

DRAFT POLICY DOCUMENT FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT IN THE EASTERN CAPE

ECD OUR PASSION, OUR FUTURE

1. BACKGROUND / INTRODUCTION

1.1. WHAT IS ECD

Early Childhood Development (ECD) is an umbrella term, which refers to the processes by which children from birth to at least 9 years of age grow and thrive physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, morally and socially. Furthermore, ECD is also making use of various approaches and extracts of policies of the sister departments which have a stake in ECD. It also encourages active participation of learners, parents and caregivers. Although the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) has initially focused its attention and development specifically on the learner from 4 and a half to 9 years of age, its scope of operation covers learners from 0 – 9 years in collaboration with the departments of Health, Social Services, Local Government, Arts, Sports and Recreation.

1.2 A POVERTY-ALLEVIATION PROGRAMME

It is generally accepted that ECD is part of the programme of poverty alleviation in the province. Therefore, it is a serious priority for the EC DoE to improve the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning as well as the functioning of our schools serving Grades R – 3.

2. ECD PROVISIONING IN THE EASTERN CAPE

2.1 Models:

The South African Schools Act regulates the provision of education to learners of 6 to 9 years attending compulsory education in Grade 1 to 3 at public institutions / schools. There is almost nothing said on Grade R and Pre – Grade R programmes. Currently, the following models of ECD provisioning for the learners of 4 and a half turning 5 by June of the year of admission, can be found in the EC:

- Community-based ECD Sites, subsidized by the EC DoE;
- Community-based ECD Sites, not subsidized by the EC DoE;
- Community-based ECD Sites, on PERSAL system.
- Grade R classes attached to public schools, subsidized by the EC DoE;
- Grade R classes in public schools, paid by the SGB;
- Grade R classes in public schools, on PERSAL system;
- Independent ECD institutions, receiving no subsidies or PERSAL salaries.
- Free-standing ECD institutions/sites on PERSAL system*

Whilst the above mentioned diversity of models of ECD provisioning is indicative of increasing interest, it obviously needs to be controlled if we are to maintain acceptable standards.

2.2 Extent and accessibility of ECD provisioning

The Eastern Cape Province is a vast province, where above 60% of the learners come from rural and very poor families, affected by a high rate of unemployment, poverty, HIV/AIDS and illiteracy. In urban and semi-urban areas, the same conditions apply. Therefore, most of the young learners do not have access to ECD facilities, as they are financially and/or physically, not in a situation to attend a Grade R class. In some communities, there are no ECD provisioning at all.

2.2.1 Challenges and suggested initiatives to extend accessibility to ECD provisioning

- **Learners with Special Needs.** The EC DoE is committed to extend the access of Learners with Special Needs to ECD provisioning. Therefore, all Grade R classes at public and community-based institutions need to accommodate Learners with Special Needs. It is thus, a priority that infrastructure needs to be conducive to cater for the various needs of such learners.
- **Learners outside ECD provisioning.** In order for all learners to have access to ECD provisioning all educational districts need to attach Grade R classes to schools as a priority. Communities will be encouraged to establish community-based Grade R classes, if such a community is located more than 5 kilometres away from the nearest school provided there is no scholar transport.
- **Infrastructure of Grade R classrooms.**
 - ◆ *Public Schools*
Schools need to extend their curriculum to provide Grade R. Therefore, schools need to look at the possibility of providing classrooms which will be conducive for Grade R learners. This entails that such a school needs to have toilet facilities appropriate for Grade R learners, a separated fenced-off outside playground as well as furniture and equipment which will encourage learning through play. If a public school cannot accommodate a Grade R class, such a class can operate in a Community-Based site.
 - ◆ *Community-Based Sites*
Currently, Community-Based sites are operating in different situations with different infrastructures, namely in shacks, home-based, built pre-schools, churches and community centres, which are not necessarily conducive to ECD. However, the safety of the learners needs to be of utmost importance when such sites are identified to provide Grade R. It is expected of these sites to satisfy the minimum educational standards applicable to ECD provision.
- **Registration of ECD Sites**
In the light of the variety of ECD provisioning models that currently exist in the Eastern Cape, not all ECD sites are registered with either

the DoE and/or Social Development. A data base audit needs to be conducted annually by the DoE, to find out which ECD sites are registered with the Department and which sites are not registered at all.

Community-Based sites which cater for Grade R learners need to be encouraged to be registered with the Department of Social Development **[See Child Care Act]**. Presently, Grade R classes at public schools are registered with the EC DoE in terms of EMIS.

