



Dek Noi Pattana Foundation:
Progress in Supporting Early
Childhood Development in 2020-21



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Background

The Dek Noi Pattana Foundation (DNPf) was established in November 2017 to support early childhood development (ECD) in Thailand. DNPf believes that all Thai children should benefit from a high quality ECD program and that realizing such a vision is critical to Thailand moving from a middle to a high-income country.

The primary focus of DNPf's work is to help enhance the training and support provided to ECD teachers and caretakers, mobilize the support of parents and local government officials, and help the development centers for children aged between 2 and 4 that are run by local authorities become high-quality early learning centers. It is doing so by building on a pilot project for training, coaching and mentoring teachers in high-quality ECD that was implemented in Surin between 2014 and 2018 and showed excellent results with respect to the development of the children's skills – physical, social, emotional and intellectual. DNPf is also endeavoring to increase national awareness of the value of high-quality ECD programs.

In this context, DNPf's objectives for the school year 2020-21 as set out in its strategy and work program were as follows:

- a) Work with the Education Faculty of Surindra Rajabhat University (SRU) to expand and sustain support for high quality ECD in Surin;
- b) Develop model centers and partnerships with like-minded organizations in other provinces, and facilitate sharing of experiences across provinces; and
- c) Facilitate sharing of knowledge and experience at the national level among government and non-government agencies.

The remainder of this report documents the good progress that has been made during 2020-21 school year in meeting these objectives, despite the major challenges posed in the early part of the year by the COVID-19 pandemic and the temporary closure of all the ECD centers.

Expanding and Sustaining Support for High Quality ECD in Surin

As set out in DNPf's strategy and work program for 2020-21, DNPf has been collaborating with the Education Faculty of SRU (under an on-going memorandum of understanding) and other provincial and local stakeholders in three broad areas: (i) fine tuning and enhancing the quality of what it has been doing in respect of in-service training; coaching, monitoring, and stakeholder engagement; (ii) working directly with SRU to develop more model centers; and (iii) supporting

model centers (beginning with centers in Salakdai) to engage with and support centers in other tambons in the same district, in line with the request of the provincial government.

In-service training. SRU and DNPf have concluded from past experience that two rounds of basic in-service training (with each round lasting five days) is the optimal process for supporting teachers and caretakers who are committed to turning their centers into high-quality early learning centers. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was not possible to hold the March in-service training event. But the October training event went ahead as planned with improvements made to the curriculum reflecting the feedback from previous events as well as inputs from national experts. Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive with 70-80% rating comprehension of the training and its applicability to their work as well as their satisfaction with the trainers and activities as “very good” (on a scale of very good, good, average, and needs improvement) and almost all the rest giving a rating of “good”. DNPf is also in discussion with the New International School (NIST) on the development of some shorter and more advanced workshops on particular topics and will shortly and together with SRU has begun to prepare for the April 2021 basic in-service training event.

Coaching and mentoring. As clearly shown by the experience with the pilot project, coaching and mentoring is an essential complement to in-service training. Only with such coaching and mentoring will most teachers and caretakers be able to develop a level of proficiency and confidence that will enable them to teach consistently at a high-quality level and achieve good results for the children in terms of their skills development. During the early part of the year and when the ECD centers were closed, in-person and in-classroom coaching was not possible. But the SRU/DNPf team advised teachers and caretakers on how best to help parents and grandparents with home schooling of their children and grandchildren. They were also able to provide teachers with additional learning materials and games to pass on to parents and grandparents to use with their children and grandchildren. The team also advised teachers and caretakers on how to get prepared for the re-opening of the centers, including on matters related to the centers’ cleanliness and safety as well as the organization of the centers and the preparation of lesson plans.

The team also used the period prior to the re-opening of the centers to take account of the experience gained during and subsequent to the pilot project in refining and updating the lesson plans for teachers and in firming up the specifics of the coaching model to be employed. This included determining how long coaching should last, how much time is required of coaches during the implementation of the coaching program, and how best to conduct the coaching. In recent months and following the re-opening of the centers, both these activities have been helpful to the team in providing coaching to centers in the program that have not yet achieved model center status. In addition, they will provide excellent building blocks for the coaching that the team will be providing to newly joining centers whose teachers and caretakers have just participated in the in-service training. For teachers and caretakers in centers that have already achieved model center status, DNPf is also in discussion with NIST on the design and

implementation of a mentoring program that would link those teachers and caretakers to teachers at NIST who can respond to questions and provide feedback and guidance.

Monitoring. As part of the pilot project, DPNF put in place a rigorous monitoring system to measure the effects of the initiative to enhance in-service training and coaching of teachers as well as the engagement of other key stakeholders on the development of the children's skills. While the system worked well for the pilot project and DPNF continued to use it in the support it provided to ECD classes in the Sangkha municipality during 2019-20 (see below), the system relied very heavily on the direct engagement of the DPNF technical team and accordingly was not sustainable or replicable on a large scale. In addition, with the decision of the National Education Council and the Department of Local Administration (DLA) in 2019 to introduce new national guidelines for monitoring the development of the children's skills, DPNF determined that going forward it should use the new national guidelines and not expect centers to be using two separate (though very similar) systems.

In practice, this has proved to be more challenging than expected, mainly because there is no national program in place to train teachers in the use of the guidelines nor a system in place to help ensure the technical quality of the data being collected. Accordingly, DPNF has used the flexibility provided by the national guidelines to develop a simplified and more user-friendly tool kit for teachers; it has trained teachers in the use of the tool kit (in October 2019 and again in October 2020); and it has provided some technical support to teachers in using the tool kit to monitor the development of the children's skills. Unfortunately, during 2019/20 this proved to be insufficient in ensuring the accuracy of the results with teachers in the already well performing centers taking the exercise seriously and doing a good job while many teachers in other centers either did not fully understand how to effectively implement the new system or were not committed to doing a good job.

