

KICCE Policy *Brief*

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Issue 7

Integration of ECEC in Korea: Current Status and Future Directions

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(2014–2016)
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Integration of ECEC in Korea: Current Status and Future Directions

I . Background

1. Current Status of ECEC Service

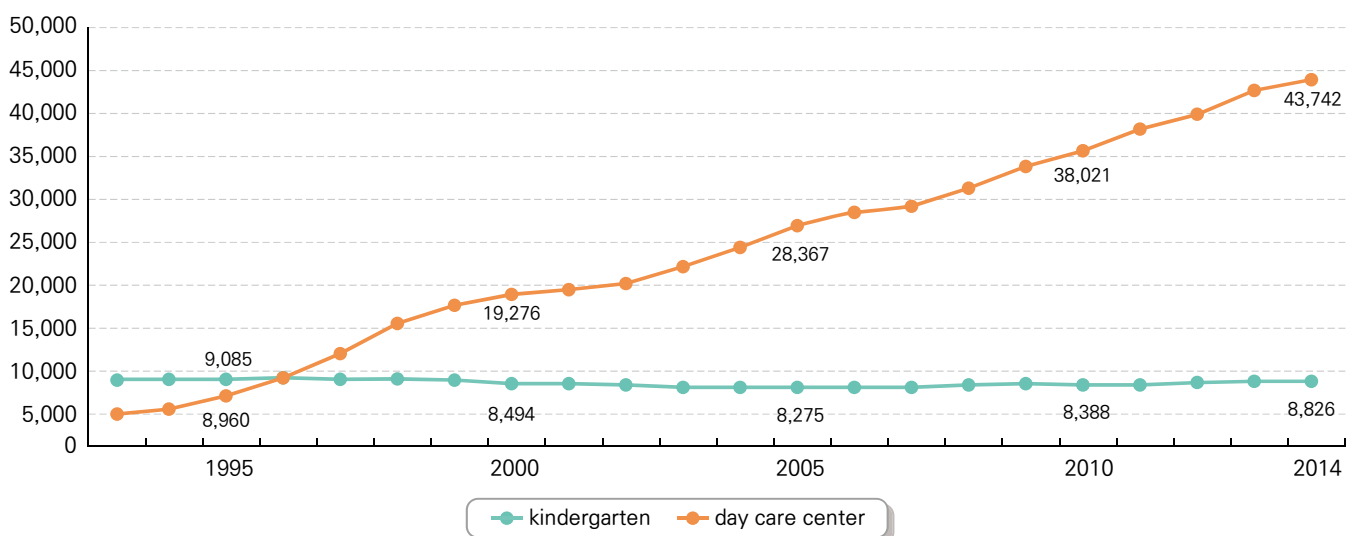
- Department in charge, teachers and center types of early childhood education and care (ECEC) are split into 2 different systems. (See the KICCE Policy Brief, issue 5-6)

The size of ECEC centers are varied from a small family child care to a large kindergarten/day care center.

Assessment/accreditation, government regulations, and entry age (for kindergarten, 3-5 years, day care center, 0-5 years) are also varied among ECEC centers.

As the financial subsidies for parents were extended, the enrollment rate and number of day care centers are increased.

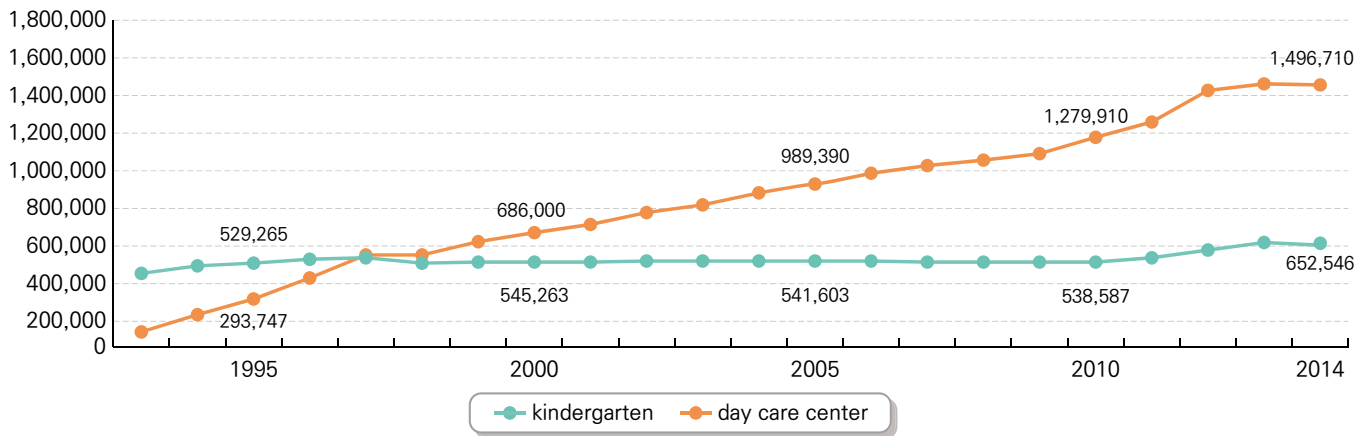
- For last 20 years, the number of day care centers has increased gradually, while the number of kindergartens has not been changed much.



