

# Educational system in latvia education essay



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Education in Latvia is composed of levels: nine years compulsory, secondary and higher education. Vocational schools, art schools, business schools, schools for special types of children, schools for children with special needs and kindergartens also form part of the program.

In vocational education programs lasting two or three years provide theoretical and practical

knowledge. The majority of vocational schools in Latvia provide 2-3 and 4-year vocational education and training programs, but in special education schools or special education classes within general education schools provide education for children with special needs that correspond to each individual's physical and mental condition.

There are private schools and universities, where fees are charged. But majority of students go to state schools which are free.

The main purpose of the nine year school is the general intellectual and social development of the child. Children in Latvia are compulsory by law to attend school from the year when they turn seven till the age of 16. In some special cases the acquisition of basic education may last till the age of 18. Promotion from one grade to the next is based on the pupils' skills in all school subjects and on the results of tests.

In secondary schools most pupils follow a course that includes latvian, science, social studies, mathematics, physical education, foreign languages. Elective subjects may be chosen according to the student's interests. A

student is graded from 10 (outstanding) to 1 (failing) in each subject he takes. Students receive report cards twice a year.

At the end of the 12th grade every school-leaver is supposed to take 2 compulsory exams chosen by the Ministry of Education and 3 exams in the subjects each individual student has selected himself.

About 80% of young people graduate from school with a General certificate of education. To get this certificate each student must complete a specified number of subjects and pass 6 final exams graded no less than 4 and upwards. Usually pupils have a separate teacher for each subject.

Schools in Latvia begin on September 1 and end near the end of May. The year is divided into semesters, typically- September- December- January- May. The school breaks for holidays 4 times a year. There is a week holiday at the end of October, 2 weeks at Christmas Holidays, a week at the end of March and 1 week at Easter. The basic school day comprises from 5 lessons in grades 1-3 up to 8 lessons in grade 9. The school year is 34 weeks long in first grade and 37 weeks in grade 9 per year.

In Latvia have two sorts of higher education programmes – academic and professional. Such a division of higher education allows the student to choose either research or professional activity in the future. Professional higher education is divided into two levels. First level professional higher education programmes lasting 2-3 years and there are both state-financed and private higher education institutions.

## 2. Early childhood education system in Latvia

Children attend pre-school when they are under age of seven years, but it is also possible to lengthen studying for one more year, if the kid has some health, psychological preparedness problems, considering desire of parents, family doctor, psychologist opinion.

Early childhood education programmes provides preparation to primary school, including the development of individuality, mental, physical, social development, independence, creativity, strengthening health and also improving basic skills of state language.

Main type of activity for pre-school children is games, so the teaching process is organised that a children can learn by playing and by this learning process kids takes over community experience, acquire knowledge, skills to create attitudes, explore themselves and also act independently.

In pre-school educational institutions it is not allowed by law to hold entrance examinations.

The local government, in agreement with the Ministry of Education establishes, maintain and finance, as well as reorganize and liquidate pre-schools.

## 2. 1. Curriculum in early childhood education

All subjects in early childhood education and curriculum content is important for giving children a common understanding of environment that is around them and develop their creative, logical thinking and in making curriculum for early childhood education it is important to understand what children

already can do and what they need to learn and what they need to improve and train.

Curriculum in Latvias early childhood education includes such subjects: latvian language (children develop speech of mother tongue also improve knowledge of literature, folklore, literacy), natural-sciences (children learns constructing, creat mathematical ideas), social sciences and ethics ( children develop social skills, explore environment and also social life), music, physical education, that goes closly together with didactics of rhythm and movement, visual art ( children are improving creative side by drawing, painting, modeling), housekeeping and technology ( children are doing needlework, applique or origami).

Teaching methods and curriculum in early childhood education dipends from children stage of development and age. There is four levels in children stage of development. The first level is for kids till two years age, second level is for kids till three years, third level is for kids till five years and the last level is till age of six. Curriculum for each level, teaching methods and methodical approaches are profesionaly created by Latvian Education Curriculum Centre but it is not forbidden that teachers in early childhood education use their own profesionaly created methods and materials.

Now I want to speak more closly about curriculum and children levels of development. At the level first, when kids are one, two years old, they can learn throught observation( going in walks and observing environment and it can also be made together with older kids, for exchanging their ideas and observation outcomes), demonstration ( these demostrations can be made

by showing some plants, mushrooms), movement games, musical games, manipulating objects and exploring real objects.

