

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION 856.

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856. . Ms P Marais (EFF) to ask the Minister of Basic Education: to ask the Minister of Basic Education:

What is the total number of early childhood development centres for children living with disabilities in the Republic?

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Response

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) received the Early Childhood Development (ECD) function 'as is' from the Department of Social Development (DSD). In the manner in which the function had been set up, which currently obtains. There had been no ECD centres that had been built specifically for children with disabilities. The 2021 ECD Census found that there are 42,420 ECD programmes in South Africa. Therefore, following the principle of inclusive education, it is expected that all these ECD centres should accommodate children with developmental delays, or physical disabilities. The improvements the DBE is making in this area are, the development of a screening tool for developmental delays or disabilities for use by ECD practitioners, to enable the early identification of delays or disabilities. The DBE also continues to train ECD practitioners in inclusive practices through Uhambo Foundation. The DBE will further be working with the Department of Health in developing referral networks to ensure that children with delays or disabilities receive early intervention and support.