

Welcome back to work. I hope that 2022 will be a year of much success in the Early Childhood Development sector. To set a tone for 2022, I want to write about an inspiring book that I read recently. You may recall the story of Captain Tom Moore who at the height of Covid-19, at the age of 99 years, starting on 6th April 2020, began to walk 100 lengths of this garden each day in aid of National Health Services charities, with the goal of raising £1,000. During his walking he turned 100 years old, on 30th April 2020. Over 24 days, he ended up raising £40 million (that is R 720 million) as people from all over the UK and the world followed the story on the news and social media. He became Sir Tom Moore when a knighthood was conferred on him by Queen Elizabeth on 20 May 2020.

Captain Tom Moore passed away from Covid-19 related illness on 2nd February 2021 at the age of 100 years.

Captain Tom Moore is an example to us of how great things can happen at the most unexpected of times. When he started on his daily walk of 100 laps, which he aimed to do for a month, he did not expect to become a global phenomenon. Why am I writing about this and telling the story? It is simple. He has written a 144-page, easy to read book, called Captain Tom's Life Lessons, which has become a No. 1 bestseller. In the book, he shares ten life lessons as set out below.

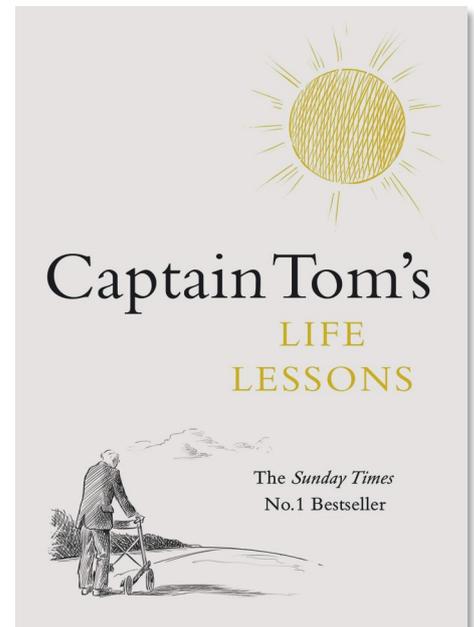
1. Eat Your Porridge
2. The World is your Oyster
3. Be Comfortable in your Own Skin
4. Keep Smiling Through
5. Walk in Someone Else's Shoes
6. Keep an Open Mind
7. Fortune Favours the Brave
8. With Hope in your Heart
9. Find your Purpose
10. You'll Never Walk Alone

In the book he explains, over a few short pages, each of his Life Lessons. These are all very important lessons not only for individuals, but also for our non-profit organisations. These simple lessons, as set out by Captain Tom Moore, are far more valuable and significant today, in my view, than most of the tens of thousands of leadership and management books on the market.

I strongly recommend that ECD organisation leaders purchase this book and use it to guide them as we battle through the Covid-19 pandemic and as we enter the challenging waters of organisation sustainability.

All the best for 2022 in your work, let us make it a memorable year for all of us. Stay safe.

