



Effective early childhood development programme options meeting the needs of young South African children

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SUPPORT PRO-POOR
POLICY DEVELOPMENT



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Effective early childhood development programme options meeting the needs of young South African children

A research report for the Programme to Support Pro-poor Policy Development (PSPPD)

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This report is available online at www.cecd.org.za



Cotlands



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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements
CCD	Care for Child Development
CSG	Child Support Grant
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoE	Department of Education (precursor to DBE)
DoH	Department of Health
DPME	Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
DSD	Department of Social Development
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECHS	Early Childhood Home Stimulation
EPWP	Expanded Public Works Programme
ETDP SETA	Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education Training Authority
EU	European Union
FAS	Foetal Alcohol Syndrome
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HWSETA	Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NCF	National Curriculum Framework
NDP	National Development Plan
NIP	National Integrated Plan for Early Childhood Development in South Africa 2005–2010
NPO	Non-Profit Organisation
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
PSPPD	Programme to Support Pro-Poor Policy Development
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SASSA	South African Social Security Agency
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
WCED	Western Cape Education Department



INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the problem

In the developing world alone, there are over 200 million children who are in need of immediate early childhood development interventions (Van der Gaag & Putcha, 2015). Early childhood development interventions protect children against the effects of poverty, poor nutrition, inadequate health care and a lack of education (Van der Gaag & Putcha, 2015). According to Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) (2012), 60% of children in South Africa are born into families earning less than R544 per month. At the same time, there are a great number of young children not living with their biological parents, but living with their extended family, especially in the rural provinces of South Africa. In these rural areas, where early childhood development (ECD) programmes are less available than in urban areas, ECD is not accessible to the majority of children.

Stats SA (2012) indicates that half of all children born into families living on less than R544 per month are born to parents who are both unemployed. Living below the poverty line makes the vast majority of children vulnerable to disease, illness, stunting and death. This could be significantly alleviated if these children had access to quality ECD programmes, which include a nutrition and health component.

Quality early childhood development interventions can have a significant effect on reducing poverty and inequality across South Africa. Globally, various ECD programme interventions in communities clearly indicate that communities and families want quality ECD programmes for their children at a cost which is affordable. Parents want a stimulating and safe environment for their children whilst they are at work or are seeking work. Parents who cannot afford to access ECD centres welcome early childhood household stimulation (ECHS), because of the marked effect they see in children who have benefitted from ECHS programmes. In summary, communities support ECD programmes because they recognise the value these programmes have on their children, their families and their community.



Whilst government has ensured universal (almost 100%) access to primary schooling for South Africa's children, with 97% of children aged 7 – 17 attending an educational facility (Hall, 2014), it has also acknowledged that it needs to increase ECD access for children between the ages of 0 and 6 years. The present research study supports the efforts by the South African government to achieve universal, quality ECD provision



“Quality early childhood development interventions can have a significant effect on reducing poverty and inequality across South Africa.”



“ Direct effects of ECD programmes on the nation include a more productive society, improved socio-economic circumstances and social cohesion, all of which in turn counter the cycle of poverty.

for South African children as outlined in the National Development Plan: Vision 2030 (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 2011), furthering development of South Africa and building the economic strength of the country.

In South Africa, the majority of children enter formal school at age 6 turning 7, and many are ill-prepared for the rigour of school. These are children who have not had access to quality ECD programme options, and as such, are less likely to perform well academically, are more likely to need costly remedial education, and are likely to leave school prior to completing Grade 12. Some of the effects of early drop-out include antisocial behaviours such as involvement in criminal activities, gang membership, substance abuse and teenage pregnancies. These are some of the significant social, economic and education challenges that affect our country, and which perpetuate the cycle of poverty.

1.2 Significance of the research study

South Africa has recognised the positive effect that ECD programmes have on communities and for South Africa. Direct effects on children include better academic performance in school, physical thriving through good nutrition, and improved psychosocial health. Direct effects of ECD programmes on parents include better parenting, support and mentoring of young children, all of which contribute towards healthy growth and development of the child. Direct effects of ECD programmes on the nation include a more productive society, improved socio-economic circumstances and social cohesion, all of which in turn counter the cycle of poverty.



As beneficial as ECD programmes are, the quality of ECD in South Africa varies greatly. Problems such as distance to ECD centres, affordability and poverty limit accessibility of such facilities for large numbers of young children. Geographically, ECD centres and programmes are not evenly and well distributed with many ECD centres located in urban areas and not enough in rural areas. Many of the ECD centres that are located in rural communities are of a poor quality and do not have access to many resources needed by the children, such as health clinics, nutrition programmes, speech therapists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists.



As such, the main aim of this research project was to develop ECD programme option guidelines for South Africa. These guidelines will be of benefit to children, families and communities because government, the ECD non-profit sector and communities will now have guidance on how to provide these much-needed, quality ECD programmes. These programmes will enhance the knowledge, capacity and skills of ECD providers across South Africa.

Since the guidelines comprise both centre-based and non-centre-based ECD programme options, they will also result in reaching large numbers of children through ECHS and other ECD programme options. By providing South African policymakers with guidelines based on empirical evidence, the number of ECD services and programmes offered can be enhanced, those presently not being reached can be reached, and the quality of all these ECD programmes can be improved.

This research study was conducted throughout South Africa with the aim to analyse, review and describe ECD programme options, which work towards increasing access to these centres and improving the quality of ECD for young children in South Africa. The results of this study can be used to effect policy changes and assist with the effective implementation of current ECD policies, including the new National Integrated ECD Policy of 2015 (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 2015), so that children may have greater access to quality ECD programmes thereby reducing inequality and poverty. In saying this, it is well-known that South Africa has admirable policies in place, although the implementation of these policies is weak. This research will assist government, civil society, and the private sector to implement these policies effectively and to benefit South Africa's youngest citizens.

It is the intention of this research that these implementation guidelines and recommendations for ECD programmes will ensure that the right information is available for decision-making, that systems are improved, and that government and ECD non-profit providers may effectively reach high numbers of children through a range of quality ECD programme options. The ultimate goal is thus to reduce inequality and poverty.

“By providing South African policymakers with guidelines based on empirical evidence, the number of ECD services and programmes offered can be enhanced, those presently not being reached can be reached, and the quality of all these ECD programmes can be improved.”



“This study focused on those ECD programmes, which have shown the best outcome in enhancing ECD services across South Africa.”

1.3 Goals of the research study

This research study had four specific goals. Each of these will be listed and discussed below.

GOAL 1

To determine, review, analyse and describe the various early childhood development programme options in South Africa.

The Centre for Early Childhood Development (CECD) analysed, reviewed and described the various ECD programme options currently used in South Africa. Through this the outcome of this goal, government, the non-profit providers and communities are supported with regard to how they can substantially increase the number of young children in quality ECD provision nationally. This study focused on those ECD programmes, which have shown the best outcome in enhancing ECD services across South Africa.

Data was collected by means of face-to-face interviews using a structured interview schedule, which allowed the researchers to explore specific ECD programme options. The ECD programme options were also compared against the norms and standards of the Children’s Act (No. 38 of 2005) and the National Early Learning Development Standards (NELDS) of the South African government. This was to ensure that the selected programmes fell within the legally accepted norms and standards.

As the study focused on how we can improve accessibility to quality ECD programmes, the action focused on gathering data and information in order to develop a data bank of quality ECD programme options currently provided that are the most viable, that work well, and that are cost-effective.

GOAL 2

To understand what makes ECD programme options effective.

To achieve this goal, the researchers reviewed and studied the various ECD programme options available to young children. This was done in two ways; by means of desktop

research and interviews with ECD specialists. A broad and comprehensive desktop research was conducted, and comparisons were made of the ECD programme options currently in operation across South Africa, to determine which programmes were the most viable, practical and effective in reaching young children, as well as the most cost-effective. Thereafter, interviews were conducted with ECD specialists that garnered rich information and insight into what makes programmes effective.

