



## Guidelines for Enhancing Early Childhood Teacher Preparation and Development in Higher Education Institutions in Thailand

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### Abstract

This research aims to study the preparation and development of early childhood teachers in Thai higher education institutions. Overall, the study established the guidelines and the policy proposals for enhancing the “preparation and development” of early childhood teachers in Thai higher education institutions; following the Standard of the National Early Childhood Development Institution. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected with relevant groups and stakeholders in the process of preparation and development of early childhood teachers in 4 regions, the data were conducted in 2020. The participants were (1) Administrators or lectures, accountable for producing early childhood teachers, in the higher institutes in 4 regions, (2) Students in Early Childhood Education Programs, (3) School authority, mentors, student teachers, (4) Graduated in Early Childhood Education Programs, (5) Representatives from 4 relevant Ministries, (6) Early Childhood Teachers in different affiliations, (7) Senior experts in policymaking, and (8) Specialist in early childhood teacher preparation and development. The research tools included interviews, group discussions, data record forms, and the questionnaires of management and organising learning experiences for early childhood development according to the Standard of the National Early Childhood Development Institute. The qualitative data analysis was made using content analysis. The quantitative data were analyzed by descriptive statistics and inference statistics using One Way ANOVA statistical analysis, the correlation analysis, and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The results of the research revealed that early childhood teacher preparation conditions of higher education institutions in Thailand can be classified into 8 areas. The findings revealed that early childhood teachers in different affiliations had developed relevant knowledge, understandings and strengthening the competency in organising activities for early childhood development. However, there are several challenges facing the teachers to meet the requirements.

## Introduction

Early childhood is an essential age for the foundation for national development. As it is an important period to build a strong bedrock for human life and a foundation for the country's development and growth in many areas. At the present, the Thai government places a priority on early childhood development by launching the Early Childhood Development Act 2019, which is presented in Section 1, Unit 5 on Early Childhood Development. It states that "Early childhood education encompasses the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development and cultivate a good manner, moral character, ethics, and build a good conscious for young children. Meanwhile, teachers or caregivers must be knowledgeable and skillful, and obtain a good attitude towards early childhood development". Besides, several researchers indicated that children aged 0-6 years can develop their learning rapidly; since their brain undergoes rapid growth. Providing high quality and consistent educational support, therefore, can create a significant fundamental experience for learners to be equipped with skills for their future learning.

"Early childhood teacher" generally has an important mission and role in the development of early childhood ages to become a quality citizen. This is in agreement with the country's intention, as shown in in the Early Childhood Development Act 2019, Chapter 4 on Early Childhood Development, Section 23, paragraph 1, requiring "To produce or develop teachers in early childhood development, the educational institutions need to provide; teaching and learning to strengthen the spirit of being a teacher, having a morality, ethics, knowledge, skills, and ability to stipulate the teaching and learning to supervise and develop young children following the principles and philosophy of early childhood development". Also, the "teacher preparation" can ensure the education quality and the continuity of early childhood development in the Child Development Center, especially, the role of teachers/caregivers to provide education and play experiences to promote the holistic early childhood development. Besides, the Office of the Education Council and the relevant organization who are involved with the early childhood development, have made; the documentation and manual to indicate the standard and direction for the high quality for the teachers/caregivers in Early Childhood Development Center in public and private sectors; and teaching profession institutes inputs or key variables into the educational management process following their roles

in producing and developing "early childhood teacher" to maintain the educational quality and standard as required.

Currently, there are various higher education institutions that offer courses in early childhood education. It offers programs ranging from certificate, diploma, bachelor's, master's, to doctorate degrees in a variety of locations throughout the region; in a public university, autonomous university, Rajabhat University, the educational institutions of the private sector, and community college. The number of early childhood education courses account for more than 50% of all higher education institutions; under the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation. According to the Office of the Education Council (2019), statement in the Executive Summary that the current teacher preparation systems had a lack of a mechanism to monitor and assess quality, such as a large application of early childhood teachers that effects the ratio of the teachers to the number of students and the efficiency in teaching. As the early childhood teacher development process cannot be done only with lectures but also the requirement of professional experience training. In addition, the teacher development system is lacking in clarity and there is no direct response agency that can provide guidelines and supports, as well as the Teacher Development Curriculum and Methods are fairly in species with school contexts and the needs of the teachers. As a result of the reports, there is a concern in society about the quality and standard of early childhood teacher's preparation and development in higher education institutions. So that, the relevant agencies, especially in the government sector, need to provide guarantees for the parents and society to be confident that all children will be taken care of with high education quality; and with qualified teachers thoroughly.

For this reason, the researchers are intended to carry out the study of the "preparation and development" of early childhood teachers in all types of Thai higher education institutions in 4 regions. The study focused on the current conditions of teacher preparation and development in higher education institutions on the relevant issues such as the curriculum, quality of the early childhood institution, instructors, and students in early childhood education program, and the teaching development, etc. The aim for the research findings is to aid in the analyses for the path to success, the relevant problems and challenges and the formulation of guidelines for enhancing the preparation and

development of early childhood teachers, as well as, creation of the policy proposals to identify and promote the preparation and development of early childhood teachers to meet the Standard of National Early Childhood Development Institution.

