

Higher education qualifications for Early Childhood Development educators: Conditions for successful policy implementation

DATA CODING FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTION RESPONSES

| Participant | Questions and coded utterances | Colour coded data categories |
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| | 1. Why did you decide to become and ECD practitioner? | |
| JTS45 Principal | My mother ran the centre from out home. I decided that I like the young kids, so I wanted to train. | Young and/or unqualified practitioners entering the sector |
| | I applied for the Level 4 certificate in ECD at Matthew Goniwe. I am still busy with it | Low qualification levels |
| | My mother was the principal, but she said she was getting too old to manage it and I became the principal. | Unqualified principal |
| JIS14 Principal | I first did a social auxiliary worker qualification, but I didn't get a job. | Not a career of first choice |
| | Then I decided to work in a crèche and from there I did the FETC level 4. | Low qualification levels |
| | I was 28 [when I started working at the crèche] | Young and/or unqualified practitioners entering the sector |
| JTS15 Principal | I could see there was a need in the community, so my wife and I started a Day care centre at the church. | Service to the community |
| | [Not ECD level 4 – just training with a private provider] It was with the City of Johannesburg in 1994. They came to us to see if we knew how to work with the children and did some training with us, but it was just basic | Informal short unaccredited courses |
| | In 2006 I came across Wits and I did a course that had to do with how to grow your business. Along the way I came across Unisa. They offered workshops on ECD. | Informal short unaccredited courses |
| ET16 Principal | I worked as a domestic worker because I couldn't find other work for many years. | Opportunity for unskilled women with few other prospects |
| | My friend helped me to get a job at a Day Care to help with the children. | Young and/or unqualified practitioners entering the sector |
| | ...after some years I started to study ECD level 4 and then I did ECD level 5 Higher Certificate | Qualifications above level 4 |
| TS11 Principal | My mother started a day care centre, so that's where it started.[Early 20s] | Young and/or unqualified practitioners entering the sector |
| | I thought I wanted to be a secretary and work in an office, but my mother needed me to help and then it became a business, so it was ok. | Not a career of first choice |
| | I started doing a Diploma in Gr R teaching at TUT, but I changed to do ECD. Now I have an Educare Diploma. | Qualifications above level 4 |

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| ES5 Practitioner | I worked as a cashier and I saw an advertisement for a practitioner at a centre. | Opportunity for unskilled women with few other prospects | |
| | I went there so I applied. I was 29. | Young and/or unqualified people entering the sector | |
| | I started doing workshops at a school in Randburg, at a school called Thandulazi, birth to 4 years. It was Junior Play SA [and] it was [offered by] Cotlands. | Informal, short unaccredited courses | |
| | I wanted [to] gain more knowledge. I wanted level 4, so now I am doing that with Mathew Goniwe, but my facilitator has advised me to go further. | Concern for own professional development | |
| | I started [doing the level 4 qualification last year, but with Covid, I am now waiting to finish. | Low level qualifications | |
| TIC21 Practitioner | I love working with kids, playing with children. It's easier teaching smaller kids when they are old it is going to be harder. | Opportunity for unskilled women with few other prospects | |
| | I was a domestic worker before I started in 2018. [35 yrs old] | | |
| | I am still completing my FETC ECD Level 4 at Matthew Goniwe. I started last of last year, but now because of the virus [Covid 19] it has stopped. | Low level qualifications | |
| | When I finish, maybe I will be permanent | Concern for job security | |
| ETS21 Practitioner | I always had that passion of working with children. | Values commonly linked to professionalism | |
| | Before I was doing home-based care for HIV/AIDS patients. I did a course in home-based care. | Reason for career change unknown | |
| | Then I applied at Khanyisile and got accepted. I was 41 years old. | | |
| | Then I did level 4 | Low level qualifications | |
| JS14 practitioner | I left school and I didn't get work. | Opportunity for unskilled women with few other prospects | |
| | Another practitioner told me I can study ECD at TVET and get a NSFAS bursary. | Financial aid a major consideration for studying | |
| | I applied to South West TVET College in Randfontein and after some time I got NSFAS. | Financial aid a major consideration for studying | |
| | I was doing level 4 and I got work at a preschool here in Soweto and finished my portfolio for practicals. | Low level qualifications | |
| | I wanted to do fashion design, but now I like it | Not a career of first choice | |
| TIS 27 Practitioner | I had not job and I was going up and down looking. I asked for work and [<i>the principal of the crèche</i>] she said I can look after the babies. [24 yrs old] | Young and/or unqualified people entering the sector | Opportunity for unskilled women with few other prospects |
| | [No, qualification indicated on questionnaire. Confirmed that she attends workshops (short | Low qualification level/no qualification | |

