

# Early Childhood Education In The National Education System In Vietnam Today

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## ABSTRACT

ECE is the first level of education in the national education system, laying the initial foundation for children's physical, cognitive, social, and aesthetic development. Moreover, ECE has equipped children with the full scope of skills for their learning and later success.

It is undeniable that teachers play an important role in the education system, especially ECE teachers those who transmit knowledge and shape children's personalities right from the first days of school. Thereby children form a solid knowledge base and deep roots in their subconscious, providing the basis for all future learning. As can be seen, the tasks of ECE in the national education system in Vietnam are very important, especially in the current period.

### Keywords:

Education, ECE, National Education System, Vietnam.

## 1. Introduction

In the Context of International Integration, ECE is the door to a bright and solid future. Moreover, it is the foundation for the cognitive development of children who are ready to enter primary school.

The political report of the Party Central Committee presented at the 13th Congress stressed: "The State shall continue increasing investment in ECE development and at the same time boost the preschool education socialization, expand the system of creches and kindergartens in all population areas; especially in communes meeting with socio-economic difficulties as well as high-mountain and island communes". To attain this objective, planning approaches will need to be established by the education sector. ECE is the first level in the national education system. In these ways, the development of ECE laid the groundwork for the development of humans. According to Article 22, Chapter II, Section 1 of the Education Law, "The objectives of ECE are to help children develop physically,

emotionally, intellectually, and aesthetically, shape the initial elements of personality, and prepare children for the first grade".

## 2. Review Of Related Legal Basic

Decision 1981/QD-TTG, dated October 18, 2016, in Ha Noi under the Law on Government Organization dated 19 June 2015 and the Law on Revision of certain articles of the Law on Education dated November 25, 2009; Under the law on Higher Education dated June 18, 2012; Pursuant the Law on Vocational Education dated November 27, 2014; Pursuant the Government's Decision No. 44/NQ-CP dated June 9, 2014, on the introduction of the action program of the Government for implementation of the Resolution No. 29-NQ/TW dated November 4, 2013, of the Central Executive Committee (XI<sup>th</sup> tenure) on the basic and comprehensive reform of education and training to meet industrialization and modernization requirements in the context of socialist-oriented market economy and international

integration; Upon the request of the Minister of Education and Training and the Minister of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs.

Resolution No. 19/NQ-TW and Official Letter No. 3712/BGDDT-CSVC dated August 24, 2018, advising committees and local authorities on arrangements by the provisions of law and development scale; not merging preschools into primary schools; ensuring the rights of children to school; ensuring each commune has at least one public preschool.

Decision No. 1677/QD-TTG, dated December 3, 2018, approves the project ECE development from 2018 to 2025; Under the Law on Government Organization dated 19 June 2015 and the Law on Revision of certain articles of the Law on Education dated November 25, 2009; Pursuant the Law on Higher Education dated June 18, 2012; Pursuant the Law on Vocational Education dated November 27, 2014; Pursuant the Government's Decision No. 44/NQ-CP dated June 9, 2014, on the introduction of the action program of the Government for implementation of the Resolution No. 29-NQ/TW dated November 4, 2013, of the Central Executive Committee (XI<sup>th</sup> tenure) on the basic and comprehensive reform of education and training to meet industrialization and modernization requirements in the context of socialist-oriented market economy and international integration.

Decision No. 1677/QD-TTG on approving the ECE project from 2018 to 2025. The objectives of the project are to strengthen and develop the network of preschools to the socio-economic conditions of the locality and meet the needs of children, in the direction of standardization, modernization, socialization, and international integration. Diversifying methods, improving the quality of nurturing, and educating children compared to regional and international benchmarks.; Strengthening, maintaining, and improving the quality of universal ECE for 5-year-olds, well-preparing children for first grade; develop ECE for children under 5 years old.

Decision No. 1065/QD-BGDDT dated April 19, 2019, on promulgating the plan for

implementation of the project "ECE Development in the period from 2018 to 2025". Under the Government's Decree No. 123/2016/ND-CP dated September 1, 2016, stipulating the functions, tasks, powers, and organizational structure of the Ministry, ministerial-level agencies; The Government's Decree No. 69/2017/ND-CP dated May 25, 2017, stipulating the functions, tasks, powers and organizational structure of the Ministry of Education and Training; The Prime Minister's Decision No. 1677/QD-TTG dated December 3, 2018, on approving the project "Development of ECE the period of 2018-2025"; considering the proposal of the Director of the Department of education.

