INTERIM POLICY FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

(DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION)

PREFACE

The Government of National Unity (GNU) has recognised the critical importance of Early Childhood Development (ECD) as a fundamental pillar of the foundation for lifelong learning.

The long history of discriminatory provision in this sector delivers a set of conditions that make it difficult to provide a quick-fix solution. It is for this reason that the situation requires a set of immediate measures alongside carefully devised medium- and long-term strategies that will provide a better foundation to address the fundamental need for ECD services.

Within the context of the Government's commitment to include a reception year as part of the 10 years of compulsory schooling, a strategy has been devised to phase in the implementation of the National Reception Year programme.

To commence this strategic plan, the National Department of Education (hereafter referred to as the Department) has agreed to the implementation of a Project-Based Early Childhood Development Programme entitled the "National ECD Pilot Project". This pilot project represents the first step towards implementing the compulsory reception year throughout South Africa. Lasting three years, the pilot project will create and test innovations in the field related to developing interim accreditation and standards for practitioners, building provincial government and non-governmental organisation (NGO) capacity, developing interim policy and establishing sustainable subsidies for community-based ECD programmes.

This focused intervention will make a significant contribution to the overall development of policy implementation for ECD (birth to at least 9 years).

To assist the Directorate for Early Childhood Development within the Department in the development of an appropriate strategy, the Department established the Ad Hoc Coordinating Committee for Early Childhood Development (Ad Hoc CCECD).

It is envisaged that a Statutory Advisory Council will take over the responsibility of advising the Minister on issues relating to the policy for Early Childhood Development.

The Ad Hoc CCECD, consisting of the Department of Education and other government representatives, together with representatives from national stakeholder organisations and specialists, has participated in the development of this document.

This policy document has also benefitted from a large number of submissions from organisations, individuals and provincial consultative forums in the field of ECD. It provides an interim policy framework for the implementation of the national ECD pilot project and for policy on Early Childhood Development.

GLOSSARY

Some of the concepts defined here are discussed in more detail in Appendix 1.

Early Childhood Development (ECD) — An umbrella term which applies to the processes by which children from birth to at least 9 years grow and thrive, physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, morally and socially (See Appendix 1).

Educare — A term referring to the provision of education and care of children from birth to age six. This term is now superceded by the term Early Childhood Development (ECD).

Children with special needs — Includes children with special academic and learning problems, physical health problems, emotional concerns and particular social needs. The term "disabled learners" refers specifically to those learners with severe and chronic physical disabilities, moderate and severe mental handicaps as well as multiples of these conditions. (Policy Framework for Education and Training, Education Department of the ANC, 1994).

Content-based curriculum development — Curriculum development which uses knowledge as the basis for development

Curriculum — This term includes all aspects of teaching and learning.

Curriculum development — A generic term for the development of learning programmes, learning materials, lesson preparation, etc. (See Appendix 1).

Curriculum framework — A curriculum framework is a philosophical and organisational framework which sets out guidelines for teaching and learning (See Appendix 1).

Competence — The capacity for continuing performance within specified ranges and contexts resulting from the integration of a number of specific outcomes. The recognition of competence in this sense is the awarding of a qualification.

COTEP — Committee on Teacher Education Policy

The Department — Refers to the national Department of Education

Outcomes — Are the results of a learning process whether formal, non-formal or informal. In outcomes-based education and training, curriculum developers work backwards from agreed desired outcomes within a particular context which clearly state what the learner should be able to demonstrate an understanding of and/or

ability to apply approp riately. Programmes of learning are then designed to help the learners to achieve these outcomes.
- Essential Outcomes
Are cross-curricular broad generic outcomes that inform teaching and learning.
- Specific Outcomes
Are contextually-demonstrated knowledge, skills and attitudes, reflecting essential outcomes.

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HECDOM　　　　　　　　- Heads of Education Departments Committee

GNU　　　　　　　　　　- Government of National Unity

NEPI　　　　　　　　　　- National Education Policy Investigation

National Qualifications Framework(NQF)
- Is a framework for providing lifelong learning opportunities utilising nationally recognised levels (See Appendix 1).

Outcomes-based curriculum development
- Curriculum development which starts with the formulation of the purposes of learning and teaching and uses these as the criteria for further curriculum development and assessment.

National ECD Pilot Project
- Refers to the pilot projects being introduced by the Department of Education as the first step towards the implementation of a compulsory Reception Year programme throughout S.A. This project aims to create and test innovations relating to the development of interim accreditation and standards for ECD practitioners, building capacity in provincial governments, the formal training sector and non-governmental organisations, developing interim policy for ECD and establishing sustainable subsidies for community-based ECD programmes.

Practitioner
- The term refers to all ECD education and training development practitioners. This encompasses the whole spectrum of ECD educators, trainers, facilitators, lecturers, caregivers, development officers, etc, including those qualified by their experience, and who are involved in provision in homes, centres and schools.

In respect of educators and trainers the term includes both formally and non-formally trained individuals providing an educational service in ECD. This would include persons currently covered by the Educator's Employment Act (Act no 138 of 1994).

Service providers
- Refers to institutions providing training and resources for practitioners. This covers the whole range of formal and non-formal institutions such as universities, technikons, colleges of education and NGO training and resource organisations.

Programme
- Refers to any series of activities aimed at promoting the development of young children, either directly or indirectly. Programmes are compiled subject to the Interim Curriculum Framework and Accreditation Guidelines for ECD Provision (See Appendix 2).

Programmes are divided into two broad categories for the purpose of this document: those offering ECD services directly to the young child, and related services that target other groups that can impact on the lives of young children, including programmes offered by service providers.

ECD services
- Refers to those programmes offered directly to young children by practitioners. These can be offered in a variety of locations, including primary schools, ECD

centres, community centres, homes, etc. (See Appendix 1).

Reception Year   - The Reception Year should not be understood as an institutionalised year of instruction in the primary school at this stage. The current context requires indirect preparation for the Reception Year to be introduced in the future as the first introductory year of an integrated four-year Junior Primary programme. Thus, older, out-of-school children will be brought into the school system through an interim reception programme. In addition, ECD services for children under five years of age and who are at risk will be supported in the short and long term.

ECD services, which will include children who are 5/6 years old and are outside the school system, will be supported until the school system can adequately accommodate all 5/6 year olds.

Consequently, the interim reception programmes need not take place in a school: they can take place in other locations such as community-based centres or homes.

This document provides a curriculum framework for reception programmes. All interim pilot programmes should be conceptualised as part of a continuous programme from birth to at least 9 years which responds to the needs of the child, assists the child's develop- ment, and which follows the Interim Curriculum Framework (See Appendix 2).

Thus the current primary school programme for Grades 1 to 3 should not be offered to 5/6 year olds.

1. INTRODUCTION

"The care and development of young children must be the foundation of social relations and the starting point of human resource development strategies from com-munity to national levels" (White Paper on Education and Training, 15 March 1995).

The Government of National Unity (GNU) has acknowledged the importance of Early Childhood Development (ECD) as a fundamental pillar of the foundations for later or lifelong learning by incorporating ECD as an intrinsic component of the White Paper Policy Framework for Education and Training in a democratic South Africa.

The White Paper (1995) defines Early Childhood Development (ECD) as "an umbrella term which applies to the processes by which children from birth to nine years grow and thrive, physically, mentally, emotionally, morally and socially" (p. 33, par. 73).

Previously the term Educare was used to refer to programmes for children in the 0 to 6 years age group. This is now replaced by the term Early Childhood Development (ECD) that encompasses children from birth to at least nine years, depending on their age when entering formal education.

ECD programmes include a variety of strategies and a wide range of services directed at helping families and communities to meet the needs of children in the above-mentioned age group.

This development phase is particularly crucial in the current context of reconstruction and development as impoverished families are not able to meet the developmental needs of their children without assistance. Many young children are at risk because their health, nurture and education cannot be provided for adequately from resources available within the community.

The families of more than half of our infants and children are extremely poor. The children of poor parents are particularly vulnerable to malnutrition, diseases and premature death.

These children suffer disproportionately from the effects of migrant labour and other exploitative labour conditions which divide families and put them under stress. They are also victims of domestic, social and political violence.

A high proportion of poor parents have had very little or no schooling and experience difficulty in preparing their own children for formal learning and for acquiring skills such as reading.

Programmes aimed at reconstruction and development which address the basic needs of families for shelter, water and sanitation, primary health care, nutrition, employment and adult basic education are therefore particularly vital. Their successful implementation will improve the quality of life of young children and enable families and communities to care for them more adequately.

2. **THE INHERITED SITUATION**

Previous governments have taken the view that early childhood development is the responsibility of parents and families and not that of the State.