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| | courses] ...but we just get attendance. The social worker also comes to talk to us and from the clinic they tell us about clean water and washing hands and about the clinic cards for the children for vaccination | |
| | 2. Reasons for wanting to do a higher education qualification in ECCE. | |
| | <i>You indicated that you want to build a career in ECCE. How will having a Diploma/degree/Higher certificate in ECCE help you in this regard?</i> | |
| JIS14 principal | Parents will know that I am a qualified practitioner and will be happy to send their children to my Daycare. | Concern for job security |
| | They will know that their children will get good development | Expectation for upward social mobility through gaining a competitive edge |
| | And I will be able to train the others who are assisting me while they wait to get their qualifications and teach them what to do with the children. | Concern for development of children |
| JTS15 principal | It will make me better qualified in ECD. | Concern for own professional development |
| | The concern will be equipping myself and really coming to the understanding of things, like 4IR [Fourth Industrial Revolution]. | Concern for own professional development |
| TS11 principal | Well, I like that there is a diploma and a degree for birth to four years old, because we need a Diploma [to teach] for Gr R and a degree for Foundation Phase. | Concern for own professional development |
| | So now we are no longer taking those kids because we heard this from the ECD forum. | Concern for job security |
| | I will specialise [in birth to four]... | Concern for own professional development |
| | ...but also the parents will know that I have a degree and in the community that will be something that is, uhm...like they will know that we are also teachers, but just for little children. | Expectation for change in perceptions of ECD educators linked to Higher Education qualifications |
| ES5 practitioner | I want to open my own centre and I would like to open an after care. | Expectation for upward social mobility through entrepreneurial business |
| | [There is a need for an after care] ...because parents they work and the kids have nobody at home when school is finished. | Expectation for upward social mobility through entrepreneurial business |
| | I want to go further to learn to work better with the young children ... | Concern for development of children |
| | It will open more opportunities. | Concern for career advancement |
| | ...if I study more I will be more confident to talk to parents and colleagues. | Concern for own professional development |
| TIC21 practitioner | If I can do the Diploma and maybe the degree...like, I can be able to open my own centre... | Expectation for upward social mobility through entrepreneurial business |

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| | ...and then create more jobs for other people and teach others who work for me | Providing employment | |
| ETS21 practitioner | It is my dream to open my own centre. | Expectation for upward social mobility through entrepreneurial business | |
| | Having a degree will help me to do things differently and have higher standards than other day care centres and people will respect my centre. | Expectation for upward social mobility through gaining a competitive edge | |
| | There is high competition in this area | Low level qualifications | Concern for job security |
| | No, it won't [make a difference to the parents if I have a degree], but if they see and hear that my centre has a high standard and we do good work with the children here, they will send their children to my day care. | Expectation for upward social mobility through gaining a competitive edge | |
| TIS27 practitioner | If I can do this qualification, maybe I can get bigger pay and also teach the older children [other than babies 0-2 yr olds that she is currently responsible for]. | Concern for career advancement | Concern for income security |
| | <i>You indicated that you wanted to become a better practitioner. Why did you select that particular response?</i> | | |
| JTS45 principal | for the sake of the kids. | Concern for development of children | |
| | So, when we send kids to Gr R they are ready... | Concern for development of children | |
| | ...because the teachers say the kids don't know what they should know | Recognition of lack of quality and oversight in ECD centres | |
| | Level 4 offered a lot, but going further will give more knowledge | Concern for own professional development | |
| JIS14 principal | [We must make sure the children are ready for Grade R or Grade 1 at Primary School – they must be well-developed. | Concern for development of children | |
| | A higher qualification will give me more knowledge on how to develop children | Concern for development of children | |
| JTS15 principal | I think it will equip us more than before to really know how to work with the children... | Concern for development of children | |
| TS11 principal | I have a good centre and the parents like to send their kids here and I have 3 qualified practitioners working for me, ...but I think I need to have a higher qualification. | Concern for own professional development | |
| | So, it is to be able to show, uhm... teach the practitioners, because I am the principle. | Concern for own professional development | |
| | It will make my centre better and we can help the kids to be ready for Gr R.. | Concern for development of children | |
| TIC21 practitioner | I want to know more about child development. | Concern for development of children | |
| | It will help me to understand how to develop a child - all the skills; how to develop motor skills (such as] gross motor-skills and fine motor-skills... | Concern for development of children | |
| ETS21 | Because I'll be having a degree and have more knowledge about teaching young children. | Concern for development of children | |

