



basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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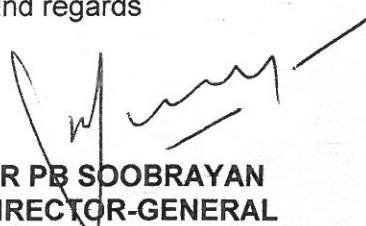
Dear Dr Phillips

DIAGNOSTIC REVIEW OF THE ECD SECTOR

Following your letter dated 20 July 2012, please find attached the Department's management response to recommendations pertaining to the improvement of the ECD Sector.

Enquires can be referred to Ms Marie- Louise Samuels who is responsible for ECD in the Department. Her contact details are: Tel: 012 357 4114; email: Samuels.ml@dbe.gov.za

Kind regards


MR PB SOOBRAYAN
DIRECTOR-GENERAL
DATE: 20/07/2012

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE ON ECD DIAGNOSTIC REVIEW

RECOMMENDATION FROM THE ECD EVALUATION STEERING GROUP	RECORD OF AGREEMENT OR DISAGREEMENT	REASONS FOR DISAGREEMENT
LEGISLATION AND POLICY FRAMEWORK (INCLUDING STRATEGIES)		
<p>1. A country strategy for ECD should be developed based on a National Integrated Regulatory framework for ECD, from which each department (DBE, DSD, DoH and if relevant other departments) should develop an implementation programme for their component. A Task Team should be established to produce the Strategy – with clear roles and responsibilities of key players and government departments. The country strategy should be submitted to Cabinet for approval.</p>	<p>Agree that we need a country strategy for ECD and that it needs to be submitted to Cabinet for approval.</p> <p>Agree that a task team, with clear roles and responsibilities, should be established to produce the strategy. We propose that this task team should be established by Cabinet.</p> <p>Agree that each department should develop an implementation programme for their component, based on the strategy.</p>	<p>The modalities of a “national integrated regulatory framework” need to be investigated further.</p>
<p>2. The national strategy should include a common definition of ECD, agreed provisioning based on age, stage of development, socio-economic circumstance and needs (including delivery services to reach poor and vulnerable children, also children with disabilities, and promoting universal access); multidisciplinary and inter-sectoral teams with funding streams & mechanisms in line with outcomes and results; specific institutional arrangements of</p>	<p>Agree</p>	

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interdepartmental and inter-sectoral cooperation with clear protocols; mechanisms for information sharing.		
3. The Children's Act should be reviewed to include the period from conception to birth (pregnancy). It therefore should cover from conception to 9 years. There should be a strong emphasis on the first 1000 days from conception to 2 years. The implementation programmes must disaggregate the needs of different age groups.	Agree	
4. Costed implementation programmes should be developed to reach the poor and vulnerable providing both a universal and targeted comprehensive service. The Integrated plans and policies that are developed should be consulted as wide as possible with all stakeholders. The parental programme will need a strategy for sustainable implementation and funding.	Agree	
COORDINATION AND INTEGRATION		
5. Currently people working on ECD have their time split on other issues. There needs to be adequate allocation of capacity and focus on ECD in DBE, DSD, DoH.	Agree	
6. The same should be the case in provincial government, including with district level structures.	Agree in principle, but may not be possible in practice.	The Department cannot compel provincial education departments to structure their organograms in a particular way

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INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS		
7. An effective coordinating mechanism must be established - an agency, board or commission - with high-level influence, an explicit mandate, and the necessary resources including expertise, to drive the ECD agenda forward in all 3 spheres (including local government) and deliver results. A feasibility study needs to be conducted considering the options, pros and cons of the best mechanism for inter-sectoral coordination, how it could be established, how it could be funded, and what its terms of reference would be.	Agree	
8. As this may take some time, in the meantime the 4 key ministers of DBE, DSD, DWCPD and DoH are asked to reinforce the current interdepartmental mechanism and to report on to Cabinet on how this will be achieved.	Disagree	It may be more appropriate if the proposed task team (see points 1 and 2) undertakes this responsibility. This will avoid duplication of structures and reduce potential alignment problems.
CORE PACK OF COMPREHENSIVE ECD SERVICES (ACCESS & EQUITY, QUALITY, LEARNING MATERIALS)		
9. ECD services should be comprehensive and should address the specific needs of different age groups from conception to 9. This should include appropriate partnerships with civil society and the private sector.	Agree	
10. The elements should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family planning, healthy pregnancies and 	Agree	

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<p>postnatal care to give children an optimal start in life from conception.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutrition support for pregnant and breastfeeding women and young children through home-, community and facility-based programmes. This should include support for food security. • Birth registration, social security through the CSG and other instruments, subsidised housing and other state provisions for the poorest families. • Supporting parenting through public education campaigns, as well as using the faith sector and traditional leadership, and care groups and companionship support through outreach programmes. • Quality learning by young children encouraged at home and in groups, programmes and centres that focus on building enjoyment of learning, the confidence to learn from others especially adults, and self-control and social respect so that children can participate in and contribute positively to social life. The inclusion of children with disabilities into mainstream programmes should explicitly be addressed. • Preparation for formal schooling by enrolment and regular attendance in Grade R, with support for learning from parents and other adults in the home. 		

