Chapter 3.
Educational Development Plan for the Period up to 2015 in the DPR of Korea

3.1 Educational development goal to be attained by 2015

In his treatise “On further development of educational work”, the great leader comrade Kim Jong Il said:

“Education is one of the fundamental issues that determines the prosperity of the country and future of the nation. Without education can no country or nation achieve social progress and prosperity, nor can it expect its national dignity and bright future.”

The DPRK Government, whose consistent policy is to give priority to education, sets it as its educational development goal to improve the quality of education to a higher level by 2015, in full consideration of the achievements gained in the last century and socio-economic and scientific development prospects of the country in the new century by applying Jomtien Declaration and Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All to the specific conditions of the country.

This is one of the follow-up tasks to propel forward the educational development in the country, on the basis of the institutional guarantee for EFA that has been provided by universal 11-year compulsory education system.

This major goal shall be reached through the implementation of development goal and strategies for preschool, primary, secondary and higher education.

3.2 Preschool education goal and strategy for its implementation

3.2.1 Goal for preschool education

Preschool education is the first process in the comprehensive education.

The Government shall set it as its major goal for the implementation of Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All to give precedence to the enhancement of the roles of childcare centers while improving their qualities, and to shoulder the responsibility of taking care of, and educating all preschool children (0-6 year olds) at the expense of the state, social institutions and cooperatives.
The Government shall ensure that children are brought up physically, mentally and intellectually sound through unified and comprehensive education based on rational methods.

The Government shall increase state investment aimed at ensuring education of good quality through diverse plans and services for children and families, and establish state coordinating system to provide regular supervision over the implementation of the objectives.

The Government shall achieve following objectives for the attainment of the goal:

a) To ensure that all children are brought up in adequate space of buildings by carrying out construction and maintenance of nurseries and kindergartens with increased state investment.

b) To produce greater number of up-to-date teaching aids and toys required for the education of preschool children.

Teaching materials that suit psychological aptitudes of children shall be produced and sent to kindergartens. Audio-visual equipment such as VCRs, slide projectors and overhead projectors shall also be provided.

c) To construct modern foodstuff processing factories to provide nutritional food that meet children’s physical needs.

d) To produce and publish many textbooks and reference books that can be helpful for intellectual development of children by making intensified study of teaching methods and contents in nurseries and kindergartens.

e) To train competent kindergarten teachers by providing training centers for nursery and kindergarten teachers with modern educational equipment and improving their educational program and quality.

f) To upgrade the standard of nursery and kindergarten teachers’ retraining by equipping refresher training centers with better facilities, and increase the number of qualified nursery and kindergarten teachers.

3.2.2 Implementation strategies for preschool education goal

3.2.2.1. Improvement of educational contents and methods

Special attention shall be directed to the improvement of childhood care and education of preschool children (0-schooling age) to meet the new requirements for early childhood care and education in the new century.

- Educational programs and textbooks in nurseries and kindergartens shall be newly framed and drawn up in conformity with the requirement of the times and children’s intellectual development.
i. Childcare and education programs for infants in nurseries (age group 0-4) shall be adapted to the requirements of the times and physical and mental characteristics of children.

Old conception that children in nurseries need only to be brought up healthy and lively should be got rid of, and scientific childcare and education programs shall be developed to meet the demands and capacities of children from a new standpoint that children ought to be developed cognitively and intellectually as well as physically.

ii. The existing educational programs of kindergartens shall be reviewed in a comprehensive way and adapted to the demands of children and requirements of the IT era.

The process of reforming curriculum and re-editing textbooks in kindergartens shall be undertaken under the state concern.

- Deep attention shall be directed to the development of intellectual faculties of children.

The essence of early childhood education is to develop basic intellectual capacities that guarantee effective and efficient study in the future, rather than give isolated bits of knowledge.

i. For the education of children in nurseries emphasis shall be put on the improvement of intellectual education to develop their intellectual and cognitive capacities of children.

ii. Children of kindergarten age shall be given deep attention so that they can be ready for basic formal education and develop their intellectual faculties.

iii. Experiments shall be undertaken on systematic development of observation, thinking, and memorizing power of children. In order to facilitate this process more books aimed at intellectual development of children, reference books shall be published, and more playthings that contribute to the development of intellectual faculties shall be produced.

- Collective and individual education shall be properly combined in order to meet the diverse demands and aptitudes of children.

i. Conditions shall be provided to ensure sufficient individual education while intensifying collective education by taking into account the aptitudes, tastes, personalities and capacities of children.

ii. Special attention shall be given to physically handicapped children to ensure better care and education conditions.
- Talented children shall be timely identified and early education for them shall be intensified.

- Children shall be brought up to be fit physically, mentally, and emotionally by intensifying education through games, sports, singing and dancing and other pleasure games and artistic activities.