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| practitioner | Level 4 taught me about the ages and stages of children's development so I know what they can do, but a degree will teach me more. | Concern for own professional development | Concern for development of children |
| TIS27 practitioner | I want to learn more about being a practitioner. | Concern for own professional development | |
| | It has been 18 years of doing this work and I have learnt a lot from doing it and from my principal and others. | Concern for own professional development | |
| | I want to get the qualification now. | Concern for own professional development | |
| | Other practitioners at my pre-school have like level 4 or a diploma and I am 42 now and I can still do it. | Concern for own professional development | |
| | I need to know more about how to play with babies so they are learning...like my principal says babies can learn even if they are so young | Concern for development of children | |
| | <i>You indicated that you want to specialise in the care and education of birth to four. Can you tell me more about your wish to do this?</i> | | |
| JIS14 principal | I think I can also teach Grade R if I have this Diploma. | Concern for career advancement | Misguided notion of the purpose of MRQECDE qualifications |
| | It will give me more knowledge about this age and what they can do at every age and how I can help them. | Concern for development of children | |
| | [The]level 4 qualification gave me 90% of what I need to know, higher qualification will be still better | Concern for own professional development | |
| | I didn't know [that I can't teach Gr R with the Dip ECCE] but I like the younger kids very much. | Misguided notion of the purpose of MRQECDE qualifications | |
| ET16 principal | I have an ECD Level 5 that I did through Edu Build, but the Higher Certificate in ECCE will be on birth-to-four years and I will be a specialist. | Concern for own professional development | |
| | 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. | Concern over length of study period relative to age | |
| | It means I have more knowledge about this age and what they can do at every age and how I can help them.. | Concern for development of children | |
| | Things have changed a lot. Some parents, they want their kids to learn even if they are young. | Concern for own professional development linked to meeting expectations from parents | |
| | 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. | Concern for development of children | |
| TS11 principal | ... the parents will know that I have a degree and in the community that will be something that is, uhm...like they will know that we are also teachers, but just for little children. | Expectation for change in perceptions of ECD educators linked to Higher Education qualifications | |
| TIS27 practitioner | I think to specialise means you have much knowledge of ECD for all the ages. | Concern for own professional development | |
| | [Response to whether Higher Cert ECCE will make her a specialist]. No, I don't think so | Concern for own professional development | |

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| | because it is not at a high level, but if I can manage, I will go further. | | |
| | <i>You selected the response category: “To become permanently employed.” Could you please clarify why you selected this response?</i> | | |
| JS14 practitioner | I want to get work at a school... There are schools here in Johannesburg, they have pre-Gr R. | Misguided notion of the purpose of the MRQECDE qualifications. | Concern for career advancement |
| | I think I can get that job with a BEd for ECCE because it will be the same level as the BEd FP for teachers. | | |
| | The salary is more and you are paid by the school or the Government and you can be permanent. | Expectation for change in sector linked to Higher Education qualifications | Concern for income security |
| | My sister’s friend is a Foundation Phase teacher and she gets medical aid too. | Expectation for change in sector linked to Higher Education qualifications | |
| | Gr R is now compulsory and they say pre-Gr R will also be compulsory, so that is what I want [posts to be created for pre-Gr R educators and ECCE qualifications being the requirement] | | |
| | <i>Do you think having a professional qualification will change anything for you in terms of your salary, and the respect and status shown by parents, the community and society in general?</i> | | |
| JTS45 | Status-wise it will change and even salary-wise. | Expectation for upward social mobility through greater status | Concern for income security |
| | I will be able to offer better services, get more kids and get more exposure. | Job security | Expectation for upward social mobility through gaining a competitive edge |
| | Everyone has the same Level 4 and we do the same things, but if I can do more and improve my centre by doing things that I have learnt, I can get more kids. | | |
| | If the parent know that I have a higher certificate or a diploma, they will know that my centre can prepare their kids better for Gr R | | |
| | [Why do you think a qualification in higher education will give more status to the profession?] Because we will be the same as teachers. | Expectation for change in sector linked to Higher Education qualifications | |
| | If the ECD moves to DBE - I have heard about that, but it has not happened - Then we will be closer to the Gr R teachers and we can know what they want in Gr R, | | |
| | [It] will not be fair if we can’t be paid the same as teachers | | |
| | <i>Do they [the community] appreciate and respect the work you do?</i> | Appreciation and respect shown by parents/community | |
| They [parents] do respect the work we do. When they see the things we teach children. | | | |
| JIS 14 | [Did not select the response on questionnaire about earning a better salary as a reason for doing qualifications] <i>Am I correct in understanding that you don’t expect to get a better salary</i> | Underfunding of ECCE services. | |

