

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC )  
OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
First Regular Session )

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SENATE

S. No. 299

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Introduced by Senator S. R. Osmeña III

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EXPLANATORY NOTE

Education is a right and not a privilege. It is an instrument in awakening a child to the socio-political, economic, and cultural realities. It is also an important weapon in shaping up a child's moral and spiritual values. As such, providing quality education is the most important function of the State and local government.

Preparatory education is a stage which is vital in shaping up the values, developing the academic interest of the child and enhancing the confidence and self-esteem of the child. In fact, child educators agree that starting formal education at preschool age has substantial benefits to the child and to the society as well.

Despite the benefits derived, only few children can avail of a preparatory education. Children from poor families are usually left behind and wait until they reach the right age to be admitted to grade school.

This bill will give opportunity to many children who maybe gifted but are born to poor parents a chance to avail of an early education especially those in the rural areas where pre-schooling is not yet widespread. This is also in accordance with the provision of the Constitution mandating the State to protect and promote the right of the citizens to quality education and to take appropriate steps to make such education available to all.

*S. Osmeña III*

SERGIO OSMEÑA III  
Senator

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC )  
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AN ACT  
INSTITUTIONALIZING FREE PUBLIC PREPARATORY EDUCATION,  
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:*

1 SECTION 1. **Title.** – This Act shall be known as the “**Free Public**  
2 **Preparatory Education Act of 2004.**”

3 SEC. 2. **Declaration of Policy.** – It is hereby declared the policy of the  
4 State to institutionalize and provide free public preparatory education to all  
5 qualified Filipino children in order to promote their physical, social, intellectual,  
6 emotional and skills stimulation and value-formation to sufficiently prepare them  
7 for formal elementary education.

8 SEC. 3. **Statement of Objectives.** – The Free Public Preparatory  
9 Education program, hereinafter referred to as the Program, shall be implemented  
10 in accordance with the following objectives:

11 a. To make preparatory education compulsory for all five (5) to six (6)  
12 years old children as part of the formal education ladder;  
13 To implement an adequate preparatory education program that will effectively  
14 provide the necessary physical, social, intellectual and emotional activities  
15 needed by the preparatory school children.

16 SEC. 4. **Definitions.** – For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall  
17 mean:

1 (a) Free Public Preparatory Education – children from five (5) to six (6) old  
2 enrolled in day care centers established, administered, maintained and  
3 funded by national and local government units, and those public  
4 preparatory schools which may be established by law, shall be free  
5 from payment of tuition and other school fees; These qualified children  
6 shall finish one (1) year of schooling before they are admitted to  
7 Grade I.

8 (b) Tuition Fee – refers to the fee representing direct costs of instructions,  
9 training and other related activities and for the student's use of the  
10 instruction and training facilities.

11 (c) Other School Fees – refer to those fees, which cover other necessary  
12 costs supportive of instruction, including but not limited to medical and  
13 dental, athletics, library and laboratory fees.

14 **SEC. 5. Implementation of Free Public Kindergarten Education.** – The  
15 system of free public preparatory education is hereby institutionalized as part of  
16 compulsory basic formal primary education. It shall commence on the school  
17 year immediately following the approval of this Act. In case there is no adequate  
18 number of classrooms available for immediate use, the existing classrooms in  
19 public elementary schools and barangay day care centers shall be used  
20 temporarily until the national government provides for sufficient facilities to  
21 accommodate the preparatory school children nationwide.

22 **SEC. 6. Applicability of Other Laws.** – Republic Act No. 5546 which  
23 prohibits the collection of contribution from school children in the public, primary,  
24 intermediate and high schools, shall be applicable to public preparatory schools.

25 **SEC. 7. Implementing Agency; Powers and Functions.** – The Program  
26 shall be implemented by the Department of Education (DepEd) through the  
27 organization of preparatory school classes in public elementary schools.

28 Pursuant to said mandate, the DepEd shall exercise the following  
29 powers and functions:

- 1 a. Oversee, administer and supervise the implementation of the  
2 program throughout the country;
- 3 b. Provide properly trained preparatory education teachers and make  
4 available all existing facilities of public elementary schools for pre-  
5 school use until funds for the construction of pre-school classrooms  
6 are made available;
- 7 c. Authorize the opening of preparatory education classes in all public  
8 elementary schools as part of the education ladder, including the  
9 registration/ accreditation of barangay day care centers that are  
10 currently holding preparatory school classes;
- 11 d. Formulate a standard preparatory education curriculum in order to  
12 attain quality, efficiency and access. In addition to providing the pre  
13 school children with general skills, knowledge and values, such a  
14 curriculum must include reading and arithmetic.
- 15 e. Provide a regular training program to preparatory education  
16 teachers to keep pace with modern trends, methodologies and  
17 concepts on early childhood education.
- 18 f. Perform such other duties as may be necessary and relevant to  
19 ensure the effective implementation of the program.

20 **SEC. 8. Appropriations.** – The amount necessary to implement the  
21 provisions of this Act shall be charged to the appropriations for the DepEd under  
22 the current General Appropriations Act. Thereafter, such amount as maybe  
23 necessary for the continuous implementation of this Act shall be included in the  
24 Annual General Appropriations Act.

25 **SEC. 9. Repealing Clause.** – All laws or parts thereof, inconsistent with  
26 any provision of this Act shall be deemed repealed or modified accordingly.

27 **SEC. 10. Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its  
28 complete publication in two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,