To address these challenges, DPNF provided further hands-on training for teachers who now have a much better understanding of the process and more confidence in carrying it out. This is well reflected in the most recent results recorded for centers in Salakdai and Donraed (see Annex 2) which in the opinion of DPNF's technical team are a much more accurate reflection of the performance of children across those centers. As noted below, DPNF has also shared with national authorities its experience with the piloting of the national guidelines and the tool kit and other instruments it has developed.

Stakeholder engagement. As demonstrated by the pilot project and confirmed by experience from many other countries, the effective engagement of other stakeholders in supporting teachers and helping in the management of the centers is crucial to the ensuring that the centers become high quality early learning centers. Indeed, DPNF strongly believe that it is no coincidence that the centers that performed less well under the pilot project were all in tambons where there was less engagement by stakeholders such as parents, communities, and the local authorities. Moreover, provincial authorities have indicated that they believe the majority of

tambons/municipalities in Surin will face challenges with respect to the commitment and capacity of such stakeholders to effectively support teachers and centers.

Accordingly, and in partnership with an NGO (Friends Facilitator) with outstanding skills in community engagement, DNPf and SRU have identified a specific approach to facilitating the effective engagement of parents, communities, and local authorities in the management of the centers and will begin piloting this approach in 2021 in two tambons (Salakdai and Donraed). The approach includes: training selected local leaders in participatory techniques for engaging with those involved in ECD; helping those leaders engage with all concerned stakeholders and develop a detailed operation plan for supporting ECD; and providing support to those leaders in the implementation of the operation plan.

Developing more model centers. The Surin provincial authorities have requested DNPf and SRU to develop model centers in all the province's seventeen districts and from which other centers in the same district can learn. While there is no commonly agreed definition of a "model center" both DNPf and SRU believe that the results achieved with respect to the development of the children's skills merit 13 centers/classes in four districts that have received support from DNPf/SRU being designated as "model centers/classes". These include the four classes in the Thatum Municipality, the four centers in Tambon Salakdai (in Muang Surin) and one center in Tambon Donraed (in Amphur Rattanaburi) as well as the four classes in Sangkha Municipality. The four classes in Sangkha Municipality have been included in the list following an intensive year of coaching support from the DNPf team during 2019/20 and in recognition of the outstanding results achieved (see Annex 1). In particular, and by the end of the school year, all the children across all four classes were able to independently perform key social, emotional and intellectual skills and 93% were able to perform key physical skills.

In this context DNPf and SRU are currently focused on supporting the development of model classes in Tambon Nongsanit (in Amphur Chompra) and model centers in Tambon Tanee (in Amphur Prasat). The teachers and caretakers responsible for these classes have already benefited from in-service training events provided by DNPf and SRU (including the most recent training event in October) and during the remainder of the school year have been provided with coaching support from the DNPf/SRU team as well as support in monitoring the development of the children's skills. The DNPf/SRU team has also been engaging directly with parents and grandparents as well as with the responsible education committee and the tambon authorities to facilitate their support and active engagement in the process.

Helping model centers support other centers in the same district. In response to the request from provincial authorities, DNPf and SRU have begun helping model centers support other centers in the same district. In particular, the DNPf/SRU team has been working with teachers and the local authorities in Salakdai to support the teachers and caretakers at centers in Tambon Nadee which like Tambon Salakdai is also in Amphur Muang. This has included: inviting teachers and caretakers from centers in Tambon Nadee to participate in the October training program and to observe the work of the teachers and caretakers in the model centers in Tambon Salakdai;

helping the teachers in the model centers in Salakdai coach the teachers and caretakers in the centers in Tambon Nadee; helping put in place effective systems for monitoring the development of the children's skills in the centers in Tambon Nadee; and providing guidance to the education officer and the local authority as well as parents and education committees in Tambon Nadee.

Developing Model Centers and Partnerships with Like-Minded Organizations in other Provinces

In spite of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic DPNF has also been able to strengthen its partnerships with centers and organizations working in other provinces in support of ECD. In particular DPNF is moving forward with putting in place a partnership with the Education Faculty of Rajabhat Buri Ram and with the Mechai Bamboo School to roll out a similar program of support for ECD centers to the program now in place in Surin. The program began in March 2021 with support in classroom organization and creating a safe and supporting learning environment in the Ko Klang center in Buri Ram. This will be followed by the provision of coaching and monitoring support to teachers and caretakers in the Kok Klang center who have already participated in the in-service training events in Surin and including in the most recent event in October 2020 which was also attended by teachers and students from the Bamboo School. Once this program is up and running, DPNF hopes to develop similar programs of support in Roi Et and Prachin Buri that will build on partnerships already established with particular centers in those provinces as well as well as DPNF's work with other organizations.

During the course of the year DPNF has also been able to further enhance its partnership with the Yuvabhatana Foundation which is working with ECD centers in Lopburi. In particular and following the participation of the Integrated Child Center Active Learning Project (ICAP) of the Yuvabhatana Foundation in the DPNF/NIST consultation workshop in January 2020, DPNF introduced the ICAP team to the Rector and Education Faculty of TRU. This introduction has now led to members of the Education Faculty of TRU working with the ICAP team in supporting teachers in a number of ECD centers in Lopburi.

