

DECREE-LAW No. 3/2015 14 January 2015

APPROVES THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM BASIS FOR PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

Pre-school education is of particular importance in the development of the child, and its potential directly links to a solid foundation in childhood and the early years of education.

A positive pre-school experience can be a determining factor in the lifelong education process as it has the potential to influence families in understanding the value of education and in the child's willingness to participate in the school process. As such, pre-school can contribute to the process of universalizing basic education and to equal opportunities in access to school as well as to the success of learning.

The curriculum assumes a special prominence in defining the quality of any stage of the education process, as it determines what is taught and how children's capacities should be stimulated. In this way, the curricular parameters, the most appropriate teaching methods and the expected learning outcomes are defined in the present diploma.

As established in Law 14/2008 of 29 October, which approved the Basic Education Act, pre-school education plays a complementary role to education that happens within the family and should provide the child with the opportunity to enjoy diverse educational experiences, through interactions with other children and adults. With this perspective, this Decree-Law recognizes and values the role of the family in the implementation of the national basic curriculum.

The Government considers the development of children's capacity for expression and communication during pre-school education presupposes an active participation of the child in the educational process. As determined in the Reference Guide for Pre-School Education Policies approved by Government Resolution x / 2013, of X of Y (sic), this value recognizes the value of the use of the language used by the child in the family environment and in its interaction with the community. The positive results of implementing

projects to test the use of mother tongue in pre-school education attest to its essentiality for learning. In order to build a solid linguistic base in one of the official languages and an adequate preparation for basic education, the curriculum that is approved also includes the development of oral and written approach to one of the official languages.

The present diploma incorporates the understanding that playability should be more explored and valued in pre-school education, given the ability to provide a pleasant learning to the child. Furthermore, it determines that the pedagogy to be used in teaching and learning must be child-centered, including through democratic participation, thus creating the basis for the development of the cognitive, psychomotor, social and affective dimensions.

At present, a large number of children begin to attend primary school without being properly prepared for school life, which has an impact on their future school success. Thus, although pre-primary education is not compulsory, it is at this stage that the Government considers it essential to support pre-school education more strongly, including through the development of appropriate materials, helping the educator to contribute to the full development of the child.

Within the scope of the present diploma, a comprehensive public consultation was promoted by the Ministry of Education throughout the national territory, resulting in a wide range of relevant contributions.

Therefore,

The Government decrees, in accordance with Article 115 (1) (b) and (3) and Article 116 (d) of the Constitution of the Republic, in conjunction with the provisions of paragraph 3 of article 10 and article 62 of Law no. 14/2008 of October 29, to validate as law, the following:

**CHAPTER I
GENERAL PROVISIONS**

**Article 1
Object**

The present diploma establishes the guiding principles, organization and management of the basic national curriculum of pre-school education and the methods and criteria for identifying the capacities developed through its implementation.

**Article 2
Scope**

1. This decree-law applies to public, private and cooperative pre-school education establishments that are part of the network of public service education offerings and provide pre-school education.
2. The present diploma does not apply to other private and cooperative establishments, including those that are defined as international schools, with the terms of application of the national curriculum to these establishments determined according to the legal regime of accreditation and evaluation of the education system preschool.

**Article 3
Curriculum**

1. The pre-school education establishments covered by this diploma are obliged to implement the national basic curriculum of pre-school education.
2. For the purposes of this diploma, the national basic curriculum is understood as the set of values, contents and objectives that form the basis of the organization of teaching and assessment of the development of children in relation to the three years of pre-school.
3. The curriculum is implemented in curricula, as well as in teaching methods and techniques elaborated according to the curricular programs that form their content.
4. The knowledge and skills to be acquired and developed by the children are based on the curricular programs as well as the learning

outcomes to be achieved by age group, approved by a decision of the Government member responsible for education.

5. The guiding principles, learning outcomes and minimum teaching hours represent the core of the national basic curriculum.

**Article 4
Autonomy of teaching**

1. As part of their pedagogical and organizational autonomy, preschools may add a diversified part to the national basic curriculum, organize the school day differently from that proposed by the Government member responsible for education, and modify part of the curriculum, in accordance with the provisions of this diploma.
2. Preschool establishments wishing to add to the national basic curriculum a diversified part, such as curriculum enrichment activities, required by the regional and local characteristics of the community, culture, economy and children, shall inform the member of the Government responsible for education.
3. Preschool establishments may require the implementation of only part of the curriculum, respecting its essential core, as defined in paragraph 5 of the previous article, and to this end, submit a reasoned request to the member of the Government responsible for education until three months before the start of the school year.
4. The decision on the application referred to in the preceding paragraph shall be in written form and must be reasoned and based on an overall analysis of the curriculum, the quality of the proposed changes and on the fulfillment of the core curriculum.