### 3. Research Methods

- Theoretical research method: This method was used to collect scientific information based on the study of scientific works, documents, existing texts, and logical thinking manipulations to serve the purpose of research.

- Analysis and synthesis method: This method was applied to analyze and synthesize the theory, and data on the effectiveness of vocational training policies for ethnic minority workers, thereby assessing the situation and providing solutions.

- Historical method: The author recognizes and analyzes theoretical and practical issues of vocational training policies for ethnic minority workers by finding the source of problems, considering problems in the process of formation and development to find development trends, and providing possible solutions to solve the problem.

- Methods of collecting and analyzing secondary data: Secondary data are the overview data on vocational training policies in state administrative agencies. This data source is published in the annual report of the Party and the State of Vietnam, as well as in specialized journals, and at scientific conferences.

### 4. Results Of Discussion

#### 4.1. Overview of the structural framework of Vietnam's national education system

According to the decision 1981/QĐ-TTĐ, the structure of the national education system is described in the diagram attached to that decision. As can be seen, Vietnam’s education system has 8 levels, from ECE to doctorate degrees. Educational levels and qualifications attained in the national education system encompass:

- a) ECE is divided into nursery and kindergarten education;
- b) General education is divided into primary, lower, and upper secondary education;
- c) Vocational education is divided into elementary, intermediate, and junior college-level training levels;
- d) Higher education is divided into bachelor’s, master’s, and doctorate degrees.

**THE STRUCTURAL FRAMEWORK OF VIETNAM’S EDUCATION SYSTEM AFTER 2015**

(Recommended by Vietnam Association of Universities and Colleges, Vietnam Association for Study Promotion, and Association for Education for All)