The research team sent out a 'Call for Participation' to non-profit organisations and service providers throughout South Africa. The programme submission forms received provided researchers with the information required to assess exactly what each programme entailed, how it was being implemented, and what impact the programme was achieving.

To select the final ECD programme options for inclusion in this research, an extensive assessment process was conducted to ensure that these programmes were in fact programmes of value and ones that exhibit best practice. This assessment entailed developing a comprehensive 'assessment rating scale' with which to assess each programme submission. This tool was specifically developed for this study, and was peer-reviewed by a specialist in the ECD research sector in South Africa.

Finally, an in-depth study of the selected ECD programmes was conducted by means of face-to-face interviews and site visits. These interviews were guided by a structured interview schedule, developed specifically for this research, which formed the basis of the development of the case studies and implementation guidelines for each programme.

It was through this process that the researchers gained an understanding of what makes ECD programmes effective in their implementation.



GOAL
3

To develop quality ECD programmes guidelines.

Using the in-depth interview transcriptions, along with site visit notes, and additional source documents and resources, the researchers developed ECD programme guidelines and recommendations that encourage quality learning by providing a minimum standard of quality that can be required at policy level. Detailed case studies and guidelines on how to implement these programmes were written up, with implementation guidelines



“To select the final ECD programme options for inclusion in this research, an extensive assessment process was conducted to ensure that these programmes were in fact programmes of value and ones that exhibit best practice.”



“By focusing on addressing how to ensure more efficient and effective implementation of ECD programmes, a greater number of children can benefit.”

and recommendations developed for each case study. The findings of our action informed our recommendations.

By focusing on addressing how to ensure more efficient and effective implementation of ECD programmes, a greater number of children can benefit.



**GOAL
4**

To provide the South African government ECD policymakers with a comprehensive package of ECD services that could be used to increase the quality and quantity of early childhood development in South Africa.

Through our engagement with government and ECD service providers, we compiled guidelines on the most effective ECD programme options across South Africa. We did this by identifying and recording what the major elements of each programme were, and then analysed and reviewed current ECD policies. This allowed for engagement with government policymakers on how ECD policies could facilitate better implementation of the ECD programme options, and which options would increase access to quality ECD provision.

The expected results of this study were that South African ECD policymakers will have a better understanding of the effect current policies have on children's access to quality ECD provision. Policymakers will also have evidence and knowledge of which policy changes are necessary, and they will be able to shape future ECD policies based on the programme options reviewed and evaluated in this study. This will, in the long term, reduce inequality and poverty in vulnerable families and communities.

This research has provided us with evidence of cost-effective ECD programme options currently being used, and which can be replicated across South Africa. The result is a set of implementation guidelines and recommendations of ECD programme options that will increase the quality and accessibility of ECD for government ECD policymakers. An important long-term outcome of this study would be that more children will have access to quality ECD services, and that there will be a greater number of cost-effective ECD services available to children.

1.4 The structure of the research report

This research report provides an overview of the study undertaken by CECD with the support of the Programme to Support Pro-Poor Policy Development (PSPPD), a partnership between the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation and The Presidency.

This research report comprises five chapters. Chapter 1 focuses on the statement of the problem and the significance of conducting this research study within a South African context. Chapter 2 presents a review of literature related to children in South Africa, the ECD sector and current ECD policies. The chapter also provides a discussion on the essential components of the comprehensive ECD package. Following this, Chapter 3 describes the research methodology, including details of the sample and data collection methods used. Chapter 4 provides 12 detailed ECD programme option case studies, comprising centre- and non-centre-based ECD programmes, together with implementation guidelines and recommendations, as well as costs of each programme that can be used to implement ECD policy more effectively so as to ensure increased service delivery of quality ECD services. Finally, Chapter 5 concludes the report with challenges and recommendations drawn from the key findings.







Centre for Early Childhood Development

ECD Centre Infrastructure Upgrade Programme

“ This programme has played a significant role in improving children’s access to quality education in safe environments. It does not only focus on the infrastructural needs of ECD centres, but also assists principals and teachers in improving their management and teaching skills.”

Centre for Early Childhood Development

ECD Centre Infrastructure Upgrade Programme

AT A GLANCE

Name of implementing organisation:	Centre for Early Childhood Development (CECD)
Implementer status:	Non-profit organisation, non-profit company, and public benefit organisation
Year organisation established:	1994
Main focus of organisation:	Early childhood development
Head-office location:	Claremont, Cape Town, Western Cape
Website:	www.cecd.org.za
Contact number:	+27 (0) 21 683 2420
Contact person:	Eric Atmore (Director)

MODEL DETAILS

Year launched:	2001
Launch province:	Western Cape
Geography type:	Urban, peri-urban, rural
Time frame/Stage:	Ongoing, long-term, multi-year programme
Main source of funding:	Various sources including government departments (Western Cape, DSD in particular), foundations and trusts, corporate social investment initiatives and international philanthropists
Beneficiaries reached per year:	Approximately 1 844 direct child beneficiaries reached in a one-year period (2015/2016)
Keywords:	ECD centre upgrade, infrastructure upgrade, whole-centre upgrade, centre outreach, minimum norms and standards



Centre for Early Childhood Development

ECD Centre Infrastructure Upgrade Programme

Centre for Early Childhood Development

The Centre for Early Childhood Development (CECD) is a registered non-profit and public benefit organisation committed to promoting access to quality early childhood development (ECD) facilities for all the youngest citizens of South Africa. The organisation, established in August 1994, provides training, resources and support to individuals, organisations and communities to enhance their capacity and capability to deliver effective ECD services. With offices based in Cape Town, the organisation carries out activities on a national scale in a wide range of urban, semi-urban and rural areas. CECD has also worked in other countries across Africa, giving the organisation a significant reach, and an international footprint.

The major contributions of CECD to the ECD sector over the past twenty-two years have been well recognised, and the organisation continues to grow, focusing on implementing integrated ECD programmes including a focus on leadership and management, organisational development, entrepreneurship, ECD teacher skills training, contributing to ECD policy, and producing quality research in the ECD sector. Through its various on-the-ground programmes and services the organisation has reached approximately 399 490 young children to date.

A flagship programme of the Centre for Early Childhood Development is the ECD Centre Infrastructure Upgrade Programme, first initiated in 2001, with funding from the Western Cape provincial Department of Social Development (DSD).



ECD Centre Infrastructure Upgrade Programme

The ECD Centre Infrastructure Upgrade Programme started in 2001, when the Western Cape provincial DSD office approached CECD to assist with the national Integrated Service Land Project (ISLP), a presidential project of then President Thabo Mbeki. The specific objective was to build six new ECD centres on sites in the Western Cape, allocated by the City of Cape Town. These sites were in Delft, Brown's Farm, Crossroads,

Weltevreden Valley, and Philippi. The centres were built at a cost of R1.8 million each. Today these centres accommodate more than 500 children on a daily basis.

With the significant success of the ISLP project, CECD was propelled onto a successful trajectory in working on ECD centre infrastructure, both in the form of building new ECD centres, and also, more frequently, upgrading already existing ECD centres.

At the end of 2005, the Western Cape DSD approached CECD to upgrade existing ECD centres in low-income communities in the Western Cape, including Khayelista, Gugulethu, Langa, Nyanga, Mitchell's Plain, Eersterivier, Wynberg, Bellville, Atlantis, Paarl, George, and Oudtshoorn. Through an assessment phase, CECD encountered ECD centres in such poor condition that CECD recommended they amalgamate with other ECD centres in the particular community. After this assessment was completed, 179 ECD centres qualified for the programme, and all 179 ECD centres were upgraded over a period of 23 months. A total of 31 131 young children benefitted from this project.

