UKRAINE

Key Contextual Data

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Citation suggestion:

Funded by:
Early childhood education and care (ECEC)

ECEC system type and auspices

Ukraine has a bi-sectoral system of early childhood education and care. Nurseries (dytyachi yasla) and nursery-kindergartens (yasla-sadky), mainly for children between 2 months and 3 years, and kindergartens (dytyachi sadky) and school-kindergartens (shkola-dytyachyy sadok) for 3- to 6- or 7-year olds come under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Science (Ministerstvo osvity i nauky Ukrayiny). Home-based childcare settings fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Health (Ministerstvo okhorony zdorov'ya Ukrayiny); the same applies for health support childcare centres (budynok dytyny) for orphans or children with disabilities up to 4 years of age. Local authorities are responsible for the management of ECEC settings.


General objectives and legislative framework


The former Ministry of Education and Science, Youth and Sports (Order 615, 2012, new version) set out the general objectives for the ECEC system relating to the provision now under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Science:

- recognising the intrinsic value of early childhood and its special role in the development of the individual;
- preserving children’s subcultures;
- creating favourable conditions for the individual development of the child’s abilities;
- prioritising the child’s need to live in the here-and-now over preparation for the future;
- respecting the child, taking into account the young child’s individual personal experience;
- following a competency approach to personal development, including a balance of acquired knowledge, skills, motivation, interests, intentions, personal qualities and confident behaviour;
- prioritising social and moral development, developing children’s ability to respect group rules, balancing personal interests with those of the group;
- supporting the development of a holistic, realistic world view.

In addition, as a key part of the ECEC settings in Ukraine, the involvement of parents in decision-making processes is considered crucial at every phase of the child’s development.

According to the law “On Preschool Education” (2001), preschool education is a holistic process aimed at supporting the comprehensive development of preschool children according to their
needs, aptitudes, abilities, individual qualities and cultural needs, including the development of ethical principles. The law also ensures – among other things - the child's right to free early childhood education, and determines curricular content.

Moreover, the law addresses the general framework for preschool provision, including the responsibility of local authorities as providers. The ministerial document "Basic components of preschool education in Ukraine" (1998; 2013) sets out the national standards for early childhood education and care:

"Preschool education is an independent system, a mandatory part of education in Ukraine, which combines family and public education. The very first social environment for the child is a preschool setting, which aims to ensure the harmonious development of the child, physical and mental health, the development of values relating to the natural and social environment, to themselves, the formation of mechanisms of social adaptation and creative implementation in the company of unfamiliar children and adults."


ECEC entitlement and compulsory enrolment age

Early childhood education is an independent but integral part of the education system in Ukraine (Law "On Preschool Education", 2001, §1, Art. 4).

All children from age 2 months up to school entry are legally entitled to a free place in either a centre-based or a home-based setting.

For 5- to 6-year olds, it is stated that preschool education is compulsory. However, there is no obligation for the children to attend a centre-based setting. It could be a home-based setting or in the family's home. For younger children it is up to the parents whether they wish to enrol their child or not.

Statutory schooling begins at age 6, although for some children with special needs it may be delayed until age 7.


Main types of provision

According to the law “On Preschool Education” (2001, Art. 12) there are different types of preschools:

**Nurseries (yasla)** provide for children aged 2 months to 3 years. However, most exist as part of a kindergarten or nursery-kindergarten. They are open from 7:30 to 17:00 (state and municipal provision) or from 8:00 to 20:00 (private provision).

**Nursery-kindergartens (yasla-sadok)** provide for children aged 2 months to 6/7 years. Opening hours are also 7:30 to 17:00 (state and municipal settings) or from 8:00 to 20:00 (private settings).

**Kindergartens (dytyachyy sadok)** are for 3- to 6-/7-year olds, run by state, municipal and private providers. Opening hours are as above.