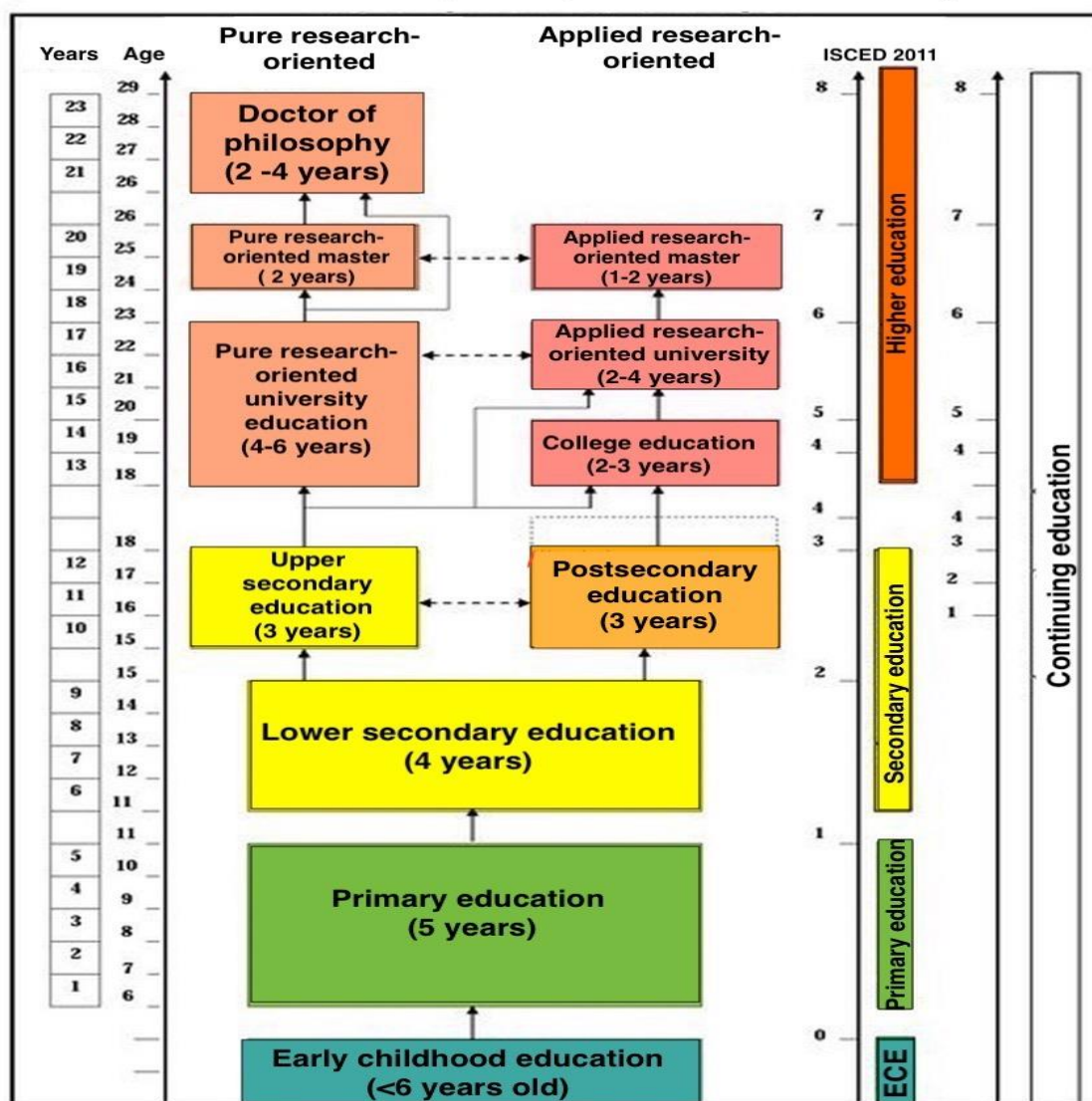


Figure 1. The structural framework of Vietnam’s education system after 2015

ECE includes nursery and kindergarten education. The goal of ECE is to help children develop physically, emotionally, intellectually, and aesthetically, forming the first elements of personality, and preparing children for the first grade. Besides the formation and development of children of psychophysiological functions, competencies, and fundamental qualities, necessary life skills, arouse and develop maximum potential abilities, and lay the foundation for their lifelong learning. Nursery education is offered to children aged 3 months to 3 years. Kindergarten education is offered to children aged 3 months to 6 years.

General education includes primary education, lower secondary education (basic education stage), and upper secondary education (vocationally oriented education stage): Primary education lasts for 5 school years from the 1<sup>st</sup> grade to the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Primary school graduates will be moved up to the lower secondary education level. The lower secondary education primary school graduates. Lower secondary education lasts for 4 school years from the 6<sup>th</sup> grade to the end of 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Lower secondary school graduates may opt to move up to the upper secondary education level, or continue to enroll in elementary and intermediate-level training programs. Upper secondary education is offered to lower secondary school graduates. Within the stipulated duration of upper secondary education, students can transfer to intermediate-level training programs if they wish and meet the requirements set out in these programs.

#### **4.2. The goals of ECE in the education system**

In the fundamental and comprehensive renovation of Vietnamese education, Resolution No. 19/NQ-TW sets out that the goal of ECE is to help children develop physically, emotionally, intellectually, and aesthetically, forming the first elements of personality, preparing children to enter the first grade. That confirms that ECE has an important role in human development. ECE is now very popular and open in every corner from urban to rural, and remote areas. Children

have opportunities to develop languages, cognitive abilities, and the necessary skills which are very useful for later success.

ECE is the golden stage for the development of young children, especially the perfect development of the brain. This is the stage when children need to receive adequate nutritional care, modern educational methods, good training environment. Converging all these factors forms children's good personalities, healthy lifestyles and become good citizens in the future.

In addition, ECE serves as an important foundation for other levels of education. Children will receive different methods of education throughout their life. Therefore, the ECE must be renewed paralleling the development of children and social trends. The ECE program still revolves around the following objectives:

- *Help children become aware.*

Before receiving ECE, most children receive education and teaching from their families. However, education from parents does not bring many breakthroughs for children and few parents can spend a lot of time with their children.

