

Congress of the Philippines]
TWENTIETH CONGRESS]
First Regular Session]



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

House Bill. No. 1033

BY REPRESENTATIVE SUN J. SHIMURA

AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION OF FILIPINO CHILDREN BY INSTITUTIONALIZING A HOLISTIC, VALUES-CENTERED, AND COMMUNITY-BASED CURRICULUM FROM NURSERY TO GRADE 3, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The foundational years of a child's education are paramount to their holistic development, shaping not only their academic potential but also their character, values, and sense of civic responsibility. In the Philippines, while significant strides have been made in basic education, there remains a critical need to strengthen the very earliest stages of formal schooling to ensure that Filipino children are equipped with robust moral, cultural, and linguistic foundations before they delve into more complex academic subjects.

This Bill, to be known as the "**Early Foundation Education Act of 2025**," seeks to institutionalize a paradigm shift in the early years of education, specifically from Nursery to Grade 3. It is anchored on the policy that the State must promote the holistic development of the Filipino child by instilling moral integrity, civic consciousness, cultural identity, and linguistic proficiency at these crucial stages.

Key provisions of this proposed measure include:

- **Holistic Focus from Nursery to Grade 3:** The Bill defines "Early Foundational Education" as encompassing Nursery, Kindergarten, and the first three years of elementary education (Grades 1-3). During this period, the curriculum will primarily focus on three core subjects: **Good Manners and Right Conduct (GMRC)**, the **Regional Native Language**, and the **English Language**. This deliberate focus aims to cultivate essential values, reinforce cultural identity, and build strong communication skills from the outset.

- **Prohibition on Other Formal Academic Subjects:** A significant feature of this Bill is the prohibition on requiring or formally assessing students in other academic subjects like Mathematics and Science during Nursery to Grade 3. While fundamental concepts of these subjects may be integrated within language-based instruction and character-building activities, they will not be taught as discrete subjects. The rationale is to allow young children to develop at their own pace, reduce undue academic pressure, and prioritize character formation and linguistic proficiency, which are critical prerequisites for later academic success. Assessment will focus on holistic development, communication skills, moral reasoning, and socio-emotional well-being.
- **Strict School-Based Learning:** To further support a child-centered approach and promote a healthy balance between school and home life, the Bill mandates a strictly school-based learning system. This explicitly **prohibits bring-home assignments**, ensuring that all school deliverables are completed within allotted school hours. This encourages efficient use of classroom time and allows children more time for play, rest, and family interaction.
- **Integrated Character-Building Activities:** Beyond GMRC as a subject, the Bill mandates the integration of non-graded, mandatory character-building activities. These include daily classroom cleaning, shared responsibilities in school lunch programs, cooperative learning, classroom management, and active student participation in school-wide events. These activities are designed to instill discipline, industry, service, cooperation, and a sense of community through practical, experiential learning.
- **Comprehensive Curriculum Development and Teacher Training:** The Department of Education (DepEd) is tasked with designing an integrated, age-appropriate, and experiential curriculum. This process will involve extensive consultations with various stakeholders, including labor, professional regulatory bodies, school associations, and parent-teacher groups. Furthermore, the Bill emphasizes specialized training for teachers handling Nursery to Grade 3, focusing on methodologies for experiential learning and values integration. It also mandates adjustments to the Teacher Education curriculum to align with the new foundational education framework.
- **Community Partnership and Oversight:** The Bill recognizes the vital role of the community in a child's development, mandating schools to establish Community Partnership Programs with parents, local government units, and community organizations. To ensure effective implementation and accountability, a Joint Congressional Oversight Committee will be created to monitor and evaluate the program.

By refocusing the early years of education on values, cultural grounding, and language development, while minimizing academic pressure and emphasizing experiential learning, this Bill seeks to build a stronger, more resilient, and values-driven generation of Filipinos. It recognizes that true education begins with character and the ability to communicate effectively, laying a solid foundation upon which all future learning can thrive.

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



REP. SUN J. SHIMURA

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AN ACT

STRENGTHENING THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION OF FILIPINO CHILDREN BY INSTITUTIONALIZING A HOLISTIC, VALUES-CENTERED, AND COMMUNITY-BASED CURRICULUM FROM NURSERY TO GRADE 3, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

1 **SECTION 1. Short Title.** This Act shall be known as the “**Early**
2 **Foundation Education Act of 2025.**”

3 **SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy.** It is the policy of the State to
4 promote the **holistic development of the Filipino child** by instilling
5 moral integrity, civic consciousness, cultural identity, and linguistic
6 proficiency at the earliest stages of formal education. To achieve this, the
7 State shall foster respect for the dignity of the individual, cultivate a public
8 spirit dedicated to the betterment of society, instill respect for labor, and
9 develop a strong sense of responsibility and cooperation among the youth.
10 The foundational years from **nursery to Grade 3** shall focus on the core
11 elements of **values education, cultural grounding, and language**
12 **development**, which are critical to a child's personal and academic
13 success.

