



Conversation

Frequently Asked Questions



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What does the 2030 Strategy for ECD Programmes mean for the children of South Africa?

The government wants every child to be able to access a quality ECD programme. The Strategy provides a framework (plan) for all the different role players to work together to make this happen.

What does the 2030 Strategy mean for my programme?

The 2030 Strategy wants to address the different challenges that ECD programmes face, such as registration, funding, training and materials. It provides a map for building solutions to these challenges, which will be implemented gradually over the next seven years.

What is an early learning programme (ELP)?

An ELP is one type of ECD programme. ELPs are attended by children in a range of spaces away from their home, and include ECD centres, playgroups and day mothers. On the other hand, parent support programmes are provided to parents and caregivers to support their child's early development, and include home visiting and parent workshops.

Do all ELPs have to register?

Yes. The Children's Act says that all ECD programmes need to be registered, and the DBE is prioritising this. If your programme is not registered, get in touch with the social worker from your local education department to find out how you can apply.

Why should I register my ELP?

Registration enables an ELP to apply for the ECD subsidy for eligible children. It also makes it easier for government to make sure that different types of support – like training and materials – can reach you.

Has the registration system changed?

Since the shift of the ECD function to DBE, the registration system has stayed the same but is now run by the provincial department of education, instead of social development. You do not have to re-register your facility or programme unless your current registration has expired. A list of provincial and district contacts to support with registration is available here.

What is conditional registration?

If your ELP received a certificate for conditional registration, it means that it did not meet all the requirements. The certificate should show which standards were not met and how long you have to comply with them. If you are not sure, then get back in touch with your local social worker.

What is the ECD subsidy and how can I apply for the children at my programme?

The ECD subsidy is a daily amount provided by the government for some children at ELPs. In order to qualify, the child must be eligible for the Child Support Grant. An ELP can submit an application to the local education department for the ECD subsidy, but only if the programme is fully or conditionally registered.

Will the government pay for upgrades to private homes where ELPs are run?

No. ELPs that are run in facilities registered as non-profit organisations can apply to the local education department for the ECD maintenance grant, to help ensure their facility is safe. This grant is not available to ELPs run in private residences. The DBE is investigating wider ways of providing pre-registration support to these ELPs; for example, by funding key equipment.

My ELP has a Health Certificate, does that mean it is registered?

No. ELPs have to comply with various processes that are run by the local municipality. These include zoning and health inspections. These processes are different to the registration process, which is run by provincial education departments through its local officials.

My ELP has an NPO certificate, does that mean it is registered?

No it is registered as an NPO but not as a partial care facility or ECD programme. Under the Children's Act, ELPs have to register with the provincial education department. This is a separate process to NPO registration, which is done through the department of social development.

Will the DBE be establishing state-owned ELPs?

In the beginning, in order to reach as many children as quickly as possible, there will be a greater focus on supporting community-based ELPs which make use of existing premises, including homes. Over time, as more government resources are made available, the DBE will focus on establishing more ELPs in purpose-built facilities, both state-owned and non-state-owned.

Do ECD practitioners now need to get a degree?

No. The DBE is encouraging ECD practitioners to obtain an NQF Level 4 qualification, but this is not compulsory at this stage.

Will the DBE be providing training opportunities for ECD practitioners?

Provincial education departments are working with partners to provide NQF Level 4 training for ECD practitioners. These training opportunities will be gradually rolled out in line with available funding.

Is there a curriculum that ELPs must implement?

In 2014, the DBE produced the National Curriculum Framework for Birth to Four (sometimes called the NCF). This is a Framework which gives a broad description of the types of learning and development opportunities that all ELPs should provide. The DBE is developing supporting tools and materials to help ELPs that do not have a curriculum to implement the NCF. Other curriculums exist for ELPs, and it is important to check before using one of these that it is aligned with the NCF

Is the DBE going to start employing ECD practitioners?

Unlike schools, ELPs are run independently. Some are private businesses, and some are local community services that are set up as 'voluntary associations'. This means that most ELPs are independent, and the practitioners who work there are either employed by the programme or are self-employed. The government can



A young child with dark curly hair, wearing a white t-shirt and denim overalls, is sitting on a light-colored carpeted floor. The child is focused on playing with a green wooden toy truck on a wooden train track. The room is bright and airy, with large windows in the background. To the left, a white door is decorated with colorful stickers, including a large yellow and orange one. A striped tote bag sits on the floor near the door. To the right, a yellow and red table is visible. The overall atmosphere is warm and educational.

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