposio/Otros_archivos/Pol%C3%ADtica%20Nacional%20de%20Ni%C3%BEz%20y%20Adolescencia%20\(%C3%BAltimo\)%20\(2\)Costa%20.doc](http://www.sedi.oas.org/dec/documentos/simposio/Otros_archivos/Pol%C3%ADtica%20Nacional%20de%20Ni%C3%BEz%20y%20Adolescencia%20(%C3%BAltimo)%20(2)Costa%20.doc)

⁹⁷ <http://www.oei.es/quipu/costarica/politicaeducativasigloXXI.pdf>

		continues in school, promoting good performance at school and throughout life, in relation to the cognitive-linguistic, social-emotional and psychomotor dimensions.
	Fundamental Education Law 2160/57 ⁹⁸	Considers preschool as an educational level and establishes its purposes. Primary school is compulsory. Preschool, primary and intermediate schools are free and funded by the national government.
Ecuador	10 Year Education Plan 2006-2015 ⁹⁹	Stipulates that education for children under the age of five must be equitable and of high quality; that the rights of children, diversity and the natural pace of growth and learning must be respected and foster fundamental values. For the period 2007-2008, the MEC calls for the definition of strategies for articulation between preschool and basic education with respect to methodologies, training, family participation, teacher attitude, and the handling of learning spaces.
	Education Law 127/1983 ¹⁰⁰	Establishes the purpose of pre-primary schooling as development of the child and his or her values in the motor, biological, psychological, ethic and social aspects, and integration into society with family and State involvement.
El Salvador	National Education Plan 2021 ¹⁰¹	Offers learning experiences to children from birth to six years to increase their prospects of success in basic education.
	General Education Law, Decree 917/1966 ¹⁰²	Makes a distinction between education for children from birth to four years, and from four to six years, as follows: Initial education runs from birth to four years, during which activities are focused on the family and the community. Preschool education runs from four to six years and is conducted with family and community involvement. One objective of preschool education is to develop the basic specialties of pupils to ensure their successful preparation and incorporation into basic education.
Guatemala	National Education Law,	The education system is structured so that initial

⁹⁸ <http://www.asamblea.go.cr/ley/leyes/2000/2160.doc>

⁹⁹ http://www.educacion.gov.ec/_upload/PlanDecenaldeEducacion.pdf

¹⁰⁰ http://www.educacion.gov.ec/_upload/13.pdf

¹⁰¹ http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/El%20Salvador/El%20Salvador%20Plan2021_metasy politicas.pdf

¹⁰² http://www.oei.es/quipu/salvador/Ley_educ.pdf

	Legislative Decree 12/1991 ¹⁰³	education runs from conception though the age of four, and preschool from four to six years, but there is no description.
	Education Policies 2008-2012 ¹⁰⁴	This document makes it a strategic objective of Guatemala's education policy that pupils should receive a high-quality education that is equitable and culturally and linguistically pertinent. It proposes as education policies: enhancing the quality of education, expanding coverage to include the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, promoting equity and continuance in school, strengthening bilingual intercultural education, implementing a transparent management model, promoting educational decentralization, and strengthening the institutions of the education system.
Honduras	Strategic Plan for the Education Sector 2005-2015 ¹⁰⁵	Calls for the education system to be organized into subsystems, levels and modalities by 2015, with an integrated national curriculum that is articulated between levels and modalities. Proposes to increase the coverage of care with quality, efficiency and equity, doubling the coverage of pre-basic education and reaching 95% in the first two cycles of basic education.
	Organic Law on Education, Decree 79/1966 ¹⁰⁶	The Education Law describes preschool education as that which children receive in nursery schools or kindergartens, with the objective of guiding their first experiences, stimulating the development of their personality, and facilitating their social integration. Preschool education is to be offered over a period of three years.
Mexico	"Vision 2025: An Educational Focus for the 21st Century; National Education Program 2001-2006" ¹⁰⁷	Establishes the mechanisms for transiting from one educational modality to the next. Recommends the revision and adaptation of the curriculum, educational materials and teaching practices to encourage pedagogical continuity in basic education, from preschool to secondary school.
	National Development Plan 2007-2012 ¹⁰⁸	One of its objectives is to promote the healthy and integral development of Mexican children by guaranteeing full respect for their rights, attention to

¹⁰³ http://www.mineduc.gob.gt/uploads/Ley_Educacion_Nacional.doc

¹⁰⁴ http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Guatemala/Guatemala_Presentacion_Politiclas_Educativas_2008-2012.pdf

¹⁰⁵ <http://www.gsdehonduras.org/gnet/documents/a5.pdf>

¹⁰⁶ http://www.oei.es/quipu/honduras/Ley_educ.pdf

¹⁰⁷ <http://dieumsnh.qfb.umich.mx/PNE0106/introduc.htm>

¹⁰⁸ http://pnd.calderon.presidencia.gob.mx/pdf/PND_2007-2012.pdf

their health, nutrition, education and housing needs, and promoting the full development of their capacities.

General Education Law¹⁰⁹ Provides that basic education comprises preschool, primary and secondary levels. Preschool is not a prerequisite for primary school. For children under the age of four, initial education is offered to promote their physical, cognitive, emotional and social development. It includes educational guidance for parents or tutors.

Acuerdo 348/2004¹¹⁰ Regulates the preschool education program and its curriculum. Stipulates that preschool education is to be articulated with primary school and is to prepare children for a successful career at that level, to ensure continuity and consistency of instruction. Preschool is intended to have a lasting influence on a child's personal and social life. The quality of education and its compulsory nature are also mentioned, and the role of the teacher and the family in children's learning is emphasized.

Acuerdo 358/2005¹¹¹ This *Acuerdo* (Agreement) establishes the special program 2005-2009 for the accreditation of preschool education received by children attending community childcare centers in the Federal District.

Nicaragua Education Law 582/2006¹¹² Establishes that initial education is part of basic education, running from birth to six years, with an integral focus. Children ages five and six are covered in level III of initial education, with the objective of developing their skills and preparing them psychologically for success in basic education.

Common Work Plan: Strategic Priorities 2005-2008¹¹³ The plan accords high priority to preschool education because of its importance to child development and its impact on subsequent learning. It recommends expanding the coverage of care in developing new teaching approaches that start with identification of the skills that children must have upon entering the first grade.

National Education Plan 2001-2015¹¹⁴ One of the objectives of the plan is to implement a curriculum reform based on basic learning standards and achievements: to promote quality and equity in

¹⁰⁹ <http://www.sep.gob.mx/work/appsite/progimer/EVALUACION/LGE.doc>

¹¹⁰ <http://www.funcionpublica.gob.mx/resoluciones/2004/CI-SFP-348-2004.pdf>

¹¹¹ <http://www.oei.es/inicial/legislacion/mexico/acuerdo358.pdf>

¹¹² http://www.oei.es/quipu/nicaragua/Ley_Educ_582.pdf

¹¹³ <http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Nicaragua/Nicaragua%20Plan%20comun%20de%20trabajo%202004-2008.pdf>

¹¹⁴ <http://www.laprensa.com.ni/archivo/2001/noviembre/20/opinion/opinion-20011120-02.html>

		learning in all education centers, as well as continuity for pupils in the move from one education program to the next.
Panama	Education Law 34/1995 amending Law 47 ¹¹⁵	Establishes that preschool education is targeted at children of four and five years of age, and is to last for two years. It will be made progressively free and compulsory in accordance with the government's capacities.
	Objectives and Goals of the Government of the New Fatherland 2005-2009 ¹¹⁶	The general objective is that the Ministry of Education should exchange the current education model for one that stresses quality, modernity, participation and efficiency. Goals include expanding the coverage of preschool education and child nutrition programs and updating teacher training, professional development and performance evaluation.
Paraguay	Nanduti Education Plan 2003/2015 ¹¹⁷	This plan considers innovations in the classroom relating to the articulation between EI (initial education) and EEB (basic education), and preparation of an articulation program for teachers of EI and EEB.
	National Education Plan 2002-2012 ¹¹⁸	This plan sets as goals: a) strengthening early childhood education, improving human resource training, making preschool education universal; and b) continuing non-formal care and validating alternative models. It also constitutes initial education as a government policy for helping to break the circle of poverty by guaranteeing equality of opportunities, inter-sectoral coordination, and family and community participation in an education process that is participatory, effective and sustainable.
	General Education Law 1264/98 ¹¹⁹	Establishes that initial education comprises two cycles. The first runs to three years of age, and the second to four years. At age five, the preschool child will enter basic education (primary school), which by executive decree is compulsory.
Peru	General Education Law	In referring to the structure of the education system,

¹¹⁵ http://www.oei.es/quipu/panama/Ley_Educ_34_95.pdf

¹¹⁶ http://www.presidencia.gob.pa/smetas/objetivos_metas.pdf

¹¹⁷ <http://www.iidh.ed.cr/Documentos%5CInformes%5CI-Educacion%5CPLANES%5Ceducacion%20para%20todos%5CParaguay.pdf>

¹¹⁸ <http://www.mineducacion.gov.co/cvn/1665/article-138708.html>

¹¹⁹

<http://www.cej.org.py/desc/desc/vivi/EDUCACION/LEYES%20NACIONALES/LEY%201264.GENERAL%20DE%20EDUCACION.doc>

28044¹²⁰ and amendment
of article 36 by Law 28123
Regulation¹²¹

this law describes initial education as the first level of basic education, directed at children under the age of six, with family and community participation. It is divided into two cycles: the first from birth to two years, and the second from three to five years. The state covers health and nutrition needs through inter-sectoral coordination. It is articulated with primary education to ensure pedagogical and curricular coherence, while keeping its identity, specificity, and administrative and managerial autonomy. Family and community involvement promotes children's development of children, the protection of their rights, and the improvement of living standards.

National Education Project
in 2021 RS 001-2007-
ED¹²²

The National Education Project was prepared by the National Education Council; it has six strategic objectives, each with its respective outcomes and policies. The first, educational opportunities and outcomes of equal quality for all, proposes that early childhood education should be a national priority and the policy for 2021 is to ensure optimal development of children through inter-sectoral action coordinated with the state in each region. Other policies are: expanding access to basic education for underserved groups by universalizing education for four- and five-year-old children; establishing a national curricular framework that is shared, intercultural, inclusive and integrating; reducing repetition and dropout rates; and improving initial and in-service training for teachers.

National Plan for
Education for All 2005-
2015 RM 0592-2005 ED¹²³

Within the framework of the National Forum for Education for All, the national EFA plan proposes, as its first policy, to expand the opportunities and quality of integral care for children under the age of six giving priority to the poorest population, and recognizing the country's social and cultural diversity. To guarantee educational continuity and quality and ensure that rural and poor public school pupils complete the primary level.

National *Acuerdo*
(Decision) 2002/2011¹²⁴

Establishes 29 government policies. In the education field, it undertakes to guarantee universal access to initial education so as to ensure integral development, health, nutrition and early stimulation for children from birth to age five, recognizing the country's ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity; eliminating

¹²⁰ <http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Peru/Peru%20Ley%20general%20de%20educacion%2028044.pdf>

¹²¹ <http://www.minedu.gob.pe/normatividad/reglamentos/EducacionCalidadyEquidad.pdf>

¹²² www.oei.es/quipu/peru/Proyecto_educ_nac.pdf

¹²³ <http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Peru/Peru%20PlanNacionalEPT2005-2015.pdf>

¹²⁴ <http://www.scribd.com/doc/11641960/Acuerdo-Nacional>

quality gaps between public and private education as well as between rural and urban education in order to foster equity in access to education opportunities.

Dominican Republic Strategic Development Plan for Dominican Education 2003-2012¹²⁵

This plan has ten strategic objectives. One of them recognizes the impact that initial education has on basic education because it prepares children to perform better in basic and secondary school, and is a means for combating educational and social exclusion. The plan calls for increasing investment in initial education programs for urban and rural children alike.

General Education Law 66/1997¹²⁶

Establishes that initial education is the first level of education and is to be provided prior to basic education, in coordination with the family and the community. Makes initial education compulsory for children five years of age. Among the functions of initial education is that of preparation for basic education.

Uruguay Draft General Education Law 18154/2007 Replacing Emergency Law 15739¹²⁷

Makes initial education for children ages four and five, as well as primary education, compulsory. Proposes an integral approach to education to promote children's social inclusion and their knowledge of themselves, their family setting, their community, and the natural world. The structure of the education system is expanded to incorporate early childhood education and non-formal education.

Law 1701 5/98, Rules Governing Initial Education for Children under Six Years¹²⁸

The National Administration of Public Education has defined initial education as that offered to children under the age of six for their integral and harmonious bio-psycho-social development through systematic, institutionalized experiences of pedagogical socialization. The objectives include strengthening the links between the school, the family and the community. Initial education is to be made compulsory for children five years of age, and once this is accomplished it will be made compulsory for children four years of age.

Venezuela Bolivarian Education: Policies, Programs and Actions¹²⁹

This document (also referred to as "Millennium Goals") gives importance to early childhood education and proposes to expand coverage through formal and non-formal programs. It presents the

¹²⁵

<http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Dominican%20Republic/Dominican%20Republic%20Plan%20Estrategico%20de%20Desarrollo%20de%20la%20Educacion.pdf>

¹²⁶ http://www.oei.es/quipu/dominicana/LeyEdu66_97.pdf

¹²⁷ <http://www.adur.org.uy/trauniv/anteprojectodeleymec.pdf>

¹²⁸ <http://www.anep.edu.uy/documentos/ley17015.pdf>

¹²⁹ http://www.oei.es/quipu/venezuela/Educ_Bolivariana.pdf

Simoncito project as one of the strategic projects defined by the national government in the context of universalizing preschool education, with an orientation towards social justice and equity so that all children ages three to six will have access to preschool and can enter the first grade of basic education on equal terms, thereby reducing repetition and dropout risks.

Organic Law on Education 2635/1980¹³⁰ Makes preschool education the phase prior to basic education, with which it must be integrated. It is to help and protect children in their growth and development and offer them social-educational experiences appropriate to their age; and to meet their needs and interests in the areas of physical activities, emotions, intelligence, will, morals, social adjustment, expression of thought, and development of creativity, skills and basic abilities.

Source: Organización de los Estados Iberoamericanos *Educación inicial atención a la primera infancia. Información por país* : <http://www.oei.es/educacioninicial.htm>.

OEI. *Educación Inicial Legislación*

<http://www.oei.es/inicial/legislacion/index.html>, and other sites mentioned in the footnotes

3. Care and Education Policy for Children in the Caribbean

As noted earlier, among Caribbean countries it is Jamaica that has made the greatest advances in preschool policy, and is in fact the regional leader in early childhood matters. Jamaica's care system covers more than 90% of children ages three to five. The objectives at the preschool level are to prepare children for school, to offer parental support programs, and to assist the transition to primary school. Jamaica's Early Childhood Commission, which is responsible for the quality of the system, has developed 12 categories of standards for care and education institutions, based on performance criteria. Those standards relate to: (i) staff, (ii) programs, (iii) behavior management, (iv) physical environment, (v) equipment and furnishings, (vi) health, (vii) nutrition, (viii) safety, (ix) child rights, protection and equality, (x) parent and stakeholder involvement, (xi) administration, and (xii) finance. Each standard is set forth in a statement with performance indicators for assessing compliance.

Trinidad and Tobago has published a "green paper" containing standards for early childhood care and education (ECCE) centers (Ministry of Education, Trinidad and Tobago, 2006), which constitute the regulatory framework. This document is intended to give a more cohesive structure to early childhood services and to guarantee their quality. Every center or program must be registered, as a way of guaranteeing compliance with the standards. Licenses are granted for three years, and the Ministry conducts inspections to verify that the standards are being met in private and public sectors alike.

These standards apply to all services for children under the age of six and address eight critical areas: (i) registration and licensing of ECCE centers; (ii) staffing (personal suitability of registered providers, educators/caregivers and other staff members); (iii) the quality of early childhood development practices (including equal opportunities, child protection, discipline,

¹³⁰ <http://www.mes.gov.ve/mes/documentos/marcolegal/3.pdf>

confidentiality, partnership with parents); (iv) quality standards for children from birth to three years of age; (v) quality standards for early childhood environments for children between three and five years old; (vi) records keeping; (vii) health and safety; and (xiii) physical environment. The quality standards for programs for children under three include aspects relating to interaction between adults and children, time organization, physical resources, learning opportunities, and transitions. The standards for older children are much more detailed, and the Ministry of Education reports that the standards will soon be given the force of law.

According to UNESCO (2006), Guyana has finalized an early childhood development (ECD) policy establishing eight principles: (i) the establishment of an accreditation system; (ii) quality improvement; (iii) development of a training program for ECD personnel; (iv) development of strategies for parental education and community awareness; (v) development of a curricular framework for the zero-to-six age group; (vi) equity; (vii) access to ECD services; and (viii) infrastructure development. When it comes to articulating the system with primary school, the 2003-2007 Strategic Plan for Education provides that the two years of preschool education (four- and five-year-olds) together with the first and second grades of primary school will be known as early education. An official is to be specifically designated for the two years of preschool and the first two years of primary school.

Suriname was expected to reform its basic education legislation by the end of 2008, to integrate preschool care (for children four and five years old) within the framework of basic education (which includes six years of primary school). It has also prepared a comprehensive policy document for early childhood, not yet approved, and has launched the process of preparing standards of care for children from birth to age six. In 2007, St. Lucia amended its education act to include preschool care from birth to six years as an integral part of education and care centers. Schooling is compulsory at five years, beginning with kindergarten; as in Suriname, kindergarten and grades one and two constitute the first or “infant” level of primary education. In Barbados, preschool education, while not compulsory, constitutes the first of three levels of primary education; schooling is compulsory at five years, with the “infant” stage running from age five to seven.

At the regional level, the Early Childhood Action Plan 2002-2015 sets care policy standards for children up to three years old. There is also a Minimum Service Standard for the Caribbean, covering 12 critical areas of child development: (i) organization of space for learning; (ii) scheduling of care and education activities; (iii) suitable caregivers and teachers; (iv) a safe and appropriate environment; (v) adequate furnishing and equipment; (vi) health and safety procedures and practices; (vii) nutritious food and drink; (viii) positive interactions and behavior; (ix) information to parents about what their children are doing; (x) anticipation of special needs; (xi) record keeping; and (xii) additional standards for children under the age of two. While none of these 12 areas makes explicit reference to transitions, they do indicate that the child’s development must respect its own culture, that of others, and participation by parents, elements that favor transitions. By 2009, it is expected that all Caribbean countries will have adopted an early childhood care and education policy.

A report presented in 2005 dealt with transition to primary school, and called for, among other things: (a) adapting the environments of grades one through three of primary school by providing training for teachers about early childhood issues; and (b) considering the years from kindergarten to second grade as a unit within the school, with its own separate facilities.

Table 9. Legislation on care and education for children under the age of six in selected Caribbean countries

Country	Legal or regulatory provision	Contents
Barbados	Secondary documents have been revised, such as that of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (2005), Policies and Strategies for Early Education and the webpage of the Ministry of Education available at http://www.mes.gov.bb/index.cfm	Preschool care for children three and four years is part of basic primary education. It is provided in preschools or preschool classes in primary schools. Compulsory education begins at age five, with the "infant" level, which covers classes for children ages five and six.
Jamaica	Early Childhood Commission Act (2003) Early Childhood Act (2005)	Creates the Early Childhood Commission to oversee care and education programs and to improve services through the adoption of standards.
Suriname	National Policy Plan for Children 2002-2006	Care for children under the age of four is the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Affairs, while older children fall under the Ministry of Education. The National Policy Plan was prepared by the Ministry of Social Affairs. The preschool period covers children ages four and five, and although it is not compulsory, enrollment exceeds 80%. Kindergartens are located within the schools; there are no competitive tests; and at the end of two years all children are promoted to primary school. There is an early childhood committee responsible for establishing a national policy in this area.
Guyana	Education Policy 1995 Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Education 2003-2007	Sets ECE objectives and recommends that the first two years of primary school be considered as part of ECD. This process has already begun, with revision of the curriculum.
St. Lucia	Education act 41, 1999	The Ministry of Social Transformation, Culture and Local Government is responsible for children under the age of three. The Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development, Youth and Sports is responsible for children over the age of three.
Trinidad and Tobago	Standards for Regulating Early Childhood Services (2006)	These are the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and were drawn up by the National Council for Early Childhood Care and Education.

Sources:

Barbados Ministry of Education, Youth and sports (2005) Early education policies and strategies; Jamaica Ministry of Education Youth and Culture (2003) The Early Childhood Commission Act 2003: http://www.ecc.gov.jm/legislation_03.htm; Jamaica Ministry of Education, Youth, and

Culture (2005) The Early Childhood Act:
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Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Education 2003-2007:
<http://www.sdn.org.gy/minedu/about/strategic.htm>. The Strategic Plan 2008-2013 is available at
<http://www.moe.gov.gy/documents/esp2008.pdf>;
St. Lucia Education Act No 41 of 1999; UNESCO web site
http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/format_liste1_en.php?Chp3=National+Education+Legislations
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<http://www.oas.org/udse/readytolearn/inve.html>;

Conclusions

The first great transition is the one the child makes to the daycare center, and is influenced by policy aspects that have to do with maternity leave, and early childhood care and education. Maternity leave in OECD countries varies from a minimum of 12 weeks in the United States and New Zealand to a maximum of 52 weeks in the United Kingdom. The European Commission's DG for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (ESAEO) recently proposed expanding the minimum leave to 18 weeks. With the exception of the United States, maternity leave is paid and is covered by social security, the employer or the State. In several OECD countries, maternity leave is a right of all mothers, and not only of working mothers. With paid maternity leave and access to additional kinds of leave (paternity leave, parental leave) in the first year of a child's life, many OECD countries make provision for childcare beginning at six months or one year of age.

In Latin America, while the average length of legally mandated maternity leave for working mothers is 12 weeks, it varies from one country to the next. In Bolivia it is eight weeks, in Argentina and Peru 13 weeks, in Brazil and Costa Rica 16 weeks, and in Chile and Venezuela 18 weeks. Except in Bolivia and Mexico, where paid leave covers all women, in other countries it applies only to working women under the formal regime, and the costs are covered by social security, the employer or both. Leave is also granted for other situations such as miscarriage, child adoption, or illness of the mother or child. In Caribbean countries paid maternity leave varies between 12 and 13 weeks, with remuneration amounting to between 60% and 100% of pay and is covered, as in Latin America, by social security, the employer or both. In the Bahamas and Barbados, and in some cases in Haiti, Grenada and Jamaica, coverage is 100%.

European countries offer a series of benefits to parents, such as paternity leave or parental leave. Paternity leave in most European countries last between three and ten days, with the longest being that offered in Norway and Finland (42-52 weeks and 18 weeks). In Latin America, few countries offer paternity leave, and it fluctuates between one and ten days. However, other countries are now making provision for this in their labor legislation, as Ecuador has recently done.

The availability and accessibility of early childhood care and education services, and their quality have an influence on how and when the first transition takes place. Access to and involvement in these programs is not uniform. It tends to be higher in European countries, where the service is public and subsidized. ESAEO has set a 33% coverage target for children under the

age of three in countries of the European Community. In the United States, Australia and New Zealand, coverage tends to be less because the service is private and more costly. In Latin American countries, childcare centers are sponsored by various institutions other than/separate from the Ministry of Education. The high costs associated with a quality care program limit the possibilities of education systems to provide formal programs. Despite this, state-paid coverage for this age group is increasing, generally through non-formal programs that involve parents and the community directly.

The second transition begins for most children at some point after the age of three, most frequently at the age of five. In Latin America, responsibility for promoting and financing preschool and primary centers and programs lies with the ministry of education, but in some cases it is shared with local or municipal governments. The number of private preschool centers has been growing in urban areas, and primary and secondary schools are establishing special sections for four- and five-year-olds. In their medium and short-term development plans and strategies, governments often declare their intention to expand the coverage, equity and quality of these systems, articulating preschool with primary education in order to facilitate the passage from one level to the other so that the child will be prepared to face the challenges of first grade. In most OECD countries care is publicly provided, and preschool programs are offered through the public education system.

While the legislation of OECD countries recognizes the importance of preschool education, it is not compulsory in most of those countries. Yet coverage ratios are relatively high, and enrollment in preschool programs is almost universal in OECD countries. By contrast in Latin America, although most countries make one or two years of preschool education compulsory (at ages four and five) the average enrollment rate for children ages three, four and five is 62%, with variations among countries, indicating that it is not legislation that impedes access at this level but rather other factors such as the lack of education services in rural areas, parents' ignorance of the benefits of preschool education, the cost of sending children to school, long or difficult trips from home to school, and the fact that, especially in rural areas, children are expected to help out with household tasks as a contribution to the family economy.

A broad conception of preschool education tends to facilitate transitions because it recognizes the importance of other aspects beyond the strictly academic. The objectives of initial education in these countries place the emphasis on readiness for school (United States, France) or comprehensive preparation for life (Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Norway, New Zealand), or both (Italy, Portugal). The concern for "being ready" stresses "school readiness," the development of cognitive abilities and skills with emphasis on acquisition of knowledge, attitudes and dispositions for learning. On the other hand, readiness for life stresses experiences in preparing for life and society, and takes on a broad concept of preschool education that facilitates transitions because it recognizes the importance of other aspects, beyond the academic, that influence performance.

The transition from a daycare program to a preschool program generally implies a change. In Latin America as well as in OECD countries, preschool programs generally fall under the Education Ministry, while daycare programs are the responsibility of the Ministry of Welfare or Social Protection of the Family. For this reason, preschool programs pay more attention to the curriculum and to formal learning, while daycare programs do not consider these aspects, and are generally run by teachers rather than non-teaching staff. The emphasis is distinct and the policies governing these services are for the most part different, so that elements and factors of continuity are missing.

In recent decades there has been a tendency in OECD countries to unify policies for children under three years and those for the three to six-year age group into a single system. This is the case in Sweden, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Australia. Sweden and New Zealand were the first countries to coordinate early childhood care under the same ministry, thereby constructing a single, unified system with common coverage objectives, financing, regulations and personnel. This has resulted in services for children under the age of six that are governed by common quality standards and principles that ensure continuity, progression and differentiation between levels.

As ESAEO indicates, in those countries that have an integrated early childhood system the quality of services for children under three has improved. Generally, the training requirements and salaries are comparable to those for staff working in services for children from ages three to six. This has a positive impact on quality and facilitates transitions by lending continuity to the education and care process that children and their families experience. Likewise, those countries that have an integrated early childhood policy have placed more emphasis on transitions in their regulations and policy documents. They have articulated legislation and policies with common objectives for the entire period of early childhood. The concept of early childhood is more comprehensive, and is seen as a period of preparation for life (and not only for learning and academic performance), influenced by the tradition of social pedagogy.

As to the manner in which policy documents address transitions, various OECD countries do so explicitly, establishing the goal of promoting transition and continuity in the education process. Based on these policy documents, strategies are developed such as revising the preschool and primary curricula to align them, or creating a preschool class within the primary school. Some countries have established standards to regulate the quality of early childhood services. Because they are common to the entire period of early childhood, they tend to ensure a degree of homogeneity and thus of continuity in services, thereby facilitating transitions.

In Latin America indicators are now being applied and validated, and these will make it possible to gather information on the situation of young children as input into the formulation of relevant and workable policies relating to care and education of children from birth through first grade. Central American countries have developed standards for primary education in order to establish the knowledge, abilities and skills that pupils must acquire in the learning process, as well as what the teacher must teach and the learning conditions that must exist.¹³¹

In Latin America, primary school begins at six or seven years of age in state-run centers, and education is compulsory and free. In OECD countries, primary school begins at age five, six or seven. In the United Kingdom, New Zealand and the Netherlands, compulsory schooling begins at age five, with the first year of primary school. In Sweden and Finland, compulsory schooling begins at seven years, again with the first year of primary school. Beyond the compulsory aspect of education, it is interesting to note that OECD countries have established different ages for the beginning of primary school. Starting primary school at age five is different from doing so at age seven, considering the child's level of development and maturity. Developmental psychology holds that five-year-olds are going through a development phase distinct from that of seven-year-olds, who are better prepared to meet the demands of the school system.

The transition from preschool to primary school is the one of greatest concern to parents, teachers and policymakers, because of the high repetition rate among children who cannot meet

¹³¹ Ministerio de Educación de El Salvador (2008). *Estándares educativos de educación física para educación básica*. http://www.miportal.edu.sv/NR/rdonlyres/2C774B61-4304-4BA3-9A0F-E5556E90DA65/0/1_Fisica_0_.pdf

learning expectations. This happens more frequently in rural areas, where school attendance is lower, many parents are illiterate and cannot help their children with their homework, malnutrition and morbidity rates are high, and the teacher may not speak the children's mother tongue. In most countries, the Education Ministry or Department is aware of this problem and has taken steps to facilitate children's transition, articulating preschool with primary curricula and producing complementary documents, as discussed in the following chapter.

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III. TRANSITIONS FROM THE CURRICULUM PERSPECTIVE

The previous chapter offered an overview of early childhood education and care policy, in light of policy documents and regulations. This chapter reviews the curricular frameworks of early childhood programs available on the websites of each country's institutions. It examines aspects such as whether countries have a single curriculum for the entire period (birth to age six); curriculum basics; priority dimensions; and strategies for promoting successful transitions, among others.

1. Curriculums in OECD Countries

A single curricular framework for early childhood

Of the OECD countries studied Sweden, Finland, Norway, New Zealand and the United Kingdom have curricular frameworks for early childhood.¹³² These frameworks lay down the principles of early education and are articulated with those of primary school, such as “curriculum Lpfo 98” in Sweden. In Finland, while the Social Affairs and Health Ministry is responsible for services for children under the age of six, there are “national curriculum guidelines for early education and care” (2003) that provide guidance for care and education programs based on common principles.¹³³ In Norway, a framework plan for kindergarten contents and activities was adopted in 2006, setting forth principles, objectives, and basic contents and activities. Since late 2008, the United Kingdom has had a single curricular framework, the “Early Years Foundation Stage”, which runs from birth to five years.¹³⁴ It is based on standards that guarantee a constant quality of service and cover learning, development and welfare aspects in all institutions and programs. Although not part of the national curriculum, it is articulated with the curriculum for the second level of basic education (Key Stage 1) and has the same legal status. In New Zealand, the 1996 “*Te Whariki*” curriculum spans the early childhood years, and seeks to ensure continuity in the education process for children from birth until they enter higher education.

Ireland and Australia are developing curriculum frameworks for early childhood. The curricular framework in Ireland will be designed to support children's learning and development from birth to age six and will make both explicit and implicit linkages to the primary curriculum so as to ensure continuity and progression in children's learning.¹³⁵ In Australia a curriculum framework is being prepared to guide educators in the development of quality care and education programs for the period from birth to the age of five.

Canada, the United States and Germany have no curriculum framework for early childhood or for preschool education. In Canada, each province and territory has its own curriculum, which kindergarten programs must follow. Day care programs are not expected to adhere to any specific curriculum, although some provinces are in the process of developing curriculum frameworks with objectives and goals. The situation is similar in the United States. There is no national curriculum, and even the federal Head Start program does not have a specific curriculum, although it does have performance standards and an outcomes framework. These programs choose between a range of curricula that are widely used in the United States, including the Creative Curriculum¹³⁶ and the High/Scope Curriculum.¹³⁷ With the adoption of the 2002 *No Child Left Behind Act*, states must develop early learning guidelines or standards that include expectations of what children should know and be able to do in language and mathematics upon entering kindergarten. In Germany there is no early childhood curriculum with topics or subject

¹³² In Finland the curriculum covers the period to six years; in Sweden and Norway the preschool curriculum applies to preschool programs from one to five years; in the United Kingdom, the curriculum covers the period to five years.

¹³³ In Finland there is also a specific curriculum for the preschool class, for children ages six and seven years.

¹³⁴ Since September 2008 England has been implementing the new “Early Years Foundation Stage” curriculum, which replaces two earlier frameworks, known as “Birth to 3 Matters” and “Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage” (3 to 5 years).

¹³⁵ In Ireland, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) published a document in 2004 entitled “Towards a Framework for Early Learning” which is being validated and will be published in 2009.

¹³⁶ Dodge, D; Colker, I. & Heroman, C. (2002) developed the “Creative Curriculum for Preschool” and subsequently for infants to two years. http://www.teachingstrategies.com/book/0019_CCforPS.cfm

¹³⁷ <http://www.highscope.org/Content.asp?ContentId=1>

matters; there is only a joint framework for the *Laender* on early care and education, indicating learning areas, and the stress is on educational projects, which must be relevant to the interests and the environment of the child.

In Spain, Italy, France and Portugal there is no curriculum for early childhood; laws and regulations set general guidelines for further development at the local level. In Spain and Italy, legislation establishing curriculum guidelines for primary school also consider guidelines for preschool. In Spain there is no single curriculum framework for early childhood, but rather core curricula for the two levels of preschool education. In Italy, a May 2004 legislative decree sets national indicators¹³⁸ for individualized education plans in early childhood schooling. In France, the new national programs introduced in 2007 define the dimensions of preschool activities in the nursery schools (*maternelles*). Teachers are free to choose their methodology and teaching materials, including books. In Portugal, curriculum guidelines were introduced in 1997 constituting a group of principles to support educators in working with children, a benchmark for teachers to organize education contents, and the possibility of developing distinct curricula using specific methodologies. These guidelines are targeted at programs for children over the age of three.

In the Netherlands¹³⁹ there is no curriculum framework for children under the age of four, but service providers must consult parents on the program's child development policy and learning opportunities. This policy must establish methods and group size, and provide for children's emotional security, opportunities for personal and social development, opportunities for play, and the type of assistance that professionals receive. For children ages four and older, there are learning objectives (which are part of primary education). To facilitate adaptation and development of achievement targets, the Education Ministry has developed intermediate goals and teaching guidelines for subjects such as arithmetic and Dutch. The teaching guidelines provide a benchmark for designing and organizing learning in a specific thematic area, and for evaluating pupils' progress.

A common element in the curricula of the countries reviewed is they are not prescriptive, but rather constitute frameworks that must be developed further at the local level. It is the responsibility of the local government or schools or programs to prepare the curriculum on the basis of the curricular frameworks. In Finland, every center or school has to adapt and develop its own classroom curriculum in light of national curricular guidelines, establishing an annual plan for education activities and the concrete evaluation of the plan. Teachers and pedagogues select the contents, working methods, and teaching materials, but they must address the areas of work indicated in the curriculum. The situation in Sweden is similar: educational institutions must interpret the national curriculum and prepare their own local curriculum. The curricular framework is basically a guide (and has only 16 pages) setting out the fundamentals of preschool education and indicating the principle areas that must be developed. In Norway, every kindergarten is expected to develop its own annual plan and decide how it will approach children's care, play and learning, as well as the areas indicated in the curricular guidelines. In Spain, the autonomous communities must develop the curriculum for their respective territories, on the basis of core curricula.

Curriculum foundations

¹³⁸ They establish specific learning objectives that children must achieve by the end of preschool, primary and secondary education.

¹³⁹ The Primary Education Act (1988) assigns functions to the schools, including teaching of the various subject matters, and establishes learning objectives for each subject.

The emphasis given to the curricular framework depends on the official vision of the objectives of preschool education. If government policy emphasizes preparedness for primary school, the curricular framework will give priority to developing cognitive capacities and skills. On the other hand, if it takes a broader perspective – such as preparation for life – the curriculum will emphasize the development of social skills and teamwork. In other words, there are essentially two pedagogical currents in play.

In OECD countries there are, broadly speaking, two pedagogical currents underlying the curricula. The social pedagogy focus, based on natural learning strategies such as play, curiosity and peer interaction, is focused on the child and its integral development. The curricula in Nordic countries, and also in New Zealand, are influenced by social pedagogy and combine care, child rearing and education. The focus is on helping children develop their skills and their interests, and not on achieving any predetermined level of knowledge. For example, the New Zealand curriculum seeks to develop children's learning in a comprehensive manner, taking as its point of departure their cultural context and the ethnic group to which they belong. The curriculum was prepared with heavy input from the Maori aboriginal group, and the result is a curriculum in which Maori language and values are respected and recognized.

On the other hand, there is the preschool curriculum based on the notion of facilitating readiness for school. In this case the emphasis is on developing cognitive skills such as reading and writing. This approach involves a more structured program with particular attention to language skills. In France, for example, according to information at the Ministry of Education's website, the priority objectives in the preparatory and elementary courses are reading, writing and French, and numerical knowledge and understanding (writing in figures, calculating small quantities).¹⁴⁰

One element common to the curricular frameworks of these countries, regardless of their pedagogical orientation, is the emphasis placed on play and active, child-centered learning as the guiding principles of teaching and learning activities. Play has a key role as a mechanism for facilitating the learning process. Finland applies a concept whereby the child learns actively in interaction with its environment and other people, processing information and using its own conceptual framework through play. In Norway, the curriculum is based on the principles of socialization and play. Play is seen as a medium through which the preschool child learns and develops. In Sweden¹⁴¹, children are viewed as active knowledge builders and they have a participatory role in constructing the classroom curriculum. The objective is not to measure their level of knowledge but rather to develop their curiosity for learning. Similarly, in France games play an important role, which does not preclude discipline and helps children to explore life settings, imitating others, inventing gestures, communicating in all dimensions, and discovering themselves, which promotes observation and reflection. Play is the starting point of a number of didactic situations offered by the teacher.

Table 10. Preschool curriculum frameworks in selected OECD countries

Country	Characteristics
Germany	There is no curriculum for preschool, as there is for primary school. According to the joint framework of the <i>Länder</i> for early education, methods of educational work in day-care centers for children are determined by a holistic approach. The main emphasis is on project work. The educational work with

¹⁴⁰ Information extracted in August 2008 from the website of the Ministry of National Education of France:

¹⁴¹ The curriculum was based on research work by a specially appointed commission that took various elements of the Reggio Emilia curriculum. It stresses documentation, project work and learning mechanisms.

older preschoolers is essentially based on the situational approach: guided by the interests, needs and situations of the individual children. Subjects and teaching hours are not laid down.

Australia The "Early Years Framework", now in preparation, is based on the latest research into the conditions that make learning most effective. It recognizes the importance of play-based learning, communications and language skills as well as personal, emotional and social development. The document establishes common goals to be achieved by children under the age of five, and the various programs are expected to prepare them for this. This also serves to inform parents about their children's learning. One of the objectives of the framework is to ensure that children are better prepared to begin their formal education.

Denmark 2007 Child Care Act defines the topics that must be covered by education plans. The municipalities establish the targets and the working framework. Teachers and pedagogues select the contents, working methods and teaching materials to be used, in light of the topics established. The method gives priority to play as a learning medium.

Spain 2005 Organic Law on Education stipulates that the Government should establish the core curricula for the second cycle of pre-primary education, whereas the education authorities are responsible for determining the educational contents of the first cycle (birth to 3 years). The education authorities should also establish the curriculum for the second cycle in accordance with the core curricula fixed by the Government.

The core curricula cover the basic aspects (objectives, methodological principles, contents and assessment criteria) consistent with the general objectives of each stage, cycle, grade and modality of the education system. The law develops the basic aspects of the preprimary curriculum and establishes the general methodological principles, but it does not determine any specific method. It indicates that pre-primary education must be based on experiences, activities and play, and put into practice in an atmosphere of affection and trust, in order to promote the self-esteem and social integration of children.

The purpose of these core criteria is to ensure a common education for all pupils in the Spanish education system. Treatment at the first and second levels is differentiated as to the areas or fields of experience that are stressed. For example, at the second level there is emphasis on reading and writing and on learning a foreign language.

Finland The National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education and Care (2003). The Finnish version does not use the word "curriculum" but rather "core plan" to emphasize the holistic nature of early childhood education and care, which includes care, education and teaching. Besides its emphasis on cooperation between parents and staff, the document sets the goal of creating a partnership involving mutual and committed interaction for the care and education of children.

The document was prepared on the basis of the resolution defining the ECEC policies. It provides national guidelines for the content of activities and the quality of services and constitutes the core curriculum on which programs must

build their own curriculum. It seeks to achieve three broad educational goals: "promotion of personal well-being; reinforcement of considerate behavior and action towards others; gradual buildup of autonomy."

Activities must encourage children to play, explore, act and express themselves in many different ways. There is an emphasis on language development (including the mother tongue) and the child's development as a member of its own cultural community as well as the broader Finnish community. The curriculum also emphasizes the importance of parental cooperation and involvement.

The *pre-primary core curriculum* came in to force in August 2002. It does not specify different subjects, because education is based on integration. Integrative education is composed of themes related to children's sphere of life, on the one hand, and to contents expanding and analyzing children's views of the world, on the other. Different branches of knowledge are taken into account in planning and implementation and examined as part of the theme selected.

France The new national programs (2007) establish the dimensions of preschool activities. Preschool education is intended to initiate children to reading, and also to identify children experiencing learning difficulties, so as to help them adapt to primary school activities. Games play an important role in helping children to explore life settings, imitating others, inventing gestures, communicating in all dimensions, and discovering themselves, which promotes observation and reflection. Play is the starting point of a number of didactic situations offered by the teacher. Emphasis is placed on the learning of French.

Ireland "Towards a Framework for Early Learning," the document prepared in 2004 by the National Council on Curriculum and Assessment, is in the process of validation and will be published in 2009.

England The curriculum for the "Early Years Foundation Stage" was published in 2008. It is based on four principles: a unique child; positive relationships; enabling environments; and learning and development. It establishes learning goals that children must achieve by the end of this stage. A profile is being prepared for assessing achievements at the end of the level. The assessment is made on the basis of teachers' observations and evaluations in the six areas.

Italy The 2004 Legislative Decree declares that preprimary school (*scuola dell'infanzia*) is a formative time for strengthening personal identity, achieving independence, and developing competencies. It provides for three years of preschool, which is to contribute to the affective, psychomotor, cognitive, moral, religious and social development of children and promote their potentiality of establishing relationships, of autonomy, creativity, learning and equal educational opportunities. Preschool is an educational environment where children experiment and learn in an atmosphere of play that includes these elements: the relationship among peers and with adults; the improvement of all the forms and experiences of playing; the relevance of direct experience in contact with nature, things, materials, and the social and cultural environment.

The decree establishes the specific learning objectives that children must achieve by the end of preschool, and provides for national guidelines for

personalized education plans. It also establishes the criteria for formulating personal education plans and the portfolio of competencies that the pupil is to have by the end of each period. The portfolio includes a basic description of the path followed by each child, the progress made, and some of the pupils' work. It offers guidance based on pupils' resources, learning times and methods, interests, activities and aspirations. The portfolio is not mandatory. These national guidelines have been under review since 2006/2007.

Norway

The Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergarten (2006) establishes principles and objectives for this level (for children from one to five years). Two concepts in the law, *understanding* and *collaboration*, cover different aspects of the contact between kindergartens and parents. Understanding means mutual respect and recognition of each other's responsibilities and tasks in relation to the child. Collaboration means regular contact during which information and reasoning is exchanged. The content of kindergarten is to be comprehensive and varied, based on principles such as care, play, learning, and social and linguistic skills.

Content is organized into seven learning areas. For each area the framework plan describes what children should achieve, as well as general guidelines on what teachers must do to help children. Each kindergarten must establish an annual activities plan based on the national curriculum, along with its evaluation. The annual plans must also specify plans to facilitate children's transition to school. Collaboration between school and kindergarten is encouraged for transmitting information about the child.

Finally, the document stresses the value of preserving Sami children's cultural identity and supporting children in their mother tongue, while actively promoting the use of Norwegian.

New Zealand

The *Te Whariki* curriculum was introduced in 1996 for all preschool levels. Its objective is to promote learning based on four principles: empowerment, holistic development, family and community, and relationships. There are five interwoven areas associated with these four principles. Each area has its associated goals and specific learning outcomes.

The curriculum establishes how to move towards the vision set forth in the education and care programs. Along with the English version is the Maori text, which complements it and contains a specific curriculum for this population group. The curriculum stresses the importance of linkages between the family and education and care programs. It also draws a distinction between the needs and characteristics of children under three and those of older children, noting that each subgroup has specific curricular requirements and that each should offer specific experiences that will contribute to achieving the desired results. For each area there is also provision for curricular continuity and a profile of the child (what he or she knows) upon leaving the preschool program and entering school.

Netherlands

There is no prescribed curriculum as such in childcare provision, but providers are obliged to draw up a policy on child development and learning opportunities, in consultation with parents' committees. The plan developed must include methods, group sizes, opportunities for children's development,

social rules, opportunities for play outside the classroom or center, and the type of professional assistance offered those who provide care. The "policy rules on the quality of child care" address regulations governing space and requirements.

From age four, children attend school, where teaching content and methods are not prescribed, although there are national achievement targets. Schools must organize their programs so as to cover all subject matters for which goals have been established. Those goals define the curriculum. In 2006 around 58 learning goals were introduced. Each school must develop an academic plan, which is updated every four years, describing the steps to be taken to monitor and improve quality, and indicating the school's policy with respect to educational materials, personnel etc.

Portugal The *Curriculum Guidelines* adopted in 1997 constitute a set of principles to support educators in their decisions regarding the teaching and education of children from three to six years of age. They constitute a reference framework for teachers in organizing education contents so as to guarantee learning, and in choosing different education options and different curricula. Curriculum development is the responsibility of the director of the preschool, who must take into consideration the general objectives established in the Preschool Education Act.

Sweden The Lpfo98 preschool curriculum consists basically of regulations, rather than a prescriptive curriculum. Teachers and schools have the responsibility to translate the general objectives of the curriculum into activities. The curriculum promotes comprehensive learning and development based on play. It stresses the development of language skills. The municipality is responsible for enforcing the curriculum guidelines.

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Curriculum dimensions

With respect to the dimensions and areas covered by curricular frameworks, Nordic countries place special emphasis on social and cultural values and on comprehensive instruction. In general terms, the dimensions are similar although with some variations, as can be appreciated from the following table.