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| | <i>if you have a professional qualification?</i> | | |
| | I can say, I do need more money for my Daycare, because many parents can't pay... | | |
| | ...I can't just tell them your kid can't come | Values commonly linked to professionalism | |
| | But if my day care can grow and get more children, then maybe more parents can pay. | Expectation for upward social mobility through entrepreneurial business | |
| JTS15 principal | They (community) much appreciate the work we do. | Appreciation and respect shown by parents/community | |
| | A whole lot of children that were at our centre have now finished schooling and they always come back to thank us. | | |
| | We also try to teach the parents and elderly people who look after children. They need to be taught how to look after children after school, not to let them loiter in the street. | Community outreach as part of centre work | |
| ET16 principal | I can say, some they do [appreciate the work we (practitioners) do]. They thank you when their child goes to Gr R. | Appreciation and respect shown by parents/community | |
| | ...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. | Feeling undervalued | |
| | They have many excuses but they don't respect you. [It is] like you are just a nanny – an aunty looking after their child | | |
| | Yes, I think they will have more respect if they know I am studying at a university | Expectation for change in perceptions of ECD educators linked to Higher Education qualifications | |
| TS11 principal | The parents who send their kids to my centre appreciate us and they are happy when the school says that the kids are ready for Gr R. | Appreciation and respect shown by parents | |
| | ...some just want us to look after the children and they take us like babysitters | Feeling undervalued | |
| | Also, some ECD centres don't do things right and they don't have qualifications and then it gives us a bad name. | Recognition of lack of quality and oversight in ECD centres | |
| ES5 Practitioner | ...and get a better salary. If I can have my own centre, [when I get the Diploma in ECCE] I can get more money, because I will also register my centre and get that subsidy and have the aftercare. | Expectation for upward social mobility | Concern for income security |
| | I will try for that [subsidy], but the money from the government is too little and they don't support us to open centres. | Underfunding of ECCE services. | |
| | Parents do respect us now. During parent meetings we address that... and we give them a workshop and we show them what we are doing. | Appreciation and respect shown by parents and community | |
| | They [teachers in schools have greater status because they] work with older children and have higher qualifications and work in schools, not in centres, like in backyards. Yah, they don't struggle like we do. | Underfunding of ECCE services. | Feeling undervalued |
| | Yes. [A higher education qualification will make a difference to how people view ECD | Feeling undervalued | |

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| | practitioners]. And the way you present yourself. | | |
| TIC21 Practitioner | I think so, [A higher education qualification will make a difference to how people view ECD practitioners]...maybe they can put the same status as the teacher, because they're [practitioners] also teachers. They're the first teacher before they [the children] go to the big school. | Expectation for change in sector (initiated at government level) linked to Higher Education qualifications | |
| ETS21 Practitioner | We have to do fundraising and ask for donations from businesses because there is a lot of unemployment here and the parents can't all pay | Underfunding of ECD | |
| | If the donors know that our centre has a high standard and I have a degree and we develop the children, we will get more donations and support from businesses. | Expectation for upward social mobility through gaining a competitive edge. | Concern for job security |
| | Then the principal can pay me better because the donations help the centre and we don't have to buy everything [from parent fees] | Concern for income security | |
| | 3. What makes an ECD practitioner a professional? | | |
| | <i>Why do consider the number of years of experience of working with young children an indication of a professional ECD educator?</i> | | |
| JTS45 principal | If you are a professional it means you are qualified in the ECD [sector]. | Limited understanding of what constitutes a profession | |
| | But some knowledge is not from school. There are people with no ECD qualification. but they are doing things naturally. | Limited understanding of what constitutes a profession | |
| | Experience is also important because you get to learn things with experience and can be a better practitioner | Limited understanding of what constitutes a profession | |
| | It is a combination of things, but not only a professional qualification. | Limited understanding of what constitutes a profession | |
| ET16 principal | 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. | Limited understanding of what constitutes a profession | |
| | 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. | Limited understanding of what constitutes a profession | Values commonly linked to professionalism |
| JS14 practitioner | When you start working with these young kids, you don't know much, but after some years you are experienced and you know what to do. | Limited understanding of what constitutes a profession | |
| | No, you must have the qualification to be a qualified practitioner [response to whether you can be a professional without any ECD qualification]. | Limited understanding of what constitutes a profession | |

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| | | profession |
| | You can learn from the qualified practitioners and get experience, but it is not enough. | Limited understanding of what constitutes a profession |
| | <i>Why do you consider continually improving your knowledge and understanding of you work by undergoing training as an important indicator of a professional ECD educator?</i> | |
| JTS45 principal | One has to keep studying. | Concern for own professional development |
| | Each qualification has something new to offer | Concern for own professional development |
| | I will know more and be better equipped. | Concern for own professional development |
| JIS14 | If you want to move up in this work, you need to keep studying. | Expectation for upward social mobility through gaining a competitive edge. |
| JTS15 principal | We are living in changing times. It is crucial as new things come in, to learn about them, to really try to uplift ourselves. | Concern for own professional development |
| | There are always changes and new development. I want to improve myself | Concern for own professional development |
| TS11 principal | You need to be up to date with what is going on in ECD, like learning through play... | Concern for own professional development |
| ES5 Practitioner | Even a level 2 practitioner can be professional in the way they behave, but the knowledge they have is too little. | Concern for own professional development |
| ETS21 Practitioner | I have that level 4, but I still need more. | Concern for own professional development |
| | There are new things that we can learn | Concern for own professional development |
| | We have an ECD forum here in...and we get people to do workshops for us so we can learn more. | Concern for own professional development |
| | And now I want to go further and do the degree. | Concern for own professional development |
| JS14 practitioner | We go to workshops and we learn new things. Now I will learn more from the degree. | Concern for own professional development |
| | If you are professional, you must keep learning about new things in ECD. | Concern for own professional development |
| | <i>Please explain why you consider dedication and commitment to the work you do, including putting the children's interests above your own makes you a professional?</i> | |
| ET16 principal | I love this work and I love the children. | Values commonly linked to professionalism |
| | I give a service to this community, even though it is hard. | Values commonly linked to professionalism |
| | Even if I want to have fewer days at work and let the practitioners who work for me carry on some days... | |