In second level, when children are in a age of three years then mostly all methodical approaches are playful and children are learning throught simbolistic, plot, destructive, rhythm games (swiping palm hands and singing together) and practical work ( children are involved in independent work, for example writing calligraphy). Many games can be played with older children from different stages and levels of development. Such kind a approach improves social skills and experience exchange.

In the third level, when kids are in age till five years old, then the main teaching and learning approaches is throught discussion, evaluation, throught didactic games, construction games and story role games. In this level it is also very common to go in excursions, go for a walks and do some games or playful activities outside the kinderganten yard.

Till the age of six, when kids are in the last level, then the most common methodical approaches to children are by experments, dialogues ( teacher asks questions and making diagolue with children, about what they have seen today or making dialogues about some stories and fairy-tales), dramatization and theatrical games and also folk games (One of the most famoust folk games in Latvia is „ Kas dÄ ģ rzÄ ģ ?” or „ Whats in the garden?” It is game in a circle and when teacher stops singing one of the kid find another child to put in a center of circle).

## 2. 2. Rythm and movement in early childhood education

Rythm and movement goes closly together with such kind a subjects as physical education, health and music and thats why am going to review curriculum of these subjects to understend better about rythm and movement importance in early childhood education curriculum.

Physical education and health subjects main goal is to promote children health, strengthening their body, improving movement but music subject promote childrem emocional, intelectual development, knowledge about rhytm and improve creativity.

The main tasks in physical education and health is to acuire the skills to manage the body and enhance the natural movement activity and promote children emotional, social development throught physical activity. For example curriculum for physical education and health includes stepping and running, crawling and climbing, throwing and capturing, rolling and jumping. All these process improves childrens movement.

The way how can improve children stepping and running is by playing some movement games (Craw and at the same time rolling the ball, by this proces children learns to control direction of ball). For example in running, there is many tasks to improve it and the more older are children, the more difficult will be task and curriculum.

When the kids are about two years old they are able to run freely throught the field, evading and not touching other play members, but when the kids are about four and five years old, then the level of running comes more difficult. As an instance kids have to run after each other, run in environment with barriers, cones, filled balls and run by doing curves and changing

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directions, but when the kids are about six years old, then they are able to use some rhythmical actions like run and at the same time kick to a ball.

Crawling and climbing is one of the ways how to improve movements and strengthen body. In a first level, when kids are one, two years old, they can crawl and overcome a variety of high obstacles, but they are still learning to crawl in direct route among objects and around them.

When the kids come older, they can freely crawl on rough surface also on wide, sloping surface. Kids can also support moving by hand palms and feet, climb the stairs up and down.

In a fourth level children are able to crawl and roll the ball at the same time by controlling balls direction.

There is also throwing and capturing process in early childhood education curriculum. These processes come closely together with playful learning. In a first level of children development, they are able to throw some objects in uncertain directions and capture transmitted objects from close distance, when children pass to next level they are able to throw objects in freely chosen directions, but in a third level of development children are ready to throw objects in horizontal goals (box, basket) from a small distance.

Children are also able to throw and capture objects from a short distance by working in pairs. In a fourth level of development children are able to throw objects in vertical goals and capture the ball after it has hit the ground.

## 2. 3 Music and rhythm in early childhood education



One of the most important learning subjects, that creates development of rhythm and movement is music. Music subject in early childhood develops motor coordination, sense of rhythm, encourage to play music and rhythm instruments. In a curriculum of music, there is such important process as singing, listening music, dance and musical rhythmical movements, use of rhythm and musical instruments.

The subject singing includes working with folk songs, children songs, chants, vocal range and tune. In a first level of development in singing children are learning to sing a simple children songs in a small range, play together with teacher rhythm accompaniment to instruments. When the kids gets older and pass next level of development, they can sing freely and naturally without tension and can use different tempo, sing songs with different accompaniment types, use rhythm instruments like rattles, sticks.

Another curriculum subject is listening to music, that includes tempo, dynamics, sound layout, genres, songs. In a age one and two children are listening various sounds and voices and at the same time are learning to heard low and high register, linking it with an image. At this age children are also able execute variety of movements while sound of music. With a time children gets older, they can recognise some specific musical instrument sounds and express their feelings about the composition and also recognise hearded composition. When children is five or six years old, they are able to improvise movements given by music, perceive music mood (character), genre (song, dance, march) and dynamics.

The other subject in music curriculum is dance and musical rhythmical movement, which includes such important objects as posture, pulsation, sounding gestures. In a first level of development children are able to listen music accompaniment and do movements of mimics and participate in simple musical and rhythmical plays. When children pass next stage of development, then they are able to perform some movements while listening musical accompaniment and learn most basic dance steps as well dance in couples, but when the kids are about five years old, they can do dance moves, dance steps and are also able to stand in circle, which they can reduce or expand.

