

**R**isk management and protection of organisation assets is very important. Our organisation assets include far more than property, and it is our responsibility in leading our organisations not to put these assets at risk.

We have to protect our organisation from financial loss due to disaster. Because of the risk involved, every non-profit needs a risk management plan which highlights events and occurrences that might put the organisation at risk.

There are four main areas of risk: people, property, income and reputation.

As organisation leaders, we need to consider how our organisation would survive a serious event such as fire, natural disaster or as we experienced a few years ago, a global pandemic such as Covid-19. We know that many, many non-profit organisations closed as a result of Covid, mostly because they were not prepared for such a disaster.

One of the questions we need to ask of our organisation is: What would we do in a downturn of the economy. What would the impact be on our organisation and what steps should we take today to mitigate any negative impact?

To mitigate risk, we need to create a risk management plan. This plan should record what risks we face, and how we would mitigate these risks? It will also record what the consequences would be if an event occurred and who is responsible for acting on the risk?

It is essential that our non-profits take a proactive, preventative approach to risk management and that we do everything possible to avoid problems.

Probably the first step is to insure our buildings and property. This is crucial.

Another huge risk facing organisations is not raising the funding needed to deliver on our programmes. Many non-profits do not consider the risks of not raising the required funds. It will certainly pay-off to have a fundraising plan for 3 to 5 years ahead, to reduce the likelihood of your organisation closing due to lack of funds. In South Africa we have seen more than 80 ECD non-profit organisations close over the past two decades, simply because the risk of not raising required funding was not acted upon.



A risk management plan won't keep bad things from happening, but it could enable our organisations to continue to function if something does happen.

We hope you enjoy reading this month addition of EARLY YEARS.

**ERIC ATMORE**  
Director

# EFFECTIVE CROSS DEPARTMENTAL AND INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT:

THE FIRST STEP IN DEVELOPING THE ECD SECTORAL STRATEGY FOR THE 2024-2029 MEDIUM-TERM NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

~ National Planning Commission

The following excerpts are taken from the recent document published by the National Planning Commission, entitled, "Effective Cross-Departmental and Inter-Governmental Coordination in Early Childhood Development: The First Step in Developing the ECD Sectoral Strategy for the 2024-2029 Medium-Term National Development Plan".



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This advisory has three main purposes:

1. To make a case for a set of urgent interventions to address challenges in the coordination mechanisms in achieving an integrated Early Childhood Development sectoral strategy which will inform the draft 2024-2029 Medium Term National Development Plan (MTP). It is the view of the NPC that effective coordination is indispensable to building the necessary base for the design, implementation, and monitoring of a successful integrated ECD Sectoral Strategy. The goal of ensuring concerted action across national departments and spheres of government is paramount to benefitting all children and ensuring equitable access to quality ECD services. It is noted that current structures are not functioning robustly or serving their intended functions.
2. To signal the intention of the NPC to further explore and develop the challenges identified in this case study of ECD, in relation to their application to other vexing problems of coordination in government, as one of the major challenges in the building of state capacity.

3. To stress a 'whole of society approach' in our national response to supporting the optimum development of young children. Government cannot support children alone – nor should it. A national commitment to placing children at the centre of our concerns must be inclusive of all components of society, all levels of government, and all relevant government departments. Work within the DBE in developing an urgent solution for at-scale service delivery which brings government and social partners together to ensure every child is reached by the services they need, is acknowledged. Non-state providers are integral to this solution, and there is much innovation in the sector from non-state actors and learning from these experiences can optimise ECD reach and effectiveness.

## BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

### Benefits, Coordination, Capability, Hunger and Legal Framework

In 2010 NDP prioritised ECD, indicating that, the benefits of intervening early in the lives of children include: better school enrolment rates, retention as well as academic performance, higher rates of high school completion, lower levels of antisocial behaviour, higher earnings later in life and better adult health and longevity'. It also acknowledged that 'the coordination weaknesses between the different sectors and departments responsible for early childhood development services need to be addressed 'in order to strengthen collaboration'. This work is now even more urgent. In this advisory, the NPC explores challenges in inter departmental coordination, notes the unfortunate tendency to elevate matters requiring coordination to the Presidency, thus overloading this office, and proposes mechanisms for facilitating the resolution of coordination challenges by strengthening existing systems. The following are explored in relation to ECD:

- Formal delegation of responsibility to a lead ministry in respect of a coordination role.
- A coordination facilitating and problem-solving role of the Minister in the Presidency.
- Lead Ministers reporting quarterly to cabinet on a cabinet-approved, and publicly available, plan of implementation for 'coordinated' functions.
- Outcome-based coordination as a mechanism for planning and monitoring functions that require coordination across departments. This requires that DPME plays a key monitoring role to identify what needs to be escalated for strategic discussion at Ministerial level, and the Auditor General audits formal commitments in relation to functions requiring coordination within an outcome-based model as part of the MTSF.

