

Using the ACEI's Global Guidelines Assessment  
for Improving Early Education

by

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Abstract

The Global Guidelines for Early Childhood Education and Care in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century were developed as a collaborative project between the U. S. National Committee of the World Organization for Early Childhood (OMEP) and of the Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI). The project's intent was to provide guidance concerning the fundamental elements that are necessary to create high quality environments for early care and education. This paper presents the history of the development of a related instrument, called the ACEI

Global Guidelines Assessment (GGA). The GGA was developed to help early childhood educators assess and improve program quality, particularly in developing countries. It is divided into five areas: (1) Environment and Physical Space; (2) Curriculum Content and Pedagogy; (3) Early Childhood Educators and Caregivers; (4) Partnership with Families and Communities; and (5) Young Children with Special Needs. The GGA was designed to serve several purposes: (1) to provide a research-based process for making statements to distribute to national government leaders; (2) to promote and provoke policy discussions and curriculum development; and (3) to guide early childhood educators throughout the world to assess their own programs for children.

### Краткий обзор

«Глобальное руководство дошкольного образования и заботы о детях 21 века» было разработано как совместный проект Национального комитета мировой организации дошкольного образования США (ОМЕР) и Ассоциации международного дошкольного образования (АСЕИ). Намерение проекта - дать руководство относительно фундаментальных элементов по созданию высококачественной образовательной окружающей среды для осуществления эффективного обучения и оказания заботы о дошкольниках. Эта статья представляет собой историю развития инструмента «Оценки образовательного учреждения на основе Глобального руководства» (ОГР). ОГР было разработано для того, чтобы помочь воспитателям/учителям оценить и улучшить качество образовательной программы, особенно в развивающихся странах. Документ разделен на 5 сфер: (1) окружающая среда и физическое пространство, (2) содержание учебного плана и педагогика, (3) воспитатели/учителя в сфере дошкольного образования, (4) партнерство с семьями и обществом, (5) дети с особыми нуждами.

ОГР было разработано с целью: (1) разработать, основанный на исследованиях процесс подачи заявлений и распространения их среди государственных лидеров, (2) выдвигать и стимулировать обсуждения различных правил и разработку учебных планов, (3) направлять воспитателей/учителей со всего мира, работающих в сфере дошкольного образования в оценке образовательных программ, используемых для обучения детей.

### Introduction

The Global Guidelines for Early Childhood Education and Care in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century were developed as a collaborative project between the U. S. National Committee of the World Organization for Early Childhood (OMEP) and of the Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI). The project's intent was to provide guidance concerning the fundamental elements that are necessary to create high quality environments for early care and education. This paper presents the history of the development of a related instrument, called the Global Guidelines Assessment (GGA). The GGA process is being used in many languages throughout the world to stimulate improvements in policy and in services for young children.

### Global Guidelines

The Global Guidelines for Early Childhood Education and Care in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century have emerged as part of the fulfillment of ACEI's mission statement:

*“To promote and support in the global community the optimal education and development of children, from infancy through middle childhood, and to influence the professional growth of educators, and the efforts of others who are committed to the needs of children in a changing society.”*

The Global Guidelines were developed as a collaborative project between the U. S. National Committee of the World Organization for Early Childhood (OMEP) and ACEI. The

project's intent was to provide guidance concerning the fundamental elements that are necessary to create high quality environments for early care and education. In 1999, an International Symposium was co-sponsored by OMEP and ACEI in Ruschlikon, Switzerland. Professionals attended from 27 countries and every continent except Antarctica. The Symposium resulted in a set of Global Guidelines that address the fundamental elements necessary to create quality environments for early care and education for young children around the world (Wortham, 2001 and 2003).

There are six premises that form the foundation for the Global Guidelines.

- *Global Guidelines Premise #1:* Children are both the present and the future of every nation. Children have needs, rights, and intrinsic worth that must be recognized and supported.
- *Global Guidelines Premise #2:* Every child should have the opportunity to grow up in a setting that values children, that provides conditions for a safe and secure environment, and that respects diversity.
- *Global Guidelines Premise #3:* Knowledge about human development is more substantial than at any other time in history. The new century offers opportunities to consolidate recent gains and to respond to new challenges that lie ahead.
- *Global Guidelines Premise #4:* Children must receive appropriate nurture and education within and outside their families from birth onward if they are to develop optimally.
- *Global Guidelines Premise #5:* Attention to the health, nutrition, education, and psycho-social development of children during their early years is essential for the future well-being of nations and the global community.