In the light of the massive need for the provision of early childhood services, the current situation is inadequate, fragmented, unco-ordinated, unequal and generally lacking in educational value. It is further characterised by a long history of discriminatory provision with regard to race, geographic location, gender, special needs and funding.

Up to now only between 9 and 11% of all South African children from birth to six years have had access to public or private ECD facilities, with the result that:

- o only two percent of under threes are provided for by full-day care and home-based private- or community-funded facilities;
- o one in three White infants and children receive ECD services, compared with about one in eight Indian and Coloured children and one in sixteen African children;
- o in urban and rural areas full-day care facilities, community-based crèches and pre-schools for the children of Black working mothers are scarce, generally unsubsidised and poorly resourced;
- o twice as many urban as rural infants and children receive ECD provision;
- o only ± 2000 infants and children with disabilities attend ECD facilities. Half of these are White children. There is a serious lack of provision of ECD services for Black children with disabilities.

Not only are very few infants and children catered for, but even fewer receive an appropriate ECD experience and therefore have an abrupt introduction to formal learning.

This, coupled with poor facilities and inadequate learning conditions in the majority of junior primary schools, results in frustration, poor learning, school failure, a high drop-out rate and repetition of grades.

This situation is exacerbated considerably by the inadequate funding of ECD services and the discriminatory funding by previous education departments.

The inadequate funding of ECD services for Black communities has resulted in ECD provisioning for these communities being characterised by

- o a lack of financial resources for salaries for practitioners and for equipment and food for the children;
- o the demotivation of ECD staff and a high turnover of non-formally trained ECD practitioners;
- o a low morale amongst practitioners due to the non-recognition of their non-formal qualifications;
- o the unavailability of appropriate physical structures for ECD services resulting in multi-purpose halls and informal structures being utilised as ECD centres;
- o difficulties arising from unrealistic regulations relating to norms and standards such as physical requirements for facilities and state-recognised qualifications for practitioners, thereby making subsidisation of community efforts very difficult.

In the absence of effective State intervention the major lifeline for the provision of ECD services to communities has been non-governmental agencies and the efforts of parents and community-based organisations.

ECD NGOs in South Africa have accumulated a vast wealth of expertise in the ECD field, giving us a rich legacy of innovative and creative experience with regard to programme planning, curriculum

design, teacher training and accreditation as well as innovative ways of providing ECD services to children. This work has received considerable international recognition.

In addition to this there also exists a number of notable initiatives in providing early childhood services within the previous formal education departments.

Given the reality of long historical neglect and the absence of a coherent government policy for ECD there cannot be a quick-fix solution to the problem of meeting the vast need for ECD services in our communities.

A comprehensive plan for reversing this historic neglect of early childhood development needs to be put in place.

The situation requires carefully-devised medium- and long-term strategies together with immediate measures that will provide a better foundation for addressing the fundamental need for ECD services.

This document proposes an interim policy to provide possible solutions to the above-mentioned problems.

3. **EFFECTING EDUCATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION IN THE TRANSITION WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY (GNU)**

The Government's intervention in the ECD arena has to be understood in the context of the general strategy to reconstruct and develop the education and training system for the benefit of the country and all its people. The challenge that the Government faces is to create a system that will provide opportunities of learning for all. The paramount task is to build a just and equitable system which will provide good quality education and training to learners young and old throughout the country.

In addressing this task the national as well as provincial departments of education have had to:

- o reorganise and rationalise the 19 departments of education into one integrated system consisting of a national Department of Education and 9 provincial departments responsible for the provision of schooling;
- o commence with the implementation of the Government's commitment to 10 years of compulsory general education for all South African children. Budgetary, human resource and infrastructure constraints necessitate the phased-in implementation of this commitment;
- o engage with the Ministry of Labour in the development of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) that will provide an instrument for an integrated approach to education and training as well as a quality assurance mechanism for the upgrading of the knowledge and skills of all South Africans;
- o commence with a number of additional developmental initiatives around curriculum development, open learning, support services for Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSEN), teacher education policy, Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) and Early Childhood Development (ECD).

The above is based on the constitutional provision that there shall be "a future founded on the recognition of human rights, democracy and peaceful coexistence and developmental opportunities for all South Africans, irrespective of colour, race, class, belief and sex".

The reconstruction of the education and training system has the vision of transforming the educational legacy of the past into a democratic education system which will contribute to the development of literate, creative and productive human beings leading productive, self-fulfilled lives in a country free of violence, discrimination and prejudice. Lifelong education, training and development opportunities must be created empowering people to participate effectively in all processes of a democratic society.

The Department of Education's intervention in the field of Early Childhood Development must be seen as an important and essential innovative thrust in establishing a proper foundation for children's later learning and at the same time constituting an essential bedrock on which the new education and training system will be built.

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4. **GUIDELINES PROVIDED FOR ECD BY THE WHITE PAPER ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING (MARCH 1995)**

The White Paper establishes the Government of National Unity's commitment to the provisioning of Early Childhood Development and provides a broad policy framework for the intervention of the Department in ECD.

The White Paper acknowledges that a child's development and growth is affected by a combination of inter-related factors which constitute the overall environment.

In constructing this environment the basic needs of a child must be met by ensuring adequate nutrition, good health, early childhood stimulation and a loving and secure environment. It is clear that early childhood development must be approached within a wider and holistic context which will include multiple learning environments, namely the school, family and the community that influence the development of a child.

The White Paper recognises that interventions need to focus not only on the child but also on the wider environment, particularly the family, community support systems and government policies. An integrated strategy for ECD will recognise the need for linkages between education and nutrition, health and welfare. The White Paper proposes the establishment of formal interdepartmental committees on ECD with their counterparts in the Departments of Health and of Welfare and Population Development and the linkage of these with RDP human resource development planning at national and provincial levels.

The role of the inter-departmental ECD committees will be to develop and promote a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary approach to the welfare and development of young children from birth to at least nine years of age.

The White Paper stresses the need for these committees to work in full collaboration with the representative bodies of ECD practitioners, trainers and resource specialists and with the large array of non-governmental organisations, development agencies and the private sector that have responded to the demand for ECD services, particularly in impoverished communities.

A model/system for ECD provisioning

In the vision of the White Paper on Education and Training a system/model for ECD **provisioning** that must be put in place will consist of a **facilitative state apparatus** working in **collaboration and in partnership with a range of roleplayers within civil society** such as religious groups, women's groups, NGOs and CBOs.

This system/model is expected to provide a better foundation to address the fundamental need for ECD for all of South Africa's children over the long term with appropriate strategies that are multi-pronged and integrated.

The White Paper acknowledges that the developmental needs of the young child are continuous from birth onwards and require appropriate programmatic intervention that provides continuity between "the home, the educare and pre-school phases and the early years of schooling". It also indicates that the scope of ECD policy should, in principle, cover the full early childhood phase, and that this should be undertaken by the various Ministers of Education, Health and Welfare and Population Development.

Furthermore, the White Paper specifies that the Department of Education, working with the provincial departments in the Heads of Education Departments Committee (HECDOM) as well as relevant stakeholder organisations will have the major responsibility for developing national education policy for ECD, including the reception year.

Such policy will include the structure of provision, the determination of financial responsibilities and the establishment of national norms and standards for ECD curricula.

According to the White Paper, provincial departments will spearhead the phasing in of the policy in conjunction with NGO providers and accredited training agencies.

This plan will enable the proper establishment of a suitable infrastructure for the Reception Year programme and the preparation or upgrading of adequate numbers of practitioners with the appropriate skills required for the reception year education and thereafter making the reception year part of the compulsory phase of schooling.

To achieve this the White Paper envisages that the National Directorate for Early Childhood Development and Junior Primary Education will lead the formulation of the national programme for ECD .

5. **VISION**

The vision for Early Childhood Development is that it will serve as the bedrock for child and family life, as well as for future learning. It will be concerned with the holistic development of the young child and ensure an environment characterised by safety, protection, anti-bias and cultural fairness, so that attitudinal and psychological healing, reconciliation and the start of nation building can take place at a young age.

All children, including those with special needs, need to be affirmed in their own right and encouraged to become lifelong learners and active, creative and critical participants in society.

An adequate ECD infra-structure that can free parents, especially mothers, to take up employment and further their education will enable women in poor families to break out of the cycle of poverty, illiteracy and economic dependence.

The benefits to society and the local community are enormous. These benefits include

- an integrated community service directed at integrated needs of children, women, and families;
- scope for primary caregivers to take up employment and further education;
- opportunities for increased economic activity and productivity; and
- the reduction of the need for costly medical health, education and welfare services.