Table 11. Preschool curriculum dimensions in selected OECD countries

Finland	The national core curriculum of 2003 focuses on six areas of study: (i) mathematics, (ii) natural sciences, (iii) history, (iv) art, (v) ethics, and (vi) religious philosophy.
Norway	(i) Communication, language and text; (ii) body, movement and health; (iii) art, culture and creativity; (iv) nature, environment and technology; (v) ethics, religion and philosophy; (vi) local community and society; (vii) numbers, space and forms. In each of these topics there are national objectives.
Sweden	(i) Cooperation between preschool, school and leisure-time centers; (ii) norms and values; (iii) development and learning; (iv) influence of the child; (v) preschool and home.
Germany	(i) Language, writing and communication; (ii) personal and social development, values and religious education; (iii) mathematics, natural sciences and technology; (iv) arts; (v) body, movement and health; (vi) natural and cultural environments.
Portugal	(i) Personal and social development; (ii) expression and communication (command of expressions, command of language and command of mathematics); (iii) knowledge of the world.
Spain	(i) Self-knowledge and personal autonomy; (ii) physical and social environment; and (iii) communication and representation. ¹⁴²

¹⁴² Treatment of these dimensions differs in the first and second cycles. The first cycle stresses the development of movement, bodily control, the first manifestations of communication and language, discovery of personal identity, and elemental guidelines. The second cycle (preschool) calls for the development of language as an instrument of knowledge and integration, the development of a positive self-image, and social skills. This level also involves an introduction to reading and writing and a foreign language, as well as to basic numeracy, information and communication technologies, and visual and musical expression.

Italy	(i) The self and the other; (ii) body, movement and health; (iii) use and output of messages; (iv) exploring, knowing and planning.
England	(i) Personal, social and emotional development; (ii) communication and language; (iii) problem solving, reasoning and mathematics; (iv) knowledge and understanding of the world; (v) physical development; and (vi) creative development.
Netherlands	(i) Dutch; (ii) English; (iii) arithmetic and mathematics; (iv) social and environmental studies; (v) healthy living; (vi) social structures and religious and ideological movements; (vii) creative expression; and (viii) sports and movement.
France	(i) Language as the center of the learning process; (ii) living together; (iii) action and expression with the body; (iv) discovering the world; and (v) sensitivity, creativity and imagination.
New Zealand	(i) Well-being; (ii) belonging; (iii) contribution; (iv) communication; and (v) exploration.

Facilitation strategies for transitions to primary school

Several OECD countries include specific strategies in their curricular frameworks to facilitate educational transitions. These may be concrete strategies pursued in the classroom, or they may involve the articulation of preschool curricular contents and methods with those of primary school.

When it comes to the specific strategies followed, in Finland the *national core curriculum for kindergarten* (2006) requires that plans be in place to facilitate the transition to the first grade of primary school, and that these must be specified in the annual plans for each child, and developed in consultation with the parents. The core curriculum also highlights the importance of exchanging information and communication between parents, the preschool facility and the school. In Italy, portfolios are used to document children's work and progress; these are shared with teachers from previous years, and accompany the child throughout his or her career in the education system. The creation of a preschool class for six-year-olds, located within the primary school, is another strategy for facilitating transitions that is used in Sweden, Finland and Denmark.

With respect to articulating curricular frameworks, the intention is to give continuity by designing the contents of grades by steps and in sequence. This is the case in the United Kingdom, France and the Netherlands. In England the national basic education curriculum is organized into cycles or stages. The first cycle is targeted at children from ages five to seven. This is a way of achieving the coordination that is usually lacking between the two levels (pre-kindergarten and kindergarten with grade 1). For each curricular course there are areas of study and objectives to be achieved. A revision of this curriculum was launched in January 2008.

In Norway and Sweden, not only is there articulation of contents, but the primary school curricular frameworks are also influenced by preschool curricular concepts. The primary curriculum is articulated with the preschool level and draws upon learning approaches used at the preschool level (such as child-focused education and the promotion of teaching practices relevant

to the child's level of development). In Norway, the curriculum indicates that the first four grades of primary school have been designed in light of preschool (kindergarten) precepts and concepts, to help children make the transition from preschool to primary more readily. Teaching is organized into topics and becomes more specific with each higher grade. In Sweden the Lpfo 98 (preschool curriculum) and the Lpo94 (national basic education curriculum) share the same bases. They are organized into similar areas of learning to give continuity to the education process from one level to the other. The Lpo94 preceded the Lpfo 98 and was adapted as well to include the preschool class.

With respect to instruction in the mother tongue, countries take various stances. In Finland, the rule defines policies for learning in the mother tongue and the right to the pupils' own culture in preschool, which helps the child in the transition to the new environment. This is also the case in Sweden, where preschool classes have materials in the various mother tongues of children, so that they can read in their own language the same books that they are reading in Swedish. On the other hand, Germany and France give priority to learning in the official language. Germany uses instruments to measure pupils' linguistic competence in German upon entering primary school (including the children of migrants and those with a language deficit, so that the necessary measures can be taken to improve their capacity). The emphasis is on learning in the national language.

Table 12. Primary curriculum documents in selected OECD countries

Country	Characteristics
Denmark	Under the 2007 <i>Folkeskole Act</i> , the Danish Parliament lays down the overall aims of teaching, the Ministry of Education sets the targets for the individual subjects and the local school authorities decide on how to attain these targets. The Ministry of Education issues curriculum guidelines for each subject, but these are seen purely as recommendations and are as such not mandatory. Schools are permitted to work out their own curricula, as long as they meet the targets set by the Ministry of Education.
Finland	The 2004 national core curriculum establishes the objectives and core contents of different subjects. It does not cover the preschool level (but it remains to be seen whether the changes made to the compulsory schooling rules will have an effect on these documents). It establishes the key principles of services and home-school cooperation. It constitutes a regulatory document on the basis of which schools must take decisions regarding their own curriculum.
France	Basic education is divided into three cycles: cycle 1 (preschool), and cycles 2 and 3. Cycles 1 and 2 constitute primary education. Cycle 1 covers the nursery section, the preparatory course (six-year-olds) and the elemental or first year course (seven-year-olds). Priority objectives of cycle 1 are: reading, writing and French language, knowledge and understanding of numbers; writing numbers; calculating small quantities.
Germany	The curricula are prepared by the education ministries of the various <i>Laender</i> and must be implemented by the teachers. However, they are formulated in a general way so as to give the teachers freedom to choose their teaching method.
Ireland	The curriculum for compulsory basic education runs from the ages of six to 12. However, as most four- and five-year-olds are enrolled in primary school, in the

infant and level 1 and 2 classes, the curriculum also covers preschool instruction. The curriculum is organized in levels that cover periods of two years: for example, the "junior and senior infants" class covers the first and second grades. The curriculum is divided into seven areas, which in turn are divided into modules. Each area is covered by a separate document, accompanied by a teacher's guide.

- Italy The 2004 Legislative Decree establishes national guidelines for primary education, which constitute its general objectives. It also sets specific learning objectives for Italian, English, history, geography, mathematics, sciences, technology and information technology, music, arts, and motor sciences—knowledge and abilities that each pupil will turn into personal competencies with the help of the school. The guidelines also include personalized study plans, learning units, and education objectives.
- Netherlands A series of laws govern the curriculum: the *Primary Education Act* (1998), the *Primary Education Attainment Targets Decree* (1988) and the *Revised Education Act* (2006). An indication is given for each subject as to what pupils must learn, and what schools must offer pupils in terms of teaching matter, focusing not only on cognitive and emotional development but also on creativity and social, cultural and physical skills. Schools are free, within the framework set by the government, to decide how much time is spent on the various subjects and areas of the curriculum, and when. The only restrictions relate to the minimum number of teaching periods per year, the maximum duration of the school day, and the achievement of attainment targets at the end of primary school.
- The Ministry has developed intermediate objectives and guidelines for such subjects as arithmetic and Dutch. The teaching guidelines offer a benchmark framework for designing and organizing learning in a specific subject. Since 2006, schools must teach six subjects. As well, each school must have a plan that is to be updated every four years, describing the steps to be taken to monitor and improve quality and indicate school policy in pedagogical matters, personnel and quality assurance.
- Norway The 2005 National Curriculum is based on the 1997 core curriculum for primary and secondary school. It is organized into three sections: the curriculum for primary, secondary and adult education; principles and guidelines for basic education; and the curriculum for each subject. It was prepared using precepts and concepts from the preschool (kindergarten) level. There is a specific curriculum for the Sami population (as part of the L97 curriculum).
- Portugal The National Curriculum for Basic Education: Essential Skills (2001) includes essential learning and educational experiences that should be provided to all students. The interpretation and application of the national curriculum is put into practice by preparing school and class curricular projects. There are three compulsory non-curricular disciplines: the "project area," tutored study, and civics. Tutored study helps pupils acquire the skills to use study and working methods and techniques that will make them more independent in their learning.
- Sweden The Lpo94 is the national curriculum for basic education, which was adapted to include the preschool class and leisure-time centers. All are organized in similar areas of instruction to give continuity to the education process from one level to

the next. There are two kinds of goals: goals to aim for, and goals to attain. It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that pupils are given the necessary support to attain these goals. The teachers themselves determine which topics should be covered in lessons and the teaching methods to be used. A comparative assessment of the results achieved by pupils in relation to the goals in the curriculum is made during the fifth year of school.

Source: European Commission Eurydice The Information Database on Education Systems in Europe: http://ec.europa.eu/education/linkhomepage/linkhomepage342_en.htm;
Finland: Finnish National Board of Education (2004) National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2004. Studio Viva Ovy, Vammala.P. 34

2. Curriculums in Latin America

The curriculum is a fundamental tool for education planning because it contains the guidelines and basic contents that give unity to the education system in each country and that guide educational activity. This document is accompanied in most cases by methodological manuals that supply further information. In all Latin American countries, education systems have a curriculum, known by various names including curriculum, curricular design, study plan and program, curricular benchmark, curricular guidelines, curricular bases, multilevel guide. The following table describes the general characteristics, foundations and dimensions of the curricular documents of countries in the region for the education of children under the age of six.

Table 13. Curricular documents in Latin American countries¹⁴³

Country	Characteristics
Argentina (Buenos Aires) ¹⁴⁴	The "Curricular Design" document ¹⁴⁵ contains fundamental information on work with children from 45 days of age. The level is organized in three cycles: from 45 days to two years, from two years to three years, and from four years to five years. It applies only to formal programs, and covers all their pedagogical, psychological, cultural and social fundamentals.

The document has four sections. The first contains an analysis of the context of the city of Buenos Aires. The second addresses articulation at each level within the institution and between institutions, working with diversity, and health concerns. The third part describes the schools for children from 45 days to five years; the emotional climate, the role of the teacher and the relationship with the family and community; the organization of space, materials, time, and groups; as well as some administrative documents. The fourth section contains the general principles and learning activities, with special emphasis on play and exploration. At this level play is a crosscutting theme and a fundamental methodology. The curriculum contains guidance for planning and evaluation.

- This document is supplemented by: (i) the Basic Common Contents (CBC), which covers conceptual, procedural and attitudinal contents. The areas are social sciences and technology, language, mathematics, natural sciences, bodily expression, art and music, and physical education. (ii)

¹⁴³ Peralta, M.(2007). *Estado del arte sobre pedagogía de la primera infancia (0 a 3 años) en Latinoamérica y el Caribe*. OEI web site: <http://www.oei.es/inicial/curriculum/index.html>

¹⁴⁴ Because Argentina has a federal system, the provinces have their own curricula.

¹⁴⁵ http://www.buenosaires.gov.ar/areas/educacion/curricula/inicial.php?menu_id=20709

The core learning units¹⁴⁶ (*núcleos de aprendizaje prioritarios*) are articulated with those of primary education, giving continuity to the process.

Bolivia¹⁴⁷ The documents "Curricular Design for Initial Education" and "Study Plan and Program for Cycle II" constitute the framework for formal and non-formal programs for children from birth to the age of six.

They contain scientific, psychological, economic, and anthropological-cultural fundamentals and are structured by curriculum areas: expression and creativity, language, life sciences, technology and practical knowledge. Instead of objectives, competencies are proposed, including: knowledge, skills, abilities, values and attitudes indispensable for the integral development of a human being, in accordance with the stages of development and the requirements of the natural, social, cultural and productive setting.

The curriculum is flexible, open, pertinent, integrated and global. It considers the child as the center of the education effort, experiencing his or her first learning in the family and socio-cultural context, and for whom play is a tool of exploration and experimentation. It also provides for articulation with primary education.

The new Education Law bases curricular organization on the principles of complementarity and completeness of knowledge of the different education players in full harmony with innate wisdom and universal understanding.

Brazil The curricular benchmark document constitutes guidelines for teachers responsible for formal and non-formal care and education of children from birth to the age of six, in light of their styles of learning and the country's cultural diversity.

The essentials are philosophical, social, cultural, psychological and pedagogical, and cover the following areas of experience: personal-social development and knowledge of the world, which contain learning objectives, contents and teaching guidelines. The document is presented in three volumes that guide the planning, development and evaluation of educational practice. Volume I¹⁴⁸ defines the concepts of child, education, institutions and teachers, and goes on to establish, in the two following volumes, the general objectives and orientation and organization of contents.

Volume II¹⁴⁹ deals with personal and social development and contains themes of work that will promote children's identity and autonomy.

Volume III¹⁵⁰ refers to knowledge of the world and contains six documents with working themes oriented toward the construction of different languages and the relationships they establish with the object of knowledge: movement, music, visual arts, oral and written language, nature and society, and mathematics.

¹⁴⁶ http://www.oei.es/inicial/curriculum/nap_argentina.pdf

¹⁴⁷ http://www.oei.es/linea3/Educacion_Inicial_Bolivia.pdf

¹⁴⁸ http://www.oei.es/inicial/curriculum/rcnei_brasil1.pdf

¹⁴⁹ http://www.oei.es/inicial/curriculum/rcnei_brasil2.pdf

¹⁵⁰ http://www.oei.es/inicial/curriculum/rcnei_brasil3.pdf

The education function must consider play, interaction, meaningful learning, and previous knowledge. The curricular benchmark is accompanied by a manual of parameters for initial education.

Colombia¹⁵¹ The "Curricular Guidelines" document covers formal programs for children ages five and six (grade zero).

Its foundations are psychological, cultural and pedagogical. The pedagogical guidelines are constructed on the basis of a conception of children as protagonists of pedagogical and management processes. It is organized into the dimensions of development, core subjects, and competencies.

The curriculum for grade zero in its political, conceptual and pedagogical frameworks, and in the guidelines for construction of the written language and mathematical knowledge, guide the creation of environments for socialization and learning that will promote the integral development of the child, the transition from family and community life to school life, increased interest in school learning, knowledge, development of autonomy, cultural appropriation, social relations, and links to the family and community.

It presents the pedagogical project as a working strategy, with play as the principal activity. Grade zero constitutes an alternative for expanding coverage, improving quality, and generating more equitable conditions for children of five and six years.

Costa Rica¹⁵² The Study Program for the Maternal-Child Cycle and the Study Program for the Transition Level constitute the guidelines for formal and non-formal programs for children from birth to age five-and-a-half, and from age five-and-a-half to six-and-a-half, respectively.

The foundations are philosophical, anthropological, psychological, social and cultural, biological and pedagogical. The nursery cycle considers the following core aspects: social-cultural, personal, knowledge and communication. This leads to the following purposes for the child: to adapt progressively to the socio-cultural setting, to construct its autonomy and personal identity, to expand and deepen its experience and knowledge and to enrich and diversify its forms of communication and representation. From these purposes are derived specific guidelines for pedagogical programming and action.

The transition level program considers the areas of cognitive development—linguistic, social, emotional and psycho-motor. It also presents five thematic areas: (i) Who am I, in interaction with myself, with others and the environment? (ii) I explore, enjoy and communicate through my body and movement. (iii) I communicate with myself and with others through different languages of expression. (iv) I discover, investigate and enjoy my natural, physical, social and cultural setting. (v) I relate to objects and persons through mathematical games.

Chile¹⁵³ The document Curricular Foundations of Preschool Education covers formal and non-formal programs for children from birth to age six. The foundations are legal,

¹⁵¹ <http://menWeb.mineducacion.gov.co/lineamientos/preescolar/contenido.asp>

¹⁵² <http://www.oei.es/inicial/curriculum/index.html>

¹⁵³ http://www.oei.es/inicial/curriculum/bases_curriculares_chile.pdf

philosophical, historical, situational, social, anthropological, cultural, neuroscientific, environmental, biological, psychological, and pedagogical.

The document is organized into four chapters. The first explains the set of pedagogical fundamentals and principles underlying it. The second defines the goal and general purposes of preschool education, and the curricular organization with its components. The third contains characterizations of learning experiences, definitions of core subjects with their general objectives, and the learning expected for the first and second cycle, with the respective pedagogical orientations. Finally, the fourth chapter proposes a set of criteria for implementing the curricular fundamentals in terms of planning and evaluation, organization and participation of the education community, organization of education spaces and time.

The objectives are formulated in terms of expected learning. Three areas of learning experience are described with their corresponding core subject matter. For the personal and social development sphere: autonomy, identity, and living together. For the communication sphere: verbal language, artistic languages. For the relationship with the natural and cultural environment: living beings and their surroundings, human groups, ways of life and relevant events, logical-mathematical relations, and quantification.

The document provides the teacher with: (i) A curricular framework for the entire level, defining primarily the "what, why and when" of learning opportunities that respond to the higher and more complex formative requirements of the present. (ii) Continuity, coherence and curricular progression over the different cycles that constitute preschool education, from the first months of life until entry into basic education, as well as between both levels. (iii) Guidelines for developing the different modalities and programs. (iv) Criteria and guidelines for integrating children's interests, needs, characteristics and strengths.

Ecuador¹⁵⁴

The 2007 curriculum document (*Referente Curricular*) covers formal and non-formal programs for children from birth to age five. The Ministry of Education and Social Welfare prepared the document in 2002 as the basis for formulating institutional curricula considering national guidelines and the country's multicultural characteristics, as well as proper coordination with child protection, health and nutrition activities. In this context, the General Directorate of Initial Education of the Ministry of Education formulated the institutional curricula for children from three to four years and from four to five years, adapting the national curriculum to the country's cultural, geographic and ecological characteristics.

The foundations are philosophical, neuro-cerebral, psychological, pedagogical, social anthropological, cultural and legal.

The concept of the child is stated as "a person free from birth, unique and not replicable in its personal singularity, capable of governing itself dynamically and of processing the information it retrieves from its environment; social subject and actor with rights and duties."¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ www.educarecuador.ec/interna.php?txtCodiInfo=24

¹⁵⁵ *Referente curricular de Ecuador*,

www.educarecuador.ec/interna.php?txtCodiInfo=24

It also contains profiles of children from three to four years and from four to five years, institutional objectives and future forecasts, and policies. It explains the concept of articulation between initial and primary education to facilitate the gradual transit of children from one level to the other, understood as articulating not only the curriculum but also the methodologies and teaching strategies, so is to respect the natural pace of development of children and to plan significant situations for them.

It also provides that, because of the importance of play as a methodological pillar of initial education, it must be maintained with equal emphasis in basic education.

The intermediate curriculum guidelines of the Education Ministry do not consider curricular areas. There are seven general objectives for each age group (three to four years, and four to five years) with their corresponding specific objectives. The document then presents a table with four columns showing learning objectives, learning experiences, suggested learning activities, and success indicators for evaluating learning.

El Salvador¹⁵⁶

Under the "curriculum for learning" policy of the National Education Plan 2021, new programs of study have been developed for preschool education. That level includes the development of competencies as part of the new policy, which seeks to address the questions: What is teaching for? What should children learn? How should they be taught? What should be evaluated, when and how?

The preschool study program (2008) covers formal and non-formal programs for children of four years (section 1), five years (section 2) and six years (section 3) of age. It does not explain the foundations but it notes that their content is consistent with a constructivist, humanistic and socially committed curricular orientation.

The structure considers three areas of development and their corresponding competencies that will allow the articulation of knowledge, know-how and being: (i) in social development: identity, autonomy and living together; (ii) in knowledge of the natural, social and cultural environment: discovery and understanding of the natural environment, discovery and understanding of the social and cultural environment, logical reasoning and the use of mathematical language and application of mathematics to surroundings; (iii) in language and creative expression: oral understanding and expression, written understanding and expression, and artistic understanding and expression.

The following units are proposed: the education center, the family, the community, nature and the universe, from which flow 16 themes. Each unit has its objectives and themes, and each theme has objectives, contents (conceptual, procedural and attitudinal) and success indicators. The methodology is adaptable and flexible. It stresses play, and the importance of prior knowledge. It guides the organization of the school day and presents criteria for evaluation and priority indicators for each competence. The study program is accompanied by a methodological guide for teachers and a child performance report.

Guatemala¹⁵⁷ The 2005 National Core Curriculum is an important element in the curricular

¹⁵⁶ <http://www.oei.es/inicial/curriculum/index.html>

¹⁵⁷ http://www.oei.es/inicial/curriculum/curriculum_preprimaria_guatemala.pdf

transformation of the national education system, and was formulated as part of the education reform, taking into account the stages of development of children from birth to six years.

One of its most important characteristics is its flexibility, which allows it to be contextualized within both the regional and local setting so as to respond more effectively to the needs and interests of children throughout the country. Other characteristics are comprehensiveness, perfectibility and participation.

The curriculum has an intercultural focus that encourages recognition of the country's ethnic, linguistic and cultural wealth. It encourages parents to participate as the first and principal educators.

The principles proposed are: equity, pertinence, sustainability, participation and social commitment, and pluralism. It applies to formal and non-formal programs for children from four to six years.

Its foundations are legal, social, anthropological and cultural, biological, psychological and pedagogical. It proposes as competencies that children must achieve: (i) learning skills, (ii) communication and language, (iii) social and natural environment, (iv) artistic expression, and (v) physical education.

These competencies are formulated for each level of the education system and include: (i) framework competencies that constitute the broad purposes of education; (ii) thematic competencies that indicate the learning of conceptual, procedural and attitudinal contents; (iii) area competencies that include capacities, abilities, skills and attitudes that children must achieve in different areas; and (iv) grade or stage competencies that represent achievements or performance in day-to-day classroom work. For each of the grade competencies there are contents and success indicators.

As part of the ministerial goal of "**educational reform in the classroom**," a national core curriculum for the initial level was recently adopted (2008). The document is still under revision. It proposes five areas of instruction: learning skills, communication and language, social and natural environment, artistic stimulation, and motor development. Each area has a manual covering methodology, activities and evaluation criteria.

Honduras¹⁵⁸

The 2003 National Core Curriculum (CNB) contains plans and programs of study. The CNB combines the three levels of education in a single document, and is intended to guide the education process. It proposes common guidelines for all levels and begins with a contextual framework relating to the country's socioeconomic and educational situation. It then describes the other components, including: (i) the foundations (legal, pedagogical, epistemological, technological, sociological and ecological); (ii) the principles of equality, equity, identity, autonomy, unity, participation, universality, comprehensiveness, the interdisciplinary approach, flexibility, relevance and inclusiveness; (iii) objectives and strategies for curricular adaptation in order to address diversity, with a bilingual intercultural education focus.

The first level, "pre-basic," offers care and education for children from birth to the

¹⁵⁸ <http://www.oei.es/inicial/curriculum/index.html>

age of six, in formal and non-formal programs. It is divided into two cycles, the first for children from birth to three years, and the second for those from three to six years of age; the section from five years is compulsory. It encourages comprehensive education and a process of constant change. With respect to the concept of the child it declares the child to be a unique being with a series of intelligences to be developed, with characteristics, needs and interests proper to his or her stage of development. The document also contains a profile of the pupil, the intercultural bilingual teacher, education standards, curricular areas, horizontal themes, objectives of the areas and guidelines for evaluating learning.

Curricular content is organized in the following areas: (i) personal social development, (ii) relationship to surroundings, (iii) communication and representation. Each area has its own learning objectives. The document calls for articulation between initial and primary education.

Mexico¹⁵⁹

The 2004 Initial and Program is targeted at children from birth to four years, and from three to five years attending formal and non-formal programs. The document contains the following sections: (i) foundations, a quality preschool education for all; (ii) characteristics of the program; (iii) fundamental purposes; (iv) pedagogical principles; (v) learning fields and competencies; (vi) organization of teaching work during the school year; and (vii) evaluation.

The implicit foundations are legal, anthropological, neuroscientific, social, psychological and pedagogical;¹⁶⁰ their purpose is to improve the quality of children's education and experience in preschool.

With this objective, the program starts by recognizing the capacities and potentials of children and establishes the competences that must be developed in light of what they know and are capable of doing. It also seeks to articulate preschool with primary and secondary education.

Teaching fields and their corresponding competencies are: (i) personal and social development: personal identity and autonomy, and interpersonal relations; (ii) language and communication: oral and written language; (iii) mathematical thinking: number, form, space and measure; (iv) exploration and knowledge of the world: natural world, culture and social life; (v) artistic expression and appreciation: music, dance, art, drama; (vi) physical development and health: coordination, strength and balance and promotion of health.

The teacher is free to select or design teaching situations, topics and ways of working to promote relevant and pertinent learning. There are also guidelines for the teacher's organization of work and for evaluation.

Nicaragua¹⁶¹

The Multilevel Guide presents the national curricular framework based on educational competencies for children from ages three to six attending formal and non-formal programs. Its foundations are historical-situational, philosophic,

¹⁵⁹ <http://www.reformapreescolar.sep.gob.mx/ACTUALIZACION/PROGRAMA/Programa2004PDF.PDF>

¹⁶⁰ Peralta E, M.V (2007) *Primer informe del estado del arte sobre pedagogía de la primera infancia (0 a 3 años) en Latinoamérica y Caribe* Pg. 16. Santiago de Chile: Universidad Central.
http://www.sedi.oas.org/dec/documentos/simposio/Otros_archivos/PRIMER%20INFORME%20de%20Mar%C3%ADa%20Victoria%20Peralta%20%20%20%20%20%20%203.5.07.doc

¹⁶¹ <http://www.oei.es/inicial/curriculum/index.html>

social-anthropological-cultural, neuroscientific, psychological, pedagogical and ecological, and it defines the following as curriculum subjects: mathematics, communication, culture, personal development and productivity, and environmental science. The curricular framework is formulated so as to achieve uniformity across the country and to give schools a tool to identify the competencies and contents that all students must know so as to improve the quality of the learning process.

The Multilevel Guide contains four documents with: generalities, didactic offering, preschool competencies for each age group, and strategies for educational transformation. Each competency is accompanied by achievement indicators and contents. Competencies and success indicators with their corresponding core contents determine the learning that students must achieve in order to complete each level of education successfully.

The guide describes the profile of the child upon leaving preschool education, and is accompanied by a document for planning and evaluation of learning.

Panama¹⁶²

The Preschool Programs document covers children four and five years of age attending formal programs. It has legal, philosophical and pedagogical fundamentals and defines social, emotional, cognitive, linguistic and psycho-motor areas of development and curriculum.

The methodological approach is constructivist, which means that pupils are expected to construct their own learning, based on the principle of "learning to be, learning to learn, learning to do, learning to understand, and learning to live together."

The program is comprehensive, flexible, relevant and can be diversified in light of the characteristics, needs and socio-cultural and natural requirements of the community, region and country. It includes learning objectives.

Paraguay¹⁶³

The Program of Study applies to children from ages three to six attending formal and non-formal programs. Its foundations are philosophical, neuroscientific, socio-cultural, psychological and pedagogical. It is organized into fields of experience: (i) personal and social development; (ii) thinking, expression and communication; and (iii) relationship with the natural, social and cultural environment.

The first field takes a comprehensive approach to personal and social development, building security and basic confidence, in close relation with nature and the quality of emotional ties with the father, the mother, the family and other significant adults. Within this field the following dimensions are organized: identity, living together, autonomy and a healthy lifestyle.

The second field promotes the development of capacities for thinking and creativity. Oral, written and artistic language, and logical mathematical thinking

¹⁶² Oficina Internacional de Educación (2006). Programas de atención y educación de la primera Infancia (AEPI) Perfil nacional de Panamá para el Informe de seguimiento de Educación para Todos en el Mundo 2007 Bases Sólidas: Atención y Educación de la primera Infancia.

www.bdigital.binal.ac.pa/bdp/descarga.php?f=artpma/educaciondelaprimerainfancia.pdf

¹⁶³ <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001481/148108s.pdf>

are part of this process, encouraging expression in all its manifestations.

The third area seeks to channel children's curiosity and interests using the scientific method. It also deals with the capacity for wonder, sensitivity, interest in caring for the environment and respect for cultural diversity. It covers the natural environment and the social and cultural environment.

The study program considers three units, around which all the didactic offerings revolve: family, school and environment. Objectives are set for each stage (birth to three years, and three to six years) together with pedagogical activities and orientations for children over the age of three.

Peru¹⁶⁴

The National Curricular Design (2009) articulates and integrates the three levels of regular basic education, and then deals with them separately. The focus is on process, beginning in the first cycle of the initial level and concluding in the seventh cycle of secondary school. The document has three parts. The first contains the foundations, characteristics, principles and orientations for organizing regular basic education (EBR), as well as the characteristics and educational achievements of students, a plan of study, and guidelines for evaluating learning.

The second part presents the curriculum areas of EBR and their articulation, guidelines for diversification, the plan of study, guidelines for evaluation and tutoring. The third part addresses the curriculum program for each educational level: initial, primary and secondary.

The initial education level is targeted at children from birth to age five attending formal and non-formal programs, and is divided into two cycles: birth to three years (first cycle), and three to six years (second cycle).

For the first cycle, the subjects are: the relationship with oneself, integral communication and relationship with the natural and social environment. For the second: mathematical logic, comprehensive communication, personal and social development, and science and the environment. The competencies are broken down into capacities and attitudes. The document also offers guidelines for curriculum programming and the evaluation of learning.

Dominican Republic¹⁶⁵

The curricular formulation document covers formal and non-formal programs for children from birth to two years, from two to four years, and from four to six years. It sets social, cultural and pedagogical fundamentals and general and cycle-specific purposes in the cognitive, linguistic, physical-motor and emotional dimensions of human development.

The topics begin with an all-embracing theme, the human being, its relationship to nature and the social environment, and two specific themes, discovering the social environment and discovering the natural environment. These lead to the following thematic units: my person; family experience in my life; the school as a space where I learn and have fun; my local community and my neighborhood; my national community; food, plants, animals and other elements of nature; and the planet Earth in the universe.

¹⁶⁴ <http://www.scribd.com/doc/11563767/Diseno-Curricular-Nacional-2009-Peru>

¹⁶⁵ http://www.educando.edu.do/UserFiles/P0001/File/Curriculo/SEE_CurriculoNivelInicial.pdf

The contents of each unit are presented as aspects within the different dimensions of the development of expression and communication, intellectual development, and social and emotional development. These aspects are: oral and written expression, artistic expression, bodily expression, mathematical logic, exploration and command of the social environment, exploration and command of the natural environment, and feelings, values and attitudes, which appear as part of social and emotional development. It considers meaningful learning.

Uruguay

The document on care and education of children from birth to three years is known as the Core Curricular Design.¹⁶⁶ Its foundations are anthropological, sociological, psychological and pedagogical, and its structuring themes are the environment, play and language. The subject areas from which the key contents flow are self-knowledge, knowledge of the environment, and communication. Importance is placed on the role of the educator and on planning, as well as on work between the family and the school, covering the following contents: interactions of support between adult and child, nutrition, hygiene and sleep.

The document considers the profiles and development characteristics of children and presents tables with conceptual, procedural and attitudinal contents for children from birth to 12 months, from 12 to 24 months, and from 24 to 36 months.

The document relating to children from three to six years is the Initial Education Program.¹⁶⁷ Its foundations are social, psychological, and epistemological and pedagogical, and it is structured by areas of experience and knowledge: (i) *Self-knowledge*: the child and construction of his or her bodily awareness, the child and his or her emotional life, and the child and his or her surroundings. (ii) *Knowledge of one's surroundings*: physical knowledge and spatial relationships, social knowledge and relationships with persons and forms of organization, living and processes, the notion of time. (iii) *Communication*: expression, mathematics, technology, family and school. The document provides guidance for ongoing evaluation and improvement of the study program, and considers competencies.

Venezuela¹⁶⁸

The Curriculum document focuses on children from birth to six years attending formal and non-formal programs. It constitutes a framework guiding educational activities in schools and community facilities. Its foundations are legal, philosophical, political, and others deriving from current theoretical trends relating to learning and child development.

It deals with two levels: nursery (birth to three years) and preschool (three to six years). The curriculum contains the following elements: (i) integrating themes: environment and health, intercultural relations, information technologies, and liberating work; and (ii) areas of learning, leading to a series of competencies: personal and social development, communication, relationship among environmental components. The organization of learning places emphasis on play, learning projects, and planning.

The document also considers the profile of the teacher and pupil, guidance to

¹⁶⁶ http://www.oei.es/inicial/curriculum/disen0_3anos_uruguay.pdf

¹⁶⁷ http://www.oei.es/inicial/curriculum/programa3_5anos_uruguay.pdf

¹⁶⁸ <http://unefm.edu.ve/Web/Sistema%20Educativo%20Bolivariano.pdf>

teachers for helping children to learn, suggestions for classroom organization and time distribution, etc. It proposes a system of evaluation.

The analysis of curricula in Latin America's education systems shows that the structure of the curricular document varies from one country to another in terms of its organization, contents, degree of specificity, and length. The degree of flexibility varies for many reasons relating to the rules in place at the time the curriculum was formulated. Some countries (e.g. Nicaragua and Peru) present the curriculum in a single document covering all levels of basic education, while others have a document for each level of education and even for each cycle within that level. But the official curriculum, which gives unity to the education system, is not always attuned to the cultural diversity that exists in many countries. It has been noted that some education ministries have developed diversified curricula to address these differences, while in other cases guidelines are established or diversification is recommended at the regional or local level to take into account the geographic and socio-cultural realities of each context, so as to respond to the characteristics, needs and interests of children and the expectations of their parents and community.

The review of curriculum documents in Latin America also suggests that in many cases preschool and primary education share the same foundations, curricular themes and crosscutting topics, and have a similar organization into cycles, curricular or development areas or core elements as well as objectives or competencies, capacities and attitudes.¹⁶⁹ We also find in some documents that the contents become broader and more diversified after the first cycle (birth to three years) as the child progresses towards the higher grades, as in Peru. This continuity can also be seen in the objectives and competencies, profiles and educational achievements.

All the curriculum documents give implicit or explicit consideration to their underlying theoretical frameworks or foundations. These foundations include disciplines that have traditionally been considered, especially in the curricula of longer standing, and new ones that have been built into the more recent curricula, such as those relating to neuroscience, cultural anthropology and the environment. An important aspect to note in the theoretical framework is that for the most part it recognizes that children are persons, endowed with rights and the potential for learning (Peralta, 2007).¹⁷⁰

As to what children are expected to have achieved by the end of the learning process, some countries have established learning objectives, while others consider competencies, capacities and attitudes; in a few cases countries have set targets to be achieved, purposes, and expectations of achievement and conduct. The competency-based curriculum model is now being adopted in various countries for the entire education system, from preschool to higher education, although many educational experts do not consider this very relevant for young children. It would be useful to assess the results from its application, especially in cycle I where attention is more personalized. Curricula also include other aspects relating to their characteristics (flexibility, participation, coherence, comprehensiveness, cultural relevance) and their organization of space, time and players (children, teachers and families).

¹⁶⁹ Terms used in the documents of different countries.

¹⁷⁰ Peralta, M. (2007). *Estado del arte sobre pedagogía de la primera infancia en Latinoamérica y Caribe. Primer informe*. Universidad Central de Chile.

http://www.oei.es/inicial/articulos/estado_pedagogia_primer_infancia_0a3anos_ALyCaribe_peralta.pdf

Curriculum proposals are supplemented with other documents generally expressing the intention to establish mechanisms to facilitate transition from preschool to primary,¹⁷¹ as discussed below.

In Argentina, the "common core contents" (CBC) and the "Priority Learning Units" (NAP) for the preschool and primary levels seek to overcome inequalities and ensure that children will have equal learning opportunities regardless of their social and geographic circumstances, by reinforcing both the individual dimension and "the elements of a common culture" and encouraging the school to give careful thought to "the relationships between those two dimensions and a permanent reconceptualization of the curriculum."¹⁷² The NAP are accompanied by "classroom workbooks" for use by the teachers, containing educational situations and proposals to guide their application.¹⁷³ The classroom workbooks also offer guidance for constructing learning proposals within the NAP. The topics covered in the first workbook are: "games and toys" and "storytelling and library," which propose learning relevant to the process of reading and writing. The themes in the second workbook are "fantasy zone" and "playing with numbers," intended to build bridges towards future learning. The classroom workbooks for primary education are organized by assignments: language, mathematics, social and natural sciences, for each year/grade. There are also contents relating to other academic knowledge such as technological education, ethics and citizenship, artistic education, and physical education.

These documents serve to facilitate articulation between the primary schools and nearby preschool facilities, and thus assist in the transitions between the two levels, by sharing projects and optimizing use of installed capacity and educational materials. The first-grade language workbook indicates that classes at the initial and primary levels must offer children the opportunity of making rich and rewarding contact with books.

In Bolivia the National Profile prepared for the 2006 UNESCO EFA global monitoring report indicates that the curricular design for initial education complements the education provided by the family, and in the second cycle establishes a bridge between what has been learned at home and what the child will achieve in school.

In Brazil the *Referencial curricular*¹⁷⁴ emphasizes strategies for facilitating entry into preschool and then into basic education. This move from home to preschool, and from there to the next level, is to involve visits to the new school and a ritual of bidding farewell to the preschool. The objective is to make this transition a meaningful event in which there are losses but there are also gains.

In Chile, the core curriculum for preschool poses the need "to facilitate the child's **transition** into basic general education, developing the necessary skills and attitudes and implementing processes of teaching and learning required to facilitate articulation between the two levels."¹⁷⁵ There must also be "continuity, coherence and curricular progression throughout the different cycles that make up preschool education, from the first months of life until entry into

¹⁷¹ OEI *Educación inicial atención a la primera infancia*.

www.oei.es/inicial/información_pais/index.html

¹⁷² Ministerio de Educación Ciencia y Tecnología de Argentina (2004) *Núcleos de aprendizaje prioritario del nivel inicial*. http://www.oei.es/inicial/curriculum/nap_argentina.pdf p. 8

¹⁷³ Ministerio de Educación Ciencia y Tecnología de Argentina (2004) Cuadernos de aula para el nivel inicial. http://www.educacion.gov.ar/archivos/cuadernos/inicial_V1.pdf

¹⁷⁴ *Referencial Curricular Brasil* (1). http://www.oei.es/inicial/curriculum/rcnei_brasil1.pdf

¹⁷⁵ *Bases curriculares para la educación parvularia*, pg. 23. Chile, <http://aep.mineduc.cl/images/pdf/2008/CurriculumParvularia.pdf>

basic education, as well as between both levels,"¹⁷⁶ in order to achieve better articulation between the two levels.

Schools that include preschool education should also develop pedagogical activities to improve articulation between the preschool and basic curricula. These include: (i) exchanging pedagogical practices; (ii) preparing, designing, planning and implementing joint activities; (iii) analyzing and defining common rules of getting along with others in school, based on the school's PEI; (iv) facilitating familiarity with classrooms at both levels and exchanging learning experiences among children; (v) sharing work portfolios and other instruments for evaluating children in preschool with teachers in the first year of basic; (vi) holding exhibitions on the learning achieved by children so that the entire educational community will appreciate their achievements and there will be proper curricular progression and learning between the two levels; (vii) sharing ways of working with the family and agreeing on strategies to secure their participation and support for the education and development of their children at both levels; (viii) developing joint activities with the CRA library and the Linkages classroom; and (ix) pursuing other activities that meet the needs of articulation between preschool and basic education.

In Colombia, Decree 2247/1997 provides that the preschool curriculum constitutes a permanent object of pedagogical construction and research that incorporates the objectives established by article 16 of Law 115/1994 in order to ensure continuity and articulation with teaching processes and strategies in basic education. This articulation seeks to ensure linkage mechanisms so that the transition will have elements of continuity, such as the development of competencies. In Ecuador, the new curriculum highlights the need to articulate the curriculum, considering pertinent didactic methodologies and strategies to facilitate children's transition from one level to the other.

In Guatemala, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama standards have been established for the minimum learning that children must achieve in language, science and mathematics. Those standards deal with the quality of education as well as the orientation and review of curricula, methodological manuals and teaching materials, initial training and professional development for teachers, and evaluation of learning. They also indicate that if learning targets are clear, objective, continuous and graduated this will guarantee a satisfactory transition. For example, in the area of language and communication Guatemala makes provision for continuity and sequencing in standards for preprimary and the first and second grades.¹⁷⁷

Table 14. Standards for preprimary, first and second grade (Guatemala)

Preprimary	First grade	Second grade
Listen and act in accordance with oral messages from the family and school context	Listen to conversations and statements decoding body language in the family and school context	Listen to conversations, stories, descriptions, dialogues and statements and decode the messages received

In Guatemala, teachers have a guidance document for the preschool curriculum with suggestions for curricular planning. In Peru a single curricular design is being prepared, which includes three levels of regular basic education, with the express intention of articulating them.

¹⁷⁶ op. cit, pg. 10.

¹⁷⁷ *Sistemas de estándares educativos para comunicación y lenguaje.*

www.mineduc.edu.gt/recursos/images/8/80/Info_Estandares_Educativos.pdf pg. 4

The General Education Law of Peru 28044 (article 36), as amended by Law 28123,¹⁷⁸ provides that "initial education is articulated with primary education to ensure pedagogical and curricular coherence, but it retains its specificity and its administrative and management autonomy."

In Uruguay, the curriculum for the period from birth to 36 months¹⁷⁹ recognizes that education continues throughout life in its different stages and that it involves transitions from one stage to another. In this process, infant education is the first stage, where family participation has a decisive role. In the curriculum for ages three to five,¹⁸⁰ while there is no direct mention of transition, initial education is considered a stage in permanent education.¹⁸¹

Nevertheless, and despite the encouraging efforts that have been made in most Latin American countries to achieve articulation between the two levels of education, in practice there are significant differences in organization of the classroom, furnishings, teaching materials, time distribution and use of methodological strategies of instruction and learning that, in primary school, have a more traditional focus, which often fails to recognize children's prior knowledge. This is more obvious in rural areas where children have learned things in their daily life that the school does not consider important or does not take into account.

In this context there arises the concept of "educability" determined by the abilities and skills that the child possesses, and the ones the school demand he or she have for success upon admission, and during the course of instruction. "The child is caught between these two socializations: the academic success of some is due to the proximity of these two cultures, the family and the school cultures, while the failure of others can be explained by the distance between those cultures and the social dominance of the second over the first" (Dubet & Martucelli, 2000).¹⁸² Moreover, in order for children to take part successfully in school life, "conditions of educability", such as provision of resources and opportunities, must be offered both in the family and in the school environment" (Moromizato, 2008, p. 8).¹⁸³

For this reason, continuity of curriculum and methodological orientations between preschool and primary school should be considered for overcoming the problem of repetition in the early primary grades. It is clear that in Latin American care and education programs for children under the age of six there is concern to facilitate the transition to school through various strategies; in primary schools, on the other hand, very little is done to support this transition. On this point Bennett (2006) recommends considering the continuity of classmates and teachers in the transition process because this proximity gives the child the emotional security essential for learning.

3. Curriculums in the Caribbean

According to Charles and Williams (2006) there is no standard curriculum in the region. Service providers can generally use the curriculum they choose, which is often the High/Scope,

¹⁷⁸ Ministerio de Educación del Perú (2003) Ley N°28213 modifica el artículo 36 de la Ley General de Educación N°28044 <http://www.oei.es/inicial/legislacion/peru/ley28123.pdf>

¹⁷⁹ Ministerio de Educación de Uruguay *Currículo para 0 a 3 años*.
http://www.educando.edu.do/UserFiles/P0001/File/Curriculo/SEE_CurriculoNivelInicial.pdf

¹⁸⁰ http://www.oei.es/inicial/curriculum/programa3_5anos_uruguay.pdf

¹⁸¹ www.oei.es/inicial/curriculum/programa3_5anos_uruguay.pdf

¹⁸² Dubet, F. & Martucelli, D. (2000). Los otros actores: el Estado y la sociedad civil. En Tedesco, J. C. & López, N. (2002). *Las condiciones de educabilidad de los niños y adolescentes de América Latina*. Buenos Aires: Ed. Losada. <http://www.iipe-buenosaires.org.ar/pdf/documentos/educabilidad.PDF> pg.13

¹⁸³ Moromizato, R. (2008), "Building bridges in central rainforest of Peru", in *Early Childhood Matters*, June 2008, Volume 110, Bernard van Leer Foundation, p. 35

Montessori, SERVOL, or a combination of approaches. Only five countries (Anguilla, Barbados, Cayman Islands, Guyana, and St. Kitts and Nevis) have an established curriculum for preschool children, and only Guyana has a curriculum for children under three.

In Barbados, the primary curriculum includes elements and objectives of preschool learning (ages three to five) as well as those for the "infant sections" (ages five to seven). The curriculum is based on a constructive and child-centered notion of learning. It favors the child's interaction with the curriculum instead of having the curriculum dictate what and when to learn. It is organized into seven areas of learning, and learning targets or standards have been established for each grade of primary school, including the three-to-five-year group in early education.¹⁸⁴

Trinidad and Tobago has published a National Early Childhood Care and Education Curriculum Guide (Ministry of Education, Trinidad and Tobago, 2006), which, according to the Ministry of Education, provides teachers with a framework to promote and facilitate learning and development for children ages three and four. It was created to facilitate the transition from home to preschool and then to primary school without major complications. The curriculum is guided by seven principles: holistic development, active learning, interactive learning, integrated learning, learning through play, authentic assessment, and partnership/relationship. It defines learning goals and desired outcomes in five areas: wellness, effective communication, citizenship, intellectual empowerment, and aesthetic expression.

The objective is to pursue activities focused on children's experiences rather than on the acquisition of knowledge and to relate these activities with daily life, families and communities, thereby establishing links between these levels. The document is not prescriptive: it does not specify activities that must be pursued. Rather, it is a curricular guide offering general guidelines on subject matters, learning methods such as the use of projects, the organization of space, and routines. Teachers are expected to develop them locally, following the parameters and guidelines set forth. Building continuity from home to the ECCE center, and from the ECCE center to primary school, is an important aspect of the curriculum, and teachers and families must collaborate to ensure a successful transition.

Guyana has an integrated primary and preprimary curriculum. It encourages self-initiated confidence building activities that will promote physical and mental health and seeks to develop a challenging learning environment that supports exploration, creativity and problem-solving. According to the Education Ministry's strategic plan 2003-2007, the current curriculum for levels one and two of preschool (ages four and five) was to be revised to place greater emphasis on pre-language skills and on articulating the first and second grade curriculum in primary school (UNESCO, 2006).

