

# Early Childhood Education and Care

Greece



# Early Childhood Education and Care is provided in the following ECEC settings:

- ❖ Infant care
- ❖ Infant/child care
- ❖ Child care centres


(within the competence of Municipalities ,Ministry of Interior).

- ❖ Pre-primary schools, public and private.

(Within the competence of Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs).



According to the Regulation, these centres are premises of care and safe accommodation for preschool-aged children. In particular:

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- Child care centres accommodate children aged 2.5 years up to the age of 4.
  - Infant care and infant/child care centres accommodate infants aged 2 months, subject to certain conditions, up to the age of 4.


## TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN PER ROOM

- Infant classes are attended by a maximum of 12 infants with 2 teachers and one assistant.

## THE RATIO ADULT/CHILDREN

- Every class of the Child Centre serves up to 25 children with one teacher and one assistant.





Infant care (*vrefikoi stathmoi*),  
infant/child care (*vrefonipiakoi stathmoi*)  
and child care centres (*paidikoi stathmoi*), operate in  
Municipalities across the country. Their operation is governed  
by the "Standard regulation of operation for municipal  
infant/child care (*vrefonipiakoi stathmoi*) and child care centres  
(*paidikoi stathmoi*)" (Joint Ministerial Decision 41087/29-11-  
2017).

# Annual, weekly and daily organisation

the operation of these settings begins on 1 September and ends on 31 July of the following year (Monday to Friday). In other words, these care centres operate around 220 days per year.

In areas where employment of working mothers reaches its peak in the summer period, the care centre may operate during August and discontinue its operation for a month in June or July. The care centres remain closed from December 24 until January 5 and from Holy Thursday until the first Sunday after Easter Sunday.

The care centres do not operate during the official holidays of public services and local anniversaries. The operation of infant care, infant/child care and child care centres falls under the Municipalities' competence.

According to the "Standard regulation of operation for child care and infant/child care centres", care centres operate from Monday to Friday. Even though it is flexible, the basic points in the timetable are being adhered to (arrival and leaving time, time of meals, rest and break). Care centres open at 7.00 am during the winter schedule and at 6.45 am during the summer schedule and close at 16.00pm.



The aim of infant care, infant/child care and child care centres is to:

- Offer comprehensive preschool care, following the most up-to-date scientific developments
- Support children in developing physically, mentally, emotionally and socially in a holistic manner
- Eliminate any discrepancies arising from families' cultural, economic and educational level
- Raise parents' awareness in modern pedagogy and psychology issues
- Help pre-school children in their smooth transition from family to school environment
- Offer daily nutrition and care to children adhering to health and safety rules.

## LENGTH OF TYPICAL DAY, EACH DAY OF THE WEEK (INFANTS)

### MONDAY TO FRIDAY

Out of hours provision (before activities)	6.45 or 7.00am - 9.00 am	Arrival of Infants Catering for individual needs, rest or free activities
	9.00 am - 9.30 am	Breakfast
Activities  (starting and finishing times in the morning)	9.30 am - 12.00 am	Individual programmes aimed at children's development
Lunch break and Rest	12.00 am - 13.00 pm	Lunch break
	13.00 pm - 14.30 pm	Rest
Activities (starting and finishing times in the afternoon)	14.30 pm - 15.15 pm	Infants' free activities
Out-of-hours provision (after activities)	15.15 pm - 15.45 pm	Afternoon snack
	15.45 pm - 16.00 pm	Preparation - Departure