## Objectives

1. To study the preparation and development of the early childhood teacher in Thai higher education institutions.

2. To formulate guidelines for promoting the preparation and development of early childhood teacher in Thai higher education institutions following the Standard of the National Early Childhood Development Institution.

3. To formulate the policy proposal for the preparation and development of early childhood teachers in Thai higher education institutions following the Standard of the National Early Childhood Development Institution.

## Conceptual framework

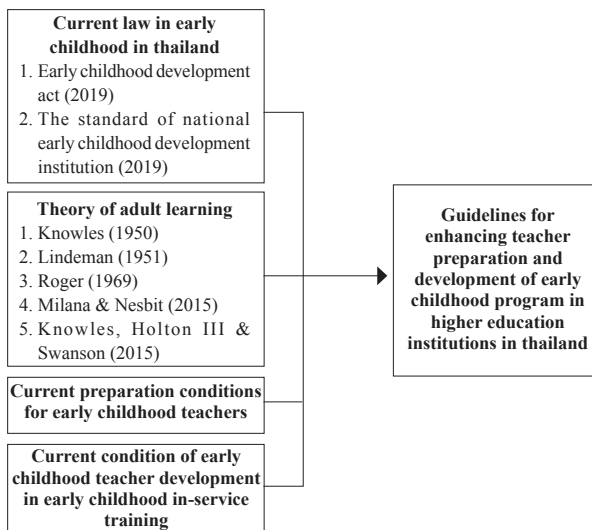


Figure 1 Conceptual framework

## Research methodology

### 1. Research participants

#### 1.1 The number of participants

1.1.1 Administrators or lectures, accountable for producing early childhood teachers, in the higher institutes in 4 regions from State Universities, Private Universities, Rajabhat Universities, and Community

Colleges in total 20 participants

1.1.2 Students in Early Childhood Education Programs, in total 20 participants

1.1.3 School authority, mentors, student teachers, in total 15 participants

1.1.4 Graduated in Early Childhood Education Programs, in total 20 participants

1.1.5 Representatives from 4 relevant Ministries, in total 4 participants

1.1.6 Early Childhood Teachers in different affiliations, in total 8,534 participants

1.1.7 Senior experts in policymaking, in total 5 participants

1.1.8 Specialist in early childhood teacher preparation and development, in total 5 participants

#### 1.2 Sampling method

1.2.1 Simple random sampling was used in the selection of early childhood teachers in different affiliations to complete the questionnaire of management and organising learning experience for early childhood development according to the Standard of the National Early Childhood Development Institute.

1.2.2 Purposive Sampling was used in the selection of senior experts in policymaking in early childhood education and specialist in early childhood teacher preparation and development to interview and join group discussion.

## 2. Research instruments

2.1 There were 3 instruments used in this research which were interview forms, focus group discussion topics and questionnaire forms. Three instruments are detailed as follow;

2.1.1 Interview form which was the semi-structured interview form regarding issues of state and problems of preparation and development of early childhood teachers in Thai education institutions;

2.1.2 Focus group discussion topic which question about preparation and development of early childhood teachers in Thai education institutions;

2.1.3 Two questionnaires with a 5-rating scale (1) questionnaire of preparation and development of early childhood teachers in Thai education institutions and (2) questionnaire of management and organising learning experience for early childhood development according to the Standard of the National Early Childhood Development Institute.

2.2 The procedure of developing research instruments

2.2.1 Set goals, scope, and the key ideas

for the development process of learner and the scope of research tools including interview forms, topics for group discussion, and questionnaires.

2.2.2 Research the relevant documents about the preparation conditions and the development of early childhood teachers of higher education institutions including the Early Childhood Development Act 2019 and the Standards of the National Early Childhood Development Institution. Review basic information about the current situation of early childhood teacher preparation and development in Thai higher education institutions and define the terminology of the variables to be measured

2.2.3 Formulate the definitions and terms from the study in stage 2 and point out the relevant topics/issues for group discussion and questions in the questionnaire following the definition of the variables.

2.2.4 Examine and test the interview questions, scripts, and topics for group discussion for validity. This process was done by the experts to check the language expressions of the text appropriation, whether the questions/scripts/issues are completed within the framework of the definition.

2.2.5 Three specialists tested the content validity in finding the correlation between the research questions and definitions and using the Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC). The result showed that interview forms, focus group discussion topics and questionnaires were marked with 0.67-1.00 of IOC.

2.2.6 Bring the pre-determined interview questions and scripts and topics for group discussion to collect data in the local research settings.

### 3. Collection of data

3.1 Researching and gathering information, concepts, theories and principals from the relevant documents and literature about the teacher preparation and development in higher education institutions; both in Thailand and internationally. As well as, researching the Early Childhood Development Act 2019 (B.E. 2562) and the Standard of National Early Childhood Development Institution to review the literature and collect preliminary information on the current conditions and situations for preparation and development of early childhood teachers in Thai higher education institutions.

