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A brief description of the Chilean Education System

The Chilean system has four levels of education with universal coverage up to the standards of any first world country.

Chile invests 7.5% of its gross domestic product in education, a considerable amount which surpasses some developed countries like Finland or the United States, to name a few.

Chile's education system is decentralized; administration for each establishment is executed by persons or municipal and private institutions known as sustainers, who are responsible for managing the educational establishment on behalf of the State.

The system is made up of subsidized establishments, municipal and private establishments with four levels of education: pre-school or early education, elementary or primary, high school and higher education.

Coverage of Chile's education system is practically universal. 99.7% of all children between the age of 6 and 14 are enrolled in elementary or primary school (EGB).

87.7% of all children between the age of 15 and 18 are enrolled in high school. 2009 higher education figures indicate that total enrollment in 2008 came to 752,182 students, the highest rate in history and up 14% compared to 2007. The system coverage is already surpassing 40%, which is very high and even comparable to some developed countries.

Advances have been possible because the education system is obligatory and the most recent administrations have put forth important efforts aimed to improve education

quality.

PRE-SCHOOL OR EARLY EDUCATION

THIS IS THE FIRST LEVEL OF EDUCATION IN THE CHILEAN EDUCATION SYSTEM AND IT IS PROVIDED FREE-OF-CHARGE FOR CHILDREN UP TO THE AGE OF SIX.



Pre-school coverage has increased substantially over the last few years. The category currently extends throughout the entire country, covering over 30% of the total population under the age of six.

Education for this category is not obligatory, but the benefits provided by personalized education for boys and girls is so important that it is even considered an effective mechanism for interrupting the poverty cycle. Pre-school education is provided by a wide range of public and private institutions, including the following:

1. Municipal and Subsidized Private Schools: These are free of charge and attend children between the ages of 4 and 6.
2. Subsidized private schools with shared financing: these attend children between the ages of 4 and 6, are financed by contributions from parents (monthly payments) and State supervision. These are

supervised by Mineduc (Chilean Ministry of Education).

3. Preschools and day care centers managed by the National Board of Early Education (JUNJI): attends children between the ages of 3 months to 6 six years old. These are free of charge and are supervised by Junji.

4. Private preschools and day care centers: these attend children between the ages of 3 months and 6 years old. These are paid for and supervised by JUNJI if registered.

5. Day care centers managed by Integra Foundation: these attend children between the ages of 3 months and 4 years old.

6. Preschools and day care centers managed by companies: these attend children between the ages of 3 months and 6 years old. They are free of charge and supervised by Mineduc or Junji.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

THIS IS THE FIRST LEVEL OF OBLIGATORY EDUCATION AND IT INCLUDES TWO FOUR-YEAR CYCLES. THE SYSTEM PROVIDES SCHOLARSHIPS AND OTHER BENEFITS.



Elementary education consists of eight years of study divided into two cycles. The first

four-year cycle teaches basic contents with universal methodology.

The second four-year cycle features contents organized into subjects and more specific educational activities. The structure of this level has been designed to provide students with an integral, general and basic education. Integral in that the system encompasses all aspects of human development: affective, cognitive and ethical, focusing on the process of growth and personal self-affirmation and providing guidelines as to the way the person relates with others and with the world.

General in that it promotes lessons learned and a wide range of knowledge pertaining to humanistic, scientific and artistic areas. Elementary because it provides the minimal formal education required in keeping with study plans.

SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION

CHILDREN BETWEEN THE AGES OF 13 AND 17 PREPARE FOR UNIVERSITY EDUCATION AND ACTIVE INTEGRATION INTO THE WORKPLACE.



HIGHER EDUCATION

AFTER COMPLETING HIGH SCHOOL STUDIES, HIGHER EDUCATION IS PROVIDED

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Secondary school education lasts four years and is divided into two areas: scientific-humanistic and technical-professional.

Scientific-humanistic education is divided into two cycles and includes general education subjects which aim to prepare students to enter university.

The first cycle is ninth and tenth grade, while the second cycle is eleventh and twelfth grade. Technical-professional education aims to prepare students for the workplace. The same is made up of different categories: commercial, industrial, agricultural and maritime: these are chosen starting in tenth grade.

After completing a high school education under any category, students receive a high school diploma and are ready to enter university. Likewise, those graduating from technical-professional institutions are awarded a technical degree in the specialty they have studied.

Up until 2003, only elementary education was obligatory. Starting in 2003, a constitutional reform established that high school was free and obligatory for all Chileans under the age of 18. The State thus became responsible for guaranteeing access to twelve years of elementary and high school education.

Students graduating from high school and planning to enter state-owned and private universities are required to take the university placement test (PSU). According to their scores on this test, these students will be allowed to enter different careers at the different universities throughout the country.



UNIVERSIDAD CATÓLICA, CAMPUS LO CONTADOR (PHOTO:REVISTA PLACERES)

- UNIVERSITIES

- PROFESSIONAL INSTITUTES

- TECHNICAL COLLEGES

UNIVERSITIES

UNIVERSITIES OFFER PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL CAREERS. PROFESSIONAL CAREERS LAST A MINIMUM FOUR YEARS AND LEAD TO A PROFESSIONAL DEGREE, WHILE TECHNICAL CAREERS NORMALLY LAST TWO YEARS AND LEAD TO A TECHNICAL DEGREE.

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Universities give professional and technical degrees. The former are certificates provided to those who have completed the study curriculum for a career, which entitles the same to execute professional activities. In contrast, the latter are trained for a technical or professional support activity.

University entrance is done by means of a national selection using the university placement test (PSU). Students are able to choose between traditional universities, 25 institutions classified by the Chilean

University Rectors Council, which receive State funding and are also self-financed, as well as private universities. The latter category has grown substantially over the last 10 years, currently accounting for 30% of university enrolment.

PROFESSIONAL INSTITUTES

Professional institutes are an educational alternative recognized by the Ministry of Education. These offer professional and technical careers, but do not offer exclusively university careers (medicine, law, education).

These institutes do not have bachelor's, master's or PhD degrees. Tuition and enrollment fees are cheaper and careers are shorter (from 2 to 3 years). Students are generally prepared for easier insertion into the job market.

Technical careers include the following: administration engineering, general accounting, electrical engineering, executive secretary with computer skills, agronomy technician, financial administration.

All professional institutes are privately-owned and are subject to State supervision. Here is a directory of Professional Institutes in Chile.

TECHNICAL COLLEGES

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These only offer technical careers, which normally last for two years and lead to a technical degree. All technical colleges are privately owned and are supervised by the Ministry of Education.

There are more than 2000 alternatives of programs and technical colleges and you

can find them everywhere in Chile. In a CFT (Centro de Formación Técnica) you can study all from mechanics to tourism,

All the CFT are private and they are low supervision of the Department of Education.

Technical College directory.