The kindergarten environment will provide children with many opportunities to explore and stimulate their curiosity and curiosity which form important skills such as observation, judgment, comparison, and classification. Besides, children understand more about the environment as well as the society around them. Hence, children

understand more about themselves, thereby gradually shaping their personalities.

- *Help children develop language.*

Children can develop their languages due to the ECE period. In the process of learning, and communicating with friends, and teachers, children will know how to express their personal feelings more clearly. They also know how to ask and answer questions about the world around them. Therefore, they constantly develop reading and writing skills.

- *Help children develop physically.*

ECE programs are often associated with fun activities, so children learn, and experience, thereby improving physically. Preschool has a

large space where children can freely move, combining activities organized by teachers to help them become more flexible and more active, and stimulate the development of height and weight. In addition, children are equipped with the habit of training, health care, personal hygiene after exercise, and safety during activities. Moreover, nutrition at ECE is thoughtfully considered. The menu is changed daily with the main meals and suppers balancing between groups of nutrients. Children are also checked for weight and height periodically for monitoring growth and development. Enabling children to develop both physical and mental in a harmonious way. Furthermore, modern educational methods enabled children to develop essential skills and comprehensive knowledge.

#### 4.3. The current situation of ECE in the national education system in Vietnam

According to the latest statistics from the Ministry of Labor, Invalids, and Social Affairs on July 11, 2019, the population of Vietnam has reached 96,208,984 people. Affirming that Vietnam is a "rejuvenated" country, the country has 95.8% of people aged 15 and over who can read and write. With a high proportion of young populations, the need for education is constantly being focused on, especially on children - the future generations of the country. Therefore, the current situation of ECE aroused the interest of all. ECE is the first social education foundation for children. Children need to live in a healthy and safe environment and develop physically, intellectually, spiritually, and ethically in a harmonious way.

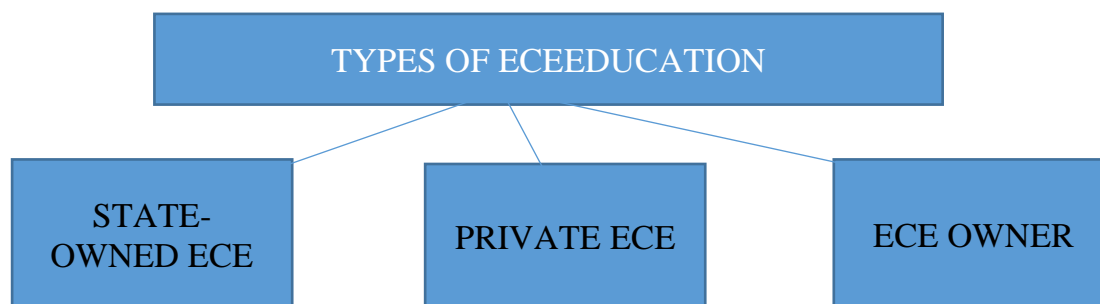


Figure 2: Current types of ECE (Self-study author)

Currently, ECE is divided into state-owned ECE, private ECE, and ECE owners.

##### - *State-owned (public) ECE*

This is the most common form in Vietnam. The state-owned ECE is built and maintained based on funding from the State. Hence, the cost of public training is slightly low.

##### - *Private ECE*

Nursery and kindergarten are built and maintained by the funding of a group of residents and supported by local community organizations and authorities. The facilities here are fully invested.

##### - *ECE owners*

This kind of ECE is completely built and maintained by an individual, a group of people, and an economic organization or a social organization without funding sources from the State.

ECE provides an environment for children to explore, play with peers and build self-confidence. They can accomplish tasks and make decisions without the help of their parents. Hence, Child protection policies are being enacted more and more thoroughly.

According to the Report on Education and Training at the review conference of the school year 2020 - 2021, the end of the school year 2020-2021, the country has a total of 15,480 preschools (12.18 public; 3,299 non-public); The total number of children attending school equaling to 5,357,045; Facilities are increasingly solidified, the national average reaches the ratio of 01 class / 01 room; Solid classrooms reached 80.0% ( increasing 2.3 %); temporary classroom remains at 1.4%; The quality of teachers is improved, the ratio of teachers/class is 1.84; The percentage of ECE teachers with qualifications of Pedagogical

Junior College or higher reached 78.9%; The percentage of ECE teachers with qualifications from University of education or higher reached 55.2%; The accreditation of education quality and the construction of schools meeting national standards is increasing, there are 8,300 national preschools which were highly rated reaching 53.6%.