The full report can be found at:  
[https://www.nationalplanningcommission.org.za/assets/Documents/NPC\\_ECD](https://www.nationalplanningcommission.org.za/assets/Documents/NPC_ECD)

## MILLIONS OF CHILDREN IN SA NOT ATTENDING EARLY LEARNING

~ Zolani Sinxo

About 1.3 million children in the country aged 3 to 5 years are not attending any form of early learning while only 45% of those who do are developmentally on track.



*The DBE said that the ECD allocation was insufficient to cover all children currently in ECD programmes and eligible to benefit from the ECD subsidy. Picture Ayanda Ndamane / Independent Newspapers*

The portfolio committee on basic education heard this yesterday during a briefing on the migration of early childhood development (ECD) from the Department of Social Development to the Department of Basic Education (DBE).

The migration process was announced by President Cyril Ramaphosa in his 2019 State of the Nation Address, in which he said: "Over the next five years, we will focus our attention on expanding access to early childhood development and improving early-grade reading, where we are already beginning to see progress."

The committee was not happy with the progress update, as it raised questions about whether it was implementable.

Committee chairperson Bongive Mbinqo-Gigaba said the intentions of the migration were honourable. However, serious questions remained about the readiness and preparedness for the move. "We need to be honest. When the migration was conceived, did you consider if it would be implementable? We need to be honest where there are shortcomings.

"What are the plans for learners with special needs in ECD? These plans are clearly noteworthy with great intentions, but we are concerned about the planning phase prior to migration," said Mbinqo-Gigaba.

The committee was informed by the DBE that the current funding for ECD was inadequate.

"The overall ECD budget for the 2023/24 financial year was R3912 billion; this entailed R205 million in the national Budget vote, R1184 billion in the conditional grant, and R2523 billion through the Equitable Share."

The DBE said that the ECD allocation was insufficient to cover all children currently in ECD programmes and eligible to benefit from the ECD subsidy.

"A substantial increase in the ECD allocation is required to cover all children eligible to receive the subsidy, as access is continuously expanded."

The committee heard that the mass registration drive would target 20000 unregistered ECD programmes and provide them with conditional registration for one year.

During this year, the DBE and municipalities would support ECD programmes to become compliant through the provision of pre-registration support packs, after which they will be required to apply for full registration.

A legal researcher at the Equal Education Law Centre, Tatiana Kazim, said that while they noted the commitment of the DBE to ensure universal access to quality early learning opportunities, more needed to be done to adequately protect young children's rights and secure their futures.

"The DBE's registration drive may assist unregistered ECD programmes to get one step closer to unlocking the government subsidy.

"However, as the DBE itself notes, this will not guarantee funding. An increase in the number of eligible children requires a concomitant increase in the budget for the subsidy. This is not on the cards according to the most recent Budget," said Kazim.

She said it was important to note that the subsidy was frozen at just R17 a child a day since 2019.

"The lack of adequate state funding and support has serious consequences for young children.

"Of the fortunate minority of children who do access an ECD programme, more than half nonetheless fail to thrive by age five.

"One in every four children is stunted, 80% of Grade 4 learners cannot read and understand what they read," she said.

"We cannot keep expecting the ECD workforce to nurture our youngest children without proper state funding or support.

"Perhaps more importantly, the registration drive will offer little assistance to the 1.3 million children aged three to five who are not accessing an ECD programme at all.

"It is concerning that only a small portion of the ECD conditional grant—less than R157 million—is going towards establishing new, lost-cost ECD programmes for under-resourced communities."

Tracey Chambers, Grow ECD co-founder, said the recent Budget speech announced an increase of only R1.59 billion for the ECD grant, which was less than the projected R1.9 billion for 2024 that was promised in last year's budget.

As a result, the ECD sector was in even greater need of funding and access to alternative sources of capital.

"Almost 60% of ECD programmes are not registered with the Department of Basic Education and so cannot access the government's ECD subsidy.

"Although these programmes desperately need funding for pre-registration support and improvements to their infrastructure so that they can qualify to register, only 10% of the ECD grant over the next three years will be dedicated to helping ECD programmes register," said Chambers.

