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Compiler: Ms L. Malemela
Telephone: 012 357 3221
Date: 23/03/2026

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

GUIDANCE ON RESEARCH IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (ECD) CENTRES

AIM

1. To request the Director- General to approve the proposed approach to responding to research requests relating to Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres as outlined in **Annexure A**.

BACKGROUND

2. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) regularly receives requests for permission or advice regarding research conducted in ECD centres, including privately operated crèches and early learning programmes. The document provides clarity on the Department's role, as well as the legal and ethical obligations of researchers undertaking such work.

DISCUSSION

3. In response to this, **Annexure A** has been developed to establish a formalised and consistent approach for handling research requests related to ECD centres.
4. A key objective of the document is to strengthen legal and ethical compliance, as ECD research often involves interactions with children, one of the most legally and ethically sensitive populations. The guidance reinforces that the DBE cannot grant ethics approval, and that any research involving children must have oversight from a recognised ethics committee, obtain informed consent from parents or guardians, and implement appropriate child safeguarding measures. By outlining the ethical responsibilities of researchers

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and the expectations placed on ECD operators, the guidance ensures that studies adhere to national and international research ethics standards.

5. The document also aims to streamline internal processes and improve service delivery. Without an approved, standardised position, officials currently spend significant time handling requests on a case-by-case basis. Once approved, the guidance note will facilitate quick, consistent responses, reducing administrative burden and improving turnaround times.
6. The ECD Directorate and Legal Services are requested to review the proposed approach and provide input. Once finalised and approved, the guidance note will be published on the DBE website, providing clear expectations for researchers and reducing repeated enquiries.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7. None.

COMMUNICATION IMPLICATIONS

8. The approved publication of the finalised guidance will be uploaded on the DBE website under the “Information for Researchers” section.

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RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Director-General:

9. approves the proposed approach to responding to research requests relating to ECD centres as outlined in Annexure A.



MR SG PADAYACHEE

DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL: BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

DATE: 07/04/2026

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CENTRES**

DECISION

10. The recommendation in Par 9 approves the proposed approach to responding to research requests relating to ECD centres as outlined in Annexure A is **Approved**.

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**MR HM MWELI
DIRECTOR-GENERAL
DATE: 28/04/2026**

**GUIDANCE ON RESEARCH IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (ECD)
CENTRES**

COMPILED BY:



MS L MALEMELA

SENIOR SECRETARY: RESEARCH COORDINATION, MONITORING AND
EVALUATION

TEL: (012) 357-3221

DATE: 12/04/2026

OFFICIALS INVOLVED:

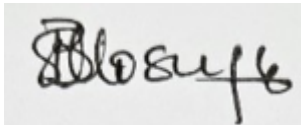


DR S TAYLOR

DIRECTOR: RESEARCH CO-ORDINATION MONITORING & EVALUATION

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DATE: 01/04/2026



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TEL: (012) 357-3339

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**GUIDANCE ON RESEARCH IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (ECD)
CENTRES**



DR J KOTZE

DIRECTOR: EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE 0-4

TEL: 012 357 3200

DATE: 07/04/2026

COMMENT:

The ECD Directorate was involved in the development of the Guidance Note and is comfortable with the contents.



MS K TEFU

ACTING DIRECTOR: LEGAL SERVICES

TEL: (012) 357-3336

DATE: 10/04/2026



MR T KHALA

CHIEF DIRECTOR: MEDIA LIAISON & NATIONAL & PROVINCIAL
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TEL: (012) 357-3755

DATE: 24/04/2026

**GUIDANCE ON RESEARCH IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (ECD)
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L Ndabankulu', with a large, stylized initial 'L'.

MS L NDABANKULU

CHIEF DIRECTOR: ODG SUPPORT SERVICES

TEL: (012) 357-4500

DATE: 28/04/2026