

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

QUESTIONS TO ECD EDUCATORS AND PRINCIPALS

Background

ET16: Boksburg, 57, Principal and owner, not registered, parent fees only.

In the questionnaire which you completed, you indicated that you want to do a Diploma in ECCE. I would like to ask you some further questions about your responses in the questionnaire to gain a better understanding of your work situation, challenges and aspirations as an ECD practitioner.

Q1: *Firstly, can you tell me why you decided to become an ECD practitioner?*

ET16: I worked as a domestic worker because I couldn't find other work for many years. Then I got a job at a Daycare centre, and after some years I started to study ECD level 4 and then I did ECD level 5 Higher Certificate.

Q2: *In the questionnaire you indicated a number of reasons for wanting to do this higher education qualification and gave indication of what you consider a professional ECD practitioner is. I would like you to tell me a little more about why you selected these response categories.*

You selected the response category, "To specialise in the care and education of the birth to four child." Could you please clarify why you selected this response as the only reason to do a higher qualification?

ET16: I have an ECD Level 5 that I did through Edu Build, but the Higher Certificate in ECCE will be more on birth to four years, and I will be a specialist.

R: *The Higher Certificate in ECCE is also at Level 5. Would you not rather do a Diploma in ECCE at level 6?*

ETS16: No, I am too old to study for many years. The Diploma will take maybe 4 or 5 years, but the Certificate will be just 2 years.

R: *What do you think it means to be a specialist in ECCE?*

- ET16:** It means I have more knowledge about this age and what they can do at every age and how I can help them. Things have changed a lot. Some parents, they want their kids to learn even if they are young. When I first started working in a Day care - we just watched the children, and they played. Now, we have to prepare them from a young age so that they are ready for Gr R.
- R:** *Do you think that the parents appreciate the service that you provide and that they respect the work you do.*
- ET16:** I can say, some they do. They thank you when their child goes to Gr R, but some don't speak to you nicely. They come late to fetch their children and expect you to stay late and not complain because they are paying you. They have many excuses but they don't respect you. It is like you are just a nanny – an aunty looking after their child.
- R:** *Do you think having a Higher Certificate in ECCE will make a difference to how they see you?*
- ET16:** Yes, I think they will have more respect if they know I am studying at a university.
- Q3:** *The other question that I would like to ask you is about what makes an ECD practitioner a professional?*
- R:** *You ticked the response, "Knowledge of Early Childhood Development theory and practice". Can you explain why you consider this an important indicator of being a professional?*
- ET16:** It is what I was saying about helping children to develop at every age. If you haven't learnt child development in your courses you won't know what to do and you can't be a professional. But I think I can learn more.
- R:** *Do you think experience of working with young children for many years can make you a professional?*
- ET16:** Some practitioners have been working for many years with young children and they are good even if they have not, you know...uhm studied ECD. But they have that love and care for children and can work with any child...like, even the child with problems, they can be good with that child.
- R:** *Can you give an example of dedication and commitment to the work you do, including putting the children's interests above your own to illustrate how that makes you a professional?*
- ET16:** I love this work and I love the children. I give a service to this community, even if it is hard. Even if I want to have fewer days at work and let the practitioners who work for me carry on some days, I know I have to be here because the children need me and this is my school.
- R:** *So, can you sum up in a sentence or two why you consider yourself a professional practitioner?*
- ET16:** I work hard and I care for the children and their families. I know my job and I have been doing it for many years.
- Q4:** *Have you applied for registration of your programme and for a subsidy from the DSD?*

No, I have not applied. My centre is private and the parents pay school fees. They all work and the children will not qualify for subsidy. Some parents are not regular, but my Nursery school is well-known and parents know I have to charge fees to keep it going. Equipment is very expensive and parents must buy crayons and things for their kids to bring to school.

R: *You are fortunate to have a Nursery school in an area that attracts parents who are working and can pay for their children's early learning and care.*

Q5: **Answered above.**

Q6: ***What changes do you think the MRQECDE policy is bringing to the ECD sector?***

ET16: It is giving us higher qualifications and bringing us closer to the teachers in Foundation Phase.

R: *Do you think it will be a good thing if ECCE educators have to have a Diploma in ECCE like the Gr R teachers have to have a Diploma in Gr R teaching?*

ET16: That will be hard for many of us. I am too old now to do a Diploma. Maybe for the young ones it will be better because they can carry on studying, but it is a question of the money to study.

R: *If they are accepted to register for one of the qualifications at a university, they can apply for NSFAS funding.*

Q7: How do you think the Government can further support the ECCE sector?

ET16: We are struggling with Covid. We had to close and the parents are not paying now. I can't pay my staff. It will be better if the Government can help to pay us so we can manage in this time.

Q8: ***Do you have any questions that you would like to ask?***

ET16: I have heard that DBE will take the 4 yr-olds to the schools. Is this true because that will be very bad.

R: *No, that is not true. The DBE will be responsible for ECCE in future and not the DSD, but they will not move the children or stop you from having them at your Nursery school.*