Over the past few years nations throughout the world have reaffirmed their commitment to a first call for children. Three international events have focused the world's attention on the young child. These are

- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

  The Convention, currently ratified by 127 countries including South Africa, promotes the value of the family, the principles of joint and shared parental responsibilities and the defense of children's rights within a context of gender equality.

- The World Conference on Education for All (1990)

  Focusing on the principle that "learning begins at birth", this conference emphasized the need to expand early childhood development programmes to include family and community interventions especially for poor, disadvantaged and disabled children.

- The World Summit for Children (1990)

  This summit synthesized the principles and the concerns of children and urged the world's societies to work for children's enhanced development.

The framework, emanating from these three important international events, provides the basis for the vision, values and principles around which the interim policy for ECD has been developed.

6. PRINCIPLES

The Government's intervention in Early Childhood Development is based on the following principles:

- o The Government's responsibility in the field of Early Childhood Development flows from its constitutional duty to protect the rights of young children as well as their right to security, basic nutrition, basic health care and basic education.
- o Parents and families have the primary responsibility for the care and upbringing of the young child.
- o Government ECD policy and its successful execution at all levels will aim at the empowerment of parents, families and communities to foster the care and development of their young children.
- o Children's need for care, safety and protection, stimulation, education, nutrition and health are inter-dependent. An effective, good quality early childhood development programme based on sound educational principles, requires an integrated societal approach to meet these needs.
- o Children that are differently abled must be given adequate opportunities to develop to their fullest potential.
- o The effective planning and provision of ECD services requires a collaboration between the government departments of Health, Education, Welfare and Population Development, etc. and institutions such as teacher education and training colleges, technikons and technical colleges, non-governmental organisations, especially at community level, unions, employers and donor agencies together with the active involvement of parents. All the above stakeholders in ECD will be afforded opportunities to make meaningful inputs.
- o For an ECD programme to be effective it must be based on the involvement of parents, communities and other stakeholders in democratic governance structures.
- o Well-targeted expenditure on ECD from all sources, represents a vital investment in social and economic reconstruction and is fully merited on the grounds of redress.
- o The educational component of ECD must be planned in a continuous developmental sequence from birth to the end of the foundation phase (birth to at least nine years).

7. KEY CONSIDERATIONS IN PLANNING FOR ECD POLICY

In planning for the future a number of key considerations emerge as priority issues:

7.1 Correcting past imbalances

The majority of South Africa's children have not had the benefit of exposure to a good quality early childhood development programme. At present only between 9 and 11% of children (birth to 6 years) have access to any ECD services.

Amongst these, African children are most severely disadvantaged as a result of the discriminatory provision of ECD services by previously appointed governments. At present only 6% of African children from birth to six years of age have access to ECD services. This situation has to be drastically redressed and a more equitable scenario of access to ECD services will be established.

Particular attention will be given to African children, girls in rural areas and to children of working and rural mothers.

7.2 The need to provide equal opportunities

The transformation with regard to the provisioning of ECD services has created high expectations amongst the communities. Children from privileged backgrounds enter the schooling system at a greater advantage than children from impoverished homes. Due to the discrepancies between the home and the school and negative schooling experiences, the vast majority of children in schools within impoverished neighbourhoods that provide a poor learning environment are disadvantaged. There is, therefore, a need to provide equal opportunities and access for all children.

7.3 Issues of scale

As stated previously, the percentage of children in the birth to six year age range, provided with ECD services is minimal. There is a need to develop multi-focused strategies to ensure that greater numbers of children are reached.

7.4 Affordability

Communities cannot be allowed to carry the burden of ECD provisioning on their own. Programmes must extend existing child care practices and choices which are affordable to parents and therefore require active funding partnerships between the Government, private donors, parents and local communities.

7.5 Increasing public awareness and advocacy

In view of the inadequate public awareness regarding the early childhood years and its importance as a foundation for developing life skills and later learning, a public awareness

campaign on ECD will be implemented. This campaign will promote a greater awareness of the benefits of ECD and highlight why financial investments in early childhood development promote greater social gains.

8. PILLARS OF GOVERNMENT ECD POLICY

In applying these considerations the Government's long-term policy for ECD rests on the following pillars:

- o Policy for ECD provision
- o Policy for ECD curriculum
- o Policy on accreditation
- o Policy on training in ECD
- o Policy on the employment of ECD practitioners
- o Policy on the funding of ECD services
- o Policy in respect of policy development structures

8.1. A policy for ECD provision

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8.1.1 Targeted provision

At present children from birth to at least 9 years of age are provided for in two broad categories of provision: those inside the primary school system and those outside the primary school system, in community-based or private services.

Since all 5/6 year olds will eventually be in the Reception Year which will be the first introductory year of an integrated four-year Junior Primary programme, the current policy for ECD provision will take this into account. In future there will be two categories of provision: all children over 5 years in the school system; and children at risk under five. Since children in the school system are currently funded through the provincial education budgets, children outside the school system need targeted provision:

Categories of targeted provision:

* children outside the school system (over 6)
* children outside the school system (5/6)
* children at risk (0-5)

Funding directed at children 5/6 outside the school system will not weaken provision for the other two categories of targeted provision.

These categories describing provision priorities will not undermine the concept of integrated programmes for children form birth to at least 9 years. This means that children in these different categories do not necessarily need to be located in discrete services. These categories relate to criteria for subsidies rather than to different kinds of services.

In respect of the birth to five/six year group, policy will be defined in conjunction with various other government departments, including Health, Welfare and Population Development, local governments and the RDP.

Innovative, ground-breaking ECD programmes must cater for children from migrant, rural, squatter, peri-urban, work-based or any other disadvantaged communities.

Although the above diverse target groups are specified, the common objective of ECD is the integration of these communities into the education society, based upon

the principles of equity, freedom of choice, co-operation, and equal access. Children in these communities must therefore be given the same opportunities as children from more advantaged backgrounds.

A sustainable basis for socio-cultural change with regard to the improved status of women and girls will be developed. Factors which contribute to the high drop-out rate amongst girls, such as the cost of schooling and restrictive learning environments will be addressed within the respective cultures.

8.1.2 Programming strategy

Whilst the interim reception programme is targeted as an initial government intervention, a government-supported environment is needed for a broad range of ECD programmes that cater for the birth to nine year age group. A framework that will include a comprehensive programme covering the development of all children from birth to the end of the foundation phase, will be established. The framework will include programmes that

* attend to children and families in homes, centres and schools;
* support and educate ECD practitioners;
* promote community development;
* promote change and development in the Junior Primary years of schooling;
* promote linkages between the earlier years and Junior Primary years;
* strengthen institutional resources and capacities; and
* strengthen demand and awareness.

8.1.3 Child Care and Development in the Community

It is proposed that Early Childhood Development form part of a comprehensive, national community development strategy linking economic and social development which will include housing, health, welfare and education, planning, safety and security.

This will require

o   that ECD is accorded appropriate priority in the national and provincial governments' reconstruction and development programmes including the deployment of state resources;
o   that there be joint responsibility for the planning of ECD strategy by the relevant government departments at all levels, with the Department of Education co-ordinating the process;
o   the establishment of representative consultative structures at national, provincial and local levels to guide policy development and implementation;
o   that the priorities for delivery by the Government, Non-Governmental Organisations, Community-Based Organisations, etc. be planned at local level in relation to local needs and circumstances and in collaboration with all concerned groups, service organisations and agencies.

8.1.4 The Early Years of Schooling

The early years determine whether or not a child becomes a successful learner in and out of school. Therefore, a more learner-centred approach will be adopted in the Junior Primary years.

The present rates of repetition and drop out in schools are intolerable and should be reversed. A fresh approach to the learning of children is needed and will be accomplished by:

- o establishing the concept of the reception year which builds on the range of existing societal child care and development options;
- o establishing a reception year with an enriched, play- and activity-based curriculum which emphasises continuity with the home and community and recognises the value of the children's own knowledge and experience;
- o introducing the reception year as the first year of the foundation phase; and
- o educators in the early years developing a pedagogy based on an interactive approach to learning and aimed at encouraging children's curiosity, developing confidence in using basic linguistic and cognitive skills and achieving fundamental literacy and numeracy.

8.1.5 The Reception Programme

- Location

  A variety of forms for the Reception Programme is supported, such as play groups, childminding, family-based programmes, alongside the more institutional forms. Such provision could be located in schools, ECD/community centres and homes.

  Whether provision in a reception programme is located in a setting outside the school or within, those offering such provision will have to be registered with the Department of Education and will have to demonstrate that the programmes subscribe to the national curriculum and guidelines.

  Practitioners will have to be accredited within the national accreditation framework set out by the Department of Education.