Facilitating Sharing of Knowledge and Experience at the National Level

In spite of the challenges posed by COVID-19, the DPNF team has also made substantial progress in facilitating the sharing of knowledge and experience with respect to ECD at the national level. Of particular importance have been the discussions DPNF has had with NESDC, ONEC, and DLA around the dissemination of the policy brief for ECD as well as the tool kit and the other materials DPNF has developed to support the effective implementation of the national guidelines for monitoring the development of the children's skills. In both respects, it has been agreed that DLA should take the lead in the follow-up work, with support from DPNF. In particular a national

forum with key stakeholders will be organized during 2021 in order to facilitate dissemination and dialogue around the policy brief and encourage implementation of its recommendations. DNPf will also work closely with the Education Division of DLA to carry forward the work on the national monitoring guidelines. The Director General of DLA has taken a personal interest in all of this work and been directly involved in the discussions as well as visiting Surin in October 2020 to open the in-service training event.

DNPf has also strengthened its partnerships with the Council of Deans of the Education Faculties of the Rajabhat Universities as well as with Thepsatri Rajabhat University (TRU) in Lopburi, whose Rector also participated in the opening of the DNPf/SRU in-service training event in Surin in October 2020. The Rector of TRU has agreed to take the lead in consulting with the Deans of the Faculties of Education of other Rajabhats on the importance of following the example of SRU in supporting the training of teachers at the ECD centers as well as the tambon education officers and in collaboration with the tambon authorities.

During 2020, DNPf has also further strengthened its partnerships with other non-government stakeholders. In particular, it has continued to work very closely with NIST and benefit from its support with respect to the basic in-service training program. In addition, NIST has agreed to help DNPf and SRU with the development and implementation of a series of more advanced workshops for teachers that have already benefited from the basic in-service training program. It has also agreed to support a mentoring scheme under which teachers at NIST will provide continued support and advice to teachers in the model centers to help them maintain and even improve on the high quality they have already achieved. DNPf hopes that its partnership with NIST can be a model for similar partnerships with other international schools which have already indicated their interest in supporting similar kinds of activities in other provinces.

Concluding Remarks

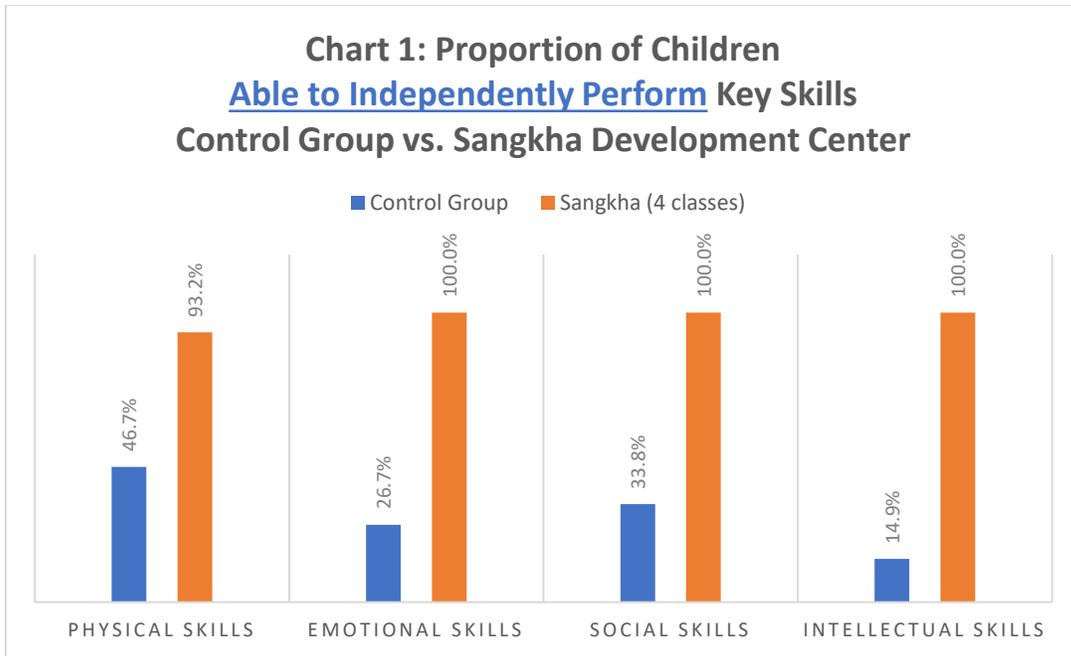
In spite of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, DNPf has made good progress in implementing its 2020-21 strategy and work program. In Surin and working closely with the Education Faculty of SRU, teachers and caretakers were advised on how best to help parents and grandparents with home schooling of their children and grandchildren while the centers were closed. Once the centers were re-opened DNPf/SRU was able to resume its full program of activities with respect to in-service training, coaching, monitoring and stakeholder engagement. In this context DNPf/SRU has started working in more amphurs and in more centers in the province as well as helping teachers in model centers with the coaching of teachers in other centers in the same amphur. The planned expansion of DNPf's work to other provinces was delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic but is now well advanced in Buri Ram. At the national level DNPf has also made substantial progress in facilitating the sharing of knowledge and experience with respect to ECD, and has strengthened its partnerships with the DLA, ONEC, NESDC and the Education Faculties of the Rajabhat Universities as well as with NIST and other organizations

outside of government. In all of these respects, DNPf looks forward to building on the good progress during the remainder of 2020-21 and in the years to come. DNPf is also most grateful for the financial support of key partners including the Ton Poh Fund and the John F. Kennedy Foundation of Thailand as well as for the financial support of individuals that have made all of the good progress possible.