St. Lucia has no national curriculum, but in 2006 there were plans to prepare one. The objective of preschool education is to provide an enriching environment that fosters the development of dignity, discipline and national pride. The goals relate to physical, intellectual, social and emotional, spiritual and creative development. Suriname, again, has no national preschool curriculum. In 2000, however, the curriculum department drew up a program for four- and five-year-olds based on play, but with no specific objectives and targets. In preschool programs children learn musical, fine motor, language, pre-reading and mathematics skills. The central objective is to prepare them for primary school.

Finally, Jamaica has been piloting a national early childhood curriculum for children under three, and for those between three and five years old. There is currently a manual of

¹⁸⁴ Barbados Education Ministry web site: <http://www.mes.gov.bb/pageselect.cfm?page=99>

learning achievements developed by the Caribbean Child Development Centre that has been distributed to local programs by the Early Childhood Commission.

At the regional level, as part of the Caribbean Plan of Action and the Child Focus II project, it was decided to develop a common regional framework for learning outcomes in the years from birth to age seven, and to align national curricula with those outcomes. A series of workshops were held (primarily in Barbados in 2004) involving delegates from 18 Caribbean countries, for the purpose of defining objectives, values and common approaches, reaching consensus on the fundamentals of learning, and identifying what would be applicable and valid for informing national curriculum development. The fundamental pillars of early childhood development and learning were identified and expressed in terms of outcomes: a seven-year-old should be a strong, healthy and well-adjusted child, an effective communicator, one who values his or her own culture, a critical thinker and independent learner, respectful of self and others and the environment, and resilient.

On the basis of these agreements and consultations with representatives of CARICOM countries and the review of international experience, as well as local studies on visits to programs and local practices, a curriculum resource guide was developed. This resource guide is organized on the basis of six desirable learning outcomes: (i) wellness, (ii) effective communication, (iii) valuing culture, (iv) intellectual empowerment, (v) respect for self, others and the environment, and (vi) resilience. It contains three segments, dealing with programs for children from birth to the age of three (in daycare or home visiting program); ages three to five (in day care and preschool settings); and ages five to seven (in the early years of primary schooling). Each learning outcome is presented for each of the three age groups and listed under the following subtitles: what children are expected to do; what we see children doing; what we can do to support children's development; signals of inappropriate practices; involving parents and community; useful supports and resources; supporting diversity and children with special needs; challenges and dilemmas faced; and examples of what really works. The document is available in electronic format.¹⁸⁵

Conclusions

This chapter has reviewed the curricular frameworks for early childhood. Having a common curricular framework for early childhood can be a favorable factor for transitions by promoting common learning and care criteria, standards and methodological approaches between daycare and preschool centers. Of the group of OECD countries examined, Sweden, Finland, Norway, New Zealand and the United Kingdom have early childhood curricular frameworks. Australia and Ireland are now developing such frameworks. On the other hand Canada, the United States and Germany do not have a curricular framework for early childhood or for the preschool level. Each territory (province, state or *Land*) establishes its own guidelines and standards. In Germany there is a joint framework for all *Laender* establishing common education areas, but it is not a curriculum. Spain, Italy, France and Portugal have no single curricular framework for early childhood, but have developed general, national criteria or guidelines for the two levels of early childhood (under and over the age of three). In the Netherlands, the core education curriculum establishes care guidelines for children starting from the age of four.

In Latin America, all education systems have a curricular document that is a fundamental tool for educational planning and evaluation. The document is known by various names: curriculum, curricular design, curricular guidelines, curricular bases, multilevel guide, *referencial* (curricular benchmark), and so forth.

¹⁸⁵ <http://www.garnettechnologies.com/clients/unesco/ecd2/>

One element common to the curricula of the countries reviewed is that they are frameworks that must be fleshed out locally. It is the responsibility of the local government or the schools or programs to prepare the curriculum on the basis of the curricular frameworks. A rigid and prefixed curriculum will work with a homogeneous population of children living in a similar context. The reality however is different, as in our countries – and even in OECD countries – children live in widely differing contexts, depending on social, economic or perhaps ethnic factors. A common curricular framework for the country, adapted to the local context of the school or center, will generally lead to a more successful experience for the child.

In Latin America, one of the most frequently mentioned curricular characteristics is flexibility, which is essential for adapting the curriculum to different realities. All curricula have, explicitly or implicitly, a set of underlying theoretical frameworks or foundations, although the treatment differs from one country to another; in some cases they are comprehensive in scope, in others they apply separately to each discipline. Some frameworks are shorter and others are more extensive. Countries that have integrated the three education levels (preschool, primary and secondary) have formulated a single curricular framework covering the entire system.

In OECD countries there are, broadly speaking, two pedagogical currents in preschool curriculum planning: one takes the social pedagogy approach, while the other seeks to ready the child for school. Curricula based on the social pedagogy approach tend to place more emphasis on transitions as organizing elements or working objectives.

Play is considered an essential part of the education strategy both in OECD countries and in Latin America. From the very beginnings of education, pedagogues and psychologists around the world have highlighted the importance of play in child learning. The constructivist approach encourages the child to explore, investigate, discover, take decisions – in other words, to be a protagonist in his or her learning, a knowledge builder, who arrives at school with a baggage of notions and knowledge which the teacher must take as the starting point.

Various OECD countries (for example Sweden, Norway, the United Kingdom, France and the Netherlands) include in their curricular frameworks strategies to facilitate transition, either by articulating preschool and primary curricula or by implementing specific strategies to achieve this in the classroom. In Sweden and Norway not only are the contents articulated, but the primary curricula have also been influenced by the pedagogical principles of preschool. One concrete classroom strategy is to use specific plans to facilitate transitions to grade 1; another is to use portfolios that accompany the child throughout its preschool and school experience. The creation of the preschool class with its own methodology, but located within primary schools, is another attempt to bridge these two levels.

In Latin America, some curricula include guidance for curricular planning and for evaluating learning. Child evaluation is considered an integral part of the education process, and is based on learning objectives, competencies, capacities and attitudes, expected learning, purposes, goals to be achieved, expected outcomes, depending on the case. The curricular document also spells out the stages, instruments and techniques of evaluation. In most countries methodological manuals are prepared as an accompaniment to the curriculum, expressing the intent to identify and apply mechanisms that will facilitate transition between preschool and primary education. One useful approach is to ensure that preschool and primary facilities located close to each other or within the same premises can share projects and optimize the use of installed capacity and other educational materials. This is the case with the proposal of the language class workbooks in Argentina, which encourage preschool and first-grade classes to

offer children the opportunity of coming into contact with books and becoming familiar with the atmosphere of the library.

An important initiative has been taken in Central America by Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama, which have developed education standards with targets that are clear, objective, continuous and graduated, and that guarantee successful transition between preprimary and primary. In Uruguay, the 0-to-36 months curriculum identifies the period from birth to three years as the first stage through which the child will transit, where family participation is decisive. However, these theoretical initiatives for ensuring satisfactory transition still face obstacles to their application because of the significant differences between the two levels in terms of classroom organization, time distribution, and methodological strategies.

Another important point conditioning the success of transitions is learning in the mother tongue, where countries take different stances. Finland and Sweden have policies for learning in the mother tongue, and their curricular frameworks stress children's right to their own culture in preschool thereby helping them make the transition to the new environment. Other countries, such as Germany and France, give priority to learning in the official language. In New Zealand, the curriculum document itself is presented in the other principal languages and the curriculum is not only translated into those languages but is also pertinent. In Latin America, where most countries have different ethnic groups speaking languages other than the official one, intercultural bilingual education is being gradually incorporated into the education systems.

The articulation of the preschool and primary curricula is a first step towards ensuring successful transition between educational levels. However, it will not be enough by itself unless instilled in the classroom, where teachers must be able to facilitate and support the process and work with pedagogical and child development concepts so as to adapt their teaching methodology to the children's level of development.

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www.mineduc.edu.gt/recursos/images/8/80/Info_Estandares_Educativos
- Ministerio de Educación de Guyana, Plan Estratégico de Educación 2003-2007 disponible vía electrónica <http://www.sdn.org.gy/minedu/about/strategic.htm>

Educational Legislation in Latin America:

- http://www.me.gov.ar/doc_pdf/ley_de_educ_nac.pdf
- http://www.cessi.org.ar/documentacion/Plan_de_Accion_2008-2011.pdf
- <http://www.portalargentino.net/leyes/124195.pdf>
- <http://www.oei.es/inicial/curriculum/index.html>
- <http://www.region11.edu.ar/documentos/ley26075.doc>
- <http://www.planificacion.gov.bo/BANNER/PARA%20PAG%20WEB/pnd1.html>
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- http://www.oei.es/quipu/dominicana/LeyEdu66_97.pdf
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IV. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS

WORKING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

Teachers certainly have a fundamental role in the different transitions that the child experiences in his or her early childhood, and this requires an analysis of their initial and continuing training to be performed in order to identify the aspects that facilitate (or do not facilitate) the transitions. This chapter presents a general review of teacher training programs for early childhood teachers, both in the Latin American and the Caribbean regions, as well in OECD countries. Several aspects are considered such as: length and type of training, and competency profiles to work as a teacher, among others. An analysis of the material available on the websites of countries' Ministries of Education is made, as well as of other available documents related to transitions. The first part of the chapter summarizes the evidence on the importance of teacher training; the following section analyzes teacher training in OECD countries; and the last two parts analyze teacher training in Latin America and Caribbean countries, respectively.

Professional Development of Teachers to Guarantee Quality Care

Care and education in early childhood requires professionals adequately prepared to guarantee the quality of care. Research conducted in developed countries shows that professional development is central to guaranteeing quality care. The quality of a teacher's professional development ensures quality processes in the programs of education and early care, and better results in a child's cognitive and social development.¹⁸⁶ Adequate development gives teachers the tools with which to promote positive interaction with children. The adult-child interaction, specifically the type of interaction, is central to determine the quality of a program. The professional development of early childhood teachers is being considered by OECD countries as a central aspect in the process of improving quality care in early childhood.

In Latin America, an evaluation carried out by UNESCO in 2006 affirms that despite the efforts made by the countries in the region, there are still deficiencies that affect the quality of services; namely strategies for working with parents, the care and education of children under the age of three, intercultural bilingual education, the inclusion of children with special educational needs, and in the areas of investigation and evaluation. These deficiencies are related to teachers' competency levels, their performance as mediators and their responsibility for the education of children, as well as their initial and continuous training that does not pick-up the scientific and technological advances proposed by education reforms.

Tenti Fanfani (2003) observes that in Education Reforms conducted from 1990 in the majority of Latin American countries, teachers' opinions were generally not taken into consideration, though they are a fundamental human factor because of their strategic role in the teaching-learning process. When referring to the dimensions of teacher professional development, Tenti Fanfani affirms that: "... little has been made in relation to initial and continuous training, working conditions and wages of the Latin American teachers. If what is meant is really to (...) improve the quality of learning, (...) the educational policies should put in the top of the agenda the question of teacher professional development from an integral perspective."¹⁸⁷

On the other hand, Torres (2008) observes that in reflecting on the professional development of teachers it should be noted that although this is an important factor in the quality of education, it is also true that quality does not depend solely on professional development. Rather the level of quality depends on multiple factors such as ones' quality of life, work conditions, motivation to perform duties, interest in learning and staying up to date, values and attitudes towards others. This is an important point if we consider the context in which the teachers are working. In general they face difficult conditions, limited resources and a poor infrastructure, living far away from their workplace, loaded with personal problems and hopelessness for the future.

In order to improve the quality of education in the region it is most likely necessary to make a substantive change in the teacher's initial professional development, based on a profile that considers the competencies required of an early childhood professional in the 21st century. This should be based on the different scenarios in which they will have to perform. Currently, the task of teaching has become increasingly complex, and therefore it is necessary that:

¹⁸⁶ NICHHD 2002, Blau 2001; Lamb, 1996; Olds et 1993; Peisner-Feinberg et al 1999, Schweinhart 2005; Love Schochet & Meckstroth 1996.

¹⁸⁷ Tenti Fanfani, E. (2003). Algunas dimensiones de la profesionalización de los docentes. Representaciones y temas de la agenda política www.iipe-buenosaires.org.ar/LogArchivos/download_attach.asp? Pg:2

“The teacher accesses new ways to favor the learning process of students, to address diversity in the classroom, to incorporate information technologies in the teaching process, to work in teams and to collaborate with families. Additionally, in his professional development, the teacher has to be aware that in addition to his professional competencies, it is required from him to have strength of character or positive predisposition for teaching, showing affective equilibrium and moral responsibility” (Marchesi, 2008).¹⁸⁸

But how is initial and continuous professional development of early childhood/preschool teachers in Latin America compared to the professional development in OECD countries? Are aspects related to transitions being considered in the content of professional development? A teacher that knows about transitions and their importance could be better prepared to help children in their transit, recognizing that it is an experience that needs support and specific strategies.

1. Teacher Training in OECD Countries¹⁸⁹

Structure of the preschool and elementary school teacher’s initial training

Teacher training in OECD countries is structured in one of the following three ways: a common training for the preschool and elementary teacher that does not lead to specialization; training with a common core that leads to a specialization; and a different training. The first case, a common training without specialization, can be found in France and Netherlands, where teacher training for preschool and elementary school is the same. Teachers in preschool or elementary school can teach in either of these levels interchangeably. In France, teacher training is the same for those who teach children between the ages of two and eleven. In the Netherlands, in 1985, teacher training for preschool (ages four to six) and elementary school (ages six to 12) have been unified. The focus of the training, however, is centered mainly on the pedagogy for primary school, geared towards the learning in school. Likewise in Canada, teacher training is similar to a bachelor’s degree in pedagogy. Training does not require specialization for preschool children. The specialization for elementary school allows teaching children between the ages of five and ten.¹⁹⁰

On the other hand, in countries like Italy and Spain training has a common core but then requires a specialization, such as preschool or primary school. All studies have the same duration. In Italy, the first two years are common training, and in the following two years the student chooses a specialization, either preschool or primary school. In Spain, the student is trained during a period of three years, and then specializes in early childhood or primary school.

¹⁸⁸ Revista Internacional Magisterio. Educación y pedagogía. “La docencia una profesión moral. Entrevista a Alvaro Marchesi”, www.oei.es/noticias/spip.php?article2268

¹⁸⁹ Referring to the initial teacher training in European OECD members, one should make reference to the Bologna process. In 1999, was held in Bologna the meeting of ministers of education of the European Union. It was agreed to initiate a process of convergence of European university systems by 2010. The goal is to promote the free movement of students and teachers in the European community. Following the agreement, the higher education courses are being reorganized as the curriculum, credit systems, the method of teaching, infrastructure and postgraduate degrees are revised. One of the agreements was to structure higher education in undergraduate and postgraduate degrees: the undergraduate degree with a duration of 3 to 4 years where general knowledge is taught, and postgraduate with a duration of 1 to 2 years where specific skills are developed. Regarding doctorate, one additional year of studies will be required. This process is having an impact on the education of preschool teachers, which in most European countries, are taught in the universities.

¹⁹⁰ The OECD study (2006) points out that training does not include essential aspects of preschool education and focus is mainly on primary and preparation for primary school. Those with bachelor’s degree in another field can take this course, with an additional year of study in pedagogy.

In Australia and New Zealand, teacher training for the preschool level is a higher level of professional development that also requires a degree in early childhood. In Australia, public school teachers are required to have a bachelor's degree in education, and a specialization in early childhood, if they want to teach the first grades (kindergarten to second grade). In the State of Victoria a specialization in early childhood is required and can only be used to teach in preschool. In the rest of the states, these teachers can teach in any level. In New Zealand, the teachers that teach in early childhood (with exception of the Nga Kohanga Reo programs, and Play Groups, which do not require a license) are required to have a diploma (in Early Education). This is a higher-level degree that is obtained by those who already have a diploma in education (primary) or another undergraduate degree following one or two years of training.

In the United States the requirements to teach at preschool level are not the same in every state. In 22 of the 44 states, teachers are required to have a bachelor's degree, and only in some states are they required to have a specialization or certification in early education. In private centers there are fewer requirements: in most only an Associates Degree in Child Development (CDA) is required.

In Portugal, preschool teacher training is different from the training for teaching primary school. Each level has its own curriculum and emphasizes specific aspects. In the case of preschool teacher training, the curriculum prioritizes the pedagogic-didactic component. In Denmark and Norway the law allows preschool teachers to teach in the first grades of primary school. In Denmark, preschool teacher training is regulated by another law and has a shorter duration. However, when teachers obtain their degree in preschool education they can teach both at the preschool level, and in the first through fourth grades. In Norway, preschool teachers are trained for three years and can teach through the first grade. With an additional year of study they can obtain the credentials to teach through the fourth grade of primary school.

Training of staff working with children under the age of three

Training requirements of staff working in early care and education programs for children under the age of three are less than those required for teachers of preschool-aged children. The minimum requirements vary by country and type of services. They are generally asked for a high school degree, or a high school degree with one or two years of vocational higher training. Staff that work with children under the age of three receive low wages that are less than what teachers make. For this reason there is a high drop-out rate in these type of programs.

In Germany, higher training is only for those who wish to teach in primary schools or higher levels, but not for those who wish to work in preschools, with children under the age of six. Those who work with young children are trained as Community and Youth Workers, which is a vocational training. It is necessary to obtain a certificate in vocational training of two years, or have two years of relevant experience.

The professionalization of staff working in early childhood

The countries of Anglo-Saxon tradition are conducting a process of professionalization of non-teaching personnel. They seek to create a competent workforce for early childhood, raising the qualifications. England, New Zealand, Canada, the United States and Australia have started a series of reforms that seek to reach the professionalization of staff (teachers and others) that work in programs of early care and education for children under the age of three. To this end, they have established goals for 2010-2015 to improve the minimum requirements in relation to the qualifications of staff working in programs of early childhood.

In New Zealand, it was suggested that 50% of early childhood care and education center staff be qualified in early childhood education by 2008, that is, be recognized by the New Zealand Teachers Council (NZTC). By the year 2010, 80% of centers should have registered teachers, and 100% should by 2012. Similarly, in the document *Paths Towards the Future (Senderos hacia el Futuro)* it was established that since 2005 those who teach in out-of-school programs should have a degree in teaching or comparable qualification.

In England, according to the Plan for Children, it is expected that by the year 2015 all full-time centers be led by staff with higher education. In the United States, the Head Start Program's Reauthorization Act has raised the minimum qualifications required for staff by 2013. In Australia, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) statement seeks to raise the training of teachers of early childhood.

Table 15. Initial professional development of preschool and primary school teachers in OECD countries

Country	Initial Professional Development for Preschool Teachers	Initial Professional Development for Primary School Teachers	In-service Training
Australia	<p>Preschool teachers in public schools are required to have four years of bachelor's studies. Certain states ask for a specialization in early childhood education. Preschool teachers can teach also in primary school and high school.</p> <p>Those who work in preschools that are not part of the public school system are required to have two years of vocational training and possess a Certificate III or Diploma in child services. Although this is the minimum qualification, part of the hired staff may be without qualifications. The majority of provinces require teachers to have the Certificate III in order to work.</p>	<p>Training programs for primary school teachers prepare them to teach children between the ages of five and 12, in grades one through seven. The four-year program usually offers a balance of professional and curriculum studies to develop the child's social, emotional and physical development.</p>	
Canada	<p>Preschool teacher training in a preschool program organized by the education system lasts four years and is conducted in a higher institution, though not necessarily with a specialization in early childhood education.</p>	<p>The university training is available in the universities of each province and territory.</p>	<p>Is the shared responsibility of the departments or Ministries of Education, school boards, universities, associations, and teachers unions, and of</p>

Country	Initial Professional Development for Preschool Teachers	Initial Professional Development for Primary School Teachers	In-service Training
	<p>In the case of care center programs, the requirements for initial professional development varies according by province, ranging from no training or minimum criteria (as is the case in two territories) to two years of training with a credential of care and early childhood education.</p>		<p>NGOs with experience in the field.</p>
Denmark	<p>Initial professional development for this level is ruled by the Teacher Education Act (1992). The teacher is prepared for educational work with children, youth and adults with social difficulties. The training is conducted in higher education centers or in specialized schools, and lasts approximately three-and-a-half years in which practice components are combined with components of theory. The thematic areas that addressed are: pedagogic and psychological studies, social health, activity and culture, and communication.</p> <p>At the conclusion of the training they can teach in kindergarten classes or from grades one through four in primary schools.</p>	<p>It is based on the Consolidation Act (1997) and a 1998 Ministerial decree that establishes the duration, courses and provisions regarding the institutions.</p> <p>The training lasts four years.</p> <p>The 2007 reforms establish that teachers have to specialize in three subjects and receive training in didactic methods.</p> <p>Teacher training is conducted in higher education centers or in specialized colleges.</p>	<p>In-service training is offered in several places: schools of pedagogic training, the Danish University of Education, and under the auspices of professional organizations. It is not required to participate in in-service training courses to be promoted. The government provides funding to the municipalities in order to carry out the trainings.</p>
England	<p>The teachers working in preschool programs within the education system need to have reached Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). Currently, the minimum requirements and a system of professional development for teachers of children under the age of five, that are not part of the education system, are being formulated (The Early Years Professional Status—EYPs).</p>	<p>Initial teacher training requires that QTS status or qualification be reached, which can be attained via several routes: a bachelor's degree in education or in another area with QTS; a graduate degree of one or two years in education; or teacher training being employed as teacher.</p> <p>Those trained as primary school teachers should have a knowledge of the</p>	

Country	Initial Professional Development for Preschool Teachers	Initial Professional Development for Primary School Teachers	In-service Training
		curriculum's Key Periods 1 and 2 (and can teach children between the ages of three and 11).	
Finland	<p>The required staff qualifications are regulated by the Teaching Qualifications Decree (986/1988), which determines the qualifications for teachers at all levels including kindergarten.</p> <p>Kindergarten teacher training is concurrent with the one of a school teacher, but culminates after three years upon obtaining a bachelor's degree. Most kindergarten teachers work in care centers as child teachers and educators.</p> <p>The curriculum for school and kindergarten teachers resemble one another because they have a similar organization with common language modules and communication, basic and thematic studies in education, subject studies, and optional studies. Specialized modules for kindergarten teachers allow them to develop professional skills in early care and education.</p>	<p>The professional development program is for classroom or subject teachers. Classroom teachers teach first through sixth grade in elementary school, and subject teachers teach grades seven through nine in high school. Classroom teacher training lasts five years, at the end of which a Master's Degree is obtained.</p> <p>The curriculum of classroom and preschool teachers are similar, the difference being that classroom teachers take advanced education studies while preschool teachers study the skills needed to work in early childhood education.</p> <p>Initial training is offered mainly in universities or pedagogical schools.</p>	<p>It is considered the responsibility of teachers and those who provide educational services (e.g. schools). Funding is decentralized to the municipalities.</p> <p>Teachers must participate in trainings three to five days a year, and continue to receive their full salary.</p>
France		The schoolteacher teaches children from ages two to eleven, at both the preschool and elementary school level. To be trained as a schoolteacher, one must pass the entrance examination. University teacher education institutions prepare students for the entrance examinations for one year, and for an additional year in vocational pedagogy training.	

Country	Initial Professional Development for Preschool Teachers	Initial Professional Development for Primary School Teachers	In-service Training
		<p>At the end of this training the student is a certified schoolteacher. Students do not necessarily have to go to the university education institution to prepare for the exam. They can also take the examination if they show a certificate or license degree confirming that they have had three years of post-secondary studies.</p>	
Germany	<p>Those who work in preschool programs are not teachers but rather <i>pedagogic</i> staff. They do not possess the same training or status that teachers do. The training they receive is tertiary as youth and community workers. The training ranges from four to five years, given that in order to be trained as such they have to have two years of vocational training or two years of experience in a relevant occupation. As with teacher training, it has a practical and theoretical part.</p>	<p>Teachers' training is regulated by the different territories' Ministries of Education (Lander). It is divided into two stages: the first is conducted in the university with theoretical contents, with a duration of seven semesters and a practice area that is conducted in the institutes of pedagogic training during two years. In total there are six different teaching degrees, the first being that of primary school teacher.</p>	<p>It is the responsibility of the territories' Ministries of Education to provide in-service training through public institutions.</p>
Italy	<p>Initial teacher training for early childhood is carried out in the university. This training is known as <i>laurea</i> in the primary education sciences; it is a joint training for elementary education and early childhood teachers that takes four years to complete, and is divided into two years of general training and two consecutive years in which the student specializes in early childhood or primary school.</p> <p>The high school teacher training program requires a subsequent specialization. To secure a spot,</p>	<p>The <i>laurea</i> program is divided into three areas: (1) teacher training that includes teaching methodologies, psychology, social anthropology, medico-hygiene; (2) elementary contents that refer to the primary school and early childhood curriculum, based in the areas of language, mathematics, physics, environmental science and geography; (3) labs that include analysis, planning and motivation and</p>	<p>In-service training provides mobility, requalification, professional reorganization and special requirements. Each year the Ministry of Education generates a directive which defines the annual training objectives. Each school decides the annual in-service training, taking the ministry directive and objectives into account.</p>

Country	Initial Professional Development for Preschool Teachers	Initial Professional Development for Primary School Teachers	In-service Training
	<p>teachers must pass a competitive examination. It is hoped that in the future, those working with those from birth through age three will also be required to have a four-year degree.</p>	<p>practice.</p>	<p>In-service training takes place in classrooms, with reading materials and case studies, simulations, exercises, action research or e-learning.</p>
Netherlands		<p>Since 1985, there exists a unique professional development program for primary teachers. Training is provided in vocational higher education institutions with duration of three years. The training for primary school has a mandatory practical component. Since 2006, core competency standards are available for primarily schoolteachers.</p>	<p>In-service training is provided in the schools. Each primary, secondary, vocational or adult school has its own budget for the in-service training of teachers. Funding is decentralized to the municipalities, which decide both course content and the institution that will provide the training.</p>
New Zealand	<p>In 2007, a series of reforms begun to improve the professional development and minimum qualification requirements. By 2012, all teachers in education and care programs must hold a degree in education or the equivalent of a level seven qualification approved by the New Zealand Teachers Council.</p> <p>The qualifications of those working in criminal programs or Play Centers, among others, are generally less than a seven in the New Zealand Qualifications Framework.</p>	<p>There are various routes for those who have not completed high school, and already have a bachelor's degree, among others. These options are offered in 15 accredited higher institutions. It is expected that they obtain a bachelor's degree in education, or a specialization in education.</p>	
Norway	<p>Preschool teacher training lasts three years and is offered in the university from which one obtains a bachelor's degree. Preschool teachers can teach in</p>	<p>Teacher training lasts four years and qualifies one to teach both in primary and lower secondary education, as well as in adult</p>	<p>In-service training is flexible in its organization, content and methods. It is offered at national,</p>

Country	Initial Professional Development for Preschool Teachers	Initial Professional Development for Primary School Teachers	In-service Training
	<p>both kindergarten and the first grade. They student-teach in a kindergarten class, and with an additional year of training can teach up to the fourth grade.</p> <p>The Kindergarten Act of 2005 and the Education Act of 1990 are currently being reviewed, and changes are expected in the objectives of initial training. By 2006, only 30% of lead teachers and educators had been trained as preschool teachers.</p>	<p>education.</p>	<p>regional and local level, and does not necessarily lead to a formal qualification.</p> <p>It can be offered as short-term courses by a variety of institutions, or be organized from innovative classroom projects. At the local level, primary school teachers are required to have a mandatory study week. The content is determined by the school and local authorities.</p>
<p>Portugal</p>	<p>Initial training is offered in institutions of higher education and universities, and the length varies between eight and ten semesters. The pedagogical-didactic component is more present in the professional development of pre-school teachers and teachers of the first cycle of basic education. They also have a module in special education and a practical component that is allotted 22 to 27 percent of the schedule's total time. The educational science component takes another 20 to 25 percent.</p> <p>Currently, as part of the Bologna process, the curricula, duration and specialization are being revised to comply with the signed agreements.</p>	<p>Initial training for teachers for the first, second and third cycle of basic education is provided by institutions of higher education and universities. The length varies between eight and ten semesters.</p>	<p>In-service training is offered in institutions of higher education, in the formation centers of school partnerships; and the formation centers of nonprofit professional associations.</p> <p>Regardless of the institution imparting the in-service training, the training must have a component in which teachers work autonomously in a real working environment, be it a classroom, school ,or community education area. Courses must have a minimum duration of 15 hours.</p> <p>In-service training may be in the form of courses, modules, seminars, workshops,</p>

Country	Initial Professional Development for Preschool Teachers	Initial Professional Development for Primary School Teachers	In-service Training
			practical courses, projects, study groups, or courses in higher institutions.
Spain	<p>Teacher training (preschool and primary school) is regulated by Royal Decree 1440/1991 and LOE 2006. To teach children from birth through the age of six, a Teacher's degree (Maestro) is required with a specialization in early childhood (which lasts three years). The training is being reviewed and there are plans to extend it to four years in order to adapt it to European standards.</p> <p>Teacher training is offered in universities and teacher training centers. The teaching model with primary school teaching is concurrent with a basic core of common subjects.</p>	It is necessary to obtain a Teacher's degree (Maestro) with a specialization in primary education. Teacher training is offered in universities and teacher training centers.	It is a decentralized function of the autonomous communities, though the Ministry of Education establishes priority lines. In-service training is offered in training centers and other institutions.
Sweden	The initial professional development for teaching in preschools and the first years of basic education, as well as in school-age childcare centers, and to teach in the mother tongue lasts three and a half years after which one receives a higher education university degree.	Professional development for teachers of elementary school and the first grades of secondary education lasts a minimum of four years, and it is necessary to specialize in one or two subjects. There is also a shorter route for those who already possess a bachelor's or master's degree, which requires only one-and-a-half years of additional training.	
United States	<p>Minimum requirements vary by state, and there are no national criteria for working in care centers. Each state establishes its own standards and minimum criteria.</p> <p>To be a preschool or</p>	Traditional training is a university bachelor's degree in education. Students must then obtain a higher degree, and many programs require student-teaching practice. The requirements vary by state.	

Country	Initial Professional Development for Preschool Teachers	Initial Professional Development for Primary School Teachers	In-service Training
	<p>kindergarten teacher in public schools, four years of higher education training is required (bachelor's degree), though not all states require certification in preschool or early childhood education.</p> <p>The HS program has its own requirements, the credential CDA, which is the equivalent of one year (of two) of training with an Associate's Degree.</p>	<p>Today several states have alternative routes for those who have bachelor's degrees that are not in education (professional programs). Those wishing to work in a public school must receive a certification by the Department of Education of every state. Certification as a teacher in the first grades (preschool through third grade); education elementary (grades one through six or eight); or in education in a specific subject (Kindergarten through grade twelve).</p>	

Source: European Commission Eurydice The Database on Education Systems in Europe: <http://www.eurydice.org/portal/page/portal/Eurydice/EuryCountry> (Consulted 07/2008); Australia: Watson, L (2006) Pathways to a Profession. Education and Training in Early Childhood Education and Care, Australia. Department of Education, Science and Training, Australia 2006; The Government of Australia's Website, Education System in Australia <http://aei.gov.au/AEI/CEP/Australia/EducationSystem/Teacher/Overview/default.htm> (Accedido en Octubre 2008); Canada: OECD Directorate for Education (no date) Early Childhood Education and Care Policy Canada Country Background Note 2004. http://www.oecd.org/searchResult/0,3400,en_2649_39263231_1_1_1_1_1_1,00.html (consulted 09/2008); Council of Ministers of Education (2008) Education in Canada, Toronto Ontario 2008 Accedido de la página web <http://www.cmec.ca/Pages/splash.aspx> (septiembre 2008); Council of Ministers of Education (2008) Report One: The Education Systems in Canada- Facing the Challenges of the Twenty First Century. October 2008, Toronto, Ontario. <http://www.cmec.ca/Pages/splash.aspx> (Consulted 11/2008); New Zealand Ministry of Education (2007). Briefing for the Incoming Minister of Education. November 2007. 09/<http://www.minedu.govt.nz/>(Consulted 09/2008); EEUU OECD (2006) Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care. Annex E; Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook 2010-211 <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos318.htm> (Consulted 01/2010); United Kingdom: Web page of the Agency of Training and Development of the Schools (TDA) <http://www.tda.gov.uk/Recruit.aspx> (Consulted 11/2008); New Zealand TeachNZ (2008). "Is there a place for you in Early Childhood Teaching? Teacher Education Qualifications 2008. <http://www.teachnz.govt.nz/thinking-of-becoming-a-teacher/early-childhood/where-to-study> (Consulted 11/2008)

The duration of teacher training for the preschool level is shorter than that for teaching in primary schools. In Finland the kindergarten or preschool teacher needs to obtain a bachelor's

degree following three years of study, while the schoolteacher (grades one through six) requires five years of study. In Sweden, preschool teachers study for three years, and the requirements to teach higher grades is longer, extending up to five years.¹⁹¹

In-service training

In-service training is generally the responsibility of local governments or school authorities that, in collaboration with government authorities, decide the content and methods of said training. In Germany, Italy and Spain, the central or local government is the one that gives the guidelines or priorities of the training content. Training is provided by multiple channels (teacher training schools, universities, professional organizations, schools, etc.). In schools, teachers can receive one-on-one coaching, access to school networks that share successful experiences, and external training.

In-service training is intended to update teachers' knowledge of new curricula, or changes in the learning and teaching processes. In England, training and professional renewal is promoted as the teacher reaches the various levels of professional development. By law, teachers must work 195 days a year, five of which must be dedicated to in-service training. In the United States, 15 hours a year are destined to in-service training. In Australia's case, through the accreditation system of care centers, accredited centers have access to government support for professional development, as well as for resources and technical support. In countries like Finland and Sweden there is a minimum requirement of in-service training: in Finland it is three to five days a year, during which teachers continue to receive their full salary; in Sweden teachers have one week of mandatory training.

Professional development system: teacher certification and teacher profiles

Accreditation as a teacher by a recognized national institution is another important aspect. In England all public school teachers, including those who teach children between the ages of three to five, can attain Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). QTS is an accreditation given to teachers who have proven to have reached professional standards in order to be considered qualified to teach. Without the QTS teachers cannot be registered in England's General Teaching Council nor can they be employed as qualified teachers.

In the same manner, the *Plan for Children* proposes the professionalization of those working with children under the age of five as an objective for the year 2015. In 2005, the *Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC)* organization was established, and standards of common skills and competencies for those working with children were developed (*Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for Children Workforce 2005*). Since then, work has been done towards the professionalization of those working in the early years (known as *Early Years Workforce*) in order to create a group of early year professionals (*Early Years Professional Status* or EYPS).

EYPS¹⁹² status is obtained by validating previous studies and attending training sessions of four, six, 12, or 15 months, depending on the level of prior training. By 2010 each nursing center must have one EYP. Specific standards equivalent to those of QTS have been set; when these standards are met, the status of workers in the early years (EYPS) is granted. The minimum

¹⁹¹ Since the changes introduced with the Bologna agreement, the course of 3 to 3.5 years is known as a course of primary level (undergraduate) and the one of 4 to 5 years of second level (graduate).

¹⁹² The CWDC (2008) noted difficulties in implementing the EYPS. The link between EYPS and the Early Years Foundation Stage is not clear. Incentives, such as the fund to subsidize the cost, are not effective because there is excessive regulation. The EYPS are restricted to private, volunteer or independent services.

requirement to be trained as an EYPS is obtaining passing grades in GSCE examinations in mathematics and Spanish. To receive EYPS certification it is necessary to pass an assessment that measures whether the future teacher knows and applies professional standards, submit written assignments, and pass a practical assessment in the workplace. Similarly, and as part of the vision included in the *Every Child Matters* (2003) policy, an *Integrated Qualifications Framework* (IQF) has been developed for all those working with children, families and youth.¹⁹³

In the United States, there is a mechanism for the certification of staff working in early childhood, but independent of the government. As each state is free to establish its own minimum training requirements for staff working in early childhood programs, the Council for Professional Recognition (CPR), an NGO that provides training and accreditation for those without degrees working in the early childhood sector, provides a CDA credential.¹⁹⁴ The CDA credential is equivalent to one year (the first year) of higher education in an Associate's degree program in vocational and technical colleges. The Associate's degree is equivalent to half of a university Bachelor's degree, is widely recognized and can be used as credit towards a four-year university program. The credential is awarded after achieving professional competencies in six dimensions and 13 functional areas. From 1975 until 2005, the CPR granted 191,000 CDA credentials throughout the country. It has been established that to teach in Head Start and Early Head Start programs educators must have the CDA credential.

Australia is in the process of creating a professional development system. Today there are two types of training: vocational technical education (VET) and higher education (HE), but there is no system of equivalence that allows those who are formed in a VET to continue their training in HE. Those who are in higher education are registered teachers. Those who acquire vocational training obtain a diploma or certificate in Children's Services, which is a step below, and work primarily in nursing and private education centers. The problem according to Watson (2006) is that training in higher education and vocational technical education has different operational contexts, curriculum, pedagogy, and does not allow the movement of students.

Australia is therefore seeking to integrate the training received in vocational technical schools and higher education institutions to create a single training in early childhood. Towards the end of 2008, the country will have completed a national strategy for Early Years Workforce, in which standards of skills and competencies for staff working in early childhood will be laid down. This initiative is part of the central government's efforts to develop a national framework for quality in early childhood (National Quality Framework for Early Education and Development), which will be linked to programs' quality standards. According to Watson (2006), in order to achieve the harmonization of programs, the curriculum of technical vocational institutes should be expanded, courses should be developed in a way to connect what is offered in VET and HE, and the two diplomas should be integrated within a single career, where the VET is granted first, and the HE two years later.

When elaborating professional development systems, work is conducted on the basis of competency profiles. These profiles are developed on standards that represent what teachers should know and do, and together provide a complete profile of the teacher. The goal is to create profiles and standards for both teachers in primary and early childhood education. In England

¹⁹³ This document, which will be completed in 2010, will be the frame of reference on the qualifications needed for each of the different activities done with children. It will consist in a set of skills that will enable progress and continuing professional development. It is based on the standards of the *Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce*.

¹⁹⁴ The Head Start Act (2007) increases the requirements for 2013, the HS principal teacher must demonstrate competence in the functions established by the program and have a bachelor's degree in early education or an equivalent training of early education with teaching experience to preschool children. Assistants will need a CDA credential or be enrolled in an undergraduate program or complete their credential within 2 years.

there are standards for teachers in primary education (QTS)¹⁹⁵ and those working in early childhood education (the EYPS). In Australia, the Charter of Australia Teaching Profession is a set of statements about the values and commitments of teachers in basic education, developed by the country's teachers association. In the State of Victoria, the Ministry of Education and Early Childhood developed professional standards for early education teachers, which are being validated and may be used by teachers to evaluate their own practice, identify opportunities for professional development, and monitor achievements. In New Zealand, the New Zealand Teachers Council (NZTC) developed common professional standards for all teachers, including those in kindergarten.

In short, in a professional development system there are levels that staff reach as they gain experience; this experience is then evaluated and certified. To set the levels, profiles of what teachers should know, learn and do are developed. To access higher levels on the scale of recognition and payment, it is necessary to meet preceding standards and the ones of the new level being accessed. The goal is to have a system of professional development for all early childhood staff.

Table 16. Preschool teacher profiles in selected OECD countries

Countries	Teacher Profile
New Zealand	<p>Standards for teachers are based on competencies, grouped into three levels: (i) unregistered beginning teachers, who work under the supervision of more experienced teachers; (ii) registered teachers who have taught for at least two years and have high levels of competency; and (iii) experienced teachers with a high level of understanding of the teaching and learning process, and are prepared to support their colleagues.</p> <p>According to the standards developed by NZTC, every teacher has three types of competencies: <i>Professional Knowledge</i>: (i) knows what to teach, (ii) knows his students and how they learn, (iii) understands the contextual factors that influence the teaching and learning process. <i>Professional Practice</i>: (i) uses his or her professional knowledge to plan a safe and quality learning environment, and a high quality education, (ii) uses evidence to promote learning. <i>Relationships and Professional Values</i>: (i) develops positive relationships with students and members of the learning community, (ii) is a professional committed to his or her profession.</p>
Australia	<p>There are no standards for teachers, as they are currently being developed.</p> <p>There is a statement on teacher's commitments and values in the <i>Charter of Australia Teaching Profession</i>. This document contains general statements about the teacher's role in education: (i) set high standards for each student, and meet the individual needs of his or her students, (ii) provide a stimulating learning environment, (iii) motivate students to discover the joy of learning and of the world of knowledge, ideas and creativity. It also includes statements about the profession, such as that it should reflect a balance between renovating and preserving what it is, and anticipating and constructing what it can be.</p>
United States	<p>According to the CDA, educators in early childhood programs must meet the</p>

¹⁹⁵ Last year qualifying standards for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), i.e. teachers of basic education, were revised.

Countries	Teacher Profile
	<p>following competencies: (i) establish and maintain a healthy and safe learning environment, (ii) promote physical and intellectual competence, (iii) support the emotional and social development, and be a positive guide or role model, (iv) establish positive and productive relationships with families, (v) ensure a program that purposefully responds to the needs of families in a well-managed manner, (vi) maintain a commitment to professionalism.</p>
United Kingdom	<p>The QTS establishes different stages in the career: (i) QTS teacher. (ii) Post teacher status is obtained by passing through an induction period during which the teacher receives personal supervision for three semesters from a more experienced teacher. His performance is evaluated based on more rigorous standards. (iii) Excellent Teacher. (iv) Advanced skills teacher.</p> <p>All standards are organized into three interrelated categories: professional attributes, professional knowledge and understanding, and professional skills. A teacher who seeks QTS status must know, understand and be able to: (i) establish professional relationships, (ii) communicate with others, (iii) have an understanding of relevant legal frameworks, (iv) participate in professional development, (v) feel competent in the subject he or she teaches, (vi) have a clear understanding of how children are progressing and what their learning needs are, (vii) inspire children and guide their learning, (viii) recognize the place and role of school in the community, (ix) understand how teachers contribute to the welfare of children and the variety of factors that influence child development, (x) have planning, evaluation, monitoring, teamwork and collaboration skills, as well as the ability to give feedback, (xi) establish clear expectations for learning, discipline and safe learning environment, (xii) reflect on his or her own practice, develop skills, and make use of opportunities for advising and mentoring children.</p> <p>Standards similar to those of QTS are being developed for early childhood staff. These standards are performance statements that describe what an EYP needs to know, understand and be able to make and implement in his or her practice in working with children. They are organized into six groups with 39 standards in total: (i) knowledge and understanding, (ii) effective practice, (iii) relationships with children, (iv) communicating and working in partnerships with families, (v) teamwork and collaboration, and (vi) professional development.</p> <p>There is also the <i>Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce (2005)</i>. These are a set of common values for those working with children that promote equality, respect, diversity and comprehensive services. They are organized in six areas: effective communication and involvement, child and youth development, caring and promoting the welfare of the child, supporting transitions, multi-agency work, and information sharing.</p>

Sources:

New Zealand: Graduating Teacher Standards (2007) available at <http://www.teacherscouncil.govt.nz/education/gts/index.stm> (Consulted 11/2008);
Australia: Teaching Australia (2008) Charter for the Australian Teaching Profession. A Statement of Values and Commitments. <http://www.teachingaustralia.edu.au> (Consulted 11/2008);
The United Kingdom: TDA (2007) Professional Standards for Teachers. Why sit still in your career? <http://www.tda.gov.uk/Recruit/thetrainingprocess/qualifiedteacherstatus/achievingqts.aspx/>

<http://www.gtce.org.uk/standards/professional/sopv> (Consulted 11/2008); CWDC (2008) “Introduction and Information Guide Early Years Professionals Creating Brighter Futures” & “Guidance to the Standards for the award of the Early Years Professional Status”. <http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/eyps/how-to-become-an-eyp> (Consulted 11/2008); Department for Education and Skills (2005) Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children’s Workforce. <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk> (Consulted 11/2008).

2. Teacher Training in Latin America

Teacher training in Latin America is heterogeneous and information on it is rather incomplete. In most cases the content of the courses are not provided, and in some cases only the training areas are mentioned in very general terms—a situation that prevents further analysis to identify if educators receive the information and training in order to facilitate transitions in early childhood.

