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Early Childhood Education in Georgia: Socio-Economic Challenges and Implications for Sustainable Development

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Abstract

Early childhood education (ECE) in Georgia has undergone significant institutional transformation, reflecting reforms in the national education system and a shift away from Soviet-era models. This study explores how demographic trends and institutional frameworks form the early learning landscape. Drawing on population and enrollment data (2017–2025) alongside legal and policy documents, the research combines quantitative and qualitative perspectives.

The findings show that declining birth rates, migration, and regional differences make it difficult to plan kindergarten networks, emphasizing the importance of flexible governance and careful resource allocation. Simultaneously, well-run preschools promote children's cognitive, social, and emotional development. Reforms such as the 2016 Law on Early and Preschool Education and the 2022 authorization process have strengthened quality, accountability, and access. By combining population trends with legal analysis, the study aims to demonstrate how preschool quality contributes to cognitive development and long-term educational sustainability.

Overall, the study emphasizes that investing in early childhood education is crucial not only for individual development but also for social cohesion and long-term educational systems, illustrating the value of linking demographic knowledge with solid pedagogical practice.

Keywords: economic awareness, education, early childhood education, preschool children

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