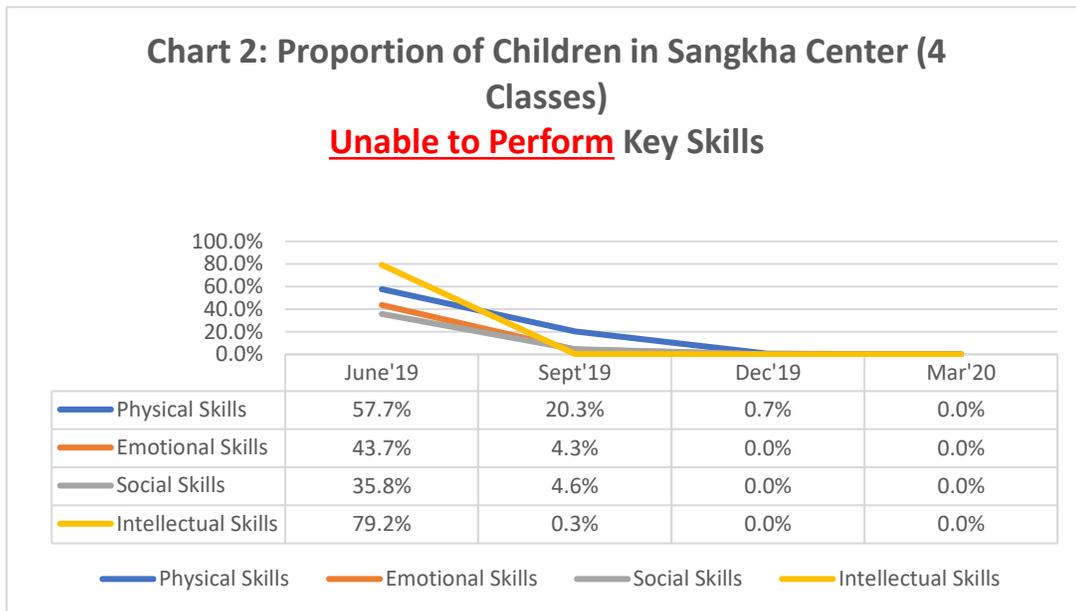
Annex 1: Development of Children’s Skills in the Sangkha Municipal ECD Center 2019-20

During 2019/20, the DNPf team supported the Sangkha Municipal ECD Center in enhancing the quality of each of the four classes in the center, using the same approach adopted for the pilot project: in-service training; coaching; monitoring of the development of the children’s skills; and engagement with parents, the education committee and the local authorities. Teachers and caretakers from the four classes participated in the bi-annual training organized by the Foundation. Coaching included visits by the Foundation’s project team to the four classes to provide direct support and advice to the teachers and caretakers as well as engagement on the Line Group where each center was able to share insights and experiences, ask questions, and get advice. Monitoring of the children’s skills followed the same rigorous evaluation system put in place for the pilot project with children’s physical, emotional, social and intellectual skills being measured periodically throughout the year. Throughout the year the Foundation also engaged regularly with the Mayor and other municipal officials as well as with the center’s education committee and with parents and grandparents to discuss the program and its expected impact on the development of the children’s skills.

The results of the program in terms of the development of the children’s skills proved to be outstanding. By the end of the school year all the children were able to independently perform emotional, social and intellectual skills and almost all were able to independently perform physical skills (see chart 1). Moreover, these levels of performance were much above those recorded for the control group during the pilot project.



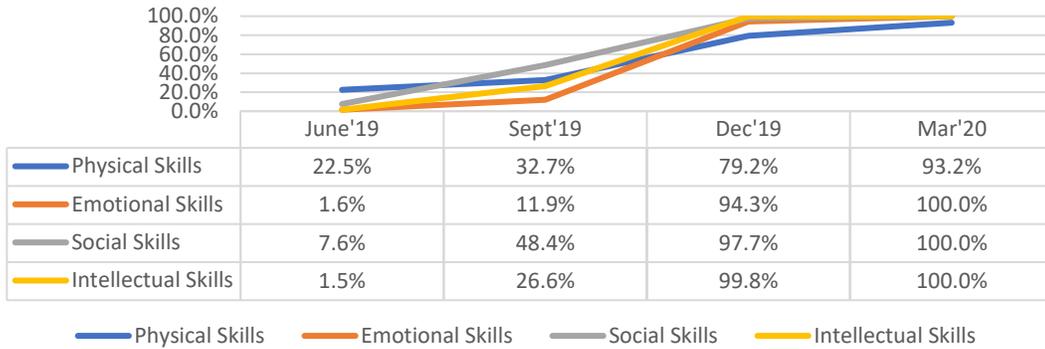
During the early part of the school year the proportion of children unable to perform key skills declined significantly (see chart 2) with some moving into the intermediate category of being able to perform key skills with some help.



Between September and December there was a major increase in the proportion of children being able to independently perform key skills and a further improvement (mainly in the area of physical skills) during the remainder of the school year (see chart 3).