**Article 5
Organization of the school year**

1. The school year shall correspond to the period between 1 January and 31 December of each year.
2. The school year is understood as the period contained within the school year in which the

school activities are carried out and corresponds to a minimum of 180 effective days.

3. The actual days of the school year shall be established in the school calendar and shall be distributed in a balanced manner for specified periods, interspersed with periods of interruption of school activities, in order to promote the full development of the child, ensure his or her right to and the right of early childhood educators to enjoy annual leave.

4. The school calendar shall be defined by a ministerial diploma of the member of the Government responsible for education and shall be approved and published no later than one month before the end of the school year.

Article 6 **Guiding principles**

Based on the general objectives of pre-school education provided for in the Basic Education Law, the organization, execution and monitoring of curriculum implementation are subject to the following guiding principles:

- a) close links with local culture and way of life;
- b) Full development of the child through play activities;
- c) Valuing the individuality of the child;
- d) Ensuring full participation of the child; e) Relationship of proximity to family and community.

Article 7 **Close relation to local culture and way of life**

1. The national core curriculum reflects the cultural heritage of Timor-Leste, recognizing the country's values, customs and traditions and how they contribute to its cultural and linguistic diversity.

2. With a view to enhancing culture, children are supported to understand and appreciate the values, customs and traditions of Timor-Leste, as the main form of cultural expression of the people, to recognize and value the languages of the country and the way communication between people.

3. Practical materials, cross-cutting themes, date celebrations, songs and other play activities are based on local cultural practices and ways of life to ensure the provision of the preceding paragraphs.

Article 8 **Full development of the child through playful activities**

1. The national basic curriculum aims at the full development of the child, integrating the various dimensions of child development, namely the cognitive, psychomotor, social and affective dimensions.

2. The curriculum is based on an interconnection between learning and development, which are inseparable from the educational process and are reflected in learning outcomes, curriculum structure, school environment organization and teaching plans.

3. Recognizing that one of the children's daily actions and the child's priority is play, the curriculum makes use of play activities as the main method of teaching.

Article 9 **Valuing the individuality of the child**

1. The curriculum promotes a personalized education, shaped to the individual needs of each child, respecting their personality and valuing their attempts and their contribution to the construction of individual and collective knowledge.

2. The content and implementation of the curriculum ensure the integration of children with special educational needs, difficulties in learning or access to teaching materials and structures, by defining strategies to ensure equal opportunities in learning.

Article 10 **Ensuring full participation of the child**

1. The curriculum focuses on child-centered methods, recognizing that the child is the subject of educational action.

2. The educational project is based on the active participation of the child, stimulating the curiosity, the discovery and the capacity to question, as well as fostering the strengthening of self-confidence and self-esteem.

3. A school environment should be created which gives the child the opportunity to express himself freely, including through the use of the most familiar form of communication.

Article 11
Relationship with family and community

1. The curriculum is developed on the basis of close collaboration with the family and the community in which the preschool establishes.

2. The content and teaching methods stimulate the child's social insertion through the strengthening of his / her perception as a participating member of a group, a community and a society.

CHAPTER II
ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE
PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION CURRICULUM

Section I
Organization of the Curriculum

Article 12
Organization

1. The curriculum is organized by areas of knowledge, namely the areas of oral and written language, mathematics and general development.

2. Areas of knowledge are developed in specific programs, which identify learning outcomes by age group, as set out in Article 3 (4).

3. The curricular matrices for pre-school education listed in Annex I, which is an integral part of this diploma, are approved.

4. The curricular matrices of pre-school education include:

a) The minimum weekly load for each age group;

b) Minimum total hourly load to be fulfilled in the school year, by age group;

c) Minimum overall hourly load of the pre-school education establishment.

5. The minimum total workload determined for each age group to be met in the school year shall not be concentrated in a number of weeks less than the minimum number of weeks in the school year.

6. The Government member responsible for education may decide, by Ministerial Diploma, to increase the minimum workload contained in the curriculum matrix.

Article 13
Oral and Written Language

1. Oral and Written Language aims to give children the opportunity to develop their communication skills, including the ability to communicate their own ideas to others, orally, through drawings and / or words, and to understand the ideas of others .