- The modernization of educational equipment in nurseries and kindergartens shall be given deep attention and education through audio-visual means shall be enhanced.
  
i. Nurseries and kindergartens shall be provided with VCRs, slide projectors and other modern educational equipment.
  
ii. 1 or 2 model kindergartens shall be chosen in each county to furnish them with audio-visual facilities and put their education method on a modern basis in order to generalize their experience throughout the country.
  
iii. State investment and concern shall be increased to enable video teaching materials studios to produce on a normal basis video teaching materials necessary for children in nurseries and kindergartens.

- Deep attention shall be paid to the introduction of ICT in the early childhood care and education, and state investment and social assistance shall be increased to this end.

  i. Computers shall be introduced first to the kindergartens in Pyongyang City and other provincial seats, and positive measures shall be taken to introduce them to all kindergartens throughout the country by 2015.

  ii. State investment shall be increased to produce a larger amount of more effective education program conducive to the development of the intellectual faculties of children and their learning efficiency.

- Education through firsthand observation of nature shall be promoted in various forms and methods.

  i. Children shall have vivid impression of nature and society, and thus widen their vision through regular organization of walk and tour to streets, villages, nearby hills and countryside or fishing villages.

  ii. Adequate measures shall be taken to bring children into contact with the nature and social life by organizing visits to historical revolutionary sites, famous spots, factories, enterprises and cooperative farms.

  iii. Children shall be encouraged to participate in the artistic performances and propaganda activities.
- Exhibition of modern teaching materials and teaching aids shall be organized once or twice a year, and national seminars shall be held for exchange of experiences with other countries.

3.2.2.2. Improvement of education conditions and environment

Provision of good education conditions and environment is one of the issues of primary significance in improving early childhood care and education.

The state will increase its investment in and have active social assistance given to ensuring good childcare and education conditions in order to meet the educational, nurtural and hygienic requirements for children.

- The Government shall see that new nurseries and kindergartens are constructed and that existing ones are expanded.

  i. The Government shall ensure that all children are brought up and educated collectively in nurseries at the state expense and through assistance from social and cooperative organizations by newly constructing nurseries or expanding existing ones by 2015.

  ii. Kindergartens shall be newly built and existing kindergartens expanded by 2010 so that all children of kindergarten age can receive preschool education.

- The Government shall see that are reconstructed and expanded nurseries and kindergartens and their educational facilities in a more hygienic, cultural and modern manner so that these institutions are fully equipped with all the necessary conditions needed for childcare and education.

  i. The buildings and facilities of all nurseries shall be modernized in accordance with hygienic and educational requirements.

  ii. All kindergartens shall be equipped with education rooms, sleeping rooms, play rooms, dining rooms, kitchens, bathrooms and swimming pools so that all children have access to these facilities.

  iii. Playgrounds shall be built in all kindergartens and necessary sports facilities installed there so that children can play at their hearts’ content.

    - The area of playgrounds that are not up to the standard shall be expanded and new ones be laid for kindergartens which have no playgrounds.

    - Every kindergarten shall have more than 15 kinds of sports facilities for different exercises and games by 2008, and more than 20 by 2015.
- The Government shall pay special attention to the improvement of conditions for early childcare and education for the most vulnerable children in the areas seriously hit by natural disasters, and isolated countryside, mountainous areas and islets, as well as the disadvantaged children in baby homes and orphanages.

   The Government shall pay its attention to modernizing childcare and education facilities of nurseries, kindergartens, baby homes and orphanages in the said areas and gradually increasing the supply of nutritional food.

- In remote mountainous areas and far-off islets where there are few preschool children, branches of nurseries and kindergartens shall be organized and operated.

- The number of weekly or 10-day kindergartens shall be increased to make it possible for the children of working women to have access to preschool education without any inconvenience.

- Production bases for toys, school things and other teaching aids shall be modernized, and the well-regulated supply system shall be established.

   i. In order to produce up-to-date toys and games facilities the existing production equipment in toy factories and educational materials factories shall be fully furnished and their production capacities enhanced by 2008.

   ii. Sufficient amount of wisdom toys and other kinds shall be provided to children to help boost their intellectual creativity.

      - The Academy of Pedagogy and the Educational Experimental Apparatus Institute and other research institutions shall actively research in, and develop various kinds of toys that help develop intellectual faculties of preschool children.

      - State-owned enterprises and local and social cooperative organizations shall make plans for, and realize the production and sales of different kinds of toys required for childcare and education and establish a well-regulated supply system.

      - Nurseries and kindergartens in local areas shall make various kinds of favourite toys by themselves in good consideration of their local characteristics and their specific situations.

   iii. More animation films shall be made and children’s books be published to contribute to the education of children.