3.2 Establishing a framework for analyzing “the preparation” and “the early childhood teacher’s development” in Thai higher education institutions and defining issues for analyzing data in terms of quality, efficiency, and success in implementation including

possible problems and challenges.

3.3 Conducting data collection with participants by asking for permission to conduct the study was sought from Suan Dusit University and other universities, Office of the Private Education Commission (OPEC), Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA), the Local Government Organization (DLA), and the Office of the Private Education Commission (OPEC) in Thailand.

3.4 The data were collected by using, the semi-structured interview form, the focus group discussion topic, and the questionnaires. The research team organized the field study to collect the qualitative data from 79 participants. The interview and focus group discussion were conducted several times in different target groups. Whereas the questionnaires were shared by the link of google form to collect data, the relation between research instruments and participants is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1** Research instrument and participants conducted in the research

Research instrument	Participants	The number of participants
1. The semi-structured interview form	1) Administrators or lectures, accountable for producing early childhood teachers, in the higher institutes in 4 regions from State Universities, Private Universities, Rajabhat Universities, and Community Colleges	10 participants
	2) Representatives from 4 relevant Ministries	4 participants
2. Focus group discussion topic	1) Students in Early Childhood Education Programs	20 participants
	2) School authority, mentors, student teachers	15 participants
	3) Graduated in Early Childhood Education Programs	20 participants
	4) Senior experts in policymaking	5 participants
	5) Specialist in early childhood teacher preparation and development	5 participants
3. Questionnaire of preparation and development of early childhood teachers in Thai education institutions	Administrators or lectures, accountable for producing early childhood teachers, in the higher institutes in 4 regions from State Universities, Private Universities, Rajabhat Universities, and Community Colleges	20 participants
4. Questionnaire of management and organising learning experience for early childhood development according to the Standard of the National Early Childhood Development Institute	Early Childhood Teachers in different affiliations	8,534 teachers

#### 4. Data analysis

The researcher team analysed the quantitative data using the following statistics:

4.1 Descriptive statistics including mean and standard deviation,

4.2 Inference statistics using One Way ANOVA statistical analysis,

4.3 The content analysis was used for analysing interview and focus group data.

#### Results

The results of the research are discussed as follows:

##### 1. Current preparation conditions for early childhood teacher preparation.

The teacher preparation conditions in the teacher institutes had been improved by adjusting the curriculum; according to the changes in society and the impact of external circumstances. The curriculum development focused on producing teachers in new traits that highlight the results-oriented dimensions, evolve into highly-qualified teachers, and raise the awareness of the teachers' dignity following the Teaching Profession Standards. Moreover, student teachers must have the ability to provide a learning experience and develop learners to be good, knowledgeable, inquisitive, skillful, and professional. They are also anticipated to obtain positive attitudes towards the profession careers and to have awareness of morality and ethics following Professional Ethics; and to be omniscient, adaptive and have awareness of the way to develop themselves sustainably to build confidence and faith in the professional practice; as well as to work efficiently with others to meet the Professional Standards and Educational Competencies. In consideration of teacher preparation conditions in higher education institution in Thailand, it can be classified into 7 areas as follows;

##### 1.1 Curriculum for early childhood teacher preparation

Considering, the average number of credits of 139-141 for the four-year curriculum of Teacher Preparation. This included an average of 63 credits for Core modules, 42 credits for Teaching Professions modules, 30 credits for General modules, and 6 credits for Optional modules. According to the new Four-Year Curriculum, which had one year less than the previous curriculum, it is required the institutions to adjust the courses and integrate education with professional instructors to help students learn the skills

they need for their careers optimally. Some institutions had adjusted the curriculum to fit with the changes in society and some had reorganised the curriculum with more major and minor subjects to provide a wide-range of knowledge and expertise to meet the needs of the social changes in the world today.

##### 1.2 Management of the early childhood education curriculum

The role and responsibilities of faculty members in the Early Childhood Education Curriculum were similar in each university. The instructors shared the responsibilities in each area clearly including academic work, teacher placement training, student's activities, quality assurance, the research work, and the personal tutor for the yearly advisor. Generally, the main teaching workload for instructors in the early childhood education programs was quite large: approximately 15-18 hours per week. As well, there were additional tasks such as project work, research, practice placement supervision, and other workload in faculty and university. For admission, the student's admission system in institutions are supported by the TCAS system to select a student. Meanwhile, there were "Teacher Rak Tin" another way of admission, that offers scholarship for students for Early Childhood education program. Generally, the admission was carried out by interviewing and there are additional examinations such as the English tests and some specific subject tests required by each institution.

##### 1.3 Information about teacher's preparation institutes

Overall, the oldest teacher training institute was established 114 years ago and the most recent institute was established about 14 years ago. On the one hand, the oldest early childhood teacher training institute was founded approximately 80 years ago while the latest institute was founded recently for one year. Each institute was well-organised in providing learning support, activities, laboratory, language rooms, libraries, teaching laboratories, and the demonstration school as the placement platform. Moreover, the institutes usually obtained a cooperative network in both governmental and non-government organisations, communities, municipalities, and universities where they offer substantial grants, subsidies, or educational scholarships.