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| | ...I know I have to be here because the children need me and this is my school. | Values commonly linked to professionalism |
| ES5 practitioner | Ja, you have to be professional and show love for the children too. | Values commonly linked to professionalism |
| | <i>Why do you consider showing love, care, kindness and compassion for children an important indicator of a professional ECD educator?</i> | |
| JIS14 principal | If you don't have that love for the work you won't do this job. | Values commonly linked to professionalism |
| | for the love of the children and community | Values commonly linked to professionalism |
| | keep confidentiality about those children's problems. | Values commonly linked to professionalism |
| JTS15 principal | This is my passion. I will always work with the children and make things better for them. | Values commonly linked to professionalism |
| TIS27 practitioner | You must love the children and not be harsh. | Values commonly linked to professionalism |
| | Also understanding where they come from, like some children live with the Goggo and there is just the grant...they come to school hungry | Values commonly linked to professionalism |
| | <i>Can you explain why you consider Knowledge of Early Childhood Development theory and practice an important indicator of being a professional?</i> | |
| ET16 principal | It is what I was saying about helping children to develop at every age.. | Concern for the development of children |
| | If you haven't learnt child development in your courses you won't know what to do about helping children to develop at every age and you can't be a professional | Concern for development of children |
| | But I think I can learn more. | Concern for own professional development |
| | <i>Why do you think having a thorough knowledge and understanding of the programme or curriculum which you use, and the ability to implement it, is important for being a professional?</i> | |
| TS11 principal | We are using the NCF in my centre, but we need some training to use it well. | Concern for the development of children |
| | If you are professional, you know your field and you can talk to colleagues about what you do in your centre and share ideas. | Concern for own professional development |
| | <i>Why do you think obtaining a qualification that is described in MRQECDE is a necessary requirement for being a professional?</i> | |
| JTS15 principal | There will be a whole lot of things that we will know more about, so that will make me more professional. | Concern for own professional development |
| TS11 principal | I think you can be professional even if you don't have one of those higher qualifications, but if you want to know more and to be a specialist, you need it. | Concern for own professional development |

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| TIC21 practitioner | Because I think if we have a level 4 all of us, so we'll have all the information, or we don't have much more information. | Low level/no qualifications | Concern for own professional development |
| | So, we must get all the knowledge that we can get, of which the level 4 is maybe not enough for us. | Low level/no qualifications | Concern for own professional development |
| TIS27 Practitioner | Like, I am not a professional now, because I don't have a qualification, but I have experience, so now I must do this training to learn more and to become a professional practitioner. | Concern for own professional development | |
| | <i>Why do you consider abiding by an agreed-on Code of Conduct is an important indicator of being a professional?</i> | | |
| ES5 Practitioner | You have to be an example in your centre and in your community too if you are in this job. | Values commonly linked to professionalism | |
| | Your behaviour must be good and you must show that you are a responsible person to take care of children,... | | |
| | so that people can respect you. | Appreciation and respect of community | |
| | <i>You indicated that registering with a professional body is an indicator for being a professional. What does that mean to you and why is it important in terms of being a professional?</i> | | |
| ETS21 practitioner | Like teachers register with SACE and they can't abuse the children because they will de-register them and they will lose their jobs. | Recognition of lack of quality and control/oversight in ECD centres | |
| | It is a good thing that they have that control and practitioners will know they can't just do as they like at their centres. | Lack of management of, and support for ECD centres | |
| ES5 | I know about registering with SACE, but the government doesn't pay us. We don't work for the DBE. So, I don't think they can do that [de-register practitioners who don't abide by a code of conduct so that they can't practice anymore]. It is the parents, the community who will decide. | Lack of management of, and support for ECD centres | |
| | <i>You have indicated that you consider yourself a professional ECD practitioner. Can you clarify why you see yourself as such?</i> | | |
| JTS45 | How they treat parents and children and colleagues shows if they are professional | Values commonly linked to professionalism | |
| JIS14 | ...and because I show that love for the kids. | Values commonly linked to professionalism | |
| JTS15 principal | Yes, I am already a professional because I always adhere to the opinions of professional that we have around us... Teachers, health workers, many departments who can assist. | Limited understanding of what constitutes profession | |
| | Also, there is that thing that they say the customer is always right. So, we must treat the parents with respect. | Values commonly linked to professionalism | |
| TS11 principal | Yes, I am professional because I run my centre well and I treat my staff and the parents with respect. | Values commonly linked to professionalism | |

