



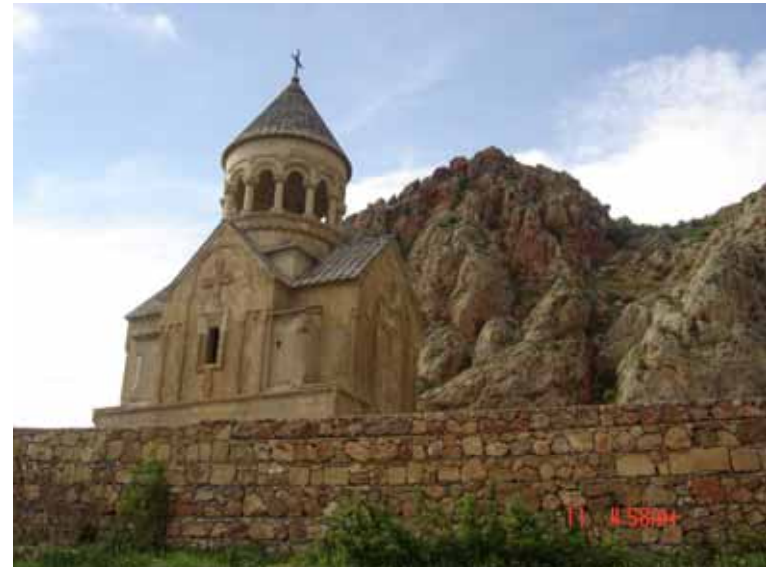
EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENTAL STANDARDS IN ARMENIA

(Standards for Children 5-6)

UNICEF, MOES, Step by Step



ARMENIA



ARMENIA



Area:

- *total: 29,800 sq km*
land: 28,400 sq km
water: 1,400 sq km
- *Literacy definition: age 15 and over can read and write*
total population: 98.6%
male: 99.4%
female: 98%
- *GDP - per capita (PPP):*
\$4,500
- *Unemployment rate:*
31.6%
- *Population below poverty line:*
43%
- *Religions:*
Armenian Apostolic 94.7%,
other Christian 4%, Yezidi
(monotheist with elements of
nature worship) 1.3%



Education

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia the secondary education is compulsory and free of charge.

- Pre-school education

- Secondary education

- Elementary School (1-4 grades)
- Middle School (5-9 grades)
- High school (10-12 grades)

- Higher Education

- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Post-graduate studies ("aspirantura")



Why we need to develop standards

- Urgent need to improve the quality of early childhood education since only 25% of children attend kindergartens in Armenia.
- The initiative is part of PRSP
- Ministry of Education and Science of Armenia prioritizes the development and implementation of multifaceted programs for childcare, education and development.
- There is an urgent need to develop a network of quality alternative services for families.
- Development of ELDS for children 5-6 was crucial for Armenia as the schooling system shifted from 10-year to 12-year and it required that children start school at 6.



Stages of the work

- Preliminary decision making.
- Consideration of documents related to standards in Armenia.
- Research on ELDS development worldwide.
- Actual development of standards.
- Validation of standards.
- Implementation of standards.



Preliminary decision making

- Goal
- Uses



GOAL

To have formulated and nationally accepted culturally and nationally appropriate expectations for the early childhood development.



USES

- Improve quality of ECD programs and services,
- Improve teaching practices,
- Improve parenting skills,
- Develop and improve diagnostic tools (tests, questionnaires),
- Improve pre-service and in-service teacher training,
- Assess effectiveness of ECD programs,
- Nationally monitor progress of children and families.



Strengths and Resources Available

- State educational reforms towards building open democratic society,
- Shift from teacher centered to child centered approach in education,
- Existing innovative programs implemented by different organizations (UNICEF, OSI, World Vision, “Step by Step” BF, etc.)



ELDS Development Process

- Participating organizations: NGOs, MOES, MOH, International organizations, HED and Preschool Institutions.
- Working group
 - Educators
 - Psychologists
 - Pediatricians



Developmental Domains

- ❖ Language
- ❖ Cognition
- ❖ Motor/Physical
- ❖ Self help and safe behavior
- ❖ Social, personal, and emotional
- ❖ Approaches to learning

FORMAT

Domain		
Subdomain		
Standard	Indicator	Example 1 Example 2

Validation

1. Content Validation

- Expert Review (physiologists, health expert, HED professors, preschool teachers, MOES representatives, representatives of local and international NGOs, WB PIU expert).
- Adaptations and changes according to recommendations of experts.
- Focus group with HED experts.
- Focus group with preschool teachers and pedagogues.
- Revision of standards based on focus groups' recommendations.

2. Age Validation

- Training for 21 teachers on validation and data collection by using the indicators.
- Field testing of the tools with 440 children across the country.
Sampling criteria:
 - capital city, town, village
 - boys, girls
 - attending kindergarten, non-attending
- Data collection and analysis
- Refinement of standards based on the age validation results

3. Approval of the Standards by the MOES



Implementation

- 1. Development of a new preschool curriculum for children 5-6 based on ELDS.***
- 2. Improvement of teaching practices:***
 - Selection of indicators from each developmental domain and creation of a checklist for teachers.
 - Training for teachers on how to use standards in their daily practices to improve their instruction:
 - How to observe
 - How to create student's individual profile
 - How to create class profile
 - How to plan standards-based lessons taking into consideration students' needs
 - Technical assistance, including lesson observations, follow up trainings
 - Monitoring

Challenges

- The domain “Approaches toward learning ” was new and we had to make it really understandable for those who will be using the standards.
- Will some domains be separate or integrated (social-emotional)?
- To make it clear for educators that standards are not diagnostic tools. They can serve for creating diagnostic tools.
- Do the standards really reflect expectations for Armenian children?
- To what extent national values are included in the standards?



Accomplishments

- The developed standards are very coherent with the existing documents related to ECD in Armenia.
- The standards are lined up with international ECD documents signed by Armenian government.
- The entire document is user friendly and can be easily understood by parents/teachers and other beneficiaries.
- The standards liaise all the stakeholders of ECD at different levels: teachers, parents, HED professors, education inspectors, Ministry officials, etc.

We need happy childhood ...



