

Rwanda's Ministry of Education has set an ambitious target to increase preschool enrollment from 45% to 65% within the next five years, aiming to strengthen the foundation of early childhood education and improve student performance in later school years.

Minister of Education Joseph Nsengimana announced the goal Friday during the National Education Conference, held to review the state of early childhood and primary education under the country's Second National Strategy for Transformation (NST2) and Vision 2050.

"Preschools play a crucial role in awakening children's cognitive development and preparing them to succeed in primary school and beyond," Nsengimana said. "We had initially targeted 45% enrollment before primary school and achieved it, but that's not enough. Our new goal is 65% over the next five years."

The minister emphasized the importance of early education for children between the ages of 3 and 5, calling it a critical stage for developing foundational skills. He cited research indicating that children who attend preschool are more likely to perform well in subsequent academic levels.



*Minister of Education Joseph Nsengimana*

Currently, only 45% of Rwandan children attend preschool. Nsengimana urged parents to take advantage of early education opportunities and enroll their children, noting that the government is implementing strategies to expand access and improve quality.

As enrollment in lower primary school levels increases, the country is also grappling with overcrowded classrooms. Nsengimana acknowledged that some students are forced to attend school in shifts due to a shortage of infrastructure.

"The number of students continues to rise, which puts pressure on available classrooms and affects the delivery of quality education," he said. "The government is working to address this by constructing more schools."

In the upper levels of primary school grades four through six students begin preparing for secondary education. Nsengimana said these years are critical for helping children make informed decisions about their future studies and careers.

“Helping students make meaningful choices will build a strong foundation for the country’s long-term development,” he said. “Providing quality schools and well-trained teachers is essential to achieving that vision.”

The minister stressed that quality education requires a collaborative effort between parents, teachers, and government officials, underscoring that the responsibility for educating Rwanda’s children rests with the entire nation.