## ACEI Global Guidelines Assessment

During 2000/2001, Wortham led the development of the first draft of the “Global Guidelines Self-Assessment Tool” to help assess and improve early education program quality, particularly in developing countries. The first draft was piloted in Chile and in the United States of America. During 2001/2002, the second draft was piloted in Nigeria, Botswana, Shanghai, Taiwan, China, and additional sites in the United States of America.

In 2002, the ACEI Executive Board established a Task Force to oversee the implementation and refinement of the Global Guidelines and the Global Guidelines Self-Assessment Tool. In 2003, the “Global Guidelines Self-Assessment Tool” was finalized by ACEI, and in 2004, the Task Force voted to change the name of the self-assessment instrument to the “ACEI Global Guidelines Assessment (GGA).”

### Format of the GGA

The GGA is formatted and easy to use as a reference guide for teachers or administrators. It is divided into five areas: (1) Environment and Physical Space; (2) Curriculum Content and Pedagogy; (3) Early Childhood Educators and Caregivers; (4) Partnership with Families and Communities; and (5) Young Children with Special Needs.

Each of the five areas is subdivided into descriptors of quality. For example, under Area 2, Curriculum Content and Pedagogy, there is a subcategory called “Learning Materials.” Within each subcategory, there are criteria or statements. In the “Learning Materials” subcategory, there is this statement: “Educators/caregivers use local materials as resources for teaching and learning.” Observers can choose a rating on a scale (excellent, good, adequate, minimum, inadequate, or not available) to describe each criterion. There is space to write examples and comments that support their ratings (ACEI, 2007).

## Worldwide Use of the GGA

The GGA was designed to serve several purposes: (1) to provide a research-based process for making statements to distribute to national government leaders; (2) to promote and provoke policy discussions and curriculum development; and (3) to guide early childhood educators throughout the world to assess their own programs for children (Barbour, Boyer, Hardin, and Wortham, 2004).

Certificates are awarded to early care and education programs that use the GGA process to evaluate their services and programs. In 2004, the first Certificate of Participation was awarded for use of the ACEI Global Guidelines Assessment to the Wiseways School, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

The GGA is currently being used or is being considered for use in: Botswana, Brazil, Burkino Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Ecuador, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Italy, Kenya, Macau, Mexico, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Peru, Portugal, Russia, Senegal, Shanghai, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Taiwan, USA, and Venezuela.

Translations of the GGA have been completed in English, Spanish, French, Chinese (two versions), and Greek. Translations in progress include Italian, German, Korean, Russian, Thai, Swahili, Khmer, and Portuguese. A consensus process (Geisinger, 1994) has been used for each new language version. In this process, translators and reviewers reconcile wording, grammar, and the cultural appropriateness of items to ensure that the translation is congruent with the original instrument (Barbour, Boyer, Hardin, and Wortham, 2004).

Professionals throughout the world report enthusiasm about using the GGA to review and improve the quality of their programs. A participant from Peru wrote, “This tool helped me to

reflect [about my practices] and teach ... the children. It has also helped me to request aid with different strategies [for improvement]" (Barbour, Boyer, Hardin, and Wortham, 2004).

#### Research with the GGA

Data on the GGA is being collected from Guatemala, China, Taiwan, Kenya, and the United States to examine the reliability and validity of the instrument within and across countries. Currently data has been collected from 146 programs and 292 participants.

The Global Guidelines and the GGA may be downloaded FREE by ACEI members from the ACEI web site at [www.acei.org](http://www.acei.org). For administrators and researchers who do not have access to the Internet, please send a request for the Guidelines or the GGA to Dr. Belinda Hardin at [bjhardin@uncg.edu](mailto:bjhardin@uncg.edu). To receive technical assistance before beginning the assessment process, please contact Dr. Belinda Hardin at [bjhardin@uncg.edu](mailto:bjhardin@uncg.edu).

#### About the Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI)

The Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI) is a membership organization dedicated to encourage positive conditions around the world for optimal child development and education from infancy through early adolescence. ACEI emerged from the International Kindergarten Union (IKU), which was established in 1892. In 1931, the IKU joined with the National Council on Primary Education to create the Association for Childhood Education. In 1946, the word "International" was added to the name to indicate a concern for children throughout the world. In 1980, ACEI received non-governmental organization status on the UNICEF Committee of the United Nations. Currently, ACEI's headquarters is in Olney, Maryland, in the United States.

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