Steering documents and types of activities

The Curriculum Guidelines for Pre-school Education (Orientações Curriculares para a Educação Pré-Escolar - OCEPE) (Dispatch No. 9180/2016, 19th July [1]) act as a reference for curriculum development and constitute a set of general pedagogical and organisational principles to support nursery teachers in children’s education.

As a common reference for all nursery teachers, this document is not intended to be a syllabus, because, as something general and comprehensive, it allows the teacher to justify various educational options, offering guidelines for creating and managing what is taught in nursery schools.

In 2016, the OCEPE were reviewed and updated, 19 years after the publication of the first version.

The Curriculum Guidelines cover three key areas:

- Foundations and principles of early childhood pedagogy - A common base for learning in pre-school education. These foundations and principles reflect a certain perspective on how children develop and learn, highlighting the quality of relationships where education and care are closely connected.
- Intentionality in education - building and managing the curriculum - The professional actions of the nursery teacher involves intentionality, which implies a reflection on the purpose and meaning of their pedagogical practice and the ways they organise their work. This reflection is based on an interactive cycle - observe, plan, act, assess - supported by different forms of recording and documenting things, which allow the teacher to decide about practice and adapt it to each child, group and the social context in which they work. This process, which also involves different actors (children, other professionals, parents/families), includes forms of communication and strategies that promote this involvement and facilitate articulation between the different situations of the child’s life.
- Organisation of the educational environment - The educational environment is considered to facilitate the processes of development and learning processes of each child, of professional development and of relations between the different actors. Adopting a systemic and ecological perspective, the importance of the organisation of the educational establishment/school cluster is detailed, dealing with aspects of the organisation of the educational environment of the classroom, supporting the teacher’s work and intentionality.

The Curriculum Guidelines for Pre-school Education identify three content areas: social and personal training; expression and communication; and knowledge of the world.
### Social and Personal Training (a)

**Knowledge of the World (b)**

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**a)** Social and Personal Training - Cross-curricular area, with its own content and purpose, that is part of all the educational work undertaken in pre-school institutions. This area covers the development of attitudes, postures and values, which allow children to continue to successfully learn and become independent, conscious and supportive citizens.

**b)** Knowledge of the World - Area in which children learn about the different sciences in a coordinated way, using a process of questioning and organised search for knowledge, which allows children a better understanding of the world that surrounds them.

**c)** Expression and Communication - Basic areas that includes different languages that are essential for children to interact with others, making sense of and representing the world that surrounds them. As the only area that includes different fields, it is preceded by an introduction that justifies the inclusion and articulation of these fields.

### Teaching methods and materials

The curriculum is managed by nursery teachers, which define strategies for the implementation and operationalization of the curriculum guidelines, adjusting them to the specific context, taking into consideration children's interests and needs.

Nursery teachers may choose the model/method upon which they base the activities they do with the children, albeit using the OCEPE content areas as a reference.

The [Ministry of Education](#) published brochures to support the curriculum development in several domains of the curricular guidelines: oral language domain and written approach; mathematics; experimental sciences; artistic and musical expression; as well as publications showing the developing of project work in pre-school education.

### Bilingual schools programme in English

Following on from the Early Bilingual Learning Project in the 1st cycle of basic education, which was implemented between 2011 and 2015 in a group of public schools on the mainland, the Bilingual Schools Programme in English (*Programa Escolas Bilingues em Inglês* - PEBI) was created from the 2016/2017 academic year as part of a partnership between the Ministry of Education (through the Directorate-General for Education) and the British Council Portugal, which is monitored by the Directorate-General for Schools.

By encouraging early provision and sequential follow-up and coordination between levels of education, PEBI aims to:
• Encourage pre-school children to learn English, using play and informally, considering children's interests, preferences and ideas;
• To gradually develop the communicative proficiency in English of students in compulsory schooling that is integrated with syllabus content;
• To promote inclusive and intercultural education;
• To develop students' ability to simultaneously support communication in English and knowledge of curriculum content in the language;
• To allow teachers to acquire good practices for teaching English and bilingual teaching methodology;
• To support school management in the sustainable and high-quality implementation of the programme;
• To gradually increase the bilingual school network, in order to include 5% of public schools by 2020.

PEBI consists of the following:

• At pre-school level, raising awareness of English language learning, integrated in a natural way in the different daily routines of kindergartens throughout the day, based on a desirable minimum of 20% (5 hours per week) taught daily as part of the curricular component of pre-school education, taking into account the principles and rationale, as well as the content areas of the curricular guidelines for pre-school education;
• In basic education, integrated learning of the curriculum of several non-linguistic subjects in English and learning English to develop literacy in this language. The integrated learning of curriculum content and English as a foreign language varies between 30% (7-8 hours per week) in the 1st cycle and 36% (11-12 hours per week), in the 3rd cycle, using the methodology and resources appropriate to this cycle of education.

Institutional support is given to schools by the Ministry of Education and the British Council, via supporting documents, monitoring and specialised training.

Source URL:
https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/teaching-and-learning-programmes-children-over-3-years-8_en

Links