The ECD Infrastructure Upgrade Programme was developed to assist ECD centres in meeting the national minimum norms and standards for partial care facilities of the DSD, the education and safety requirements set out by the DSD with which all ECD centres must comply in order to register with the DSD, and be eligible to qualify for the ECD per capita subsidy.



Taking a holistic approach

Upgrades to existing ECD centres may include anything from installing new windows, flooring, ceilings, and roofing, to rebuilding toilet facilities, and kitchen facilities. Major upgrades include the construction of new buildings on designated land. The Infrastructure Upgrade Programme activities do not stand alone. Rather, these activities are facilitated within a holistic approach involving staff training and improvement of learning facilities, and connecting to various other programmes facilitated by CECD. This is because, while the upgrading of ECD centre infrastructure helps the financial sustainability of the centre (by means of gaining access to government subsidies), it does not only ensure proper management of the ECD facility.

“Many people make the mistake that sustainability is about rands and cents. It is not. It’s about strategy and leadership,” says the director of CECD, Professor Eric Atmore. With this in mind, additional training to principals and governing body members is provided to ensure centres are managed effectively. Furthermore, teachers are identified for training and are either formally connected to Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges in their region and assisted to obtain their ECD qualification, or connected to the teacher training programmes of CECD, if additional practical skills and knowledge is required. ECD centres receiving upgrades are also specifically placed into other CECD intervention programmes where education equipment provision and training on the effective use of equipment is provided, if this is required at the centre.



A note on registration

Registration as a partial care facility is a difficult and time-consuming process. To become registered, the centres need to meet the minimum norms and standards set out by the DSD. This alone can be a complex and unaffordable process. It is important to note that the norms and standards for partial care facilities, as set out by the DSD, have been put in place to safe-guard children and to ensure that they are being cared for in a safe learning environment that encourages their holistic development. If a centre does not meet the minimum norms and standards (as set out in the Children’s Amendment Act No. 41 of 2007) centres can be closed down. ECD centres have to pass inspections by various departments (e.g. the fire department and the health inspector), the property has to be zoned correctly and name clearances for all staff have to be conducted to ensure that staff members are not on the sexual offences list. All this needs to be in place before an ECD centre can register with the DSD. Unfortunately, the majority of ECD centres in South Africa have poor physical infrastructure in place and therefore they do not pass the inspections. As these ECD centres are poorly resourced, they are often unable to complete the infrastructure upgrades required. Furthermore, being poorly resourced means that these ECD centres require the subsidy even more than more well-resourced ECD centres.

Registering an ECD centre can also be financially challenging. In addition to the costs of required upgrades, training, and safety and educational equipment, the number of documents required to complete an application makes this process unaffordable for many ECD centres. To limit printing expenses, some government departments have started to request the documents on a flash drive. This, however, remains a stumbling block for principals who do not have access to technology. Some areas also require the principal to pay a fee for each visit from the Health Inspector and the Fire and Safety Marshall to obtain the relevant certificates.

Finally, although the DSD asserts that registering an ECD centre should take between four and six weeks, the availability of inspectors and other procedures make it a significantly longer process.

A key focus of the programme is to facilitate the registration of ECD centres first as a partial care facility and also as a non-profit organisation (NPO). Once certified as both by the DSD, the ECD centre can qualify as a subsidy recipient. To receive a subsidy, the centre must comply with a number of regulations. This includes submitting monthly and quarterly reports, birth certificates of the enrolled children and proof of the parents' income. Additionally, the use of the subsidies is strictly governed by the DSD.

The ultimate goal of the programme is to ensure the quality of centre-based ECD programmes in South Africa and to promote access to ECD for all children in South Africa, thereby improving the standards of ECD across the country, specifically in the most disadvantaged communities. It also serves to encourage development initiatives in the ECD sector and to strengthen collaboration between the various stakeholders, namely ECD centres, community members, ECD non-profit service providers, government departments, and funders. It is planned that the programme will expand to enhance its reach and gradually break the cycle of poverty and inequality across the country.



Description of the programme

Over the past 16 years, CECD has facilitated a number of different projects within the ECD Infrastructure Upgrade Programme scope. These have included numerous projects funded by various donors and funders, providing clusters of minor and major upgrades to existing ECD centres, as well as projects involving the building of new ECD centres. The process for the upgrading of an ECD centre, whether a minor or major upgrade or the building of a new ECD centre, takes place according to a specific procedure.

Once identified for the programme, each centre is visited by a CECD fieldworker to assess the conditions of the space and discuss the various possibilities for improvement with the principal. Sometimes some principals would already have building plans approved and CECD would suggest improvements to these if necessary. While some centres must be demolished and rebuilt, others only require minor repairs and installations. Therefore, the funds and time invested in each upgrade vary from one ECD centre to another. Most common upgrading activities include new windows, floors and ceilings,

roofing, waterproofing and painting. As part of an upgrade centres are also supplied with emergency equipment such as fire hydrants, fire blankets, etc., as well as outdoor equipment (including jungle gyms). If required centres are also included in CECD's programmes to receive education kits, which stimulate learning to encourage both fine motor and gross motor development. Kits include items such as puzzles, memory games, books, blocks, fantasy play items, balls, buckets and spades, wheelbarrows and skipping ropes.



While the focus is on infrastructure, the ultimate goal of the programme is also to empower ECD principals, members of the ECD centre governing bodies and teachers, and to enhance their professional skills. As part of the holistic on-site support, the programme offers skills training for teachers (including in topics such as fire safety and emergency procedures, childhood illnesses, identifying barriers to learning, nutrition and wellness) and governance training for principals and governing body members (including training in topics such as financial management, human resource management, infrastructure maintenance, fundraising registration, and accessing subsidies). CECD also encourages staff to acquire recognised qualifications in ECD. These training sessions provide the staff with all the necessary material and resources to maintain and run the centre effectively and sustainably.

Throughout the various stages of the programme, CECD engages on a continuous basis with the staff of the ECD centres, the funders, the architects and builders, the City of Cape Town (in the Western Cape), the DSD, the Department of Health, and other relevant stakeholders. All services are delivered according to the operational plan developed during the first stages of the project. CECD follows a standard process and adjusts to the context of each newly funded project.

To date, approximately 420 ECD centres have been upgraded by CECD, and 25 brand-new ECD centres have been built from scratch, enabling young children to benefit from a safe, stimulating and quality learning environment.

Steps in implementing the ECD Centre Infrastructure Upgrade Programme

1. Community entry

The approach of CECD to community entry varies based on the target area and the prior involvement of CECD with the community. Generally, CECD would first reach out to the DSD officials and/or local municipality in the area. In cases where CECD does not have

Forming formal connections with government officials in a target community can be especially beneficial. Municipal and DSD officials can often provide service providers with extensive information regarding the number and contact details of ECD centres in the area. This is an invaluable resource when entering a new area.

a previous footprint, and struggles to make contact with such formal structures, staff would physically visit the community and engage face to face with various stakeholders. This would involve walking from house to house in the community, and speaking with community members to identify ECD centres in the area. After identifying all existing ECD centres in an area, CECD organises community engagement sessions with the principals, usually via an ECD forum or, if this is not present in the area, an informal network of principals, to share information about the programme and the various procedures CECD would undertake. Each centre that is interested in joining the programme is asked to fill out a brief 'assessment' form and then CECD staff schedule site visits with each existing centre individually.

At these site visits, a thorough needs assessment of the ECD centre is completed. These need assessments include the assessment of a number of important factors and key indicators, while exploring the various challenges the ECD centre might be facing both in terms of building infrastructure and in terms of management, learning programme facilitation, finances, and resources. The needs assessments from all ECD centres are collated, all needs are identified and prioritised, and an implementation plan for the roll-out of the intervention programme is developed and communicated to the various relevant stakeholders.