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| ET 16 | 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. | Values commonly linked to professionalism |
| ES5 Practitioner | Parents now and then give me feedback and they appreciate what I do for their children. | Appreciation and respect shown by parents and community |
| | You can be professional because of the way you speak to the parents. | Values commonly linked to professionalism |
| | I am professional in the way I work with the children. | Values commonly linked to professionalism |
| TIC 21 Practitioner | ECD at first was not a profession, it was like you just go to the crèche and work at first. Now the government announced that you must have Level 4 at least for you to teach in ECD. | Low qualifications or no qualifications |
| | At the moment, not everybody takes ECD [practitioners] as a professional. Experience and qualification makes you a professional. The qualification is a bonus. | Limited understanding of a profession |
| | Interacting with parents. Because obviously parents will come to you. They want to know about the development of the child. | Values commonly linked to professionalism |
| | Even if you can see a problem with the child, you have to go to the principal and report to the principal. | Values commonly linked to professionalism |
| | Obviously, you have to give feedback to the parents and the principle because you are the one who is watching the child | Values commonly linked to professionalism |
| JS 14 | I am a professional because I have a Level 4 ECD qualification and I know how to be a practitioner in a centre. | Limited understanding of a profession |
| | I also attend workshops and am always learning about ECD | Concern for own professional development |
| | <i>You have indicated that you are not sure if you are a professional. Why is that?</i> | |
| ETS21 Practitioner | Because I don't have a higher qualification, | Expectation for sector change linked to higher education qualification |
| | and I don't belong to a professional body | Expectation for sector change linked to higher education qualification |
| | like the schoolteachers who are taken as professionals. | Expectation for sector change linked to higher education qualification |
| | Yes, I think so, [will be a professional] because I will have a degree [and can register with SACE]. | Expectation for sector change linked to higher education qualification |
| TIS 27 | When I get a qualification I will be a professional. | Expectation for sector change linked to higher education qualification |
| | 4. Have you/ your principal applied for registration of your programme and for a subsidy from the DSD? | |
| JTS45 principal | [The advantage of being registered with DSD] they know that we exist and it's a requirement. | Lack of management of, and support for ECD centres |
| | No, we haven't applied [for a subsidy]. No one told us that we can get the subsidy | Lack of management of, and support for Lack of knowledge of regulations |

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| | | ECD centres | |
| JIS14 principal | I want to apply, but my day care is in my garage... but I am conditionally registered | Lack of management of, and support for ECD centres | |
| JTS15 principal | Not yet, but we have applied [for registration - operating for over 20 years] | Lack of management of, and support for ECD centres | |
| ET16 principal | No, I have not applied [for registration]. | Lack of management of, and support for ECD centres | |
| | My centre is private and the parents pay school fees. | Lack of management of, and support for ECD centres | Lack of knowledge of regulations |
| | They [the parents] all work and the children will not qualify for subsidy [justification for not registering as a partial care facility and registering a programme] | Lack of knowledge of regulations | |
| | Some parents are not regular, but my Nursery school is well-known and parents know I have to charge fees to keep it going. | Reliance on parent fees only | |
| | Equipment is very expensive and parents must buy crayons and things for their kids to bring to school. | Caters for more affluent parents | |
| TS11 principal | Yes, we do [<i>get a subsidy</i>] but only from last year. I had to make a lot of changes to get registered, like the small toilets and a room for changing the babies. | Very few subsidised centres | |
| ES5 Practitioner | Yes, they do get a subsidy. | Very few subsidised centres | |
| TIC21 | I don't think so [<i>get a subsidy</i>] [Private ECD centre] | Caters for more affluent parents | |
| ETS21 Practitioner | We are still applying. Right now, we are waiting for the Health Certificate. [operating for over 8 years] | Lack of management of, and support for ECD centres | |
| JS14 Practitioner | I don't know. The principal and owner they do that [registration and subsidy applications] [Had indicated that the centre was not registered in survey questionnaire] | Doesn't know if registered | |
| TIS27 Practitioner | Yes, [we do get a subsidy], but there are many families who live on grants and the money is not enough. | Very few subsidised centres | |
| | ... we are big now, but we have struggled because of the money for building. | Underfunding of ECCE services. | |
| | 5. What is the main source of income for the centre? | | |
| JTS45 principal | The parents pay fees. | Reliance on parent fees only | |
| | This is not a very developed area and parents struggle to pay fees. | Concern for income security | Underfunding of ECCE services. |
| | Every month some parents can't pay or they pay just a little. | Concern for income security | Underfunding of ECCE services. |