##### 1.4 Instructor information

The overview of instructor information demonstrated the average number of early childhood staff which were approximately six people in the institute. Among these numbers, the instructors who obtained



Ph.D. degrees accounted for 27.66%, those who obtained master's degrees made up 72.34%. The data showed that the participants had an average of 13 years of working experience. They carried out three research projects/person on average and they averagely published two academic papers/person in the past five years. The overall strengths of teachers in early childhood education reflected the good points in teamwork, the comprehension, and cooperation of projects/development for project efficiency. On the other hand, the participants reflected the weakness of the instructor role which was the promotion for academic titles. There were still a number of faculty staff who have not applied for the academic titles which indicated the need for the development of member staff in the early childhood program to apply for the academic position, develop research and pursue a doctoral degree.

#### 1.5 Student Information

The average number of early childhood students from 2017-2020 tended to increase gradually in each year. On the one hand, the average number of early childhood students in each institute was; 67 first-year students, 62 second-year students, 59 third-year students, 40 fourth-year students, and 78 fifth-year students.

#### 1.6 Issues in early childhood teacher preparation

The issues of teacher preparation institutes are focused on three aspects consisting of (1) student aspects: it was revealed that the students decided to choose to study in an early childhood education as it is the easiest fields compared to other educational areas. Some students did not want to be teachers but their decisions were influenced by their families. Some student teachers did not hold a qualification as a teacher. Therefore, the student came to study in ECE with different perspectives such as the aptitude in teaching professions, family's background and the accessibility to the technology (2) teacher aspects: it was found that the workload of teachers in early childhood education program was quite high in almost all institutions. As a small number of instructors compared to the number of students along with the other tasks such as researching, quality assurance, student development project activities, academic services and some other faculty and university duties. Some institutions reflected a shortage of early childhood teachers due to the number of qualified graduate's teachers are relatively few and some institutions revealed the lack of quality of teachers with educational management for Four-Year Curriculum of

Teacher Preparation and (3) learning support aspects: it was found that there were lack of training books and textbooks for teacher development supported by faculty and university. In terms of teaching placement, it was reported that there are a small number of network schools where they are qualified and have similar prospects and visions in providing early childhood education with the teaching institutions.

#### 1.7 Factors affecting early childhood teacher preparation

Factors affecting the preparation of early childhood teachers were divided into 4 areas: (1) teacher factors consisted of the quality of the teachers (knowledge, competence, academic status, academic standing and educational qualifications) and teacher workload (2) Learner factors consisted of learner quality (attitude, motivation, learning goal) the ability to develop their ability through various activities and the economic status of learners (3) Curriculum and teaching factors consist of media, technology, materials, teaching equipment, documents / books / textbooks / researches, learning resources / educational institutes with quality-placement training , and the funds for teaching and learning (4) Social and economic factors and social values such as the expectations of parents who desire their offspring to serve in the teacher service following the changes in government policies; to reform the quality of teacher preparation system; a decrease in demands for graduates; and the impact of the coronavirus outbreak (Covid-19).

#### 1.8 Ways to success and the conditions of early childhood teacher development in early childhood development institutions.

The path to success in early childhood teacher preparation is as follows: (1) the cooperation of all parties involved in the development and preparation of the curriculum for early childhood teacher; including the university, faculty of education, early childhood education program, and the stakeholders who work with teachers and the network schools (2) teacher preparation institutes develop their strengths according to their identity and expertise of teachers to fully develop students to expand their teaching abilities and potentials; and (3) the supportive and extracurricular activities should be provided by the relevant departments, the network schools, the collaboration from alumni or the retired teachers.

**2. The condition of early childhood teacher development in early childhood in-service training** found that in the curriculum of early childhood teacher

development the majority of early childhood teacher development curriculum was short-training courses that operate 1-3 days. The training usually is lecture-based and work-based training. However, nowadays, the training was significantly moved online to continue during the Covid-19 outbreak. Many educational activities, such as educational training, teaching placement training, or teaching evaluation, were held online via programs such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Facebook Live, etc. There are more options for training channels as well as a variety of training topics for early childhood teachers, such as providing learning experiences for children in the New Normal era, changing world-adapting teachers, psychology of learning to develop learners and to understand early childhood with different needs through careful observation, etc. The online training courses for early childhood teacher development are available both with fees and free of charge. As a result, the teachers have various channels for continuous self-development. However, the issues of early childhood teacher development in different affiliations revealed that there were differences in the dimensions of teacher development opportunities that may arise from inadequate budgetary support and the administrators may not recognize the needs of early childhood teacher development. On the other hand, the Child Development Institution under the Office of the Private Education Commission (OPEC) and the Ministry of Higher Education (Demonstration schools) had more opportunities and supportive factors for teacher development than other organizations. The results of the study of Needs of Early Childhood Teachers for Self-Development demonstrated that the majority of teachers requirements for self-improvement was techniques for organising activities for the development of active learning; the assessment for learner's development according to age range, coding activities, the foundation for Educating Students with Special Needs, the management and literacy of emergency or epidemic circumstances, the communication skills between parents and communities. This can be organised through a training model with a mentor or a coach to facilitate them to reflect on what can be done for teaching development. The results of the study of the state of early childhood teacher development found that the early childhood teachers in different affiliations, obtained the relevant knowledge, understanding, and strengthen the competency in organising teaching activities for early