It is important to note that in many instances in a new target area, CECD staff conduct a broad needs assessment of the community first, prior to inviting ECD centres onto a specific programme, in order to ascertain the specific interventions required in that community. For example, perhaps the community has many well-built ECD centres, and only requires ECD qualification and skills training for teachers. Alternatively, the community has too few ECD centres, and more ECD centres need to be built and developed). Following this, an integrated intervention programme is tailored to the needs of that specific community, and CECD engages with the relevant stakeholders.



When entering a completely new target area, it is unwise to assume the community needs the exact intervention programme the organisation is offering. Conducting a broad assessment of the needs a community allows an organisation to determine and meet the precise needs of that specific community.

ECD forums are vital for effective ECD provisioning in a community. They serve to spread knowledge of training opportunities and intervention programmes, and form a network for support and the sharing of skills. If a formal forum does not exist in an area, it should be explicitly encouraged.

By introducing the programme to all possible beneficiary centres, and encouraging those interested principals to take part in the programme, instils a sense of buy-in and approval by the participating principals.

Conducting a formal needs assessment at all ECD centres is crucial. These allow programme staff to identify all of the needs and challenges experienced at the ECD centre comprehensively, thereby allowing intervention activities to be tailored specifically for each ECD centre. (These needs assessments also serve as baseline assessments for monitoring and evaluation purposes.)

Throughout the needs assessment phase, CECD links with the local municipality and existing ECD forums to engage with the local community and collect feedback and information. This facilitates efficient implementation of the programme.

2. Staff contingent

Programmatic staff comprises an ECD fieldworker and a programme manager who facilitate the entire process from identifying and assessing the needs of each ECD centre, liaising with all the relevant stakeholders, obtaining building quotes, overseeing

Having a number of layers of management and supervision, all of which are directly involved in the programme, means team members are continually supported, while being able to focus on their strengths, and working as a team.

Experience from working in new areas has shown that it is crucial to employ local contractors and builders on a new site. This allows for a far better reception of the programme from the community, while also promoting job opportunities in that area.

all building work done, and providing on-site support to the ECD centres. An operations manager is responsible for establishing the upgrading plan and overseeing its progress and successful completion. The programme also requires at least one ECD trainer, as part of the comprehensive package of services provided to an ECD centre. These trainers conduct management, governance and teacher training sessions for various programmes facilitated by CECD.

A requirement of the programme is that contractors in the local communities facilitate the recruitment of local labourers. CECD has built an extensive network over the years through the roll-out of this programme, and tries to collaborate with trusted contractors in their network in the respective areas. When working with contractors for the first time, CECD would evaluate their professionalism during minor upgrading contracts, and then use these contractors for larger and larger upgrades, according to their proven track records. So far, the programme has provided more than 2 100 job opportunities to unemployed local workers.

This programme requires a committed team to be run efficiently and effectively. It is essential for the programme manager to have a background in ECD, experience in programme management and knowledge of construction work to oversee the builders' activities. Once the builders have received their instructions, CECD staff would focus on all the other aspects of the programme including the training sessions, liaising with other stakeholders, assisting with the registration process and reporting to the donors.

The programme manager, the operations manager, fieldworker and trainers must all have ECD knowledge and experience of ECD centre management. Excellent interpersonal and mediation skills are also important assets. All parties involved in the implementation of the programme should be passionate and committed to the cause.



3. Staff training

No particular staff training is designed for the implementation of this specific programme. All staff have adequate knowledge and skills from previous work experience in ECD (a requirement for working on this programme) and have received training throughout years of working for the organisation and gained relevant knowledge along the way.

The holistic approach of the programme encourages staff to collaborate and learn from one another. Inputs from the local community on each project have also been invaluable for the development of the programme.

4. Partnerships

Partnerships are essential to increase the extent and quality of support for each centre and guarantee that a holistic intervention is provided to each centre. Key partners include the DSD, the Department of Health, the City of Cape Town (for those sites in the Western Cape), local municipalities, funders (many of which are involved and active in upgrade activities), as well as contractors, builders, and architects, if required. It is also crucial to reach out to organisations that have been involved in the area of intervention to obtain detailed information about the local context.

5. Participant recruitment

CECD identifies potential candidates for upgrades through a variety of processes, including through formal community needs assessment processes, through CECD's other programmes by consulting the local ECD forums in specific areas, or through CECD's ECD helpline, on which ECD centres can contact the organisation via email or phone at any time. Past beneficiaries from the programme have also started to spread the word about the programme.

The participants are recruited through an extensive assessment process, with the number of ECD centres each year being determined by the amount of funding available. CECD also takes into account the level of vulnerability of the beneficiaries. All services that CECD provides to the centres are free of charge. An essential eligibility criterion is the level of commitment, motivation and dedication of the governing body and principal of the ECD centre. To ensure that the ECD centre will value the programme, it is recommended to encourage the ECD centres to find ways to contribute, even on a small scale, towards the cost of their upgrade.

Following the completion of a needs assessment and the recruitment of a beneficiary ECD centre, CECD assesses the space with the principal, conducts site visits with a contractor, discusses the upgrade plans with the principal and the contractor, and obtains a quote. Once everything has been approved, the principal and contractor/builders make arrangements for dates that are suitable for both parties.

It is important for staff to spend time in the field to understand the needs and expectations of the local community and use that knowledge to design the most suitable operational plan.

Engaging with other organisations involved in the area is a good strategy to access key information, network with other stakeholders and ensure that services do not overlap, but rather complement one another. These partnerships are extremely valuable as coordination and collaboration within the ECD sector should be strengthened.

Encouraging principals to contribute to costs, even if it is a nominal amount, helps create buy-in by principals.



6. Delivery of programme – venues

This programme requires minimal infrastructure to be run effectively. It only needs an office space for administrative purposes (which can also be conducted remotely) and an adequate training space. CECD, in fact, often conducts training sessions in community or church halls, as this is often more practical for the participants who attend the training, since it does not require them to spend time or money on travel.

Regarding the actual sites of construction, arrangements are made to avoid disturbing the children at the centre during an upgrade. For example, most activities would take place over weekends and often there would be an extra room to accommodate the children during the construction. Principals tend to be very helpful in accommodating the builders.

7. Participant training and content

As mentioned, the ECD Infrastructure Upgrade Programme is not offered in isolation, but is a component of a whole-centre upgrade approach. Therefore, all participants in the programme also receive relevant training from CECD with additional on-site support. This includes training in governance and management for principals and supervisors, as well as teacher training opportunities for all ECD teachers at the ECD centre.

Training for principals and supervisors is based on the NQF unit standard, “Managing an Early Childhood Development Service”, which CECD is accredited to offer, and participants receive credits if they are studying towards their Level 5 qualification in ECD.

In line with the aim of this programme (to assist ECD centres to meet the minimum norms and standards as set out by DSD in order to become registered and eligible for the DSD per capita ECD subsidy) specific training sessions are held to assist centres with the registration process. The focus is on both the registration as a partial care facility and as a NPO with the DSD. The training sessions are followed with sessions on applying for the DSD per capita ECD subsidy. On-site support with attaining this registration and subsidisation is critical to help ECD centres to achieve this goal. Following the completion of all building work at their respective ECD centres, principals are also provided with training in facility maintenance.

Finally, all ECD teachers at beneficiary ECD centres are provided with training opportunities. In addition to connecting teachers in need of an ECD qualification to TVET colleges in their region, teachers in need of skills training are also placed on the teacher training programmes of CECD, which focus on various topics such as literacy, numeracy, life skills, creative arts, nutrition, health and safety, inclusive education, and the daily programme, to name but a few.

Offering accredited training aims to empower participants and encourage more ECD practitioners to obtain their professional qualifications.

Providing facility maintenance training is critical. The DSD conducts a two-year follow-up assessment to ensure that all registered ECD centres maintain the required standards, in order to retain their registration.



8. Time frame

The time frame for each centre on this programme varies based on the needs of the ECD centre and the extent of upgrade required. In general, CECD works with an ECD for a minimum of one year to a maximum of three years. For construction of new centres, the period is usually one year from the time when funding has been approved and building plans and zoning applications have been submitted, to the final completion of the building.

9. Monitoring and evaluation

The Centre for Early Childhood Development uses various monitoring and evaluation (M&E) tools and processes in order to monitor programme progress, and assess the impact the programme is having on beneficiaries. The key M&E activities, which take place on this programme, are discussed below.

Baseline and follow-up assessment

CECD conducts needs assessments of all ECD centres when they enter the programme. These needs assessments are particularly thorough in order to assess various key indicators of quality, challenges faced by the ECD centres, as well as the current compliance of ECD centre with norms and standards of the DSD. The needs assessments also serve as baseline assessments for the interventions. After all intervention activities including building upgrades, resource provision, supervisor, governing body and teacher training, and on-site support, follow-up assessments are conducted to assess the level of impact this programme has had on the beneficiary ECD centre.

On-site support visit documentation

Throughout the intervention, CECD staff do on-site support visits to the principal/supervisor and teachers at the ECD centre. These visits involve providing on-site practical support and mentoring for the staff. The visits include assisting principals and supervisors with specific registration and management challenges, and assisting teachers with implementing knowledge and skills acquired in training. Following each visit, the CECD staff member fills out a 'support visit record sheet' recording relevant observations, assessing specific indicators (progress in relevant areas), recording a summary of the support activities provided, and noting further follow-up activities that need to take place. These forms are submitted to the operations manager for monitoring of progress.

Monitoring and evaluating the effect and sustainability of each upgrade is extremely valuable considering the amount of time and funding invested in each project. CECD tries to maintain a relationship with the principals of upgraded centres and to remain aware of their progress. Feedback from participants is essential to continue improving the programme. It also serves as feedback to the funders.



Monitoring visits

In addition to on-site support visits, CECD conducts monitoring visits throughout the building upgrade phase. These monitoring visits are conducted to ensure all upgrade work is progressing according to schedule and to a high quality, as well as to maintain communication with the principal to assess whether she is happy with all building activities taking place. The frequency of these visits varies based on the location of the ECD centre. For centres located less than 100 kilometres from CECD offices, a visit would take place at least once a week. For centres situated further away, the programme manager would communicate with the principal and builders over the phone and request pictures to monitor progress. Site visits at these centres would take place at a minimum every few weeks, if not more often, depending on the duration of the upgrade work, and the distance of the centre. Once the building renovations are completed, the programme manager inspects the site to ensure that all upgrades are completed as listed on the previously agreed upon quote.

Ongoing monitoring is key for the success of the programme. Based on the experience of CECD, the more site visits, the better, including conducting unscheduled site visits when the builders and staff are not expecting a visit.

It is always an advantage to establish and maintain a trusting professional relationship with builders from one project to another to promote consistency in the work delivery, standards and expectations of the programme.



10. Programme flexibility

This programme was designed to be flexible with regard to the context within which it operates, as well as the various needs of each ECD centre and each target community. In some cases, the centres are based in principals' homes and are not necessarily suitable for children due to a lack of space and resources. Although the degree of upgrading varies from one centre to another, the programme is implemented with the belief that the large majority of centres will benefit from support for improvement. CECD also collaborates with other organisations involved in the area to share responsibilities and avoid overlap.

11. Funding

Over the years, the ECD Centre Infrastructure Upgrade Programme has been well-supported by the Western Cape DSD, as well as a number of funders including foundations and trusts, corporate social investment initiatives and international philanthropists.

CECD works towards securing funding at least six months to one year before starting an upgrade. The principal of the centre is only informed about the upgrade once funding is confirmed in order to avoid disappointment.

Having long-term positive relationships with funders is key to gain credibility and security when implementing such programmes.

CECD also assists principals in implementing fundraising strategies for additional resources for the centres when the budget for the infrastructure upgrade does not cover all the needs of the centre, such as additional furniture or office equipment. This greatly encourages the staff of the ECD centres to take ownership and contribute to their own professional development.

It is important to note that the budget for a specific project and the conditions of the centres in the area of intervention will determine the number of upgrades that can be done simultaneously in a target community. Before initiating the building process, CECD ensures that the funder is aware of the results of the assessment and recommendations that have been made.

12. Community exit

A key aim of this programme is to promote sustainability of ECD centres by assisting ECD centres to meet the DSD norms and standards. This is done by upgrading the physical infrastructure in parallel with providing training opportunities for principals and teachers. Once beneficiary ECD centres meet these norms and standards, are running effectively, are registered as a partial care facility and registered as a NPO, and are on track with their application to receive the per-capita funding from DSD, CECD would exit from those ECD centres. The time frame for each project, or cluster of ECD centres, is established and communicated to principals before the upgrade process starts.

Following a formal exit, CECD remains available at all times for support and the sharing of resources. The programme also aims at building networks within the local communities and encouraging collaboration within the ECD sector. CECD connects principals and teachers in the area during the training sessions to create a local support system and extend the impact of the programme.

It is important to keep all contributors to the project connected and informed at all times.

By connecting various ECD centres and staff, the programme aims to create capacity in the communities to develop integrated mechanisms of ECD service provision.



Challenges and lessons learnt

Upgrading home-based ECD Centres

The upgrading of home-based ECD centres presents significant challenges. Home-based centres are often started in the principal's home because the principal has no

It is recommended to build a relationship with the staff of ECD centres through training sessions first before proceeding with any construction work. This gives the beneficiaries an opportunity to show their dedication to the centre and the programme.

It is crucial that beneficiaries be strongly committed, invested and passionate about their work in ECD in order to ensure the programme has a lasting impact.

It is necessary to be aware of the risks of an area at all times and to put specific safety procedures in place to mitigate those risks.

other suitable space. These centres are often in the most need of intervention, requiring infrastructure upgrading, additional resources and guidance through their registration process. Unfortunately, as these buildings are owned by private individuals, using funding to upgrade these facilities can become risky. For example, it is within the principal's right to close such an ECD centre at any given time. However, she may have just received a large building infrastructure upgrade to her premises for the purposes of the ECD centre. This can cause significant issues. To avoid these, yet remain inclusive, CECD has implemented a stringent assessment for selecting participants, questioning principals thoroughly on their plans for their centres for the next five to ten years.

Demand

A major challenge that CECD faces is keeping up with demand. Nearly all the ECD centres with which the CECD works, across all of its programmes, would benefit from an upgrade, yet the programme can only reach a set number of ECD centres each year because of costs. As such, the investment, time and number of potential candidates make the selection process complex and forces CECD to prioritise centres and areas. The demand highlights the relevance of this programme and the need for similar initiatives to expand and address gaps. Currently, obtaining funds for a substantial upgrade project and for projects in specific areas can be challenging as some donors have defined target areas, and small budgets.



Safety

Over the years, safety has been a significant challenge in various areas in the implementation of this programme. CECD has put in place measures to ensure the security of the staff. This remains an ongoing challenge.

Conclusion

The ECD Centre Infrastructure Upgrade Programme has played a significant role in improving children's access to quality education in safe environments. The programme

does not only focus on the infrastructural needs of ECD centres and within this, on building new ECD centres, but also assists principals and teachers in improving their management and teaching skills. ECD centres are also assisted to become adequately equipped with stimulating learning materials for children to thrive.

Through the building of new ECD centres, CECD promotes employment opportunities not only for local builders, but also for children's caregivers who previously did not have access to an ECD centre in their area.

By encouraging more ECD centres to reach the minimum norms of standards as set by DSD, the programme contributes significantly towards achieving the 2030 objective of the National Development Plan to ensure access to quality ECD education for all of the youngest citizens of South Africa.