- Subsidisation

  Providers of the reception programme, irrespective of the location of delivery, will qualify for government subsidy provided that the practitioner meets the accreditation guidelines and the programme complies with the requirements of the national ECD Pilot Project.

- Practitioner:Learner Ratio

  There is considerable discussion on the Educator:Learner ratio appropriate for the junior years in the primary school. The ratio agreed to for normal primary school via agreements in the Education Labour Relations Council is 1:40.

  In respect of the pre-primary and reception classes the ratio appropriate for these years is still under discussion.

  The recommended ratio is 1:30 and in instances where there are more than 30 children, it is recommended that an additional practitioner be deployed in the programme.

  Practical and provisioning constraints may, however, result in a Practitioner:Learner ratio of 1:40.

- Targeted Provision

  The provisioning of ECD services will be phased in over a five year period due to resource and other constraints. It is essential to prioritise communities with areas of greatest need and least financial resources.

Particular attention should be given to the target groups identified in paragraph 8.1.1.

- Admission Age

Priority will be given to children who have already reached their 5th birthday prior to the beginning of the first term of the school year.

Children who turn 5 within the first 3 months after the beginning of the first school term may also be admitted to the reception programme, provided that this acceptance does not displace a seat for a child who has already turned 5.

Children who are older than 5, but are within the age range of 5-10, and who have, for one reason or the other missed a schooling opportunity will be allowed admission to a reception programme. In such instances practitioners will be adequately equipped to provide learning opportunities for children in mixed-age classes.

Children who are above 10 years of age who require exposure to a reception programme for re-entry into the schooling system will be admitted to special programmes catering for mixed-age group learning.

8.2. A Policy for ECD curriculum

Improving the quality of ECD provision will depend on improving the quality of the context of childhood, ECD staff and the curriculum.

This will require a sustained and targeted programme of action over many years. For the interim period (i.e. approximately 3 years) the following components will be included in the framework for an interim national curriculum:

- The curricula that have been developed by NGOs will be recognised and interim accreditation provided alongside the accreditation presently accorded to formal providers.
- For the interim and the short term period, ECD practitioners and providers must begin shaping their curricula according to the guidelines presented in Appendix 2.
- The curriculum content can be viewed in terms of knowledge, skills, processes, values and attitudes. This must be considered in the context of changing social, political and economic conditions.
- The curricula must recognise the indivisibility of care and education of young (including children beyond this age who did not have the opportunity for ECD within a development framework from birth to at least nine years).
- The curriculum will draw from the multicultural strengths of the various communities making up the South African nation.

(For detailed information refer to Appendix 2)

8.3. A Policy on accreditation

These interim guidelines are proposed in order to include those service providers who at present fall outside the scope of the Norms and Standards for Teacher Education of the

Committee on Teacher Education Policy (COTEP). Initially, these interim guidelines will be applied specifically to accredit providers outside the formal schooling system. However, these interim guidelines will also serve as the basis for the development of national guidelines for all ECD provision for children from birth to at least nine years.

This will be undertaken at two levels:

- The accreditation of practitioners.

  Practitioners willl be accredited for the interim period on the basis of required knowledge, skills and abilities. The next step will be to begin the process of articulating the knowledge, skills and abilities with existing policy on teacher education and then with those competences proposed by the NQF.

- The second level will require the development of criteria for the accreditation of training providers. Guidelines for provider accreditation will consider the following: *
  The programme that the respective institution offers;
  * The knowledge, skills and experience of training staff;
  * Teaching methodology, resource utilisation and access to resources.

  Providers must participate continuously in in-service programmes for ongoing development and lifelong learning.

  The guidelines provided will constitute the basis for accrediting both practitioners and institutions/organisations that provide training.

  An appropriate body, recognised by the Department of Education, will function in the interim as the accrediting body.

  (For detailed information refer to Appendix 2.)

8.4. A Policy on training in ECD

For this interim period it will be important to access current training capacity within the formal and NGO sector and to undertake an assessment of the feasibility of extending capacity both qualitatively and quantitatively.

This will be addressed through:

- The participation of organisations in the ECD Pilot Project. These organisations must establish courses that will enable practitioners to fulfil the requirements of the ECD curriculum and to become accredited.
- Collaboration between the formal and NGO sector in their joint venture of developing, extending and sharing resources, skills and knowledge for the foundation phase.
- Debates around the present ECD levels for training of practitioners and its articulation with the levels of qualification on the NQF continue. No levels for ECD training will be prescribed during the interim period.

8.5. A policy on the employment of ECD practitioners

The incorporation of partnerships in the provision models for ECD brings into play employer bodies from both the public and private sector. This new condition will require a more exhaustive examination of how ECD practitioners, as employees within both these domains, are catered for within the framework of the new Education Labour Relations Act No. 146 of 1993 and the new Labour Relations Bill of 1996 as well as the Educators Employment Act No. 138 of 1994.

8.6. A policy on the funding of ECD services

The public funding of a national ECD programme is justified on many grounds. It can help redress past discrimination against young children, protect the rights of children and women, promote human resource development, help prevent costly social pathologies, secure more efficient performance by children in school and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the schooling system. Public funding for ECD must be mobilised from national, provincial and local governmental revenues.

However, public funding should not be the only source of financial support for ECD. Employers also have a distinct responsibility to contribute to meeting their employees' child care needs.

Parents have played a substantial role in the funding of ECD services through the payment of user fees and should continue to contribute according to their means.

A policy on the funding of ECD services will include

- o a recognition that the funding of ECD services involves a partnership of the national, provincial and local governments, the private sector, organised labour, community organisations, parents and donor agencies;
- o an enabling legislative environment to encourage the maximum mobilisation of financial resources for ECD provision;
- o investments in ECD within the framework of a coordinated strategy for reconstruction and development;
- o the fostering of a funding culture that supports democratisation, transparency and responsible administration and accountability so as to enable the most efficient use of resources;
- o adequate resourcing of an appropriate national ECD programme which will continue to present creative challenges to our capacity to mobilise adequate financial and human resources.

There will, therefore, be the need for creative investigation of special measures/mechanisms to address appropriately the funding needs of ECD and to increase the existing pool of resources available for ECD programming.

8.7. A policy in respect of policy development structures

The process of policy development, refinement and consultation will be an ongoing process between the Department of Education and stakeholders in ECD.

In respect of the elaboration of ECD policy the White Paper on Education and Training instructs the establishment of an inclusive statutory consultative body that must be representative of all sectors in the ECD field.

The establishment of such a body is regarded as a priority by the Department. Proposals in respect of the terms of reference, powers and functions, composition and the procedures for the establishment of such a body are presently being tabled for discussion.

It is envisaged that the process for continuous policy consultation and development between stakeholders and the Department of Education will be given a considerable boost when the Statutory Council is established.

In the interim, acting through HECDOM, the Department has established an Ad Hoc Co-ordinating Committee for ECD (CCECD) as a vehicle for stakeholder consultation and advice on the development of an Interim ECD Policy.

The CCECD has facilitated the development of stakeholder forums in the various provinces between representatives from the provincial government education departments, the formal sector and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the ECD sector. These forums are being encouraged to create conditions for genuine collaborative collegial partnerships.

The framework that has been developed for these forums includes the following:

- o Objectives:
    - o to facilitate closer working relationships among the officials of the national and provincial departments of education, the formal sector and NGO counterparts in ECD;
    - o to develop a genuine process of partnerships and collegial collaboration on ECD;
    - o to provide a broad-based consultative forum of the major stakeholders in ECD; and
    - o to develop support strategies for the departments of education, the formal sector and the NGO sector to advance ECD.
- o Method:

    In planning and executing the forum processes a partnership of collaboration among government departmental officials, the formal sector and NGO counterparts has emerged.

- o Issues:

    Three sets of issues currently constitute the agenda of the forums. These are:

    - o Policy and Policy Structures for ECD;
    - o Curriculum, Accreditation and Training issues; and
    - o Provisioning for ECD issues.
- o Outcomes:
    - o These provincial forums are engendering wide-spread support and participation amongst a broad range of stakeholders.
    - o The forums are emerging as the most useful platforms for provincial consultation and liaison with national processes.
    - o Effective communication and collaborative linkages are being constructed between the Department of Education and the roleplayers in the ECD field.
    - o Supporting mechanisms and strategies are emerging for ECD arising from the collegial collaboration among the national and provincial departments of education, the formal sector and the NGO community.
    - o The limited capacities for ECD within the provincial and national departments of education are being strengthened by the collaboration with the NGO community.

    It is envisaged that these forums will continue to function as consultative structures in the interim until the establishment of the permanent structures.

9. CONCLUSION

The policy statements enunciated in this framework will function as interim policy guiding the implementation of the national ECD Pilot Project.