childhood development. Nevertheless, there were some problems in terms of support including a budget, personnel capacity, high workload, that caused the difficulties of teacher's self-development. The results of the problems in the development of early childhood teachers showed that there was a high workload and a relatively small number of early childhood teachers in the Early Childhood Development Institution which hindered the participation in development training. Besides, it was found that some administrators did not recognise the role of early childhood teachers and had some misconception such as early childhood is an easy subject, people can teach early childhood education without training. As a result, some teachers were not encouraged to participate in the development training. Moreover, there were differences in knowledge, understanding, and competence of early childhood teachers who graduated from different educational institutions. The factors affecting the development of early childhood teachers in all affiliations reflected the support from the administrators that provide the cooperative network to collaborate. This included the areas of work such as teacher's workload, budget, development support, and offer additional support to support teacher's confidence and consult with the mentors or experts about the problems/challenges when it is needed.

2.1 The results of the study of the management and organising learning experience for early childhood development according to the National Early Childhood Development Institute standards are presented in table 2-4.

**Table 2** Mean and standard deviation of management and organising learning experience for early childhood development (n = 8,534)

Management and organising learning experience for early childhood development	M	SD	Description
Standard 1: management	4.21	0.54	high
Standard 2: teacher /caregivers who provided care and experience for learning and playing for early childhood development	4.39	0.53	high
<b>Overall</b>	<b>4.30</b>	<b>0.51</b>	<b>high</b>

Table 2 shows that the overall *management and organising learning experience* for early childhood development has an average mean score = 4.30 and the standard deviation = 0.51 which is at a high level.

**Table 3** Mean and standard deviation of standard 1: management (n = 8,534)

Standard 1: management	M	SD	Description
1. Systematic Management	4.21	0.63	high
2. Personnel Management according to the Affiliation	4.23	0.65	high
3. Environment Management for Safety	4.17	0.62	high
4. Health Promotion Management and Learning	4.26	0.60	high
5. Promoting Family and Community Participation	4.18	0.63	high
<b>Overall Standard 1</b>	<b>4.21</b>	<b>0.54</b>	<b>high</b>

Table 3 shows that the overall standard 1: management has the mean value = 4.21 which is at a high level and a standard deviation = 0.54. When considered *items* individually, it was found that Health Promotion Management and Learning had the highest mean score (M = 4.26 SD = 0.60), followed by all types of Personnel Management according to the Affiliation (M = 4.23 SD = 0.65), the Systematic Management (M = 4.21 SD = 0.63), Promoting Family and Community Participation (M = 4.18 SD = 0.63) and the Environment Management for Safety had the lowest mean score (M = 4.17 SD = 0.62), respectively.

**Table 4** Mean and standard deviation of standard 2: teacher /caregivers who provided care and experience for learning and playing for early childhood development (n = 8,534)

Standard 2: teacher /caregivers who provided care and experience for learning and playing for early childhood development	M	SD	Description
1. Care and Development of Young Children	4.34	0.57	high
2. Promotion of Physical Development and Health Care	4.47	0.55	high
3. Promoting Intellectual Development and Language and Communication	4.38	0.57	high
4. Promotion of Emotional, Psychological, Social and Moral Development and Good Citizenship	4.43	0.56	high
5. Supporting Transitions from Preschool to The Next Educational Stage	4.29	0.66	high
<b>Overall Standard 2</b>	<b>4.39</b>	<b>0.53</b>	<b>high</b>

Table 4 shows that the overall standard 2: teacher/caregivers who provided care and experience for learning and playing for early childhood development had an average mean score = 4.39 which is at a high level and standard deviation = 0.53. When considered items individually, it was found that the Promotion of Physical Development and Health Care has the highest mean score (M = 4.47 SD = 0.55), followed by the Promotion of Emotional, Psychological, Social and Moral Development and Good Citizenship (M = 4.43 SD = 0.56) Promoting Intellectual Development and Language and Communication (M = 4.38 SD = 0.57) the Comprehensive of Care and Development of Young Children (M = 4.34 SD

= 0.57) and the Supporting Transitions from Preschool to The Next Educational Stage had the lowest mean score (M = 4.29 SD = 0.66), respectively.

2.2 The comparison of results of management and organising learning experience for early childhood development classified by affiliation, regions, educational qualification, working experiences is presented in table 5-7.

2.2.1 The comparison of results of management and organising learning experience for early childhood development classified by affiliation is shown in Table 5.