CECD's ECD Centre Infrastructure Upgrade Programme costing

Table 29 provides a breakdown of the number of beneficiaries reached by the ECD Centre Infrastructure Upgrade Programme. This table shows that the programme (based on 2015/2016 data), upgraded 31 ECD centres, and reached 1 719 direct child beneficiaries each year. This programme also facilitated the building of a new ECD centre in 2015/2016; a centre, which accommodates 125 children each year. It is important to note that this reach fluctuates from year to year, depending on the various projects funded that year.

Table 29. ECD Centre Infrastructure Upgrade Programme: Number of Beneficiaries Reached

	Number of DIRECT beneficiaries of the CECD ECD Centre Infrastructure Upgrade Programme	
	Minor and major upgrades	Building a new ECD centre
ECD centres reached	31	1
Total number of children reached	1719	125
0 to < 18 months old:	69	25
18 months to < 2 years old:	103	25
2 to < 3 years old:	344	25
4 to < 5 years old:	687	25
5 to 6 years old (Grade R) children	516	25

If these figures are considered in relation to the expenditure for the programme for a one-year period, a cost for the programme in total, as well as per beneficiary, can be calculated. For the purposes of this exercise, the expenditure for the minor and major upgrades of 2015/2016 is reflected. As seen in Table 30, for 2015/2016 to reach 31 ECD centres, the current programme cost a total of R2 174 153. Using these expenses for the year, the following costs can be calculated:

- Cost per direct child beneficiary in year 1: **R1 265**

Based on a hypothetical scaling-up exercise of the programme, the programme expenses to reach 310 ECD centres (and therefore to reach 17 180 direct child beneficiaries) were estimated. The total costs of this larger programme would be approximately R18 016 744* for the year. Using these hypothetical total costs, the following costs can be calculated:

- Cost per direct child beneficiary in year 1: **R1 048***

(*It is important to note that these figures are projections and are based on 2016 rates, without taking inflation into account.)

Table 30. ECD Centre Infrastructure Upgrade Programme: Expenses

Programme expenses: 01 April 2015 to 31 March 2016

To reach:
31 ECD centres

To reach:
approximately 310
ECD centres

Organisational/Overhead costs	Amount	Amount*
Auditors' fees	R3 840	R11 520
Accounting fees	R8 519	R25 557
Bank charges	R1 910	R5 730
Advertising, marketing and promotions	R5 328	R5 328
Cleaning and gardening	R1 939	R1 939
Computer expenses (maintenance)	R1 069	R1 069
Electricity and water	R5 946	R5 946
Insurance	R6 765	R6 765
Motor vehicle expenses	R9 711	R58 266
Postage and courier	R6 638	R6 638
Rental/bond repayments	None at CECD	None at CECD
Rates	R1 200	R1 200
Building repairs and maintenance	R1 853	R1 853
Staff training and development	R3 655	R3 655
Security	R1 147	R1 147
Subscriptions	R1 823	R1 823
Telephone and fax	R5 599	R33 594
Website/Internet	R600	R600
Programme-related costs		
Director: part salary	R40 000	R40 000
General manager: part salary	R28 000	R28 000
Operations manager: part salary	R30 000	R90 000
ECD fieldworkers and trainers: salaries	R600 000	R3 600 000
Catering (include trainee refreshments)	R4 800	R48 000
Printing, materials and resources (including manuals)	R7 038	R70 380
Travelling expenses/transport	R21 000	R210 000
Verification costs	R2 100	R21 000
Monitoring and evaluation costs	R6 000	R60 000
Other costs: building upgrades costs		
Building materials	R631 740	R6 317 404
Building: labour	R716 333	R7 163 332
Fire and safety equipment	R19 600	R195 998
TOTAL COSTS PER YEAR	R2 174 153	R18 016 744

To offer this programme from scratch, additional capital items would also be required, including computer hardware and software, office furniture, vehicles, etc.



TRENDS AND INSIGHTS, POLICY CHANGES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter comprises three sections: the first summarises the key trends and insights that emerged from the featured case studies, the second looks at the various policy implementation challenges and the corresponding policy recommendations that came out of this research study, and the third section details recommendations based on the findings of this research.



“ South Africa has many quality ECD programmes, having a significant effect in the lives of the children of our country.

5.2 Key trends and insights from the case studies

Throughout the research process, many trends and insights were learned about the ECD non-profit sector and the range of early learning programmes they provide. From interviewing ECD specialists, along with reviewing and assessing ECD programme options, as well as conducting interviews and site visits based on ECD programme submissions, we found that South Africa has many quality ECD programmes, having a significant effect in the lives of the children of our country. However, these programmes often operate in isolation, with minimal cohesion amongst the efforts of the sector. Our research shows that, at the time of this research, there was a great deal of variation in ECD programmes in South Africa, particularly in terms of the quality of programmes that were provided, the varying target numbers, as well as varying costs for the different programmes. This was particularly evident in the submission data that was received.

In addition to the above, some of the findings and trends that emerged from the study were as follows:

- From the programme submissions, and more specifically, the interviews, it was found that many of the most effective programmes (different programmes aiming to achieve different objectives) utilise a home-visiting model with great success.

“ In South Africa,
63%
of children are not in centre-based ECD provision.

- There is a concentration of top-quality ECD NPOs and programmes in the Western Cape, and a lack in many other provinces. This needs to be addressed (perhaps through funding to expand their work by means of satellite offices in other provinces).
- Similarly, there are many areas across provinces that are unserved and under-served by NPOs. There is a significant divide in terms of rural and urban areas, with an unequal distribution of services skewed in favour of urban communities. This is concerning, considering that almost half (44%) of South Africa’s children live in rural households (Delany, Jehoma & Lake, 2016), while only a few ECD programmes target rural areas.
- The traditional ECD NPO sector is driven, at its core, by a small number of committed, passionate leaders and programme staff.
- Many existing NPOs have changed their focus in recent years to ECD. These NPOs are fast becoming significant role-players in the ECD sector.
- The lack of inclusive education ECD facilities in South Africa remains a significant challenge, which needs to be addressed.
- In South Africa, 63% of children are not in centre-based ECD provision (Early Learning Resource Unit [ELRU], 2016). This is due to many reasons, such as affordability; reach or availability; parents being at home and not feeling the need to send their children to an ECD centre; and a lack of awareness of the importance of ECD. It is unclear how many of these children are accessing alternate forms of ECD provisioning, such as out-of-centre programmes, and how many have no access. Consequently, more expenditure needs to be put into reaching this 63% of young children. With the majority of government expenditure going into ECD centre-based programmes, young children not attending ECD centres are not provided for.
- There is currently no provision in the Children’s Act for non-centre-based ECD programmes and as such, each toy library is required to register as a partial care facility with DSD. In terms of registration, the physical toy library is seen as a centre-based programme and therefore is required to comply with the minimum standards of partial care facilities, as specified by the Children’s Act. Each toy library programme is registered as an ECD learning programme with DSD, but the fact that there is nothing guiding non-centre-based programmes is a challenge. It is illogical to use ECD centre registration requirements for out-of-centre programmes, as they are fundamentally different in their mode of delivery. Importantly, ECD NPOs are in discussion with government to address many of the issues surrounding centre-based and non-centre-based programmes, their registration and minimum standards.



Some patterns that emerged from the case studies of ECD programmes are discussed below.

- Impact evaluations are not common and more evaluations need to be conducted in order to validate the claims of programmes.
- NPOs often align their programmes to government policies and curriculum frameworks (e.g. the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement [CAPS], the NELDS, and the National Curriculum Framework [NCR]).
- Receiving long-term funding for programmes is often a challenge with many organisations, particularly smaller organisations, and those that do not have a proven track record (i.e. have only been in existence for a short while). This has an effect on the roll-out of ECD programmes.
- In the Western Cape, the DSD funds many of the best practice programmes that are included in these guidelines. This cannot be said for the other provinces.
- Many programmes assessed did not have formal theories of change, which drove their programme development. Usually, their programme models were based on common knowledge and considerable years of experience.
- Monitoring and evaluation quality, depth, frequency and importance varied from NPO to NPO, and from programme to programme. This was often driven by funder and contractual requirements.
- As part of this study, a costing of each ECD programme was done, along with an analysis of the number of direct and indirect beneficiaries reached. These results were correlated, and showed interesting results. Based on the 12 programmes included in this study, a number of trends could be seen. There was a strong correlation (0.24) between the number of children reached (either directly or indirectly) and the cost-effectiveness (per child) of the programme. This was calculated by looking at the number of children reached by each programme for a one-year period, as well as the direct cost per child beneficiary for that period for each programme. This data for all 12 programmes was analysed, and the correlation coefficient for these data points was calculated.