[Figure 1] Number of Kindergartens and Day Care Centers (1993-2014)¹⁾

1) Korea Educational Development Institute (2014). Education Statistics Service Ministry of Health and Welfare (2014). Childcare Statistics.

- Since 1995, the number of children enrolled at kindergarten has been increased about 23%, whereas it has increased fivefold at day care center.



[Figure 2] Number of Children Enrolled at Kindergarten and Day Care Center (1993-2014)²⁾

2. Challenging Issues

- Under the split system of law, funding, and service delivery, early childhood education and care are operated and developed separately with different policies and standards.
- Insufficient quality support and monitoring system in ECEC

Although the quantity of ECEC services increased steeply, the supervision by government does not ensure the high quality of ECEC services to be provided at all ECEC centers.

The parental support, programs for children, teacher's qualification and wage are varied in early childhood education and care sector.

- Parents' report on inconvenience of the different standards and financial system

Difference in the expenses and government subsidy between kindergarten and day care center

Divided administrative system as the education office for kindergarten and local government for day care center.

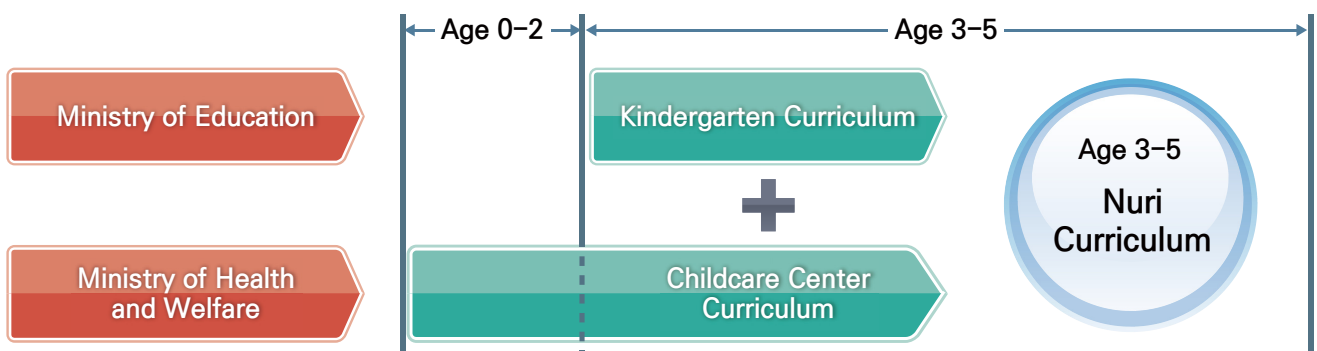
2) Korea Educational Development Institute (2014). Education Statistics Service Ministry of Health and Welfare (2014). Childcare Statistics.

3. Policy Goals for Integrating ECEC

- Due to the current issues and strong demands for quality of ECEC services, the Korean government started the ECEC integration plans.

The integration of Nuri Curriculum for 3-5 years was conducted in 2012-2013.

The national standardized child care curriculum for 0-2 years is not integrated yet and it is still used in day care centers.



- The policy goals for integrating ECEC

- Equal start for all children
- To increase accessibility for parents and children
- To improve the quality in ECEC and teacher's working condition

II. 3-Step Progress Plan for ECEC Integration (2014-2016)

- In 2014, the 『Office for Government Policy Coordination』 launched the 『Office for Integrating ECEC』.

1. Concept of Integrating ECEC

- In order to provide quality education and care for all children, integrating ECEC will be gradually proceeded and considered the diversity of ECEC settings, parental and children's needs.

2. Multiple Aspects of Integration

Department in Charge	Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Welfare
Law & Regulations	Price, Assessment & Accreditation, Hours of operation, Financial standards
Facility	Facility assessment, Facility standards
Teacher	Qualifications, Teacher training system, Salary, Working condition
Curriculum	Integrated Nuri Curriculum (3-5 years), Standard curriculum for child care (0-2 years)
Service Type	Kindergarten (Private, Public), Day care center (Private, Public, Social welfare cooperation, Family child care, Workplace)
Financial Resources	Integrated financial grants from local education for all 3-5 years (Nuri Curriculum) *However, the budget for kindergarten and day care center are still supported by different departments.

3. Phased Progress



Establishing the foundation for improving service quality (2014)

- Expansion of information disclosure
- Integrated systems for assessment/ accreditation of kindergarten and day care center
- Unified payment card, financial accounting standards



Integration of management standards, rules and operating environments (2015)

- Facility standards (area of classroom, teacher-child ratios etc.)
- Required hours for kindergarten/day care center, expansion of kindergartens to 0-2 year-olds, price



Integration of laws, financial resources and departments in charge (2016)

- Integration of the financial resources and department in charge
- Integration of teacher qualification and education
- Narrow the gap in working condition between day care teacher and kindergarten teachers

III. Future Direction

- With the 3-step roadmap strategy and detailed standards for integration, the 『Office for Integrating ECEC』 will endeavor to integrate the early childhood education and care system in Korea.

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