14 **SECTION 3. Definition of Early Foundational Education.** **Early**
15 **Foundational Education** refers to the educational stage intended to
16 establish the core learning curriculum for learners from **Nursery to Grade**
17 **3**. It shall also encompass equivalent alternative learning systems for out-
18 of-school learners and those with special needs, ensuring inclusive access
19 to this foundational stage.

20 **SECTION 4. Early Foundational Education Program Structure.** For
21 purposes of this Act, the Early Foundational Education Program shall
22 encompass:

- 23 • **Nursery Education:** At least one (1) year of preparatory education
24 for children who are at least three (3) years of age.

- 1 • **Kindergarten Education:** One (1) year of preparatory education for
2 children who are at least five (5) years old, serving as a prerequisite
3 for Grade 1.
- 4 • **Early Elementary Education:** The first three (3) years of
5 elementary education (Grade 1 to Grade 3). Typically, the entrant
6 age for Grade 1 is six (6) years old.

7 **SECTION 5. Core Foundational Subjects for Nursery to Grade 3.**

8 Beginning School Year 2026-2027, all public and private educational
9 institutions shall primarily focus instruction for children enrolled from
10 Nursery to Grade 3 on the following core subjects:

11 **(a) Good Manners and Right Conduct (GMRC):** A dedicated subject
12 focused on ethical conduct, empathy, honesty, and social responsibility,
13 taught through both direct instruction and integrated into all school
14 activities.

15 **(b) The Regional Native Language:** The dominant native language
16 spoken by the majority of the community in which the school is located,
17 as approved by the Department of Education (DepEd).

18 **(c) The English Language.**

19 **SECTION 6. Limitation on Other Academic Subjects and Assessment**
20 **Focus.** For the duration of Nursery to Grade 3, schools shall **not require**
21 **or formally assess students in any academic subjects other than**
22 **those specified in Section 5.** The primary focus of assessment shall be
23 on the child's holistic development, particularly their communication skills,
24 moral reasoning, social-emotional well-being, and foundational literacy and
25 numeracy skills as integrated within the core subjects, rather than on
26 academic performance in subjects formally introduced in Grade 4.

27 **SECTION 7. School-Based Learning Environment.** To ensure the
28 holistic development of children undergoing the Early Foundational
29 Education Program, the school curriculum shall adopt a strictly school-
30 based learning system. This system shall **prohibit bring-home**
31 **assignments** and ensure that all required school deliverables are
32 completed and submitted within the allotted school hours.

33 **SECTION 8. Integrated and Holistic Curriculum Development.** The
34 Department of Education (DepEd) shall design the curriculum to ensure the
35 integrated, age-appropriate, and experiential delivery of the three core
36 subjects. While formal academic subjects such as Mathematics and Science
37 shall be introduced starting in Grade 4, their fundamental concepts shall be
38 incorporated as content within language-based instruction and character-
39 building activities without being taught as discrete, separate subjects
40 during the Early Foundational Education stage.

1 To achieve an effective enhanced basic education curriculum, the DepEd
2 shall undertake comprehensive consultations with other national
3 government agencies and stakeholders, including but not limited to, the
4 Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the Professional Regulation
5 Commission (PRC), private and public school associations, national student
6 organizations, national teacher organizations, parent-teacher associations,
7 and chambers of commerce, on matters affecting the concerned
8 stakeholders.

9 The curriculum development shall ensure that the adapted curriculum
10 allows sufficient latitude for schools to localize, indigenize, and enhance the
11 same based on their respective educational and social contexts.

12 To further ensure a smooth transition period after the passage of this Act,
13 the curriculum development shall also consider the qualifications required
14 for practitioners who graduated using previous curricula, as well as the
15 necessary training to be provided for the effective delivery of the Early
16 Foundational Education Curriculum.

17 Finally, the curriculum development team shall ensure that the curriculum
18 outlined pursuant to this Act is properly integrated with the current
19 curriculum for Grade 4 to facilitate a seamless transition as students
20 advance through year levels.

21 **SECTION 9. Integrated Character-Building Activities.** To supplement
22 the core subjects, all schools shall integrate mandatory, non-graded
23 character-building activities aimed at developing discipline, industry, and a
24 spirit of cooperation. These activities shall include, but are not limited to:

25 **(a) Daily Cleaning and Maintenance:** All students shall participate in
26 the daily cleaning of their classrooms, corridors, and other school
27 facilities as a shared responsibility.