However, ECE still faces many difficulties. Currently, due to the covid-19 pandemic, preschool-aged children must stay at home for a long time, which has negatively affected their routine and habits; non-public preschools face many economic difficulties; Disparities in access to education disadvantaged ethnic minorities, and the abuse of children still occur. The lack of contingent ECE teachers as well as the non-synchronized facilities, there are 21,236 odd school points, equaling 1.4%, especially in mountainous, and remote provinces.

As can be seen, the important goals of ECE programs are to help children acquire social skills and learning-related skills. Minister of Education and Training Nguyen Kim Son once said: "the innovation of education needs to be from education, the best things must be for children. "The best must be for children, so the innovation of education needs to be from the foundation level", must be done for three purposes: Happiness, Fulfillment, and Satisfaction: which means that children feel happy when going to school, teachers fulfill their tasks and parents satisfied with the service of ECE."

#### 4.4. Tasks of ECE

##### *(1) Improving the effectiveness and efficiency of education management*

The Ministry of Education shall review, advise and promulgate the system of legal documents under the Education Law 2019, creating a legal corridor to improve the efficiency of state management of education. Besides, guide the timely implementation of legal documents to meet the requirements of management renewal. Continue to innovate the management of education in the direction of decentralization, decentralization, self-attention associated with the mechanism of

supervision and accountability; Guide the management of ECE establishments; Develop models of ECC administration and minimize book records. Strictly and fully implement regulations on the organization and operation of ECE establishments by regulations on financial management. Strengthen the implementation of democracy in the management and operation of ECE establishments, ensure the promotion of mastery of cadres, and civil servants, and improve the responsibilities of heads of sectors.

Localities focus on strengthening the inspection, and supervision of the implementation of regulations on preschools, especially the licensing of establishment and operation of non-public preschools; Resolutely suspend ECE owners that do not meet the prescribed requirements; Strictly handle violating individuals and officials. Closely coordinate with departments, branches, and unions in the management of ECE, especially non-public education; Mobilize the participation of the community to supervise the organization and operation of non-public ECE.

##### *(2) Review and arrange the development of school and class networks, strengthening facilities for early childhood*

To review and arrange the network of preschools in the spirit of Resolution No. 19/NQ-TW and ensure the provisions of the Law on Education, practical meetings, create favorable conditions to bring children to school, improve the quality of care and education of children; Do not merge ECE into primary education; Ensure that each commune or ward has a public preschool. Effectively implementing the project "Ensuring facilities to implement the ECE and general education program from 2018 to 2025".

Implementing the Government's Resolution No. 35/NQ-CP dated June 4, 2019, on strengthening the mobilization of resources of the society to invest in education and training development in the period of 2019 - 2025. Develop a network of preschools suitable to the socio-economic conditions of each locality to guarantee children's chance to attend ECE.

*(3) Strengthening and improving the universal quality of ECE*

Focus on prioritizing resources to ensure the maintenance and improvement of the universal quality of ECE; Seriously implement the inspection and recognition of maintaining the universal quality office results for localities that have met standards. For provinces, some communes have not been recognized to meet the standards (13 communes) need to direct and focus on investing resources to meet the universal quality of standards. Strive for 100% of communes in the country to meet the universal quality of ECE standards update data, report, and exploit the universal quality of ECE data on the electronic information system to effectively manage universal education.

Fully and timely implement the lunch support policy for kindergarten children as prescribed in the Prime Minister's Decree No. 06/2018/ND-CP dated January 05, 2018, and other regimes and policies for children. Increase the proportion of preschools meeting National Standards as well as quality accreditation standards.

*(4) Maintaining and improving the quality of education:*

Ensuring physical and mental safety for the child; Improving the quality of nurturing and health care of children; renovating care and education activities, improve the quality of implementation of the ECE program.