- State investment shall be increased to ensure that nurseries and kindergartens are provided with sufficient amount of food required for healthy growth of children.

   i. The supply of nutritional food to children in nurseries and kindergartens shall be increased and their quality raised on a systematic basis.
ii. Milk production bases shall be set up in each province and the production conducted on a normal basis in order to provide milk everyday to all nurseries and kindergartens throughout the country.

iii. Children’s foodstuff production plants in each province shall be reconstructed and modernized to systematically increase the production and supply.

iv. Special attention shall be paid to the supply of sanitary water to the children in nurseries and kindergartens.

3.2.2.3. Training of nursery and kindergarten teachers and improving their qualifications.

Intensified training of nursery and kindergarten teachers and improvement of their qualifications is an important requirement for the development of preschool education.

The Government shall:

- Increase the number of nursery and kindergarten teachers in a planned manner to meet the growing demands and steadily increase the child/teacher ratio.

  i. Excellent students shall be enrolled in teacher training universities and colleges to train highly qualified teachers and thus, meet the needs for teachers both qualitatively and quantitatively.

  ii. Qualified nursery and kindergarten teachers shall be trained through strengthening the training centers of nursery and kindergarten teachers in provinces, cities and counties.

  iii. The number of nursery and kindergarten teachers shall be increased in a planned way to ensure that child/teacher ratio reaches 8:1 by 2015.

- Strengthen the state examination system and give an examination every other year for upgrading nursery and kindergarten teachers in eastern and western parts of the country.

- Hold the short-term training courses for nursery and kindergarten teachers twice a year through the existing central, provincial, city, county-level retraining system and ensure that their qualifications are kept up to the developing reality.

- Hold refresher courses for nursery and kindergarten teachers for 3~6 months every 4~5 years.

- Organize twice a year observation of demonstration classes and meetings for exchange of experiences on a nationwide scale for improving teaching methods of nursery and kindergarten teachers.
- Hold national teaching competition every year and create new teaching methods and generalize them in order to improve teaching techniques of nursery and kindergarten teachers.

- Hold meetings for the exchange of teaching experiences and teaching skills competitions regularly at county, provincial and central level in a planned manner so that nursery and kindergarten teachers can improve their qualifications.

- Provide all necessary research conditions to the Academy of Pedagogy and other preschool education research institutions in order to ensure that they contribute to the enhancement of the qualifications of nursery and kindergarten teachers.

- Improve the content of “Kyowonshinmun (teachers’ news)”, “Kyoyangwon (kindergarten teacher)”, “Poyukwon (nursery teacher)” and other educational periodicals and books so that better articles on teaching experiences are carried, and ensure that the circulation of those publications are increased by one and half or two times.

3.2.2.4 Combination of family education, social education with school education.

Keeping close ties between parents and nursery/kindergarten teachers is an important issue to improve the quality of early child care and education.

The state will pay deep attention to keeping close ties of nursery/kindergarten teachers with family and society.

- Parents shall be provided with enough publications and reference books needed for family education of children so that they can enhance their roles.

- Nurseries and kindergartens shall make use of various means, including regular calls at children’s homes and convocation of meetings of mothers’ association in order to strengthen ties with families.

- Uninterrupted attention shall be paid to intensifying child education through TV and radio.
  
  i. TV and radio shall enhance their function and role for educating children.

  ii. Contents and forms of the programme for children shall be made more interesting and diversified in order to meet the demands and psychological features of children.

- Picnic, mountaineering and other activities shall be widely conducted by families, nurseries, kindergartens or villages so that children have better access to surrounding nature and society.

- Parks, pleasure grounds, zoos and botanic gardens of different sizes and styles shall be built wherever there are children, in accordance with the specific local conditions,
and those facilities shall be made best use of in order to conduct child education in a diverse way.

3.3 Primary and secondary education goals and strategy for their implementation

3.3.1 Primary and secondary education goals

Primary schools, a phase of elementary education, shall implant a firm basis for world outlook in the minds of children and encourage them to acquire basic knowledge on nature and society and ensure that they are well prepared to receive secondary education and basic technical education.

Secondary school level pupils shall acquire the correct world outlook, as well as complete secondary general knowledge which is essential for the members of modern society, and acquire more than one technical skills associated with modern production process.

In particular, ICT education shall be intensified in conformity with the requirements of the new century and emphasis shall be put on practice and life skills education so that pupils can have easy and rapid access to higher education or actual world.

3.3.2 Implementation strategies for primary and secondary education

The improvement of the quality of universal 11-year compulsory education comprising primary education and secondary education plays key role in attaining the education goal for the period up to 2015.

The Government put forward as the most important task in the state strategy for the implementation of EFA goal the improvement of the quality of universal 11-year compulsory education in order to meet the requirements of the new century.

3.3.2.1. Improvement of Educational Content

The content of education decides the characteristics and quality of education.

Rapid increase in the quantity of knowledge and constant enhancement of the function of education require as a matter of urgency the improvement of educational content.

The Government shall pay deep attention to the improvement of education content on the basis of the new concept of talents in the new century.

The Government shall: