

# Compulsory Education



## A General Information

The infrastructure of a country and the development of its economy are a function of the country's cultivation of manpower and talent. This requires long term, continued investment and needs to start from the very bottom. The government set the length of compulsory education at 9 years in SY1968, and further extended it to 12-year Basic Education in SY2014, which helped to nurture and develop the manpower needed for economic growth.

Ensuring that all toddlers receive proper preschool education is a major objective of

our educational policy. Kindergartens are preschool institutions set up in accordance with relevant legislation for children aged 4 and above up until the eligible age for elementary school, and are supervised by education administrative authorities, whereas nurseries are welfare organizations set up in accord with Children and Youth Welfare Act that accept toddlers aged 2 to 6 and are supervised by social administrative authorities. The talks and negotiations for merging nurseries and kindergartens started in 1997, and culminated in the Early Childhood Education and Care Act passed on June 29, 2011, to be put in place beginning Jan 1, 2012.

## B Preschool and Compulsory Education Structure

The Early Childhood Education and Care Act is a revolutionary move in our preschool system. After the bill was enacted on Jan 1, 2012, nurseries and kindergartens were redesignated "preschools", in which toddlers from the age of 2 onwards are given complete and thorough education and care in the preschool until they enter elementary school. This bill consolidated the education and care of toddlers under a single administrative system, putting into practice a toddler-centered strategy that focuses on the toddler's best interests. Taiwan is also the first country in Asia to consolidate the two systems.

According to statistics by UNESCO, there are over 40 countries in the world that have a basic education system that exceeds 10 years. The main reason for this is that many non-developed countries have noticed that basic education is directly connected to national competitiveness. Put into practice in SY1968, Taiwan's 9-year Compulsory Education system is compulsory, free and obligatory. Legislation states that citizens from the age of 6 to 15 should receive compulsory education; which is divided into two stages – the first 6 years at the elementary school level, and the latter 3 in junior high school. However, this system has been in place for over 4 decades.

When first put in place, there were fewer than 10 countries worldwide with more than 9 years of compulsory education in place, making us one of the forerunners. Compared with developed countries, however, the number of years was not that high. To solve the current educational conundrum and enhance the development of national manpower, a 12-year Basic Education system was adopted in SY2014, a new landmark for our education system.

## C Preschool and Compulsory Education Policies

Under Taiwan's educational setup, preschool education is not compulsory. The education and care of preschool-aged toddlers was originally provided by, respectively, kindergartens and nurseries, largely consisting of privately-established institutions. As the two systems were separate and had different supervisory administrative units, they evolved different set-up standards and have different regulations regarding personnel and curriculum. Thus toddlers of the same age often received inconsistent education and care at different institutions. Also, internationally, the trend of offering edu-care service has become a common scene. We thus started to promote the integration of early childhood education and care. The integration is aimed to be completed within 14 years.

To stimulate the development of junior high and elementary school education and improve its quality, and lay the groundwork for course planning, fundamental research in the development of elementary and junior high school curricula was carried out and added to the 12-year Basic Education policy strategic plan in 2012 to allow the National Academy for Educational Research to complete the Proposal for 12-Year Basic Education Curriculum Development and Guidance for 12-year Basic Education Curriculum Development to ensure consistency. In November, 2014, Curriculum Guidelines of 12-year Basic Education (General Curriculum Guidelines) were promulgated, and



curriculum guidelines for different subjects have been promulgated in phases since February, 2016 and starting in SY2018 in phases.

Social development has caused population to move into cities and industries and people to move out of rural areas, resulting in the withering of local industries, difficulties in making a living and grandparenting. In order for each and every child to have his / her chances to adaptive development, and embody the fair and just social values of education, MOE has promulgated respectively on April-28<sup>th</sup>, 2015 and October-2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015 the Innovative and Experimental Program for Rural Education and the Stabilizing Rural Education Program and included highlights for balancing urban and rural development into the 5-year-to Improve the 12-Year Basic Education Program in order to offer an enriching learning environment, stabilize teaching manpower as well as introducing outside resources to ensure the students' rights to learn in rural areas.

Another key strategy is the idea of social care and assisting in the education of children from economically disadvantaged families. Currently there are 3,440 schools participating in the Promoting School Education Savings Account project nationwide, which authorizes the schools to receive charitable donations. Many philanthropists in both business and society have been long term donors to children in the program, a testament to the generosity of the people of Taiwan.■



### Alternative Education Centers Individual Development

Waldorf Elementary School affiliated to Zen Mei Junior High School in Taoyuan that centers education on the individual development has seen its process over the decades.

Waldorf education is based on the educational philosophy of Rudolf Steiner, emphasizing the holistic development of pupils in the intellectual, practical, and artistic aspects. The major focus switches in different phase of development, according to director Chuang Wan-Ting.

From grade 1 to 8, the emphasis is emotional education as well as imagination and personality development of pupils. During the time span, activities related to stories, ballads, rhythm, painting, hand-made, and farming are introduced to complement main courses such



as language, mathematics, nature, and society. Consequently, pupils are enabled to garner knowledge and capability closely related to life.

“And the artistic nature of the courses will lead to the balanced development of body, emotion, and thinking ability of pupils,” said Chuang.

Specially-catered courses are sought to explore local environment and culture. For instance, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders are guided to stroll in the neighborhood, which allows them to observe the changes of environment along the fixed route twice a week. 3<sup>rd</sup> graders are given farming and architecture courses, while 4<sup>th</sup> graders explore community features. The 6<sup>th</sup> graders then push the border to the seashore lines of Taoyuan to learn more.

Waldorf education offers a freer curriculum design to echo the inner state of pupils instead of catching up regulated progress. Meanwhile, it weighs the cooperation among the parents, the teacher, and the pupil, in particular the family education, said Chuang. III

### Houlong Diabolo Team Wows the Audience

The diabolo team from Miaoli's Houlong Elementary School won a convincing victory at Diabolo Malaysia Open Competition 2015.

Practice makes perfect and is the promising way leading to success. Their regular drills include basic movements, figure, steps, techniques, and group practice, according to Coach Fu, Shih-Ming.

Many would presume that mastering the techniques is the most difficult during training. But it is not the case. “When we seek advancement, the tough part is the pose and consistency of group movements,” said Fu. We went to school early in the morning last summer vacation and spent a lot of time practicing—leg lift and steps in particular, said team member Lee, Chih-En. But to give an excellent group performance, consistency matters. “So I think it's important that the whole team reaches sync in movement,” said Lee.



Distinguished styles presented by international delegations were impressive, in particular, creativity, said Fu. Playing diabolo is not only about showing off techniques, but a combination of power and beauty, he said.

He especially appreciated Japanese team's easy and have-fun attitude, which had made the competition more like a game. “I was inspired to try to have breakthrough in moves and glad to see children trying to pursue innovative and advanced techniques after the contest,” said Fu. And this is definitely a huge reward.

The attachment among team members and their family becomes the strongest support behind. More than ten parents of members flew together with the team to Malaysia to assist make-up, styling, and seized time to take photos as record, and eventually witnessed their victory. III