2. In the period of pre-school education, activities of emergent literacy are promoted in order to develop the children's initial reading and writing skills through the phonetic or synthetic method and the constructivist or global method.

3. The curriculum shall be implemented in such a way as to guarantee, through linguistic progression, that at the end of pre-school education, children have an oral language base in one of the official languages. 4. The national curriculum, reflecting the Timorese multilingual and multicultural society, makes use of the first language of children as an instrument of effective access to the curricular content of this area of knowledge, when necessary.

Article 14
Field of Mathematics

1. The mastery of mathematics aims to enable the development of the child's ability to use basic mathematical concepts and to relate them to the world around them, to develop skills related to

numbers, thus building a solid basis for the transition to basic education.

2. Mathematics focuses on learning about the use and manipulation of numbers, the application of mathematical language 'property of things', the measurement and basic forms of the objects with which the child relates in his daily life, through the use of practical materials.

Article 15 General Development

1. The General Development area of knowledge aims at the integral development of the child, giving him the opportunity to understand his identity and to develop his social, emotional and physical self.

2. General Development focuses on the development of the child's reasoning and initial learning about the world, primarily through appropriate play activities.

Article 16 Thematic approach

1. With a view to obtaining the expected learning outcomes and an articulated construction of knowledge, the curriculum is implemented through a thematic approach, the areas of knowledge being considered globally and integrated through the use of cross-cutting themes.

2. The themes to be implemented are determined in the curriculum provided for in Article 3 (4).

Article 17 Functions of language

1. The language represents an area of knowledge of the curriculum, serves as an instrument for teaching other areas of knowledge and as a means of communication between the child's educator, child and the family or caregivers of the child.

2. The choice of the language of interaction between the child and the educator follows the progressive teaching of languages as provided for in Article 13 (3), using the children's first language

when necessary to ensure effective communication.

3. In order to prepare the child for basic education, if the language of interaction between the child and the educator is not one of the official languages, the pre-school education institution shall implement teaching sessions focused on the development of orality in Tetum.

4. The Government member responsible for education establishes, by ministerial decree, specific guidelines for the implementation of the language progression plan, in order to ensure a methodical application of quality of different languages in pre-school education.

Article 18 Supporting materials

1. The Ministry responsible for education has a duty to develop and guarantee access to quality materials to support the implementation of the curriculum.

2. Support materials include pedagogical programmatic guidelines, tools for implementing participatory methodologies, and are available in the two official languages.

3. The availability of support material printed in the two official languages is progressively implemented according to the existing degree of need.

4. In addition to printed material, the necessary tools for the development of play, art, culture, music and sport activities, and experiences in the field of mathematics are support materials.

Section II Curriculum Management

Article 19 Management

1. The management of the curriculum of each pre-school establishment shall be the responsibility of the respective administrative and management bodies, which shall be responsible for developing the mechanisms they deem appropriate for this

purpose in close consultation and collaboration with teachers.

2. In the management of the curriculum they take special importance:

- a) creating the necessary conditions to support the full development of the child on an equal footing, including through the implementation of strategies to meet special educational needs;
- b) The integrated participation of parents or other responsible children and members of the local community in the implementation of curricular activities;
- c) The organization of the school environment;
- d) The valorization of the use of local materials freely available in the community;
- e) The promotion of partnerships with the Basic Education establishments to support the transition process;
- f) The participation of educators, managers and administrators in technical-pedagogical activities in the implementation of the curriculum.

Article 20

Responsibilities of the educator of infancy

1. In the context of the functions defined by the teaching career regime, the child-rearing teacher is the principal agent in the implementation of the national basic curriculum, who is responsible for preparing teaching sessions on the basis of teaching plans, facilitating them, to assess children's learning, to implement specific actions to support their overall development, and to maintain a constructive and regular dialogue with their families or guardians.

2. The early childhood educator should also:

- a) Adopt a pedagogy that favors the ludic activities and pedagogic animations;
- b) Use methods of positive discipline, facilitating the creation of an environment conducive to the personal development of the child and mutual respect;

c) Provide, as far as possible, additional support to children with special educational needs;

d) Promote the active participation of the family and the local community, namely the community leadership and traditional leaderships, in the educational project, assuring its supporting role in the implementation of the activities.

3. Pre-school education is carried out under a single childhood educator as the group's full professor, with each educator having the responsibility of following two different age groups.

