

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

QUESTIONS TO ECD EDUCATORS AND PRINCIPALS

Background

JS14, practitioner, 34, Johannesburg, Soweto, Preschool, parents pay school fees

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.

Q 1: *Why did you decide to become and ECD practitioner?*

JS14: I left school and I didn't get work. I stayed at home and then another teacher told me I can study ECD at TVET and get NSFAS to study. I applied to South West TVET College and after some time I got NSFAS . I was doing level 4 and I got work at a preschool here in Soweto and finished my portfolio for practicals.

R: *Was being an ECD practitioner your first career choice?*

JS14: [Laughs] No, I wanted to do fashion design, but now I like it.

Q 2: *You only indicated one reasons for wanting to do the BEd in ECCE. I would like to ask you to tell me a little more about why you selected this response.*

R: *You selected the response category: "To become permanently employed." Could you please clarify why you selected this response?*

JS14: I want to get work at a school. There are schools here in Johannesburg, they have Gr R. I think I can get that job with a BEd for ECCE because it will be the same level as the BEd Foundation Phase for teachers.

R: *So, you would like to be employed in a public school and not in the informal ECD sector and work in private ECD centres and preschools? What do you think will be the biggest difference.*

JS14: The salary is more and you are paid by the school or the Government and you can be permanent. My sister's friend is a Foundation Phase teacher and she gets medical aid too.

- R:** *Unfortunately, you will not be able to work at a public school as a teacher with a BEd ECCE. There are schools with pre-Grade R classes, but there are no posts that are advertised by the Gauteng Provincial Department for teachers for those classes, as is done for teacher posts from Gr R to 12. Some schools can afford to employ a teacher for pre-Gr R in a School Governing Body (SGB) post. That means the person is paid by the school. So that may be possible, but the Department of Basic Education is not going to create posts and employ ECCE educators. It might happen in future, but at present that is not being considered.*
- JS14:** I hope that will happen because Gr R is now compulsory and they say pre-Gr R will also be compulsory, so that is what I want.
- Q 3:** ***You selected a number of indicators for what makes an ECD educator a professional. I would like to ask you to tell me a little more about why you selected these response categories.***
- R:** *You ticked the response category for “number of years of experience of working with young children”. Why do you think this is an important indicator of a professional?*
- JS14:** When you start working with these young kids, you don’t know... like you don’t know much, but after some years you are experienced and you know what to do.
- R:** *So, are you saying, that even without any ECD qualification you can be a professional if you have enough experience?*
- JS14:** No, you must have the qualification to be professional. You can learn from the others and get experience, but it is not enough.
- R:** *The other response that you ticked and that I am interested in is the one about continually improving knowledge and understanding of your work by undergoing training or studying further. Why do you think this is important in terms of being a professional?*
- JS14:** We go to workshops and we learn new things. The principal wants us to keep learning. Now I will learn more from the degree. If you are professional, you must keep learning new things.
- R:** *Can you give an example of something that you have learnt more about in the last year or two?*
- JS14:** Using hand puppets and 6 bricks lego and reading big picture books to children.
- R:** You also indicated that you consider yourself a professional ECD practitioner. Why do you think so?
- JS14:** I am a professional because I have a Level 4 ECD qualification and I know how to be a teacher for the kids. I also attend workshops and am always learning about this ECD.
- Q4:** ***I see that the Preschool is not registered with the Department of Social Development. Do you know why it is not registered?***
- JS14:** I don’t know. The principal and owner they do that.
- Q 5:** ***So, does that mean that the fees parents pay for their children to attend the Preschool has to cover all the costs, including salaries?***

JS14: Yes, I think so.

Q 6: *What changes do you think the MRQECDE policy is bringing to the ECD sector?*

JS14: It is making us to try for better qualifications to make the centres better.

R: *Do you mean to improve the quality of the early learning and care services at the centres?*

JS14: Yes, because some ECDs, they are not good and the kids don't learn and the Gr R teachers say the kids are not ready.

Q 7: *How do you think the Government can further support the ECD education sector?*

JS14: Now that you say there are no posts for pre-Gr R and we will just carry on with those 4-year-old kids in our centres. I think they must make those posts and pay for teachers, because Gr R is now compulsory and they say pre-Gr R will also be compulsory, so that is what I want if they say it is compulsory. If we have those higher qualifications.

Q 8: *Is there anything you would like to ask about doing the qualifications?*

JS14: When will the registration be open at UNISA for the degree?

R: *The Universities are still developing their programmes and will not start offering the qualifications until 2022 or 2023. Unisa is not developing the degree at present, but North West University also offers distance education and they will offer the BEd ECCE.*

R: **Thank you for taking the time to talk to me and answer my questions. I enjoyed our conversation.**