**School-kindergartens (shkola-dytyachyy sadok)** combine a preschool setting and a primary school and can be run by state, municipal and private providers. They are all Level I educational settings.
according to the Ukrainian Educational System, i.e., they cater for both preschool children and schoolchildren up to the 4th year of school. These educational settings provide a smooth transition from kindergarten to primary school, enabling children of different ages to interact on a daily basis. When analysing the specifics of 'school–kindergartens', scholars tend to emphasise the benefits of the continuity they provide for the work in preschool and primary education settings: the same facilities; the organisation of collective forms of work for pre-schoolers and schoolchildren; common organisational structures and pedagogical approaches; and common educational goals.

**Health support childcare centres** (*budynok dytyny*) are preschool educational settings for the social protection of orphans and children without parents’ care and those with disabilities up to 3 years of age (for healthy children) and up to 4 years of age (for children with disabilities). They operate on a longer daily basis, from 7:00/8:00 to 21:00/22:00.

**Special nursery-kindergartens** are for 2- to 6-/7-year olds who require support in their physical and (or) intellectual development or (and) need long-term care and rehabilitation according to their personal abilities. Special early childhood educational institutions of this kind are intended for children with hearing and sight impairments, speech and language disorders, learning and intellectual disabilities, and physical disabilities. Residential sanatorium early childhood institutions are intended for children with early signs of tuberculosis, chronic non-specific respiratory diseases, cardiovascular, endocrine system and digestive diseases, and neuro-psychiatric diseases. State-run and municipal settings are open from 7:00 to 19:00. The sanatorium-type settings offer 24 hours of residential provision, including four meals a day.

**Combined nursery-kindergartens** (*yasla-sadok kombinovanoho typu*) are for the children aged 2 months to 6/7 years. They can comprise groups of general development, special groups, inclusive groups, sanatorium-type groups, family-type groups, walk-in and short-term-stay groups in various combinations. State-run and municipal settings are open from 7:00 to 19:00, private settings from 8:00 to 20:00.

**Child development centres** (*tsentr rozvytky dytyny*). These ECEC settings are intended for children with regular and special needs. They provide a broader scope of activities. According to the requirements of the “Basic components of pre-school education and the “Basic programme for pre-school children” these centres may offer:

- groups for children aged 2 months to 3 years to support their social adaptation to conditions of the ECEC setting;
- groups to prepare 5- to 6-/7-year olds for school;
- artistic/aesthetic, fitness or music groups for 3- to 6-/7-year olds;
- rehabilitation groups (provision of health, educational, psychological, medical and social support for children aged 2 to 7/8 years);
- groups of early support for children aged 2 months up to 2 years.

Settings such as the *budynok dytyny*, the *yasla-sadok kombinovanoho typu* and the *tsentr rozvytky dytyny* play an important role in the system as a whole. They include various kinds of groups (compensatory types included), thus allowing for a better integration of children with special needs. All work is aimed at improving the health of children, their intellectual and social/moral development, helping them to master life experiences, thus gaining skills for further schooling. Pedagogical staff in these institutions work closely with speech therapists, psychologists, music teachers and physical education instructors, thus creating the best possible conditions for the physical and cognitive development of the child. If a child has specific disabilities that do not allow group participation in the same way as children without disabilities, it is up to the parents to decide if they would prefer to enrol their child in a special kindergarten. Some mainstream kindergartens have special groups for such children. Unfortunately, there is no data on the number of these ECEC settings in Ukraine.
Objectives are regulated by law (Resolution 1124 "On Approval of the Child Development Centre", 2009):

- ensuring the full development of pre-schoolers according to their abilities and individual mental and physical characteristics;
- providing early social adaptation of children to the conditions of a kindergarten and preparing them for school;
- providing comprehensive educational and psychological assistance to children requiring to improve their physical and (or) mental development;
- providing consultations and advice to families, involvement of parents in the education, training and rehabilitation of the child;
- interacting with civil organisations to promote comprehensive development of children requiring to improve their physical and (or) mental development;
- implementing experimental and innovative activities.

All of the above-mentioned types of ECEC provision are open from September 1st to May 31\textsuperscript{st}. In cases of need, the educator may stay with a child after the official closing time, e.g. if the parents cannot pick the child up for some urgent reason. In such a case, the educator will make sure that the child is brought home safely. During the summer period – June, July, August –, all ECEC facilities provide summer camps where children can either stay 24/7 or where they can spend a day and then be taken back home. The camps include various educational and health care activities. These are not compulsory and work on a voluntary basis, depending on the wishes of the parents.

