

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 10387



Introduced by Representative Michael L. Romero

**AN ACT STRENGTHENING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION THROUGH
THE MANDATORY INCLUSION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
PROGRAMS IN UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES WITH EXISTING
BACHELOR DEGREES IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The importance of early childhood development has been underscored in the implementation of the K to 12 Curriculum in 2013 and the Kindergarten Act in 2012. Early childhood educators play a crucial role in promoting child development and school readiness (Moore, 2009). On that note, the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Council developed competency standards intended for early childhood educators, which include strong knowledge about child growth, development, and learning; child's health and proper nutrition; play-based and experiential learning curriculum; the development of a safe and supportive learning environment designed to cater hands-on learning experiences; age-appropriate assessment and its reporting; strong family involvement and community linkages; and continuous personal growth and professional development.

Despite efforts to improve teacher quality in the past decade, only less than 10% receive pre-service training in subject matter and pedagogical knowledge and skills, while others are trained upon entering the teaching force (UNICEF, 2022). In the study conducted by Biana et al. (2021) assessing the competencies of early childhood care and development teachers in the Philippines, there is a need to concentrate on teacher qualifications and hiring standards. Teacher professional development has always been essential for enhancing the quality of education.

Neighboring countries like Japan, South Korea, and Singapore focus on the importance of early childhood education as they recognize its long-term benefits for families and the country as a whole. Policies and programs have been well established

to ensure that children have access to high-quality early childhood education and care anchored in Sustainable Development Goal 4 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

It has been mentioned in the 2023 EDCOM II report on “Teacher Quality” that “proposed reforms were implemented,” but the results were inconsistent with what was expected. To help address this growing concern, this legislation seeks support in the mandatory offering of specialization in Early Childhood Education in HEIs that offer Bachelor's degrees in Elementary Education or equivalent degree offerings. This bill aims to ensure that prospective teachers of Kindergarten to third grade will carry out their responsibilities to the fullest extent possible.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael L. Romero', written over a horizontal dotted line.

MICHAEL L. ROMERO Ph.D.

Representative

1-PACMAN Partylist

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Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. Short Title. – This act shall be known as the “Early Childhood Education Expansion and Enhancement Act of 2024, or THE ECE 2024 ACT”.

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels. Furthermore, the State recognizes the importance of producing competent, and dynamic early childhood educators who are concerned with the welfare and development of children in their early years.

In this regard, the State mandates all the HEIs that offer a Bachelor’s Degree in Elementary Education to offer at least a specialization in Early Childhood Education. This ensures that the early childhood education sector is given the highest level of importance. Specialized knowledge and skills necessary to effectively teach and support young children during their formative years shall be the core focus of this program. The program shall ensure that educators possess adequate training and expertise in early childhood education which is essential for the holistic development of children. The program shall integrate specialized training in early childhood education within the bachelor programs in elementary education that will enhance the quality of education provided to young learners specifically in the age group of 0-8.

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms - The following terms are defined as follows:

- (a) Higher Education Institutions (HEIs): Refers to accredited colleges, universities, and similar institutions offering bachelor programs in elementary education;
- (b) Early Childhood Education (ECE): Refers to the field of education focused on the development and education of children from birth to age eight;
- (c) Bachelor Programs in Elementary Education: Refers to undergraduate degree programs and other related degree programs designed to prepare individuals for careers as elementary school teachers;
- (d) Bachelor of Elementary Education major in Early Childhood Education (BEECEd): Refers to a 4-year teacher education program that aims to produce quality graduates who are equipped with pedagogical, and content knowledge and skills of children in their early years;
- (e) The Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Council is a government agency mandated by Republic Act No. 10410 otherwise known as the “Early Years Act of 2013”, as the primary agency implementing the government’s National ECCD System.

SECTION 4. Mandatory Specialization of Early Childhood Education in HEIs – The Commission on Higher Education (CHED), pursuant to its mandate under Republic Act No. 7722, otherwise known as the “Higher Education Act of 1994”, is hereby mandated to develop a course on Bachelor of Elementary Education major in Early Childhood Education (BEECEd).