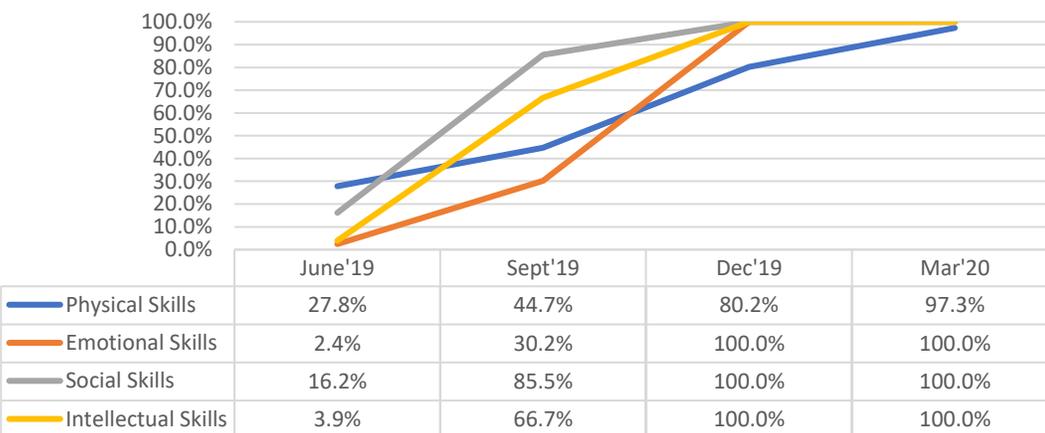
Chart 3: Proportion of Children in Sangkha Center (4 Classes)

Able to Independently Perform Key Skills

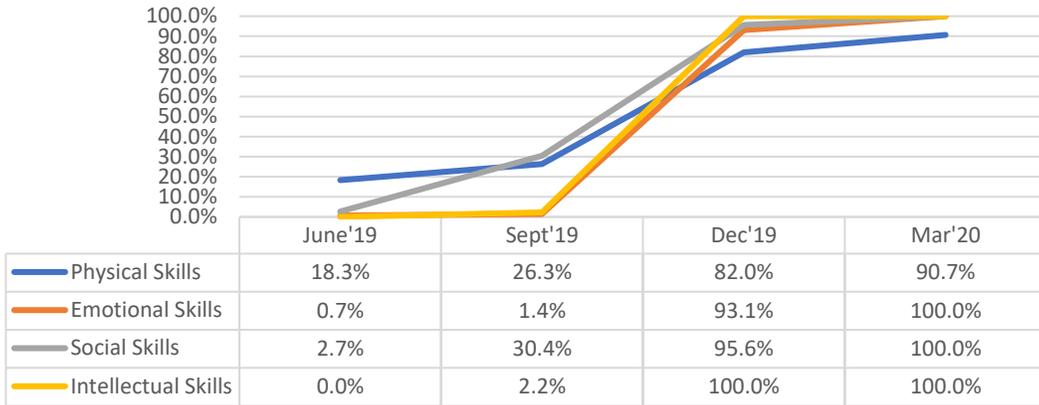


It is also gratifying to note that the huge improvement in children’s skills occurred across all four classes with the most significant improvements occurring in the period from September to December 2019 (see charts 4-7). This is very consistent with the pattern observed in many other centers and classes during the pilot project.

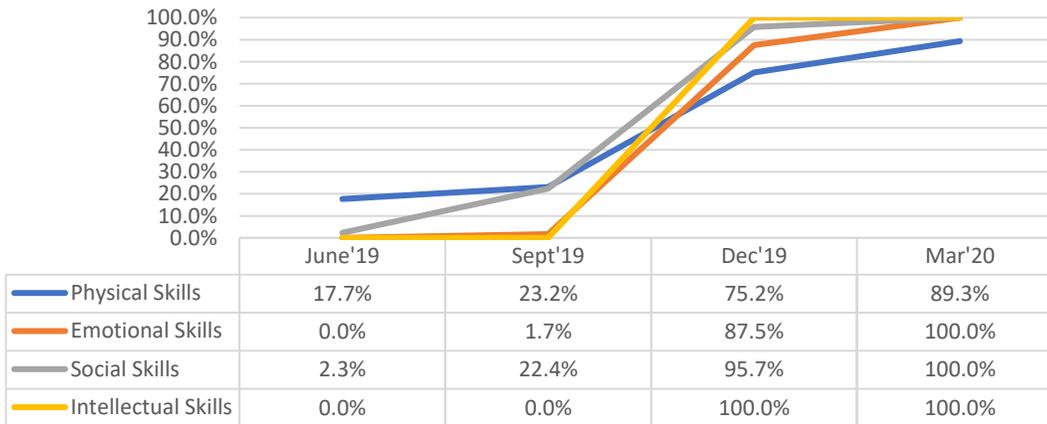
Chart 4: Proportion of Children
Able to Independently Perform Key Skills
Kratinoi Class



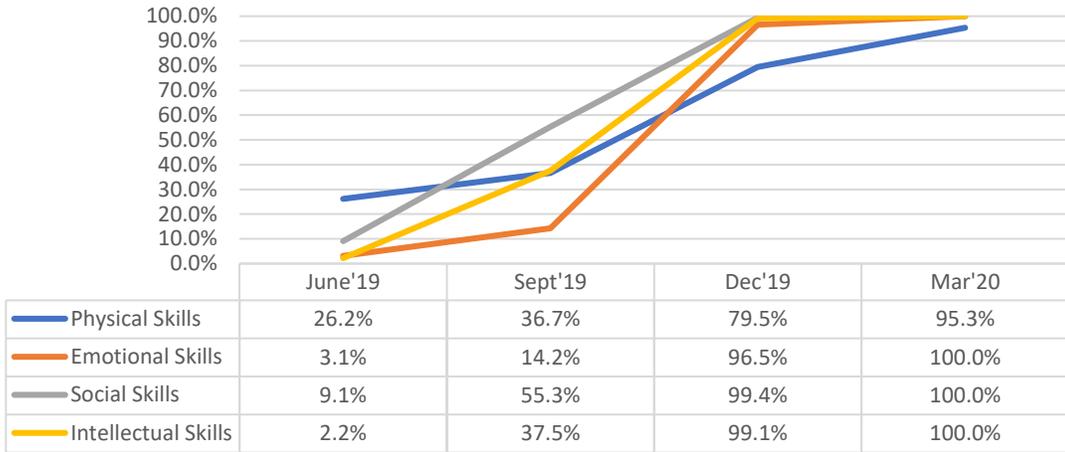
**Chart 5: Proportion of Children
Able to Independently Perform Key Skills
Moonoi Class**