In a age of six, kid is ready to dance simple dances, and through musical accompaniment improvise movements and reproduce composition in their movements. In this age children are also able to acquire folk dance grib and do gallop steps.

The last learning subject in music curriculum is rhythm and music instruments. In this subject it is very common to use rhythmical instruments, sound tools, pulse. In a age of three kids in early childhood are able to play some audio tools by listening accompaniment at the same time. Kids are also able to play some rhythm instruments like rattles, beat with a stick.

When children pass to next level of development and come bit older, they are able to recognize two or three musical instruments, improvise accompaniment with rhythm and musical instruments.

3. Riga Teacher Training and educational management academy

The Academy's goal is to provide each student with an opportunity to acquire professional and academic higher education in the areas of pedagogy, psychology, business and management, as well as motivation for professional life and constant self-improvement. RTTEMA prepares teachers who are able to prepare pupils for life and work in information society.

RTTEMA is a conceptually and technically modern professional higher education institution and academy is founded by a state. It started its work in 1994 with 1273 students and now is one of the largest higher educational institutions in Latvia in terms of the number of students. Academy educates more than 3, 5 thousand students in full-time and part-time studies, employs 160 lecturers and docents, offers 25 study programs at college, bachelors, master and PhD levels. RTTEMA also organizes international conferences, publishes scientific articles, implements projects of scientific research, promote student and teacher international mobility, is an active member of international organizations.

Academy's intellectual environment consist of Pedagogic Scientific Institute, Creativity Scientific Institute, Child Language Research Center, Psychological Research Institute, Nature and Working Environment Institute, Several methodic centers, Young Teachers' Club, RTTEMA Centre of Further Education, Library with stocks in 10 cities of Latvia.

Students are provided administrative support at International Office and social support at Students' Parliament. Apart from these units students have an opportunity of involving themselves in the following cultural undertakings, that are Mixed choir " Fortius", female choir " Balta", chamber orchestra "

Gaudeamus Orchestra”, “ Big band”, sports club, folk dance group “ Dejojprieks”.

In RTTEMA is also possible to study education programs that are related to rhythm and movement subjects, for example professional bachelor’s education programs and second level in the short vocational higher education program offers to study and become a “ Dance and Rhythmic Teacher” or “ Music Teacher”. Professional Master’s program offers “ Dance Pedagogy”, “ Music Pedagogy”.

If a student wants to get Bachelor degree in “ Dance and Rhythmic Teacher” education program, then he/she has to study in full time for four years or in part time, that takes four years and three months. This educational program gives opportunity to work in a profession of dance and rhythmic teacher also manage dance groups. Main requirements of this program is to acquire theoretical base of pedagogy and psychology, link the theoretical conclusion with the practical work at school, primary school also acquire research skills and be able to use them in practical work, develop skills and abilities necessary for Dance and Rhythmic Teacher as well as personal qualities and competences. This education program includes a plenty of subjects like classical dance, historical dance, dance anatomy, composition of dance, rhythmic, methods of children dance, the notation of Latvian dance, jazz dance, didactics etc.

## Conclusion

The Latvian education system is structured at four levels: primary, secondary, vocational and higher education. There are also private schools

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and universities, where fees are charged, but majority of students go to state schools which are free. Children in Latvia are obliged by law to attend school from the year when they turn seven till the age of 16.

Children attend pre-school when they are under age of seven years, Main type of activity for pre-school children is games, so the teaching process is organised that children can learn by playing and by this learning process kids takes over community experience, acquire knowledge, skills to create attitudes, explore themselves and also act independently.

Teaching methods and curriculum in early childhood education depends from children stage of development and age. There is four levels in children stage of development. Curriculum for each level, teaching methods and methodical approaches are professionally created by Latvian Education Curriculum Centre.

Early childhood curriculum includes physical education and music subjects, witch goes includes knowledge about rhythm and movement. These subjects main goals are to promote children health, strengthening their body, improving movement but music subject promote children emotional, intellectual development, knowledge about rhythm and improve creativity.

Riga's Teacher Training and educational management academy (RTTEMA) main goal is to provide each student with an opportunity to acquire professional and academic higher education in the areas of pedagogy, psychology, business and management, as well as motivation for professional life and constant self-improvement. In RTTEMA is also possible to study education programs that are related to rhythm and movement

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#### Internet resources

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