All in all, in 2015 there were 14,813 early childhood institutions in Ukraine.

Table 1
Ukraine: Number of ECEC Institutions by type, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Number of Institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nurseries</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursery-Kindergartens</td>
<td>6,796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergartens</td>
<td>4,903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other ECEC facilities</td>
<td>3,113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14,813</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Cabinet of Ministers 2009.
Ministry of Health 2016.

Provider structures

Providers of ECEC institutions are – according to the Law on Preschool Education – the state, municipalities and private persons (the latter include home-based settings, see below). In reality (see Table 2), nearly all ECEC settings are funded by the state or the municipalities. The proportion of private or church-affiliated provision is negligible (1.2%). Within the current framework of decentralisation in Ukraine, there is a trend towards transferring state-run provision to the municipalities.

Table 2
Ukraine: Number and proportions of ECEC provision according types of providers, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Proportion, in %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Municipal and state-funded</td>
<td>14,636</td>
<td>98.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private and church affiliated</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14,813</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recently, the Ministry of Health eased the restrictions for founding a preschool or a home-based setting (Law "On Approval of the sanitary regulations for preschools" 2016). Furthermore, since 2015, the providers of private preschool settings are legally exempted from taxes (Law "On Amendments to the Tax Code of Ukraine on creating favourable conditions for the provision of educational services of preschool and secondary schools in private ownership"). Thus, there is a hope that these measures will increase the numbers of official registrations – especially of home-based settings.


Participation rates in regulated provision

During the last five years, both the number of ECEC institutions dropped (from 16,100 in 2011 to 14,813 in 2015) as well as the number of children enrolled (see Table 3). The overall participation rate (1-6 year olds) remained at 55% – disregarding a peak of 61% in 2013. However, compared to the EU countries, the attendance rate according to age-groups is rather low: Only just over one quarter of the 3- to 6-year olds attend a kindergarten and only 15% of the under-threes (Table 4).

Table 3

Ukraine: Numbers of preschool institutions and children (age 1 to 6) and attendance rate from 2011 to 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total number of Institutions</th>
<th>Total number of Children</th>
<th>Rate of attendance in all types of ECEC institutions, in %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>16,100</td>
<td>1,354,000</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>16,400</td>
<td>1,204,000</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>16,700</td>
<td>1,236,000</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>1,077,000</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>14,813</td>
<td>1,291,200</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4

Ukraine: Number of children enrolled in centre-based settings and attendance rate according to age-groups, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age-group</th>
<th>Number of children</th>
<th>Rate, %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1- to 3-year olds</td>
<td>200,926</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3- and 4-year olds</td>
<td>399,795</td>
<td>30.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-year olds</td>
<td>326,486</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-year olds</td>
<td>329,288</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-year olds</td>
<td>38,396</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,294,891</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Financing and costs for parents

State educational institutions and establishments, organisations and enterprises of the system of education are mainly funded by budgets of the national economy and by state enterprises and
organisations. The total expenditure of the consolidated budget on preschool education increased from 789,000,000 UAH (approx. 29 mill. €) in 2000 to 18,142,200,000 UAH (approx. 666 mill. €) in 2015.

The State provides comprehensive assistance to families for their children’s education and is supposed to ensure accessible and free pre-school education in state and municipal kindergartens that comply with the state requirements regarding the content, level and length of optional and mandatory preschool education.

Within the current transition period towards increased decentralisation in Ukraine, state funding for a number of facilities, including ECEC settings, is being increasingly transferred to local budgets. Also, “District councils shall carry out the transfer of joint ownership of territorial communities of villages, towns and cities in the ownership of united territorial communities”*. This will also affect the provider structure of ECEC settings in Ukraine in the near future. During the transition phase in 2015, the budgets of villages, towns and cities of regional importance will finance expenditures provided for by Paragraph 20, Section VI BCU (Budget Code of Ukraine), namely for preschool educational institutions, cultural clubs (a phenomenon representing buildings for public gatherings and public events), recreation centres and libraries. This means that a centralised state system of funding is transitioning to a more local and decentralised form of budgeting.