**Chart 6: Proportion of Children
Able to Independently Perform Key Skills
Noknoi Class**



**Chart 7: Proportion of Children
Able to Independently Perform Key Skills
Puengnoi Class**



ANNEX 2 Development of Children’s Skills in ECD Centers in Salakdai and Donraed

Competencies

Competencies are actions or behaviors that are age-specific and cover many areas of a child’s development and what a child can do. Competencies in each development area can be evaluated through the children’s behaviors in each development stage. Therefore, the competencies can serve as a guide to identify what behaviors each age group should be showing. It is not to be used as a pass or fail test in the case where a child has not yet demonstrated skills in one of the competencies. Rather, the measurement of competencies can serve as a guide for parents, guardians and teachers to be able to identify what activities are needed to support a child’s development

Early childhood experts and early childhood development (ECD) organizations in both developed and developing countries view the measurement of competencies as critical to enhancing the quality of ECD. In this regard, the clearer and more detailed the guidelines for measuring competencies can be the more they can help parents, guardians and teachers understand children and can use best practices to support their growth and development. It is for this reason that the National Early Childhood Education Act, section 17 (6), stipulates that “the early childhood development subcommittee shall develop competencies and domains for early childhood development”.

The Office of the Education Council in Thailand, with the support of UNICEF, has rolled out research that observed 600 children nationwide covering many provinces. As a result, it has sparked the concept of designing “guidelines” for parents, caretakers and teachers. Based on research, domains and indicator guidelines for developing children’s competencies ages 0-5 years old were developed. The guidelines aim to allow teachers and caretakers to conveniently and accurately support competency development to the best of their ability.

Implementing Competency Development in Early Childhood Education in the 2019 Academic year.

Ahead of the roll-out of the national guidelines in 2020, the Dek Noi Pattana Foundation (DNPF) decided to pilot the use of the national guidelines for children ages 2-3 years old in 2019 in some of the centers in Surin where DNFP was already working. The competency domains and indicators of these two groups are as follows.

Table 1: Competencies of 2-year-old children

Domain	Indicators
<p>Domain 1 Motor Development and physical well-being has 3 sub-domains:</p> <p>Sub-domain 1.1 Development of gross motor skills includes walking, running, jumping, stopping, climbing stairs, throwing balls, and riding bicycles.</p> <p>Sub-domain 1.2 Development of fine motor skills includes drawing with the dominant hand, wiggling both thumbs.</p> <p>Sub-domain 1.3 Development of personal care includes knowing when they need to use the bathroom, getting dressed, washing and drying hands, brushing teeth, turning on tap water.</p> <p>Domain 2 Perception and learning development includes singing, building blocks, matching shapes colors and similar pictures, drawing, understanding reasoning, understanding sequence, understanding depth perception, copying drawings (vertical line, circle, crosses), matching items, retrieving items from verbal commands, puzzles.</p> <p>Domain 3 Language development and comprehension includes speaking, naming items, naming body parts, sharing their emotions, naming equipment/materials, imitating sounds, naming the primary colors, listening to a story and answering short questions, showing interest in books, observing and asking “why” questions.</p> <p>Domain 4 Emotional and social development includes separating from their parents without crying, telling their needs, imitating grownups, expressing ownership, talking to acquainted people, being patient, knowing their gender, talking about their experience.</p>	<p>21</p> <p>3</p> <p>11</p> <p>33</p> <p>16</p> <p>9</p>
Total	93

Table 2: Competencies of 3-year-old children

Domain	Indicators
Domain 1 Motor Development and Physical Well – Being	
Sub – domain 1.1 Motor Skill Development	
Area 1.1.1 Gross Motor	9
Competency #1 Children demonstrate strength and coordination of movements using Large muscles.	
Area 1.1.2 Fine Motor	7
Competency #2 Children demonstrate strength and coordination of movements using small muscles.	
Area 1.1.3 Sensorimotor	8
Competency #3 Children are able to use their senses (e.g.: sight, hearing, touch etc.) to guide their movement.	
Sub – domain 1.2 Physical Well-Being	
Area 1.2.1 Nutrition	1
Competency #4 Children eat a variety of nutritious and safe foods.	
Area 1.2.2 Physical Fitness	7
Competency #5 Children demonstrate physical strength and endurance.	
Area 1.2.3 Safety	6
Competency #6 Children express understanding of safety.	
Area 1.2.4 Autonomy and Personal Care	
Competency #7 Children demonstrate autonomy in daily living.	14
Domain 2 Social Development	
Sub-domain 2.1 Interaction with Adults	
Competency #8 Children interact with adults with appropriate social skills.	11
Sub-domain 2.2 Interaction with Peers	
Competency #9 Children demonstrate positive social skills with peers.	8
Sub-domain 2.3 Adaptive Social Behavior	
Competency #10 Children demonstrate awareness of their behavior and its effect on other people and the environment.	2
Sub-domain 2.4 Appreciating Diversity	
Competency #11 Children recognize, appreciate, and respect similarities and differences in people of diversity.	2
Domain 3 Emotional Development	
Sub-domain 3.1 Self Concept	1
Competency #12 Children are able to perceive themselves as unique individuals and demonstrate awareness of preference.	
Sub-domain 3.2 Emotional Self-Control	9
Competency #13 Children follow rules and daily routine and demonstrate an appropriate level of emotional control.	