28 **(b) School Lunch Program Responsibilities:** In schools with lunch
29 programs, students shall take turns in the preparation, distribution, and
30 cleanup of meals to learn about nutrition, service, and gratitude.

31 **(c) Cooperative Learning and Classroom Management:** Schools
32 shall foster a classroom environment where students actively participate
33 in classroom meetings, setting rules, and resolving minor conflicts,
34 thereby developing autonomy and a sense of community.

35 **(d) School-wide Activities:** Organization of school events such as
36 sports festivals, cultural programs, and community service days where
37 students take on active roles in planning and execution.

1 **SECTION 10. Teacher Training and Professional Development.**

2 DepEd, in coordination with teacher training institutions and relevant
3 agencies, shall provide specialized training and instructional materials for
4 teachers handling Nursery to Grade 3. This training shall focus on
5 methodologies for experiential learning, facilitating character-building
6 activities, and integrating values into every aspect of the school day.

7 Following the passage of this Act, new graduates of the current Teacher
8 Education Curriculum shall undergo additional training upon hiring to equip
9 them with the necessary skill set to adapt to the curriculum outlined in this
10 Act. Furthermore, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), in
11 coordination with the DepEd and relevant stakeholders, shall ensure that
12 the Teacher Education curriculum offered in Teacher Education Institutions
13 (TEIs) meets the necessary quality standards for new teachers specializing
14 in Early Foundational Education.

15 **SECTION 11. Community Partnership.** To foster a supportive ecosystem
16 for the child's development, each school shall establish a **Community**
17 **Partnership Program**. This program will facilitate active collaboration
18 with parents, local government units, and community organizations in
19 reinforcing the values and skills taught in school through community-based
20 activities and lifelong learning opportunities.

21 **SECTION 12. Monitoring and Evaluation.** DepEd shall implement a
22 national monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness
23 of this foundational education model, with emphasis on moral development,
24 communication skills, and student well-being.

25 The DepEd shall include, among others, in its midterm report, the following
26 key metrics of access to and quality of basic education:

27 **(a) Participation Rate:** The percentage of children enrolled in the Early
28 Foundational Education Program relative to the total population of
29 children within the eligible age group.

30 **(b) Retention Rate:** The percentage of students who continue their
31 enrollment from one school year to the next within the Early
32 Foundational Education Program.

33 **(c) Early Foundational Learning Outcome Assessments:** Age-
34 appropriate assessments focusing on communication skills, moral
35 reasoning, social-emotional development, and foundational literacy and
36 numeracy as defined by the curriculum. (Replaced "National
37 Achievement Test results" as it's not applicable to early grades' focus).

1 **(d) Completion Rate:** The percentage of students who successfully
2 complete the Early Foundational Education Program (Nursery to Grade
3 3).

4 **(e) Teachers' Welfare and Training Profiles:** Data on teacher
5 qualifications, professional development, and working conditions.

6 **(f) Adequacy of Funding Requirements:** Assessment of financial
7 resources allocated and utilized for the program.

8 **(g) Learning Facilities:** Including, but not limited to, computer and
9 science laboratories, libraries and library hubs, and sports, music, and
10 arts facilities, specifically as they relate to fostering holistic development
11 in early grades.

12 **SECTION 13. Joint Congressional Oversight Committee on the Early**
13 **Foundation Education Program.** There is hereby created a **Joint**
14 **Congressional Oversight Committee** to oversee, monitor, and evaluate
15 the implementation of this Act. The Oversight Committee shall be
16 composed of five (5) members each from the Senate and from the House
17 of Representatives, including the Chairs of the Committees on Education,
18 Arts and Culture, and Finance of both Houses. The membership of the
19 Committee for each House shall include at least two (2) opposition or
20 minority members.

21 **SECTION 14. Appropriations.** The amount necessary for the
22 implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General
23 Appropriations Act under the budget of the Department of Education.

24 **SECTION 15. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** Within sixty (60)
25 days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Education shall
26 promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for its effective
27 implementation.

28 **SECTION 16. Separability Clause.** If any provision of this Act is declared
29 unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions shall remain in full
30 force and effect.

31 **SECTION 17. Repealing Clause.** Pertinent provisions of Batas Pambansa
32 Blg. 232 or the "Education Act of 1982," Republic Act No. 9155 or the
33 "Governance of Basic Education Act," Republic Act No. 10533 or the
34 "Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013," and all other laws, decrees,
35 orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are
36 hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

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1 **SECTION 18. Effectivity.** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after
2 its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general
3 circulation.

4 **Approved,**