LENGTH OF TYPICAL DAY, EACH DAY OF THE WEEK (CHILDREN)		
MONDAY TO FRIDAY		
Out of hours provision (before activities)	6.45 or 7.00am - 8.30 am 8.30 am - 9.00 am 9.00 am - 9.30 am	Arrival of Children
		Prayer - Children get ready for breakfast
		Breakfast - Children serve and lay the table in working groups
Activities  (starting and finishing times in the morning)	9.30 am - 12.00 am	The educator plans and interacts with children on daily activities
	10.00 am - 11.00 am	Parallel or individual workshops
	11.00 pm - 12.30 am	30-minute break interchangeably between classes - Preparation for lunch (personal hygiene) - Free activities in "pedagogical corners of activities" or team games in the classroom and in the playground
Lunch Break	12.00 am -13.00 am	Lunch - Children serve and lay the table in working groups - Tooth-brushing after lunch
Activities  (starting and finishing times in the afternoon)	13.00 am - 13.30 am	Quiet activities and gradual departure of children leaving early
Out-of-hours provision  (after activities)	13.30 am - 15.00 am	Rest
	15.00 am - 15.45 am	Afternoon snack Free activities Putting the class in order Departure




# Affordability

Child care, infant care and infant/child care centres may require board fees on a monthly basis, depending on the economic status of the family.

Children may be transported to the municipality care centres, on condition that the latter provide their own means of transport and abide by the rules of safety. For infants, transfer may be assigned to a special escort, or to members of the pedagogical staff, in rotation. The cost of transportation is determined by the Board of Directors of the Municipal infant care, infant/child care or child care centre and may be covered by an additional contribution of parents, depending on their financial ability, irrespective from the normal parental contribution (fee).



## Professional qualifications needed for work in ECEC settings



Teachers in Child and Infant Centres have received general pedagogical training and have attended (at least) a semester's course on science education during their Initial Teacher Training, and cannot be considered as subject specialists.

All children coming from a respective Municipality may be enrolled at child care and infant/child care centres.

In particular, infants and children enrolled at infant care, infant/child care and child care centres come primarily from the respective municipality area, not excluding the case of children living in the immediate vicinity, where enrollment is possible due to vacancies or due to acute social need of parents. These cases are justified in the decision of the Board of Directors of the infant care/ child care centre.

In addition, there are private pre-school education and care settings (profit-or non-profit-making), as well as part-time childcare settings for infants or/and children and infant/child care centres providing integrated care operating within the competence of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

# Description of buildings, space organization, furnishings, and furniture arrangements











# Pre-primary schools (nipiagogeia)



In Greece, the state offers public pre-primary **for free**, within the competence of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs (MinEdu). The majority of preprimary schools are under state control. Nevertheless, there are also private ones.




# Types of pre-primary schools


- Standard Type of All-Day Pre-primary
- All-day Special Education Pre-primary
- All-day Experimental Pre-primary incorporated in or out of University
- Pre-school of European Education
- Private Pre-school








Pre-primary schools have a limit of 25 children per teacher. The Pre-Primary School programme is divided into two age groups, juniors (5-year old children) and pre-juniors (4- year old children), but without a separate curriculum for each age group. It is common, especially in rural or remote areas where there is only one teacher in the school, for both groups of children to be taught together.



Attendance in pre-primary schools is compulsory for 4-year-old and 5-year-old children and last two years.



In order for a child to enrol for preprimary education it is required to:



- have completed the fourth year of age;
- have received the required vaccinations and dental examination.

# Curriculum

- The Greek Pedagogical Institute (GPI) was an independent state organisation operating under the supervision of MinEdu. Its duties were to formulate guidelines, draft timetables and curricula, approve and order textbooks among its main responsibilities. As the only agency that has the authority to develop and publish curricula all the policy documents analysed in this report are authored by GPI. In May 2011, a new organisation, the Institute of Educational Policy (IEP), was created to replace the GPI and incorporate other governmental agencies (e.g. the School Book Publishing Organisation) into one larger organisation.