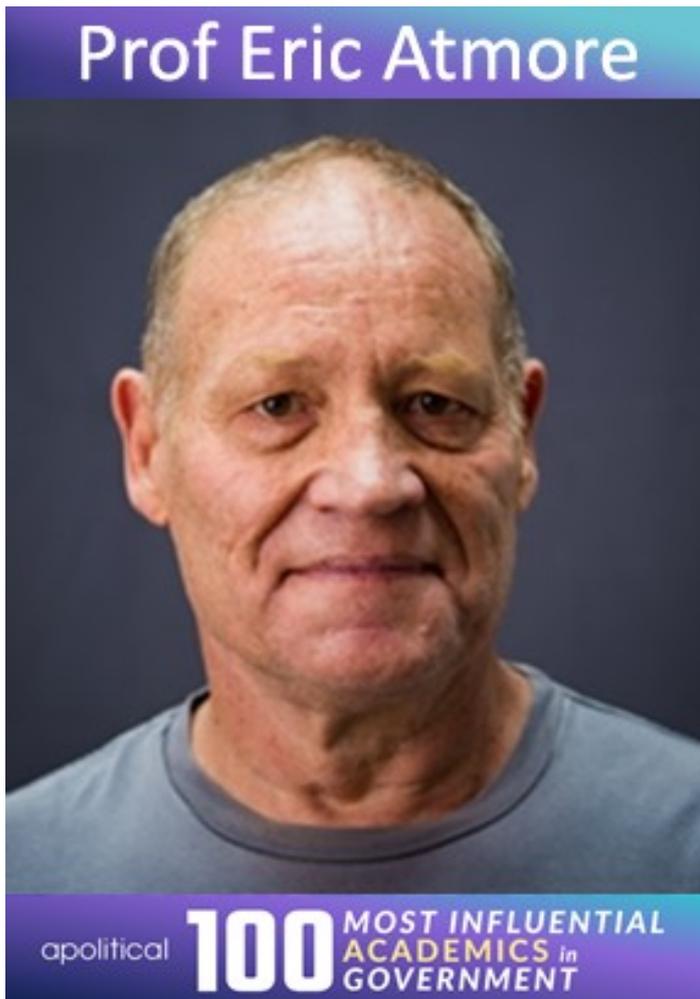
ERIC ATMORE
Director



PROFESSOR ERIC ATMORE, NAMED ONE OF THE WORLD'S TOP 100 MOST INFLUENTIAL ACADEMICS IN GOVERNMENT

~ Sibulele Kasa

Professor Eric Atmore, Director of the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Extraordinary Associate Professor in the Department of Education Policy Studies at the University of Stellenbosch, has been named one of the Top 100 Most Influential Academics in Government, across the globe.



The list, put out by [Apolitical](#) (a global learning platform for government, allowing public servants to share best practice and policy globally, in order to solve the greatest challenges facing society) recognises academics whose work and research on policy helps to make governments more effective. Nominations came from across the globe, from local and national government officials, international organisations, non-profit organisations, and individuals from a variety of countries looking to recognise the hard work of academics who have been influential in their fields thereby effecting change.

Speaking about his inclusion in the Top 100 list, Professor

Atmore said: "In being recognised by the global Apolitical organisation for the work that has been done as an early childhood development (ECD) activist in South Africa, it is important to be aware of the close to 180,000 ECD teachers and other workers that fight everyday for young children's right to quality early education opportunities in our country. It is always heartening to hear that your activism and research is of value to public officials, the ECD sector and other activists."

Eric has worked in the non-profit sector for 40 years, and has lectured at various universities and consulted to a range of non-profit organisations around South Africa. He has published extensively, including refereed and peer-reviewed articles, chapters in books and conference proceedings and numerous articles in the popular media. Eric completed his PhD in 2019 on "An Interpretive Analysis of the Early Childhood Development Policy Trajectory in Post-Apartheid South Africa".

Across his various roles, Professor Atmore uses his research in the field of early childhood development and education to advocate for young children's access to quality early education throughout South Africa. He works with and speaks up to government officials across all spheres of government - local, provincial and national; without fear. He uses his research to back up his advocacy work - and is always on the front line of education issues in South Africa; working and urging government departments to achieve the best possible outcomes for young South Africa children.

You can view the full Top 100 list on [Apolitical's website](#).

Article first published and available at:
<https://cecd.org.za/press-release-professor-eric-atmore-named-one-of-the-worlds-top-100-most-influential-academics.pdf>

ECD SECTOR DISAPPOINTED BY STIMULUS FUND DELAYS

~ Sibulele Kasa

More than half of the struggling educare centres in the Western Cape which applied for the Employment Stimulus Relief Fund are still waiting for much-needed funding.

The National Department of Social Development opened applications for the relief fund a year ago to minimise the financial effects of Covid-19 on the sector.

Of the R496 million allocation from the national department, the provincial department received a R53m grant for the once-off payment to the staff at a maximum of R4 470 per person.

MEC of Social Development Sharna Fernandez said the delays were due to the national department's inability to develop a system that would be quick in verifying details .

EARLY YEARS

Of the 3 159 applications from the Western Cape, the provincial department received 1 415 approved applications from the national department. "The approved applicants were the ones that passed the initial eligibility criteria set by the national department," said Fernandez.

Sylvia Prezens, former principal of Parkwood Educare and Aftercare, said she had to close down the centre due to Covid-19 protocols. The four staff took care of 100 children.

She said her educare was registered and operated in a church hall at Simon of Cyrene Anglican Church in Parkwood since 1992.

Since the churches were closed during hard lockdown she could not open and her staff were forced to look for alternative work.

When churches could reopen she did not have the money to run the centre.

She had to renovate her garage in Fairways and turn it into an educare, which has 19 children now and she increased the fees to be able to maintain it.



Sylvia Prezens, former principal of Parkwood Educare & Aftercare was forced to close the centre as a result of Covid-19 lockdown.

Parent Mpumezi Koli from Philippi whose child used to attend the closed educare in Parkwood said the closure made his life difficult as he had to pay extra money at the new centre.

Principal of a Peek-a-boo Daycare and Preschool Sharifa Sapud said she received the funds about six months ago for the Parkland preschool, she paid her four staff and bought extra chairs and hand sanitisers with the funds. She said she charges R400 per child, which includes transport and that she accommodates 57 children.

Siphokazi Dlamini of Injabulo Educare Centre in Makhaza said she followed all the application requirements but was disappointed when she did not receive the funds. She said they bought food for the children with the fees they received. "Our teachers could not get their wages and there are three of them. If we get the money from the Stimulus Fund, we would have teachers that are motivated to work," said Dlamini.