Table 31 below illustrates the scale of cost-effectiveness of the 12 ECD programme options included in this study, and Table 32 presents a ranking of the reach that each of these ECD programme options had. These tables demonstrate that the most cost-effective programmes, which reached the highest number of children, were the large-scale teacher training programmes. It is these programmes that work with ECD centre teachers or practitioners (reaching children indirectly); hence, the lower cost and greater reach.

Table 31. Ranking of Cost-effectiveness of Programme Options

MOST EXPENSIVE PER CHILD	
1	Inclusive ECD centre programme
2	Specialised home visiting programme (rural or with trained counsellors)
3	Community-based ECD centre programme
4	Out-of-centre outreach programme (home visiting, toy libraries, playgroups)
5	Outreach (training) programmes with ECD centre (as often the teachers are the direct beneficiaries, including large- and small-scale programmes)



“ Impact evaluations are not common and more evaluations need to be conducted in order to validate the claims of programmes.



“ ECD programmes, which are the most cost-effective and reach the highest number of children, are those that have more limited frequency and depth.

Table 32. Ranking of Reach of Programme Options

REACHES THE MOST CHILDREN	
1	Large-scale outreach (training) programmes with ECD centre (as the teachers are the direct beneficiaries)
2	Out-of-centre outreach programmes (home visiting, playgroups)
3	Small-scale outreach (training) programmes with ECD centres (as the teachers are the direct beneficiaries)
4	Out-of-centre outreach programmes (toy libraries and inclusive ECD community outreach)
5	Specialised home visiting programme (with trained counsellors)
6	Community-based ECD centre programme
7	Specialised home visiting programme (rural)
8	Inclusive ECD centre programme

The analysis of the 12 ECD programme options allowed us to record and compare the frequency as well as the duration of each of the programmes. As can be seen in Table 33 below, the programmes with the highest frequency and duration were the ECD centre programmes, and the programmes with the lowest frequency and duration were the large-scale outreach (training) programmes conducted with adults.

An analysis of the three tables presented indicates that the ECD programmes, which are the most cost-effective and reach the highest number of children, are those that have more limited frequency and depth.

Table 33. Ranking of the Frequency and Duration (Depth) of Programme Options

HIGHEST FREQUENCY AND DURATION (DEPTH) OF PROGRAMME INTERVENTION ACTIVITIES	
1	ECD centre programme → every day, 4–8 hours a day
2	Out-of-centre outreach programme (playgroups) → once a week, half-day
3	Out-of-centre outreach programme (home visiting) and specialised home visiting programme (rural or with trained counsellors) → once a week, 1–2 hours
4	Out-of-centre outreach programme (toy libraries) → varies
5	Outreach (training) programmes with ECD centres → once a week – with adults

5.3 Policy challenges facing the ECD sector

Although much has been done to improve access and quality of early learning programmes in both ECD facilities and Grade R classrooms, there is a long way to go in the enhancement of service delivery (DBE, DSD & UNICEF, 2010). According to the DBE, DSD and UNICEF (2010), some of the prominent challenges and obstacles facing ECD facilities include the absence of learning materials and resources, especially within the classroom setting, minimal funding, lack of qualified teachers, inadequate security for children whilst at the ECD facility, as well as poor toilet facilities. These challenges

all been echoed and reflected in the case studies presented within this report and are discussed in more detail below.

5.3.1 Political will

'Political will' can be understood as a force that generates political action and produces desired outcomes (Atmore, 2016). It implies sustaining implementation through resource provision over time. Government has shown little political will for ECD over the years. Until ECD is a political priority, it will not be provided for adequately in South Africa (Atmore, 2016).

Cabinet approved the new Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy on 9 December 2015, and while this policy is comprehensive and what our country needs, it is evident that there will be minimal funding provided to support implementation (Atmore, 2016). There is a clear chasm between the intention of this policy and the likely practical outcomes.



5.3.2 Funding of ECD programmes

Minimal funding for early childhood development programmes across South Africa is a significant challenge. This is a stark indication of the country's lack of political will to support early childhood development.

"While subsidies for poor children attending registered non-profit ECD centres increased from approximately R422 million in 2007/08 to R1.6 billion in 2013/14, this does not adequately reach the poorest and youngest children who mostly do not access registered centres" (Viviers, Biersteker & Moruane, 2013: 38). Importantly, over 80% of children between the ages of 0 and 4 years in the poorest 40% of the population are entirely excluded from registered ECD programmes and thus are not included in national budget calculations (Albino & Berry, 2013).

Not only is this limited funding inadequate to meet the needs of poor and vulnerable children within South Africa; it is also not being channelled to the programmes that could reach the majority of young children, such as non-centre-based ECD programmes, and their caregivers. Alternative funding models are required for non-centre-based ECD programmes in order to support our country's youngest children and their caregivers.

“While subsidies for poor children attending registered non-profit ECD centres increased from approximately R422 million in 2007/08 to R1.6 billion in 2013/14, this does not adequately reach the poorest and youngest children who mostly do not access registered centres.

(Viviers, Biersteker & Moruane, 2013: 38)



“There needs to be greater accountability and capacity for the implementation of policies at all levels of government.”

As has been indicated earlier in this report (see 5.3.1), the new National Integrated ECD Policy (RSA, 2015) is comprehensive and encouraging but, despite ECD being declared a public good, there is little hope of this policy being implemented as intended. It is our hope that the case studies and implementation guidelines presented in this report will be a starting point for government policymakers and officials, as well as non-profit providers, in the effective implementation of this ECD policy.



5.3.3 Management capacity

To implement ECD policy successfully requires significant management expertise and skills. Limited management capacity exists within the Departments of Basic Education and Social Development as can be seen by the paucity of successful large-scale ECD projects. With the exception of the CSG, there has been no successful large-scale implementation of policy over the past 23 years, since democracy. There needs to be greater accountability and capacity for the implementation of policies at all levels of government.

5.3.4 Non-profit capacity

For policy objectives to be achieved, South Africa requires the NPO sector to be an integral part of implementation. As with the lack of government capacity, so the ECD NPO sector does not currently have the management capacity to deliver on the National Integrated ECD Policy of 2015. The NPO sector is severely stretched and under-resourced, leading to an inability to reach the numbers that are required with a good quality service.

5.3.5 Timing of implementation

One of the key challenges with the National Integrated ECD Policy of 2015 is the timing of implementation. The policy will be implemented in three time phases: by 2017, by 2024, and by 2030. This is a substantial time delay during which many millions of the most vulnerable children will be denied access to quality ECD programmes. The country is putting the lives of millions of poor children at risk by delaying the implementation of the new National Integrated ECD Policy to these periods.

5.3.6 Leadership

Strong leadership and accountability at all levels of government is essential in providing quality large-scale ECD programmes. Neither government nor the NPO sector currently has the leadership in place to implement this policy effectively (Atmore, 2016).

5.3.7 Monitoring

Government has limited systems and support in place to monitor and review ECD policy implementation progress and outcomes. Effective monitoring is critical to ensure quality service delivery.



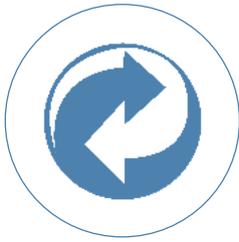
5.4 Key recommendations

From the range of policy challenges facing the ECD sector, along with the insights that emerged from the case studies, several recommendations are made to drive change in the ECD sector.