According to the research consulted on the subject, the first institutionalized forms of primary education in the region begun in the 19th century,¹⁹⁶ and it is the regular school, operating at the level of a secondary school education program, that governed the initial teacher training for nearly a century, and which still persists in some countries. Subsequently, since the mid-twentieth century regular schools have gradually become non-university institutes of higher education, or higher pedagogical institutes (post secondary schools). In most countries this initial training is supplemented by continuous training, aimed at in-service teachers through various on-site or distant strategies that are usually developed by institutions created by the Ministries or Departments of Education, and in other cases, institutions in which they have delegated the responsibility of that function.¹⁹⁷ The following table presents some characteristics of initial and continuing teacher training in Latin American countries, according to the information collected in this regard.¹⁹⁸

Table 17. Initial and continuing professional development of preschool teachers in Latin America

Country	Initial Training	Continuing Training
Argentina	<p>Since 1971, preschool and elementary teacher training is conducted in superior regular schools and institutes of higher education where the degree granted is of “Teacher” or “Professor,” and in Universities where the degree granted is of “Licentiate.” Studies for the initial level and the first and second EGB cycles last three years.</p> <p>The Federal Law of Education N°24.521/95, the agreements of the Federal Council on Culture and Education and the teacher bylaw regulate teacher training.</p>	<p>Lifelong learning for teachers includes improvement of practicing teachers, teacher training for other roles, and educational research.</p> <p>The system of training, improving and updating of teachers is done through the Federal Network of Lifelong Teacher Training, which is formed by the Institutes of lifelong Teacher Training.</p> <p>Additionally, postgraduate courses are held in universities.</p>

¹⁹⁶ Situation of the initial and in-service professional development in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay. www.unesco.cl/medios/biblioteca/documentos/estado_arte_situacion_formacion_docente_chile_uruguay_argentina.pdf

¹⁹⁷ www.oei.es/linea6/informe.pdf

¹⁹⁸ According to 2003 information. <http://www.oei.es/educacioninicial.htm>

Country	Initial Training	Continuing Training
	<p>The basic common content for teacher training are organized in three fields: general training (common and compulsory for all levels); specialized training (for special levels and regimes); and orientation training (comprehends the training and deepening centered in cycles/areas or curriculum disciplines). To this, education practice and focalized teaching is added (to respond to rural and poverty contexts, indigenous populations, etc.). The certification is given by the Federal Council of Education and Culture.</p>	
Bolivia ¹⁹⁹	<p>Teacher training policy falls under Law N° 1565/94 of the Education Reform that considers the transformation of regular schools into higher regular institutions, where one can obtain the degree of Regular School Teacher. At the university level one obtains the degree of Licentiate.</p> <p>The training curriculum considers the following areas: (i) national reality and education, (ii) analysis and curricular development, (iii) education management, and (iv) pedagogy.</p> <p>For elementary school teachers, core subjects are developed in workshops including visual, motor, musical and performing arts.</p>	<p>In-service training is held by the Training Unit at the Ministry of Education and Culture.</p> <p>Also, postgraduate courses are carried out in universities.</p>
Brazil ²⁰⁰	<p>The Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education N° 9394/96, establishes that teacher training at the licentiate level for teachers of early childhood education and the first grades of basic education be conducted in universities and institutions of higher education.</p> <p>In the National Education Plan, the Ministry of Education establishes that in the period of ten years, 70% of early childhood and basic education teachers will have a higher level training.</p>	<p>Programs of lifelong training are guaranteed by the State and Municipal Secretaries of Education that include program coordination, funding and support, and the search of partnerships with universities and institutions of higher learning. They offer the following graduate courses: Master's, Doctorate and specializations.</p>

¹⁹⁹ http://www.unesco.cl/medios/biblioteca/documentos/estado_arte_situacion_formacion_docente_bolivia_paraguay_peru.pdf

²⁰⁰ www.oei.es/quipu/brasil/informe_docentes.pdf

Country	Initial Training	Continuing Training
	<p>Resolution CNE/CP 1/2002 provides the National Curriculum Guidelines for training teachers of basic education (which includes early childhood, primary and secondary). The curriculum of instruction is structured in: (i) common basic training for all teachers, (ii) common training for specialist teachers. (iii) specific training according to levels or subjects to be taught.</p> <p>To train teachers in early childhood education and for the first grades of basic education, the higher regular course is given. The training lasts an average of two years.</p>	
Chile ²⁰¹	<p>Teacher training is governed by the Organic Constitutional Law of Education (LOCE) that has experienced several modifications since its promulgation in 1990, and the Law 19070 Statute of Education Professionals.</p> <p>Training is provided by universities and professional institutions, and the length of studies varies between three and five years.</p> <p>The curriculum includes the following areas of training: (i) general, (ii) professional, (iii) specialization, and (iv) practical.</p>	<p>The Statute of Education Professionals notes that in-service training should contribute to improving teachers' performance.</p> <p>The offer of official training is organized by the <i>Center of Development, Experimentation and Pedagogic Research</i> (CPEIP) in the following lines: on-site and distance teacher training enhancement that combines workshops with didactic material, through educative television; programs for improving the quality and equity of education; and universities offer graduate courses that lead towards Master's or Doctorate degrees.</p>
Colombia ²⁰²	<p>Article 112 of the General Law of Education establishes that teacher training, graduate training and the updating of educators corresponds to the universities and other institutions of higher education dedicated to Education. Universities are authorized to train students to teach in preschools, and for the basic cycle of elementary education, through agreements with institutions of higher education.</p>	<p>The following are responsible for ongoing training: training, updating and professionalization programs; the National System of Teacher Training; and the Committees for Teacher Training (at the departmental and district level).</p> <p>The General Law of Education 115/94 that establishes that lifelong</p>

²⁰¹ Avalos, B. (2003) La formación docente inicial en Chile [www.iesalc.unesco.org.ve; www.oei.es/docentes/info_pais/informe_formacion_docente_chile_iesalc.pdf](http://www.iesalc.unesco.org.ve;www.oei.es/docentes/info_pais/informe_formacion_docente_chile_iesalc.pdf)

²⁰² www.lpp-buenosaires.net/documentacionpedagogica/ArtPon/PDF_ArtPon/Formacion%20docente%20en%20Colombia.pdf

Country	Initial Training	Continuing Training
	<p>The National Pedagogic University is a leading institution in teacher training. Through its curricular project, Degree in Early Childhood Education, it prepares teachers to educate children from birth through the age of eight, bridging the gap between preschool and elementary school. The curriculum considers the following training: (i) pedagogic, (ii) specific disciplinary, (iii) scientific and research; and (iv) deontological and human values.</p>	<p>learning includes research, innovation, and update activities.</p> <p>Graduate courses are offered for Masters and Doctorates.</p>
Costa Rica	<p>The Constitution states that the universities or special institutions are responsible for teacher training.</p> <p>In 1995 the Professional Training Institute of Teaching (Instituto de Formación Profesional del Magisterio) was established. Training for cycles I and II of elementary school requires acquiring a university degree following two years of study. For teachers of cycle III, studies have a duration of four years. Obtaining an advanced degree requires five or six years of study.</p> <p>The curriculum for a bachelor's degree in early childhood is organized in eight academic cycles. The first four are directed at training professionals for the maternal-childhood level (ages zero to three), and the other four for the middle level and transition (ages four to seven).</p> <p>In 2003 the curriculum for a Bachelor's in Preschool Education was integrated with the curriculum for an advanced degree, and in 2006 some adjustments were made.</p>	<p>The National Teaching Center, created in 1989, is responsible for the training and updating programs, research programs, educational and technological innovations programs, and the production of educational materials. Training can be onsite, online or combined, in addition to participation via teleconference.</p> <p>The National System of Quality Improvement has implemented a method called "Leading Schools," and also supports development through publications, seminars, workshops and consultancies. Postgraduate courses towards Master's and Doctorates are also offered.</p>
Dominican Republic	<p>Law N° 66/97 establishes that teacher training will be coordinated by a decentralized institution of the Secretary of Education. This is how the National Institute of Teacher Professional Development and Training is created. By decree N° 427/00, the System of Normal Schools becomes the Institute of Teacher Training University (Instituto Universitario de Formación Docente), giving way to</p>	<p>Ongoing training is carried out through the following strategies: certificates, courses, internships, seminars, forums and videoconferences. The training is offered in universities, schools, and Higher Institute of Teacher Training campuses.</p> <p>Topics are selected based on the</p>

Country	Initial Training	Continuing Training
	<p>teacher programs in initial and basic education.</p> <p>Teacher training is offered in universities and the Higher Institute of Teacher Training. Professional development requires two years of studies, and two additional years (for a total of four) to obtain an advanced degree. The curriculum includes: (i) general knowledge; (ii) specific knowledge; (iii) psycho-sociopedagogy, and (iv) teaching practice.</p>	<p>results of national tests, curriculum development monitoring program, and monitoring of curricular development.</p>
Ecuador	<p>The State Constitution, the Law of Education, the Law of Teaching Career and the “Escalafón del magisterio nacional” regulate teacher training.</p> <p>Training for teachers of basic education is carried out in higher pedagogy institutes, pedagogic institutes, and intercultural bilingual pedagogic institutes, managed by the Ministry of Education.</p> <p>The duration of studies towards a degree in pre-primary and primary education is three years. The curriculum includes two fields: (i) core professional, and (ii) specialized professional.</p>	<p>The national system of teacher training and improvement has a compulsory, decentralized, scientific and technical. Courses for current professors are carried out by the Direction of Teacher Training and Improvement, and Pedagogic Research.</p> <p>The National Network of Teacher Training and Professional Development, in coordination with the Ministry of Education and Culture, is responsible for the training and improvement courses for teachers. Moreover, there are courses for promotion categories and for teachers without degrees, as well as postgraduate courses.</p>
El Salvador	<p>In the year 1981 teacher training was transferred to the technological institutes, and teacher training passed from secondary education to the higher education level. The National Teacher Training Program (PRONACADO), is responsible for teacher training for the first two cycles of elementary education (including preschool), and other levels and modalities.</p> <p>In 1998 a new teacher training plan was created for preschool education, and the first two cycles of elementary education. Training is also offered in universities and specialized institutes of higher education. Studies last three years, and the curriculum includes: (i) general training, (ii) specialized training, and (iii) teaching</p>	<p>A National System of Training and Professional Development is created and is comprised of three regional centers and a network of 242 model schools. The plan for teacher training seeks the implementation of curriculum change, the suitability of content and approaches, and the updating of science and technology.</p> <p>In 1995, a new process for teachers was launched with special attention to the new focus on curriculum development. Training is carried out at the national, regional and local level, through on-site courses and study cycles.</p>

Country	Initial Training	Continuing Training
	<p>practice.</p> <p>In 2004 a four-year project was launched with OAS technical cooperation, for the creation of a new model of initial teacher training, professional development and performance evaluation in the Central American sub-region. The Ministries of Education of Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama participate in the project, which is led by El Salvador, and its completion is planned for December 2008.²⁰³</p>	
Guatemala	<p>Initial teacher training is conducted in two levels: secondary education (diversified cycle) in regular schools for teaching preschool or elementary school; and higher level (with specialization) in universities for teaching secondary school and special education. It is currently proposed that teacher training for preschool and elementary education be done at the higher level.</p> <p>Studies for teaching preschool and elementary school consists of three years of basic cycle, and three years of diversified secondary education cycle. Programs address areas such as: (i) pedagogic, (ii) scientific-humanistic, and (iii) teacher practice.</p>	<p>Since 2002, in-service training for preschool and primary teachers is carried out by the Professional Development Program.</p> <p>The program has an onsite and distance learning modality, and is under the charge of local municipal offices that have been approved by the Ministry of Education and accredited universities. Users are preschool and primary school teachers, and studies last two years and include university accreditation.</p>
Honduras ²⁰⁴	<p>Teacher training for primary education is conducted in regular schools and includes the elective secondary education track (diversified cycle). Teaching in preschool centers requires two additional years of post secondary education. The National Pedagogic Francisco Morazán University trains teachers for pre-primary, primary and secondary education.</p> <p>Currently, teacher training is expected to change from regular schools to the tertiary level.²⁰⁵ The study plan includes areas such as: (i) general training, (ii) pedagogic</p>	<p>The Centers of Excellence Regional Project develops a model of professional update in reading and writing to train teachers of the first grades. The PROMETAM project offers training in mathematics with cooperation from Japan.</p> <p>The professional development for primary school teachers without pedagogic degrees is carried out in the Certification Project for Community Educators in non-formal preschool centers. Ongoing education</p>

²⁰³ www.oea-elsalvador.org/femcidi_proyecto.aspx?op=3

²⁰⁴ <http://sicevaes.csuca.org/drupal/?q=node/136>

²⁰⁵ www.oest.oas.org/iten/documentos/presentaciones/Elivirspanish.ppt

Country	Initial Training	Continuing Training
	training, (iii) basic initial training, and (iv) oriented scientific training.	is offered onsite, distance and online. Universities offer postgraduate Master's and Doctorate degrees.
Mexico	<p>In 1984 teacher training was integrated into higher education. Regular schools of higher education offer advanced degrees in preschool and primary education.</p> <p>Agreement 259/99 and 268/00 establish the curricula for primary school and preschool teachers, respectively. Studies last four years, and the curriculum includes: (i) psychology, (ii) social training, (iii) pedagogy, (iv) instrumental and (v) other areas of specialized training.</p>	<p>The National Program for the Permanent Updating of Current Teachers in Basic Education depends on the Secretariat of Public Education. Its function is to maintain a continuous, pertinent, flexible and quality offering of programs for all teachers and basic education management staff, in order to deal with curricular changes and update their knowledge in the sciences of education.</p> <p>Training policies are proposed by the General Coordination of Updating and Training for current teachers.</p>
Nicaragua	<p>Training for teachers of primary education is conducted by regular secondary schools that depend of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports. Studies include three years of lower secondary (basic cycle), and two years of upper secondary (diversified cycle). Upon completion, the Teacher of Primary Education degree is granted. If one wishes to teach preschool, he or she receives 11 months of distance training courses.</p> <p>According to the National Education Plan 2001-2015, it is expected to convert regular schools into higher regular schools, or higher institutes of pedagogy, or transfer the training to university Schools of Education.</p> <p>The curriculum includes the following areas: (i) general training (humanistic and scientific), (ii) psycho-pedagogical, (iii) professional practice, and (iv) practical activities and aesthetics.</p>	<p>Training and updating of current teachers is under the supervision of the Direction of Teacher Training. The National Network of Teacher Training is responsible for the national training strategy that involves the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports; departmental and municipal delegations; heads of educational centers; and teachers in mini-centers of inter-training (MIC).</p> <p>In 1995 the APRENDE Project of Basic Education was financed by the World Bank to improve the development of the people. In a second phase, scholarships were distributed to poor families in order to promote the retention of children in rural areas through the sixth grade.²⁰⁶ Moreover, there is a project for preschool teachers supported by the OAS.</p>
Panama	The Organic Law of Education 47/46 modified by Law 34/95 establishes that teacher training is to be carried out in	The National System of Professional Development (SINDEPRO) of the National Direction of Training and

²⁰⁶ <http://www.comminit.com/en/node/41470/303>

Country	Initial Training	Continuing Training
	<p>higher education centers and universities.</p> <p>The options are preschool teacher, primary school teacher, faculty and a degree in education, and a non-university bachelor's in pedagogy.</p> <p>The length of training varies but on average lasts four years. The curriculum includes a common core of general culture and specialized training.</p>	<p>Professional Development, depends on the Ministry of Education and is responsible for the development of training programs.</p> <p>The courses can include training, updating, and in-depth study.</p>
Paraguay	<p>In 1990 a process of education reform was initiated that ended with the promulgation of the Law of Education and the Law of Higher Education that state that higher education will be conducted in universities, higher institutes, and other tertiary institutions. Such institutions offer programs for teaching elementary education, and studies last four years in higher institutions.</p> <p>The curriculum includes: (i) basic training, (ii) in-depth study, (iii) specialization, and (iv) fundamental core courses that include education and human development, education and society, education, specialized knowledge and aesthetic training, educational practices, pedagogic projects, curriculum integration seminars, family education, and environmental education.</p>	<p>The Ministry of Education and Culture has established the National System of Teacher Updating that is responsible for providing in-service training and updating through the following modalities: continuous teacher training, specialization, and professionalization.</p> <p>Intercultural bilingual education is a main concern in teacher training.</p>
Peru	<p>The General Law of Education 28044 establishes that to exercise teaching in the levels of basic education it is necessary to have a pedagogic degree granted by higher pedagogic institutes, or universities. Studies last five years in order to obtain a teaching degree in early childhood or primary education.</p> <p>The curriculum is currently under review, but previous content includes the following areas:²⁰⁷ (i) ecosystem, (ii) society , (iii) religious education, (iv) integral communications, (v) mathematics , (vi) integral stimulation, and (vii) education.</p>	<p>The Direction of Higher Pedagogic Education is the entity responsible for formulating, managing and evaluating the National Program for Training and Ongoing Professional Development for teachers and managers, in the context of the System for Ongoing Training. That system includes training, updating and specialization in coordination with the regional heads of education and the units of local education management. The selected universities establish agreements with the Ministry of Education to</p>

²⁰⁷ http://www.minedu.gob.pe/normatividad/reglamentos/xtras/curriculo_ed_inicial.doc

Country	Initial Training	Continuing Training
	<p>The curriculum for teach in primary schools considers the same areas the one for early childhood, but the area of integral stimulation is replaced by that of work and production.</p>	<p>develop programs of ongoing training.</p> <p>Universities also offer an academic bachelor's program in education, for teachers holding degrees from higher pedagogical institutes wishing to continue their postgraduate studies at the Master's and Doctorate level, and a higher degree program in Education directed at graduates of higher pedagogical institutions that wish to obtain a higher degree with university accreditation.</p>
Uruguay	<p>In 2007 the National Unified System of Teacher Training was approved by Resolution No. 67, which notes that <i>“professionalism has been rethought from three innovative elements: a) the framework of the Single System, b) the university character and c) the conception of ‘training as a continuous process, globally planned, that includes undergraduate, graduate courses and updates...”</i>²⁰⁸</p> <p>The new curriculum for teacher training includes the professional development common core courses, and courses related to the disciplines and teaching, to which research is incorporated.</p>	<p>In the area of training postgraduate courses are being implemented to achieve better educational results throughout the system.</p> <p>To this end, a network of teacher training institutes (IFD) will be formed as the basis of a unified system. In this regard, Teacher Regional Centers (CERP) are now within the middle and technical area of the Direction of Training and Professional Development for Teachers. The curriculum, which offers distance, semi-present and onsite courses, seeks to achieve certification on all levels.²⁰⁹</p>
Venezuela	<p>In 1980 the Organic Law of Education establishes the teacher profession at the level of higher education. In this regard, teacher training has three categories: teachers that graduate from pedagogic institutes, those with higher degrees from Universities, and higher technicians from university institutions.</p> <p>In 1988 the official institutions of teacher training were integrated into the Experimental Libertador Pedagogic University to structure a coherent and coordinated system.</p>	<p>The Ministry of Higher Education and the Institutes of University Education are responsible for teacher training, and for formulating the bases of the National Program of Ongoing Training.</p> <p>The National Board of Universities authorizes postgraduate courses that include professional specializations, Master's, Doctorates, as well as courses in training, improvement or updating, professional development and postdoctoral.²¹⁰</p>

²⁰⁸ http://www.oei.es/noticias/IMG/pdf/SUNFD_2008_uruguay.pdf

²⁰⁹ http://www.oei.es/noticias/IMG/pdf/SUNFD_2008_uruguay.pdf

²¹⁰ http://www.oei.es/docentes/info_pais/informe_formacion_docente_venezuela_iesalc.pdf

Country	Initial Training	Continuing Training
	<p>In 2003, Mission Sucre is established, and directed specifically to higher education from the perspective of the municipalization of education. One of their programs is the <i>National Program of Educator</i>. The curriculum includes: (i) general training, (ii) pedagogic training, (iii) professional training and (iv) specialized training.</p>	

Source: Organization of Ibero-American States. *Organization and structure of the teaching formation in Latin America*. Extracted from [http://www.oei.es/linea6/inf &orme.PDF](http://www.oei.es/linea6/inf%20ormes.PDF)

Analysis of the table indicates that in most countries initial teacher training is carried out in higher institutes of pedagogy and universities, and lasts between three and five years. In Bolivia, Guatemala and Nicaragua, preschool and primary school teachers were trained in regular schools in the diversified cycle of secondary education. At present, these schools are in the process of transformation into tertiary institutions. In Honduras, preschool teachers must obtain a degree of primary teacher in the diversified cycle of secondary education, and then complete two additional years of study.

On the other hand, in rural and marginal urban areas of Latin America, the education of children from zero to six years takes place in non-formal or out-of-school programs, where the educational agent usually is a community member, preferably with a high school diploma, although in remote areas the level of education is lower. Given the lack of support for obtaining a teaching degree, and to ensure the best performance of their functions, these educational actors are trained, advised and supervised by an education professional in the corresponding level. The promoter or technician's work is developed with a group of children or parents.

Profiles of preschool teachers in Latin America

Another feature common to all countries is the development of teaching staff profiles. Without doubt, the profile is one of the most significant factors to guide curriculum content or teacher training programs.

Below are teacher profiles nominated by the countries of Latin America that are generally common in the professional development of preschool and primary school teachers, thus establishing a common content core for the two educational levels.

Table 18. Profiles of preschool teachers in Latin America

Countries	Teacher Profile
Argentina	<p>The teacher must be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Master the common core content and be able to contextualize them in his or her teaching. - Theoretically base his or her teaching practices on a framework of ethical and social conceptions of knowledge, according to the school and education. - Establish institutional and positive personal relationships.

Countries	Teacher Profile
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participate, together with other teachers, in the development and implementation of the Institutional Education Project, according to the particular social context of each respective school. - Analyze and interpret the results of his or her work, and evaluate and modify them in order to improve the quality of learning. - Participate in educational research. - Actively cooperate in processes of innovation and educational change as part of the exercise of his or her professional role.
Bolivia	<p>The teacher is conceived as someone who must be a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learning mediator and initiator. - Role model of knowledge-building activities. - Articulator of teamwork. - Observer of students, and intercultural communicator able to establish relations of productive interaction. - He or she should also be able to configure the classroom into a space of diverse learning and group work, diversify learning contexts, stimulate learning processes with active methodologies, and develop self-reflection and higher mental processes in his or her students.
Brazil	<p>The teacher must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be guided by principles of democratic ethics. - Understand the context and relationships in which educational practice is embedded. - Direct methodological and teaching decisions on ethical and epistemological principles. - Investigate the educational context, and take educational practice as an object of reflection. - Generate an educational practice that takes the characteristics of his or her students and community into account. - Generate teaching proposals that promote and enhance learning. - Use various assessment strategies. - Establish partnerships with parents.
Chile	<p>The teacher must be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote the learning achievement of his or her students. - Target education toward meaningful learning. - Accept the diversity among his or her students. - Develop projects and modify curriculum components. - Develop habits of cooperation and teamwork. - Manage new methodologies, techniques and materials to support work. - Lead extracurricular activities.
Colombia	<p>Colombian teachers must be education professionals able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Produce knowledge and innovations in education and teaching. - Overcome the traditional lecture method of teaching. - Ensure that learners can appropriate the best available knowledge of the society. - Create pleasant conditions in the school for group self-study and self-learning cooperatives (...), - Ensure that the appropriation of knowledge occurs in a democratic

Countries	Teacher Profile
	<p>environment, with self-esteem and solidarity, and that the best constructed educational experiences and knowledge are systematized, cumulated and reproduced by the next generation of education professionals, which means develop pedagogical tradition. (MEN, 1996).</p>
Costa Rica	<p>The teacher must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Socially committed. - Open and sensitive. - Tolerant. - Creative. - Updated in the areas he or she teaches. - Critical. - Inter-disciplinary. - Committed to change and innovation. - Open to cooperative and group work. - Fully aware of his or her leadership. - Knowledgeable of his or her students' natural and socio-cultural contexts. - A participant in the educational management of the school, community and sector.
Dominican Republic	<p>The teacher must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Show ability to function at work with pedagogical and administrative mastery of his functions. - Have a critical and innovative spirit by which he or she can value new trends and incorporate them into his or her practice. - Demonstrate integrity, and be able to serve as a model and example to his or her students and those working in his or her environment. - Be respectful of his or her environment and always committed to excellence. - Be able to commit to a vision of excellence in education, in order to transform his or her teaching practice.
Ecuador	<p>The profile is broken down into an extensive array of qualities from the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guide in learning building. - Microcurriculum designer. - Evaluator of processes and achievements.
El Salvador	<p>The teacher is conceived as the professional who has the responsibility to facilitate and guide the learning process individually and in groups of students.</p> <p>A teacher that reflects the teaching practice, so that he or she can transform reality and plan the educational processes in working groups, is required.</p>
Guatemala	<p>The teacher must be a counselor who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Respects and encourages respect for his or her community around ethical and oral values. - Knows his or her ecological environment, and the economic, social, historical, political, and cultural realities of Guatemala. - Efficiently plans his or her work. - Participates in activities of professional updating and pedagogical training.

Countries	Teacher Profile
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaborates in the organization and conduct of educational and cultural activities of the community as a whole. - Fosters a positive attitude to change and criticism in the educational process, both in students as well as in him or herself.
Honduras	<p>The future teacher develops the competencies to act as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mediator between knowledge and student learning. - Researcher of the state of education at the classroom, school and community level. - Promoter of the development of the school, and the community it serves.
Mexico	<p>The teacher is characterized by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having achieved professional autonomy that allows him or her to make decisions. - Being committed to his or her teaching and ongoing professional development. - Organizing the work of education, designing and implementing strategies as well as learning activities. - Recognizing the diversity of the group of children group under his or her charge. - Supporting the establishment of rules of coexistence in the classroom and beyond.
Nicaragua	<p>The teacher must be a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dynamic input in the process of constructing knowledge, and in the development of abilities and basic skills of his or her students. - Leader who can express social sensitivity, projecting him or herself as a positive agent of change in the school and community. - Citizen who practices and promotes honesty and integrity, repudiating all forms of corruption that undermines the law, morality and decency. - Generator of changes in the social context.
Panama	<p>The Panamanian teacher must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preserve and enhance his physical, mental and social health. - Be committed to civic, ethical, moral, social, political, economic, religious and cultural values, within a nationalist spirit. - Have a broad vision of the universe. - Have feelings of social justice, human solidarity, teaching vocation, and a critical, creative and scientific attitude in practice.
Paraguay	<p>The teacher must be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Practice principles and values that foster civic awareness and show a democratic coexistence. - Show sensitivity and responsibility for the preservation, restoration and upgrading of natural and social environment resources. - Make a commitment to the dissemination, preservation and rescue of cultural heritage, with an openness to different cultures. - Demonstrate a positive attitude towards Paraguayan multilingualism and multiculturalism, and consolidate bilingualism as the foundation and the core of national identity. - Implement the philosophical, scientific and educational foundations of the

Countries	Teacher Profile
	<p>curriculum to his or her educational action.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utilize Guaraní and Castilian languages fluently in his or her oral and written communication. - Demonstrate skills in the management of active teaching strategies. - Develop innovative processes and actions to improve the quality of teaching-learning processes, and plan and evaluate teaching and learning processes.
Peru	<p>Considers a teacher as a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Human being. - Social being. - Professional. - Facilitator. - Researcher. - Promoter in the dimensions of knowing to be, knowing to live together, knowing to think and knowing to do.
Uruguay	<p>As a professional, the teacher assumes his or her condition of "situated subject" on the complexities of society, in a historical time and geographical space:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creator and disseminator of culture; promoter of development of the subject, both in individual and collective dimension. - Having the professional development required to recognize the multidimensional nature of social transformations which create and recreate human beings. - Able to develop autonomy in decision-making within the framework of democratic practices; and a commitment to build a more human society, with justice and solidarity, based on the full exercise of Human Rights. - Protagonist in the processes of discussion, development and definition of educational policies and basis of the educational system that society needs. - Committed to comprehensive education of his or her students. - Aware of the many streams of thought, the epistemological complexity of knowledge and educational fact; and conscious of the areas of knowledge that relate to his or her practice. - Trained in collaborative and interdisciplinary work, and willing to coordinate the various inter and extra-institutional frameworks. - Able to problematize his or her knowledge, thus enabling him or her to reflect on his or her practices, and discuss them with colleagues and propose alternatives. - Be able to reaffirm his or her status of teacher, and therefore his or her commitment to the educational processes.
Venezuela	<p>The teacher must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote innovation and educational development, and participate creatively in developing educational designs. - Be prepared to consider the social context, ethical implications, and student development. - Master the basic understandings of knowledge areas in which his or her fields of expertise are ascribed. - Have practical knowledge of the processes of schooling of students. - Know the educational reality and his or her relations with social, economic, political and cultural factors, in the country, region and community.

Countries	Teacher Profile
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be aware of his or her responsibilities in the analysis and solution of problems affecting the functioning of the institution and the community. - Have a critical attitude towards the possibilities of change and continuous improvement.

Source: Organization and structure of teacher professional development in Latin America, OEI <http://www.oei.es/linea6/informe.PDF>

In relation to the profiles, Braslavsky (1999) states:

“When referring to the profile teachers must have, two trends are often confirmed. The first is oversimplification. It is said that they should know and know how to teach. The second is a lack of hierarchy. Long lists of skills and knowledge that teachers should have are presented. You may need to find a middle alternative, (...) which accounts for the complexity of the required profile, but also that focuses attention and prioritizes the actions to be taken. (...) We propose that this focus should be to ensure simultaneously skills for better performance in the conjuncture and for better participation in the reinvention of the school and education systems.”²¹¹

Countries have developed a variety of materials and documents that provide teachers with guidance to accompany their educational task, in a process of ongoing professional development. Some of these documents are:

- The *Common Core for the Initial Level and First and Second Cycle of Secondary Education of the EGB* in Argentina, which promotes continuity between the two levels. Another document that guides the teaching task in rural Argentine areas is called the *Multi-age room in the initial education*²¹² that the authors describe as a proposal for multiple readings. The document aims to support, accompany and enrich the work of teachers in rural areas, generating forms of organizing children, furniture, materials and teaching proposals that take into consideration the peculiarities and characteristics of these areas. The multi-age classroom provides care and education to children between the ages of two and five.
- *Parameters in action*, in Brazil²¹³ provides teachers with guidance in the study of the curriculum to facilitate its understanding and use. The document is organized into study modules that contain different activities, which are intended to make teachers reflect on their daily experiences in school, encouraging teamwork and collective construction of pedagogical knowledge.
- *The technical criteria of curricular articulation between nursery and primary education*, in Chile,²¹⁴ constitutes teaching technical standards to support and guide the process of articulation between the two levels, and to guarantee admission, retention and advancement of children in primary education. This proposal is aimed at teachers of both levels to carry out joint activities in the library and resource center for learning, among other possibilities.

²¹¹ *Revista Iberoamericana de Educación*, No 19, “Bases, orientaciones y criterios para el diseño de programas de formación de profesores”. <http://www.oei.es/oeivirt/rie19a01.htm>

²¹² <http://www.oei.es/noticias/spip.php?article1860>

²¹³ http://www.oei.es/inicial/curriculum/pcnacao_eduinf.pdf

²¹⁴ http://www.mineduc.cl/index.php?id_seccion=1432&id_portal=16&id_contenido=2511

- *Modules of the Training Program and Teacher Update* in Mexico are intended to provide an alternative that allow teachers to know the new preschool program through self-study and reflection, for its application in daily work with children. The Program consists of the following documents: I. Self-study guide, II. Oral Language,²¹⁵ III. Children's Approximation to Written Language, IV. Mathematical Child Thinking, V. Knowledge and Exploration of the World, VI. Artistic Expression and Appreciation, and VII. Physical Health and Development.
- The guidelines for curriculum development for children ages four, five and six in Guatemala²¹⁶ is intended to provide suggestions for curriculum development and learning activities around four themes: "Knowing Ourselves," "Weaving Relationships," "Building Our Coexistence" and "Harvesting the Future." As stated in the document, each theme generates several activities, and each activity has the necessary information to facilitate understanding such as: a name related to its contents, a table with the name of the areas, competences to be achieved, guidelines for their development, and indicators of achievement. At the end of each topic an example of an activity or tool that can be used in the evaluation is included.

These documents and provisions for continuous training for teachers are designed to improve the quality of education and to promote continuity of action between the two educational levels. Also, in the Argentine educational system, the *Basis for curriculum design for teacher professional development of the initial level* shares the structure and much of the content with the *Basis for curriculum design for teacher professional development of the primary level*. It has been taken into account that both designs emerge from common processes, that both are based on the same theoretical approach, and are aimed at training teachers in educational levels that match in some features and therefore must be closely coordinated.

In Colombia, the National Pedagogical University, the leading institution in training teachers in the Licentiate of Early Childhood Education curriculum project, trains teachers in the education of children from ages zero to eight, bridging the gap between preschool and primary school.

However, some early childhood experts believe that this integration in teacher education can affect the development of activities in preschool classrooms by limiting the development of teaching strategies that focus on the child, as well as the development of activities for toddlers.²¹⁷ For this reason, an alternative proposed by France would be to, in addition to the joint training of teachers, establish agreements or alliances between the levels of nursery and primary education to promote continuity between them, while ensuring that neither one prevails over the other. An appropriate strategy would be to make education services for preschool and primary education act in tandem and in coordination with parental and community involvement from a shared conception of the child, of learning, teaching and knowledge, with the aim to develop and implement a common culture for early childhood education, laying the groundwork for a "strong and fair partnerships" (OECD, 2001, 2006) among preschool and school. In this regard, Neuman (2008) suggests that in-service training of teachers should be carried out in tandem, as this would give teachers the opportunity to learn from each other, to share experiences and reflect on their own practices.

²¹⁵ <http://www.oei.es/linea3/ModuloII.pdf>

²¹⁶ www.oei.es/inicial/curriculum/orientaciones_infantil_guatemala.pdf

²¹⁷ Kaga, Y (2007), *Formación y condiciones laborales de docentes franceses de nivel preescolar*, N 37. www.unesco.org/education/earlychildhood/brief (consulted 8/30/2008).

In non-formal programs outside the school system, the educational agent does not have the education degree to support his or her teaching work. It is therefore necessary that the teacher responsible for monitoring and tracking programs develop, with staff under his charge, a permanent training plan to improve the quality of their pedagogy. The monitoring and evaluating of the promoters performance in their interactions with children, would allow the teacher to detect the abilities and limitations from which to develop his or her plan.

Undoubtedly, initial and continuing professional development of teachers involved in early childhood care and education requires a deeper analysis in order to identify teachers' strengths and weaknesses, and thus to design the most appropriate strategies and content in order to ensure the quality of education and successful transitions from the home to school. Supervisors usually record this information to plan the training, upgrading or improvement courses appropriately.

Professional development in intercultural bilingual education in Latin America

One particular area of teacher training requires special attention in countries where indigenous people whose mother tongue differs from the official language, and that is bilingual teacher training. Numerous studies and research show the benefits of education in the mother tongue, especially in early childhood education. There is also data showing that the simultaneous teaching in the official language and children's mother tongue contributes to achieving better school results, stimulating children's cognitive development (Medium, 1974, Stewart 1983, Jung et al, 1989; Muñoz, 1994; Skutabb-Kangas and García, 1995).²¹⁸ However, in some countries the number of bilingual teachers is still insufficient to meet the demand for their respective populations. This is a factor affecting the quality of education, and is why UNESCO's Monitoring Report 2007 proposes as an alternative the participation of multilingual members of the family and community as a valuable resource, both inside and outside the classroom.

Moreover, in some of the Region's countries successful experiments in Intercultural Bilingual Education have been conducted, which to some extent also favor the transitions and inclusion of diversity. Those experiences should be taken into account by policy makers, and by the entities responsible for education and allocation of resources in Latin American countries, when formulating policy guidelines in their development plans. These success stories include:

- When evaluating the program in Guatemala (PRONEBI), it was “found that children who received bilingual education outperformed their peers in regular schools in math, language and natural sciences.”²¹⁹
- The Bilingual Teachers Training Program in the Peruvian Amazon (FORMABIAP)²²⁰ specializes in intercultural bilingual education for the Pedagogical Superior Institute of Loreto primary school, whose staff has diversified the Primary Curriculum, and formulated guidelines for initial teacher professional development, for the professionalization and training, and developed the guide Kapeshi 2 for Promoters of PRONOEI (Unschooling Program in Early Education).²²¹

²¹⁸ Lopez , L .E. (1997), Revista Iberoamericana de Educación No 13. www.oei.org.co/oeivirt/rie13a03.htm (consulted 8/27/2008).

²¹⁹ López, L .E. (1998), La eficacia y validez de lo obvio: lecciones aprendidas desde la evaluación de procesos educativos. <http://www.rieoei.org/oeivirt/rie17a03.pdf> (consultado 8/20/2008).

²²⁰ “Una pedagogía de la selva”. www.cab.int.co/cab42/downloads/MaestrosindiosPeru.pdf (consulted 8/20/2008).

²²¹ “La Guía Kapeshi 2 Una mirada a la forma de aprender en el mundo asháninka”. www.aulaintercultural.org/article.php3?id_article=1085 (consulted 8/30/2008).

- The Teacher Professional Development Program to train indigenous bilingual teachers, developed by the Normal Superior School of Sibundoy,²²² in Colombia.
- The National Intercultural Bilingual Program in Tucumán,²²³ Argentina also entered the area of training bilingual teachers. This is the first experiment to take place in the country. As part of the program, two Teacher Training Centers have opened for the first and second cycle of basic education, through the tertiary level and with an intercultural orientation.

3. Teacher Training in the Caribbean

With regard to professional development and training of personnel working in early childhood in the Caribbean, Charles Williams (2006) reported that because of the informality with which early care and education services have been expanding in the region, the result is a rather poor level of training. Children are cared for by adults with limited basic education, and a poor understanding of child development and care.

According to the *Caribbean Action Plan for 2002-2015*, only Bahamas, Barbados and the British Virgin Islands require post-secondary education for staff heading preschools, and only Barbados and the Bahamas require such qualifications for the heads of care centers.²²⁴ Moreover, around ten countries do not require the completion of high school in order to work in a care center as support staff. In another significant group of countries, such qualifications are also not required to work in a preschool. Jamaica, Belize, Bahamas, Barbados, the Cayman Islands and Trinidad and Tobago provide certified training for staff working in early childhood.

Barbados is perhaps one of the most notable exceptions in relation to training and qualifications of staff working in early childhood. In this country, training in early care and education was introduced in education schools in 1987. As a result, teachers in most day care centers have either pedagogy training or a pedagogy degree. As reported by Charles & Williams (2006), a large percentage of teachers have a Master's degree in early childhood education, and a considerable proportion has received in-service training in early education.

In Trinidad and Tobago, since 1980, SERVOL offers a training program through a regional training and resource center.²²⁵ This center was created to train teachers and administrators in the country, as well as in other countries, and to expand the model of early care and education. In its website, SERVOL notes that in the past two decades it has trained about 600 teachers from Antigua, Barbados, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, and St. Kitts. Similarly, in recent years the Ministry of Education has made efforts to improve the skill and training level for those working with preschoolers. According to information from the Ministry of Education of Trinidad and Tobago (2008), nowadays it is important that in each early care and education center there be a qualified teacher to ensure compliance with quality standards, and to see that the curriculum is interpreted according to the standards established in the curriculum guide. The Ministry of Education, in coordination with various institutions of higher education, has ensured that the degree in early childhood education is offered in universities, and that SERVOL offers certification in early childhood. To work as a helper or assistant teacher in a center for early care

²²² www.colombiaaprende.edu.co/html/mediateca/1607/article-90428.html (consulted 8/29/2008)

²²³ www.aulaintercultural.org/article.php?id_article=1612 (consulted 8/30/2008)

²²⁴ These data come from previous work at UNESCO GMR 2007 of Charles & Williams who conducted a survey in 14 countries in the Caribbean region to gather information on progress in early childhood and on the Plan of Action for Early Childhood of the Caribbean.

²²⁵ To be a teacher in Trinidad and Tobago one must obtain a registration number of teacher. To obtain this registration number one must meet one of these five criteria: having five O'Level approvals in five tests (national exams equivalent to England exams at secondary level) or a qualification from an accredited university or superior institute of education.

and education it is necessary to have passed national exams, which include five subjects, are taken in the last years of high school, and have a professional certification as stipulated by the Ministry.

Several countries have initiated processes to improve and strengthen the competencies and skills of those working with children. From the Action Plan for Early Education in the Caribbean, signed in 1997 by the Caribbean countries, it was established that one of the nine goals of the Caribbean countries in relation to early childhood was to educate and train all workers of education and care services. Jamaica, Grenada, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines have developed a skill-based national certification system that is currently being used as the basis for the training of early childhood staff.

The model of education and competency-based training in Jamaica is a system that incorporates knowledge, skills and attitudes to the business of preparing the workforce. The competencies are based on specific requirements of different work activities, and are based on occupational standards for early childhood (prepared and published in 1998). National standards for the operation, management and supervision of programs for early care and education were recently published (Early Childhood Commission, Jamaica 2007)²²⁶. The standards indicate that staff must have reached at least the first level of training. In Jamaica, the institutions that train teaching staff are: the University of West Indies, University of Technology, three colleges, the National Training Agency of Human Employment and Resource Trust (HEART) and the National Council of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NCTVET).

This model of competency-based certification was adopted by CARICOM, in 2002 in the Regional Framework for Vocational Qualifications, for regional use (CANTA 2005). This model is organized into five qualification levels, each with a different degree of autonomy, skill and responsibility that corresponds to employment levels in the labor market. The certificate is granted upon completion of the evaluation, which is measured in terms of national and regional occupational standards. The ratings recognize the competencies required to perform the work at different levels. This framework provides a continuous system to integrate academic and vocational routes.

- Level 1: direct supervision, entry position;
- Level 2: skilled worker - self-employed;
- Level 3: independent or autonomous worker – supervisor;
- Level 4: Specialist or supervisor – technical manager;
- Level 5: Head or professional worker – executive, professional.

The first three levels are occupational levels, and occupational standards for levels one through three for early childhood staff were developed and approved.

St. Kitts and Nevis should have already introduced certification in early childhood based on competency, in accordance with plans announced in 2006. In Antigua, the Early Childhood Educational Training Centre, in collaboration with the Institute of Continuing Education of Antigua & Barbuda, has introduced the Caribbean Vocational Qualifications (CVQ) in Early Childhood. In Guyana, care center staff can receive a pre-service education in higher institutions and obtain a degree in early education that also enables them to teach in the first two grades of primary school. The training lasts three years. The other option is through an in-service training program, which lasts two years.

²²⁶ The first standard has to do with staff and noted that "the staff working in these programs have the features, training, knowledge, skills and attitude to help children reach their potential" establishing 7 criteria for measuring this standard.

Another document that provides information about the minimum qualifications of staff working in early childhood programs is the Early Childhood Development Minimum Service Standard prepared by CARICOM (2006), which refers to the profile and preparation of people working in early childhood in the Caribbean. According to the text, the minimum standard requirement is to complete secondary education, and be certified in the appropriate level of early childhood. These levels include: (i) certificate of higher education for the management of services for children from ages three to five (e.g. Bachelor's or Level 3 TVET certificate); (ii) certification as a qualified teacher to work with children, such as a national diploma in early childhood education; and (iii) certification as a caregiver or person working in early education settings, such as levels one and three.

With respect to teacher training initiatives that promote transitions, in St. Kitts there is a program through which the preschool teachers in primary schools attend an annual training that is directed to workers of early care and education centers. The aim is to ensure a smoother transition for children moving from the ECD to preschool programs (Charles & Williams 2006).

In Nevis, with support from UNICEF (2008), the *Transition Programme* began in the '90s to facilitate the transition. The program was implemented in phases. In a first phase, children spent some days in the new environment before classes officially began. In the second, preschool children participated in activities in kindergarten classrooms. In 2000, the third phase was introduced, which allowed some kindergarten teachers to participate in the two-week orientation workshop that is usually intended for preschool teachers. In the fourth phase, with support from UNICEF and the OAS, one-day seminars were held with directors of primary schools. During this seminar, directors had to develop a plan that would allow for a smooth transition. Then, kindergarten teachers gathered for two weeks to address the issue of transition, and to be more aware of the skills and experiences of children entering kindergarten.

In Guyana, in 2002, it was set as an objective to place better-qualified teachers in the early grades of primary school as a strategy to improve the quality of education in the early years and, therefore, contribute to promote positive transitions. Teachers who pursued a specialization in early education are also permitted to teach in the first two grades. The training lasts three years.

Likewise, in Suriname preschool teachers have formal qualifications to teach children ages four and five, as well as the first two grades of primary education. Preschool teacher training covers the period from ages four to eight, while the primary education teacher training covers the period from ages six to 12. Preschool teacher training incorporates training to teach in both preschool and elementary schools, is an intermediate vocational training compared to the training of secondary teachers, which is a higher vocational training. According to the Ministry of Education and Community Development, the minimum requirements in 2004 to become a preschool teacher is to have reached the junior three level of general secondary education, whereas for the primary teacher program one must have graduated from the junior level of general secondary education.

Conclusions

The recognition of teachers, one of the key factors in education quality, led to the analyzation of received initial and ongoing training content, to identify whether in that content any guidance on transitions is transmitted.

It was observed that the training requirements for staff working in care programs for children under the age of three are lower than those working as preschool teachers, as is the case in OECD and Caribbean countries. Minimum qualifications vary by country and by type of service. Staff are generally asked for a full high school diploma with an additional one or two years of higher vocational training. Staff working with children under the age of three receive lower wages than those received by teachers. For this reason, there is a high degree of attrition in these programs.

A clear trend in the Caribbean, and in some English-speaking OECD countries (the United Kingdom and the United States), is the development of a system of competency and certification-based professional development with levels that staff will reach as they gain experience. The objective of these models of professional development is to enable the professionalization of staff working in early childhood without academic qualifications, through certification programs that assess their experience and performance according to standards. To establish the levels, profiles of what teachers should know, learn and do are developed. To access higher levels on the scale of recognition and payment, it is necessary to meet preceding standards and those of the new level being accessed. In the United Kingdom, for example, these standards and profiles for early childhood staff resemble the standards that exist for primary school teachers. The ultimate goal is to improve training level of early childhood staff in order to improve the quality of services.

The evidences found allow one to conclude that one available option to structure teacher training would be to offer the same teacher education for teachers of early childhood and the first two grades of primary school. In several OECD countries (France, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain) the training is identical, allowing one to teach at both levels. In countries like Denmark and Norway, preschool teachers can teach in the first grades of primary school, which also happens in the Caribbean (Guyana and Suriname) and Latin America. In Latin America we found that some countries are developing experiences that must be validated, to later publicize the challenges and achievements. Among these experiences is one made by the National Pedagogical University of Colombia, which developed a curriculum for the Licentiate degree in Early Childhood Education to train teachers of children from zero to eight years, building a bridge between preschool and primary education. In Argentina, the teacher training curriculum for early childhood education shares the theoretical approach and common processes with the curriculum of primary education.

A more detailed study of teacher training curricula in these countries will allow one to determine how much teacher training incorporates elements of preschool and primary schools, and teaching and learning methodologies, among others things. In an ideal context, it would be expected to have a balance between the two orientations, with a greater emphasis on the methodology of work with children in early childhood, in order to fight against the general trend in many countries of “primarizing” preschool education.

It would, however, be necessary to go beyond joint professional development, and do a deeper analysis on teacher education. In the first place, competencies that teachers of both levels should develop should be defined in accordance with the new roles that the education of the 21st century is demanding. Tasks such as diversifying the curriculum, managing techniques for working with adults (parents and community leaders), facilitating transitions from the home to school, the care and education of children under the age of three, and managing research techniques, among others.

The joint training of teachers of the same jurisdiction is a strategy that will allow a rapprochement between the early childhood and primary school teachers, sharing common projects such as organizing a library or game room for children, sharing experiences on planning,

evaluation, learning and teaching strategies, and analyzing documents such as curriculum and guides.

Despite the evidence of the positive effect that education in mother tongue has on children's learning process, especially in the early grades of primary school, there is currently no intercultural bilingual teacher training policy in Latin America that meets the demands of the vernacular-speaking population for the education of their children.

