CITY OF CAPE TOWN
EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY

Social Development and Early Childhood Development

Contents

1. CONTEXT AND RATIONALE

Early childhood is a time of remarkable transformation and extreme vulnerability. Programmes that support young children during the years before they go to primary school provide strong foundations for subsequent learning and development. Such programmes also compensate for disadvantage and exclusion, offering a way out of poverty: Education for All Global Monitoring Report, 2007.

Protection of the rights and promotion of welfare of children at local government level should be seen as a process that enables children to improve their skills, talents and abilities, as well as expand their intellectual, physical and emotional capabilities.

In essence, the protection of the rights, promotion of welfare and development of children is about local government:

- Creating an enabling environment in which children can participate and contribute in their development and that of their families and communities.
- Helping with the provision of appropriate public, private and community based resources to children.
- Improving the quality of life of children through dynamic partnerships, enabling and empowering the children to develop and apply their skills, resources and capabilities more effectively.
- Forging appropriate partnerships to ensure sustainability and improved service delivery to children.
- Improving access of children to sustainable livelihoods and productive resources.

2. DEFINITION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Early Childhood Development (ECD) is a range of services provided to young children to improve their holistic development and to ensure that their basic human rights and welfare are protected and promoted.

In terms of this strategy, ECD is defined as "an umbrella term which applies to the process by which children from birth to nine years grow and thrive physically, mentally, emotionally and socially" (Education White Paper, March 1995).

Early development is the period when humans are most dependent on relationships for survival, emotional security and cognitive development:

Education for All Global Monitoring Report, 2007.

3. GOAL

The strategic framework has the goal:

- Ensure that all young children have access to sustainable ECD services which enhance their physical, cognitive, social, mental and emotional development.
- Create an environment which enhances protection of the rights and promotes the welfare of young children.

4. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- To facilitate protection and promotion of the rights of children in line with Section 28 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- To contribute towards the development of the community by providing early childhood development facilities, services and programmes;

- To work with communities, non-profit organisations, churches, employers etc. to initiate and establish early childhood development services;
- To ensure that early childhood development facilities, services and programmes are well managed, equipped, staffed and maintained;
- To monitor the quality of early childhood facilities, services and programmes;
- To ensure that health and safety standards for early childhood development facilities, services and programmes are properly maintained
- To allocate appropriate land and sites to organisations wishing to provide services for children;
- To mobilise resources for early childhood development facilities, services and programmes.
- Ensure that no policy decisions will be made which ignore the perspective of children and young people.
- To ensure that the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children
- To facilitate processes and put into place mechanisms that assist early childhood development centres to comply.

5. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

There is a general lack of formal ECD centres across the City of Cape Town. The huge demand for ECD facilities has not been addressed in a holistic manner. As a result, informal crèches that operate in sites that are not zoned for ECD or educational purposes surpass the formal ECD centres.

The situation has been further complicated by the sprawling backyard crèches that, under the circumstances, are seen to be an option by desperate parents who just need their young ones to be looked after when they are at work.

These crèches do not comply with national guidelines and policy directives and therefore are not properly registered. As a consequence, they are not receiving any grants from the Provincial Government. These informal and backyard crèches are characterised by overcrowding, lack of resources and in most cases non adherence to safety standards.

To remedy the situation, the City needs to identify and fast track zoning of portions of land suitable for ECD purposes. The option of buying land for the sole purpose of building ECD facilities need to be investigated.

The second major challenge facing the ECD sector is the educator's capacity, particularly those who work in the disadvantaged communities, to deliver quality services as well as management capabilities to manage in a manner that increases efficiency of these ECD centres. The majority of ECD educators have not been properly trained. To alleviate the situation, the City, in partnership with all relevant stakeholders needs to design a comprehensive holistic programme to address these deficiencies.

The responsible stakeholders should create a framework which brings together all elements of ECD to ensure consistency and maximise the use of available resources.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

Legislation and policy impacting on the ECD sector

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996)
- Children's Act of 2005
- Children's Amendment Act of 2007
- Health Act 61 of 2003
- National Building Regulations and Building Standards Act 103 of 1977 as amended in 1995 (Act 49/95)

- South African Schools Act 84 of 1996
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Ratified by South Africa in 1996)
- Western Cape Provincial School Education Act 12 of 1997

Departmental policies and strategies impacting on the ECD sector:

Department of Social Services and Poverty Alleviation

- ECD guidelines (Western Cape Provincial Government)
- National Guidelines For Early Childhood Development Services (July 2007)
- National Strategies Framework for Children Infected and affected by HIV/AIDS
- White Paper for Social Welfare (19997)

Department of Education:

- Interim Policy for Early Childhood Development (1996)
- White Paper on Education (1995)
- White Paper No. 5 on Education (May 2001)

Department of Health:

- National HIV/AIDS/STD Strategic Plan for South Africa (2000).
- National Child Health Policy

Local Government:

- White Paper on Local Government (1998)
- Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, No. 117 of 1998.
- Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, No. 32 of 2000.

7. PRIMARY PARTNERSHIP

In tandem with the Western Cape Provincial Government ECD strategy which highlights the need for an integrated approach that enhances the impact of services provided by various stakeholders, the City will collaborate with all relevant stakeholders including but not limited to:

- The Western Cape Education Department
- The Department of Health
- The Western Cape Social Development Directorate
- NGOs
- Business Sector
- The Provincial Department of Community Safety
- The Department of Home Affairs
- ECD Forums

8. CITY OF CAPE TOWN PRIMARY SERVICE PROVIDERS AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

In the City of Cape Town the following Departments will continue having primary responsibility to render services to ECD sector.

Social Development

- Development of Policy
- Development of Strategy
- Development and execution of Implementation Plan

  Promote care and protection of rights

  Advocate, facilitate and support programmes

  Funding of Programmes

  Champion construction of ECD facilities

  Monitoring and evaluation

Property Management

- Identification of sites for ECD facilities
- Buying of portions of land suitable for ECD facilities

Planning

- Zoning
- Approval of building / structural plans

Health Department

- Provide clearance certificates for registration of facilities
- Clinic services to parents and children
- Ensure that health and safety standards for early childhood development facilities, services and programmes are properly maintained.

City Parks

- Management of open spaces optimal use and measures to ensure safety.

9. BENEFITS OF THE STRATEGY

The strategy will yield the following benefits:

- Support and complement the efforts of parents and other carers.
- Provide a strategic framework to design quality programmes for children.
- Ensure provision of effective, integrated and sustainable services to children.

10. GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

A sustainable implementation of the strategy will need the following governance and institutional arrangements.

- Social Development Department to champion implementation of the strategy
- Inter-departmental task Team consisting of officials from Social
- Development, Planning, Health and Property Management
- Portfolio Committee to exercise an oversight role

11. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation of implementation and impact of programmes should be conducted on an ongoing basis. The main thrust of monitoring and evaluation should ensure that services rendered to children are of high quality.

Monitoring and evaluation in respect of the strategy will be conducted in the following manner:

Departments

- Departments will monitor and evaluate their progress in respect of their plans.
- Departments will monitor and evaluate implementation of programs by service providers who receive funding from the City.

NGO sector

NGO sector will monitor evaluate the quality and impact of the programs implemented by the City.

Portfolio Committee

Will be a political oversight and provide guidance.

12. COMMUNICATION

The strategy will be communicated to all stakeholders to get their support and commitment to contribute towards achievement of its goal and objectives.