All HEIs offering bachelor programs in elementary education shall be mandated to incorporate a mandatory specialization in early childhood education within their curriculum. The specialization shall cover key areas including child development, curriculum planning, pedagogical approaches for young learners, assessment techniques, family engagement, and inclusive practices. The duration and credit requirements for the specialization shall be determined by the regulatory body overseeing the higher education within the jurisdiction.

The mandatory specialization shall also focus on the child’s holistic development, taking into account age, individual and socio-cultural appropriateness, and utilize developmentally appropriate practice as its core component in line with the Early Childhood Education System.

SECTION 5. Hiring of Higher Education Institution Faculty – Following the creation of a new specialization of a BEECEd program, the recruitment, selection,

and hiring of qualified, and competent faculty members shall be put in place. New items shall be created to fill the needs of experts in the program. Part-time and full-time teaching positions aligned with the program's demand shall be posted before the opening of the program offering. The hiring process shall follow the existing guidelines for implementing HEIs following the competency standards set by the ECCD Council.

Faculty members shall have relevant academic credentials, professional experience, and ongoing professional development in early childhood education. HEIs shall ensure that faculty members responsible for teaching courses within the early childhood education specialization possess appropriate qualifications and expertise in the field.

SECTION 6. Compliance and Monitoring – The CHED, acting as the overseeing body in higher education shall be responsible for the monitoring of this mandate. HEIs found to be non-compliant shall be subject to penalties as determined by the regulatory body, which may include loss of accreditation or eligibility for government funding.

HEIs shall submit to CHED a review of its curriculum incorporating mandatory specialization in early childhood education every three (3) years, highlighting its accomplishments and impact, or any recommendations for modifications or improvements to further enhance its relevance and effectiveness.

SECTION 7. Appropriations – To assist HEIs in developing and implementing the required expertise in early childhood education, government funding and support shall be made available. Funding will be provided for resource materials, curriculum development, faculty training, and other necessary costs associated with the area of concentration. The CHED shall be responsible for the allocation of resources to support the curriculum development, hiring of teachers, and additional facilities in compliance with the promulgation of the Act.

The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be taken from the current appropriations. Thereafter, funds needed in subsequent years shall be included in the General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 8. Program, Curriculum, and Course Development Offerings and Requirements – The curriculum of the BEECEd shall ensure that the learning objectives are clearly articulated in terms of competencies, skills, and socio-emotional attributes and conform to the existing policies, standards, and guidelines set by the ECCD Council, Early Years Act, the Kindergarten Act, and the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST).

The defined set of courses or subjects and/or examinations, and/or projects and activities required for graduation shall be aligned with and equivalent to the existing curriculum of the Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education, and/or the Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education, and/or its equivalent as prescribed by the Commission on Higher Education.

SECTION 9. Transitory Provisions – HEIs shall be given a transition period of 1 academic year or 2 consecutive semesters to fully implement the mandatory specialization in early childhood education upon the enactment of the law. The regulatory body overseeing higher education shall provide guidance and support to HEIs during the implementation process.

SECTION 10. Implementing Rules and Regulations – The CHED, the ECCD Council, and the DepEd in consultation with relevant stakeholders shall be mandated to formulate the rules and regulations to implement this Act within ninety (90) days from the effectivity thereof.

- (a) The structure and components of the Elementary Education degree program specializing in early childhood education, including the duration, core curriculum requirements, and credits, shall be defined by the CHED;
- (b) Admission and enrolment procedures for prospective students applying to the program shall include entrance examinations, grade qualifications, and interview process on the basis of admission policies of the implementing HEIs.

SECTION 11. Separability Clause – In the event that any provision or portion of this Act is deemed unlawful or unconstitutional the remaining portions of this Act shall remain fully operative and enforceable.

SECTION 12. Repealing Clause – All laws, decrees, orders, rules, and regulations or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 13. Effectivity – This act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,