Article first published and is available at:

<https://www.iol.co.za/capeargus/news/13-million-children-in-sa-not-attending-early-learning>

## **SOUTH AFRICA: WOMEN PLAY A KEY ROLE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING AND CARE – BUT THEY NEED HELP ACCESSING UNIVERSITY**

~ Kaylianne Aploon-Zokufa

In South Africa, the early childhood development sector is dominated by women who build crèches from the ground up. These women offer services to communities that go far beyond childcare. They teach, feed and nurture children and keep them safe. They also build sustainable businesses and provide employment opportunities to members of their communities.

Previously managed under the Department of Social Development and currently under the Department of Basic Education, the early childhood development sector runs on an entrepreneurship model. Some individuals in the sector opt to set up and run childcare businesses; there are also many not-for-profit early childhood development centres. It's a model that lends itself to informal sector economic practices.

Like most women in the informal sector in developing countries, these early childhood development practitioners work long hours for very little money. This reality echoes the findings of a World Bank report which showed that women who trade in any

part of the informal sector in African countries are prone to economic exploitation.

Most of the women who run these facilities have certificates and diplomas from vocational colleges. But they are unable to get accepted at universities so they cannot pursue degrees. This limits their earning ability and their ability to formalise their businesses.

Having taught in vocational colleges, I set out to better understand the obstacles faced by women early childhood development practitioners who wanted to further their studies by going to university. I conducted research for my doctoral studies on practitioners and their learning journeys, as well as a focus on what's known as recognition of prior learning.

This concept assumes that people learn through experience; it then provides access to qualifications based on that experience. In some cases, people can also gain university credits through recognition of prior learning. This can then be used towards the completion of a higher education qualification.



*An employee at an early childhood development centre prepares her charges for a nap.  
Andrew Aitchison/Contributor*

I interviewed eleven women, aged between 33 and 46, based in Cape Town.

My findings suggest two potential changes to the existing system. One: there should be a standard policy across all South African universities related to recognition of prior learning as a criterion for entrance. And two: universities should accept women early childhood development practitioners who have successfully completed early childhood development qualifications at vocational colleges.

The benefits would be twofold. It would benefit the women, who could build better lives for themselves and their families. And it would benefit society. Research has shown that early childhood development is critical to children's lives.

## EARLY YEARS

### Women's own stories

All the women in my study held early childhood development qualifications from technical and vocational education and training colleges. These qualifications train women to work in centres with babies and children between the ages of 0 and 9. They completed their qualifications while working as teachers, principals and owners of early childhood development centres.

The women wanted to further their education by going to university and continue training as teachers and find better employment. They applied at different universities but were rejected, primarily because their matric results – the final secondary school exam – had not qualified them for university entrance and partly because of their ages.

In some cases they were unsuccessful because universities didn't recognise their existing vocational college early childhood development qualifications.

The only route of access was therefore through recognition of prior learning. However, this programme is not offered at all higher education institutions for access into the faculty of education.

Jenna (*not her real name*) found out from a friend about one university's recognition of prior learning programme. The application process was arduous and costly – Jenna paid R2,750 (about US\$145) overall. She submitted her work history, certificates, a motivational letter, and letters of support from the principal of the early childhood development centre where she worked, and from a mentor. She also submitted lesson plans and a portfolio reflecting her teaching philosophy.

Her application was successful. However, at the close of my study, because of ineffective administration from the university's side, Jenna had not yet entered into the first year of her degree programme.

The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) allows only 10% of entrants into any undergraduate and postgraduate university programme via recognition of prior learning. Some of my participants also applied at a different university, located in the Western Cape, for this alternative route. They were advised that, even if they successfully completed the recognition of prior learning process, there was no guarantee they'd be accepted into their desired programme, because of the 10% rule.

In my study, different institutions managed recognition of prior learning very differently, which caused a lot of confusion for my participants – and, by extension, the many people hoping to access it. Some institutions do not consider recognition of prior learning at all.

### Answers

I argue for a number of steps to be taken.

Firstly, universities should provide access to early childhood development teachers who have successfully completed

vocational qualifications. They can do this by recognising these qualifications.

Secondly, universities should recognise prior learning and standardise recognition of prior learning processes in their access criteria.

Thirdly, they should make the process more affordable and easier to navigate.

This would help early childhood development teachers to keep learning, no matter their age. And that would be good for South Africa more broadly: when women learn, children and communities learn and grow as well.



*Early learning and play are key to children's development - and their futures. Jessica Ronaasen*

Article first published in [The Conversation](#) and is available at:

<https://theconversation.com/south-africa-women-play-a-key-role-in-early-childhood-learning-and-care-but-they-need-help-accessing-university>