Parents pay a fee for the children's meals in state and municipal preschool settings according to at least 60% of actual costs in urban areas and at least 40% in rural areas (Law 2628, §5, Art. 35). These costs may differ regionally. Children’s meals cost between UAH 7.00 (0.26€) and UAH 10.00 (0.38€) per day in rural areas, an average of UAH 8.50 (0.32€).

Large families with three or more children only pay 50% of these amounts. The meals are free for orphans, for children in special educational settings and for children from families with less than the minimum income set by the government.

### Table 5
**Ukraine: Costs for parents in urban areas, 2016**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Costs for parents*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State-funded</td>
<td>0.48-1.47€ per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal</td>
<td>0.48-1.47€ per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church-affiliated</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>73.26 –366.30€ per month and more</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*There are also other costs to be paid by the parents which are not included in the table as they are not provided for by the law, but may sometimes be unavoidable (because of obsolete equipment, bad heating etc.)*

The church-affiliated ECEC institutions do not receive any funding from the state budget. Private (for-profit) ECEC institutions are self-sustaining, i.e., costs are covered by the parents and the owner. Municipal ECEC institutions until now have been partially funded from the local municipal or district budgets. However, within the framework of decentralisation, the local budgets (those of the village and town/city councils) are to be entitled to allocate funds for ECEC settings in accordance with the Law “On Amendments to the Budget Code of Ukraine concerning the criteria for the formation and execution of budgets of united territorial communities.”*

Additional sources of funding for ECEC establishments include the financial resources of the provider, donations of individuals or legal entities. Other sources of funding (e.g. by private businesses) are not prohibited by the Ukrainian Law.

Since Ukraine is currently experiencing a transition period of decentralisation, involving the merging of regions into territorial communities (terytorial’na hromada) with all the necessary adjustments, the finance structures of the entire community (terytorial’na hromada) will be subject to change.
Staff-child ratios

Children in ECEC settings are grouped according to four age-groups: (1) infants and toddlers, 1 to 3 years, (2) junior preschool age, 3 to 4 years, (3) middle preschool age, 4 to 5 years and (4) senior preschool age, 5 to 7 years. In purely arithmetical terms, the staff-child ratios would look something like this (see Table 6).

Table 6
Ukraine: Staff/child ratios, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Number of Staff</th>
<th>Number of Children</th>
<th>Staff/child ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nurseries</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1 : 2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursery-kindergartens</td>
<td>236,936</td>
<td>996,823</td>
<td>1 : 23.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergartens</td>
<td>44,431</td>
<td>177,067</td>
<td>1 : 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other ECEC settings</td>
<td>27,531</td>
<td>117,281</td>
<td>1 : 23.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Own calculations


Curricular frameworks

In 2011, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted a Common Framework for Early Education. The goal of this social programme was the development of preschool education for the period until 2017. Although this framework is not mandatory, it nevertheless provides important guidelines for the curricular frameworks in both state-funded and private (for-profit) establishments.

Letter 1/9-152 of the Ministry of Education and Science, Youth and Sports "On the development of programs for preschool education" as of 28/02/13 sets out the curricular frameworks for the ECEC settings in Ukraine.

According to the Law of Ukraine "On Preschool Education" (Article 22), the curricular framework (educational programme) as the basic component of preschool education shall be a joint function of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of Ukraine, as a specially authorised central executive authority in the field of education, and the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences.

