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EARLY CHILDHOOD TRANSITIONS: AN INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK

Conceptual framework, situation, progress and challenges

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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.

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.

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 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

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.

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.

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*

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.

*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:*

*(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).

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

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”.

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, 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

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

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-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 "*Apreniendo 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 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.

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

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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

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Country: The Netherlands

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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.

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.

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.

Transitions in the Early Years—Debating Continuity and Progression
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.

Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care

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 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 Educations 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-](http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?pid=S0036-46651994000200020&script=sci_arttext)

[46651994000200020&script=sci_arttext](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 questioned 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 à l'entrée à 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, Navarra 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_marc_hesi.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.

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.