



# National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy

## Policy Positions



### AGE COVERAGE

The policy covers children from conception until the year before they enter formal school or in the case of children with developmental difficulties and disabilities until the year before they turn seven (7), which marks the age of compulsory schooling or special education.



### UNIVERSAL ACCESS

Government has committed to the attainment of universal access to early childhood development for all young children in South Africa.



### ECD AS A PUBLIC GOOD

The Policy recognises that the provision of early childhood development (ECD) services can be regarded as a public good, based on the recognition that early childhood development services not only contribute to the development and outcomes of the child, but also to the growth and development of society as a whole in the medium and long term.



### DUAL GOVERNMENT-REGULATED MODEL

The policy supports a dual government regulated model of public and private delivery of early childhood development services with universal access for all children. Parents will have a choice between private and public delivery of services and programmes.



### COMPREHENSIVE ECD PROGRAMME

The policy provides for a comprehensive package of quality early childhood development services, with identified essential components, i.e. programmes on health care and nutrition; social protection, parent support and opportunities for learning and playing.



### INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

The policy asserts the leadership and coordination role of government.



### INFRASTRUCTURE

The policy ascertains sufficient infra-structure for early childhood development services, linked to population based planning, to realise universal access to quality services, appropriately spread out, within safe and reasonable physical reach, and including the needs of children with disabilities.



### NUTRITION

Nutritional support for women from conception and during pregnancy, and for infants and young children, is critical.



## **CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

The policy is rooted in inclusion of young children with disabilities in early childhood development services and programmes. The focus is on prevention, early screening and intervention, appropriate support and early learning and developmental opportunities.



## **SOCIAL SECURITY**

Pre-registration of income-eligible pregnant mothers to have access to the Child Support Grant from the first day of the child's life.



## **HUMAN RESOURCES**

It consolidates appropriate cadres of human resources required in sufficient numbers and with sufficient skills to support the implementation of the policy.



## **FUNDING**

The policy aims to secure and distribute sufficient funds to ensure the comprehensive package of quality early childhood development programmes and services, with prioritisation for children from poor families and children with disabilities.



## **COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

The policy emphasises the importance of a strategy to provide information and make parents and caregivers aware of importance of early childhood development and how to access early childhood development programmes and services.



## **RESEARCH**

Research will be conducted every five years to assess the impact of the National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy on service delivery.



## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

National monitoring and evaluation framework will be designed and implemented to collect and provide information on progress and review of the policy.

### **Enquiries:**

Chief Director for Early Childhood Development  
Department of Social Development  
Tel: 012-312 7948  
Fax: 086 544 1577  
Email: [musam@dsd.gov.za](mailto:musam@dsd.gov.za)