**Table 5** The comparison of results of management and organising learning experience for early childhood development classified by affiliation (n = 8,534)

Management and organising learning experience for early childhood development according to the National Early Childhood Development Institute standards	SS	df	MS	F	p
between group	50.96	6	8.49	33.57*	.00
within group	2157.47	8527	0.25		
<b>total</b>	<b>2208.42</b>	<b>8533</b>			

\*p<.05

Table 5 shows that the different affiliations had a mean score of management and organising learning experience for early childhood development; in all standards and all items statistically significant difference at .05. In Standard 1, the Office of the Private Education Commission (OPEC), Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) and the Demonstration School had a higher average score of Standard 1: the Management than the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) and the Local Government Organization (DLA). In Standard 2, the Office of the Private Education Commission (OPEC), Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) and the Demonstration School had a higher average score of Standard 2: teachers/caregivers who provide education and care in learning and playing for early childhood development than the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) and the Local Government Organization (DLA) and other child care centers.

2.2.2 The comparison of results of management and organising learning experience for early childhood development classified by regions is shown in Table 6.



**Table 6** The comparison of results of management and organising learning experience for early childhood development classified by regions (n = 8,534)

Management and organising learning experience for early childhood development according to the National Early Childhood Development Institute standards	SS	df	MS	F	p
between group	17.40	5	3.48	13.54*	.00
within group	2191.02	8528	0.26		
<b>total</b>	<b>2208.42</b>	<b>8533</b>			

\*p&lt;.05

Table 6 shows that the results revealed that the different regions demonstrated the mean score of management and organising learning experience for early childhood development; in all standards and all items statistically significant difference at .05. In Standard 1, the Central Region and Eastern Region had a higher average score of Standard 1: Management than the Northern Region. For the Northeast and the Central Region, the average score of Standard 1 Management was significantly higher than the Eastern Region and Southern Region at .05. In Standard 2, Northeastern and Central Regions had a higher average score of Standard 2: Teachers/caregivers to provide learning and play experiences for early childhood development than the Eastern and Southern Regions. While the Central Region had a higher average score of Standard 2: Teachers/caregivers to provide learning and play experiences for early childhood development than Northern Region. And, Northern Region had a higher average score of Standard 2: Teachers/caregivers to provide learning and play experiences for early childhood development than the Southern Region.

2.2.3 The comparison of results of the management and organising learning experience for early childhood development. Classified by educational qualification is shown in Table 7.

**Table 7** The comparison of results of management and organising learning experience for early childhood development classified by educational qualification (n = 8,534)

Management and organising learning experience for early childhood development according to the National Early Childhood Development Institute standards	SS	df	MS	F	p
between group	5.55	2	2.77	10.74*	.00
within group	2202.88	8531	0.26		
<b>total</b>	<b>2208.42</b>	<b>8533</b>			

\*p&lt;.05

Table 7 shows that the results of educational qualification had a mean score of management and

organising learning experience for early childhood development; in all standards and all items statistically significant difference at .05. A teacher who obtained a lower-undergraduate degree had a higher average mean score of Environment Management for Safety than those who obtained a bachelor's degree and a master's degree or higher. Also, teachers who obtained the master's degree or higher had a higher average of Environment Management for Safety than bachelor's degree at a significant difference of .05. A teacher who obtained a master's degree had the lower average mean score of Standard 2: Teachers/caregivers to provide learning and play experiences for early childhood development than those who obtained undergraduates and lower-undergraduates degree had a significant difference of .05.

2.2.4 The comparison of results of the management and organising learning experience for early childhood development. Classified by working experiences is shown in Table 8.

**Table 8** The comparison of results of management and organising learning experience for early childhood development classified by working experiences (n = 8,534)

Management and organising learning experience for early childhood development according to the National Early Childhood Development Institute standards	SS	df	MS	F	p
between group	8.03	3	2.68	10.37*	.00
within group	2200.40	8530	0.26		
<b>total</b>	<b>2208.42</b>	<b>8533</b>			

\*p&lt;.05

Table 8 shows that the results of the different work experiences had a mean score of management and organising learning experience for early childhood development; in all standards and all items statistically significant difference at .05. In Standard 1, it was found that teachers who had teaching experiences over 16 years had a higher average score of Standard 1: Management than those who work under 5 years and 11-15 years had a statistically significant difference at .05. In Standard 2, teachers who had teaching experiences over 16 years had a higher average score of Standard 2 Teachers/caregivers to provide learning and play experiences for early childhood development than those who work under 5 years and 11-15 years had a statistically significant difference at .05.

### 3. Guidelines for Enhancing Teacher Preparation and Development of Early Childhood Program in higher education institutions in Thailand

#### 3.1 Guidelines for enhancing the teacher

preparation and development of early childhood program in Thai higher education institutions (Pre-Service Training); following the standards of the National Early Childhood Development Institution. The guidelines consist of 7 areas:

3.1.1 Enhancement of the Early Childhood Teacher Profession: the results suggested that there should be an establishment of Professional Standards for Early Childhood Teachers and Caregivers and the National Standard for School Administrators for the Early Childhood Education; a license provision for early childhood teacher and caregivers classified by the particular affiliation; a system for assessing and certifying the quality of early childhood education institutions; and a mechanism for monitoring the quality of early childhood teacher preparation from the National Central agency.

