



Problems of Early Childhood Education Management of Local Administrative Organisations

Early childhood education management is important for building foundation of life because it inculcates essential skills for children's living. According to researches on education management over the past 20 years, they have stressed that the first 5 years of life

“is the critical period to form a foundation of human personality.”

This quotation shows that the State should take into the consideration the early childhood education management and propose an appropriate guidance for implementation.

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, B.E. 2560 (2017), Chapter V Duties of the State, Section 54 prescribes that the State shall ensure that every child receives quality education for twelve years from pre-school to the completion of compulsory education free of charge. Paragraph 2 states that the State shall ensure that young children receive care and development prior to education under paragraph 1 to develop their physical body, mind, discipline, emotion, society and intelligence in accordance with their age, by also promoting and supporting local administrative organisations and the private sector to participate in such undertaking. Besides, Section 258 prescribes that national reform in various areas shall be carried out to at least achieve the following results: education (1) ensuring the commencement of care and development of young children prior to education under Section 54 paragraph 2 with a view to developing their physical body, mind, discipline, emotion, society and intelligence in accordance with their age free of charge. Additionally, the National Strategy (2018-2037) stipulates that human resources development and capacity building is a significant goal to push forward the country development effectively. At present, the major organisations responsible for early childhood development are Ministry of Education, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Public Health and Ministry of Social Development and Human Securities.

Former Ombudsman, Mr. Boon Thapanadul had realized the importance and existing problems of early childhood development. He assigned staff of the Duties of the State Inspection Bureau, the Office of the Ombudsman to conduct a field investigation into a case that public agencies have not fully performed in compliance with Chapter V Duties of the State. They went to the following centers in Southern Thailand; 1) Phatong Subdistrict Municipality Early Childhood Development Center, Hat Yai District, Songkhla Province (2) Prik Subdistrict Municipality Early Childhood Development Center, Hat Yai District, Songkhla Province and



(3) Bonwaukao Community Early Childhood Development Center, Muang District, Songkhla Province. They discovered that there are insufficient personnel. Teachers have to handle administrative tasks and prepare performance evaluation documents. Therefore, they do not have enough time to prepare their teaching plans and materials.

In Northern Thailand, the staff went to the following centers;

1) Ban Tha Luk San Sai Early Childhood Development Center, San Phi Suea Sub-district, Muang District, Chiang Mai Province: its building was constructed in accordance with the early childhood development center standard of the Department of Local Administration. However, the interior designs such as children bathtub and bathroom floor level are not usable and can be harmful to early age children. Therefore, this area is not open to operate.

2) Don Kaew Neramit Panya School, Don Kaew Sub-district, Mae Rim District, Chiang Mai Province: its child development center is evaluated as excellent performance because people in the area participate in administrating the center. It is thereby a good practice center visited by many agencies.

In Northeast Thailand, they visited the following centers;

1) Isan 2 Municipality Early Childhood Development Center (Isan 2 Kindergarten), Isan Sub-district, Muang District, Buri Ram Province: it is evaluated as good performance. Its operation is similar to private kindergartens since local administration executives pay special attention to education. Early age children are promoted to acquire knowledge and skills in sport and agriculture. It is a good practice center accepted by parents in the area.

2) Wat Thung Sawang Si Arom Early Childhood Development Center, Rattanakburi District, Surin Province: The center receives a performance rating of needs improvement. Most early age children in the area lived with their grandparents. According to the mission transferred from central government, the number of early age children increase. Community leaders and local people participated in carrying out its implementation; however, with limited budget, it has to gain support from private sectors for the center development.

Due to the above-mentioned investigations, it can be concluded that early childhood development centers under local administrative organisations cannot perform its tasks effectively due to problems and difficulties concerning 6 aspects;

1. Early childhood development center administrative management: the administrative structures and standard for early childhood education management were not



determined to be implemented in the same way. The Department of Local Administration does not follow-up their performance evaluation and not evaluate teachers' performance annually. Currently, the centers fill their self-evaluation forms by themselves. The Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (Public Organization) conducts external quality assurance for only the centers joining its project.

2. Personnel: teachers do not hold direct early childhood degrees or qualifications. Besides, a ratio of personnel in the centers does not suit the number of children.

3. Building, environment and safety: the buildings are deteriorated, crowded, confined and insanitary without safety standard and emergency preparedness plan. Budget is inadequate to construct the strong buildings.

4. Academic and curriculum activities: they are a lack of educational materials. Teachers do not acquire knowledge and understanding of developing such materials. An academic standard for early childhood development centers of local administrative organisations is not established.

5. Participation and support from all sectors: there are in lack of communication and dissemination between the centers and parents. Therefore, the community participation in supporting the center is ineffective.

6. Promotion of early childhood development network: cooperation between chief of the centers, teachers and care givers in developing the centers to reach their full potential is not promoted. Committee on early childhood education management and development of the network are not properly appointed. The selection process of such committee is pursuant to patronage system.

After the promulgation of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, responsible organisations established the National Standard for Early Childhood Development Center approved by the cabinet on 2 January 2019. This national standard is deemed as a minimum standard required for child development of the country. It is to enable all nationwide agencies and early childhood development centers, in both government and private sectors, to apply it as the guidelines on operational evaluations and quality enhancement, including internal quality assurance to ensure the assessment of their relevant agencies and external quality assurance from Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (Public Organization).