5.4.1 Policy-related recommendations

Several recommendations specifically related to policy implementation emerged from the interviews with ECD specialists and organisations. These are listed below.

- Strong political support to drive the ECD agenda is critical in achieving universal access to quality early learning programmes for children. Without a commitment by the president and Cabinet and an acknowledgement that ECD is imperative and that government will move immediately to implement the National Integrated ECD Policy of 2015, this policy will be 'symbolic' only.
- A rapid upskilling of government officials and NPO staff on leadership and management skills and capacity is required. For the successful implementation of



“To forgo greater investment in ECD interventions means compromising the well-being of South Africa’s communities, perpetuating cycles of poverty, poor educational attainment, ill health, inequality and socio-economic challenges (Albino & Berry, 2013:78).”

- policies and programme delivery, effective leadership and management are essential.
- The non-profit sector is at the frontline of implementation. ECD NPO staff need to be capacitated sufficiently to enable them to meet the output and outcome requirements to achieve universal access of quality ECD programmes.
 - To drive and sustain transformation in the ECD sector, the leadership capacity of government and NPO staff needs to be enhanced. To ensure an environment in which policy and quality ECD interventions are enabled, we require government-led leadership with strong accountability and governance.
 - To improve effectiveness and quality of ECD programmes, the strengthening of monitoring systems and skills in both government and the NPO sector is required.
 - A strategy is required to ensure that ECD remains on the political agenda so that additional funds are made available for the effective implementation of plans and programmes for both centre-based and out-of-centre programmes across all nine provinces. As is articulated so well in the South African Child Gauge 2013, “To forgo greater investment in ECD interventions means compromising the well-being of South Africa’s communities, perpetuating cycles of poverty, poor educational attainment, ill health, inequality and socio-economic challenges” (Albino & Berry, 2013:78).
 - Current ECD policy norms and standards are helpful in guiding and directing ECD programmes, but in many instances, they end up holding back ECD centres, especially those in impoverished communities. It is not appropriate to have ‘one-size-fits-all’ norms and standards in a country such as South Africa, which has urban, peri-urban and rural areas. For example, building regulations in the urban suburbs cannot apply to a rural setting. As a result, children are being denied access to early learning facilities and programmes. Government policies are important and work well to guide the sector, but flexibility is required.
 - It would be beneficial for policymakers to focus more time on supporting the implementation of relevant ECD policies. It would also be beneficial for policies to be disseminated widely, in a user-friendly format.



5.4.2 Recommendations on ECD funding models

Funding for ECD was a prevalent topic of discussion during the desktop research as well as the interviews. A number of important recommendations related to funding of ECD in South Africa arose and have been listed below.

- To increase access to early childhood development programmes significantly, funding needs to be channelled across areas within each province. Currently, small pockets within the provinces are accessing funding, leaving many other areas with very little or no funding provision at all. This results in a very uneven spread of ECD services and programmes with many children receiving no early learning opportunities. This is more prevalent within the rural areas of South Africa, demonstrating a stark urban versus rural divide. An equitable distribution of funds for ECD services across all areas is necessary to ensure universal access to ECD.
- It is suggested that NPOs (who are able to) assess and revise their use of this funding to implement programmes in a more widespread manner, across provinces, rather than focusing on the province in which they are situated. One way of doing this is to partner with similar organisations in other provinces, as they have an understanding of and relationship with the communities.
- Funding for ECD needs to be focused on expanding non-centre-based programmes that have proven to work well and where there is evidence of positive outcomes. These are the programmes that should be taken to scale¹ to achieve universal access to quality early childhood development programmes for young children.

5.4.3 ECD sector-related recommendations

Several recommendations specifically related to the ECD sector and how it can improve its services emerged from the interviews with ECD specialists and organisations. These are listed below.

- To increase the reach of ECD services, there is a need for partnering between early childhood development NPOs across the country. With so few ECD NPOs, a way to reach children on a more widespread level will be to develop strong partnerships with similar organisations. Organisations working in an integrated way, combining resources, knowledge and expertise will further our reach to more children.
- More exposure for effective ECD programmes achieving positive outcomes is required. Widespread exposure of these programmes would provide learning opportunities for ECD NPOs wanting to implement similar programmes, but also for government and funders to understand what works well and the types of programmes that demonstrate significant outcomes and which would likely have a high return on investment.
- More impact evaluation studies, in which child outcomes are measured specifically, are a necessity. The present study has shown a dearth of impact evaluations on existing ECD programmes. Without such evaluations, we do not know whether ECD programmes are having a significant effect on children.
- It would be beneficial for health projects to be incorporated more often into ECD programmes, e.g. in home-visiting programmes. Despite health being a crucial element of early childhood development, health aspects of ECD programmes, especially in non-centre-based interventions, are often non-existent or very limited.
- The ECD non-profit sector needs a stronger voice in making government face the reality of the benefits of providing ECD programmes, as well as the reality of what will result if we neglect vulnerable young children as we have been and are currently doing.
- Substantially increased funding is required for ECD programmes focusing on the first 1 000 days of a child's life (the period from conception to the age of two). It is during this period that the foundation for a child to reach full potential is determined. As can be seen in literature and from the case studies, children between 0 and 2 years of age are often at home with a caregiver during the day and most do not have access to



“Funding for ECD needs to be focused on expanding non-centre-based programmes that have proven to work well and where there is evidence of positive outcomes.”

centre-based facilities. Thus, funding is particularly required to support out-of-centre programmes targeting our youngest children and their caregivers.



“ There is universal agreement and evidence of the value of ECD and the benefit that ECD programmes and interventions bring to children, families, communities and society.

5.4.4 Programme-specific recommendations

Pertaining to ECD teacher training, it is widely known that the bulk of teacher training takes place at Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges in South Africa. It was evident from this study that these colleges are over-subscribed with ECD learners and under-resourced. A key challenge is the limited on-site support that is provided due to small staff complements who are overloaded with work. This limited provision of on-site support to new ECD teacher trainees is crucial in their learning and application of theory. In order for new ECD teachers to be trained optimally and prepared to work effectively with children in the ECD field, it is vital that new models of training provision be developed. This could include partnerships between colleges and NPOs, and changes to the funding model to incorporate additional staff and resources.

5.5 Conclusion

There is universal agreement and evidence of the value of ECD and the benefit that ECD programmes and interventions bring to children, families, communities and society. In addition to the social and educational benefits, there is a substantial economic benefit to society (Atmore, 2009). It is also clear that quality ECD interventions could have a significant effect on reducing poverty and inequality across South Africa, and bringing about social justice.

Whilst government has ensured that there is universal (almost 100%) access to primary schooling for South African children; it has also acknowledged the need to increase ECD access for children between the ages of 0 and 6 years. Universal access to quality ECD services is urgent and a main determinant for the sustainable, democratic future of South Africa.

This research study has worked towards supporting the South African government to achieve universal, quality ECD provision for South Africa's youngest children, furthering development of our country and building its economic strength. The result of this study is a set of early childhood development programme option guidelines for South Africa, focusing on both centre-based and non-centre-based programmes. These guidelines will guide government, the ECD non-profit sector, donor organisations, and communities in how to provide much-needed, quality ECD programmes.

This set of implementation guidelines complements the new, comprehensive National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy (RSA, 2015), and could be used to guide policy implementation. Importantly, this will only work optimally with adequate funding and coordinating mechanisms in place.

It is our hope that these implementation guidelines would improve the quality of South African children's lives and increase their opportunities for healthy growth and development.

¹ "Scaling up means expanding, adapting and sustaining successful policies, programs or projects in different places and over time to reach a greater number of people" (World Bank, 2005:8).



“ Universal access to quality ECD services is urgent and a main determinant for the sustainable, democratic future of South Africa.



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