The concept of preschool education in Ukraine includes the following:
- supporting the comprehensive development of children on the basis of national culture and spirituality;
- ensuring the physical and mental health of children, identifying those in need of health support at an early age;
- imparting knowledge on upbringing, environmental culture, moral orientation in national and universal values, respect for other persons;
- creating favourable conditions for the development of moral self-assessment and relationships with others;
- introducing folk culture, art, traditions and rituals of the Ukrainian people, developing a respect for cultural heritage, customs and traditions of other nations;
- mastering the mother tongue; providing cognitive and other types of children's activities.
During 2004-2005 both the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Health, with the assistance of UNICEF, developed, published and introduced a national programme for the development of early-age children in all regions of Ukraine. The programme (*The little seed*) covered the period from birth to 3 years, introducing main developmental domains, standards and indicators for the earliest years of childhood.

In 2014, a number of programmes for preschoolers were introduced. These include:

- “Treasure House of Morals” (*Skarbnytsia Morali*), highlighting components of values education;
- “Know yourself, take care of yourself” (*Pro Sebe Treba Znaty, Pro Sebe Treba Dbaty*), focusing on health, safety and the personality of the child;
- “Sunflower” (*Sonyashnyk*), outlining a holistic approach towards education for all ages, with one version specifically for 4- to 6-year olds;
- “Fairy-tale exercises” (*Kazkova Phizkultura*), focusing on the physical development of children. The approach is based on the child’s mastering of eight main physical states: from supine-horizontal positions (prone, on hands and knees, sitting) to vertical functional-training (climbing, running, jumping).

Beside these, there are a number of other programmes focusing on different aspects of young children’s development (e.g. play, creativity).

International relations led to a cooperative project in 1994, funded by the Open Society Foundation, between university teachers in Ukraine and in the USA. As a result of the innovative programme "First Steps" (Project USA 1996), a team of preschool pedagogues from the Dragomanov National Pedagogical University developed the programme "Step by Step in Ukraine" (2003).


**Inclusion agenda**

*Children with special educational needs and disabilities*

By ratifying the core international human rights treaties (the UN Declaration on Human Rights, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child), Ukraine undertook obligations to respect human rights, in particular the right to education of children with special educational needs. According to recent reports, 45% of 129,000 children with special educational needs integrated into mainstream schools are children with disabilities. In 2009, Ukraine ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In October 2010, the Ministry of Education and Science, Youth and Sports of Ukraine approved the inclusive education development concept (Order 912). Another important document was the "Procedures for the organisation of inclusion in general educational institutions" – approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on August 15th, 2011. Based on the changed educational approaches they also adopted the new "Regulations on psychological, medical and pedagogical consultations."

In January 2014, the Ministry of Education and Science held the first regular meeting of a working group on early childhood education of children with special needs. Members decided to hold a series of nationwide web-seminars for parents and teachers with regard to working with preschool children with special needs.

In 2015, the Cabinet of Ministers in Ukraine issued Resolution 530 "On Amendments to the Regulations on preschools" as of 29 July 2015, agreeing on the creation of special and inclusive groups as part of preschools for children with special educational needs.
Based on the conclusion of the Psychological, Medical and Pedagogical Commission (PMPC), inclusive ECEC settings can be opened at the request of parents in co-operation with the centre head, who then decides to form inclusive education groups taking into account the specific educational needs of the children.

**Table 7**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutions with inclusive groups</th>
<th>Number of inclusive groups</th>
<th>Available places in inclusive groups</th>
<th>Number of children in inclusive groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>1,546</td>
<td>1,658</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources:** Kolupaeva, A.A. and L.A. Savchu 2011.

**Monitoring – Evaluation – Research**

There is a State inspection system for educational settings, including preschool education. External monitoring is carried out at the regional and municipal level.

There are a number of legal frameworks which the executive levels have to adhere to (e.g. "On additional measures to improve the quality of education in Ukraine", Decree 244 of the President of Ukraine, 20.03.2008; "On monitoring the state of preschool education", Ministry of Education, Order 309, 2008; "On approval of the procedures for monitoring the quality of education", Cabinet of Ministers, Resolution 1283, 2011). These all concern the overall educational system including ECEC settings in Ukraine.

In 2014 a working group composed of researchers, early childhood advisers and co-ordinators was established to develop criteria for determining the level of child outcomes (Order 1255 of the Ministry of Education and Science in Ukraine, 2014). This group focused on the evaluation of quality.