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V. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES

The family has an important role in the child's development in his or her early years. Early childhood is the stage of the life cycle in which the first social relationships are formed, first behavioral rules are learned, habits are consolidated, and the first learnings—which will later serve as the basis for constructing new knowledge—take place. Parents are the first model or reference, and it is through interaction with them that children develop. For this reason, when the child goes off to daycare or school it is important to involve the parents in the process, and to encourage communication and interchange in order to promote continuity of experiences that the child brings from home, and to be able to introduce parents' social codes (their language together with their aspirations, expectations, beliefs and values) to the school. This chapter examines how early childhood policies in some countries OECD, and Latin American and Caribbean countries encourage parental involvement in their children's learning and development, and thereby contribute to successful transitions.

Parental involvement in the Daycare Center or Program

Family involvement and the coordination of activities between the family and educational institution are issues that have been in play since the beginnings of education. Fröebel, Pestalozzi and other pioneers in early childhood education highlighted the importance of working with parents in the education of their children. Parental involvement has positive effects on the child's learning and development. According to a study by Sylva et al. (2004), these effects are just as important as the parents' education, occupation or income.²²⁷ Consequently, timely and pertinent actions through early childhood care and education programs will give parents the chance to contribute to their children's development, feel more confident in carrying out their parenting role, and acquire skills that will help improve interaction with their children.

It is currently recognized that it is during the first three years of a child's life that family attention has the greatest impact. Later, when the child enters school, family involvement will improve children's educational outcomes, especially in situations of poverty. When parents are involved in their children's education, children earn better grades, have a better attendance record, exhibit more positive attitudes and conduct, and are more likely to graduate.²²⁸ Arnold (2004) notes that:

“Where families live in poverty, adults do risk feeling little sense of agency or control, powerless to promote their children’s best interests. Too often parents underestimate their ability (through everyday activities and conversations) to support their young children’s enthusiasm for learning, their language development and their sense of self. Yet these are the very capacities that have the greatest significance in enabling children to thrive at school and break the cycle of poverty.”²²⁹

For this reason, programs targeted at parents are often combined with literacy programs.

Despite the importance of parental involvement in their children's education, this is generally limited to financial or in-kind contributions, or to some information sessions regarding their children's performance. A recent OECD document (2007) finds it curious that parents have had such a limited role in the development of early childhood policy and the supervision of services, considering that early childhood is one of the sectors that has been more open to parental involvement.

Parents and teachers must be aware that the school is an ideal place for communication, where opinions are exchanged, knowledge is socialized, and agreements are reached regarding children's education. Sensat (2004) notes that "in the education of small children it is essential that there be a solid relationship, communication and interchange between fathers, mothers and

²²⁷ A regional study by the World Bank shows that for children under five years whose mothers have no education the mortality rate is 140/1000, and that it drops to 90/1000 when the mother has between four and six years of schooling, and to 50/1000 when she has completed primary school. Other studies have demonstrated the importance of the mother as an educational and cultural factor, and the close relationship that exists between maternal education and children's academic performance (Silveira, S. *La dimensión de género y sus implicaciones en la relación entre juventud, trabajo y formación*. www.cinterfor.org.uy/jovenes/doc/not/libro273/epieck14.pdf).

²²⁸ Henderson & Berla (1994), cited by HRFP (2004).

²²⁹ Arnold, C., cited in *Early Childhood and Primary Education, Early Childhood in Focus 2*, Bernard van Leer Foundation, 2007.

educators, and they must have the right to intervene democratically in the management of centers".²³⁰

Various types of involvement should be encouraged, from managing the center or program to participating in the classroom. The transition from the home to the program is facilitated when parents have an active role, giving continuity to the child's experience, acting as a bridge between the different services, and serving as the main source of support for the child. Parents must feel welcome in the school and early childhood education centers. Recognizing parents' central role, most countries have explicit policies for involving them.

1. Parental Involvement in OECD Countries

Policies in OECD countries recognize the importance of parental involvement and the use of strategies to forge partnerships between parents and services on behalf of children's education.

Finland and Norway encourage comprehensive parental involvement. Finland's policy for early childhood care and education makes children's education the parents' responsibility, and gives priority to dialogue and teamwork between parents and teachers (and children themselves). It also declares that parents must be informed about early childhood education services in order to select the environment their children will attend. Parents should work with educators to support their children's development and learning, and should be offered opportunities to form support groups. In Norway, the Kindergarten Act states that preschool must support parents in caring for their children, and provide the foundation for development and learning for life. Between the parents and preschool there must be respect and recognition of the responsibilities and functions of each, as well as collaboration and regular contact in which information is exchanged on the child's progress and on pedagogical activities. Parents should feel confident in approaching the kindergarten with issues of concern in relation to their children, and be assured that their children are respected. For its part, the kindergarten should be sensitive to parents' expectations and cultural background, and should communicate pedagogical objectives and activities regularly to them.

Policy documents and Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom also stress the importance of partnership with parents. In Australia, the 2008 National Quality Framework indicates that a component of quality programs are partnerships with parents to ensure that cultural and linguistic needs are met. It furthermore states that care and education programs should become interactive spaces for sharing experiences. In New Zealand, the "Pathways to the Future" early childhood strategy proposes cooperation with parents as one of its three objectives, so that they be more involved in their children's early learning. In the United Kingdom, the 2007 Children's Plan highlights partnership with parents as a central aspect in all levels of the educational process (early years, primary and secondary school). An underlying principle of the plan is that parents are responsible for their children's upbringing, and that the State should support them in that role.

Parental involvement in early childhood policy

In Sweden, early childhood policy was heavily influenced by pressure from civil society, and parents in particular, for the provision of early childhood care and education services. During the 1960s, mothers returning to the workforce began a movement to demand the support of government services in caring for their children. The provision of care and education services

²³⁰ Sensat, A.M. (2004). La educación Infantil un derecho Revista de la Asociación de maestros Rosa Sensat. In-fan-cia educar de 0 a 6 años p. :6.

thus became an item on the public agenda. By 1990 the Swedes were already viewing state-subsidized care and education services as a right.

Parental involvement in program management

Denmark stresses parental involvement in the management of childcare centers and programs, and in monitoring and improving their quality. Since 1993, daycare centers have been monitored by elected parent committees (as well as by the municipal authorities) that hold decision-making power in relation to establishing the principles that guide the center's activities and budget management. Parent committees can also make recommendations concerning staff, and have an important role in defining the institutions' annual plans, which are submitted to the municipal authorities for funding.

In New Zealand parents are heavily involved in managing the childcare center or program, primarily through the modality of playgroups, in which parents have the opportunity to discuss group activities and be involved in decisions that are made. They also share information on playgroup activities. The regulations governing other types of early education and care programs also specify the importance of parental involvement in their policies. Parents should have access to information on the center's operating philosophy, and information concerning their child; receive information on how to be involved, expenditures and costs; and lastly, parents should partake in the review and development of service operational documents (including operations and procedures).

Parental involvement in the development of curricular content

In Finland, the curriculum calls for joint input from teachers and parents for each child's individual plan. Parents must also be involved in the preparation the center's curriculum. As in Finland, Norwegian kindergartens must prepare an annual plan to guide teachers in their pedagogical activities (as the basis for municipal supervision), but also as a starting point from which parents can influence activity content. The priorities set forth in the plan as well as its contents should be discussed in the parent councils and coordinating committees.

Informing parents about their children's academic progress

With respect to parents, Finland has developed documents for informing them about its early childhood policies and the role they play as parents. A concise document was prepared explaining the principles of early childhood care and education, the ways children learn, and the function of parents in developing their child's individual plan and the local curriculum. This document provides an overview of early childhood, giving parents key information on the foundations of the national curriculum, and providing guidance on their role in the process.²³¹

Australia has developed documents for transmitting information on children to parents, and from parents to teachers, as it is the teachers who support the children in the care and education programs, while the parents support them at home with activities and materials. New Zealand distributes information to parents that encourage them to take an active role in their children's learning and development. It also offers them support and development services in the early childhood care and education centers.

The United Kingdom plans to create a "Parent's Charter," describing the minimum level of support that parents should expect from the local authorities in the Sure Start centers. It also

²³¹ Because of language limitations, other documentation for parents was not reviewed; however, all countries have a significant number of resources available to parents.

suggests that parents be given an individual development record that tracks each child from birth to the age of 11. It furthermore proposes that schools provide counselors to help parents improve their children's attendance and behavior, and to offer advice. Funding has been provided for a series of "pilots" to identify the most appropriate strategies at the local level for involving parents more closely.

One approach used in OECD countries to inform parents about preschool education objectives and activities are web pages that include documents covering parents' rights of access to care and education programs; childrearing guidelines; and how to become involved in their children's activities in the center. The Education Ministries of the United Kingdom and New Zealand have webpages devoted specifically to the parents of young children. The New Zealand Ministry of Education, through its "Team Up" webpage, created in 2004, publishes documents and materials for parents at each level of the educational system. Information on the first years covers child rearing, home-based activities, and Ministry policies and programs. The information is also available in Maori and Pasifika.

In Australia, the "Early Childhood Australia" Association (ECA) has published a number of online resources to assist parents and educators in helping children make the transition from childcare to preschool, and from preschool to school. One important resource is the book entitled "Your Child's First Year at School: A Book for Parents," written by the Australian Primary Principals Association and the ECA. It was reportedly distributed at the beginning of 2007 school year to 23,000 parents in 700 schools.²³²

Funding has also been provided for research to document the effects of parental involvement in their children's education. The United Kingdom, for instance, has a project entitled "Effective Provision of Preschool Education." The various findings from this longitudinal study of children (beginning in preschool and following them throughout their academic careers) show that the home environment and parental involvement in their children's education are crucial for improving learning outcomes. As Sylva et al. (2004) note, parental involvement can be an even more important factor than their level of education, occupation or income.

The diversity of programs available for parents

OECD countries have introduced a variety of programs that include components targeted at parents. The United Kingdom has the "Sure Start Children's Centres" that offer parents support services, with a focus on parent-child bonds and modeling conduct (see the following chapter for more information). Another program was the Early Learning Partnership Project, which was implemented between October 2006 and March 2008, and was designed to help families support their children's learning.²³³ Another initiative was the "Starting School and Moving On" sessions, sponsored by the Family and Parenting Institute with support from the Department for Children, Schools and Family.²³⁴ Schools in the United Kingdom are now implementing a series of reforms

²³² The book is organized in chapters with information on: the child's first year in school and how parents must provide a secure basis and support the child's independence; the school and practical matters; development and learning; school learning; parents and their children; the parent-school partnership; how to track children's learning; and how to work together to solve problems.

²³³ The project worked with voluntary organizations, each of which was running a recognized program of working with parents and one or more schools. The objective was to develop good practice in working with parents of children between one and three years who were at risk of learning delay. The evaluation covered 20 schools, and demonstrated positive impacts on parents' perceptions and practices.

²³⁴ The program involves "Transition Information Sessions" where the objective is to lay the foundations for an effective home/school partnership, and to promote best outcomes for every child by sharing ideas about how to keep children safe, happy and learning. They include giving parents information about the range of services available to

to provide parents with support through joint learning workshops for parents and children, information sessions on key phases of transition, and classes for parents to promote formal and non-formal learning.

In Ireland the Early Start Pre-School Project is a one-year preventative intervention program offered in selected schools, in designated disadvantaged areas. Each Early Start center is set up in vacant classrooms in existing schools, and caters for approximately 60 children between the ages of three and four in morning and afternoon sessions run by qualified teachers. A key element of the program is parental involvement, both in everyday management and the organization of activities. Working in conjunction with the school's Home School Community Liaison Coordinator, staff encourage parents to take part in planning structured activities throughout the year. The objective of this participation is to train parents as the principal educators, giving them the tools and developing the skills to maximize their involvement in their children's preschool education. The coordinator's role is to seek all possible opportunities to involve parents, either through home visits or through informal contact at school. The coordinator supports parents in the school registration process and also provides ongoing support to program staff.

In the United States, the Head Start Program has an important component for family involvement in center activities (for more detail, see the following chapter). Other recognized programs with a heavy parent involvement component are the High/Scope Perry Preschool, the Carolina Abecedarian, and the Chicago Child Parent Center. The Carolina Abecedarian project, conducted in the 1970s, developed a curriculum based on games that could be incorporated into the child's daily routine, with special emphasis on language development. The curriculum is now commercialized and available to enrich curricula in care and education centers. It comes in five volumes, each with detailed activities including photographs, a list of development milestones for the period covered by each volume, and general information on child development. The material is available in Spanish under the title *Aprendamos Juntos*. Children's progress was monitored over time with follow-up studies conducted at ages 12, 15, and 21, demonstrating a positive impact.



The Chicago Child Parent Program also had a strong parental involvement component. The objective was to improve parent-child relations, strengthen family ties to the school, and prepare children for entry into primary school. Each center had a "parent resource teacher" responsible for the parental component, which included activities in resource classrooms, volunteering in the classroom (at least half a morning per week), participation in school events,

support them. A manual of ideas was developed with suggestions for schools as to the content of their sessions. All schools are expected to offer this service by 2010.

and participation in personal development courses. The program also had a component to promote transitions through the first and third grades of primary school, by placing children in smaller classes, including teaching assistants in each class, providing extra materials, and coordinating pedagogical activities, professional development, and parent activities through the resource center.

The nongovernmental sector in the United States is also implementing a number of initiatives that are centered on a parental involvement component. The "Ready Schools" program seeks to prepare public schools to receive disadvantaged children and promote their academic success. The program is offered in 31 sites in the states of Arkansas, Connecticut, Indiana, Oregon, Washington and West Virginia, and employs two strategies to promote family involvement. One of these encourages parents to become involved in school activities by: (i) providing a written policy document on working with parents, (ii) offering parents a welcome packet in their mother tongue, (iii) providing training to teachers to establish relationships with parents from different cultures, (iv) creating a parent center in the schools, (v) organizing welcome activities for parents and children at the beginning of the academic year, (vi) organizing reading workshops, and (vii) maintaining an open door policy for parents, among other initiatives.

The other strategy is to support a series of initiatives to keep parents involved in their children's education outside the school, including: (i) providing advice to parents on helping children with their homework, (ii) allowing families to check out school supplies for use at home, and (iii) visiting families in their home.

As these schools have a large population of migrant children, they maintain a number of strategies to attract families from other cultures, such as translating communications into the dominant languages, training bilingual volunteers and mentors, and offering English classes for parents.

2. Parental Involvement in Latin America

A review of the literature on parental involvement in the education of children under the age of six shows that there has been a good deal of research on this topic in Latin America. There is information available on the learning impact of early home experience, the importance of learning continuity from the home at school and from the school at home, and the best strategies for involving parents in their children's education. Latin American countries have developed many strategies for working with parents, both through face-to-face programs and through the media, and policy documents promote parental participation.

Among the many research studies demonstrating the importance of early interaction between adults and children is the study on "early mother-baby interaction" (1999) by the Universidad Metropolitana de Venezuela (CENDIF, UNIMET),²³⁵ in which an educational intervention strategy was developed to promote the quality and quantity of mother-child interaction in low-income families. The objective of the project was to provide a nonconventional educational alternative to low-income mothers and their children by developing culturally relevant, effective and scientifically valid materials. The assumption was that intervention would increase the number of linguistic interactions between the mother and baby, thereby promoting the child's social and linguistic development and avoiding subsequent poor performance and school failure in the early grades of primary school.

²³⁵ <http://www.monografias.com/trabajos-pdf2/interaccion-temprana-madre-bebe/interaccion-temprana-madre-bebe.pdf>

The study was based on the findings of Blank (1975); Cross (1977); Tough (1977); Ringler (1977); Schachter (1979); Tulkin and Kagan (1979); Wells (1981); Chávez (1985); García-Coll (1990); and Bernstein (1995), according to which poor academic performance is related to the forms of communication that low-income parents use when interacting with their children. These forms of communication, known as "restricted codes," begin with the first mother-baby or father-baby interactions at the pre-linguistic stage (Snow, Dubber & Blauw, 1982; Murray & Trevarthen, 1985; Murray, 1988, 1992). The project proved to be a successful experiment in promoting the quality of interaction between mothers and children living in impoverished contexts. The effect on the child was significant, particularly with respect to his or her cognitive development after six months of age, with gains remaining unchanged until the age of one.

In Peru, González Moreyra (1995)²³⁶ investigated language development in children under the age of three. The study showed language to be an important element in the education process because of its impact on cognitive and emotional development, as well as a significant factor in academic failure. It has been shown that children arriving at school with delayed linguistic development will have trouble learning to read and write. The study starts from the premise that language acquisition plays a fundamental role in mother-child interaction through what Bruner (1986) calls "play formats." As with the mother-baby study, González Moreyra stresses the importance of mother-child interactions in language development and, consequently, in subsequent linguistic competence. The selected sample included children from low-income urban, rural and bilingual populations. One recommendation from the study is that any intervention program targeted at low-income mothers and children must "incorporate components intended to improve the quality, frequency and duration of their verbal interactions" (González, 1995, page 33)²³⁷ from the initial, pre-linguistic stage until the child reaches the age of three.

These examples show that family involvement in their children's education will promote the development of skills and abilities that will later facilitate their transition to the new environment of socialization outside the home, as well as better performance in school. To this respect, U.S. researcher Anne Henderson, having extensive experience in family-school relations, observes that "when parents are involved, children do better in school and they go to better schools."²³⁸

Yet if this involvement is to have satisfactory outcomes, the necessary conditions must also be present: there must be educational intentionality, and as the starting point there must be concrete and achievable objectives, selecting topics that are or may be of interest to parents and that will have a positive impact on child development. Moreover, there must be sufficient criteria for selecting the most appropriate moment, such as a school holiday, a parent meeting with the school, a personal interview for completing the registration form, or the delivery of report cards. Constructing a project in which the planned activities are well selected and articulated and have been allocated enough time to develop the topic in depth are essential conditions for reaching agreements and for sharing responsibilities. The sources of information used to select the topics for programming should include the problems detected in children as well as their parents' concerns and ideas. In this way it is possible to maintain parents' interest and expectations, along with their involvement and commitment.²³⁹

²³⁶ González Moreyra, R. (1995). *Exploración del desarrollo del lenguaje en el niño/a peruano menor de tres años. Un modelo interactivo*. Working paper. Bernard van Leer Foundation-Ministerio de Educación Perú

²³⁷ González Moreyra, R. op. cit. p. 33.

²³⁸ Cited in Blanco, R. & Umayahara, M. (2004). *Participación de las familias en la educación Infantil latinoamericana*, p.23. <http://www.bvsde.paho.org/bvsacd/cd20/familias.pdf>.

²³⁹ Blanco, R. & Umayahara, M. (2004). *Participación de las familias en la educación infantil latinoamericana*. <http://www.bvsde.paho.org/bvsacd/cd20/familias.pdf> (p. 24).

One form of parental involvement is in formulating the "Institutional Education Project" by providing input on family context, traditions and cultural patterns; on their child's characteristics and interests; and on other matters relating to children's development, which can then be verified through observation of the child in the classroom. The strategy selected for the programs will not be the same in all cases, for it will depend on the issue at hand, parents' interest, time allotted, and the aids or means selected, among other factors. The importance of these actions lies in the fact that they all seek to give continuity in school to the educational process begun in the family. On this point, McAllister notes from her analysis of research by Kegan (1982), Heath (1983) and Locust (1988) that when children are confronted with significant discontinuities between home and school, when they fail in their attempt to find a piece of themselves at school, when they do not see that their past learning experience is reflected at school, when they cannot find information for constructing a meaningful world, these children may reject or ignore the new information they are receiving and continue to rely on the 'old' scheme of thought.²⁴⁰

In a similar vein, López, Ássael and Neumann (1984)²⁴¹ found that children must leave aside what they have learned at home and in their community in order to assimilate the information the school gives them. This means that in order to learn school contents, children must distance themselves from their culture and from their family's values and traditions. In the face of such discontinuity, children frequently decide not to learn what they are taught at school because to do so would mean abandoning their own culture.

Among the measures being taken in Latin America to promote parental involvement in children's education are the initiatives described below:

The National Early Childhood Development Program (*Programa Nacional de Desarrollo Infantil Primeros Años*²⁴²) in Argentina constitutes a government policy for providing information, support and resources to families in such areas as parenting or child-rearing, strengthening support networks between families, and social mobilization around local initiatives to promote child development from birth to four years. The program is conducted at the national level with participation by the social development, education, health and environmental sectors. Its objectives are: (i) to institute a policy that takes a comprehensive approach to child development from birth to the age of four in the family and community context from a perspective of social, institutional and territorial integration of government activity; (ii) to consolidate inter-institutional spaces that will have installed capacity for action in the family and community context of children; (iii) to strengthen families in the upbringing of their children from birth to the age of four. To this end, the following strategies have been selected: (i) coordinated efforts between the three ministries at the national, provincial and municipal levels; (ii) technical assistance to provincial teams; (iii) dissemination through mass media; (iv) production of training materials for facilitators and families; (v) training of facilitators responsible for executing the program with parents by the provincial technical teams; (vi) coaching for families in their child-rearing practices; and (vii) development of local community initiatives.

Available support materials include the *Educando a los más chicos* ("Educating the youngest") collection, comprising 12 booklets on the following topics: family, early years, the

²⁴⁰ McAllister Swap, S. "Parent Involvement and Success for All Children: What We Know Now," cited in Blanco, R. & Umayahara, M. (2004). *Participación de las familias en la educación infantil latinoamericana*: <http://www.bvsde.paho.org/bvsacd/cd20/familias.pdf> (p. 24).

²⁴¹ López, G., Assael, J. & Neumann, E. (1984). La cultura escolar ¿responsable del fracaso? In Blanco, R. & Umayahara, M. (2004). *Participación de las familias en la educación infantil latinoamericana*. Santiago de Chile: PIIE. (p. 24).

<http://www.bvsde.paho.org/bvsacd/cd20/familias.pdf>

²⁴² <http://www.encuentro.gov.ar/Content.aspx?Id=109&IdSeccion=18>

first year of life, girls and boys, how am I?, feeding oneself, meal time, caring for health, opening the door, having fun and learning, understanding through conversation, and language development.

In Brazil the *Família Brasileira Fortalecida pela Educação Infantil*²⁴³ (Brazilian Family Strengthened through Early Childhood Education) program, with UNICEF participation, is intended to improve the relationship between nursery and preschool centers and families in order to increase understanding about children and their rights. Each participating institution receives five documents relating to the care and education of children from birth to the age of six, from the perspective of their rights, providing information and guidance, and fostering discussion about issues relating to health, hygiene, nutrition, safety, development and learning. States and municipalities form and prepare state and local teams to train teachers and school officials to work directly with families.

The "Take My Hand" (*Toma mi mano*)²⁴⁴ program operates in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama and is designed to provide support and coaching for disadvantaged mothers in raising their children during their first years of life in order to promote the development of their capacities. The program associates training for parents participating in adult literacy and education programs with training directed at their children. Work modules, educational materials, teaching guidebooks and strategies for use by facilitators, promoters and coordinators in the project have been prepared, and their contents include parenting guidelines, early childhood development, play, psycho-motor skills, language development, health and nutrition.

The Regional Initiative for Central America (RICA)²⁴⁵ sponsored by Save the Children in rural communities of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua constitutes a regional model that takes as its frame of reference a monitoring plan and system common to all the countries involved. The aim is to support families and communities promote the healthy development of their children, and prepare them for the transition to school.

The model involves teachers and local education authorities to ensure that the school is prepared to receive the children, particularly during the most difficult transition, into first grade. The components of the model consider early childhood care and education, and education for the transition. In early childhood care and education, parents are offered activities to support the quality of preschool education that takes the child as the center and continues at home, and the use of environmental resources for educational purposes. It includes care for mothers with children under the age of three, and impact on education and health policies in local government. Education for the transition includes education aimed at parents to prepare their children for the school transition; training of teachers for a successful transition to first grade; and selection and application of child-centered pedagogical strategies during the first years of primary education.

The objectives of RICA are to: (i) increase access to quality early childhood development programs that protect and promote young children's cognitive, social, emotional and physical development; (ii) decrease repetition and drop-out rates by improving the quality of preschool education and the first three grades of primary school; (iii) strengthen community capacity to protect and promote early childhood development; and (iv) strengthen local, regional and national global policies, capacities and resources for early childhood development.

²⁴³ <http://portal.mec.gov.br/seb/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=469>

²⁴⁴ http://www.oei.es/quipu/mano_index.html

²⁴⁵ <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001474/147488s.pdf>

The OAS is sponsoring a multilateral project in Chile, Colombia and Mexico, known as PROJIAMEC (*Atención a Sectores Prioritarios Jardín Infantil a través de los Medios de Comunicación*),²⁴⁶ that involves a communication and education strategy to assist fathers, mothers, and other relatives with their children's care and education. In Colombia, the program is called *A Gatas, cantos y cuentos para una crianza mejor*, and has been underway since September 2001. It is broadcast in 40 community radio stations in order to rally public interest in early childhood issues.

The project has produced communication materials, including 20 radio programs of 15 minutes each, a research project on the state of local young children and public perceptions of childhood, and five handbooks to guide participants. Listener opinions are solicited and used as input for creating lively and entertaining radio programs with songs and real-life stories.

The *Conozca a su Hijo* ("Know Your Child")²⁴⁷ program in Chile works with mothers in isolated rural areas. It provides them with guidance on how to support learning for children under the age of six who are not enrolled in other education programs. The two-year program is offered in various community facilities and schools.

The *Educo* program in El Salvador²⁴⁸ is offered, with community participation, in the country's poorest rural areas where there is a severe shortage of educational opportunities for young children. Its objectives are to provide guidance to parents in working for their children's education, and to promote personally enriching activities. Community education associations (ACE) composed of parents have been established to run the program, under contract to the Education Ministry, which provides funding for preschool and basic education services and the hiring of teachers.

In Mexico the National Council for Education Development (CONAFE)²⁴⁹ provides non-academic early childhood education to more than 373,000 parents and guardians as well as around 415 children under the age of four. The objective is to improve parenting practices and to give children the skills and competencies needed to be good students upon entering preschool and primary school.

In Nicaragua, the comprehensive childcare program known as *Painin*²⁵⁰ seeks to strengthen families' child-rearing practices and provide support to parents. The prevention-oriented experiment is underway in 35 municipalities, and is sponsored by the Family Ministry and NGOs, and funded by the Government of Nicaragua with a grant from Norway and a loan from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

The *Qatari Wawa* (roughly, "On your feet, Kids!") program²⁵¹ in Peru is designed to identify, appreciate and apply healthy, age-old child-rearing practices in combination with other tested, progressive and accepted approaches, to strengthen family and community capacities to promote the integral development of children from gestation up to 47 months. It has an intercultural focus, with contents relating to health, nutrition and child development, living conditions at home and in the community, and emotional support for children.

²⁴⁶ <http://www.mineducacion.gov.co/1621/article-87241.html>

²⁴⁷ http://600.mineduc.cl/informacion/info_nive/nive_parv/parv_prnv.php#1

²⁴⁸ <http://www.comminit.com/en/node/39015/37>

²⁴⁹ México, "*Equidad educativa, nuevo programa de educación inicial y básica*" <http://www.oei.es/noticias/spip.php?article2889>

²⁵⁰ <http://www.oei.es/inicial/nicaraguane.htm>

²⁵¹ <http://www.mimdes.gob.pe/dgna/qatariwawa/index.htm>

Qatari Wawa also offers families guidance in new ways of organizing their home, and promotes the development of skills to improve health, nutrition, and relationships with their children. The program is managed by an interdisciplinary team, through workshops with mothers and their children, older siblings and families in general, meetings with the authorities and local leaders (including mothers and adolescents), home visits, and child growth and development monitoring. The information available on the program mentions an activity called "playing with my children in the *Yachay Wasi* (knowledge house)," conducted in premises made available by the community for meetings with the family and for child care. Children attend with their mother and/or father to play and learn through various activities and materials under the direction of a social worker.

Education ministries in Latin American countries have also prepared guidance documents for parents covering issues relating to the care and education of children under the age of six. Some examples include:

- “*Juntos. Para mejorar la educación*”²⁵² (“Working together to improve education”) in Argentina, designed to establish family-school links to support children's learning from the time they begin school. It contains suggestions to foster learning continuity, and a brief presentation on priority learning subjects, beginning at the initial level and continuing on through the early years of basic education.
- Brazil has a “family's handbook”²⁵³ designed to involve parents in their children's education by following teaching activities, participating in school boards, and assuring themselves that the school is well-organized, while identifying what the school offers their children, and evaluating its services.
- *Creciendo juntos* (“Growing up together”)²⁵⁴, prepared by the *Fundación Integra* of Chile, is targeted at the parents and relatives of children attending nursery school. It covers topics relating to child rearing and offers answers to the most frequent concerns of parents about how to have their children grow up happy and healthy. The contents are: A new life; There's a new baby in the house; A person to know and discover; The first year; No one is taught to be a mother, but you learn; A fast-moving adventure; The usual questions; The second year; No one stops learning to be a mother; My daughter surprises me more each day; Things that deprive us of sleep; How to make best use of our time; Setting ground rules for our children; and The nursery school is our home too. The document comes with a CD containing 20 children's songs.
- “*Educando en los primeros años*”²⁵⁵ (“Teaching in the early years”) is a document prepared by the Ministry of Education of Chile, containing 10 booklets: The child before birth; First needs and lessons; Making use of educational spaces; Personal and social development; Communicating through language; Communicating in different ways and being creative; Appreciating the family culture; Learning about living things in their environment; Math games; What we have learned together. There is also a workbook for use by the family facilitator, containing a methodology for working with adults, strategies for each session, and some useful contents for working with participants.
- *La educación inicial y la familia* (“Early education and the family”) in Venezuela was prepared as part of the comprehensive care policy for children from gestation through the

²⁵² http://www.me.gov.ar/curriform/publica/nap/juntos_inicial.pdf

²⁵³ http://www.oei.es/noticias/spip.php?article2629&debut_5ultimasOEI=10

²⁵⁴ <http://www.crececontigo.cl/adultos/documentos.php?q1=4&q2=8&Buscar=Buscar>

²⁵⁵ <http://www.familiaeduca.mineduc.cl/>

age of six. It offers parents and the community guidance in educating young children, highlighting the family setting as the environment that guarantees children's development and protection. The table of contents lists ten chapters: Early education and the family; Pregnancy, a new life has begun; My first six months of life; Games and the family, children from ages zero to one; Games and the family, children ages one to three; Games and the family, children ages three to five; Building family values; Learning to read and write at home; What to do when...?; The family and the early education center. These booklets are accompanied by videos.

- In Peru, the *Manual para padres*²⁵⁶ (Parents' Manual) offers parents guidance for helping their children to be successful in regular basic education. The manual suggests and recommends a series of actions that parents can take—together with teachers—to help their children learn, organizing the environment for study, and establishing schedules to help them get better organized. Suggestions include maintaining constant dialogue with children, showing them affection and playing with them. Other chapters address the question, "what should your children learn in school about communication, mathematics and personal development?" and develop curricular content for initial, primary and secondary education, and propose strategies for parent-teacher cooperation.

In this context, the report entitled *Participación de las familias en la educación infantil latinoamericana*²⁵⁷ ("Family involvement in early childhood education in Latin America"), which includes the results of a research study by Reveco (2000), offers information on international agreements relating to education and early childhood; policy frameworks of Latin American countries, and the programs being developed in different countries of the region, from the following perspectives: (i) the concept of the family underlying the programs; (ii) types and methods of participation; (iii) stakeholders and their roles; (iv) strategies used; (v) elements that obstruct and facilitate development; and (vi) program evaluation. The authors note that with respect to family involvement in education, general education laws have given priority to:²⁵⁸ the importance of educating children at home; the importance of parent associations; education as a family duty to children; the State as guarantor of families' right to participate in their children's educational process; and the family as a source of education, as presented in the following table:

Table 19. Families' participation in their children's education

Importance of Family Involvement in Education in the Home	Importance of Family Involvement in Parent Associations	Education as a Family Duty to their Children	The State as Guarantor of Families' Rights to Participate in their Children's Education	The Family as a Source of Education
Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, Paraguay,	Venezuela, Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica,	Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico,	Panama	Guatemala

²⁵⁶ <http://www.minedu.gob.pe/>

²⁵⁷ http://www.oei.es/inicial/articulos/participacion_familias.pdf

²⁵⁸ Blanco, R. & Umayahara, M. (2004), op.cit, p. 4.

		Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay		
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Source: Blanco, R. & Umayahara, M. (2004). *Participación de las familias en la educación infantil latinoamericana*. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001390/139030s.pdf> p. 41

A review of national legislation has shown that all countries stress the importance of parental involvement in their children's education, whether at home, at school, as an education agent, through parent associations, or in providing information about their children. However, it is apparent (from education studies and research conducted or published by international agencies such as the OAS, OEI, UNICEF, UNESCO and the Bernard van Leer Foundation, and work by Robert Myers, Ofelia Reveco, Gaby Fujimoto, María Victoria Peralta and other researchers) that parents also participate in their children's education in other ways, such as building or transferring premises, participating as education agents, and in the preparation of meals, garden cultivation, production of teaching materials and furnishings, etc., as the following table shows.²⁵⁹

Table 20. Other forms of parental participation

Country	Non-academic or Non-formal Program	Family Contribution
Brazil	Home nurseries	Premises and labor
Colombia	Neighborhood centers	Premises and labor
Costa Rica	CDI	Premises and labor
Chile	Family kindergartens, and occupational kindergartens	Premises
El Salvador	Day care centers	Premises and labor
Guatemala	Day care homes	Premises and labor
Nicaragua	Non-formal preschool education centers	Premises, materials and labor
Paraguay	Non-formal basic schools	Land, construction, maintenance
Peru	PRONOEI (Non-academic Early Childhood Education Program)	Premises, selection of the community promoter, preparation of meals, materials and maintenance
Dominican Republic	Schools and nurseries	Libraries and teaching resources
Venezuela	Non-formal preschool education	Premises

Source: Blanco, R. & Umayahara, M. (2004). *Participación de las familias en la educación infantil latinoamericana*. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001390/139030s.pdf> p. 44

3. Parental Involvement in the Caribbean

The few evaluations that exist on the effectiveness of programs targeted at parents in developing countries come from the Caribbean, primarily Jamaica, where the impact of such programs has been assessed.²⁶⁰ At least eight studies have been produced on the effectiveness of

²⁵⁹ Blanco, R. & Umayahara, M. (2004). op.cit p. 44

²⁶⁰ Grantham-McGregor et al. (2006); Grantham-McGregor S., Powell, C. Walker, S. & Himes, J. (1991);

Powell C. (2004). *An evaluation of the roving caregivers programme of the rural family support organization*, May Pen. Clarendon: UNICEF.

programs targeted at parents of malnourished children or those with low birth weights, and they have demonstrated both short- and long-term effects.

On the basis of these studies and others, Powell et al. (2004) found that the key elements of home visit programs are: (i) regular home visits lasting half an hour to one hour, (ii) conducted at 10 day intervals, (iii) over a period of one year, (iv) with the home visitor following a structured curriculum that involves the development of homemade toys and books that are left in the home for a week, and then exchanged for new ones, (v) sessions for demonstrating games that the mother can play with the child, (vi) a program conducted by professionals consisting of six to eight weeks of training, and (vii) constant monitoring, where the supervisor visits the home once a month.

A flagship initiative in the Caribbean, which was initially implemented in Jamaica and is now being replicated in five other countries, is the "Roving Caregiver" program, which trains young people to conduct visits to the parents of small children (under the age of three) in their homes once a week, and to demonstrate and teach stimulation activities. The focus is on child stimulation and parents' child-rearing knowledge and practices. Mothers receive guidance on how to promote their child's development, health, hygiene and safety. Other countries (St. Lucia, Grenada, Dominica and St. Vincent) have adopted the program and are implementing it. With support from the van Leer Foundation, a longitudinal evaluation of the program in St. Lucia is now underway to measure its impact on children and parents (attitudes and behavioral change), from preschool to secondary.

Another experiment in working with parents at the preschool level is underway in Barbados, where the "Parent Volunteer Support Program" was launched in 1996 as a complement to the preschool expansion program (Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports, 2005). This program encourages parental involvement in the classroom to assist and support the teacher in implementing the program. Parents work for a maximum stint of four years on a voluntary basis, although in fact they receive \$50 for every week they put in at least ten hours. Parent duties include interacting with the children, assisting the class teacher with indoor and outdoor activities and with feeding and dressing students, and encouraging good habits and values.

In recent years, Caribbean countries have placed greater policy emphasis on "parenting." At the last CARICOM meeting a progress report was presented on this topic. The Caribbean Child-Support Initiative (CCSI) prepared a draft policy document declaring that the countries of the region should create an integrated national multi-sector framework for formulating policies and legislation governing best practices in parenting and support services.²⁶¹ This would require: (i) a review of legislation to identify gaps between childhood and parenting; (ii) a standardized system for information gathering through national censuses, on parenting habits and a profile of parent characteristics as an empirical basis for future programs and services; and (iii) a policy framework and regional organization to coordinate these issues.

The CCSI 2008 report describes a Jamaican initiative, "Towards a National Parenting Policy," designed to achieve the following objectives: (i) to define a common framework for facilitating and supporting appropriate parenting; (ii) to define the State's role in facilitating an environment propitious to sound parenting; (iii) to provide a platform for promoting better parenting practices; and (iv) to provide a national framework for developing programs, materials and services, with particular attention to vulnerable families.

Powell, C. Baker-Henningham, H., Walker S., Gernay, J. & Grantham-McGregor, S. (2004). *Feasibility of integrating early stimulation into primary care for undernourished Jamaican children: cluster randomized controlled trial*. *BMJ*, 329, p. 89

²⁶¹ CCSI (2008), p. 2.

With respect to a standardized information gathering system, an important initiative has been taken in Jamaica, which has added a series of questions relating to parenting patterns, attitudes, interaction with children, discipline, and parental stress levels to the national census questionnaire form. The information has helped characterize parents, and the type of participation and involvement they have in the care and education of their children. Ricketts (2006) found that many parents experienced stress, particularly those living in poverty, and that their stress reflected the fact that they were spending less time with their children.

Another regional initiative has to do with developing a system to certify people working in programs directed at parents. This is the 2008 UNICEF-sponsored Parenting Partners Caribbean initiative (PPC), based on their work in Jamaica. In the year 2000, vocational standards were approved for facilitators working with parents; in 2007, those standards were translated into courses leading to certification. It was agreed that each country would develop an online course offering qualification at the CARICOM level III (Caribbean vocational qualification), awarded either via the course or through an evaluation. Countries such as Belize, Grenada, and Trinidad and Tobago have begun training for parent group facilitators under the leadership of Parenting Partners, Jamaica.



Since 2001, the Caribbean early childhood webpage (www.uwi.edu.caribecd) has been publishing information on parenting. Also since 2004, with support from the Bernard van Leer Foundation, Caribbean countries have been producing a regional radio program directed at parents, which seeks to improve collaboration between radio stations and communities for the development of radio programs aimed at parents. Radio programs that can be replayed over a period of 8 to 12 months were produced.

Conclusions

In most OECD countries, policy documents make explicit reference to working with parents as partners in the educational process, and to promoting specific strategies to this end. In Caribbean countries there is also an emphasis on the role of parents, but primarily as an alternative for expanding the coverage of programs for children under three, who are reached through programs targeted at their parents. In Latin America, Education Ministries have included parent-targeted program objectives in their education laws and other policy documents. The priority objectives have to do with parenting practices, supporting children's transitions in early childhood, and other forms of participation in workshops for preparing educational materials, as education agents in non-formal and non-academic programs, preparation of meals, and so forth.

OECD countries encourage differing degrees of parental involvement. Finland and Norway promote comprehensive involvement of parents, not only as partners who must be informed about what is happening in early childhood care and preschool programs, but also as partners in running care centers and preschool facilities, and as the possessors of important knowledge on children that must be reflected in the design of curriculum contents or individualized child learning plans. In Norway, for example, policy documents indicate that between parents and the preschool there must be respect and recognition of responsibilities and functions on each side, and regular collaboration and contact during which information will be exchanged on the child's development and on pedagogical activities.

One form of participation encouraged in some OECD countries is to help manage the center or program. Denmark stresses parental involvement in center or program management, for monitoring or improving the quality of early childhood care and education programs. In New Zealand, parents must have access to information on the center's operating philosophy and information concerning their children; they must receive information on how they can become involved in the service, as well as on costs and expenses; and lastly, they must participate in reviewing and developing the service's operating documents (including operations and procedures).

A second approach to participation relates to the development of curriculum contents, as in Finland and Norway. In Finland, parents must be involved in developing the curriculum for the center or program and in the individual plan for their children. In Norway, parents must be involved in commenting on and developing the centers' annual work plan.

Parental involvement is also apparent in influencing early childhood policies. In Sweden, it was parents who took the lead in calling for universal daycare services to look after their children when parents returned to the workforce. It is partly because of parents' insistence on asserting their rights that the Swedish early childhood care system has achieved its present standards.

Another way of involving parents is to inform them about program objectives and to give them information about the importance of early childhood in order to motivate them to become actively and positively involved in the education of their children, whether at home or in a center or program. All OECD countries examined have resources for parents that include information on parental rights with respect to accessibility and quality of services, parenting guidelines, and activities they can pursue with their children (for example New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Australia). All countries have published materials to inform parents about their children's educational process and the importance of this stage. These documents seek to interest and motivate parents to participate in the educational process. The most common approach is to publish these resources electronically, or to design web pages specifically aimed at parents (New Zealand, the United Kingdom).

Another approach in Caribbean countries such as Barbados, and in specific OECD-country programs such as Head Start or Carolina Abecedarian, is to enlist parental support in classroom activities. Barbados has a structured program that allows parents to provide support directly as preschool classroom assistants.

With respect to early childhood policies, Caribbean countries have posited the need for specific policies on parenting and certification systems for persons working in programs of this kind. These may be seen as attempts to regulate and formalize care for small children, through their parents. This need has not become apparent, however, in OECD countries or in Latin America.

In Latin America there is a long tradition of parent involvement in their children's education. In most countries, education laws and regulations consider parental and community involvement among the objectives of the preschool level. However, countries differ in their conceptions of parental involvement. Some place the emphasis on parental involvement in educating their children in the home (Argentina, Colombia, Mexico and Paraguay), whereas others stress involvement in parent associations (Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica and Venezuela). The majority regard children's education as the responsibility of the family (Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Panama and Guatemala).

Education ministries and civil society institutions have promoted programs aimed at parents to guide them in educating and caring for their children, with varying objectives such as coaching the family to strengthen its parenting practices (Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru), and promoting the development of capacities and facilitating the transition to school (Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama).

In non-formal preschool education programs, particularly those in rural and low-income urban areas, parents also participate in other ways, such as building or transferring premises for the program, preparing meals for the children, serving as education agents, making furnishings and educational materials, classroom maintenance and hygiene, etc. (Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, and Venezuela).

Programs may be conducted in community facilities, the school, in family homes, recreational facilities, in church, or in municipal facilities. At the same time, documents such as booklets, manuals, brochures and so forth have been prepared, sometimes accompanied by a CD (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Peru, Venezuela). Other programs have produced videos, PowerPoint presentations and TV spots frequently featuring program participants.

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VI. CASE STUDIES:

PROGRAMS THAT INCORPORATE TRANSITION STRATEGIES

This chapter presents seven case studies of programs in OECD countries and in Latin America and the Caribbean. They were selected because in one way or the other they address aspects related to transitions. The program selected are, for OECD countries, the Head Start program in the United States, the Preschool Class in Sweden, and the Sure Start Children's Learning Centres in the United Kingdom; for Latin America and the Caribbean, the CENDI program in Monterrey, Mexico, the Wawa Wasi program in Peru, the JUNJI programs in Chile, and the Roving Caregivers program in the Caribbean.

1. The Head Start Program in the United States

Head Start (HS) is a comprehensive program of care and education for children under the age of six from low-income families. It has been in existence for more than 40 years, and is currently serving some 900,000 children, with a budget of approximately \$6 billion. The program is funded from the national budget, and is periodically reauthorized by law.²⁶² It operates under the authority of the Department of Health and Human Services, through the Office of Head Start.

The program is run by nonprofit organizations that receive grants from the federal government. In 2007, 1600 organizations received government funding to operate their local HS programs. To be eligible for funding, these organizations must meet the "Head Start Performance Standards," which are the mandatory regulations that grantees and delegate agencies must implement in order to operate a Head Start program. The national HS office regulates local HS programs, grants licenses, and supplies materials and resources for the development of human capacities for service providers.

In 1994 the "Early Head Start" (EHS) was created as a sister program, targeting children under the age of three and their parents, offering comprehensive care, education and family support. The EHS budget is included in the HS program funding supplied by the federal government. EHS operates under the same dynamics as HS, through nonprofit organizations that provide services, and the HS office, which regulates, finances, supervises and evaluates the program. The EHS program is based on nine principles, more than half of which relate to transitions: positive relationships and continuity between children, families and staff; parent involvement; culture; collaboration; and transitions from EHS to HS.

Both EHS and the HS programs are evaluated continuously, under a budgetary item for impact and evaluation research. Two of the best-known longitudinal studies produced are known as "FACES" (Family and Child Experiences Survey 1997-2010) and the Head Start Impact Study and Follow-Up 2000-2009. The FACES research study provides longitudinal information on characteristics, experiences and outcomes for HS children as well as the characteristics of HS programs. To date it has collected data from four cohorts of children participating in HS (1997, 2000, 2003 and 2006). The impact study, on the other hand, is a national study designed to determine how HS affects school readiness for participating and nonparticipating children and to determine under what conditions HS has worked best, and for what types of children. It is a longitudinal study involving approximately 5,000 children ages three and four in 84 HS programs, selected at random. Similar studies are also underway for the EHS program, such as "Baby FACES" (2007-2012) and the Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Project (EHSRE) 1996-2009.

When it comes to transitions, the Head Start program has placed special emphasis on the transition from EHS to HS. The goal is to offer "seamless services" in the years preceding kindergarten. One of the nine guiding principles of the EHS program is to ensure a smooth transition from EHS to HS or another program. The performance standards require that transition planning must begin at least six months before the child's third birthday. That planning must consider the child individually, his or her health, level of development, progress in EHS, any specific needs of the family, and the availability of an HS or other program. Each program must propose its own policies and mechanisms on the basis of dialogue with parents.

²⁶² In December 2007 the President of the United States approved Public Law 110-134, "Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007", reauthorizing the program until 2012.