The Pilot Project is aimed at initiating the establishment of the start-up phase of the National Reception Year programme.

Following the successful implementation of the National Pilot Project over a period of 3 years a new policy framework for ECD is likely to emerge that will provide a permanent framework for longer-term ECD provisioning.

APPENDIX 1

CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

The formulation of national norms and standards necessarily involves the preparation of national guidelines for learning and teaching through curriculum development processes which are democratic, accountable and fully representative of all stakeholders in education and training.

National guidelines could take various forms, including curriculum frameworks, core curricula, guideline documents, learning programmes, subject curricula, syllabi, etc. Since these terms often mean different things to different people, thereby hampering understanding, the way in which they are used in this document are briefly explained in the following paragraphs.

1.1 Curriculum development

As used in this document, the term "curriculum development" is a generic term referring to the development of curriculum frameworks, national guidelines documents, provincial and local programmes development and the development of learning programmes and materials by curriculum development centres, learning institutions, publishers, etc.

1.2 Curriculum framework

A curriculum framework is a philosophical and organisational framework which sets out guidelines for teaching and learning. It thus establishes norms and standards, but does not prescribe content or teaching approach. It is not intended specifically to direct teaching and learning but to guide further curriculum development, i.e. the development of learning programmes and materials which best meet the needs of those they are intended to serve. As such, a curriculum framework:

- o spells out principles for curriculum development and design;
- o provides guidelines for organising learning and teaching;
- o specifies essential, generic outcomes for learning and teaching;
- o describes briefly the areas or fields of learning which are regarded as essential for learning and teaching; and
- o suggests approaches to be adopted in evaluating learner progress and/or assessing learning outcomes.

Curriculum frameworks are not to be regarded as learning programmes. Rather, they are to be regarded as philosophical and organisational frames of reference with a dual purpose: they provide norms and standards for curriculum development and design but, at the same time, create opportunities for innovation, allowing the development of flexible, relevant learning programmes and materials which will take cognisance of particular needs, constraints and realities.

1.3 Early Childhood Development (ECD)

Within South Africa today the term now being used to refer to programmes for children in the birth to nine age range is Early Childhood Development (ECD). The interim policy document, however, refers to children from birth to at least nine years in order to include learners who may be older but who still find themselves within this developmental phase

The term ECD conveys the importance of an holistic approach to child development and signifies an appreciation of the importance of considering a child's health, nutrition, education, psycho-social and additional environmental factors within the context of the family and the community. It is consistent with an understanding of the developmental process of children and in line with the international definition.

1.4 Curriculum Development and the National Qualifications Framework

Learning, teaching and assessment are inextricably linked. It is only in the context of the one that the other has meaning: without learning, assessment has relatively little value; without assessment, the effectiveness of learning and the accountability of teaching cannot be determined. It follows, therefore, that the development of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the development of a Curriculum Framework, National Guideline Documents and Learning Programmes should go hand in hand.

In association with the establishment of a National Qualifications Framework, the Curriculum Framework should encourage an integrated approach to education and training, facilitate articulation and progression and ensure access to relevant education and training of a high quality for all. This inextricable link between the NQF, a Curriculum Framework and ensuing curriculum documents is spelt out in the White Paper on Education and Training (p, 15), which states that

"An integrated approach to education and training, linked to the development of a new National Qualifications Framework (NQF) based on a system of credits for learning outcomes achieved, will encourage creative work on the design of curricula and the recognition of learning attainments wherever education and training are offered."

It needs to be noted that Curriculum Frameworks and the National Qualifications Framework are intended to inform each other. These links are, therefore, mutually beneficial.

The NQF is envisaged as having eight qualifications levels (See Appendix 3). Unit standards will be developed, based on the formulation of generic and specific learning outcomes, each with their appropriate assessment criteria. The NQF, therefore, is an outcomes-based structure. This implies that the Curriculum Framework, National Guideline Document and all ensuing learning programmes should also be outcomes-based.

This requires a significant paradigm shift in terms of the way learning and teaching have been viewed in traditional curricula and institutions of learning. Whereas the focus in the past has been on curriculum input (learning content) it now has to be on curriculum output, i.e. on the results of learning rather than on the ways and means by which these results have to be achieved. In order to understand the implications this paradigm shift will have for curriculum development, the **anticipated** relationship between NQF processes and curriculum development processes is explained, albeit briefly, below:

- o The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) will accept responsibility for specifying qualifications and registering standards for the entire education and training system. As such it will appoint various bodies or authorities to assist it in this task.
- o Whilst the monitoring and registration of qualifications and unit standards is the responsibility of SAQA, the development of a Curriculum Framework and National Guideline Documents will be the responsibility of the national Department of Education.

  It is imperative, therefore, that decisions taken by either of these (i.e. SAQA or the Department of Education) should, at all times, be informed by processes, structures and decisions in the other.

- o The establishment of Qualifications Councils for each Education and Training Band has been proposed. These Councils will be registered by SAQA and will decide on the requirements for each qualification, whether these be rules of combination, credit requirements, essential outcomes or unit standards.
- o Essential outcomes, as spelt out in the Curriculum Framework will, notwithstanding their generic nature, guide the development of unit standards for individual areas of learning. Unit standards will be developed by a number of Standards Generating

Bodies (consisting largely of practitioners in the appropriate Fields or Areas of Learning) and coordinated by National Standards Bodies (composed of relevant stakeholders in this Field or Area of Learning). It seems imperative that the development of unit standards and the development of national guideline documents for particular areas of learning should inform each other since they are inextricably linked.

- o The development and provision of actual learning programmes will be the responsibility of the providers, i.e. provincial, local and other institutes for curriculum development, whether these institutes be part of education departments or not. The curriculum development institutes will refer to the registered unit standards and qualifications in drawing up programmes and materials.
- o Education and Training Quality Assurers (ETQAs), accredited by SAQA, will be responsible for assuring the quality of provision on an ongoing basis.

It needs to be noted that, although specific bodies or authorities are responsible for the processes described above, relevant education, training and development practitioners and stakeholders will be involved at each stage of the process.

INTERIM CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK AND ACCREDITATION GUIDELINES FOR ECD PROVISION

0. **DEFINITION OF CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK**

A curriculum framework is a philosophical and organisational framework which sets out guidelines for teaching and learning.

1. **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this annexure is to elaborate on a curriculum framework and provide accreditation guidelines for ECD provision. The document should be used as a guideline for practitioners and not be seen as a prescriptive document. It therefore invites flexibility and creativity in its usage.

2. **GUIDELINES UNDERPINNING THE CURRICULUM**

3.1 Preamble

The principles that underpin the curriculum are based on values which are consistent with the vision that children must be given opportunities to grow and develop as active citizens contributing constructively to the building of a democratic non-racist, non-sexist and equitable society.

3.2 Provision

. Any disparities and inequalities in the allocation of resources, in the provision of ECD programmes and training opportunities and in the acquisition of skills and access to occupational and leadership roles and responsibilities at all levels must be actively redressed.
a. A practitioner with commitment, care, a knowledge base and experience can offer a good quality service in a home, centre or school setting.

3.3 Children

b. All children are of equal worth and are entitled to achieve their full potential.
c. All children share the same entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum in an environment which accepts them unconditionally. Children are entitled to well-organised and well-planned learning opportunities.
d. While respecting and affirming each child's cultural and linguistic heritage, a commitment must be made to prepare children for membership of a non-racial, multi-cultural and multi-lingual society.
e. Children with special education needs must be included within ECD services. Practitioners must become equipped and be assisted to deal with these special needs. The educational infrastructure should be adapted to accommodate children with special needs in respect of physical facilities and pupil:teacher ratio. This should be accompanied by a parent education programme around special needs for the parents of all children. The overriding consideration of inclusion must be that the child with special needs should benefit from this provision.
f. A love of learning and a commitment to lifelong learning must be encouraged.
g. Services need to be sensitised to the strengths that children bring to the ECD service, and build on these and not try to force children into a debilitating model.

3.4 Community

h. Parents should be valued as primary educators of their children and as active partners with other family and community members in facilitating the process of learning.
i. The ECD sector recognises the importance of networking and establishing linkages with other service providers at national, provincial and local government level.