If a potential ECD role-player enquires how to establish an ECD facility focusing on 0 – 4 years of age, such a person/body is to consult with the Department of Social Development in this regard. However, if this proposed ECD facility is also going to cater for Grade R learners, the EC DoE needs to be consulted to ensure that such proposal is in line with White Paper 5. The Department of Education will enter into Service Level Agreement with the Department of Social Development.

- **Registration of pre-Grade R and Reception Year programmes**
All pre-Grade R and Grade R programmes, rendered by ECD sites, whether such sites are registered with the Department of Social Development or not, needs to be registered with the EC DoE. Registration of sites needs to be a prerequisite for recognition and subsidization by the Department
- **Quality of Teaching and Learning**
Currently, the qualifications of the Grade R practitioners vary from unaccredited Level 1 to accredited Level 5 and higher qualifications. According to White Paper 5 all Grade R practitioners need to be registered with the South African Council of Educators. However, the current situation in the Province of the Eastern Cape is that interim accreditation was granted to some practitioners that participated in the Conditional Grant Programme. In the absence of more specific requirements by SAQA, all Grade R practitioners in the Province of the Eastern Cape, need to have a minimum qualification of an accredited Level IV, equivalent to Grade 12.

Therefore the EC DoE needs to ensure that all Grade R practitioners are not only knowledgeable but also skilled in implementing the RNCS in Grade R through In Service Education Training (INSET). It is pivotal that all Grade R practitioners **SHOULD** attend **ALL** INSET programmes and workshops schedules by the EC DoE. Provincial and District officials can provide further on-site monitoring guidance and support, in order to ensure the implementation of effective and quality ECD programmes.

The EC DoE appreciates the important role Resource and Training Organisations (RTOs) and Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are playing in the upliftment and enhancement of ECD Programmes. However, in order to avoid duplication, confusion and conflict between all ECD service providers and the DoE, all service providers will be

requested to liaise with the Head of the Department of the EC DoE for recognition and approval.

- **The future of PERSAL-paid ECD educators/fieldworkers/general assistants at free-standing schools**

In line with the White Paper 5's recommendations as well as the Budget & Policy Speech of 2005 by the MEC for Education, existing stand-alone or free-standing sites will be attached to existing schools and re-opened as community sites. Permanent educators working in such ECD sites, who are in the employ of the Department, will have to be absorbed in Foundation Phase posts in schools. Under-qualified teachers, who cannot teach in the Foundation Phase, need to be accommodated as principals at Community-Based ECD Sites (both previously Free-standing ECD Sites and Community-Based ECD Sites which participate in the Conditional Grant Programme). Fieldworkers, who meet the qualification requirements to teach in the Foundation Phase, need to be absorbed in the Foundation Phase posts in school. However, fieldworkers who are under-qualified and cannot teach in the Foundation Phase should be accommodated as principals at Community-based ECD Sites which participated in the Conditional Grant Programme. ECD General Assistants need to be placed in vacant positions at schools.

- **Admission Age Policy**

The admission policy for Grade R should be consistent. All Grade R learners should be four turning five by 30 June of the year of admission. This policy is applicable to all institutions that offer Grade R. **See Addendum**, [Amended Circular 15 of 2003]. The admission policy for Grade One learners should be five turning six by 30 June. In order to admit a learner in either a Grade R class or a Grade One class, the school must be furnished with either a certified copy of the birth certificate, or a copy of the clinic card, stating the learner's date of birth.

3. IDENTIFIED GAPS IN SERVICE DELIVERY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND MEANS OF CLOSING THEM

3.1 Grade R sites to be included on EMIS

The **EMIS Subdirectorate** at the Provincial Office needs to design a form which will include data collected for both Grade R in Public Schools and Grade R in Community-Based Sites. This inclusion will assist not only the ECD Directorate but also other directorates like School Nutrition Programme (SNP), Curriculum and HIV/AIDS to have a current summary of the number of learners involved and infrastructure, in order to make provision and plan for the implementation of the respective programmes from different directorates.