Advocacy and social justice manager at the Centre for Early Childhood Development Yusrah Ehrenreich said: "Principals are reporting that staff think they received the money and are not paying it out to the staff. This is causing distrust and problems amongst principals and their staff. "With these extreme delays; ECD centres are having to pay monthly fees to keep bank accounts open, and are going into debt, without receiving their expected relief funds," she said.



The delays in payment have resulted in hundreds of ECD centres buckling under the strain of Covid-19 and closing down as they cannot afford rent, electricity, nutrition for the children in their care, or staff salaries.

The centre's director Professor Eric Artmore said as much as some of the children were left in dangerous circumstances, neglect and abuse during lockdown, the main impact was the lack of food for poor children. "Thousands of young children have missed out on the daily meal that they would usually receive at the ECD centre. This has a negative impact on children's healthy development and growth," he said. Riedewhaan Allie, director of the Foundation for Community Work, has committed to working with the department to process the Stimulus Fund applications. His organisation assisted about 50 ECD centres with their online applications.

He said in his observations the reason for the delay is NPOs did not attach their contact details in the applications and that led to confusion.

Since the publication of this article, the Centre for Early Childhood Development have sent the Minister of Social Development, Lindiwe Zulu, an open letter urging immediate action to pay all outstanding applicants of the ECD ERSF. This can be viewed here: <https://bit.ly/3sQdX79>. We have also published a petition seeking support on the call. This can be viewed here: <https://bit.ly/3I2XfHU>

Article first published and available at:
<https://www.iol.co.za/weekend-argus/news/eecd-sector-disappointed-by-stimulus-fund-delays>

NEW MANAGEMENT BUT ECD CENTRES 'WILL GO ON AS USUAL'

~ Phumla Mkize

With seven weeks left before the department of education (DBE) takes over the management of early childhood development (ECD) centres from the department of social development, the fog is lifting on what the move will mean for the sector.

It will be business as usual come April 1 when the transfer is fully completed, says the department.



“The DBE will be taking over the responsibility of the ECD sector from the department of social development as it is currently. That means that ECD will continue to be provided in ECD centres; that ECD centres will still be owned by the ECD providers; and that the ECD providers will still be responsible for the employment of practitioners,” said DBE spokesperson Elijah Mhlanga.

He said the function shift is “essentially the changing of responsibility” between the Minister of Social Development Lindiwe Zulu and the Minister of Basic Education Angie Motshekga.

“This means that a successful function shift should be so smooth that stakeholders on the ground should not even realise that anything has changed. That is the DBE’s focus for this year – to ensure that everything happens exactly the way that it has done previously without any interruption in service delivery,” he said.

Though there are still major challenges that face the sector, Monica Stach, the chairperson of the National Early Childhood Development Alliance, said she has been encouraged by attempts by the DBE to create opportunities for dialogue with stakeholders.

“From early dialogues [conducted by the alliance], there was a lot of concern that the department of education would take

over privately-owned ECD centres,” she said. ECD practitioners were also expecting that they would be paid salaries,” she said.

She said through the networks and dialogues, some of which were hosted by the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) on behalf of the DBE, clarity has been provided to the sector, including to ECD practitioners.

The alliance, which comprises non-for-profit organisations and sector experts nationally, provides resources and capacity building for the ECD sector.

Stach’s optimism is not shared by Professor Eric Atmore, director of the Centre for Early Childhood Development.

“There are several challenges, uncertainties and fears across the ECD sector. The challenges relate to the capacity of DBE to successfully implement the transition of some 32 000 ECD centres with 2.3 million children and around 180 000 ECD teachers under its control.

“A major challenge is going to be ensuring that the DBE has the political will to prioritise ECD, and this includes providing sufficient funding to enable ECD centres to function optimally,” he said.

“The uncertainties relate to how ECD will be incorporated into the provincial departments of education, whether they are ready to accept the transition and whether ECD will be given the priority that is necessary and as set out in the National Integrated ECD Policy of 2015. Under the DSD, ECD enjoyed no priority with a Minister who cared little for ECD and with officials that were less than competent,” he said.

Mhlanga said the national department of basic education, in collaboration with the NECT, has been hosting monthly stakeholder engagements with the broader sector on specific themes in the ECD sector.

“Similarly, provincial education departments and provincial departments of social development have been holding joint summits with their provincial stakeholders to engage with them on what the function shift will entail. Provinces are also embarking on district roadshows to ensure further engagements at the grassroots level,” said.

Mhlanga said the focus for the 2022/23 financial year is purely on transferring responsibilities to basic education.

“We realise that there are a lot of improvements that need to be made in the ECD sector and the DBE is already working on preparations for strengthening systems so that we can start introducing the much-needed improvements in the next financial year,” he said.

Article first published and available at:

<https://www.sundayworld.co.za/education/new-management-but-eed-centres-will-go-on-as-usual/>