3.1.2 Early Childhood Teacher Policy in accordance with the International Standards: the results suggested that there should be a policy in accordance with the international standards with all affiliations who are involved with working with newborns to 6 years; a National Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Policy that concord with the Standard of National Early Childhood Development Institution; and a National Standard of Professional Teacher in Early Childhood Education to build awareness of the early childhood teacher preparation policy with all institutions.

3.1.3 Enhancement of the Early Childhood Teacher Preparation by Their Identity: the results suggested that there should be network cooperation between teacher preparation institutions; both in the country and abroad; an institutional network system to link the preparation for early childhood teachers; and there should be an enhancement teacher preparation following the instructions and local identity and the management model/ methotrexate to be in line with the National Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Policy, and; the activities to inspire an early childhood teacher for a school in local areas.

3.1.4 Curriculum for Early Childhood Teacher Preparation That Are Appropriate to The Changes in The World Society: the results suggested that there should be revisions of the curriculum to take into account the changes in the society and adjustments for coexistence. The curriculum should emphasise building hands-on experience from the Core Activities in Early Childhood Teacher Production curriculum; the course should be designed to keep up with the changes in social

circumstances; and extracurricular activities that can reflect the spirit of early childhood and preparation for teaching professions.

3.1.5 Enhancement of Teacher Competency to Meet the International Standards: the results suggested that there should be a professional learning network system for the teaching profession in Thailand and abroad; and also, a system for developing teacher's professions to meet the international standards in both academic and research development.

3.1.6 Enhancement of Student Competency for The Teaching Profession Pathways: the results suggested that there should be a system to assess the aptitude for early childhood teachers and other aptitude development methods for a student-teacher; as well as a network of student teachers in municipal/local and national levels; as well as the tracking system to maintain the teaching development with the student teachers who recently graduated.

3.1.7 Enhancement of Supportive Context for Integrated Teacher Preparation: the results suggested that there should be a high-standard school network for student-teacher to practice teaching experiences; the provision of the learning environment for student teachers should offer opportunities to work professionally in the digital age; and support/help for all students to access learning opportunities; especially those who may encounter the disparities.

3.2 Guidelines for enhancing in-service training for early childhood development following the standards of the National Early Childhood Development Institute, consisting of 4 areas as follows:

3.2.1 Teacher Competency Development Policy: the results suggested that there should be a teacher development policy for promoting excellence in the teaching profession and a continuity of teaching development following the National Early Childhood Teacher Competency Standards; a system of a mechanism for monitoring the development of early childhood teacher from the National Central agency and municipal agency to drive the early childhood teacher development policy into practice.

3.2.2 Stability and Career Development for Early Childhood Teachers: the results suggested that there should be a system for self-development in a professional path from the national organisations or agencies such as Personal Development Awards and Honors; a system to compare the professional careers progress in the different affiliation; and the scholarship for Master and Doctoral level.

3.2.3 Model of Excellent Teaching Profession Development: the results suggested that there should be a network for early childhood teacher professional development collaborating from a central agency: a system for developing; a supportive model for Excellent Teaching Profession by establishing a curriculum for developing early childhood teachers to re-skills and up-skills based upon the personal needs; and a credit banking system that allows teachers to accumulate teaching profession.

3.2.4 Supportive Context for Excellent Teaching Development: the results suggested that providing scholarships for early childhood teachers for higher education and grants for teacher's self-development and funding for innovation production to organize learning experiences and develop education for young children; a central information technology system of the country that assembles academic information related to the development and education for young children; and a national central agency of research, development and innovation in early childhood education, and shared with the early childhood teachers across the country.

## Discussion

1. In the light of current conditions of early childhood teacher preparation, the higher education institutions had modified the curriculum taking into account social changes and the impact of external situations. Accordingly, all universities, that offer the Bachelor of Education program in Early Childhood Education, had adjusted the course from 5 years to 4 years program according to the announcement of the bachelor's degree standards and professional qualifications in education, 2019. The newly developed curriculum will focus on preparing teachers in a new dimension that emphasizes learning outcomes of the quality graduate teachers and the self-respect as being a teacher according to the standards of the teaching profession and qualifications and to be a good teacher, knowledgeable and curious person. Also, a teacher should have skills, expertise, and professional experience along with a positive attitude towards the profession, and having morals and ethics that follow the professional ethics. Finally, teachers are expected to obtain knowledge and are up-to-date with the changes, and be able to learn and develop themselves sustainably. This corresponds to the Early Childhood Development Act, B.E. 2562, Section 23, which relates to the teachers' preparation and development in early childhood development that the

higher education institutions shall provide teaching and learning to enhance teacher spirit, morality, ethics, knowledge, skills, and ability to provide teaching and learning and to develop children according to the philosophy of early childhood development. Additionally, the relevant organization and agency, who are responsible for the development of early childhood caregivers, shall support teachers and caregivers to enhance the spirit of being a teacher/caregiver with morality, ethics, knowledge, skills, and ability to care for early childhood children according to the principles of early childhood development (Office of the Education Council, 2019). This corresponds to the work of Pruitthikul (2018) who studied the development of learning activities to enhance professional teachings of early childhood education students, Faculty of Education, Burapha University. The study aimed to develop learning activities and programs that enhance the spirituality of teachers and the essential competencies for early childhood education students.