4. FUNDING MECHANISM

The EC DoE is making use of two principal mechanisms of finance namely to Grade R in Community-Based Sites and Grade R in Public Schools:

4.1 Grade R in Community-Based ECD Sites

With regard to the Grade R in Community-Based ECD Sites, the EC DoE subsidizes the salaries of a Grade R practitioner in the amount of R1 000-00 per month or R12 000-00 per year subject to revision of the amount as and when need so dictates. Under this finance mechanism, Grade R practitioners in the Reception year of Community-Based schools would be employees of the school governing body and an agreement form must be signed in order to stipulate the conditions of employment. A standard agreement form is used refer to **Addendum ...agreement form**. These subsidies are made twice a year, i.e. from April to September and October to March directly into the account of the School Governing Bodies (SGBs). Therefore, all compliance forms need to be submitted to the Provincial ECD Directorate by 16 April every year before funds of the following year can be released. Compliance forms which will result in the payment of the subsidy for April to September need to be submitted to the Provincial ECD Directorate via the District Office by 16 October. All communication between the District Office and the Grade R sites will be primarily through interaction with the SGBs.

5.1 Grade R classes in public schools

The provision of the Reception Year in public schools is promoted via direct grants-in-aid from the EC DoE to school governing bodies. These grants are flowing directly to the school governing bodies under the coverage of Section 21 of the South African Schools Act. Under this finance mechanism, Grade R practitioners in the Reception year of public schools would be employees of the school governing body and an agreement form must be signed in order to stipulate the conditions of employment. Again a standard agreement form is available. These payments are being made twice a year, i.e. from April – September, October – March and Jan to March for new intakes. Therefore, all compliance forms need to be submitted to the Provincial ECD Directorate by 16 April in order to effect payment of the October – March and Jan to March [new intake] subsidies. Compliance forms which will result in the payment of the subsidy for April to September need to be submitted to the Provincial ECD Directorate via the District Office by 16 October. All communication between the District Office and the Grade R sites will be primarily through interaction with the SGBs.

5.2 Challenges and solutions regarding Funding Mechanisms

6. MANAGING AND ADMINISTRATION OF ECD SITES

6.1 Managing of Grade R classes

- All Grade R practitioners will be required to have an effective management and administration system in their classrooms
- Grade R practitioners need to draw-up a daily programme, which is developmentally-appropriate for Grade R learners, as well as

complying to the Revised National Curriculum Statement's prescribed time-allocation [4 hours 30 minutes contact time per day].

- All Grade R practitioners need to sign on their arrival at their schools a register, reporting for work as well as signing out when they leave the schools.
- Grade R practitioners need to monitor everyday Grade R learners' attendance in an Attendance Register.
- All profiles of Grade R learners need to be kept in a safe place.

The Grade R practitioner is responsible for providing a stimulating and attractive learning environment in her classroom. Therefore, provision needs to be made for different learning corners i.e. a book corner, a block corner, a fantasy / make-believe corner, a creative corner, constructive toy corner, a puzzle / educational toy corner etc. Provision must also be made for a theme table area. Furthermore, each learner needs to have his/her own place to store his/her school bag and face cloth. All equipment and educational apparatus need to be stored orderly on shelves that are easily accessible to learners to assist in packing away and/or handing out of equipment and toys. Teachers need to improvise and make toys from waste materials

For more information on this subject refer to ECD Modules 1, 2 and 3 INSET programme for Grade R Teachers

6.2 Monitoring and support

In line with the inclusion of the Reception Year as part of the 4 year Foundation Phase, the Grade R practitioner will thus be monitored, guided and supported by the Head of Department for the Foundation Phase in Grade R classes at public schools. Grade R practitioners at Grade R classes in Community-Based Sites will be monitored, guided and supported by the Principal of such a school and also through routine visits by departmental officials. The Foundation Phase educators of Primary Schools need to form partnerships with the Grade R practitioners of their feeder Community-Based Sites. This will ensure maintenance of uniform standards.

6.2 Menu

ECD Sites need to ensure that all learners are receiving well-balanced and nutritious meals per day. ECD Sites which are also catering for 0 – 4 year old learners are referred to the **Guidelines for Day Care, Department of Social Development, April 2001** in order to make provision for a balanced menu. Grade R learners at public schools are participating in the Primary School Nutrition Programme, whereby balanced snacks are provided to such learners on a daily basis. Grade R learners at Community-Based Sites need to be included in the Primary School Nutrition Programme. However, negotiations between the ECD Directorate and the SNP Directorate need to be conducted as a matter of urgency in order to effect such an inclusion.

B.3

ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENT

PARKING:

Inter-sectorial collaboration

Appointment of practitioners and norms for post provisioning

LTSM

ECD STAKEHOLDERS

ADDENDUM:

- Circulars 12, 15 & 19
- Child Care Act
- Circular on employment of practitioners [revised]
- Subsidy Management
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