

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION 578. [E142]

DATE OF PUBLICATION OF INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 03/03/2023

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 06/2023

**578. [E142]. Mr E K Siwela (ANC) to ask the Minister of Basic Education:
to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

**[Question submitted for oral reply now placed for written reply because it
is in excess of quota (Rule 137(8))]:**

What are the medium to long-term plans to transform the early childhood development (ECD) landscape, as early learning is a critical foundational phase for children and her department has made numerous interventions to plan for the growth of the ECD phase?

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Response

Since the function shift, the main focus of the Provincial Education Departments has been on stabilising the function under the new leadership and management of the Department of Basic Education. The DBE's long-run vision for ECD is to have "All children accessing comprehensive, age-appropriate, quality ECD services to enable them to grow holistically and thrive".

The following five strategies are proposed to achieve the DBE's long-run vision of universal access to quality ECD:

1. Curriculum-based early learning for all children birth to 5 years
2. Early childhood development programmes for all children birth to 5 years
3. Training, education and development for all those working in ECD
4. Co-ordination of all early childhood development services
5. A flexible funding and provisioning framework.

The DBE's proposed integrated Service Delivery Model seeks to increase access to quality ECD services, while bearing in mind the need to streamline services to ensure that the government can feasibly support all ECD programmes. This will entail seeking opportunities to provide services to ECD programmes in a way to enable programmes to benefit from economies of scale. However, it is also recognized that such a model needs to respond to the different needs of both caregivers and children. Some caregivers require full daycare for their children whilst others do not. Children aged birth to 5 years require different support and interventions for their healthy growth, development and early learning. The DBE will therefore enable the provision of multiple modalities of ECD provisioning to ensure that they are age- and developmental-stage appropriate. These modalities include independent ECD programmes, public-private provisioning ECD programmes, playgroups and home-based programmes. These modalities will be supported by toy-libraries and mobile ECD programmes.

The DBE is developing a 10-year sector plan for ECD. DBE has identified the following activities for the Sector Plan:

1. Develop a National Strategy for ECD delivery at scale.
2. Develop a costed Service Delivery Model that considers various modalities, compliance, appropriate skilling and quality in a coordinated integrated manner.

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3. Develop a Human Resources Development Plan based on the approved HRD Strategy. This includes the professionalisation of the workforce and exploring appropriate registration mechanisms for the workforce.
4. Develop a Quality Assurance and Support System using a child outcomes lens to monitor and support Early Learning Programmes to reach the minimum quality standards.
5. Develop a Funding Model for ECD programmes that accommodate all aspects of the service delivery model
6. Develop a system of Infrastructure Support for early childhood development in programmes and schools.
7. The development of a Registration Management System for ECD.
8. Develop a streamlined Registration Framework and process with the Department of Health and ensure local government is on-boarded through engagement with COGTA and SALGA
9. Ensure that all Departments know their roles and responsibilities in delivering early childhood development programmes.
10. Develop a communication strategy and advocacy campaign.
11. Develop an Organisational Structure for effective coordination between different government departments and stakeholders anchored in the DBE.
12. Strengthen the institutional mechanisms for ECD like the inter-sectoral forum, interdepartmental ECD committee, and the Inter-Ministerial Committee for ECD.

DBE is also scoping and exploring the development of a primary piece of legislation for ECD; and identify, review and amend existing policies and legislation.