Domain	Indicators
<p>Sub-domain 3.3 Self-Efficacy Competency #14 Children demonstrate belief in their abilities</p>	4
<p>Domain 4 Cognitive Development</p>	
<p>Sub-domain 4.1 Memory Competency #15 Children demonstrate basic memory skills</p>	2
<p>Sub-domain 4.2 Basic Concept Formation is not shown in 3-year-old children. Competency #16 Children demonstrate an understanding of time, space, positioning, characteristics, etc., including grouping objects in the environment.</p>	-
<p>Sub-domain 4.3 Logic and Reasoning Competency #17 Children demonstrate an understanding of reasoning.</p>	2
<p>Sub-domain 4.4 Critical Thinking Competency A #18 Children are able to compare and separate similarities, differences and evaluate the situation. Competency B #19 Children are able to solve problems.</p>	3
<p>Sub-domain 4.5 Concentration Competency #20 Children are able to concentrate on doing activities.</p>	3
<p>Sub-domain 4.6 Mathematics Competency #21 Children are able to read, count, and understanding numbers.</p>	1
<p>Sub-domain 4.7 Sciences Area 4.7.1 Living Things Competency #22 Children express eagerness to learn and experiment by observing, listening, asking, touching, and experimenting with living things.</p>	2
<p>Area 4.7.2 Non-Living Things Competency #23 Children express eagerness to learn and experiment by observing, listening, asking, touching, and experimenting with non-living things.</p>	1
<p>Sub-domain 4.8 Social Studies Area 4.8.1 Family Competency #24 Children demonstrate awareness of the characteristics and roles of the family.</p>	5
<p>Area 4.8.2 Community and Society Competency #25 Children demonstrate awareness of their community, social dependency, and social roles of various people in the community.</p>	4
<p>Sub-domain 4.9 Pollution and Environmental Preservations Competency #26 Children preserve their environment and avoid pollutions.</p>	1

Domain	Indicators
<p>Sub-domain 4.10 Economic Value Competency #27 Children demonstrate awareness of the economic values of various things.</p>	1
<p>Domain 5 Language Development</p>	
<p>Sub-domain 5.1 Language Comprehension and Usage</p>	1
<p>Area 5.1.1 Vocabulary</p>	
<p>Competency #28 Children are able to understand and use vocabulary.</p>	
<p>Area 5.1.2 Syntax and Grammar</p>	2
<p>Competency #29 Children demonstrate development in using grammar and sentence structure.</p>	
<p>Area 5.1.3 Comprehension</p>	4
<p>Competency #30 Children demonstrate language comprehension and concept understanding from speaking language.</p>	
<p>Sub-domain 5.2 Communications</p>	
<p>Area 5.2.1 Verbal Communication</p>	2
<p>Competency #31 Children are able to understand and use speaking language properly according to their needs.</p>	
<p>Area 5.2.2 Non-verbal Communication</p>	2
<p>Competency #32 Children are able to communicate with facial expressions, gestures and symbols efficiently.</p>	
<p>Sub-domain 5.3 Literacy</p>	
<p>Area 5.3.1 Reading</p>	3
<p>Competency #33 Children are able to identify and pronounce letters, and simple words.</p>	
<p>Area 5.3.2 Writing</p>	1
<p>Competency #34 Children are able to write letters and simple words.</p>	
<p>Domain 6 Moral Development</p>	
<p>Sub-domain 6.1 Self-Discipline</p>	13
<p>Competency #35 Children demonstrate self-control.</p>	
<p>Sub-domain 6.2 Moral Development</p>	6
<p>Competency #36 Children behave reflecting understanding of morality.</p>	
<p>Domain 7 Creative Development</p>	
<p>Sub-domain 7.1 Performing Arts</p>	
<p>Area 7.1.1 Music and Dance</p>	8
<p>Competency #37 Children are able to perform musical activities and move with music</p>	

Domain	Indicators
Area 7.1.2 Dramatic Arts Competency #38 Children are able to perform in dramatic arts activities	2
Sub-domain 7.2 Visual Arts Competency #39 Children are able to draw, sculpt and craft	3
Total	161

During the 2019 school year DNPf tested the competency guidelines to support early childhood development for children 2 to 3 years old in 4 ECD centers in Salakdai: 1) Ban Salakdai, 2) Ban Tra Bak, 3) Ban Tra Ban and 4) Wat Chai Prakhom ECD center. It has also tested the guidelines in 6 ECD centers in Donraed: 1) Ban Nong Hin, 2) Wat Chai Sisaat, 3) Wat Khom Si Ban Bueng, 4) Wat Thung Sawang Si Arom, 5) Ban Nongtaw Baoseaw, and 6) Wat Mai Ban Yang ECD center. The stages of pilot testing were as follows.

First stage

After attending the Education Council’s Early Childhood Standards and Competency training meeting in June 2019, DNPf recognized the importance of training teachers in the use of the national guidelines and provided knowledge, resources and support for teachers in observing and developing the children’s competencies.

DNPf also organized a meeting with the teachers from the Demonstration school ECD center at Surin Rajabhat University (SRU) to analyze the indicators in each domain as well as test the competency guidelines in observing the children’s skills. It also organized a hands-on training session about developing competency skills in early childhood based on their age and signed an MOU with SRU to monitor the children’s performance.