The key competencies promoted by the new curriculum are defined by the national and European education strategy, and are:

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1. Communication
  2. Creative and critical thinking
  3. Personal identity and autonomy
  4. Social skills and competencies related to citizenship
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# PEDAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES OF THE CURRICULUM

1. Preschool education lays the foundations for the comprehensive development of children and their subsequent attitude towards learning.
2. Personal empowering and the formation of a healthy personality is one of the main goals of preschool education.
3. Knowledge, is built through interaction with the natural and social environment. The social nature of knowledge is taken into account in the objectives and methodology of the learning program.
4. Play, is considered the dominant activity for the development and learning of children in pre-school.
5. Working with the family and connecting with the community are essential to enhancing children's development and learning.

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6. Every child is unique and all children have the right to an education that respects their personality, linguistic, social and cultural identity and needs.
  7. Children are by nature curious about the natural and social environment. The aim of the Curriculum is to utilize and strengthen the children's disposition for exploration and learning by providing the appropriate stimuli and experiences.
  8. Children learn with a variety of teaching approaches and express what they know through different means of representation.
  9. The role of the teacher is crucial for the organisation of the learning environment and the planning of the educational process. His/her goal is to balance the actions that come from the children themselves and actions with clear learning goals that he/she sets, depending on the needs of his class.
  10. Systematic observation is an important tool for recording children's needs, interests and learning progress.





# Learning areas

- ✓ Personal and social development
- ✓ Language
- ✓ Mathematics
- ✓ Arts
- ✓ Physical education
- Sciences
- ✓ Social Sciences - History
- ✓ Information and communication technologies
- ✓ Environmental education





# Organization and operation of Pre-primary School: Calendar year and Academic year

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- Calendar year is the period that begins on September 1 and ends on August 31 of the following year.
  - The academic year begins on September 1 and ends on June 21 of the following year.
  - The teaching of the courses starts on September 11 and ends on June 15 of the following year.
  - The time periods from 1 to 10 September and from 15 to 21 June are utilized for the implementation of teacher training programs.
  - On the day of the end of the courses, the Pre-primary schools send the Certificates of Attendance of the students for their registration in the Primary School
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# School holidays

Pre-primary schools do not operate on the following days and periods:

1. On Saturdays and Sundays
2. October 28 (national holiday)
3. From December 24 to January 7 (Christmas holidays)
4. On January 30, the feast of the Three Hierarchs
5. On Shrove Monday
6. March 25 (national holiday)
7. From Holy Monday until the Friday of "Diakenisimos" - the week after Easter (Easter holidays)
8. On the 1st of May
9. The feast of the Holy Spirit
10. On the day of the feast of the Patron Saint of the school headquarters and on the day of the local national holiday.



# Opening hours

Attendance at all Primary Schools is five days, from Monday to Friday.

The opening hours of the Standard Type of All-Day Pre-school include:

- . The basic compulsory program addressed to all students (pre-schoolers and toddlers) and lasts from 08.30 to 13.00.

- . The optional all-day program that lasts from 13.00 to 16.00.

As part of the optional all-day program, there is the possibility of an early reception from 07.45 to 08.30.

<b>7:45 - 8:30</b>	<b>Early student reception (optional program)</b>
<b>08:15-8:30</b>	Reception of students
<b>08:30 - 9:15</b>	Free play - engaging in learning centres
<b>9:15 - 10:00</b>	Organized activities and investigations based on DEPPS-APS, breakfast
<b>10:00 -10:45</b>	BREAK TIME
<b>10:45 - 11:30</b>	Organised activities and investigations based on the DEPPS-APS
<b>11:30 - 12:10</b>	Free play-learning in the centres, feedback
<b>12:10 -12:45</b>	Organised activities and investigations based on the DEPS-APS- Reflection-Feedback-Planning for the next day
<b>12:45 -13:00</b>	Preparing to leave
<b>13:00</b>	Closing



# Relationship with parents

Parents and guardians visit the school during scheduled meetings with teachers and out of schedule, when necessary, after consultation and communication with them.



# Staffing

Professional qualifications needed for work in ECEC settings.

The staff working in pre-primary schools are professional teachers, graduates of the University Departments of Preschool Education. The duration of studies is 4 years.

