

UNICEF praises Thailand on early childhood education ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Thailand is doing right by its children, having made impressive progress in delivering early childhood education especially to children in poor communities, according to UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, which published a global report on early childhood education last week.

"Thailand should be proud of the achievement it has made in the past decade in ensuring that its young children have access to early childhood development and pre-primary education services," said Thomas Davin, UNICEF Representative for Thailand.

The organization's report "A World Ready to Learn" credited Thailand's "strong political will and attention to equity," and noted that aside from closing gaps in access the Kingdom had also succeeded in "improving the quality of services."

The report examines the global state of pre-primary or early childhood education (ECE). The report stated that 175 million around the world are not enrolled in any ECE program or courses, particularly in poorer countries.

Education specialists have been saying for decades that children who receive ECE display better academic performance throughout their schooling years and earn higher incomes as adults, citing numerous studies to support their contention.

While burgeoning numbers of children in countries with advanced economies are benefiting from ECE, fewer children are reaping those rewards in other countries, and especially those in poor communities in those countries.

Thailand, however, has done an excellent job of reaching low-income families and providing their children with ECE, according to UNICEF.

"Thailand's commitment, adequate allocation of resources, as well as special focus on children from poor families, has clearly yielded results as seen in the data," said Davin.

The report said that 86 percent of children ages 3-5 are enrolled in ECE programs. In 2005, about 55 percent of the most impoverished children received ECE, but by 2016 that percentage had risen to 86 percent.

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