Pre-primary education: The valid investment option for EFA [1]

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Author: Choi, Soo-Hyang
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While the Jomtien World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) in 1990 unequivocally asserted that Learning begins at birth, most EFA plans for early childhood, especially those from developing countries, emphasise pre-primary education for children from the age of three to the age of their entry into primary school. This raises the concern that this emphasis on pre-primary education contradicts the original EFA vision that learning begins at birth.

This Brief discusses the rationales behind the education sector's prioritisation of pre-primary education as a valid provision of early childhood care and education. Moreover, it proposes a global policy of prioritising pre-primary education based on the following conditions:

- it promotes the child's holistic development;

- it is delivered in an environment meeting some minimum pedagogical standards; and

- there is a phased plan for the inclusion of younger age groups.

Insofar as these preconditions are met, the Brief asserts that pre-primary education is the most realistic way for the education sector to approach the EFA declaration on expanding and improving early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

Tags: children's rights [3]
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