After the announcement of this standard, the agencies in charge cannot collaboratively carry out the early childhood development and implementation because this mission is complicated and relevant to many agencies. Each agency owns different standards and assessment criteria according to their missions. Moreover, there is no coordinating mechanism among central, regional and local agencies as well as no central organization promoting the research studies and following-up the evaluation.

The Early Childhood Development Act, B.E. 2562 (2019) was enacted in accordance with the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, B.E. 2560 (2017), Section 54 and Section 258 E. Education. The main aspect is that all early age children should receive protection, the quality care, development, and education management in accordance with their ages continuously, thoroughly and equally to be grown as good citizen. The government entities, local administrative organizations, private sectors, and involved civil society sectors have the missions to collaboratively carry out the early childhood development and implementation and facilitate in child protection including a promotion of child caregivers to acquire the knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes for early childhood development and management pursuant to the set guidelines.

The Act prescribes that there shall be the Early Childhood Development Policy Committee consisting of the Prime Minister or the assigned Deputy Prime Minister as a chairperson; 8 incumbent members; 8 qualified members with knowledge and expertise appointed by the Prime Minister. The Committee shall have the powers and duties as follows: to create the national policies on early childhood development in accordance with the law on national education, national strategy, and national reform plan; to approve the early childhood plan and propose them to the Cabinet for an approval so that agencies and personnel relating to early childhood will put them into practice; to approve the budgetary plans and annual integrated operation plans of government entities and local administrative organizations relating to early childhood development; to propose and provide a consultation to the Cabinet in the early childhood development and early childhood education management ; and to propose the formulation or amendment of laws required for the implementations under the national policy on early childhood development and its plan.

In this regard, the Office of the Ombudsman attended a discussion meeting with related agencies. The implementation to push forward the National Standard for Early



Childhood Development Center into practice cannot be functioned because of some difficulties. Furthermore, the Early Childhood Development Act, B.E. 2562 (2019) does not prescribe the selection process of qualified members with expertise for the Early Childhood Development Policy Committee. Hence, the selection process criteria subject to the Prime Minister Office's Regulation on Early Childhood Development B.E. 2551 (2008) was adopted as approved by the Prime Minister.

On 3 December 2019, the Office of the Education Council conducted a meeting to select the qualified members with expertise for the Early Childhood Development Policy Committee and submitted the result to the Minister of Education and to the Prime Minister for appointment further.

Chief Ombudsman (Mr. Somsak Suwansujarit) realises the importance of early childhood education management in conformity with the Constitution and the National Strategy as mentioned. Under Section 230 (3) of the Constitution, the Ombudsmen have the duties and power to submit to the Council of Ministers for acknowledgement that a State agency has not yet correctly and completely complied with Chapter V Duties of the State. The recommendations on early childhood education management were proposed to the Cabinet for consideration. The relevant agencies are recommended as follows;

1. To accelerate the selection and appointment process of the Early Childhood Development Policy Committee in accordance with Section 9 (3) of the Early Childhood Development Act, B.E. 2562 (2019) to attain members with the expertise in this area. The committee would be able to move forward the implementation by formulating the early childhood development national plan, approving the early childhood development and annual integrated operation plans as well as specifying the criteria on early childhood enrollment to kindergarten and primary education which would not affect their development in accordance with their age.

2. To focus on creating an effective early childhood development plan and database immediately. After the appointment of the Policy Committee, they should create the early childhood development national plan in response to the National Strategy and current situation and propose it to the cabinet. The plan should identify management frameworks of early childhood development and monitoring system on related matters.



3. To apply the national standard for early childhood development center as guidelines on operation. It is deemed as a fundamental and central standard required for all agencies and early childhood development centers nationwide, in both government and private sectors, to apply it as the guidelines on operational evaluations. Therefore, the agencies in charge of early age child care should inspect the centers which have not met the standard and encourage them to improve their performance conforming to the national standard. The government should set the urgent goal in terms of law enforcement on early childhood development and enable relevant agencies to put this standard into practices.

4. To specify duties and powers of each relevant agency and promote the integration of works in this area. It can be seen that each agency owns different standards and assessment criteria according to their missions. Thus, the early childhood administration of many agencies should be integrated in terms of providing services and welfares and protecting rights at the same office (One Stop Service) since they have the same mission to develop early age children in accordance with the set standards and good practices. Additionally, this can reduce redundant works.

5. Ministry of Education is advised to promote and place an importance on producing and developing early childhood teachers and personnel. The curriculum on building teacher and care givers spirit, morals and public mind should be arranged. Besides, special attention should be given to teaching profession so as to be admired, honoured and trusted by the society.

6. To promote an integrated collaboration of public agencies, private sectors and civil society as well as an encouragement of participation among all segments of society systematically. Instead of assigning this task to the government entities merely, all sectors should support and take part in early childhood care and development. Specially, parents, guardians and communities have the duties to support early childhood development centers to be qualified and relevant to localities. Early age children should be instilled good values, discipline, responsibility and public mind. The measures to promote participation and cooperation between private sector and communities as well as knowledge exchange are required.



The Ombudsmen have moved forward the integrated implementation between public and private sectors to raise the quality and standard of education provision. Significantly, early age children should receive quality education aiming at the full development in 4 aspects - physical, emotional, social and intellectual aspects in accord with their age. This enables them to enjoy learning and be grown as a good and quality citizen. This will eventually bring the utmost benefits to the society and the country's development.