On August 26, 2021, the Ministry of Education and Training issued Official Letter No. 3676/BGDDT-GDMN on the implementation of the tasks for the 2021-2022 school year for ECE. Accordingly, there will be 9 key tasks in the 2021-2022 school year to ensure physical and mental safety for children in the context of the covid-19 pandemic.

*(5) Development of management staff and ECE teachers*

Implementing Directive No. 1737/CT-BGDDT dated 15/05/2018 of the Minister of Education to strengthen the management and improve teachers' ethics. Focus on training the contingent of ECE teachers; Improving professional capacity to meet the requirements of care and education of children, especially teachers in ECE owners; Encouraging teachers

to self-study and exploit resources from the Internet.

Implementing the project on training and cultivating teachers and managers of ECE from 2018 to 2025, fostering teachers meeting training standards as prescribed in the amended Education Law 2019. Implementing principal standards and professional standards of ECE teachers, thereby determining the capacity and training needs of teachers and managers of educational institutions to meet the requirements of the standards issued by the Ministry of Education and Training.

There are solutions to ensure enough teachers as prescribed in the Joint Circular No. 06/2015/TTLT-BGDDT-BNV; To recruit officials for ECE teachers, not to prolong the status of multi-year contracts for ECE teachers while there are still many recruitment targets.

Fully implement the policies for ECE teachers following the current regulations. Localities and training institutions continue to appoint and foster title standards, examinations/considerations for promotion and appointment, and salary ratings according to the ranking of professional titles of ECE teachers.

(6) Promoting socialization and international integration

(7) Strengthening the application of information technology

(8) Promoting communication in ECE.

Currently, ECE is planned and issued by the Ministry of Education.

- Improving the effectiveness and efficiency of education management.

- Reviewing, arranging, and developing the system of school and class networks; Strengthening facilities; Improving the quality of accreditation, and building preschools meeting national standards.

- Strengthening and improving the universal quality of education for children 05 years old; Universal ECE for children ineligible places.

- Implementing solutions to improve the quality of child nurturing, caring, and education activities.

- Developing the management staff and ECE teachers.

- Applying of information technology and digits for early formation for ECE.
- Promoting communication ECE.
- Effectively implementing statistical work, and reporting on ECE.
- In particular, supporting teachers is difficult, avoiding the situation of ECE teachers quitting their jobs, and ECE institutions dissolved.

In addition, it is necessary to improve the quality of care and education of children; do not merge ECE into primary education; ensure that each commune or ward has a public preschool. Effectively implementing the project "Ensuring facilities to implement the ECE childhood education and general education program from 2018 to 2025".

Caring out the work of nurturing, caring for, and educating children in the ECE program; Building an educational environment, organizing activities to nurture, care for and educate children; Assessing and managing children; Responsible for the quality of nurturing, caring for, and educating children; Participate in the activities of professional groups, schools, kindergartens, youth groups, independent kindergarten classes.

## 5. Conclusion

In the current period, the general tasks of the Education sector are to promote the planning, review, arrangement, and development of ECE to meet the needs of society, especially in areas with industrial zones, export processing zones, and densely populated areas.

Along with the basic and comprehensive reform measures of education and training in the current period, ECE plays a pioneering role in the education system. Hence, it is necessary to continue to innovate and standardize focusing on combining care, nurturing, and education by psychological characteristics, physiological, physical development requirements, and personality formation for preschool-age children.

In the era of globalization, economic integration is an inevitable trend for all countries, including Vietnam, the government needs to improve the effectiveness

and efficiency of management; Fostering teacher quality and expertise to overcome the ECE shortage. At the same time, improving the quality of implementation of the ECE program to ensure absolute physical and mental safety for children; supporting parents to nurture, care for and educate their children.

In the new school year, the objective of ECE focuses on maintaining and improving the quality of universal ECE for five-year-old children; supporting ECE in disadvantaged areas; strengthening Vietnamese for ethnic minority children; Taking care of disadvantaged children, children of workers in industrial parks and export processing zones; Organizing inclusive education for disabilities children.

In addition, paying attention to training managers and preschool teachers to have general knowledge and professional knowledge in depth and breadth, have diverse intelligence, and have skills in caring for and educating children. In addition, preschool teachers need to have habits and skills of regular study, scientific research, and social work in the field of ECE to meet the period of the market economy.

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