Second stage

After training teachers from all 10 ECD centers, the teachers implemented the competency guidelines in practice with the children in their centers and reported the results. The SAO Chief Administrative officer and the Deputy along with SAO education officers understood the importance of such monitoring and participated in this ECD movement.

To assist teachers in effectively monitoring the children’s competencies, the DNPf team extracted relevant indicators for 2 and 3 year olds (as indicated above). In addition, the team has developed a separate teacher’s guide to show teachers step by step how to observe behaviors to be in line with the indicators set for 2 and 3 year olds. It has also prepared forms for teachers to tick/fill in the monitoring results.

Third Stage

DNPF along with the ECD centers and SRU organized training sessions to educate parents from all 10 ECD centers on observing and monitoring the children's competency skills. Parents were trained to monitor their child's competencies at home and report their observations back. DNPF designed competency guidelines with support from ECD experts.

Challenges in monitoring early childhood competency skills

DNPF organized training sessions to use the competency guidelines to monitor the development of the children's skills as they participated in daily activities. It was found that some of the teachers in the ECD centers did not realize the importance of monitoring and observing the children's competency skills. The data reports from these centers were unreliable. DNPF addressed this issue by sending a technical team to work with teachers, share knowledge and support teachers in each center.

Implementing Competency Development in Early Childhood Education in the 2020 Academic year.

DNPF worked on building the children's competency skills in the 2020 academic year, by continuing to use the competency guidelines in the same 10 ECD centers as in the previous year, including 6 ECD centers under the Donraed SAO and 4 ECD centers under the Salakdai SAO. The first monitoring of the children's competency skills took place in July and August 2020, and the results are shown in table 3.

Table 3: Competency Skills of Children Ages 2 and 3 in ECD Centers in Salakdai and Donraed SAOs, First Semester, 2020 (% of children able to perform skills)

	Salakdai	Salakdai	Donraed	Donraed	Total	Total
2 yr olds	Average	Range	Average	Range	Average	Range
Domain 1	49	45-56	56	36-78	54	36-78
Domain 2	29	11-50	24	11-44	26	11-50
Domain 3	44	37-51	44	19-68	44	19-68
Domain 4	49	44-53	49	32-57	49	32-57
3 yr olds	Average	Range	Average	Range	Average	Range
Domain 1	76	65-83	75	69-83	75	65-83
Domain 2	77	70-83	71	52-92	73	52-92
Domain 3	73	66-80	75	63-90	74	63-90
Domain 4	74	66-82	53	44-68	61	44-82
Domain 5	75	66-80	63	43-80	68	43-80
Domain 6	78	73-83	69	45-78	73	45-83
Domain 7	77	70-84	74	62-83	75	62-84

Overall, the DPNF/SRU team believes that there has been an improvement in the quality of monitoring in 2020 compared with 2019 as a result of the increased training and other support that has been provided. In particular, the centers in Salakdai appear to be doing a very good job in following the guidelines. As for the centers in Donraed, there were some issues with the evaluation results not being consistent with the children’s skills which resulted to unstable records and a very wide variation in results across centers and for particular domains This may be due to the teacher’s lack of performance skills and not recognizing the importance of monitoring the children’s competencies even after going through DPNF’s training and receiving support from DPNF. This also may be because the ECD guidelines of developing the children’s skills have not been widely distributed as yet by the SAO.

Nonetheless, the DNPf believes that the results are sufficiently accurate to be valuable in helping teachers determine what changes and improvements to make in their lesson plans. For example, the results across all centers for domain 2 for 2 year-old children are relatively low – a reflection of challenges with respect to language development because most children speak Khmer or Lao rather than the national language and a signal of the importance of devoting more attention to this set of skills. For individual children, the results will also help teachers identify which specific skills they need to focus on more.

A further monitoring of the development of the children’s skills will take place in March and April 2021. The DNPf/SRU team will provide further support to this endeavor and has updated its user-friendly guidelines for building competency skills for children ages 2 and 3 years old with a complete form for recording the children’s performance. DNPf is also considering establishing a quality assurance monitoring system and proposing to the SAO and teachers to use it as guidelines.

Going forward it is most important that the SAO Chief Executive, Chief Administrator, education officer and the education committees recognize the importance of educational management, competency development and have a clear systematic monitoring system for evaluating the teachers continuously. Early childhood competency development is very important and is never a finished product and should continually be practiced. Teachers must recognize the importance of building early childhood competency skills as seen in the Early Childhood Education Act, section 17 (6) which stipulates that the Child Development Committee must create early childhood development competencies and indicators.

Developing competency skills in early childhood also requires that teachers, parents and caretakers and teachers support children to the best of their ability so that the children can develop their skills to their full potential. In that regard the following are some of the qualities that will help teachers (as well as parents and caretakers) support competency development.

1. To be knowledgeable about the competencies and understand the components of the competencies in each domain so that they can evaluate the children’s behaviors.
2. To have good observation skills and an ability to detect behaviors. Teachers in particular need to communicate with their body language and gestures and use their voice and eyes while communicating. They need to be perceptive and create an atmosphere that motivates children.
3. To be open-minded, have a positive attitude and believe in the potential of each child and believe that every child has the potential to develop.

4. To be able to work as a team since working with parents and peers will build a knowledge exchange and support system to promote competency development.
5. To have good planning and management skills because competency development requires a systematic process with goals, plans and procedures to reflect the child's behavior continuously.