Important aspects of monitoring are:

1. To identify the quality of the practical implementation of the curricular framework for preschool education and obtain objective information about the quality of preschool education and to plan its development;
2. To study the achievement level of pre-schoolers according to the curricular framework;
3. To conduct an analysis to compare the actual results of preschool education with the state standards of preschool education and the educational programme;
4. To identify factors contributing to a better implementation of the preschool education programme;
5. To advise teachers and parents of pre-schoolers about ways of improving the quality of preschool education based on the monitoring results.

Thus, it becomes possible to gather information on all participants in the educational process (teachers, children, parents), particularly on the state of children’s health, social security, living conditions and education, and on how well the goals of educational services have been met. Furthermore, monitoring enables an investigation of educational and methodological approaches, logistical capacities, regulatory provision, staffing, as well as the educational process itself (teaching and learning, creative, games etc.). All these findings can be used to improve the preschool system’s overall quality.
Research

The “Ukrainian Step by Step Foundation”, established in 1999, was a logical continuation of the Step by Step project implemented by the International Renaissance Foundation during 1994-1999 with the support of the Open Society Institute (New York) and Children’s Resources International Ltd. (Washington D.C.). The Programme aimed to introduce democratic practices into the pre-school education system. Responding to the desire of parents, whose children were involved in the Step by Step project, and due to positive results of the evaluation conducted by the Ministry of Education of Ukraine, the Institute of Psychology of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine and the Boston Education Development Centre, in 1996 the programme was expanded to also encompass primary education. In 1996, the programme activities were expanded again to include children with special needs and children of national minorities in regular schools.

The mission of the Ukrainian Step by Step Foundation is to promote educational reforms towards a child-centred and inclusive approach, encouraging the active involvement of families and communities through a number of activities: training sessions for educators, parents, and representatives of non-governmental organisations; initiating and conducting projects aimed at ensuring equal access to high-quality education for all children, including children with special needs.

Sources: Alekseyenko 1997.

Parental leave arrangements

Maternity leave is granted to women on the basis of a medical assessment and lasts for 70 calendar days before childbirth and 56 calendar days after childbirth.

Parental leave can be taken not only by the mother or father of the child, but also by a grandfather, a grandmother, or other relatives who care for the child while the parents work (Article 179 of the Employment Code of Ukraine, 1971, amended 1973-2016). The Constitution of Ukraine (Art. 45) guarantees parental leave also for persons who are adopting a child or taking a child under guardianship (Document n0004323-14, 23.01.2014).

Since July 2014, parental leave payments and maternity payments have been combined into a single budget – UAH 41,280 (1,442.74€) to be paid as follows: a lump sum at birth (UAH 10,320; 360.68€) and a monthly payment of UAH 860 (30.06€) for 36 months. It is possible to draw this allowance even if the mother or other carer decides to work during these three years.

If the child was born up to and including June 30, 2014, the allowances are paid according to the order of birth, i.e., for the first child – UAH 30,960 (1,082.05€), the second child – UAH 61,920 (2,164.10€), for the third and subsequent children – UAH 123,840 (4,328.21€). If the child was born on July 1, 2014 or afterwards, the flat rate mentioned above of 1,442.74€ is paid regardless of the order of birth.