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| | They don't understand that their money pays for everything. | Concern for income security | Underfunding of ECCE services. |
| | We have to buy food for the children and pay the municipality and salaries | Concern for income security | Underfunding of ECCE services. |
| JIS14 principal | Some parents pay fees. | Concern for income security | Reliance on parent fees |
| JTS15 principal | Parents can't pay for day care because they aren't working and that makes us to look for funds. | Concern for income security | Reliance on fund raising and donations |
| | We try to involve the parents themselves in fundraising | Underfunding of ECCE services | Reliance on fund raising and donations |
| | We also get some donations from the church. | Underfunding of ECCE services | Reliance on fund raising and donations |
| ET16 principal | My centre is private and the parents pay school fees. | Reliance on parent fees only | |
| TS11 principal | All the parents must pay school fees, but now I can charge less for those kids who get a subsidy. | Parent fees to supplement subsidy | |
| | Yes, I think so, [<i>the expense of obtaining full registration</i>] because the subsidy helps a lot, especially with the salaries. | Concern for income security | Underfunding of ECCE services |
| ES5 Practitioner | I think it is from the subsidy and school fees. | Parent fees to supplement subsidy | |
| | Some parents have got work and others get grants. Not all can pay every month. | Concern for income security | Underfunding of ECCE services |
| TIC21 Practitioner | [In previous centre I worked at] ...some of the parents couldn't pay, but if they can't pay you can't say anything. You can't turn the kids away because the parents don't have the money. | Underfunding of ECCE services | |
| | The school pays the salaries from the parent fees. | Reliance on parent fees | |
| | [At the centre I am working now]. The salary is better and the parents are working, most of them, because it's a private crèche. Everything is nice. | | |
| | It's a private crèche, but I think the principal is employed by them... | | |
| ETS21 Practitioner | We have to do fundraising and ask for donations from businesses because there is a lot of unemployment here and the parents can't all pay. | Concern for income security | Parent fees to supplement fund raising and donations |
| | ...my salary is from the Daycare, not the Government. | Underfunding of ECCE services | Parent fees to supplement fund raising and donations |
| JS14 practitioner | Yes, I think so [response to question about parent fees being the only source of income] | Reliance on parent fees | |
| TIS27 Practitioner | The school pays the salaries from the subsidy and from some small fees | Concern for income security | Parent fees to supplement subsidy |
| | Yes, but not a lot [<i>of donor funding</i>]. The businesses here are not many and they are | Parent fees to supplement subsidy and/or funding | |

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| | struggling, especially with Covid. | |
| | 6. What changes do you think the MRQECDE policy is bringing to the ECD sector? | |
| JTS45 principal | It will be better for the industry. | Expectation for change linked to Higher Education qualifications |
| | We will get recognition in the country, because if we have better qualifications, we get better recognition. | Expectation for sector change linked to Higher Education qualifications |
| | Look at now with the ECD centres re-opening, they are not recognising us. | Feeling undervalued |
| | Maybe they think we are not important. | Feeling undervalued |
| | They have not helped us to survive. | Feeling undervalued |
| JIS14 principal | I think it is giving us more qualifications and maybe we will be taken as teachers | Expectation for sector change linked to Higher Education qualifications |
| JTS15 principal | It will make more people better qualified in ECD. | Expectation for sector change linked to Higher Education qualifications |
| ET16 principal | It is giving us higher qualifications and bringing us closer to the teachers in Foundation Phase. | Expectation for sector change linked to Higher Education qualifications |
| | That will be hard for many of us [if ECD practitioners have to have a Diploma like Gr R teaching]. | Concern over length of study period relative to age |
| | I am too old now to do a Diploma. | Concern over length of study period relative to age |
| | 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. | Financial aid a major consideration for studying |
| TS11 principal | It will help to make us like teachers, because we will have diplomas and degrees from a university. | Expectation for sector change linked to Higher Education qualifications |
| | I think the government, with this policy, is trying to bring us closer to teachers and perhaps they will like build centres and things like that. | Expectation for sector change linked to Higher Education qualifications |
| ES 5 practitioner | It is giving us those higher qualifications that were not there before. | Concern for own professional development |
| ETS21 practitioner | We are still using the old ways, but these qualifications will help us to change and to be better, especially with the pre-grade R children. | Concern for the development of children |
| JS14 Practitioner | It is making us to try for better qualifications to make the centres better. | Concern for the development of children |
| | 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. | Recognition of lack of quality and control/oversight in ECD centres |
| TIS27 Practitioner | I think maybe it is going to make us all to have higher qualifications to make the ECDs better. Some ECDs are not good and it makes us all get a bad reputation. | Concern for status and recognition Recognition of lack of quality and |

