

Henry Wilson reports significant progress in early childhood education [JM] ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Minister of Education and Youth, Maxine Henry Wilson, has said that Jamaica has made significant process in improving the quality of care and instruction provided by early childhood institutions.

Mrs. Henry Wilson, who was speaking at the Caribbean launch of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2007, recently at the Hilton Kingston, cited the establishment of the Early Childhood Commission as one effort by the government to improve the quality of education at the early childhood level.

"This Commission," she said, "was established in 2003 to monitor, co-ordinate and oversee all early childhood institutions in Jamaica. This is in recognition that a child's experience after birth, particularly in those critical first two years of life, sets the stage for just about every function of that child in adulthood and builds the foundation for achieving the child's full potential in all areas."

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"There is no register of early childhood institutions but we have actually piloted the registration process and we are in train to have a national registration done. This will then allow us to set the kind of baseline in terms of improvement in physical facilities and so on," she explained.

The UNESCO report titled: 'Strong Foundations,' focuses on early childhood care and education and evaluates countries' provisions of such services especially for vulnerable children.

The document presents a comparative country assessment of participation in pre-school education as well as financing for early childhood programmes, and assesses the progress of 125 countries towards achieving the Education for All goals by 2015, which include achieving universal primary education, equitable access to learning, improved adult literacy, the elimination of gender inequalities in education and improved quality of education.

Based on the report, the Caribbean and Latin America have made significant progress in improving the accessibility of education for its citizens. Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Netherland Antilles and Cuba, were ranked highly in terms of being close to achieving the goals, while St. Lucia, Jamaica, Bahamas and Dominican Republic were ranked in the middle.

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- reprinted from the Jamaica Information Service

Region: Latin America and the Caribbean ^[2]

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