To give continuity to the EHS-HS experience and school, a series of policies and initiatives have been launched to incorporate what HS does best into what the public schools are doing. Thirty-one local demonstration sites were funded, involving 450 public schools, which were evaluated to examine the possibility of incorporating some of the HS strategies into the first years of primary school. The objective was to extend HS services into the first four grades of primary school. The schools were selected at random to participate as beneficiaries of a local demonstration program, or as a control group. Additional support and staff were supplied so that schools and programs could implement: (i) parent involvement activities; (ii) educational enhancement, especially to promote use of developmentally appropriate practices and continuity in children's educational experiences; (iii) family social support services; and (iv) health and nutrition.

Among the most successful activities that this study promoted were: (i) the creation of parent resource rooms in children's elementary schools; (ii) making home visits to families; (iii) sending special newsletters to families about school and community activities; (iv) teaching families about home-based learning activities; (v) inclusion of developmentally more appropriate activities in the primary classroom; (vi) more involvement of parents in nontraditional classroom activities; (vii) increased communication between public school and the HS program; and (viii) strategies to encourage appreciation of pupils' linguistic diversity.

The 2007 Reauthorization Act has a specific section that addresses transitions and articulation from kindergarten to grade 12. These provisions were amended and expanded with the recent reauthorization, requiring HS programs to work with the community to ensure continuity of services and effective transitions. This involves: (i) establishing ongoing channels of communication between HS staff and their counterparts in the schools to facilitate coordination of programs; (ii) pursuing developmentally appropriate curricular objectives and shared expectations for children's learning and development as the children make the transition to school; (iii) organizing joint training for school staff and HS staff; (iv) establishing comprehensive transition policies and procedures that support children transitioning to school; (v) conducting outreach to parents and elementary school teachers to discuss children's needs; (vi) helping parents whose first language is not English; (vii) helping parents to understand the importance of parental involvement in a child's academic success while teaching them strategies for maintaining their involvement as the child moves from Head Start to elementary school.

The local HS programs operate in accordance with minimum standards that guarantee the quality of services. These standards address specific aspects of making successful transitions from the home to the program, or from the program to primary school. They include involving parents in training to prepare them to exercise their rights and responsibilities concerning their children's school education, and helping them communicate with primary school teachers and staff so they can be party to the decisions taken concerning their children's education. Transition planning also involves having the HS program coordinator transfer records to schools or other agencies, encouraging communication between HS and school staff, initiating meetings involving parents, HS teachers and other program staff, and sponsoring joint transition-related training for school teachers, HS staff and the staff of other care programs.

With respect to available materials, a series of special documents has been developed for HS staff, and dealing with strategies to promote positive transitions:

- ***Training guides for the Head Start learning community. Effective transition practices – Facilitating continuity.*** This is the first in a series of guides and manuals addressing transitions in different learning environments from birth through the age of eight. Those

who complete the training offered in this guide are equipped to identify the elements and requirements of effective transition practices, support children and families to prepare for these transitions, and develop transition practices that facilitate continuity between environments or institutions. The guide is divided into two parts: the first deals with staff competencies relating to transition and change, transition and continuity, and partnerships for continuity; the second provides information on the concepts used in the guide and various tips including examples of transition programs within and beyond HS, activities, and a list of available resources.

- ***Transitions: parents are key. Training guides for the Head Start learning community.*** Intended to enable parents to support and advocate for their children during transitions, this guide is divided into three sections. The first section, "User's Guide," provides an introduction to the guide, including its purpose, expected outcomes, audience, performance standards, and organization. The second section, "Program and Parent Action Tools," includes nine action tools to help parents and staff understand transitions, the key role parents play, and ways to implement the performance standards. These nine action tools are organized into three broad skill categories that enable parents to: (1) support each child; (2) build partnerships; and (3) strengthen advocacy skills. The third and final section of the guide addresses continuing professional development, and guides staff and parents in expanding their skills by networking, joining organizations, and further researching the issue of parent involvement in transition.
- ***Training guides for the Head Start learning community. Infant and toddler transitions:*** This guide establishes a framework for supporting effective transitions in the early years. It notes that transitions are an ongoing process rooted in early childhood development, and that partnerships must be established with the family in order to offer continuous and supportive relationships and to individualize needs in the transition process. From the viewpoint of the child's and its family's needs, the guide addresses how to build partnerships with parents to support their children's development, and how to individualize routines and practices according to the needs, temperament and culture of each child in order to facilitate consistency and continuity. It also addresses how to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the transition using different techniques.
- ***Planning for transitions: Training guides for the Head Start learning community.*** This guide was prepared as a companion to the "Effective Transition Practices – Facilitating Continuity" manual, and is based on the concept of successful transitions, which involve coordination and continuity of services from birth through the age of eight. It includes skills and tools needed for working with families and the staff of other programs to facilitate service continuity. It is divided into four modules: "Getting on track with transition planning;" "Bringing families on board for planning;" "Making connections with other programs;" and "Accessing services through community linkages." Each module contains workshop and coaching activities.
- ***Transitions strategies: Continuity and change in the lives of infants and toddlers. Early Head Start program strategies.*** This document provides information on three transitions: the transition to the EHS program, from EHS to HS, and the transition within HS. Strategies include building support networks and planning each child's transition on an individualized basis.
- ***Easing the transition from preschool to kindergarten: A guide for early childhood teachers and administrators.*** This booklet provides a variety of ideas for preschool and kindergarten teachers and administrators to establish linkages and ease the transition

between educational settings. It discusses four critical elements of successful transition: (1) providing program continuity through developmentally appropriate curricula for preschool and kindergarten children; (2) maintaining communication between preschool and kindergarten staff; (3) preparing children for transition; and (4) involving parents in the transition.

2. Preschool Education in Sweden

Sweden has one of the most highly developed and complete early childhood systems in Europe (UNESCO 2006; OECD 2007). It covers children from the first year of life until they enter primary school, during which time they have access to a series of preschool programs. These include preschool programs for children from ages one to five; day care services provided in the caregiver's home; "open preschool" for children whose parents are not working; and the preschool class for six-year-olds, which is integrated into the public schools, although the care is not compulsory and is governed by preschool education policy.

Childcare policy is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, and is part of the social policy system that includes maternity leave and State benefits. The central government regulates and sets general guidelines for the system, and the roughly 290 municipalities are responsible for providing services within their jurisdiction. Participation is almost universal for children from four to six years of age, and enrollment is very high for children from ages one to three.

The Swedish system is what it is today thanks to a series of political, social and economic movements that have helped to consolidate it over the last 40 years. The education component was incorporated from the beginning, when in the 1930s politicians sought to remove the stigma of poverty associated with child nurseries and to provide educational services for children of well-off families. The expansion of the system came subsequently, when it was found necessary to provide daycare centers for children whose mothers were joining the workforce as a result of the women's liberation movement and the economic boom. Civil society, mobilized by families, called for universal services.²⁶³ Public debate on daycare centers was backed by the government (especially by Prime Minister Palme), and a series of reforms was launched. By the 1990s, Swedish parents viewed childcare as a right.

The expansion of preschool programs was initially funded by the central government, which gave grants to municipalities. Municipalities are responsible for opening and ensuring spaces for children of preschool age in preschool centers, and they can grant licenses to parents' cooperatives to open private preschools, although most services are publicly provided. About 20% of preschools are operated by the private sector. The municipalities may charge a small fee for preschool services, which must not represent more than 3.2% of total family income. The municipalities still receive subsidies from the central government to keep costs low.

At the beginning, regulations governing minimum quality standards were established by the central government, through the National Bureau of Health and Welfare. This entity set regulations for daycare centers and for preschools. Today, each municipality has established its own office for supervising schools and preschools.

A significant aspect of the Swedish model is its curricular framework and the process by which it was prepared. The current preschool curriculum (Lpfo 98) is based on rigorous research

²⁶³ From the State's viewpoint, to be able to attract women to the labor force, local or municipal governments realized that there should be daycare services.

conducted during the 1960s and '70s by a specially appointed commission, which proposed changes to the conventional concept of day care. As a result of this research process, it was found that daycare centers should include teaching activities and be organized on the basis of topics rather than materials; staff should work in groups combining teachers and assistants; and children should be placed in mixed age groups. The research work was distilled in the Preschool Act of 1975, and the preschool curriculum.

The preschool curriculum (Lpfo 98) is quite simple. It has only 16 pages and is targeted at the teacher and all staff working in care and education centers, and is a benchmark framework on which each school and preschool is supposed to develop its own plan, adjusting the content, organization and working method to local conditions. It is organized in two parts: the first sets the fundamental values of the preschool level and the tasks at that level, while the second establishes guidelines and targets. The targets for the curriculum establish the orientation of preschool work and the desired quality objectives. They are goals toward which early childhood program teachers and staff must work with the children. Teachers and caregivers are expected to translate the general objectives of the curriculum into learning and teaching practices and implement them in the classroom.

The targets and guidelines are organized around five goals: (i) standards and values: preschool should help children acquire the values on which democratic society is based; (ii) preschool should be characterized by a pedagogical approach where care, nurturing and learning together form a coherent whole; (iii) preschool should develop a base for an understanding of democracy: children's social development presupposes that they are given growing responsibility for their own actions and for the environment in preschool, according to their capabilities; (iv) preschool must complement the home, creating the best of conditions to ensure that each child's development will be rich and varied; and (v) there must be cooperation between the preschool class, the school and leisure-time activity centers in order to support the child's integral development. The school must establish cooperative working relations with preschool and the leisure-time centers.

The curriculum reflects Swedish values concerning education and childhood. The objective of preschool is to develop a child's curiosity and trust in his or her own capacities, and not to measure his or her level of knowledge. The preschool curriculum is designed not merely to have the child acquire information and knowledge but to give meaning to that information and knowledge. Documentation lies at the basis of the teaching and learning process: it is a way of evaluating teaching practices, and a tool to reflect and visualize the child's learning. The curriculum treats childhood as a valuable period for the child's development, one that requires stimulating environments in which the child is the agent of its own development and has an active role in developing and implementing the curriculum in the classroom.

The curriculum includes learning in the mother tongue. Sweden has a growing immigrant population, and while preschool education is provided in Swedish, development of the mother tongue is encouraged. There is a range of reading materials available in the classroom to reinforce the mother tongue. There are books in the different languages spoken by the children, color-coded and accompanied by a CD. Additionally, instruction in a third language, English, begins in preschool. Children must become aware of what it means to learn a language—something that, as Swedish experts point out, is different from the kind of "absorptive" learning by which immigrant children acquire Swedish.

In pedagogical terms, there is complementarity between the preschool and the school curriculum: both the preschool and primary curricula (Lpo 94) represent a continuum. The preschool curriculum reflects aspects of the national curriculum, and its objectives are aligned in

terms of what the child must be able to achieve by the end of preschool. Similarly, the primary curriculum has incorporated aspects of the preschool curriculum such as the emphasis on play, exploration and creativity and having teachers work in teams. Different kinds of cooperation are encouraged between the preschool class and the school in order to enrich the pupil's development and learning. The preschool class places importance on the cognitive aspect, but it is based on non-conventional learning, through play. This guarantees a gradual progression from kindergarten to school, moving from free-time activities to more structured activities.

3. The Sure Start Program in England

The Sure Start Program is a government strategy to reduce child poverty and social exclusion. It seeks to increase the availability of care centers for children under the age of five so as to improve their emotional development and health, and support parents in their child-rearing work and in their search for employment. All of this is offered within a single facility that combines health services, early education and social support, as well as private and voluntary organizations.

The program as it is being implemented today was based on the Sure Start Local Programs established in 1997 as part of the "Every Child Matters" strategy. Those programs were developed locally and aimed at children under the age of four, living in economically disadvantaged areas, and their parents. The premises where these programs were offered, as well as other, new premises, have served as the infrastructure for the National Sure Start Program.

The program is offered in "Sure Start Children's Centres" that offer care and early education services, support for parents including advice and access to specialized services, health services for children and the family, and support for parents looking for work. The educational component is guaranteed, because the centers must have a minimum of qualified teachers. Regulations also require that in the poorest areas or communities these centers must offer a minimum of ten hours a day of care and early learning, five days a week, 48 weeks a year.

The intention is that by 2010 every community will have a Sure Start Children's Centre. In the beginning only the poorest communities had such a center. Between 2006 and 2008 centers were built in the 30% poorest SOAs.²⁶⁴ By 2010 it is expected that there will be 3,500 centers in total. The specific location of the centers is decided by local authorities, who are supported by a consortium of private and public organizations, "Together for Children," to develop local capacities for planning, commissioning and managing programs. In many cases, since the schools are the centers of the community, they are the obvious choice for the location of the children's centers.

As regards services to parents, each center must choose the one that best suits its context, from among a variety of available programs. The government encourages local authorities, including the children's centers, to design and implement a strategy for parents that takes the needs of mothers into account. This is to be included in the local government's Children and Young People's Plan.

²⁶⁴ The Super Output Areas (SOA) are geographic units established by the national statistics office. Each SOA has approximately the same number of dwellings and inhabitants. Local governments have studied the characteristics of homes in each SOA to develop a multiple deprivation index used for ranking. There are 32,482 SOAs in the country.

Materials are available in the form of "Sure Start Children's Centres Practice Guidance."²⁶⁵ These guidelines are directed at persons running the centers, local authorities, and the center's teachers and other staff. They stress the following elements of good practice: knowing the community, outreach and home visits, and use of performance indicators based on outcomes for monitoring the centers' services.²⁶⁶ The guide also stresses the importance of managing the centers in a multiagency context, working in partnership with parents, health centers and the schools. It indicates that as a minimum the centers must offer the following services, if they expect to have an impact: (i) integrated early care and education services for at least 12.5 hours a week, 38 weeks a year, to children ages three and four; (ii) information on parenting, support groups, and education for parents; (iii) prenatal and postnatal care services; (iv) information about employment; (v) information at key points of transition (at the time of birth and upon entry to primary school); and (vi) additional information for families experiencing particular challenges.

When it comes to working in partnership with parents, the guide points out that parents can be involved in formal and informal roles, such as taking part in governance arrangements, working alongside the professional workers as volunteers, providing peer support, or participating in training.

In 2001, Birkbeck University was commissioned to conduct a National Evaluation of Sure Start (NESS), and this has resulted in a series of published reports. The most recent of these reports looked at the impact of Sure Start local programs on children and family functioning. It assessed some 9,000 families in 150 programs, comparing information on children nine months old (2005 study) and three years old (2008) participating in the local programs, against a control group comprising children in similarly deprived areas where local programs were not established. The research found that the program had a positive impact in seven of the 14 areas investigated. Parents showed less negative parenting while providing their children with a better home learning environment. Three-year-olds had better social development with higher levels of independence and self-regulation.

4. The Centers of Childhood Development (CENDI) in Monterrey, Mexico²⁶⁷

The Centers of Childhood Development (CENDI), sponsored by the "*Frente Popular Tierra y Libertad*," are public institutions of early childhood development in Monterrey, Nuevo León, Mexico that offer care and education services to children (from 45 days to the age of six) of working mothers in disadvantaged areas of the city.

The CENDIs began operating in 1990, in response to pressure on the federal government from working mothers, as an initial education project for children from extremely poor areas whose mothers were working outside the home. Yet while this was the initial purpose, the project was expanded to other households in different socio-economic circumstances in order to encourage positive early interrelationships between children from different social classes. The beneficiary child population was comprised 70% by children from poor areas, 15% by children who did not live in those areas, and 15% by the children of CENDI staff members.

²⁶⁵ This guide is divided into three parts, focused on the following themes: running a successful center, and good practices in specific areas such as information for parents, parenting and family support, employment support, maternity services, speech and language development, family health, reducing obesity, stopping smoking; how to adapt services to the needs of particular groups.

²⁶⁶ For example, indicators of development outcomes (percentage of children who achieve a total of at least 78 points across the Foundation Stage Profile); health (percentage of children in reception year who are obese); child poverty (percentage of children aged 0-4 and living in households dependent on unemployment benefits).

²⁶⁷ "What are the CENDI?": www.cendi.org/english/about.html

CENDI services are not confined to the education center but offer a broad range of alternatives, both formal or institutional and non-formal.

Formal programs.

Formal education is offered in 12 centers located in 4 municipalities of the state of Nueva León, covering approximately 3,150 children. Care and education services are organized by regulation into three different levels: Infants (*lactantes*), from 45 days to one-and-a-half years of age; Toddlers (*maternales*), from one-and-a-half to three years of age; and Preschoolers, from three to six years of age. Each of these levels is in turn divided into three sub-levels:

Table 21. Levels and sublevels of CENDI services

Level	Sub-level	Age
Infants	LI	45 days to six months
	LII	Seven to 11 months
	LIII	One year to one year and six months
Toddlers	MI	One year and seven months to one year and 11 months
	MII	Two years to two years and six months
	MIII	Two years and six months to three years
Preschoolers	PI	Three years to three years and 11 months
	PII	Four years to four years and 11 months
	PIII	Five years to five years and 11 months

The curriculum

Children under the age of three, as well as children from the ages of three to five, receive initial and preschool educational content as officially established by the Ministry of Public Education. In initial education, for children under the age of three, the intent is to contribute to the harmonious and balanced development of children, developing the basic skills and capacities appropriate to this age group. For preschool education, the program is structured around the competencies that the child should achieve in six areas: artistic expression and appreciation, personal and social development, mathematical thinking, physical development and health, language and communication, and exploration and knowledge of the world.

In accordance with regulations, the promoters have added other, “co-curricular” or compensatory programs, in order to enrich children's experiences in different disciplines. These are offered by teachers specialized in English, computer science, music, dance, drawing and modeling, physical education, karate, yoga, and gymnasium work. Another program deals with developmental delays, and is offered by a group of CENDI specialists, with the object of detecting developmental delays in children and treating them or referring them to specialized institutions as required.

Basic work areas

The comprehensive care provided to children embraces five basic work areas: medical, nutritional, pedagogical, psychological, and social work.

Each of these areas involves different actions that are spelled out in the institutional action plan, and are conducted via the following strategies: (i) detection of children's education needs, based on a diagnosis that is used to formulate, execute, and develop and evaluate the plan; (ii) setting priorities; (iii) determining actions to take and assigning responsibilities to specialists; (iv) planning and conducting activities with parental involvement, taking advantage of available spaces and resources; and (v) supervision and monitoring to verify performance of the planned actions and to introduce any changes necessary to achieve its objectives.

An important program component is a comprehensive evaluation of the child, performed in a continuous and daily process by professionals in each of the aforementioned areas. The purpose of the evaluation is to measure a child's ongoing development so as to detect any risks or problems. The evaluation is conducted at three times: (i) in August, during the diagnostic stage, strategies and short, medium and long-term lines of action are established; (ii) in January, the midterm evaluation is conducted to verify outcomes and determine whether the planning was effective; and (iii) in June there is a final evaluation to see whether the goals and objectives have been met and to confirm progress in areas of risk. At this stage, new objectives and strategies are programmed for continuing the formative process during the child's attendance at the center.

The comprehensive child evaluation system considers the following instruments, parameters and indicators:

Table 22. Instruments, parameters and indicators of the CENDI child evaluation system

Key Process	Indicators	Parameters	Instruments	Person in Charge
Nutrition	Weight Age Size Arm circumference Head circumference	Nutritional status	Daily food consumption record of each child	Nutritionist
Medical status	Incidence of acute illnesses; Prevalent illnesses; Nutritional state; Neuro- motor Development; Laboratory tests; Frequency of accidents	Health index	Daily record of illnesses, accidents, symptoms, diagnosis, days of suspension and observations	Physician
Psychology	Posture control Motor coordination Language Socialization	Development coefficients	Brunet Lezine development scale in LI to MII; Brunet Lezine screening in MIII to PIII	Psychologist
Pedagogy	Personal area Social area Environmental area	Maturity	Evaluation guide for children from 3 to 6 months; Evaluation guide for children from 6 to 9 months	Head of area
Social work	Socio-cultural level Education level	Socioeconomic status	Socioeconomic study conducted before entry	Social worker

Source: Rodríguez Martínez, G. (2005). La evaluación integral en los CENDI de Monterrey, Mexico. Paper presented at the *Seminario Internacional Evaluación de Programas de Desarrollo Infantil en América Latina y el Caribe*. IDB, World Bank, OAS.

A personal record is kept for every child, tracking his or her development in the pedagogical, medical, nutritional and psychological areas. That record is delivered to parents each year, showing the outcomes of the initial, midterm and diagnostic evaluations. The "observations" heading identifies the child's strengths as well as areas where he or she may be lagging and needs further attention.

Criteria for facilitating transitions

When a child makes the move from home to the CENDI Center, steps must be taken to facilitate his or her adaptation. This involves working together with the family to avoid any anxieties and traumas that could affect the child's emotional development upon being thrust into a new and unfamiliar social environment.

For the transition from one level to the other, the child's chronological age is supplemented by the maturity criterion, i.e. whether he or she has achieved sufficient progress at each stage of development to move on to the following section. For example, to move from LI to LII, the infant must have achieved posture control; to move from LII to LIII the child must be able to eat with a spoon; from MI to MII, he or she must be toilet trained. In addition, there is a programmed phase of adaptation to the next level. Thus, the child makes periodic visits to the new classroom, until he or she can do so without experiencing any stress or anxiety.

"Graduates" of the program are monitored to evaluate their academic performance; this information is shared with teachers at other levels, parents and former pupils by means of surveys as well as meetings with parents and children. The academic record of former pupils is obtained to provide more complete information on their performance. After 17 years of work, it can be said that the majority of CENDI graduates, despite their social status, have enjoyed academic success and have distinguished themselves as leaders and as cooperative members of society.

Quality of care and education services

One feature that contributes to the quality of services is the ongoing training that staff receive. In addition to the sessions for evaluation, training and exchange of experience that are held in each CENDI, there have been international meetings with presentations by distinguished specialists and experts in various areas. Said meetings are attended by teachers from all states and abroad, and as of 2008 seven international meetings and two world congresses had been held.

*Non-formal programs*²⁶⁸

In addition to its formal programs, the sponsoring institution conducts community outreach programs targeted at children and families living in socially and economically disadvantaged areas. These programs include:

The **Parents' School**, a program that recognizes the importance of parental involvement and seeks to create closer links between the home and school in order to foster joint efforts on behalf of children's integral development. Program contents relate to all the areas of work

²⁶⁸ Rodríguez Martínez, G. (2005). La evaluación integral en los CENDI de Monterrey, Mexico. Paper presented at the *Seminario Internacional Evaluación de Programas de Desarrollo Infantil en América Latina y el Caribe*. IDB, World Bank, OAS

mentioned above, and are scheduled as: (i) monthly meetings conducted by the technical council; (ii) meetings to discuss and guide special processes such as adaptation, weaning, toilet training etc.; (iii) health and nutrition workshops in which parents receive training in nutritional practices, first aid and child raising techniques; and (iv) individual consultations to deal with specific problems.

"Learning Together" is a community action program that provides care and guidance to families with children under the age of six who are not attending CENDI or any other education center, and who show signs of possible developmental delays. These programs are run by CENDI teachers, teaching assistants, and specialists in medicine, nutrition, psychology and social work. Their objectives are (i) to offer equal opportunities to children from neighboring low-income areas; (ii) to articulate institutional programs with non-formal ones so that children can achieve the same levels of development through specialized, multidisciplinary care that integrates education, health and nutrition.

The **"Rescatando Inteligencias"** (roughly "Saving Minds") nutrition program is offered to children under the age of six enrolled in CENDI and in the "Learning Together" program. It provides nutritional supplements to improve children's daily diet and boost brain development. The program is considered a priority because of the close relationship between good nutrition and physical, emotional and mental development—particularly in early childhood—and involves the following actions: census, formation of the management team, training workshops for parents, delivery of nutritional supplements, monitoring and evaluation.

"Building a Better Tomorrow" is a prenatal program for mothers beginning in their fourth month of pregnancy. The program focuses on prenatal health, nutrition, psychoprophylaxis, intra-uterine stimulation, and training. The objective of the program is to help make women aware of the fundamental importance of the prenatal stage for the life of the future baby, in order to ensure the birth of healthy individuals with greater potential and proper adaptation to their social surroundings.

The program has been serving low-income women with little schooling,²⁶⁹ and offers medical, psychological, nutritional, nursing and social services. Every woman receives attention twice a week for an hour and a half, in groups of 25. There is postnatal follow-up, and entry for the children into the CENDI program is facilitated.

5. The National Wawa Wasi Program (PNWW) in Peru²⁷⁰

Wawa Wasi ("Children's home," in Quechua) is a government-sponsored social program that provides comprehensive care to children under the age of four whose mothers are working or studying and who live in poverty or extreme poverty. The PNWW is currently serving 65,000 boys and girls across the country, in 33 regional offices. The objectives are PNWW are: (i) to provide comprehensive care for young children living in poverty and extreme poverty; (ii) to work with parents and the community to promote and develop a child-rearing culture based on healthy practices; (iii) to promote collaboration between government, community and volunteers on behalf of young children; (iv) to contribute to personal development and raise the quality of life for women, by facilitating their employment and education opportunities.

²⁶⁹ 45% have only primary schooling, 17% are single mothers or separated, 25% are teenage mothers, and 69% have no medical care.

²⁷⁰ Programa Nacional Wawa Wasi. Ministerio de la Mujer y Desarrollo Social: <http://www.mimdes.gob.pe/wawawasi/>

PNWW is offered nationwide in rural, Andean and Amazonian communities, and in settlements around urban areas that are characterized by poverty and extreme poverty. The WW provides children with comprehensive health, nutrition and early learning services throughout the year, Monday to Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The nutrition component provides each child with three daily meals, guaranteeing 100% of the protein and 70% of the calories required for healthy development. The education component pursues early childhood learning strategies, including a development evaluation using a checklist and an interactive panel; a curricular plan and an articulation matrix for planning educational activities, considering the conditions for learning, methodological resources and materials needed; and coaching and training activities.²⁷¹ Health controls are conducted by staff from the health services located near the WW.

Each program office has a management team comprising specialists in community management and a number of professionals from different disciplines who act as field coordinators and administrators, supervising each WW in the participating communities. The PNWW has more than 13,000 community workers including caregiver mothers, experienced “guide mothers,” and other volunteers who help in the kitchens, distribute materials, and serve as members of management committees and oversight boards. Community involvement is achieved through grassroots social organizations (community kitchens and women's organizations, for example) and their territorial organizations, from which the management committee members are drawn. The management committee is organized around the WW service, and is responsible for the use of government funds provided for the care of children in their jurisdiction.

The Wawa Wasi may be of several kinds. The first is the “family WW,” in which the caregiver mother looks after six to eight children in her own home (one module). The second is the “community WW,” in which local authorities provide the premises to care for 16 to 24 children (two or three modules). In rural areas, the community or family WWs take account of children's needs as well as the local culture, productive activities and social dynamics.

Finally, there is the “institutional WW” (WWI), which is sponsored by PNWW in response to requests for care and education services not provided by the state. For this purpose PNWW has signed 36 cooperation agreements with public and private institutions to provide daycare services. Furthermore, in the context of social responsibility, coordination arrangements have been made with regional, provincial and municipal governments. The number of children served by the institutional WWs varies from as few as eight to as many as 70, depending on the institution's financial and logistics situation. The WWI offers an environment in which children have varied experiences.

The initial investment in the WWI²⁷² must consider the following aspects: (i) adaptation of infrastructure; (ii) basic installation of the kitchen and the child environment; (iii) hiring of staff: caregiver mothers (each in charge of up to eight children), kitchen manager and program coordinator; (iv) costs of food, comprising a midmorning snack, lunch, and late afternoon snack; and (v) other costs such as maintenance, renewal of furnishings, training, etc. The basic amounts are determined jointly with the institution, taking into account its financial possibilities.

²⁷¹<http://www.sedi.oas.org/dec/documentos/simposio/PRESENTACIONES%20-20PRESENTATIONS%20-%20MAYO%20->

²⁷² *Wawa Wasi institucional. Una propuesta de atención a la infancia temprana.*
<http://www.mimdes.gob.pe/wawawasi/wwinstitucional.htm>



The National Wawa Wasi Program has been recognized with the following awards: Creative Businesses, Social Investment for the Future: Wawa Wasi, 2005; Honorable Mention, National Public Category; Best Government Practices – Internal Management System Category; Intelligent Social Subsidies: Wawa Net, 2006 Prize; Good Urban Practices – Urban Social Development Category, 2006.

The Qatari Wawa program

Qatari Wawa (roughly "On your feet, kids!") is an approach designed for children in rural communities where poverty, exclusion and malnutrition rates are highest. The program builds on experience with the *Allin Tayta* I and II project; it was launched on an experimental basis by MIMDES in November 2004, and in March 2007 MIMDES institutionalized the *Qatari Wawa* strategy through a ministerial resolution, making the national Wawa Wasi program responsible for implementing it in the country's rural Andean zone.

The objective of *Qatari Wawa* is to strengthen the capacities of families and of the community in the high Andean areas to establish conditions that are favorable to the integral development of children from gestation to 47 months, with an intercultural focus. It encourages participation by the entire family and by community leaders, through awareness raising, training and outreach activities concerning the program's objectives.

The program has three components: capacity development, community management, and promotion of development. Capacity development is pursued through different strategies: (i) meetings that include demonstrations relating to health and nutrition; (ii) home visits that allow for personal interaction, family and community oversight of the *Yachay Wasi*, which are community centers for learning about childhood issues. Community management is promoted through the encouragement of community participation in various stages of the program. The community produces a diagnosis of the situation of children, and this helps the community accept the program in light of the information collected. The promotion of development is directed at changing family and community attitudes and behavior and establishing a commitment to improve living conditions and achieve integral development for young children.

The program offers the ongoing support of a multidisciplinary team at its headquarters and in its regional offices. It is the field coordinators who run the programs; each coordinator is responsible for two to four communities, depending on their geographic location. The field

coordinator is the cultural mediator, and has experience and skills in working in rural communities.

Thirty-two communities in rural Andean areas have been selected for the program, which currently serves around 1,280 children under the age of four. The communities are located in the departments of Huanuco (8 communities), Huancavelica (16 communities) and Ayacucho (8 communities). In each community up to 40 families are selected, among which 40 mothers, 40 fathers, 30 older siblings, eight community leaders, and five local government officials can be found.

In order to foster the exchange of experience and strengthen efforts on behalf of young children, some activities are conducted at the district or provincial level. These include meetings of leaders (community leaders, mothers and adolescents), which are also attended by the district or provincial mayors and councilors, leading to the signature of contracts and other actions on behalf of young children.

The program's achievements include: (i) creation of recreational spaces for children; (ii) the beginning of greater interaction between mothers and their babies through play; (iii) better care and protection for children through a social surveillance system promoted during the meetings; (iv) identification and satisfaction of needs for each social group: children, mothers, families, adolescents and community leaders; (v) reduced incidences of family violence, by giving women access to public forums where they can denounce such acts; (vi) better parenting practices, and adoption of new forms that promote child development; (vii) care provided to 3,013 beneficiaries, in addition to training for 4,040 beneficiaries, including mothers of children under the age of three, children from ages three to six, adolescents, families and community leaders.

6. The JUNJI Programs²⁷³ in Chile

The educational programs of the National Kindergarten Board (*Junta Nacional de Jardines Infantiles*, JUNJI) that are offered throughout Chile provide comprehensive care for children under the age of six, through various strategies. Comprehensive care includes nutrition, social assistance, and high-quality, appropriate and pertinent education. Services are provided through formal and non-formal programs, each with its own organizational and operational characteristics. All of them, however, treat the child as a person who has a proactive role in the learning process, and the adult as a mediator between the child and his or her surroundings.

The kindergarten programs offer care to children from 85 days of age until they enter basic education, including children with special educational needs. The sections are: nursery, from 84 days to one year; "*menor*," from one to two years of age; intermediate, from two to three years of age; "*mayor*," from three to four years of age; "pre-kinder," from ages four to five; and "kinder," from ages five to six. From the "kinder" level, children go on to attend schools run by the municipality, or *colegios*. The kindergarten schedule responds to the needs of children and their families, offering half-day and full-day classes from Monday to Friday, for 11 months out of the year, and provide the children with free meals.

The kindergartens are administered by JUNJI or municipalities, with JUNJI funding, as well as by nonprofit agencies. They are generally located in high-density urban areas and in semi-urban zones where people have few resources or are at risk. The premises must comply with certain standards, such as having activities rooms, hygiene rooms, food services, a small

²⁷³ http://www.junji.cl/junjijoomla/index.php?option=com_content&task=section&id=31&Itemid=148

bodega, outdoor play areas, and administrative offices. Some rules have also been established to promote child learning, such as: (i) placing learning materials within reach of children so that they can develop their independence and responsibility while enjoying possibilities for play, exploration and cognitive interaction; (ii) allowing the child to discover and make use of new spaces as opportunities for enriching his or her learning in different contexts; (iii) promoting interaction between children in small and large groups; (iv) encouraging participatory decision-making that takes into account the interests of children and their families.

The curriculum

The curriculum used in the kindergartens is consistent with the characteristics, needs and interests of children, and also with the expectations of families and communities. The educational project that is developed with participation from the education community constitutes a guide for teaching work.

Parents and teachers work together at long-, medium- and short-term planning, and in diversifying the curriculum, articulating the plan to encourage meaningful and relevant learning and taking into account children's individual differences. Day-to-day planning incorporates experiences with verbal language and logical and mathematical relationships, as well as other core subjects, in a holistic approach that seeks to strike a balance between the different aspects of learning for human development. The curriculum uses two basic methodological strategies: educational work with children, and educational work with their families. Work with the family is intended to encourage family involvement in children's learning in order to give continuity at home to the learning accomplished at school. This means that classroom planning includes contents for working with the family, developed in general meetings, workshops and all occasions that bring parents together. In this way, all stakeholders are involved in mediating the expected learning.

In order to ensure a comprehensive evaluation of the educational process, each classroom team must take decisions about how to evaluate, bearing in mind the context in which the teaching and learning process is unfolding. In addition to the evaluation done by the teacher in the classroom, JUNJI applies an expected learning evaluation instrument that can identify achievements at the institutional level.

Other programs

JUNJI also offers alternative programs that have greater flexibility and lower operating costs than the formal centers. These programs offer free, comprehensive care, Monday to Friday for 11 months, to children from two years of age until they enter primary school. The education agent is a preschool technician. Family involvement is a key factor for the continuity of learning. These services are offered mainly in rural and semi-urban areas and use a number of strategies, some offering direct care to the children and others working through their parents. The non-conventional programs are:

Family preschool, which operates from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., or from 1 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday to Friday, for 11 months out of the year. On alternate days, the agent works with the parents and the community dealing with topics of interest concerning child development and learning. The program for planning and implementing pedagogical activities follows a semi-structured curriculum guide and a methodology guide prepared by the JUNJI technical department. Each preschool facility serves from 20 to 36 children. The education agent is a preschool technician who can count on the support of the children's relatives that have been previously trained.

Preschool for working mothers (*Jardín laboral*) serves children whose mothers work outside the home, and is organized to meet their needs, including extended hours and feeding. The program is run by a preschool technician and by a relative or leader elected by the community, who receives support from the community and is contracted by the municipalities. Teaching follows the family preschool curriculum.

Seasonal preschool for children whose mothers work at temporary jobs mainly in the fruit industry, agro industry, fishing and tourism. It operates three or four months a year during the summer, in specially equipped municipal premises or others provided by community agencies. The program is run by two preschool technicians, and uses a curricular guide prepared by the JUNJI technical department. The hours of service are from 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., Monday to Friday. The children receive meals.

Intercultural preschool is designed for indigenous children between the ages of two and five belonging to the Aymara, Atacameño, Colla, Rapanuí, Mapuche, Pehuenche, Huilliche, Kawashkar and Yámana ethnic communities. It operates in school classrooms or in community centers specially equipped to serve children for 11 months of the year, Monday to Friday, on a half-day basis, either morning or afternoon, according to the needs of each group. It uses an intercultural curriculum appropriate to each ethnic group. The educator is of indigenous origin, recognized by the community and by local leaders.

The **Program for Improving Infant Care** (PMI) is designed for at-risk children. It operates in community facilities with the participation of families and cultural agents who, with the support of JUNJI professionals, offer education and care.

Family programs: these programs are focused on the home, where the family is front and center in the child's education process. Children's homes become educational spaces, where parents or close relatives guide the learning process with the coaching and assistance of preschool educators, and with appropriate support materials. JUNJI began these programs in 1990 in order to expand coverage of preschool education. The first program was the "Home Nursery" (*Sala Cuna en Hogar*).

The family education program uses the preschool education curriculum, which identifies the learning that children are expected to achieve. The basic curricular cycles constitute guidance both for the teacher and family as to the optimum times for achieving specific learning. They also facilitate selection of objectives at each stage of the child's life, and how to organize what and when each child will learn.

The methodological strategies of the program consider work with children, the teacher and family, on both an individual and group basis. In the group work facilities, fixed groups of children and adults are formed to create interactions and dynamics that enrich the collective work and facilitate monitoring by the teacher. Curricular planning takes place at two interrelated levels: there is the plan prepared by the teacher responsible for the program, which may be short-, medium- or long-term, and the plan prepared by the family for individual work with the child.

The evaluation of the family education program is based on the criteria defined in the preschool curriculum, and includes a diagnostic evaluation, midterm progress evaluation, and final evaluation. In the health center modality, there is an evaluation of the infant's psychomotor development.

Among the family programs, the following are included:²⁷⁴

Health Center Nursery Facility (*Sala Cuna en el Consultorio*), located in premises of the public health system, and offers educational care to children at socio-environmental risk through multidisciplinary work with family involvement. It is run by a preschool teacher who plans, implements and evaluates the program for the children, and provides guidance to adults for educational activities at home, supplemented with a support manual. There are also workshops with children's relatives to reinforce their role as education agents. The nursery operates on a flexible schedule determined in agreement with the adult who brings the child to the health facility.

Communication Program, aimed at children who do not attend a formal preschool education program, is carried out through radio broadcasting, and supplemented by educational guides for the families. It offers suggestions about educational activities at home, as well as working methodologies that will facilitate children's learning process. It also incorporates contents for improving living standards, as a basic element of conditions that foster the learning process.

The "**Patio Abierto**" **Kindergarten** program offers education to children between the ages of three and five in urban areas who lack access to the education system. It is offered on Saturdays in the play yards of institutions that operate from Monday to Friday. The work is conducted by a preschool educator, assisted by monitors who have been trained to work with children. The program is supplemented with visits to the children's homes, adult group work meetings, and education guides for use at home. The children are given meals, depending on the schedule they are following.

JUNJI also has a good treatment program to protect children against abuse of all kinds, in the context of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child.

7. The Roving Caregivers Program in the Caribbean

The Roving Caregivers Program began in Jamaica in 1992, and is in actuality a regional undertaking. The initial experiment was launched in two rural parishes of central Jamaica and was expanded, over a period of six years, from 15 to 25 districts, benefiting 3,500 children and 700 households in 70 communities. In 1998 it was adopted by the government as an initiative to eradicate poverty, and was introduced on a pilot basis in urban areas benefiting 1,300 children. The program was implemented by the Rural Family Support Organization (RuFamSo) with financial assistance from UNICEF and the Bernard van Leer Foundation. It was designed as a multidimensional and integral program, and was awarded the Maurice Pate prize by UNICEF in 2000.

The Roving Caregivers Program is a non-formal program of home visits designed to encourage the early stimulation of children from birth to the age of three. The objective is to enrich parenting practices and the stimulation that children receive from their parents, in support of their development.

The key element of the program is training. First, training of the "rovers," selected from among secondary school leavers, who receive training in child development and the program's methodology and who, through the program, have the opportunity to develop their self-esteem, knowledge and recognition within their community. Second, training for parents to encourage

²⁷⁴ <http://www.oei.es/linea3/inicial/chilene.htm#9>.

the integral development of their children and to adopt parenting practices that will promote early childhood development.

The rovers are selected to work in the communities where they live. They are trained to demonstrate and instruct parents about stimulation activities and child-rearing practices. The process includes a week of pre-service or initial training, one day of continuous training every two weeks, and four weeklong training sessions during the course of the year. Every two weeks, at the continuous training sessions, matters relating to the visits are discussed, the weekly work plans are reviewed for the coming period, and play materials are prepared for the stimulation activities. Home visits are monitored by a supervisor.

The rovers go from home to home, working with parents and children. Each rover is responsible for 30 families. The rovers provide children with colorful and interesting toys, many of them made by program participants themselves. The packet of materials includes cushions with zippers and buttons to develop eye-hand coordination, bottle stoppers and shells in egg cartons for classification games, balls and hoops for motor development, and picture cards for building sensory and language skills. The group sessions with parents address such topics as early stimulation, health and hygiene, environmental aspects, promotion of vaccination, registering births, and early intervention to address developmental delays.

In 2004/2005 the program was evaluated using a sample of 163 children from 12 to 30 months of age, assigned either to the intervention or control group. The evaluation found a reduction in developmental retardation among infants and small children in poor areas of Jamaica. As a result of the intervention, children who received the parent-child stimulation sessions every two weeks had better scores in terms of developmental quotients, hand-eye coordination, and Griffiths performance tests than children who did not participate in the program. Additionally, parents who participated in the program scored better on a child development and parenting knowledge test.²⁷⁵

According to McDonald (2000), the success of the intervention and the quality of the RCP program is due to such factors as: (i) the linkage of childcare supports with supports for families; (ii) a holistic approach that recognizes the integral development of the child but also the multiple roles of women as mothers, homemakers and income earners; (iii) the transfer of skills to the household; (iv) addressing nutrition, promoting breast-feeding, meal planning, and assistance with kitchen gardens on different levels; (v) flexibility providing door-to-door services in homes that are far away, and group visits to homes that are closer; (vi) acknowledgment of various family configurations (for example grandmothers), and building on existing networks for children; (vii) the sustainability of play materials (parents are taught how to make toys using simple recycled materials); (viii) a system of referrals to child health clinics; (ix) high level of staff retention, on average three years; (x) a focus on process and material documentation; (xi) strong monitoring and feedback mechanisms (with workshops every two weeks with on-site supervision); and (xii) orientation to research leading to action (child development assessments, program follow-up studies).

According to Roopnarine (2008), the RCP owes its success to these factors: (i) it is based on culturally relevant theoretical principles and research; (ii) it takes into account different family structures; (iii) during the visit the emphasis is on motor, cognitive and language skills; (iv) it seeks to improve parent-child interaction; (v) activities are culturally appropriate; (vi) it has a set of well-developed working materials; (vii) paraprofessionals are selected from the community; and (viii) it builds on the community's social and intellectual capital, using the church and the school to provide information and guidance.

²⁷⁵ As indicated that the RCP webpage, based on the Roopnarine study, 2005

The program is currently being replicated elsewhere in the Caribbean, in Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, with support from the Bernard van Leer Foundation and CCSI (Caribbean Child-Support Initiative). The objectives of the regional project are: (i) to offer early stimulation to children and improve parenting practices; (ii) to recruit and train caregivers from the community to support service to parents; and (iii) to transfer the knowledge acquired and the skills in working with families to a series of local support agencies. The "rovers" are paraprofessionals with little knowledge of parenting practices or child development, which means that continuous feedback is needed. The rovers visit homes to demonstrate and assist parents in activities to promote early childhood stimulation and education. The group sessions for parents are held every month in order to improve their knowledge of child development strategies, and to help them pursue income-generating activities.

In St. Vincent the Childcare Training and Development Agency (Vinsave) is responsible for implementing the program in Byera, Sandy Bay and Barrouallie. In St. Lucia, the Ministry of Education, through the early childhood development unit, is coordinating implementation of the program in five areas: Anse la Raye, Vieux-Fort, Micoud, Gros Islet and Dennery. In Dominica, the Christian Children's Fund (CCF, an NGO) is implementing the program in Castle Bruce, Petite Soufriere, San Saouveur, Good Hope, the Carib Territory and Atkinson. Finally, in Grenada, the Grenada Citizen Advice and Small Business Agency (GRENCASE) is implementing the program in the communities of Mt. Tranquil/Vincennes and Dudmar, Belle Plain and Windsor Forest in St. David's. These programs have been underway since 2004 (in Dominica). The latest country to introduce it was St. Vincent. In all, the five countries are serving approximately 1,200 children.

Table 23. Coverage of the Roving Caregivers program in Caribbean countries

Country	Start date	No. of rovers	No. of families	No. of children
Dominica	July 2004	145	1,083	1,261
Grenada	2006	151	1,351	1,409
St Lucia	February 2005	132	1,907	2,112
St Vincent	July 2005	142	1,748	1,778

Source: <http://www.ccsi-info.org/pagesselect.cfm?page=47>

An evaluation of the program's impact is currently underway in St. Lucia. The program was initiated on the basis of a study of parental education in which it was found that the RCP was the best model for strengthening and changing parenting habits in the island. The program seeks to promote appropriate child-rearing practices in order to ensure the healthy development of children from birth to the age of three. The impact evaluation is being conducted in 15 communities, seven of which are pursuing the RCP program, while the other eight will constitute the control group. The study, which is quantitative and qualitative in nature, is being conducted by the Amsterdam Institute for International Development (AIID).

The quantitative study seeks to answer the following two questions: Is the program having an impact on parenting practices for children from birth to three years? Have parents acquired the skills needed to be better educators and caregivers to their children? The evaluation is designed as a quasi-experimental study, with a baseline survey and three follow-up survey rounds. The sample consists of 400 to 450 children, ranging from newborns to 24-month-olds, who will be evaluated over time at intervals of one year until they enter preschool. It is planned to continue monitoring them after they enter primary school and move on to secondary school. Three types of information will be gathered: information on cognitive, motor, speaking and

listening skills; emotional development; and anthropometric data. Once the child is in primary school, these developmental tests will be complemented with numeracy and literacy tests. The study will evaluate the knowledge, skills and conduct of parents, as well as their income and support networks. There are high expectations about the outcomes of this study, given the sound design of the evaluation, and also because it will be one of the few solid evaluations of a home visiting program in the Latin American region.

Conclusions

Head Start (HS) is a comprehensive early care and education program targeted at children under the age of six from low-income households, and at their parents. It seeks to foster the child's comprehensive, holistic development. Inherent in this concept is an appreciation of every child, his or her family and surroundings, and promotion of the child's resilience.