3.5 Practitioners

j. All practitioners should be enabled to reach their full potential.
k. Practitioners should acquire and apply knowledge through investigation and problem solving in order to make informed choices and decisions.
l. Through ongoing in-service programmes practitioners should be afforded opportunities to build their self-confidence and motivation to assist them on the path of lifelong learning.
m. Practitioners should be afforded opportunities to develop personal and social skills, including the capacity to communicate effectively.
n. Training programmes should recognise the cultures and spoken languages of providers.
o. Practitioners should implement and promote the maintenance of high quality standards in the provision of ECD services.
p. Practitioners should understand their critical role in bringing about changes in pedagogy from teacher-centredness to learner-centredness.
q. Practitioners should be competent to develop programmes to meet the needs of children, including children with special needs.
r. Practitioners require observation skills to meet the needs of individual children and to assess their progress with regard to growth and development.
s. Practitioners should understand and fulfil their role in promoting parent and community involvement in ECD by establishing relationships with the community.
t. Practitioners, besides their personal growth and experience, should be able to use a number of different paths to develop their competence, such as working with community-based organisations, non-governmental organisations, technical colleges, colleges of education, technikons and universities.

3.6 ECD Programme

u. Programmes should recognise the indivisibility of the care and education of young children within a development framework from birth to at least nine years (including children beyond this age who did not have the opportunity for ECD). Programmes should provide for a continuous progression of opportunities for development, allowing children opportunities for a gradual refinement of perception throughout this stage of their development.
v. The programmes should focus on the needs of the child and take cognisance of his/her context. Each child should be provided with realistic challenges to aim high and reach his/her full potential.
w. Programmes should embody the principle of accountability to the child, parents, community, colleagues and government departments.
x. In order to transform society ECD programmes should emphasise the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills as essential life skills.
y. To enable the child to develop emotionally, physically, spiritually, morally, intellectually, creatively and socially, the needs of the child as a whole should be emphasised.
z. The programmes should have high expectations of children who should not be limited by stereotyped views about class, cultural background, gender or special needs.
aa. Wherever possible the programme should be integrated rather than fragmented into subject areas.
bb. Programmes should focus more attention on "hands-on" experiences, the use of manipulative materials, questioning, justification of thinking and problem-solving

approaches. Less time should be spent on rote practice and memorisation, one answer and one method, the use of worksheets and teaching by telling.

cc. Assessment of children should be largely qualitative, with the aim of assisting children to develop and reach their full potential, not for **promotion purposes**.

dd. Experiences and activities, both guided and free, that create enjoyment for children's learning and a love of learning, should be the basis of the methodology in the ECD programmes. Play and educational games are examples of these experiences.

ee. The practitioner is not the only source of learning. Wherever possible learning should take place through first-hand experience. Children should interact with one other to explore and find out things for themselves and see how things work. Having children with differing abilities/ages and talents working with one another is a rich source of learning.

ff. Programmes should embody anti-bias criteria so that each child is affirmed in his/her own culture, heritage, religion, language and socio-economic background.

3. **A CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK**

4.1 Introduction

As a curriculum framework contains broad statements only, it is much more flexible and could well be the means of effecting the required balance between central and local control and participation. It provides both a philosophical base and an organisational structure for curriculum development initiatives at all levels, whether on national, provincial, community or school level. Such multi-level involvement could be effected by the provision of national programme directives on the one hand, while the shared ownership of education and training initiatives would be promoted on the other. Through these processes the shared ownership of the education and training task could become a reality for provincial and local structures and for those who have the opportunity to share in this experience.

The shift to developing national curriculum outcomes in terms of learning areas rather than developing core syllabi may, furthermore, encourage a flexibility that allows for the devolution of curriculum development and optimum teacher participation. Such outcomes could facilitate the devolution of curriculum development not only to the provinces, but also to local clusters of schools, teachers' centres and, ideally, to individual schools themselves. At all levels of curriculum development (from the national, macro-level to the provincial, meso-level and school-based, micro-level), the nature of particular knowledge areas, the needs of target groups of learners and the demands of the changing socio-economic context should inform the formulation of outcomes. Only then will outcomes-based learning programmes avoid the trap of prescribing narrow mechanistic behaviour modification rather than promoting holistic integrated learning development.

In addition, a curriculum framework is flexible enough to allow for inter- and intra-departmental interaction and integration, co-operation and consultation.

Prescribing a single, core curriculum for all users of the education and training system would ignore any initiative and creativity. Because a core curriculum is prescriptive and often rigid, it tends to over emphasise uniformity at the cost of innovation.

In addition, core curriculums often suffer from "content overload" with the result that the needs of their immediate users cannot always be met.

The overall goal of the curriculum is to provide opportunities for children to grow and develop as active citizens contributing constructively to the building of a democratic, non-racist and equitable society.

4.2 Areas of learning

The areas of learning for ECD are in line with those proposed in the Draft Curriculum Framework for General and Further Education and Training developed by the Consultative Forum on Curriculum (CFC) of the national Department of Education, and have been contextualised for ECD.

The CFC document points out that "although these areas of learning may appear reminiscent of knowledge areas in past curricula, they are neither intended nor meant to be delimiting". This ECD document is therefore not proposing that the ECD curriculum should be subject-bound; as far as possible, an integrated approach should be employed allowing for progressive opportunities for development leading to a gradual refinement of children's perceptions and which respond to the needs of the whole child. All the following areas of learning must be seen and be offered in an inter-related manner within the broader context of the development of life skills:

- emotional development;
- intellectual and perceptual development;
- communication, literacy and language development;
- development of numeracy and mathematical concepts;
- development of cultural, artistic and artistic craft skills;
- development of physical and natural sciences enquiry skills;
- development of an understanding of technology and technological processes;
- development of an understanding of economic principles;
- spiritual, moral and ethical development;
- development of human and social awareness; and
- physical development.

4.2.1 Development of Life Skills

The importance and interrelatedness of all the following areas of development need to be emphasised as necessary for learning for life. An integrated programme that builds on children's strengths and which gives sufficient time and encouragement for children to develop in all areas will build from the earliest years essential life skills such as a love of learning, resilience, self-reliance, assertiveness, respect for self, others and the environment, responsibility, critical thinking, questioning skills, informed decision-making abilities, problem-solving abilities, co-operation, conflict resolution and negotiating skills, and the creative use of leisure time.

4.2.2 Emotional Development

Children's emotional well-being underpins their personal development. Through all activities in the day, and through structured opportunities, the practitioner should ensure children's emotional well-being and afford opportunities for their emotional growth.

4.2.3 Intellectual and Perceptual Development

Opportunities need to be provided which will enable children to refine perception in all senses alongside the development of concepts to organise these sensorial perceptions. Children must be afforded opportunities to develop intellectual skills such as enquiry, exploration, questioning, problem-solving and decision-making through:

4.2.3.1 Communication, Literacy and Language Development

The over-arching goal of language development is effective communication. The focus will be on the improvement of children's listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

Practitioners need to assist children in their emergent literacy which will lead to their ability to read, write, listen and speak by the end of the Foundation Phase (Grade 3). A flexible approach should be adopted in allowing each child to progress at his/her own pace across the Foundation Phase.

Children need to be provided with opportunities to understand and use verbal and non-verbal means of communicating thoughts and feelings.

The development of questioning skills should be encouraged.

The issue of language of instruction in the early years is a subject of continuing debate. Whilst it is recommended that the child should be taught in the mother tongue, in certain instances parents may prefer to have their children taught in a language other than their mother tongue. The

policy framework allows for this flexibility and also encourages a multilingual approach.

In terms of the discussion document on a language in education policy, each primary school should be encouraged to offer at least two languages of instruction from Grade One. At least one of these should be the home language of a significant number of learners in the school. An additional language will be optional in Grades One and Two.

The ECD sector should use this discussion document as the basis for a debate around language policy for ECD, and for training courses for practitioners.

4.2.3.2 Development of Numeracy and Mathematical Concepts

A wide range of activities needs to be provided to assist the development of children's mathematical concepts, and their understanding and appreciation of relationships and pattern in number, time and space in their everyday lives.

4.2.3.3 Development of Cultural, Artistic and Artistic Craft Skills

Children should be afforded opportunities for drama, mime, music, movement, dance and various art mediums which will stimulate them to explore and express their unique creative abilities and to develop their aesthetic appreciation. Process, not product, must be the emphasis.

Aesthetic development should reflect the cultural heritage of children. They should be encouraged to build on their language and culture through these activities. Songs, stories, games and dances from various cultures should be shared in the spirit of nation building.

4.2.3.4 Development of Physical and Natural Sciences Enquiry Skills

Skills and competencies associated with science as a process of enquiry should be developed, i.e. a process which includes observation and enquiry,

selection of relevant data, making predictions, testing these predictions, identifying and explaining patterns and relationships and applying knowledge and understanding to new situations.

This development can take place in the broader context of the study of the environment which would help children to understand the world as a set of related systems by investigating and describing the natural environment and the environment created by people, as well as encouraging in children respect for and protection of the natural environment.