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| | | | control/oversight in ECD centres |
| TIC21 practitioner | Now you must have a level 4 to teach in ECD, but I think the policy will change that. | Expectation for sector change linked to Higher Education qualifications | |
| | Maybe we will have to do one of these qualifications from the policy. | Expectation for sector change linked to Higher Education qualifications | |
| | It will be very hard for some practitioners and it will take a long time and some will never get that qualification. | | |
| | 7. How do you think the Government can support the ECD education sector when implementing the MRQECDE policy? | | |
| JTS45 principal | They can build centres like they want them and let us rent them, but not charge too much. | Underfunding of ECCE services. | |
| | And they can give us equipment and fix things that get broken. | Underfunding of ECCE services. | |
| JIS14 principal | The Government can assist with giving money to make our centres like they want it, even the equipment. | Underfunding of ECCE services. | |
| | It is up to us to start the centre, not government, but government support is important. | Underfunding of ECCE services. | |
| JTS15 principal | In a nutshell, we are teaching children and encouraging parents, but the Government should be helping us to feed the children during Covid. | Underfunding of ECCE services. | |
| ET16 principal | We are struggling with Covid. We had to close and the parents are not paying now. | Underfunding of ECCE services. | Concern for income security |
| | 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. | Underfunding of ECCE services. | |
| TS11 principal | Like I said, maybe they can build centres for us to use. There is a need for centres in our communities, | Expectations for change in sector linked to higher education qualifications | |
| | ...but practitioners struggle to get registered because there is a lot that you need for that | Underfunding of ECCE services. | |
| TIC21 Practitioner | Just to give more money for ECD. | Underfunding of ECCE services. | |
| | There are many children who need day care and the centres are struggling, like in Hammanskraal where parents can't pay, not even R50. | Underfunding of ECCE services. | |
| | No, it [the subsidy] is not enough. The children must have food and the principal must pay salaries and electricity. | Underfunding of ECCE services. | |
| ES5 Practitioner | They can build the ECD centres. | Underfunding of ECCE services. | |
| | I have been here from 2015 and we are still using the garage and a room and it is not big enough. | Underfunding of ECCE services. | |
| ETS21 Practitioner | They can pay for the pre-grade R children (the 4-year-olds) to attend our centres and not open the classes at the schools for those kids because that is taking the children away from the ECDs | Concern for job security | |
| JS14 practitioner | I think they must make those posts [Pre Gr R] and pay for teachers if they say it is compulsory [and] if we have these higher qualifications. | Expectations for change in sector linked to higher education qualifications | |

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| TIS27 Practitioner | There are too many children who need to attend ECD and here in Sekampaneng there are not enough centres. | Underfunding of ECCE services. | |
| | We can't turn children away, but the work is too much and the money is too little. | Underfunding of ECCE services. | |
| | They can make more centres or help to pay the salaries for more teachers. | Underfunding of ECCE services. | |
| | No, it [the subsidy] is not enough), what about the electricity and the gas for cooking and the food? | | |
| 8. Do you have any questions regarding the qualifications that you would like to ask? | | | |
| JTS45 principal | If finances are not a problem to study, I don't have a concern. | Financial aid a major consideration for studying | |
| | [Practitioners] They say how must they pay to study when they get so little money? | Financial aid a major consideration for studying | |
| | The other practitioners at my centre don't have qualifications. They are 3. Can they be accepted if they don't have matric? | Confirmation of low qualifications or no qualifications | |
| JTS15 principal | No, as long as there are resources – funding to study, I will not have any worries. | Financial aid a major consideration for studying | |
| ET16 principal | I have heard that DBE will take the 4 yr-olds to the schools. Is this true because that will be very bad? | Concern for job security | Concern for income security |
| TS11 principal | No, because as you said there will be NSFAS to study, I think I will not have a problem. | Financial aid a major consideration for studying | |
| ES5 Practitioner | No, I didn't know [that I can apply for NSFAS funding], so that is good news. | Financial concerns for further study | |
| TIC21 Practitioner | So, if you have a bachelor [degree in ECCE], can you go to [teach at] a school? | Misguided notion of the purpose of MRQECDE qualifications | |
| ETS21 Practitioner | Will there be a bursary? | Financial aid a major consideration for studying | |
| | how long is the time to finish the degree? (49 yrs old) | Concern over length of study period relative to age | |
| | No, that is too long [6 years part-time]. I will be too old. I think I must do the Diploma. | Concern over length of study period relative to age | |
| TIS27 Practitioner | No, my only hope is that UNISA will accept me | | |