In its two modalities—HS for children from three to six years, and EHS for children under the age of three—the program explicitly addresses aspects relating to the transition from the home to EHS, HS and primary school. Indeed, one of program's principles is to facilitate positive transitions. To this end it has developed materials for teachers, staff and administrators of HS programs on how to support children's transitions. The authorization act spells out a series of strategies, such as maintaining continuous channels of communication between HS and its counterparts for coordinating programs; organizing joint training in HS and the schools; establishing transition policies and procedures that will help the child make the move to school; helping parents to understand the importance that their involvement has for their child's academic success, while at the same time offering strategies for keeping families involved.

Sweden has one of the best-developed and most comprehensive early childhood systems in Europe. In the Swedish model, transitions are addressed from various angles. One of these is the curriculum, where the primary curriculum has incorporated concepts and methods used in the preschool approach, with the emphasis on play, exploration and creativity, and teamwork among teachers. The preschool curriculum does not exclude instruction in the mother tongue, but in fact facilitates it. In this way it helps in the transitions of children from minority groups. Finally, with creation of the preschool class for six-year-olds, located within the primary school, it seeks to familiarize children with the school culture and at the same time to influence the teaching approaches in primary school in order to reduce the differences. The placement of the preschool class within the primary school allows for more coordination and collaboration among teachers at both levels, while familiarizing children with the next level.

The Sure Start Program is designed to improve the emotional development and health of English children, and to support parents in their child-rearing task and in their search for employment, all within a single facility and a single program. An important element favoring transitions is the provision of comprehensive services not only to the child but also to the family.

The CENDIs in Monterrey, Mexico, offer comprehensive, high-quality care to children from 45 days after birth until they enter school. The children come from poorer areas, and their mothers work outside the home. Services are provided in two modalities: formal and non-formal. Formal education is offered in 12 centers, each staffed by a team that includes educators, a psychologist, a physician, nurse, nutritionist, social worker, and teachers responsible for curricular programs. A record is kept of each child's progress (nutritional, medical, psychological, pedagogical and social). The CENDIs have established guidelines for the transition of children under the age of three from one section to another. Children from ages three to six receive support in the transition to school, and children are monitored after they leave.

Parental involvement is considered fundamental in the CENDIs, and non-formal programs have accordingly been established to create links between home and school to foster joint efforts. Those programs are: the *Escuela de Padres*, where parents can learn about comprehensive childcare as well as specific issues; *Aprendiendo Juntos*, which provides guidance to families whose children are not enrolled in an education center; *Rescatando Inteligencias*, which offers nutritional support to children in the CENDIs and the *Aprendiendo Juntos* program; and the prenatal program known as "Building a Better Tomorrow," targeted at mothers from their fourth month of pregnancy on. The CENDIs have been recognized by numerous national and international awards for the quality of their services.

The National Wawa Wasi Program in Peru is a non-formal, government-sponsored social program that provides comprehensive care for poor children whose mothers are working outside the home. The education agent is a mother from the community, trained and supervised by a teacher. The program promotes co-management between the state, the community and individual volunteers, and encourages parental involvement in children's education so that the home can provide continuity for what the children are learning in the program. It has a diversified curriculum and a tool for evaluating and monitoring the children and the programs. The "family Wawa Wasi" is operated by a mother in her own home; the "community Wawa Wasi" is conducted in premises provided by the community; and the "institutional Wawa Wasi" operates under a contract between businesses and the Ministry for Women and Social Development. In rural areas, the *Qatari Wawa Wawa* program has been established, run by a multidisciplinary team that serves at-risk children through their parents, in order to develop a culture of parenting and guarantee a good start.

The programs of the National Kindergartens Board in Chile are of national scope and offer comprehensive care for children under the age of six. They include both formal and non-formal or non-academic programs. Among the formal programs is the *Jardín Infantil*, which provides care for children from 84 days of age until they enter school, for five or eight hours a day, depending on the family's requirements. It operates five days a week for 11 months out of the year. The curriculum is consistent with the resources, interests and aspirations of the community, within the framework of an education project developed jointly by parents and the classroom team.

Among the alternative or non-formal programs of JUNJI is the *Jardín Infantil Familiar* (Family Preschool), which works half days with children, and on alternate days with parents and the community to provide knowledge about childcare and education. To ensure the relevance and quality of teaching activities, the education agent has a curricular guide and the methodological guide. Other programs are the *Jardín Laboral* for children whose mothers are working outside the home; the *Jardín Estacional* for children whose mothers have seasonal jobs; the *Jardín Intercultural* designed for children of indigenous communities and run by an educator who belongs to the children's culture; and the "Improved Childcare" program for at-risk children. There are also family programs conducted in the home or in health facilities, with the support of teachers and the media.

The Roving Caregivers Program in the Caribbean is a good example of a program for children under the age of three that incorporates elements favorable to transitions. Those elements include familiarizing parents with the kinds of services available in care and education centers, taking a graduated approach that begins at home.

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VII. CONCLUSIONS

Definition of Transitions

Early childhood transitions refer to the change processes experienced by children during their first 8 years of life, linked to the access (or lack thereof) to various educational services (early childhood care and education center, preschool and primary school). Transitions are processes in which what happens in the previous setting and in the being entered both matter; they imply adjustments by the child and by the environment. They affect not only the child, but also the child's environment and the setting through which he or she transits. The home, care and education center, preschool and school constitute sub-systems of passage for the child, and are in turn affected by the child's passage through them. There is a shared responsibility between the child and the child's peers, family, teacher, and community.

A successful transition is described as the child's passage from one educational institution or care facility to another, accompanied by his or her parents and teachers; a step for a child who is ready, and one in which the child experiences proximity and continuity with the new environment, thanks to a curriculum that adapts to the his or her level of development and to qualified teachers that are interested in knowing the child and his or her past experience. In this passage, parents must feel welcome and supported by the new care facility or educational institution, according to policies that promote their involvement. A successful transition in early childhood is more likely to take place if there is a common regulatory and policy framework conducive to the continuity of these experiences. An integrated early childhood care system (for children under the age of seven) under a single institution facilitates the coordination of services, the creation of common standards of care, and competency-based profiles for staff working in these programs.

Theoretical Foundations according to Various Disciplines

According to psychology, as a child grows, his or her basic affection, nourishment, and care and education needs must be satisfied in order to develop the potential he or she was born with. It is not the same child with the same capabilities that moves from one educational level to another. It is instead a conceptualization of a child who is not static, but rather in constant growth and development, so that the demands and stimuli from the environment must adjust accordingly.

From the neurosciences it is known that both genetic factors and experiences, the environment, affect the development of the child's brain. Therefore, it is becomes clear that the experiences which the child lives during the transition from one care and educational environment to another, has an impact on that child. It is thus important to address transitions in early childhood in order to provide continuity and progression to these experiences in different environments.

Factors that Influence Transitions

In this respect, authors such as Peralta (2008) identify both internal factors, linked to the child and his or her family, as well as external factors, linked to the institution through which the child transits. Internal factors include the child's nutritional state, level of cognitive and socio-emotional development achieved at the time of transition, as well as factors related to his or her family environment, socio-economic level, the value given to education and early care, among others. External factors include the quality of the educational or care institution through which the child transits and, therefore, all the elements that constitute a quality service (staff training, curriculum used, type of parental involvement promoted, conditions of infrastructure, educational materials, among others). These factors are regulated by early childhood care and education policies, and as such, policy analysis is also relevant.

How Transitions are Addressed in Care Policies for Children Under the Age of Eight

In addressing the issue of transitions, care policy seeks to offer both children and their parents an integrated system of quality care that, as Peralta (2008) indicates, has “continuity,” “progression” and “differentiation.” An element that has been considered in OECD countries is that of integrating the responsibility of early childhood policy under the educational sector. This trend is seen as an effort toward continuity (and positive transitions) in the educational process. Integrating care policy under a single sector facilitates the articulation of education proposals of services for children under the age of three and in primary school, by dealing with a common notion of childhood, care and education, and supervision of the quality of services. Countries that have an integrated system are: New Zealand, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Finland, Norway, the Netherlands and Australia.

In Latin America, care and education for children in the first cycle (from birth to age three) is promoted, with other standards, by institutions other than the Ministry of Education. The second cycle (ages three to six) and primary schools, however, do report to the Ministry of Education continuity between the first and second cycles. Moreover, in the context of comprehensive care, complimentary health and nutrition services are offered to early childhood by other sectors; situations which can sometimes lead to disparities in the access to and quality of services, as it is possible that they may not be coordinated with the education sector.

In most countries, transitions between the second cycle and primary education are addressed at the level of strategic and development plans, and in some cases, in the legislation of the education sector. However, its incorporation to pedagogic practice is still in the early stages; a first step that has been taken in this direction is the articulation of curriculum documents and methodological guidelines that, to a certain extent, helps to provide continuity to learning in the different levels of the educational system. Another important element, common to all countries in the region, is parental involvement. Their involvement in education will contribute to the child’s successful transition from the home to the different care and education services.

The policy of OECD countries specifically and explicitly addresses the issue of transitions, highlighting the importance of actions aimed at facilitating them. Strategic plans for early childhood are even organized by cross-sectional issues that include them (as is the case in the United Kingdom, Finland and New Zealand), or include specific sections on transitions. In other countries, including Denmark, Ireland and France, although not explicitly mentioned in the plans or legislation, there are references to aspects or elements related to transitions such as encouraging parental involvement.

Characteristics of a Curriculum Favorable to Transitions

Based on the information from OECD countries, it is evidenced that an element favorable to transitions is a curricular framework that can be adapted to local contexts. Understanding said adaptation not as a mere diversification of content, but rather as the development of the curriculum itself at the center or program level, allowing it to fit the specific needs, interests and characteristics of children. This is the case in Sweden, where the curriculum is developed by each center or program based on general principles. In contrast, in Latin America, Peru sets forth the possibility of curricular diversification.

In OECD, Latin American and Caribbean countries, an important element is that curricular framework include not only aspects related to learning and school readiness, but those

related to the child's comprehensive development, considering and giving a central role to child-centered methodologies and the way children learn, through play.

Another feature is that the curriculum include specific contents for indigenous or migrant populations (Sweden, Finland), or even that they be developed with the participation of these groups, as was the case in New Zealand, and in most Latin American countries that have different ethnic groups (Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Paraguay, among others).

An additional element is that the preschool curriculum share common elements with the primary school curriculum. There must be coordination not only in the contents of the entire early childhood level and between the last preschool level and first grade (as in the United Kingdom), but also in the methodology, organization of the environments, educational materials, etc. In the operative part, one should opt for a functional organization of the objectives competencies or skills in areas, or spheres, or dimensions, etc., that will enable the continuity of learning from one section to another and from one cycle to another, further coordinating the preschool and primary education curricula.

The foundations supporting the proposal should include updated information from the various disciplines, in order to guide the pedagogical approach, methodology, strategies and evaluation criteria, specifying what is for the first cycle and what is for the second, given the specific features of each age group.

It would be good to include graduate profiles of children, so as to serve as reference for teachers on the achievements the children are expected to have reached upon completing each cycle, as is being done in the United Kingdom. Lastly, the curriculum should encourage and enable parents to participate in the educational process of their children, even in the formulation of the institution's curriculum.

Constraints Faced by Countries in Implementing Curricula Favorable to Transitions

In the authors' opinion, the constraints faced by countries in the implementation of curricula favorable to transitions lie in the following: (i) Staff ability and competence to implement a non-prescriptive curriculum that demands greater effort from them as teachers, or from the staff in charge, to translate it into activities that have meaning and relevance for children in each particular context. (ii) The conciliation of the preschool methodology that privileges playing, with that of the primary level that has a more cognitive approach. (iii) Conditions of poverty and exclusion that affect families of the more deprived areas; a situation that prevents them from offering the necessary opportunities and experiences for children to develop the basic skills that will enable them to successfully face school challenges. (iv) The lack of inter-sectoral coordination among the sectors that provide health and nutrition services, which usually prevents them from reaching more remote areas, where rates of child malnutrition and morbidity are higher. (v) The lack of bilingual teachers in areas where the spoken language differs from the official one, which prevents children from understanding and contributes to increasing numbers of repetition and school dropouts. (vi) The frequent changes made to curriculum documents, the poor training of teachers to handle them, and the lack of adequate infrastructure and materials.

Elements that Should be Incorporated in Teacher Training to Facilitate Transitions

The professional development of teachers working in early childhood should have a graduate profile that considers all the functions they will have to perform not only with children, but with the parents and community as well, in the different geographical, socio-economic and cultural contexts of the respective country. It is necessary to have a competency curriculum,

accompanied by an evaluation design that will permit validating the curricular proposal. In this way, every so often (three or four years) the necessary changes can be introduced based on the results and the progress of science and technology.

It would be important that the teacher training for early childhood cover the period from birth to age eight, which would enable teachers to accompany the child during the transition to primary school, to the first two grades – as in the case in France, Denmark, Norway and Sweden, (OECD) Colombia (Latin America), and Guyana (the Caribbean).

In Latin American countries where several languages or dialects are spoken, it is necessary for the teacher to be proficient in the children's first language.

Furthermore, initial teacher training requires ongoing training through *diplomados*, training courses, specializations, and Master's and Doctorate degrees that will contribute to the continuous improvement of the teaching staff. Ongoing training must be scheduled by the institutions in charge, taking into consideration the results of the assessments made through monitoring and supervision, in order to: guide the management of new curricular documents or methodological guidelines; analyze recent research on early childhood growth and development; master the application of learning strategies and curriculum planning; and other content requested by the teachers. Courses may be either completed in person or online, with each session lasting no less than one month, using a practical theoretical approach. Learning groups may also be organized, in which teachers meet to exchange experiences, analyze documents, plan activities and do internships, among other things.

In the case of staff working in non-formal or out of school programs, ongoing training is necessary to ensure quality of service. It would also be necessary to develop competency profiles for non-teaching staff working in programs aimed at under the age of three. This would contribute to the implementation of professional development for teaching and non-teaching staff in early childhood. In Latin America, Mexico—through CONAFE—has been implementing a development system for non-teaching staff.

Policies Favoring Parental Involvement in the Education and Care of their Children

Early childhood policies in OECD, Latin American and Caribbean countries, explicitly favor parental involvement in the learning and development process of their children. The level of involvement promoted, however, depends on each country, ranging from full participation, in which parents manage the care and education center and contribute to the development of curricular content, to a participation of informative nature, in which they provide (and receive) information about their children to (and from) teachers. As we have seen, parental involvement in their child's educational process is a key factor in the accompaniment of their children during the transition from one level to another. In the specific case of rural areas in Latin America, parents participate in the construction and maintenance of premises for non-formal programs, and in the preparation of the didactic material and furniture, and furthermore exert social control over the operation of nutritional and educational services.

In OECD and Latin American countries, materials have been designed to inform parents about their children's educational process and make them partake in it, as well as to instruct them in certain specific contents. Most OECD and Latin American countries publish magazines and produce radio, television and video programs aimed at parents with children under the age of six, with greater emphasis on the period from birth to age four. And in Latin America, the education and health ministries have prepared guidelines related to care, education and prevention, directed at parents.

Elements that Favor Transitions in the Reviewed Cases

A number of elements favorable to transitions were found in the OECD experiences reviewed, namely: (i) a coordinated and articulated curriculum, in which there is continuity in the content and methodology, that places the child at the center of the learning process; (ii) parent involvement policies in which parents are invited to participate in program activities and are provided with information; (iii) programs that have continuity and are aimed at children under and over the age of three; (iv) the use of strategies that promote integration with primary schools, such as incorporating preschool classes in primary educational centers as a way to familiarize children; (v) ongoing teacher training in teams, with staff from the different levels (preschool and primary school); and (vi) providing comprehensive services for children and their parents in a single premise.

Latin American programs have only recently begun to implement the focus on transitions in the educational system; however, selected cases like the CENDIs in Mexico have incorporated criteria for: the transition from one section to another for children under the age of three, preparing six-year-olds for the transition to first grade, and following up on institution graduates to obtain information regarding their performance in primary school. Parental involvement in the educational process is also incorporated, as is the ongoing training of staff.

Wawa Wasi and Qatari Wawa in Peru, the CENDI in Mexico, and the programs of the National Board for Preschools and Day Care Centers in Chile share a common element: parental involvement in the education of their children from an early age. This strategy, along with comprehensive care and ongoing assessment of early childhood growth and development, guarantee a good start for subsequent schooling. These programs also have a multidisciplinary team that promotes comprehensive care through monitoring and supervision activities.

OECD Policy Trends on Transitions

According to the reviewed information, the tendency in OECD countries is to address transitions not only from the perspective of legislation and regulation, but rather from the curricular framework, and policies of teacher training and parental involvement. Finland, New Zealand, Spain and the United Kingdom regulate transitions in their documents on early childhood policy, indicating that they must seek and provide continuity to the educational process throughout early childhood and the beginning of primary school. In the remaining countries, while policy documents make no explicit reference to transitions, they do highlight elements that favor them.

With respect to curricular frameworks, countries such as Sweden, Finland, Norway, New Zealand and the United Kingdom have them for all of early childhood, with separate standards for children under and over the age of three, but providing continuity. On the other hand, countries like France, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom have prepared articulated curricular frameworks for the preschool and primary levels. In Finland, Sweden and Denmark, preschool classes are located in primary schools—a strategy that seeks to bridge the gap between preschool and primary school. In the case of Norway and Sweden, the primary school curricular framework incorporates methodological concepts from the preschool level. Italy promotes the use of portfolios at the preschool level, which accompany the child during his or her passage through primary school.

With respect to teacher training, there is a tendency to conduct training for the preschool level and for the first two grades of primary school under the same formation, as is the case in

France, the Netherlands, Australia, Denmark and Norway. Lastly, with respect to parental involvement, all countries studied have policies that favor parental involvement in the educational process, which is seen as an element that favors and facilitates transitions; the degree of involvement promoted depends on each country. In Norway and Finland parents even participate in designing the center's curricular content.

Policy Trends on Transition in Latin America and the Caribbean

At the legislation level (development plans, general education laws), all Latin American countries regulate transitions, especially the one from preschool to primary school. In Brazil and Uruguay, legislation addresses the transition from the care center (children under the age of three) to preschool (children over three). The concrete and specific actions of Argentina and Chile are highlighted; countries in which complementary methodological guidelines that sustain continuity have been developed. In the case of Bolivia, what the child has learned at home needs to be continued at school, and in Colombia, teachers' training encompasses those who attend school from birth through the age of eight.

In Caribbean countries, the growing trend is to address transitions in policy documents, teacher-training strategies, and particularly in parental involvement policies. In accordance with the Regional Plan for Caribbean Early Childhood, countries have set the working goal of developing comprehensive care systems with common parameters, parental involvement, certification and development of standards, and elements that clearly favor transitions.

Reflections

It is clear that a common policy framework for early childhood is an element that favors work on transitions and that an integrated early childhood care system facilitates coordination and provides continuity to the services. For these purposes, it is necessary to unify the care and education of children under and over the age of three under a single sector. How to do so will depend on each country. There are elements to be evaluated, including which is the stronger sector, which has more resources, and which could carry out coordination activities. If countries opt for the welfare sector, it is important to bear in mind the educational component of care as Denmark and Finland do.

With respect to the curriculum, there is no single model, but it is important to take into account the factors that favor transitions. The curricular approach taken will depend on the values and objectives established by States for preschool education, and the respective national project countries have in mind. However, it is important to not give importance solely to school readiness, that is to say, the cognitive view, because this may distract from valuable elements of the socio-pedagogical approach that seeks the comprehensive development of the child.

Similarly, in countries such as those in Latin America, it is important to note that in many cases, children come from disadvantaged socio-economic conditions where they have received little stimulation, and will need more preparation to reach the goals expected of them so as to perform satisfactorily in primary school. Lastly, it is better to develop a curricular framework resulting from solid research, in consultation with teachers and specialists and accepted by all, than to make constant modifications and reforms to national proposals in order to update them, without carrying out the necessary research and examination. In OECD countries, curricula have sometimes been valid for approximately ten years.

The selected case studies illustrate the different elements considered essential for transitions. Study tours are suggested in order to understand in greater detail how these programs work, and to learn about the strategies they implement to favor transitions. A common element to the case studies of OECD programs is that they have been—and continue to be—evaluated. Much has been learned from impact assessments in relation to the way they function, and this has resulted in program improvements. In Latin America, although programs have been awarded for the quality of their services (CENDI and Wawa Wasi), research has yet to be conducted to evaluate the results of the transitions from the home to the care center or preschool, and from there to school.

It is suggested that nationwide case studies be carried out to understand which aspects of the educational establishments contribute to (or hinder) children's transitions, such as those undertaken by the Save the Children organization, with the Children of the Millennium in Peru, which track the transitions of a group of children from primary to secondary school. It is necessary not only to study the policy, but also to conduct field research to collect data on the children, their parents, and the institutions they attend, to later do a cross-sectional study with information from national census or assessments on learning and performance.

This document expects to have raised some general issues on what is being done in both OECD countries and those in Latin America and the Caribbean, with respect to transitions in order to enrich the national and regional debate. While the topic of transitions in the *“Policies and Strategies for a Successful Transition of the Child to Socialization and School”* project constitutes an important contribution to the debate on early childhood education and the formulation of policies, it is still necessary to delve deeper into the subject, either through a more in-depth study of one of the several aspects addressed, or in the programs of some countries that are seen as leaders in this area. Greater diffusion is required regarding the importance of transitions, so as to generate greater debate and achieve a better and greater understanding of the transition process that starts at the moment of birth. It is also necessary that countries continue searching for better and more relevant practices to promote successful transitions for all children, to learn from them.

APPENDIX I.

Annotated Bibliography

Is Everybody Ready? Readiness, Transition and Continuity: Reflections and Moving Forward

Author: Carolina Arnold, Kathy Bartlett, Saima Gowani and Rehana Merali
Institution in Charge: Bernard van Leer Foundation – Aga Khan Foundation
Year: 2007

Country: The Netherlands

Publisher: Bernard van Leer Foundation. Working paper 41.

Information Source:

http://www.bernardvanleer.org/news/2007/is_everybody_ready_working_paper_on_transitions

This paper was based on a background paper written by the authors for the 2007 Education for All Global Monitoring Report. It responds to the problems of primary education with high dropout and repetition rates, and low levels of learning; it seeks to highlight the importance of ECD programs in preparing children for better learning and readiness. The first chapter summarizes the international evidence on the benefits of early childhood development programs for children's learning and school success. It examines in particular, how well designed programs effectively reduce poverty and exclusion. The second and final chapter deals with school and parent readiness, and how to help in the home-to-school or ECD program-to-school transition. The term transition refers to the period or time before, during and after a child's entry to primary school, either from the home or an early childhood development program.

According to the authors, the term "readiness" is closely linked to the term transition. For a successful transition, children and schools must be ready. The same is true for parents who must also be ready and prepared to help in the transition. According to the authors, various factors are associated to how prepared and ready children are for transition: their economic situation, nutritional status, language, whether or not they have a caring and nurturing relationship with an adult, and learning and stimulation opportunities at home. It should be noted that the authors indicate that ECD programs addressed to parents are changing their approach, not only seeking to change parenting practices and conducts, but also empower them to become active participants in their children's education through greater involvement in community or program activities, and assert their rights to receive a quality education. In the second chapter, the authors identify "child-friendly schools" as one of the best expressions of ready schools. Schools that are ready to receive children in primary school must be ones that offer a quality education (quality and purpose, relevance, inclusion and equality, and participation are elements of a quality education).

Among the factors that the authors have identified that affect a school's readiness are: the confidence in local schools and their teachers, language of instruction, group size and student-teacher ratios, teacher quality, and school improvements or reforms that ignore the information collected on children in the early grades of primary school. The authors note that to improve transition processes, available resources should be directed to measure success in the early grades of primary school (the equivalent to measuring child survival in the health sector), and to establish a framework to institute policies favoring an adequate transition from ECD to primary school (by implementing child-centered curricula during primary school). This paper refers to a series of programs that are implementing strategies that favor transition.

This paper concludes suggesting that we need (1) more and better ECDs; (2) a better link between ECD programs and primary school; (3) pay more attention to the early grades of primary schools in educational reforms; (4) involve parents in the education of their children at all stages; and (5) improve and give more information.

Outcomes of Good Practice in Transition Processes for Children Entering Primary School

Author: Hilary Fabian and Aline-Wendy Dunlop

Institution in Charge: Bernard van Leer Foundation

Year: May 2007

Country: The Netherlands

Publisher: Bernard van Leer Foundation. Working paper 42.

Information Source:

http://www.bernardvanleer.org/publications/Browse_by_series/publications_results?getSerie=Working%20Papers

This paper is organized into four chapters. The first is centered on transition research in the first years of education. The second addresses the roles of key stakeholders in the transition process—children, educators, and parents. The third chapter provides some examples of successful experiences, and the fourth identifies successful transition experiences and lessons learned.

The transition is seen as an ecological concept (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) that involves a series of nested structures (microsystem) linked together in a network (mesosystem), and influenced by the wider society (macrosystem). The home, the nursery, and school comprise different sub systems through which children travel in their early years of life. The way in which these transitions are experienced has a long-term effect on the child, to the extent that a transition experienced as successful will influence subsequent experiences.

Among the lessons learned are: (i) activities to support learning through transitions, for example transitional activities that involve parents, the school, preschool, and community in the form of visits, developing children's thinking to anticipate changes in the learning model, the use of play-based learning activities that start in one environment, and are completed in another, and the use of stories that help to create awareness about the next learning environment. (ii) Socio-emotional support during the transition. (iii) Communication between the school and parents to familiarize parents with the school system.

Within the recommendations for formulating policies, the authors note that service integration and curricular continuity are essential. They propose a series of recommendations such as schools appointing a team or individual responsible for monitoring the transition process, allowing visits before classes begin, having a quality communication and interaction system between the schools and parents, being sensitive to each child's particular needs, being flexible in the admission process, allowing children to start in school with a friend, developing children's resilience to cope with change, having curriculum continuity, assessing the transition and adaptation process, and lastly, giving special training to teachers.

Preparing Children for Schools and Schools for Children

Author: Robert Myers and Cassie Landers

Institution in Charge: Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development

Year: 1989, Issue 8 Coordinators' Notebook

Country: United States

Publisher: Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development, Coordinators Book

Information Source: <http://www.ecdgroup.com/download/ac1pcssi.pdf>

This paper is based on the manuscript of Chapter 8 of *The Twelve Who Survive*. It is one of the first articles to address the issue of transitions, without naming it as such. The paper presents a conceptual framework on the interaction between a child's readiness for school and a school's readiness for children. It also reviews the effects of ECD programs in primary schools, and evidence of programs in developing countries is presented. The term readiness is defined as the set of individual characteristics of the child and the school, as well as characteristics of the family and community, values, expectations, structures and organizations. School readiness is defined in terms of the child's physical capacities, activity level, cognitive skills, learning styles, knowledge, and his or her social and psychological competencies. These characteristics reflect the child's nutritional, health, and emotional status.

On the other hand, the readiness of schools for children is determined by a series of factors, including availability, accessibility, quality, recognition and responsiveness to local needs. After reviewing the evidence of the ECD programs the authors conclude "the social and personal costs of providing a poor transition from home to school are such that improving the transition must be a central policy goal of countries with high repetition and drop-out rates."

To improve children's transition to school and the effectiveness of primary school, the authors consider that ECD programs must be integrated to the primary school, so that children will not be required to be the only ones adjusting to the school model, rather schools must also adjust to the needs of the children. Therefore, they propose that ECD programs adjust to the primary school programs, and suggest an organizational alternative within the Education Ministries, by creating a division for programs for zero- to eight-year-olds. They also suggest that for evaluation purposes, longitudinal follow-up studies of children from ECD programs to schools be carried out.

Transition to Kindergarten

Institution in Charge: National Center for Early Development and Learning

Year: 2002, Vol 2, No. 2, Early Childhood Research and Policy Briefs

Country: United States

Publisher: National Center for Early Development and Learning

Information Source: <http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~ncedl/PDFs/TranBrief.pdf>

This brief note addresses the transition from early childhood settings to the kindergarten or early grades of school, in the United States. This transition is important because (i) kindergartens or early primary school years are important for the development of the child's competencies and future academic success; (ii) ECD environments are different from kindergarten settings, which usually apply a more traditional curriculum, as they provide support for parents and family; and (iii) increasing amounts of public funds are allocated to ECD programs, and it is important to know how they are best used.

A problem in the transition from ECD to kindergarten or the first years of grade school is its focus on a child's skills without considering other aspects of the child's environment. It is not only the child who transitions to kindergarten; the family is involved as well. Among the recommended policies are ones to strengthen ties between the kindergarten and ECD; create

transition-planning teams that involve parents, the school and kindergarten and family; strengthen ties between the school and family; and improve the quality of kindergarten or early education programs.

**Early Childhood and Primary Education—Transitions in the Lives of Young Children
(Educación Inicial y Educación Primaria—Transiciones en la vida de los niños pequeños)**

Author: Martin Woodhead and Peter Moss

Institution in Charge: Open Society Institute

Year: 2007

Country: United Kingdom

Publisher: The Open Society Institute, Early Childhood in Focus N2

Information Source:

http://www.bernardvanleer.org/publication_store/publication_store_publications/early_childhood_and_primary_education_transitions_in_the_lives_of_young_children/file

This text presents a summary of the most relevant aspects of the transition to primary school. It compiles perspectives, recent research and points to relevant aspects for public policies. It presents balanced information from OECD and developing countries, and is organized into four chapters: (i) early childhood and primary education; (ii) successful transitions, a question of “readiness;” (iii) early childhood and primary education, global challenges; and (iv) toward strong and balanced partnerships.

The first chapter presents the current situation of early childhood and primary education. The second reviews definitions of readiness in terms of children, schools, communities and families. It suggests that a school’s “readiness” can be measured with regard to: location and access; classroom conditions; teacher availability, confidence, commitment and teaching method; and the mismatch between the language and culture of the school versus the home. The authors maintain that if the school is not ready, what was achieved in the ECD program may be lost.

In the third chapter, the authors discuss some of the new challenges, new and changing transitions, and the redefinition of the school and ECD program’s roles. ECD programs were created to help in the transition to school, and their expansion has changed the nature of the transition from the home to school by having solved this problem. However, this has not been without difficulties, since ECD and school settings are different and their relationship must be re-defined.

The fourth and final chapter reviews the context of public policies and their discontinuity. The authors propose to work on integrating early childhood and primary education policies, and place them within a continuum, especially in relation to aspects of curricular, pedagogical, linguistic, professional, and home to school continuity.

Issue Area Framework Summary. Successful Transitions:

The Continuum from Home to School

Author: Bernard van Leer Foundation

Institution in Charge: Bernard van Leer Foundation

Year: N/A

Country: The Netherlands

Publisher: Bernard van Leer Foundation

Information Source: <http://www.bernardvanleer.org/files/frameworks/transitions.pdf>

The Bernard van Leer Foundation has developed a referential framework for the development of its program on successful transitions. In this brief paper, the Foundation states its position with regard to transitions, the definition it applies, and how the issue will be dealt with in its program. The importance of transitions in early childhood is evident, since this is a stage in which children experience a series of transitions into different environments. Furthermore, each child, based on his or her own development, starts these transitions from a different point that must be respected.

The van Leer Foundation's program is concerned with transitions from two different angles. The first is from a structural and systemic perspective, where it deals with the factors that may act to exclude the child. The second deals with the strengths and weaknesses that children bring to these situations. The issue of transitions is addressed from areas such as access to early childhood development programs, language and rights. The Foundation's key message is that schools must focus attention and resources to the first years of primary schooling, and that that working in this area can achieve positive results in the medium term.

School Readiness Assessment of Young Children: International Practices & Perspectives

Author: Pia Rebello & Dafna Kohen

Institution in Charge: UNICEF

Year: 2006

Country: United States

Publisher: working paper

Information Source: N/A

This working paper reviews the instruments used to measure children's school readiness, and was prepared by Rebello and Kohen for UNICEF New York. It starts out by presenting a conceptual reference framework on school readiness. This concept, according to the authors, includes three sub-categories: (i) children's readiness for school; (ii) school readiness for children; and (iii) family readiness.

These sub-categories must be addressed because school readiness predicts the children's school achievement; because most children can be ready for school if they receive the proper stimulation and learning opportunity earlier on; and because school performance and achievement inequalities are very significant between low income and high income children, and this gap may be reduced by early childhood education before school.

The authors differentiate the terms "school readiness" and "developmental readiness," which have been used interchangeably in literature. Developmental readiness relates to social, nutritional and health aspects, in addition to verbal and intellectual ones, and predicts future readiness for life and the future in addition to school readiness. School readiness refers to a series of conducts and skills that the child needs to make good use of what the school offers in a structured environment. It makes reference to a combination of learned behaviors (such as reading and numbers) and maturity development (fine and gross motor coordination). The emphasis is placed on what children do and how they behave.

for Children in Early Education

Author: Hilary Fabian, Aline-Wendy Dunlop

Publisher: Routledge Falmer Education

Information Source: <http://www.amazon.co.uk/Transitions-Early-Years-Continuity-Progression/dp/0415276403>

This book, edited by Fabian & Dunlop, consists of 11 chapters. The first presents an overview of the international context on transition issues (which was the only chapter reviewed). The second chapter discusses the transition from the home to the nursery or day care center, and the challenges for parents, teachers and children. The third focuses on social adjustment in early transitions and its importance for future success. The fourth chapter reviews the conditions under which children learn, and the varying perspectives of parents, children and educators. The fifth addresses parent's views on the transition to school. The sixth chapter looks at communication and continuity in the transition from kindergarten to school. The seventh chapter brings together the voices of children in this process. The eighth focuses on teachers' perspectives. The ninth chapter refers to the elements for the planning of transition programs. The tenth deals with empowering children for transitions. Lastly, the eleventh chapter answers the question: Can there be education without transition, transition without school?

**“Transiciones del niño del hogar a la escuela en la primera infancia.
Desafíos para las políticas públicas.”**

In I Seminario hacia una primera infancia exitosa:
aportes, desde el Estado, Familia y Comunidad. Lima 2008.

(First Seminar toward a Successful Early Childhood:
Contributions from the State, Family and Community)

Author: Ofelia Reveco

Country: Peru

Institution in Charge: Escuela para el Desarrollo

Information Source: Unavailable.

Transitions must be viewed from the perspective of the person who is experiencing them: the child, parents and teachers, and imply entering living spaces that differ from one's own. Thus, in transitioning to another space (or culture), it is important that the transition is made without discrediting one's own experience and culture.

Reveco suggests that for transitions to be positive experiences one must: (i) recognize the emotions that are at the base of being teachers; (ii) recognize the emotions of children; (iii) have open and flexible curricula that incorporate family cultures; (iv) integrate families and communities to the preschool and school; (v) have professional teacher training; and (vi) be able to offer quality services. Likewise, the author also indicates that a school ready to receive children includes: (i) physical spaces, equipment and material suited to the number of children; (ii) adequate material; (iii) teacher-child ratios appropriate for individualized work; (iv) qualified teachers; and (v) teaching that takes into consideration the mother culture and tongue. Lastly, Reveco notes that transitions start in the home. A confident child will experience transitions with more ease. Self-confidence is achieved within the home, which is why working with families is so important, so that they can prepare their children for the different transitions that lie ahead.

Author: OECD

Year: 2006

Information Source: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/30/9/37519103.pdf>

Eight countries were included in the study on early childhood policy, which examines why countries invest in early childhood care and education; if there is a systemic and integrated approach to preschool policy; strong and equitable collaboration with the educational system; universal access criteria, with special emphasis on children who require special attention; main public investments in services and infrastructure; participative models to improve and assure quality; appropriate training and working conditions for ECEC staff; collection and systematization of data collection and monitoring; and research and evaluation in the context of a stable, long-term program. By adopting a more unified approach to preschool and primary school policy, countries have adopted two policy approaches to address the difficulties encountered by children as they enter primary school: preparation for school, in English-speaking countries, and preparation for life, in Nordic and Central European countries.

In the conclusions, ten policy options are proposed: (i) attention to the social context of early childhood; (ii) placing well-being, early development and learning at the core of preschool care and education, while respecting the child's agency and natural learning strategies; (iii) creation of governance structures to ensure system accountability and quality assurance; (iv) development of curricular guidelines and standards for education services and preschool care, in collaboration with stakeholders; (v) public funding estimates based on achieving quality pedagogical goals; (vi) reduction of child poverty and exclusion through fiscal, social and labor policies, and increased resources on universal programs for children; (vii) promotion of family and community involvement in early childhood services; (viii) improvement of working conditions and professional training of early childhood care and education staff; (ix) guarantee of autonomy, funding and support for early childhood services; and (x) interest in a preschool care and education system to support broad-based learning, participation and democracy.

**Starting Strong Curricula and Pedagogies in Early Childhood Education and Care:
Five Curriculum Outlines**

Author: OECD 2004, Education Directorate

Year: 2004

Information Source: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/23/36/31672150.pdf>

This paper looks at five curriculum frameworks: Experiential, High Scope, Reggio Emilia, Te Whariki, and the Swedish curriculum. The experiential curriculum is an educational model that has achieved great success in the Netherlands and Flanders. It is based on making a moment-by-moment description of what it means for a young child to live and be part of an educational environment. It states that effective learning is achieved through well-being and involvement. The High Scope curriculum is based on active learning through key experiences, and was developed in Ypsilanti, Michigan over forty years ago by David Wiekart. It is used in preschools, elementary schools, and in programs for teenagers, and consists in a set of guiding principles and practices that teachers follow when they work with and care for children. It studies how: children learn in an active learning environment, how a High Scope preschool environment looks, how a day in preschool is organized, how adults interact with children, how assessments are made, how math and reading skills are taught, and how to work with children with special needs, among other things.

The Reggio Emilia curriculum is based on truly listening to young children. This curriculum or approach was developed by Loris Malagucci in Italy, in the Municipality of Reggio. The paper explores the communal responsibility behind the curriculum, the pedagogical dimensions, a child's various languages, a contextual curriculum, educational projects, collaboration, teachers as researchers, documentation, and the environment.

The Te Whariki curriculum is defined as a woven mat for all to stand on, and was developed through a large representation by parents and Maori minority groups in the nineties. The paper identifies Te Wariki's main features, adult responsibility in implementing the curriculum, and the challenges it poses.

The Swedish curriculum, in turn, establishes goals for a modern preschool system, and was also developed in the nineties. The paper reviews the curriculum's history, its learning theory, the objectives it proposes, its norms and values, development and learning, the influence of the child, and the research at the basis of the curriculum. The final chapter in the paper refers to key issues in curriculum development for young children.

**Babies and Bosses Reconciling Work and Family Life:
A Synthesis of Findings for OECD Countries**

Author: OECD

Institution in Charge: OECD

Year: 2007

Publisher: OECD Publishing

Information Source:

http://www.oecd.org/document/45/0,3343,en_2649_34819_39651501_1_1_1_1,00.html

This study reviews the policies aimed at bridging the gap between work and family in Australia, Denmark, the Netherlands, Austria, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, Portugal, Switzerland, Canada, Finland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom between 2002 and 2005. The paper starts out by summarizing the main recommendations. Chapters 2 and 3 present the countries' labor and demographic contexts. The chapters that follow compare the differences between family policy and the labor market, in terms of policies and tax benefits (Chapter 4), maternity leaves and permits (Chapter 5), childcare policies (Chapter 6), and practices in the workplace (Chapter 7).

Chapter 5, on parental leaves and permits, notes that these policies vary greatly between countries. A common trend among the countries is that the combined maternity leave and parental permit adds up to approximately one year, while in one fourth of OECD countries, the policy endorses a three-year parental permit. Licensing policies tend to reinforce each other, but there is also a tension between them. For example, parental leave may promote a job offer, but if it is too short or too long it can contribute to mothers, especially, not returning to their jobs.

Chapter 6 reviews formal childcare and school's after care programs. It analyzes trends in policies and current objectives, the variety of childcare services, and public expenses, as well as involvement in these programs. The chapter notes that Nordic countries have been the first in developing a formal childcare system, and that they continue to be leaders in policy, involvement, and equity in access and quality. Their systems are quite comprehensive, and the policy model ensures that the combination between home and work responsibilities is possible. In other OECD countries, coverage is much less for zero- to three-year-olds, and three- to six-year-olds participate in preschool programs but not on a full-time basis.

**Summary Record of the 2nd Workshop. Beyond Regulation:
Effective Quality Initiative in ECEC**

Author: OECD Network on Early Childhood Education and Care. Directorate for Education,
Education Policy Committee

Year: 2008

Information Source: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/50/32/40949117.pdf>

This paper summarizes the presentations of the Second Workshop organized by the OECD Network on Early Childhood Education and Care, held in Brussels, Belgium in November 2007. It includes a summary of the paper presented by Peter Moss and Claire Cameron on care in Europe, current understanding and future directions, as well as a summary of the presentation and discussion on effective quality initiatives in New Zealand and Norway, Canada, Finland (New ECE Curriculum Guidelines, National ECE quality review, National Webconsultin), Ireland (Siolta a Quality Framework for providers, Framework for Early Learning), Portugal, the Netherlands (Quality framework, curriculum and pedagogy), Norway (Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens, staff development), Sweden (curriculum, parental involvement, quality initiatives), and England in the United Kingdom (Every Child Matters, The Ten- Year Childcare Strategy, Early Years Services).

The Netherlands does not have a national curriculum for any education level. However, a coordinated curriculum effort has been made to improve education quality of two-and-a-half- to six-year-olds from low-income sectors. Two curriculum programs, Pyramid and Kaleidoscope, have been validated for use, and a third is under evaluation. Emphasis has also been placed on the early learning of Dutch; problems and deficiencies are detected beginning in preschool.

**Early Childhood Care and Education in the Caribbean (CARICOM States).
Background paper prepared for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2007.
Strong Foundations: Early Childhood Care and Education**

Author: Leon Derek Charles and Sian Williams

Year: 2006

Institution in Charge: OECD

Information Source: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001474/147446e.pdf>

This paper reviews early childhood policy in English-speaking Caribbean countries for the OECD. It was prepared based on surveys applied in 19 countries throughout the region that sought to capture the current situation of early care and education. The report was drawn up based on the information supplied by the 14 countries that responded the survey. On-site visits were also made to seven countries. The paper is organized into four chapters: the first centers on the countries' political, social and economic contexts; the second evaluates the progress towards the Education for All goals; the third reviews some recent initiatives in early care and education, and the lessons learned; the fourth focuses on how early care and education can be enhanced in the region.

Starting School: Effective Transitions

Author: Sue Dockett and Bob Perry

Institution in Charge: University of Western Sydney, ECRP
Year: 2001
Publisher: ECRP, Fall 2001. Volume 3, Number 2
Information Source: <http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v3n2/dockett.html>

This paper focuses on effective school transition programs. Using a ten-guideline guide developed for the Starting School Research Project, it provides examples of effective strategies in transition programs. The Starting School Research Project was implemented in Australia for three years, in which the perceptions and expectations of those involved in children's transitions to school (children, parents and educators) were researched.

The answers were grouped into categories, from which some recommendations are presented to promote effective transition programs. As such, effective transition programs: (i) establish positive relationships between children, parents and educators; (ii) facilitate the development of each child as a person capable of learning; (iii) differentiate between school-oriented and transition-to-school-oriented programs; (iv) use targeted funding and resources; (v) involve partners; (vi) are well planned and effectively evaluated; (vii) are flexible and responsive; (viii) are based on mutual trust and respect; (ix) rely on reciprocal communication between participants; and (x) take into consideration aspects of the community and individual families.

**The Transition to Kindergarten:
A Review of Current Research and Promising Practices to Involve Families**
Author: Marielle Bohan-Baker and Priscilla M. D. Little, Harvard Family Research Project
Year: April 2002
Information Source:
<http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/fine/resources/research/bohan.html>

This policy note begins with a review of practices that includes a project with the family, to highlight promising experiences. Though a review of literature concludes that the concept of transition may have multiple definitions, the authors indicate that transition is a process that the child, family, teacher and school all undergo, rather than a process that only the child experiences. The ecological and dynamic model proposed by Kraft-Sayre and Pianta acknowledges the shared responsibility of several individuals and institutions for the transition to primary school to occur, and highlights the dynamic nature of these relationships.

A review of the implemented practices that involve the family leads one to affirm that there is no one intervention formula that works in all cases, since what effective in one community may not necessarily be for another. The most frequent practices are those that begin once classes have started, and which are low intensity. Even though involving families is a widespread and established practice, schools should have a more proactive role in reaching out to families before classes begin. Pianta et al. (1999) recommend three strategies: reaching out, reaching out sooner, and reaching with the appropriate intensity.

In their review the authors conclude that involving parents must be a key element in transition policies and programs. The level of parental participation and involvement in school depends on the attitude of the teachers. Their attitude, in turn, depends on the attitude of their supervisors. Teacher training must include a component on family involvement. Lastly, implementing a transition team at school may help facilitate children and family's transition to school.

**National Education Goals Panel 1998. Ready Schools:
A report of the Goal 1 Ready Schools Resource Group**

Author: Rima Shore

Year: 1998

Information Source: <http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/negp/reports/readysch.pdf>

In the document drawn up in 1997 by the National Education Goal Panels, the first objective for the year 2000 was to start school ready to learn (broadly referring to cognitive development, but also including health and physical development, socio-emotional development, approaches to learning and communication). The NEGP itself called on a special group of advisors to prepare a “ready schools” report on what schools need in order to be prepared to receive children, recommendations for transition policies, and the main features of a primary school ready to receive children.

Ten of these key principles (i) smooth the transition between the home and school; (ii) strive for continuity between primary schools and the early childhood center and ECD programs; (iii) help children learn and make sense of the complex and exciting world that surrounds them; (iv) are committed to the success of each and every child; (v) are committed to the success of every teacher and adult that interacts with the children during the school day; (vi) implement approaches that have been shown to raise achievement; (vii) are learning organizations that modify their practices if they have not shown any benefit for the child; (viii) attend to children in communities; (ix) take responsibility for results; (x) demonstrate strong leadership.

The transition from the home to the schools focuses on the transition from the care centers to kindergarten, or from the home to public school. Schools should reduce the cultural differences between the home and school by working with parents, getting to know the children in the different contexts of their everyday lives, creating a curriculum that is sensitive to children’s everyday experiences, and using the curriculum to respect their cultures’ oral tradition. Another alternative is carrying out activities, such as home visits, before the child reaches the age of five.

The National Initiative on Transition from Preschool to Elementary School was introduced, along with a series of state-level efforts. Some Head Start programs make consistent efforts to link their programs with the schools their children attend, and other initiatives include professional training for those working with children between the ages of three and eight.