4.2.3.5 Development of an Understanding of Technology and Technological Processes

Technology is concerned with bringing about change in and exercising control over the environment.

The processes involved in Technology Education are: identifying a need or problem, planning, designing and producing a model to meet the need, redesigning and making the product based on the model, evaluating the product, considering marketing strategies and communication to promote the product and its ultimate influence on the environment.

Children's problem-solving skills can be enhanced through moving through all these processes.

Children should have a rich exposure to a wide variety of natural and manufactured materials, different forms of energy and use different forms of information inputs in order to provide them with opportunities to gain an understanding of technological processes and to develop an understanding of the impact of technology on their lives.

Technology from the children's own environment should serve as the starting point. Different contexts where products are produced should also be investigated, such as the home, small businesses and factories.

Information Technology is central to technology: the knowledge, skills and processes involved in the gathering of data, transforming data into information, the storing, retrieving and presentation of data and information in various ways, e.g. on paper and electronically.

The Department's "Technology 2005" Project envisages that technology education will be part of the education of every child and teacher by 2005 with a view to their becoming creative, adaptable, critical, autonomous, entrepreneurial and employable citizens. Children should thus be provided with opportunities to discover and use appropriate levels of technology safely and seriously so that they become aware both of the benefits of technology for people and of the negative impacts it could have.

4.2.3.6 Development of an Understanding of Economic Principles

Children should be exposed to a broad range of simple financial transactions, including borrowing and investing money and the buying and selling of goods and merchandise. This can be done best through outings and excursions to places of work and through simulation activities that include a critical appraisal of business practices.

Activities associated with business and commerce that are linked to children's basic needs should lead to a consideration of people's needs in relation to their desires and wants.

4.2.4 Spiritual, Moral and Ethical Development

A broad approach needs to be employed which encourages children to develop spiritually, morally, and ethically. Experiences and activities, both guided and free, as well as pro-social activities, should give children opportunities to grow morally and to develop a social sense.

Within this broader context, all children, regardless of age, aptitude, physical or social circumstances should enjoy an educational experience in religious education which is coherent, continuous and challenging. While having their personal religions affirmed, children should be informed about the world's Monotheistic

Religions, other World Religions and Personal Search to understand their own religion in the broader context and to understand the values that underpin all religions.

4.2.5 Development of Human and Social Awareness

This area of experience concerns itself with the examination of people, with their heritage, with their ways of life and with their relationships, both with one another and with the environment. Using their immediate families, communities and environments as starting points, children can be exposed to the full range of South African cultures, traditions, religions and languages to understand similarities and differences, and develop respect for one another. It is essential that culture is understood as dynamic, rather than static. This can lead ultimately to children gaining a world view and global perspective which respects human dignity.

Children should be afforded opportunities for co-operation through developing conflict-resolution and negotiating skills.

4.2.6 Physical Development

Activities that allow children to develop large and small muscles, and that encourage co-ordination and balance need to be included in the programme.

In addition to these general skills, children need to know how to keep their bodies healthy and how the human body works. Skilful body management can be promoted through participation in everyday family and community experiences and events, creative, artistic movement, individual and team games involving psycho-motor skills, and activities that lead to increased suppleness, ability, strength and stamina.

4.3   Processes through which development takes place

Development takes place through learning experiences that are multi-faceted and are based on concrete, "hands-on" experience. A wide range of activity-based processes should provide for discovery, exploration and experimentation, both within the setting of the home, centre and school, and through outings and excursions.

Experiences and activities, both guided and free, that create enjoyment for the child and foster children's learning and a love of learning, should be the basis of the methodology in the ECD programme. Play, meaningful everyday work and events and educational games are examples of these experiences.

Informal learning approaches should be employed whenever possible.

The programme should provide children with rich opportunities to develop independence, confidence, curiosity, perseverance, co-operation and co-ordination. One-on-one, small group and large group experiences must be part of the daily programme.

The setting provided must encourage self-discovery, decision-making, enquiry and problem-solving.

4.4 The role of practitioners in the development process

Practitioners need to offer children a balanced programme of experiences. To do this, they need to be adaptable and to respond to individual needs.

The primary challenge of practitioners is to provide sufficient activities to assist children with their development as learners and human beings.

Practitioners need to make use of the child's environment, a range of bought, found and made materials and equipment in order to provide children with sufficient concrete, "hands-on" experiences.

Practitioners should select activities and equipment that promote the goals of non-sexism, non-racism and non-violence.

Practitioners should assess the progress of each child through continuous observation to provide information about the child's development in all aspects of emotional, physical, intellectual and personal growth. Children should be assessed in relation to their personal development and progress.

Assessment of children should be largely qualitative to assist children in their development, not for purposes of promotion. Assessment through observation should be an integral part of the programme. No formal written examinations may be set.

One important function of assessment is to identify as early as possible areas of a child's development that need extra or specific attention.

Another important function of assessment is to provide information to parents and family with regard to the development of their child. The practitioner needs to encourage consultative partnerships in the process of assessment.

The process of assessment should include the children, the curriculum, the learning environment and the practitioners themselves in order to achieve optimal opportunities for children and to enhance development.

5. **ACCREDITATION GUIDELINES**

These interim guidelines are proposed in order to include those service practitioners who at present fall outside the scope of the Norms and Standards for Teacher Education of the Committee on Teacher Education Policy (COTEP). Initially these interim guidelines will be applied specifically to accredit practitioners who are not accredited by the government and are participating in the ECD Pilot Project. These interim guidelines will serve as the basis for the development of national competences for all ECD practitioners.

This development process should include input from the service providers in the Pilot Project, including the training and support agencies, and the practitioners in homes, centres and schools. COTEP should ensure participation and co-ordination between this process and the setting of national norms and standards. Furthermore, the ECD sector (formal and non-formal) must be included in the process of developing national accreditation criteria which are acceptable to the ECD sector as a whole.

This development process must at all stages fit the operational parameters of the National Qualifications Framework.

The interim accreditation process acknowledges the work already done in the field of accrediting non-formal training courses for early childhood practitioners.

5.1 Interim accreditation of ECD practitioners

Accreditation guidelines are provided and are in keeping with the developmental nature of this process.

Individual service practitioners will be given interim accreditation if they either satisfy the guidelines or if they are prepared to satisfy the guidelines in the continuing process of their professional development.

Practitioners participating in the ECD Pilot Project will be required to operate within the interim curriculum framework.

5.2 Interim accreditation of training providers

Training organisations should also ensure that courses delivered to practitioners are in line with the operational parameters of the proposed curriculum framework and the accreditation guidelines.

Until the South African Qualifications Authority is established and a standard-setting body for ECD has been established, no requirements regarding ECD qualification levels are prescribed.

This will afford stakeholders in the ECD sector the opportunity to debate the issue of the existing qualification levels within the present system of non-formal accreditation and to arrive at a position of consensus with regard to qualification levels in the future.

5.3 Accreditation Guidelines for Practitioners

The accreditation guidelines reflect the needs and working conditions of the ECD practitioners in relation to the aims for teacher education and the outcome for teacher education programmes provided by COTEP. These are generic guidelines for practitioners working with children from birth to at least nine years of age, and for formal and non-formal ECD provision. These guidelines must be modified, adopted and developed through practice.

The practitioner must be able to fulfil the requirements of the accreditation guidelines. Where the practitioner is not able to fulfil a particular requirement, that person will need to undertake further training in order to achieve that requirement.

The following will serve as the interim accreditation guidelines for practitioners:

5.3.1 ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN A SAFE AND HEALTHY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT, BY:

- promoting the physical and emotional well-being of children;
- ensuring access to clean water, adequate nutrition, sanitation, shelter and protection;
- making informed choices that will contribute to the physical, mental, emotional, social, spiritual and educational well-being of children;
- encouraging good health and safety practices in the work/play environment;
- demonstrating the daily routines for children, including supervision/provision of meals, toilet practices, hygiene, rest/sleep periods;
- developing children's awareness of their own capabilities and what is healthy and safe for them to do;
- ensuring that the abuse of children in the learning environment, whether physical, verbal or emotional, does not occur, and countering such abuse where it occurs in the community; and
- demonstrating and encouraging respect for and protection of the environment which arises naturally through practical involvement with the environment.

