

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION 696.

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696. Mr S L Ngcobo (IFP) to ask the Minister of Basic Education: to ask the Minister of Basic Education:

(1) What steps is her department taking to ensure that the 1,300 newly registered early childhood development centres through the Bana Pele mass registration meet quality standards in terms of teacher training, infrastructure, and learning resources;

(2) what contingency plans does her department have in place to maintain and/or improve education outcomes with existing resources, given that the National Treasury has not yet allocated to her department the additional funding that she has requested?

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Response

The Bana Pele Mass Registration Drive is fully aligned with the registration requirements outlined in Chapters 5 and 6 of the Children's Act (Act No. 38 of 2007).

A registration framework has been developed to guide Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) on a standardised approach to implementing conditional registration (as per sections 83 and 98 in the Children's Act). This registration framework outlines the developmental approach to Early Childhood Development (ECD) programmes reaching full registration.

To support ECD programmes to meet the full range of norms and standards specified in the Children's Act, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) is implementing a multi-pronged approach. This includes leveraging the maintenance component of the ECD conditional grant to support ECD programmes with infrastructure support or health and safety packs. It further includes partnering with the private sector in establishing an infrastructure fund, through the Development Bank Southern Africa, to support ECD programmes.

To ensure that ECD programmes reach the quality required to improve child outcomes, the DBE has developed Learning and Teaching Support Materials to empower ECD practitioners with implementing the National Curriculum Framework for children from birth to four years of age.

Furthermore, the DBE is developing a Quality Assurance and Support System to support ECD programmes to progressively, and in a developmental approach, reach the quality standards which are being established.

Should additional resourcing not be made available, the DBE, along with PEDs, will not be in a position to expand access to and improve the quality of ECD significantly. Although contingency plans such as the Early Childhood Education Outcomes Fund and other public-private partnerships are being established, these mechanisms will not have the commensurate reach and impact to an increase in the value of the ECD subsidy but will provide additional funding that will assist.