Ready schools help children make sense of their world. In other words, their curriculum places the child’s self-esteem at the core, they provide quality teaching (using simple language, teachers check that children are understanding), appropriate instruction levels (content and pace), providing incentives for learning (making sure that material is engaging), and use time effectively, learning in the context of relationships.

Committed to each child’s learning, ready schools introduce a curriculum and teaching-learning method that meets the individual needs of children with an environment conducive to learning and exploration, considering issues of equity and poverty, to address special needs, and that children from minority groups have material to help them learn in two languages. An inventory was prepared to see if schools are implementing the proper policies.

**2007 Follow-up Report on Education for All.
Strong Foundations: Early Childhood Care and Education**

Country: France

Year: 2007

Author: Nicholas Burnett and collaborators

Institution in Charge: UNESCO

Publisher: Printed in Fortemps, Belgium

Information Source: http://portal.unesco.org/education/es/ev.php-URL_ID=49640&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html
(consulted 01/12/2008)

The 2007 follow-up report is organized into three parts: the first two present a global approach to the six Education for All goals, describing what has already been done and what still needs to be achieved. The third part is dedicated to early childhood, and establishes the arguments that sustain children's education and care during their early years of life, emphasizing the contribution that quality comprehensive care can have on a child's well-being, and on the learning and development and transition to school.

In this regard, the evaluation of the worldwide progress made by countries in early childhood care and education (AEPI) shows that despite these achievements, many children, for different reasons, continue to lack access to AEPI; especially those under the age of three and who live in rural areas and in poverty, as they are the ones who are at risk. To address this problem several efficient care strategies are suggested, to ensure a quality education and equity for all children, facilitating the transition to primary school. It also considers the need for early childhood policies and increased investment to finance more, better programs.

Transitions in the Early Years: A Learning Opportunity

Country: The Netherlands

Year: 2006

Authors: Editors, Teresa Moreno and Jan van Dongen

Institution in Charge: Bernard van Leer Foundation

Information Source: Espacio para la Infancia N° 26

<http://www.bernardvanleer.org/> (consulted 03/15/2008)

This paper contains a series of articles on children's transitions from the family setting to new socialization settings, care centers, preschools and schools. In this context, the issue of transitions is addressed as a continuous process in which the quality of experiences, and the support that parents, teachers, and the community provide to children, will determine their transitions are successful or not, both during early childhood and later on in life.

Among the articles is a summary of the 2007 Follow-up Report on Education for All (UNESCO), which evaluates countries' achievements in meeting the Dakar goals (2000) and emphasizes transitions and the need to increase the coverage of early childhood services, with quality and equity.

John Bennet's interview addresses transitions, pointing out that they should be viewed in a more positive manner, as a challenge and not a problem. His proposal is based on the Starting Strong study, and together with Sheldon Shaeffer's interview, Director of the UNESCO Office in Bangkok, contribute suggestions to ensure that transitions be motivating experiences for children.

Lastly, the paper describes successful transition programs such as: out-of-school programs, An Efficient Transition Model in Mississippi, USA; early childhood education in India's rural area; classes held beneath the trees in the pastoral communities of Uganda; bilingual and community education in Guatemala; the experience of the Comenius Foundation in establishing preschool centers in Poland's rural municipalities; Children's Parks in rural parts of north-eastern Brazil; and a case study in Israel on the inclusion of children with special educational needs, supported by the Bernard van Leer Foundation and the Center for Learning Capabilities.

**Seeking New Paths for Better Opportunities:
Successful Home-School Transitions in Asháninkas Communities
(Buscando nuevos rumbos para mejores oportunidades:
Transiciones exitosas del hogar a la escuela en comunidades asháninkas)**

Author: Regina Moromizato Izu

Institution in Charge: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Peru, Asociación Amazónica Andina and the Bernard van Leer Foundation

Year: 2007

Country: Peru

Publisher: Editora & Comercializadora Cartolan. EIRL

Photos on <http://aamapresidente.blogspot.com/2007/04/buscando-nuevos-rumbos-para-mejores.html> (Consulted 09/23/2007)

This document presents information on the conditions in which children under the age of eight grow, develop and learn in four native asháninka communities in the Junín region of Peru. The study analyzes cultural socioeconomic and political organization contexts of this ethnic group, and compiles information on the transitions that take place in the family and school continuum and which affect children's development and learning.

It also identifies the difficulties children face in the teaching learning process and their relation to academic failure, family and community expectations, and teachers' opinions about their pedagogic activity. This study proposes that to improve education quality and guarantee a successful transition, the following lines of action must be considered: pedagogic innovation through a diversified curriculum with an intercultural bilingual approach and pertinent infrastructure and educational material; the strengthening of teaching competencies; development of better parenting practices within families; the strengthening of strategic alliances between the community and local governments; and political incidence for the benefit of native jungle communities.

Early Childhood Development: Health, Learning and Behavior Throughout Life

Country: Colombia

Year: 2003

Author: Fraser J. Mustard

Institution in Charge: Centro Internacional de Educación y Desarrollo Humano. CINDE

Information Source: Early childhood and development. The challenge of the decade.

www.redprimerainfancia.org/aa/img_upload/; and

www.oas.org/udse/dit2/relacionados/archivos/desarrollo-cerebral.aspx (consulted 05/23/2007)

This article addresses brain development from the gestation stage and the early years of life, emphasizing its role in learning, behavior and health, as well as its impact in the later stages of life. It notes the importance of early experiences in the formation of sensory circuit synapses (sight, tact, and hearing) and analyzes the consequences of physical and sexual abuse on child development, orphanage institutionalization, stress and the lack of stimuli. The article reflects the opinion of economists such as Heckman and van der Gaag on the need to intervene in early childhood development programs.

**The Twelve who Survive:
Strengthening Early Childhood Development Programs in the Third World.**

Author: Robert Myers

Year: 1992

Country: Colombia

Institution in Charge: Pan American Health Organization

Information Source: Comments on the book in Revista del Instituto de Medicina Tropical, Sao Paulo, Brazil http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?pid=S0036-46651994000200020&script=sci_arttext (consulted 04/24/2008)

The author expresses concern for the future of children in developing countries who are at risk of having their physical and intellectual development impaired due to the situation of poverty in which they grow. In this regard, he establishes a close link between health, nutrition, and social and psychological development, and the synergic effect between them.

To address this problem, the author presents programs that are underway in different countries, analyzing their achievements, difficulties and application possibilities, considering the contexts, costs and the impact they might have on children's quality of life and well being. He considers that cooperation organizations, governments, families and communities must coordinate to establish priorities and invest in programs that improve children's growth and development, in addition to their survival.

**Some Dimensions in Teacher Professionalization:
Representation and Political Agenda Issues
(Algunas dimensiones de la profesionalización de los docentes.
Representación y temas de la agenda política)**

Country: Argentina

Year: 2003

Author: Emilio Tenti Fanfani

Institution in Charge: Instituto Internacional de Planeamiento de la Educación

Information Source: www.iipe-buenosaires.org.ar/Archivos/download_attach.asp?
(Consulted 08/03/2007)

The author stresses the importance of teachers and their strategic role in the education of children and youth, but this appreciation of the teaching role has not been considered in the educational reforms that have taken place in Latin America, as their professional situation has not improved.

This paper also presents the results of an investigation conducted with teachers in Argentina, Peru and Uruguay, that gathers teachers' views on the appreciation of the roles of

education, their professional roles, the use of new technologies, future work projects, the evaluation of their performance and attitude towards their position in the hierarchical order.

In the final remarks about the obtained results, the author proposes issues for the political agenda including the selection of future teachers, early and ongoing training, admission to teaching, incentives and evolution of professional performance, as well as medium-term goals and objectives.

**Protective Factors: An Investigative Contribution from Community Health Psychology
(Factores protectores: un aporte investigativo desde la psicología comunitaria de la salud)**

Country: Colombia

Year: 2003

Authors: José Amar Amar; Raimundo Abello Llanos; Carolina Acosta

Institution in Charge: Universidad del Norte, Barranquilla

Information Source: Revista del Programa de Psicología. January-June N° 11 pp: 107 -121.
http://ciruelo.uninorte.edu.co/pdf/psicologia_caribe/11/7_Factores%20protectores_Psicologia%20desde%20el%20Caribe_No%2011.pdf (consulted 05/22/2007)

This article presents the results of an investigation on the daily protective factors used in the communities of Tasajera and Barranquilla, undertaken in the context of the “Costa Atlántica” Comprehensive Child Care Project.

The study uses Urie Bronfenbrenner’s ecological human development model as a reference, which considers the child’s cognitive variables, as well as the environment where the child grows and develops, and the interactions between the systems in which the child is immersed. This approach is complemented by Sameroff et al.’s transactional development model, giving rise to a transactional ecological model.

The identification of protective factors aims to reduce situations of risk that arise because of the educational processes in the family, school and community, including health, housing, affection and healthy behaviors. To this end, protective factors are classified according to their nature, as material or natural, and as immaterial or social. The most relevant protective factors are filiations, security, affectivity, the formation of values, teaching of norms, the role of family members, access to formal education, as well as parent’s educational level.

The results highlight the benefits of changing the paradigm from the reactive, related to healing, to the proactive, which is prevention, and from a negative approach that indicates risk factors to a positive one that includes protective factors, thus promoting healthy and harmonious development in all aspects of child development.

State of the World’s Children 2005. Childhood Under Threat

Country: United States

Year: 2004

Author: Carol Bellamy, Executive Director, UNICEF

Institution in Charge: UNICEF

Information Source: http://www.unicef.org/spanish/sowc05/sowc05_sp.pdf
(Consulted 07/23/2007)

This publication makes a detailed and comprehensive report of the state of the world's children, highlighting the achievements of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in relation to survival, health and education. However, it expresses concern for the risk factors that threaten children and hinder the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Among the risk factors with the greatest impact on children's development are poverty, armed conflict and HIV/AIDS. Each factor is addressed individually, hence Chapter II refers to children living in poverty; Chapter III to children trapped in armed conflict; and Chapter IV to children who lose their parents or are vulnerable because of HIV/AIDS. Each chapter analyzes the consequences of these risk factors on children's development and learning, and a plan of action is proposed to overcome the situation to which they are exposed in each case. Positive experiences under implementation in some countries are also included.

Chapter V proposes that countries adopt a development approach based on human rights that protects children from abuse, exploitation, violence and child labor, and recommends promoting a protective environment that prioritizes essential goods and services for survival, health and education.

A Matter of Interculturalism and Latin American Education
(La cuestión de la interculturalidad y la educación latinoamericana)

Country: Chile

Year: 2000

Author: Luís Enrique López

Institution in Charge: UNESCO Regional Office

Information Source: Working paper presented in the seminar on education perspectives in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

http://www.aulaintercultural.org/article.php3?id_article=33 (consulted 05/26/2007)

This paper presents the historic evolution of education in the indigenous populations of Latin America, which begins with the application of a hegemonic curriculum and literacy learning in the dominant language. Subsequently, as a result of research and indigenous movements, the importance of the mother tongue was recognized to facilitate the learning of a second language, but it is in the eighties that intercultural bilingual education emerges, and, respecting the values of each culture and the ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity of indigenous populations, incorporates elements from other cultures.

As a result of a study the present situation of intercultural bilingual education in 17 of the region's countries is described, as are the results of the developed programs. It emphasizes the mother tongue's importance in children's learning, especially in the early years, and its impact on lowering repetition and dropout rates. However, it also recognizes that at present not many teachers identify with their own cultures, or speak and write their indigenous languages, a situation that affects children's learning.

Easing the Transition from Preschool to Kindergarten

Country: United States

Year: 1986

Author: Head Start Information and Publication Center

Information Source: www.headstartinfo.org/recruitment/easingtransit (consulted 04/03/2007)

This brochure for parents and teachers offers information on the strategies that facilitate a child's transition from preschool to kindergarten (five-year-olds).

Among the actions suggested for a successful transition, the document mentions: the continuity of the preschool program in kindergarten through the application of a curriculum that considers similar learning contexts and pedagogical strategies within a child development framework; maintain continuous communication and promote collaboration between parents and teachers; prepare children for the transition by acquainting them with the school, teachers and other children; include parents in the transition process so they may make their children feel more secure and confident.

Transition entre la maison (ou la Garderie) a la maternelle/aptitudes necessaires a l'entrée a l'école : une conséquence du développement précoce de l'enfant

Country: United States

Year: 2005

Author: Gary W. Ladd, Ph.D.

Institution in Charge: Arizona State University

Information Source: <http://www.enfant-encyclopedie.com/fr-ca/accueil.html>

(Consulted 11/24/2007)

This paper refers to the outcomes of the Pathways Project that identifies the characteristics of children, families, school and peers that may affect a child's adjustment to preschool at the age of five, and the possible impacts that their early adjustment has on the later transitions to primary, secondary and higher education, as well as their academic success. The investigation tracked children and their families for ten years, and indicates that the aggressiveness and anxiety that children feel upon entering a preschool center and school hinder the establishment of good social relations with their peers, affects their psychological and school adjustment and constitutes a risk factor later on in life.

To avoid these problems, the paper recommends that parents and teachers be aware of the child's feelings toward the school, and the quality of the relationships that he or she establishes with peers to help him or her develop social skills. The paper notes that one should provide the child with experiences and the opportunities to interact with other children before beginning preschool. Teachers are advised to avoid programming activities that may stress children, such as group work where they may be rejected or questions by peers, due to the negative consequences this may have on a child's long-term school adjustment and academic performance.

**School Transition and School Readiness: An Outcome of Early Childhood Development
(Transition vers l'école et aptitudes nécessaires a l'entrée a l'école:
une conséquence du développement du jeune enfant)**

Country: United States

Author: Sara Rimm-Kaufman, PhD

Year: 2004

Institution in Charge: University of Virginia

Information Source: <http://www.enfant-encyclopedie.com/fr-ca/accueil.html>

(Consulted 12/04/2007)

This study addresses the transition to school and the abilities that are necessary for its success. It analyzes the outcomes of research undertaken by the Head Start Transition Study, National Education Longitudinal Study, NICHD Study for Early Child Care, and the National Center for Early Development and Learning, that address the issue from various perspectives: parents and preschool teachers; the importance of social cognitive and self-regulatory skills, and the child's chronological age; and a third that considers that early educational experiences and the socialization processes that take place within the family are also important for the transition to school and during the first two grades of primary school.

The results show that parents prioritize academic abilities, and teachers prioritize social ones. The research in turn establishes a balance among the social and self-regulation cognitive indicators, highlighting the importance of the latter two in good academic performance. Early success predictors are also thought to include academic success, positive relationship with peers, and the family's emotional and stimulating support, as well as quality environments in the care centers.

Synthèse sur la transition vers l'école

Country: Canada

Year: 2007

Author: Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development

Institution in Charge: Centre d'excellence pour le développement des jeunes enfants

Information Source: <http://www.enfant-encyclopedie.com/fr-ca/accueil.html>

(Consulted 12/04/2007)

This article contains a summary of all the Early Childhood Development Encyclopedia's papers on transitions. It highlights the importance of preparing a child for school, and notes the necessary conditions for success in school and in life, as well as the role of parents, teachers and the community in this transition. The article emphasizes the impact that the first socialization experiences outside the home, in quality care centers and preschools, have on the transition to school with regards to the child's adjustment to the new contexts, and in his or her academic success. It concludes stating that further research is needed on the issue in order to achieve a better understanding of the process, and greater knowledge about the best practices to optimize school readiness for all children.

Early Education: A Right (La educación infantil: Un derecho)

Country: Spain

Year: 2004.

Author: Consejos Autonómicos de las Revistas Infancia e Infancia, de Andalucía, Asturias, Canarias, Cantabria, Castilla - La Mancha, Castilla León, Catalunya, Euskadi, Extremadura, Galiza, Illes Balears, Madrid, Murcia, Nafarroa and País Valencia

Institution in Charge: Asociación de maestros Rosa Sensat

Information Source: Revista Infancia en Europa: número 7

<http://www.ciefp-laredo.org/documentos/Debate.pdf> (Consulted 09/25/2007)

This paper begins with the concept of a child as a person, subject to rights, one of which is education, and goes on to make a proposal for the improvement of early education, in the

context of the debate promoted by the Education Ministry, on the new education law. It also considers the role of the family, teacher training, the inclusion of introduction to reading and writing in curricular contents, teaching of a foreign language and the use of computers, and the administration and financing of services. The proposal seeks to guarantee a quality education with equity for all children.

**Early Education Quality. Assessment Instruments
(Calidad de la educación infantil. Instrumentos de evaluación)**

Country: Spain

Year: 2007

Author: María José Lera R.

Institution in Charge: Universidad de Sevilla

Information Source: Revista de Educación 343. May- August 2007
www.revistaeducacion.mec.es/re343_14.pdf (Consulted 09/13/2007)

This article refers to research on the quality of early childhood education quality from 1979 to 1991, and the indicators used to assess them. These studies, carried out in the United States, enabled the formulation of an assessment model that takes into account the context, assessment instruments to measure quality, and the obtained results. From these results, it was established that the quality of processes and the conditions that facilitate them are the most important.

The author goes on to address the evaluation in early education, and describes the instruments used to measure quality such as the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS – ECERS-R). This scale includes basic principles, areas or sub-scales, 37 indicators, and four assessment criteria: inadequate, minimal, good, and excellent. In addition to assessment, the author also mentions observation, and among the observation methods, cites temporary sampling as the most used, and uses the observation of preschool activities to measure educational practice, whose categories include the child, the teacher, and the activity carried out. The presentation concludes with a study done in Seville, Spain, describing the process followed, the sample and outcomes.

**Intersectoral Coordination of Early Childhood Policies and Programs:
Experiences in Latin America
(Coordinación intersectorial de políticas y programas de la primera infancia:
Experiencias en América Latina)**

Country: Chile

Year: 2004

Author: Mami Umayahara, Project Coordinator

Institution in Charge: UNESCO/OREALC

Information Source:

http://www.oei.es/pdfs/coordinacion_intersectorial_politicas_programas_primera_infancia.pdf
(Consulted 08/18/2007)

This study presents inter-sector and inter-institutional coordination mechanisms for early childhood care and education programs, examining the achievements and difficulties, as well as the factors that favor or hinder these coordinations. Experiences in Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba and Mexico are examined. For this purpose, a scheme was proposed to countries, which

considers the origins of the initiative, structure and composition of the coordination mechanism, the functions carried out by each, and the lessons learned from these experiences.

The results obtained in the inter-sector coordination initiatives evidence the population's greater interest in early childhood care and education, the extension of comprehensive care coverage, and a shared holistic vision of comprehensive care. The studies all indicate that the coordinated participation of different sectors is needed to ensure the child comprehensive care. In this sense it requires the designation of a responsible sector, or the creation of a coordinating entity.

Although it is not possible to suggest a single model given the different realities, a political will is needed to establish and maintain coordination mechanisms in place, regardless of periodic government changes. The following are suggested as important aspects to consider to obtain positive results in the inter-sectoral coordination of early education policies and programs: recognizing children's rights, their needs and potential, a shared vision of comprehensive care, political will and technical leadership, joint decision making at the national level, and the active participation of civil society as a whole.

Dramatic games in Preschools
(El juego dramático en la escuela infantil)

Country: Uruguay

Year: 2001

Author: Patricia Sarlé

Institution in Charge: OMEP, Uruguay

Information Source: "Infancia del nuevo milenio, interrogante, desafío, compromiso."
Contributions from the I MERCOSUR Congress of Early Education, and the II Congress of Maternal Education. *Novedades Educativas* magazine. Edition 171. March 2005, pgs. 23-27
(ISSN 0328-3534)
No web site.

The author describes the characteristics of games in an early childhood setting as a self-motivating activity that allows children to create, have fun, learn, imagine, express themselves freely, make decisions, etc. She goes on to focus on dramatic games, their historic evolution, objectives, and the structure of their phases or moments. For a better understanding she presents an example of dramatic play and performs a thorough analysis of each point in the game. To close the presentation the author discusses the meaning of play, and the roles of the adult and the child in school play activities.

Results-Focused Budgeting: An Innovative Public Management Instrument
(El presupuesto por resultados: un instrumento innovativo de gestión pública)

Country: Peru

Year: 2007

Author: Francisco Córdova S.

Institution in Charge: Centro de Investigación y Promoción del Campesinado –CIPCA

Information Source:

www.elregionalpiura.com.pe/pdfweb/doc_2007/presupuestoporresultados_fcs2007.pdf

(consulted 11/18/2007)

This new budgeting approach is presented in response to the challenge posed by the growth of the economy, which does not contribute to improving the population's standard of living. This new approach seeks mechanisms to improve resource allocation, the implementation of an administrative model that shows effective achievement, and expense accountability. To facilitate the understanding of this new modality, the author recounts the budget formulation in Peru up to the present model, which aims to reduce poverty from the current 49% to 29% in 2011.

Some initiatives are proposed to implement this methodology, and raises the pending challenges and tasks. This requires clear objectives, designing relevant tools for participatory monitoring of expenditure, decentralized application, monitoring and assessment, as well as compliance with deadlines.

**Teacher's Observations of Daily Classroom Activities in the 1st and 2nd EGB Cycles
in Buenos Aires**

**(Observación de la práctica diaria del docente en el aula
en el 1° y 2° ciclo de EGB de Buenos Aires)**

Country: Argentina

Year: 2005

Author: Marcela Marguery

Institution in Charge: Universidad San Andrés

Information Source: Conceptualización de infancia que subyacen en la práctica docente Tesis de Maestría www.udesa.edu.ar/files/EscEdu/Resumen%20Ma/MARGUERY.PDF

(Consulted on 06/10/2007)

In the introduction of her Master's thesis in education, Marguery analyzes the teaching-learning process, the relationship established between the student and teacher, and whether that bond allows the child to be the constructor of his or her knowledge, or makes him or her a passive recipient of the information conveyed by the teacher. The paper aims to identify the conceptions of early childhood and the child's forms of interaction with the teacher, with the knowledge and underlying autonomy in pedagogical practices. Observation of classroom practices allows for the identification of the different ways in which childhood is conceptualized.

**Conceptual and Methodological Framework in UNESCO's System of Indicators,
in the Framework of EFA/PREALC**

**(Marco conceptual y metodológico del sistema de indicadores de UNESCO,
en el marco de EFA/PREALC)**

Country: Mexico

Year: 2007

Author: Daniel Oscar Taccari

Institution in Charge: UNESCO/OREALC

Information Source:

http://www.inee.edu.mx/images/stories/Seminarioindicadores/daniel_oscar_taccari_unesco.pdf

(consulted 08/06/2007)

This PowerPoint presentation for the Third International Seminar on Educational Indicators is based on the Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development (MDG) goals, as well as on the regional commitments (EFA/PREALC).

The author maintains that the educational indicators traditionally used in Latin America and the Caribbean are associated with industry models: input or resources, processes, and products or results. The regional proposal is more elaborate and considers a conceptual framework within an approach based on rights and education quality that proposes the following aspects: relevance, pertinence, equity, efficacy and efficiency; it also includes an analysis model, based on the aforementioned aspects, that formulates variables for each. These variables give rise to a system of indicators that, in addition to relevance, pertinence, equity, efficacy and efficiency, takes into account the four education pillars of the Delors Report.

The presentation concludes by presenting the “Educational Situation in Latin America and the Caribbean: Guaranteeing quality education for 2007” paper (www.unesco.cl), and the following steps in the generation of new indicators.

Small Children, Big Challenges: Early Childhood Education and Care.
Executive Summary
(Niños pequeños grandes desafíos: Educación y atención en la primera infancia.
Resumen ejecutivo)
Country: Spain
Year: 2003
Author: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
Institution in Charge: Organization of Ibero-American States
Information Source: www.campus-oei.org/publicaciones/otros_ninos.htm
(consulted 07/03/2007)

This paper presents a comparative study of 12 OECD countries that proposes innovating approaches, as well as pertinent and feasible educational policies to be applied in different contexts. It also mentions the elements to be taken into account when formulating policies for a quality and equitable education.

The Executive Summary recognizes the importance of equal opportunities in the access to quality care and education in the first years of a child’s life. Demographic, economic and social trends in participating countries, and their impact on children’s education, are also analyzed. The study proposes eight priority policy elements that ensure program equity and quality: the need to appoint an organization to coordinate the actions of the different sectors involved, strengthening the bonds between parents, professionals and services; a learning approach from birth that facilitates successful transitions; including children with special educational needs and children under the age of three in ECPI programs; increasing state investment in these services; increase quality through regulatory standards, monitoring and appropriate pedagogical frameworks that focus on children’s comprehensive development; offer ongoing training and adequate working conditions for responsible staff; constantly monitor, supervise, collect and analyze data; and promote program research and evaluation to disseminate the results.

Framework for the Analysis of Public Policies Addressing Children
(Marco para el análisis de las políticas públicas dirigidas a la infancia)
Country: Mexico
Year: 2006
Author: Francisco Pilotti

Institution in Charge: Centro Internacional de Estudios e Investigaciones sobre Infancia (CIESPI)

Information Source: <http://www.uam.mx/cdi/redesinv/publicaciones/mariana/menezes.pdf>
(consulted 07/04/2007)

In this chapter of the paper, the author acknowledges that since the Convention on the Rights of the Child, significant progress has been made in extending coverage and reducing child mortality, but not in other aspects. From the conceptualization of children as subjects to rights, the author analyzes childhood policies in Latin America by comparing the traditional failure-based approach with the rights-based approach, with a dynamic perspective. He criticizes welfare policies and proposes an integrated child welfare system that involves children and their families. The author gives an important role to the community in the implementation of preventive actions, and concludes that public policies should focus on fulfilling children's rights through a series of means and different strategies.

**The Value of Educating Everyone in a Diverse and Unequal World
(El valor de educar a todo el mundo en un mundo diverso y desigual)**

Country: Chile

Year: 2006

Author: Alvaro Marchesi

Institution in Charge: UNESCO/OREALC

Information Source: Revista PREALC 2.- Encuentro Sentidos de la Educación y la cultura.
Cultivar la humanidad

www.unesco.cl/medios/biblioteca/documentos/sentidos_de_la_educacion_ponencia_alvaro_marchesi.pdf (consulted 12/06/2007)

The presentation focuses on education, and makes a call to reflect on the relationships among people, and social problems arising from inequity, discrimination, lack of resources, violence, lack of family interest, and teacher apathy. The situation takes place in a social context in which rapid changes in science, the economy and technology, affect people's lives, especially children's learning, and must therefore go hand-in-hand with changes in education.

In reference to values, the author expresses concern about the contradictions between what schools and the media transmit. On the other hand, not everyone in society shares the same values, therefore intercultural bilingual education and multicultural education discourses becomes meaningless in many countries where the dominant culture imposes itself over minority cultures. In this context of contradiction, society demands that education solve a wide range of problems from violence to academic failure. He therefore suggests reforms in the curriculum, enhancing educational management, teacher training, and evaluation systems, all of which must be accompanied by increased investment support from all sectors of society.

The author concludes by focusing on the PISA evaluation results (2002, 2004), and formulating a proposal based on: equality of access and educational provision, society's commitment to children at risk who grow up in highly deficient environments, the inclusion of a daily hour of reading to form reader communities, coexistence and emotional development by promoting pro-social behaviors, the transmission of fundamental values, the development of moral education, the commitment to teachers, and the meaning teachers find in their teaching.

**Report on the First Symposium:
“Understanding the State of the Art in Early Childhood Education and Care”**

Country: United States

Year: 2007

Institution: OAS

Information Source:

<http://www.symposium-educacioninfanciaoea.org/resumenejectivo2SP.pdf>

This report is on the First Symposium: “Understanding the State of the Art in Early Childhood Education and Care,” held May 14 to 18, 2007, at OAS headquarters in Washington, D.C.. The symposium is part of the “Policies and Strategies for a Successful Transition of Children towards Socialization and School” project.

Participants included international professionals and researchers; national directors and UNICEF officials from 23 Member States—Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Colombia, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, United States, and Uruguay; and 15 delegations representing international organizations and institutions.

The report includes some considerations on the need for childhood-related policies to be comprehensive, and broader, so as to link children’s education with other disciplines, from an ecological approach that includes the complex cultural, historic, environmental and social context in which children live. Based on the analysis and reflection on the various presentations, conclusions and challenges related to the care and education of children under the age of three were formulated after analyzing and elaborating the various presentations on education and care of under three year-olds in the following topics:

Policies: Countries’ early childhood policies aim to expand quality care and equity, but give priority to the four -to six-year-old age group. The report indicates that the deficiencies in their formulation translates to program discontinuity and lack of sustainability. This sets the need to move from a sectoral or government policy to a State policy that promotes equity and social inclusion.

Curriculum: Most countries have designed curricula for children under the age of three, from a wide range of approaches. Some deficiencies have been observed in their formulation and difficulties in their application, and as a result there is a need to promote the development of curriculum proposals and teaching guidelines at the macro level with a holistic, comprehensive, and multidisciplinary outlook.

Program evaluation, follow-up and monitoring: Deficiencies have been detected in these areas, as regards approach and execution, which hinder program direction. For this reason it is necessary to establish evaluation, follow-up and monitoring systems, as well as quantitative and qualitative indicators, in order to have reliable information.

Research: Research on this age group has focused on quantitative aspects, contributing limited information to improve the quality of children’s comprehensive care by means of more relevant and equitable programs. The challenge is to foster more research in these areas.

Teacher training: This area requires special attention since teachers are the principal factor agent to provide a quality education. To this, deficiencies in teacher performance that affect the

quality of services have been detected in the region. There is a need to develop appropriate curricula for initial training, and to foster ongoing training and postgraduate studies.

Financing: There is little State participation in programs addressed to this age group. Greater investment is needed for these programs within a policy aimed at reducing poverty, and with equal opportunities for the more vulnerable and excluded groups.

Coordination: Little coordination among the many early childhood service sectors was observed, although in some countries coordination is already taking place through various strategies. It is necessary to boost inter-sectoral coordination as a way to overcome the fragmentation of social actions and ensure comprehensive care and to optimize the use of resources.

Transition: Isolated and disjointed efforts have been observed in the transition from the home to care centers for children under the age of three, noting that there are very few studies and little research on the issue in the region. The challenge is to systematize experiences and promote research projects that provide information so as to build a conceptual reference that allows the implementation of strategies for a successful transition.

**V Meeting of Ministers of Education
“Hemispheric Commitment to Early Childhood Education”**

Country: Colombia

Year: 2007

Information Source: <http://www.sedi.oas.org/dec/Vministerial/>

This paper reports on the V Meeting of Ministers of Education “Hemispheric commitment to early childhood education,” organized by the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI) at the *Centro de Formación de la Cooperación Española, Claustro Santo Domingo*, in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, from November 14 to 16, 2007. Various sessions took place during the event: a preparatory session, an inaugural session, nine plenary sessions and a closing session.

During the meeting, the following topics, among others, were addressed: Revision of the early childhood comprehensive care policies in the region and state-of-the-art early childhood policies in the hemisphere; Intersectoral public policy, comprehensive care and diversity; Regulatory frameworks and financing schemes for sustainability; Early childhood comprehensive care programs; and future work of the Inter-American Committee on Education. The event concluded with the formulation of the “Hemispheric Commitment to Early Childhood Education: Conclusions, Recommendations, and Joint Work Agenda (2007-2009)” document.

The meeting was attended by the Ministers of Education or their representatives from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela, who reported on the early childhood actions undertaken by their respective governments. In addition, representatives of international organizations and other institutions committed to early childhood presented the results of research, studies and recommendations on actions taken to ensure quality care and equity for children under the age of eight. They also offered the necessary support to fulfill the Hemispheric Commitment to Early Childhood Education.

The final report presents the summary of the main conclusions and agreements approved by the plenary, delivered by Colombia’s Minister of Education: (i) that early childhood is a

decisive phase in a person's lifecycle; (ii) early childhood education addresses the comprehensive development of children from birth to the age of eight; (iii) equitable and timely access to quality and integral education is a human right; (iv) the family is a child's first and irreplaceable educator and caretaker; (v) the Inter-American Program on Education for Democratic Values and Practices, and PRIE, have the support of ministers and should consider incorporating early childhood initiatives; (vi) quality professional training and ongoing development of teaching staff shall be strengthened; (vii) Heads of State and Government shall receive the recommendation to include actions aimed at strengthening early childhood policies in the Declaration of the Fifth Summit of the Americas; (viii) government, international and civil society institutions shall work together to achieve the objectives of this commitment; and (ix) the Inter-American Commission on Education shall prepare the 2007-2009 Work Plan to implement this commitment, and shall use the "Guidelines for Early Childhood Education Programming" paper as a reference. This paper includes, among other things, concrete actions aimed at: evaluating programs; identifying good practices; exchanging experiences and practices in the evaluation and training of teachers and other educational staff; strengthening and expanding the development of indicators; broadening the scope of the Portal of the Americas, RELPE and other educational portals; and fostering the participation of civil society. The "Hemispheric Commitment to Early Childhood Education" and "Guidelines for Early Childhood Education Programming" documents were formulated.

**State of the Art Pedagogy in Early Education (Zero- to Three-Year-Olds)
in Latin America and the Caribbean
(Estado del arte sobre pedagogía de la educación inicial (0 a 3 años)
en Latinoamérica y Caribe)**

Country: Chile

Year: 2007

Author: María Victoria Peralta Espinosa

Institution in Charge: Universidad Central de Chile – Instituto Internacional de Educación Infantil. OEA

Information Source:

http://www.oei.es/inicial/articulos/estado_pedagogia_primer_infancia_0a3anos_ALyCaribe_peralta.pdf

The author presents the main progress of Latin American and Caribbean countries in care coverage, education quality and the construction of curricular designs for children under the age of six, with a special emphasis on birth through the age of three. In this regard, she presents a detailed analysis of curriculum documents, using pre-selected criteria and categories as a reference.

The author notes that the different analyzed aspects are as diverse as the denominations of the zero- to three-year-old cycle and the institutions that serve young children. She begins by naming the instruments that relate to curricular focus and degree of openness: manuals, guides, programs, curricular design, curricular structure, curricular references, curricular bases, curricular guidelines, and curricular framework. She then refers to the ages they comprise, which for the most part goes from birth or the first months of life, to the age of six, with a greater emphasis on the stage between the ages of three and six; however, there are still countries that have not formulated any document for this age. With regard to formal and core curricula aspects, the author mentions flexibility, the possibility of being contextualized, and involvement in its application, be it for formal, non-formal or both types of programs.

She states that most frequent foundations are legal, philosophical, social, biological, psychological and pedagogical, to which the following have been included: cultural-anthropological, environmental and the neurosciences. With regard to organization, the areas that have been considered are curricular, or experience and knowledge, or curriculum development, or knowledge and development; areas of experience, learning experience; dimensions; curricular and thematic cores, thematic blocks, training fields, and generating cores. The author notes that the formulation or presentation of objectives is also diverse, and includes competencies, expected learning, significant learning, learning objectives and other things such as goals to be achieved, purposes, and conducts. Similar to curriculum factors are those that facilitate its application and refer to the human environment, the organization of time and space, the selection of resources, as well as planning and evaluation. The paper concludes by highlighting the importance of having a curriculum that retrieves children's rights, beginning at birth, to a relevant and opportune education, which is why it is also necessary to train teachers for its proper implementation.

**Educability Conditions in Children and Adolescents in Latin America
(Las condiciones de educabilidad de los niños y adolescentes de América Latina)**

Country: Argentina

Year: 2002

Authors: Juan Carlos Tedesco, Néstor López

Institution in Charge: Instituto Internacional de Planeamiento de la Educación

Information Source: www.iipe-buenosaires.org.ar/pdf/documentos/educabilidad.PDF
(consulted 05/14/2007)

The authors state that when children enter primary education they have already undergone an initial education within their family and the community. The teachers that receive them, in turn, expect these children to be educated; i.e., that they have already gained a series of skills, knowledge and resources that facilitate learning, with family being the main provider of educability. In this context, social policies should consider families' access to the resources needed to provide conditions for their children to participate successfully in the educational process.

However, educability may also be interpreted as the outcome of an adequate distribution of responsibilities between the family and the school. This implies acting on schools and education systems as a whole, ensuring the development of teaching strategies based on a greater recognition of students' situations, bringing schools and families closer together, while at the same time operating over the multiple social integration mechanisms, so that families can access the resources that allow their children and adolescents to assume and fulfill the commitment to education.

**Building Bridges between Families and Schools
(Construyendo puentes entre las familias y las escuelas)**

Country: The Netherlands

Year: 2008

Author: Regina Moromizato

Institution in Charge: The Bernard van Leer Foundation

Information Source: Revista Espacio para la Infancia N° 29 La educación infantil: El desafío de la calidad <http://es.bernardvanleer.org/>

This article presents a project on transitions with a population of the Peruvian Amazon. The project aims to improve the learning achievements of four- and five-year-olds, and in the first

two grades of primary school in these native communities. It notes that for children to be successful in the educational process, the necessary resources and opportunities must be provided by the family and community at large. But it is also important that the school and teachers respond to the expectations of the families and the children, as both share the wish that students reach “optimum development and solid learning.” The project’s design takes into account childrens’ and teachers’ views on education and their respective schools.

A management model based on co-responsibility is proposed, and agreements were signed to form a local network with the participation of the municipality, native community leaders, the Bilingual Intercultural Teachers Association, the Andean Amazon Association and the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Peru. While valuing the performance of bilingual teachers, the project considers it is necessary to establish ongoing training to better pedagogical practice, maintaining the positive aspects and modifying only what is not working. Other aspects considered are diversification of the curriculum in order to contextualize the official curriculum so that it can be relevant, sequential, and continuous; design assessment tools that enable collecting children’s learning achievements; improve schools’ infrastructure; and develop learning spaces in and out of schools.

The Challenges of Early Childhood Education

Country: The Netherlands

Year: 2008

Author: Rosa Torres

Institution in Charge: The Bernard van Leer Foundation

Information Source: Revista Espacio para la Infancia N° 29

Los desafíos de la Educación Infantil <http://es.bernardvanleer.org/>

In an interview by the Revista Espacio para la Infancia, Rosa Torres refers to the reasons for the low investment in the most vulnerable groups, and mentions two circumstances of discrimination: socioeconomic status, and age. She points out that increased investment and the concept of education and learning are closely related to primary education. When referring to comprehensive care, Torres states that the emphasis should not be solely placed on education, viewing early education as a preview of the school, whose purpose is to compensate for shortcomings. Education should be yet another component of that care. While education coverage has been extended in recent years, it does not fulfill the expected learning quality and exhibits high repetition and dropout rates. She enumerates a series of factors that contribute to a low-quality education, emphasizing what to expect of education, such as student and family satisfaction, effort appreciation, placing more attention on the process than on the product, and giving all children equal opportunities to learn with motivation and pleasure.

Torres considers that teacher training is very important to ensure education quality, but notes that all elements that contribute to reaching teaching excellence must also be considered. With respect to transitions from the home to early education programs and later to school, she refers to the necessary collaboration between the family and school, taking childrens’ needs into account. She also indicates that a closer relationship between the school and families is inevitable, bridging the gap that separates them, although the school “with all its institutional and professional resources is obliged to adjust to the children.” She concludes the interview referring to illiterate parents’ literacy as well as child literacy. The interest of parents to be literate is the need to help their children with their schoolwork. For children, the importance lies in that reading and writing is vital to attaining academic success.

Teaching: A Moral Profession
La docencia: una profesión moral

Country: Spain

Year: 2009

Author: Álvaro Marchesi

Institution in Charge: Organization of Ibero-American States

Information Source: Revista Internacional Magisterio. Educación y pedagogía

www.oei.es/noticias/spip.php?article2268

In Alvaro Marchesi's interview by the Revista Internacional Magisterio sobre Educación y Pedagogía, he referred to teaching as a moral profession with regards to the requirements of the contemporary school and teacher competencies. He states that the contemporary school requires that teachers meet new functions and with regards to changing paradigms in teaching and learning, teachers must renew their acquired skills so they may, among other things, contribute to improve their students' learning, attend to diversity, incorporate ICTs in teaching, work in teams and collaborate with families, all of which must be accompanied by a positive attitude toward their pedagogic practice. Marchesi also stresses the importance of education in values, being himself a role model for children. He mentions that some projects can contribute efficiently to education in values, such as fair play, cooperation and endeavor in sports.

Bases, Orientations and Criteria for Designing Teacher Training Programs
(Bases, orientaciones y criterios para el diseño de programas de formación de profesores)

Country: Spain

Year: 1999

Author: Cecilia Braslavsky

Institution in Charge: Organization of Ibero-American States

Information Source: <http://www.rieoei.org/oeivirt/rie19a01.PDF>

The author takes a critical stance as regards teacher training in Latin America, stating that there is consensus in society that the school and education system must continue to exist, focusing on specific periods in people's lives—childhood and youth—but that the system must nevertheless function better. This means that schools currently offer an education that does not satisfy society's expectations for various reasons related to the programs, infrastructure and teaching materials, which are either insufficient or not good enough; teachers who do not have the required capabilities; practices that have been bureaucratized; and a number of other reasons that must be taken into account and improved to ensure a quality education that meets the demands of the 21st century.

Referring to the role of teachers, Braslavsky notes that this is linked to the traditional school model that sets up identical schools in different contexts, and that the model of teacher training, especially in Latin America, responds to the foundational model that no longer meets the needs and expectations of the knowledge society. She also mentions that there are certain training and upgrading traditions aimed at in-service teachers that involve the use of a particular set of resources and strategies. In this regard, it is questionable whether the solution lies in the improvement or transformation of the profiles of teachers currently in service using existing resources and strategies, or if it is necessary to resort to other teachers. Based on these reflections the author suggests some definitive characteristics of the teacher profile for the 21st century, as well as some criteria for design of graduate training programs for Latin American teachers.

**Latin American Ethnic, Cultural and Linguistic Diversity,
and Human Resources Required by Education
(La diversidad étnica, cultural y lingüística latinoamericana
y los recursos humanos que la educación requiere)**

Country: Bolivia

Year: 1997

Author: Luís Enrique López

Institution in Charge: Organization of Ibero-American States

Information Source: Revista Iberoamericana de Educación N° 13

<http://www.oei.org.co/oeivirt/rie13a03.htm>

In this paper, the authors make an in-depth analysis of bilingual education from different perspectives. The presentation is divided into four parts, which address and review: a quick analysis of the situation; the needs for human resources in educational programs; the region's available resources, including the presentation of an innovative teacher training proposal to address ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity; and a series of closing reflections. Among the relevant aspects addressed, some are related to the sociolinguistic situation in Latin America, to indigenous languages and their speakers, and are related to the educational provision that schools provide to children who speak a non-official language, and the impact that each country's educational policies have on children's learning. With regard to early teacher training, the authors note that aside from the sociolinguistic differences, which in many cases define the characteristics of bilingualism in Spanish and one or more indigenous languages, the available psycholinguistic and pedagogic information is as valid for Spanish and foreign language bilingualism, as it is for Spanish and indigenous language bilingualism.

**Family Involvement in Latin American Early Childhood Education
(Participación de las familias en la educación infantil latinoamericana)**

Country: Chile

Year: 2004

Author: Coordination: Rosa Blanco and Mami Umayahara. Research: Ofelia Reveco

Institution in Charge: UNESCO - OREALC

Information Source: www.oei.es/inicial/articulos/participacion_familias.pdf

This study reviews and analyzes the documentary information in the region on family involvement in Latin American early education, as regards policies and educational practices. Reveco's 2000 research is among the consulted investigations. Additionally, a survey was applied to Latin American institutions working on the issue. This paper is structured into three parts: the first presents a conceptual framework, the second analyzes parental involvement and education in Latin America, and the third offers conclusions and recommendations that may prove useful to guide the debate and advance the development of policies and programs for this level.

The first chapter outlines the study's objectives and methodology. The second establishes the relation between childhood and family, analyzes the concepts of childhood, family and early childhood education, family influence and child-rearing guidelines, and the changes

families in Latin America have undergone, and concludes by underscoring the importance of parental involvement in their children's education.

The third chapter describes four types of information: (i) the theoretical concept of involvement; (ii) the contributions of the different types of adult and child involvement; (iii) pedagogic challenges involved in the family-school relationship; and (iv) the type of knowledge currently disseminated through a specialized network on research and education topics. The fourth chapter analyzes policies, regulations and programs from the perspective of family involvement and education. The analysis is carried out in terms of: international agreements on education and childhood; and the political frameworks of Latin American countries, and programs being developed in different countries in the region. The analysis is based on the following perspectives: the family concept underlying the programs; involvement types and modalities; stakeholders involved, and their roles; strategies used; elements that hinder and facilitate their development; and program evaluation.

**Early Childhood Indicator in Latin America
(Indicadores de la primera infancia en América Latina)**

Country: Chile

Year: 2008

Author: Rosa Blanco and collaborators

Institution in Charge: UNESCO – OREALC

Information Source: Digital format paper

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0016/001629/162970S.pdf>

The authors express that given the need for more and better information on early childhood care and education services to allow comparisons between different programs in the region, indicators have been developed to monitor early childhood education in order to make the results useful for the discussion and formulation of policies for children under the age of six. In this context, OREALC, taking into account the observations made to the base document presented at the 2003 meeting, has developed 55 indicators to collect information on the programs directed at children from birth through the age of six. These indicators are grouped into three categories: general context, family context, and educational system, all of which in turn consist of sub categories.

A second part of the paper presents the results obtained in the experimental application of the indicators in three countries: Brazil, Chile and Peru. It ends with some general conclusions from the study and analysis of early childhood programs in the three selected countries, concluding that the results allow collecting evidence of the quality and feasibility of calculating the formulated indicators.

Guide to General Observation No. 7 of the Declaration on the Rights of the Child, Page 31

Country: Switzerland

Year: 2006

Author: Committee of Children's Rights

Institution in Charge: United Nations

Information Source: Digital format paper

Assistance to Parents, Families and Institutions for the Care of Children (Article 18)

The Convention requires State parties to assist parents, legal representatives and large families in carrying out their parenting responsibilities, in particular providing education to parents on the issue. In addition, State parties should ensure the development of child care institutions, facilities and services, and take all appropriate measures to ensure that children whose parents work are eligible for child care services, maternity protection, and facilities for which they are eligible. In this regard, the Committee recommends that State parties ratify Convention No. 183 on International Labor Organization's maternity protection. Lastly, State parties should ensure that parents receive appropriate support, enabling them to make their young children participate fully in early childhood programs, and particularly in preschool education.