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11. An equity-based approach ensures that the state and its partners prioritise the provision of services and support to those children and families who most need them. Work should begin immediately in the poorest and most disadvantaged wards. The most urgent next step is to develop a basic 'ECD package of services' to be rapidly expanded to reach vulnerable children.	Agree	
12. A core package of ECD messages should be developed for inclusion in training of home- and community-based workers employed in different sectors who reach young children in the course of their work, and for campaigns to promote effective social mobilisation and messaging on ECD issues.	Agree	
INFRASTRUCTURE		
13. A costed and funded integrated infrastructure policy and strategy should be developed for ECD addressing amongst other the provision of infrastructure, that fall within the norms and standards of different services.	Agree	
14. In relation to local government, a model for bye-laws should be provided that address norms and standards and municipalities should be encouraged to adopt these. Municipalities should be encouraged to provide land, facilities and rezoning for ECD	Agree	

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15. Under-used space in community halls, traditional authority offices, schools, clinics, churches and homes can all be used to run home- and community-based programmes.	Agree	
HUMAN RESOURCES, TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING		
16. The National Curriculum Framework should take into consideration age ranges, ECD settings and, learning programme as articulated in Children's Act and NIPECD review recommendation.	Agree. The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) is structured along a grade-based framework. Each grade is linked to an appropriate age in terms of formal age-grade norms. Owing to repetition however, it is not uncommon to find "over-aged" children in a particular grade.	
17. A human resource development strategy should be developed for all staff working in the ECD sector to improve staff qualifications, professionalise ECD, provide a career path and assist with retaining ECD workers. This should consider the different packages of services for different age groups. This should include staff working in early learning and care centres and programmes. To do this an audit of existing staff qualifications should be undertaken and resourcing made available for initial training and upgrading for all workers in the sector including those in support and monitoring positions, as well as centre-based and outreach ECD practitioners	Agree. The audit should be preceded by a qualifications framework for ECD staff. A system to record the qualifications of all staff on PERSAL, should be established.	

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18. There also need to be campaigns for empowering parents using different platforms.	Agree	
19. Only accredited FET colleges should train ECD practitioners, unlike the current situation.	Disagree	Higher Education Institutions may also offer ECD-linked qualifications. So too may institutions that are <i>registered</i> as FET Colleges, but may not necessarily be <i>accredited</i> . The proposed Task Team could investigate this matter further.
20. A core package of ECD messages should be developed for inclusion in training of home- and community-based workers employed in different sectors who reach young children.	-	This point is repeated. Please see recommendation 12.
21. To provide support, ECD Centres should partner with home and community-based providers	Agree	
FUNDING AND PARTNERSHIPS		
22. A targeted investigation should be commissioned to look at funding models for comprehensive ECD services that don't inadvertently incentivise centre-based early learning and care over home- and community-based programmes, or out-of-home childcare over family-based home care for working parents and other families needing assistance. This should include a review of all existing funding models. The funding models must take into account ensuring that poor and vulnerable children	Agree	

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can access ECD services. To assist, an economic evaluation should be conducted in 2013/14, as part of the National Evaluation Plan.		
<p>23. Appropriate partnerships should be developed with the private sector to support ECD (the partnership should be in line with government protocols). To do this the following should be developed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An ECD Sector funding plan • Identification of government and appropriate private donors to leverage resources for ECD services including children with disabilities and workplace child-care facilities, including aftercare. • A donor forum • Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with Donors. 	Agree	
RESEARCH, MONITORING AND EVALUATION		
24. An integrated M&E system for the ECD sector should be developed as part of the overall national ECD strategy and its implementation with a National Information System hosted by the lead department.	Agree	
25. This should include an Essential Data Set for ECD to address the challenge of inter-sectoral and separate practices of data collection across various departments.	Agree	

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<p>26. A challenge for M&E is that the questions on preschool participation in the General Household Survey are too general to provide information for policy development and amendment. Similarly, the questions on disabilities among preschool children are inappropriate. A technical group should work on measurement of these two important aspects of ECD and work with Statistics South Africa and others to improve the measurement of child care, preschool experience and disabilities.</p>	<p>Agree</p>	