4. In cases where the preschool education institution implements an additional workload relative to the stipulated minimum workload, the educator can be responsible for monitoring only a group corresponding to an age group.

Article 21

Organization of school time

1. The member of the Government responsible for education proposes, by order, to the pre-school establishments a model of the organization of the teaching time with the following elements:

- a) Start time and end of school day;
- b) Division of the school day, with determination of the time of the teaching sessions;
- c) Division of the school day by groups that include the children of a certain age group.

2. Preschool establishments, as provided for in article 4 of this statute, may prepare a proposal for the organization of the time of school other than that provided for in the preceding paragraph, and submit it to the member of the Government responsible for education, for approval.

3. The proposal presented by the establishment must be approved in advance by a Pedagogical Council or by an advisory body if it is in operation and must be submitted three months before the end of the year prior to the beginning of the school year.

4. The purpose of the approval provided for in paragraph 2 is to certify that the proposal of the educational establishment respects the minimum weekly teaching hours per age group, as well as the total number of hours to be completed in the school year.

5. The member of the Government responsible for the area of education establishes, by ministerial decree, guidelines that should be taken into account by pre-school establishments when drawing up the proposal provided for in paragraph 2.

6. Exceptions to the provisions of the preceding paragraphs are changes to the organization of temporary teaching time, lasting less than four months.

Article 22 **Organization of educational space**

1. The educational space, as an integral part of the educational, is of fundamental importance in pre-school education, providing the essential conditions for the implementation of the curriculum, and should be organized in order to ensure:

- a) Enough space to implement collective teaching sessions;
- b) Space to carry out activities in small groups;
- c) Specific spaces or areas for different teaching areas and the use of different methods;
- d) The creation of outdoor spaces for recreational activities and educational activities that allow exploring the elements of nature.

2. The member of the Government responsible for education issues, by order, on the organization of the school space, namely on the provision of space, equipment and materials.

Article 23 **Extracurricular activities**

1. As an essential instrument for the implementation of the curriculum in accordance

with its guiding principles, extracurricular collective activities are developed that aim to create a sense of community within the preschool education establishment, a sense of responsibility of the child, active participation of your family or other responsible, strengthening your relationship with the community.

2. Extracurricular activities are held outside of the school day and are not considered as a school day.

Section III **Evaluation of children**

Article 24 **Purpose and goals**

1. Assessment is a process that regulates teaching, identifies acquired knowledge and skills developed by the child and guides the implementation of the curriculum.

2. The purpose of the assessment is the child's ability to demonstrate predetermined learning outcomes for each age group, as well as other aspects such as self-confidence, self-esteem, and the extent of the child's interactions with the adult.

3. The main objectives of the evaluation are:

- a) Support the individual learning process of the child, identifying fundamentally their progress with the expected learning outcomes;
- (b) give the child the opportunity to demonstrate his / her level of development in relation to each area of knowledge in a regular and appropriate manner at his / her age during the school year;
- c) Keep the family or other responsible caretakers informed about their development, including progress on expected learning outcomes.

4. The objective of the evaluation is to support the assessment of the state of education, rectify procedures, readjust the teaching of the different areas of knowledge to the determined learning outcomes, and serve as a source of information

for the revision of the formative actions on the national curriculum of base.

Article 25
Actors

The child educator and the child are involved in the evaluation process.

Article 26
Methods of assessment

The evaluation of learning includes the modalities of formative evaluation and summative evaluation.

Article 27
Formative Evaluation

1. Assessment in pre-school education assumes a continuous and systematic character throughout the school year and has a diagnostic function, allowing the educator and the teacher to obtain information on the development of learning, with a view to the definition and adjustment of processes and strategies.

2. A multiplicity of information gathering instruments is used, namely:

- a) Formal assessment methods, including observation of the child's execution of parts of the curriculum in accordance with predefined methods, analysis of exercises relating to specific units in the area of knowledge and development of practical projects;
- b) Informal methods of evaluation, such as occasional daily observations that give rise to immediate interventions in order to positively influence the learning process.

3. The formative evaluation is carried out regularly and is usually compiled at the end of the teaching period, according to the school calendar.

4. The formative evaluation materializes in a descriptive way, expressing itself in the values "reached independently", "reached with support", "started to reach" and "not yet reached".

Article 28
Summative Evaluation

1. Summative evaluation is translated into the formulation of a judgment comprehensive assessment of child learning, and aims to report their development within the school project during the school year.