Historical highlights and shifts

1917 | The Central Council of Ukraine forms the General Secretariat of Education, renamed the Ministry of Education on January 9th, 1918, including a Department for Out-of-school Educa-
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>The Department of Out-of-school Education and Preschool Education raises the issue of universal compulsory preschool education of children. &quot;Regulations of Kindergartens&quot; noted that &quot;all children from the age of 3 years old shall attend kindergartens&quot; – these should be &quot;free everywhere and be established at the expense of the rural and urban self-government.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>The basis of the Ukrainian System of National Education is the social care and education of children aged 3 to 15. Orphanages become the main child care establishment: kindergartens, schools, and out-of-school institutions have to merge into a &quot;single social organism&quot;, i.e. an orphanage, even though not all children were parentless.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>3,713 regular preschools exist in the Ukraine, providing for 215,700 children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Resolution of the Council of Ministers of Ukraine &quot;On measures for the Further Development of Childcare Facilities, Improving Education and Health Care for Children of Preschool Age.&quot; This and other documents plan the expansion of a network of ECEC settings and the improvement of their financial security. One of the major drawbacks of preschool education is defined as the absence of a single coherent system of education and care. A decision is made to combine nurseries and kindergartens into a single preschool establishment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960s</td>
<td>During the 1960s a stable growth takes place in the number of preschool institutions and the number of children attending. By the end of 1970, the total number of kindergartens in Ukraine was 16,500.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980s</td>
<td>Expansion continues during the 1980s and also qualitative measures are taken. In 1987, 23,100 kindergartens exist in the Ukraine catering for 2.7 million children, representing 60.3% of the total population of preschool children (69.3% in urban areas, 40.5% in rural areas).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>24,500 kindergartens operate in Ukraine – the highest figure so far. The number of children covered by the system of public pre-school education reaches 2.2 million, representing 47% of the total population of preschool children. 268,000 teaching staff are involved, 97% of which are fully qualified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990s</td>
<td>During the 1990s considerable progress is made in the conceptual and legal framework of preschool education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Current views on preschool education are set out in the Concept for Preschool Education in Ukraine - a system of objectives and approaches in preschool education based on humanism, democracy, national culture and humanistic values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>A collaboration of university professors from Ukraine and the USA resulted in the Project ‘First Steps.’ A feature of the project was the organisation of the learning and play environment based on the children’s interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of 3 November 1993 on the State National Programme ‘Education’ (‘Ukraine of the XXI Century’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Standards of education at all levels of educational institutions are set out, for ECEC institutions in the &quot;Basic components of preschool education in Ukraine&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>The Law of Ukraine &quot;On Child Protection&quot; sets out the system of state and public measures to ensure a full life, comprehensive education and development of children as well as the protection of their rights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>The Preschool Pedagogy team at the Dragomanov National Pedagogical University develop the programme ‘Step by Step in Ukraine’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>The policy paper &quot;On additional measures to improve the quality of education in Ukraine&quot; provides the theoretical basis for preschool education, defining functions, policies, principles, goals and objectives for modernisation up to 2016.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources:**
- Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine 1993.
Challenges for the system of Early Childhood Education and Care in Ukraine
Country expert assessment by Nickolas Kushnaruk

The Interagency Council on Early Childhood Education in Ukraine (created according to Order 1616 of the Ministry of Education and Science as of 22.11.2013) is a major body with a board of scientific representatives which meets regularly to discuss and take action on various challenges and issues arising in the preschool education field. Participating ministries and agencies are the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, the Ministry of Health of Ukraine, the State Sanitary and Epidemiological Service of Ukraine, the State Institution "Institute of Hygiene and Medical Ecology of NAMN in Ukraine", the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine, the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine, the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, the Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine, the Ministry of Regional Development, Construction and Housing and Communal Services of Ukraine, the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Ukraine.

From a personal perspective, I will highlight four major challenges for the ECEC system in Ukraine – issues which are deeper and more diverse than they may seem to be at first glance.

(1) Enhancing knowledge and learning continuity between preschool and primary school education

There are many cases of children encountering problems when transitioning from preschool to primary school. Researchers in Ukraine already studied the problem (e.g.: A.M. Vynogradova, head of the department of primary education, L.V. Pysareva and K.K. Shakhova - Senior lecturers in the Humanitarian Education Department, Dnipro Regional Institute of Postgraduate Education) and discovered the lack of continuity of the purpose, content, teaching methods and training, as well as ever changing social requirements. This problem can be solved through establishing continuous educational programmes – from the pre-school level to the final school year, just as our colleagues in neighbouring countries have solved it.

(2) Developing a sustainable financing system for ECEC provision

Through the moves towards decentralisation of the financial system, this remains a largely unresolved issue. Until funding is stable and sustainable, it will be difficult to ensure a significant improvement of logistics, teaching and innovation in ECEC settings. A further issue is the move towards new principles of preschool education, in particular the ‘money follows the child’ principle. The financial challenge raises the issue of the availability of preschool education settings of different types. The State programme of targets for preschool education up to the year 2017 aims to deal with this issue. However, it should not be forgotten that the moves towards decentralisation will bring about many changes related to the financing of preschool settings – some will be assigned to local budgets as already mentioned above.