2. The current condition of early childhood teacher development. The comparative study of learning experiences for young children in different affiliations found that early childhood teachers under the Office of the Private Education Commission (OPEC), Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA), and the Demonstration School had a higher average of learning experiences of early childhood development than one who is affiliated under the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) and the Local Government Organization (DLA) and other child care centers. This is because the management system of schools under the Office of the Private Education Commission (OPEC), Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA), and the Demonstration School are more flexible. School administrators play an important role to make decisions directly and they can also manage the financial plan for organising learning experiences for the children's learning and development immediately.

The findings showed that early childhood teachers in different affiliations have been developed in terms of knowledge, understanding, and capacity in delivering early childhood development activities. However, there are some problems in terms of support for example the budget, human resources, and heavy workload which hindered teacher's self-development. Factors affecting the development of early childhood teachers in all affiliations reflect the following issues: the support of the administrators, the professional networking and community in helping teachers to share and support one

another, teacher's workload, budget, development support. On the one hand, consulting with mentors or experts is placed as essential because it motivates teachers' confidence and offers immediate support. This corresponds to several studies that indicate that Learning Management for Early Childhood Teachers is the learning for adults. An important characteristic of this type of learning is that it is learning management that emphasizes experiential learning in the form of self-guided learning. Learners are involved in all learning designs and processes; from setting learning goals, plans, and the analysis of problems that exist in the setting to meet the basic needs and requirements. The use of participatory activities with real learning experiences is an important mechanism to achieve meaningful learning. The teachers must adjust their roles as facilitators and supporters who can help procure and manage learning resources both in the form of techniques, teaching strategies, pedagogy, and the use of technology materials that facilitate flexible learning and minimize the problem of travel distance, time constraints, and creating a learning atmosphere for lifelong learning (Lindeman, 1951; Knowles, 1950; Roger, 1969; Milana & Nesbit, 2015; Knowles, Holton III & Swanson, 2015).

According to the survey of Early Childhood Teachers' Needs for Self-development, it was found that the majority of the teachers had needs for self-development on the following issues: techniques for organising activities to develop learners using active learning, an assessment and evaluation for learner development by stage of child's development, coding activities, the fundamental knowledge of children with special needs, the ability to cope with the emergencies or epidemics circumstance and the communication between parents and community. This is consistent with several studies which investigated the needs of early childhood teachers. The findings found that there was a need for self-development in writing lesson plans and organising learning experiences, the media production or innovation in early childhood education, the technology with early childhood teachers, and child development assessment, and the relationship and involvement of parents and communities (Jongpattana, Narintarangkul, & Ayudhaya, 2017; Meesomsarn, 2017; Thongplew & Chanawonges, 2017; Chuensuksomwng, 2014; Pinyoanuntapong, 2015).

## Suggestion

### 1. Suggestion for research application

Apart from the knowledge and specific

specialization that the early childhood teachers received from learning in the early childhood education program, the program and curriculum should be appropriately designed to respond with global communities' dynamics. The development guideline concerning the early childhood teacher concentrates on curriculum, teaching, and learning perspectives. Every early childhood education institute can apply this research to improve, develop, and promote their students to have sufficient capacities in the era of global communities' dynamics.

1.1 In terms of Institution, guidelines for enhancing the teacher preparation and development of Early Childhood program in Thai higher education institutions, consisting of 7 areas, (1) enhancement of the early childhood teacher profession, (2) Early Childhood teacher policy in accordance with the international standards, (3) enhancement of the early childhood teacher preparation by their identity, (4) curriculum for early childhood teacher preparation that are appropriate to the changes in the world society, (5) enhancement of teacher competency to meet the international standards, (6) enhancement of student competency for the teaching profession pathways, and (7) enhancement of supportive context for integrated teacher preparation.

1.2 In terms of organization, working for the development of early childhood teacher, the research reveals that there are seven guidelines that the research team has proposed, and these suggestions can be beneficially applied to develop and promote the teacher capacities, consisting of 4 areas, (1) teacher competency development policy, (2) stability and career development for early childhood teachers, (3) model of excellent teaching profession development, and (4) supportive context for excellent teaching development.

## 2. Suggestion for further research

2.1 In the case of a development perspective for the early childhood teachers, the provincial-base development model is used. The well-formulated teacher capacities result from collaborative working. Therefore, the next prototypical model for early childhood education can apply these capacities for further research.

2.2 In terms of teacher development perspective, the recommendation for student selection system to study and join the scholarship program, the next research can be conducted to develop an evaluation system for student selection, reflecting expected characteristics of early childhood teachers.

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