2. Summative assessment is carried out once a year at the end of the school year and results exclusively from the overall assessment of the results of the formative assessment, thus enhancing the child's participation and effort.

3. Final year tests are not used during pre-school education.

Article 29
Progression

The progression of the child within pre-school education is exclusively determined by his or her age.

Article 30
Registration and publication of the evaluation

1. The assessment of the child shall be recorded in an individualized report which shall include information on the social and emotional development of the child in addition to information on progress in the learning outcomes of the areas of knowledge.

2. The individualized report of the child shall be carried out at the end of the periods in accordance with the school calendar.

3. The model of the assessment report referred to in paragraph 1 shall be approved by order of the Government member responsible for education.

4. Dialogue with the family or other caregivers of the child is an integral part of the evaluation process and should be shared with the child development information in the school environment.

5. The dialogue referred to in the preceding paragraph shall be regularly carried out when the period evaluation report is drawn up and

additional communications may be made when the child has special educational needs.

6. Individual assessment of children is confidential and may be accessed only by evaluation stakeholders, the child's family, and those responsible for school management and administration structures.

7. Education officials may also have access to educational assessments when necessary to monitor school performance or conduct public policy studies relevant to the education system.

CHAPTER III FINAL AND TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

Article 31 Implementation of the curriculum

1. The National Basic Curriculum for pre-school education will be implemented as of the school year 2015.

2. The availability of the support materials printed in the two official languages is implemented progressively according to the existing degree of need.

Article 32 Supervision of curriculum implementation

1. The supervision of the implementation of the national basic curriculum represents an important instrument for ensuring the quality of the curriculum as well as an element of the accreditation and evaluation regime of pre-school education.

2. The purpose of supervision is to assess school performance relative to curriculum learning outcomes.

3. The bodies of the Ministry responsible for the area of education with competence to supervise the implementation of the curriculum coordinate with each other and determine, in concert with the management and administration of the schools, a system to guarantee a timely and effective supervision.

Article 33 Specialist training of educators

1. The public institution responsible for the training of educators has the duty to develop and implement a specific training program as part of the continuous and specialized training of educators in order to support the implementation of the national basic curriculum foreseen in the present diploma.

2. The training program on the national basic curriculum shall include participation offers for educators of private and cooperative institutions that are part of the public service education network.

Article 34 Regulation

The regulations expressly provided for in this Decree-Law, necessary for the implementation and development of the standards contained therein, must be approved within 90 days of the date of entry into force of the diploma.

Article 35 Organization of the academic time for the year 2015

For the year 2015, the proposals of the pre-school education organization on the organization of teaching time in accordance with Article 21 (2) shall be submitted not later than one month before the start of the school year.

Article 36 Formation of groups

1. Prior to the adoption of a legal regime on the enrollment and formation of classes in pre-school education, classes in pre-school education are based on two age groups, one for children between the ages of 3 and 5 years and another between 5 and 6 years.

2. Admission to age groups shall be determined on the basis of the child's age by 31 December of the year preceding the beginning of the school year.

Article 37
Reorganization of education

The reorganization of the educational area, as provided for in Article 22, shall be carried out gradually in accordance with the resources available to the pre-school establishment.

The Prime Minister,
Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão

The Minister of Education,
Bedito dos Santos Freitas

Promulgated on 11/24/2014

Article 38
Entry into Force

This Decree-Law shall enter into force on the day following the day of its publication.
Approved at a meeting of the Council of Ministers on 17 June 2014.

The President of the Republic,
Taur Matan Ruak

ANNEX I
Curricular Matrix of Pre-School Education
(referred to in Article 12)

Curricular Organization	Minimum Weekly Time Schedule (a)		
	Year 1 (b)	Year 2 (c)	Year 3 (d)
General Knowledge Areas (Oral and Written language, Mathematics and General Development)	10h	10h	13h 45m
Time for completion of school year (in hours) (f)	360h	360h	495h
Time for completion of three years of preschool education	1215h		

- (a) Weekly tuition load in minutes, referring to class time.
- (b) Children who have reached the age of three by 31 December of the year preceding the beginning of the school year;
- (c) Children who have reached the age of four by 31 December of the year preceding the beginning of the school year;
- (d) Children who completed their fifth birthday by 31 December of the year preceding the beginning of the school year;
- (e) Whereas each pre-school establishment has at least one age group in accordance with Article 36. Total relates to class time.
- (f) Teaching hours per year in hours, according to the number of school days provided for in Article 5.