(3) Improving research-based and advisory support for preschool settings

Supporting settings-based quality improvement (e.g. through electronic aids, virtual laboratories, electronic databases, educational portals) will help to ensure continuing innovation in the preschool education system. This depends to a large extent on the successful solution of the financing issue. Many preschool settings do already have IT support, as well as scientific and advisory support, but it is not yet common practice - particularly in settings in villages and small towns.

(4) Changing approaches to working with parents

Finally, an issue which has become a considerable challenge in our society is the need to fundamentally change the ways of co-operating with parents. We need to enhance their psychological and pedagogical readiness for parenting, and in this connection we need to pay more attention to preparing special programmes for parents and something like ‘schools for parents’.
Demographic data

Total population
Over the past 20 years, the total population of Ukraine decreased steadily from 51,728,400 in 1995 to 47,280,800 in 2005 and 42,760,500 in 2016.

Children under age 6
The number of children under age 6 increased significantly in the last two years: from about 5% to nearly 8% of the total population. Also the numbers in the age-groups of the under-twos and under-fours rose considerably.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 8a</th>
<th>Ukraine: Number of children aged 0 – 6 years and proportion of total population, 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age group</td>
<td>Number of children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 - 2 years</td>
<td>934,382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 - 4 years</td>
<td>1,552,297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 - 6 years</td>
<td>2,193,509</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 8b</th>
<th>Ukraine: Number of children aged 0 – 6 years and proportion of total population, 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age group</td>
<td>Number of children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 - 2 years</td>
<td>1,343,111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 - 4 years</td>
<td>2,301,004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 - 6 years</td>
<td>3,246,428</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Single households with children under age 6
In 2015, children under age 6 were present in about 50% of Ukrainian households. This proportion has not changed much since 2010. Children living in one-person households almost always live with their mothers, although there is a small trend towards a greater number of children living with their fathers, increasing from 3% to 5% in the time span from 2010 to 2015.
Table 9a
Ukraine: Number of households with children, 2010, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Households with children (age not specified)</th>
<th>With child(ren) under 3 years, in %</th>
<th>With child(ren) aged 3 to 6 years, in %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>6,453,200</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>5,751,800</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9b
Ukraine: Number of one-parent/no-parent households with children (age unknown), 2010, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>One-parent households with children</th>
<th>With fathers, in %</th>
<th>With mothers, in %</th>
<th>Living with relatives or other persons, not specified, in %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1,367,600</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>93.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>1,149,300</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>95.4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Employment rates of parents with children under age 6
There are no available national data on the employment rates of parents with children under age 6.

Children at risk of poverty or social exclusion
In 2014, approximately 27%* of the total population in Ukraine were at risk of poverty or social exclusion, slightly higher than the EU28 average of 25.8%.

There are no national data about the proportion of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

A study on poverty (2013) revealed that 65% of the participants considered themselves to be poor**. This suggests very clearly that pre-defined criteria such as that of ‘relative poverty’ do not always reflect the real situation in the country at question.

Sources: *Eurostat 2016.
**Osaulenko, O. 2016.

References


‘At risk of poverty or social exclusion’ refers to the situation of people either at risk of poverty (threshold set at 60 % of the national median equivalised disposable income after social transfers), or severely materially deprived or living in a household with a very low work intensity. http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Glossary:At_risk_of_poverty_or_social_exclusion_(AROPE)


Ministry of Education and Science in Ukraine. 2015b. Yearbook, Information Materials to be Discussed at the Collegium of Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine “On the Results of Preschool, Secondary, Vocational and Alternative Education Provision for 2014/2015 and tasks for 2015/2016”, 2015/08/14, p. 4-6 http://www.mon.gov.ua/content/%D0%9D%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B8/2015/08/14/zbirnyk01.pdf