5.3.2 ADVANCE THE PHYSICAL AND INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN, BY:

- providing opportunities to refine perception through all senses, alongside the development of concepts to organise these sensorial perceptions;
- providing opportunities for language development through listening, speaking, reading and writing;
- assisting children in their emergent literacy and showing respect for the child's mother tongue;
- providing opportunities for children to understand and use verbal and non-verbal means of communication;
- developing questioning skills;
- providing opportunities to assist the development of children's numeracy and mathematical concepts;
- assisting children in their understanding and appreciation of relationships and patterns in number, time and space in their everyday lives;
- providing opportunities for drama, mime, music, movement, dance and the use of various art mediums so as to stimulate children to explore and express their unique creative abilities and to develop their aesthetic appreciation;
- developing children's skills and abilities associated with scientific enquiry: observation, selection of relevant data, making predictions, testing these predictions, identifying and explaining patterns and relationships;
- assisting children to understand the world as a set of related systems by investigating and describing the natural environment and the environment created by people;
- encouraging respect for and protection of the environment;
- developing children's skills and abilities associated with technology: identifying a problem, producing a model, redesigning the model, evaluating the product, considering marketing strategies, including communication and evaluating its impact on the environment;
- developing children's skills and abilities associated with Information Technology: gathering data, transforming data to information, storing, retrieving and presenting data;
- encouraging children to view their heritage, culture and traditions in relation to other South African cultures to encourage respect for human dignity;
- developing children's co-operation, conflict resolution and negotiating skills;
- providing opportunities to develop large and small muscles, co-ordination, balance, and promote healthy living and skilful body management, suppleness, ability, strength and stamina;
- assisting children to develop spiritually, morally, and ethically;
- developing children's questioning abilities;
- providing activity-based/informal activities that enhance self-discovery and decision making;
- providing activities and experiences that develop enquiry, exploration and problem solving;
- providing children with opportunities to gain a critical understanding of economic principles;

- using materials and equipment, whether purchased, made or found, that will enhance the development of the above;
- encouraging children to understand the importance of all the above as integral to the process of lifelong learning;
- planning a daily, weekly and monthly programme of balanced activities in order to develop all the abilities in each child;
- demonstrating an ability to work one-on-one, and with small and large groups;
- assessing the progress of each child through continuous observation and providing information on physical and intellectual growth of the child to parents;
- developing and providing services and programmes appropriate to the individual needs of children and which promote the development of the whole child;
- developing and providing services and programmes appropriate for children with special needs; and
- developing and providing anti-bias programmes to prepare children for membership of a non-racial, multi-cultural, multi-lingual society.

5.3.3 BUILD A POSITIVE SELF-CONCEPT AND INDIVIDUAL STRENGTH IN CHILDREN, BY:

- providing experiences and activities, both guided and free, as well as pro-social activities for children to develop self-reliance, resilience and assertiveness;
- providing experiences and activities, both guided and free, as well as pro-social activities for children to develop spiritually, morally and ethically;
- exposing children to their own heritage, culture, tradition, religion and language to understand their heritage, and
- encouraging children to view their heritage, culture, and traditions in relationship to other South African cultures.

5.3.4 PROMOTE POSITIVE FUNCTIONING OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS IN A GROUP ENVIRONMENT, BY:

- structuring opportunities for children to experience and practise skills, such as empathy and mutual respect, required to build a harmonious community;
- providing opportunities for children to listen, interact and express themselves freely with other children and adults;
- providing activities that encourage children to cooperate and share with other children;
- resolving conflicts in peaceful, co-operative and equitable ways;
- utilising the community to provide materials and expertise to promote the broader understanding of different cultures;
- working collectively and effectively with other adults on a common task, whether with colleagues, committees, parents or other community structures, in order to foster the care and development of children; and
- exposing children to the full range of South African cultures to understand similarities and differences in order to develop respect for different cultures and traditions.

5.3.5 FULFIL ADMINISTRATIVE AND MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES, BY:

- keeping appropriate records;
- explaining legal requirements for his/her provision; and
- explaining and participating in the process of accreditation of practitioners.

5.3.6 PROMOTE RESPONSIBLE PARTICIPATION IN THE LIFE OF THE HOME, LOCAL, NATIONAL AND GLOBAL COMMUNITIES, BY:

- contributing constructively to the life of the child, whether it be at home, in a centre, or a school;
- pursuing excellence and originality in his/her work and supporting these qualities in the work of others;

- bringing about optimal co-ordination between his/her service - whether it be in the home, a centre of the school - and the families of the children in his/her care, particularly with regard to child-rearing practices and expectations;
- understanding and implementing the values of the South African Constitution and Bill of Rights;
- understanding, implementing and advocating the Children's' Charter and the Convention on the Rights of the Child; and
- identifying and upholding the rights and responsibilities of South African citizens.

5.3.7 COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY WITH CHILDREN, OTHER STAFF MEM-BERS, FAMILIES AND SERVICE PROVIDERS, SUCH AS COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS, FOR EXAMPLE PUBLIC WORKS, HEALTH, WELFARE, ETC., BY:

- using appropriate forms of communication in relation to the age and context of the child;
- communicating clearly and confidently with other adults in the context in which the communication takes place; and
- ensuring accountability to all stakeholders for the services provided.

5.3.8 USE PROBLEM-SOLVING AND RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING ABILITIES USING CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKING, BY

- recognising that all children are different and finding ways to work effectively with each child;
- raising questions and pursuing creative solutions using a variety of strategies;
- evaluating problem-solving strategies and determining ways of improving them; and
- knowing how to obtain information and assistance from a variety of sources.

5.3.9 USE THE SKILLS OF LEARNING TO TEACH MORE EFFECTIVELY, BY:

- setting appropriate goals for the children's learning, making realistic plans and keeping track of and evaluating their own progress and that of the children;
- being clear about their ideas by reflecting on their own thinking and the responses of others;
- using a variety of services and resources in the home/centre/school, the community and broader society to gather and evaluate information;
- describing the connections among various contexts;
- understanding how they learn;
- conducting an enquiry with integrity and discipline; and
- understanding how children develop, from birth to at least 9 years, within their different contexts.

5.3.10 CARRY OUT, WHERE APPROPRIATE, SUPPLEMENTARY RESPONSIBILI-TIES RELATED TO CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES:

5.3.10.1 Infant Care:

- care for infants demonstrating procedures for bathing and feeding;
- provide the infant with an environment that is safe and hygienic; and
- provide a well-stimulated environment.

5.3.10.2 Budgeting and Financial Control:

- do a needs analysis, draw up a budget, control finances and keep records of income and expenses.

5.3.10.3 First Aid and Health Care:

- administer basic first aid by being able at least to:
  - stop bleeding
  - immobilise fractures
  - treat cuts and bruises
  - administer CPR
  - treat poisoning
  - understand the limitations of a first aider and when and how to refer cases;
- recognise common childhood illnesses and be able to advise parents on treatment and/or referral;
- be able to give advice on the prevention of AIDS; and
- understand how to include children with AIDS in the ECD programme.

5.3.10.4 Committee Organisation:

- demonstrate knowledge of committee procedures and the functions of office bearers through facilitating the creation of a parent committee.

5.4 Assessment Guidelines for the Accreditation of Practitioners

NOTE: While these guidelines will be used to assess practitioners with respect to the ECD Pilot Project, they are intended to stimulate debate, develop and generate mutually agreed upon guidelines for the methods of assessment of all practitioners for accreditation.

These methods will develop alongside the development of competences and outcomes for accreditation.

These methods are aligned with the outcomes-based approach proposed in the discussion document Life-Long Learning Through the National Qualifications Framework (1996), requiring a collection of evidence of achievement.

The preferred methods of assessment are:

- Direct observation of performance in the workplace;
- Oral questioning of the practitioner's performance to cover areas that are not readily observable;
- Asking the practitioner to give a rationale for activities/performance, which will enable the assessor to determine the practitioner's level of knowledge and its appropriateness;
- Investigating relevant work products such as written programmes, menus for meals, etc.;
- Observing the setting provided; and
- Observing the children in the setting.

Where performance is not directly observed, any evidence should be authenticated, preferably by colleagues, supervisors/principals, parents and other persons and by detailed questioning of the practitioner to establish authenticity.

Where appropriate, written and oral evidence may be supplemented by diagrams, photographs or other practical materials.

APPENDIX 3

PROPOSED STRUCTURE FOR AN NQF			
NQF Level	**Band**	**Types of Qualification and Certificates**	
8	Higher Education and Training Band	Doctorates Further Research Degrees	
7		Higher Degrees Professional Qualifications	
6		First Degrees Higher Diplomas	
5		Diplomas, Occupational Certificates	
Further Education and Training Certificates			
4	Further Education and Training Band	School/College/Training certificates Mix of units from all	
3		School/College/Training certificates Mix of units from all	
2		School/College/Training certificates Mix of units from all	
1 = General Education and Training Certificates = 4			
	General Education and Training Band	Senior Phase	ABET Level 4
		Intermediate Phase	ABET Level 3
		Foundation Phase	ABET Level 2
		Pre-school	ABET Level 1