

QUESTIONNAIRE

Professionalising the Early Childhood Development Educator (birth to 4) Workforce through a policy-driven initiative.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my study. Kindly complete the questionnaire by answering the questions as fully as possible. The completed questionnaire can be returned to Adendorff.z@dheth.gov.za

Participant:

H 4

A. Implementation of the Policy on Minimum Requirements for Programmes Leading to Qualifications in Higher Education for Early Childhood Development Educators.

The ¹MRQECDE policy, aimed at producing a graduate birth to 4 years educator workforce, has far reaching consequences for the ECD sector. In light of this, please provide your considered responses to the questions below:

1. What role does your organisation/institution/department play in relation to early childhood development?

Answer deleted for protection of privacy

¹ Minimum Requirements for Programmes leading to Qualifications in Higher Education for Early Childhood Development Educators

2. In your opinion, does the MRQECDE policy have any implication for your work? Why or why not?

Yes, it provides policy guidelines w.r.t to development of the [programmes] in ECCE. This covers the principles, content, context and articulation considerations that have to be made.

3. Do you think that your organisation/institution/department may have a role to play in contributing to the successful implementation of the MRQECDE policy either at present, or in the future? If so, what, in your opinion, would this entail?

The offering of [a qualification] in ECCE

4. Do you see the implementation of the MRQECDE policy as a necessary initiative for the ECD sector? Why, or why not?

Yes, the policy provides the framework to develop ECD qualifications that take into account the norms and standards, as well as the articulation considerations to enable life-long learning in its formal sense. It will certainly assist in the professionalization of the ECD. This in turn, will hopefully help with improving the status of the ECD sector as a viable field to practice as a professional in South Africa.

5. What do you see as the constraining factors that may hinder or prevent the successful implementation of this policy?

The policy is the policy, so it will be implemented. The real challenge is whether there will be much interest in pursuing ECD qualifications at university, given the poor employment status of the sector currently.

6. What do you see as the enabling factors which could contribute to the successful implementation of this policy?

There is a growing focus on ECD, both internationally and locally. So this focus will enhance both scholarship and professionalization of the ECD sector. Thus, potentially, many opportunities will arise for people to enter the field at different levels and in different portfolios. The development and offering of ECD qualifications at universities is already contributing to the implementation of the policy

7. Are there any aspects of the policy which you would recommend being changed?

This policy guides the development of qualifications prior to Grade R. However, the term: early childhood sometimes extends to the age of 9 years. So, conceptually, there may be some confusion, especially with regard to horizontal and vertical articulations, especially when considering articulation to Foundation Phase qualifications.

B. Views on the professionalisation of the Early Childhood Development Educator (birth to 4) workforce.

1. What in your view does the term “the professionalisation of the ECD educator (birth to 4) workforce” mean?

It means that the educator has received and graduated with ECD qualifications that attest to the competency of the educator in the field. In effect, the educator is supposed to have informed knowledge and an appropriate disposition toward the field of ECD, having specialised in the teaching and learning of young children and has been exposed to the complexities of providing services in an ECD context. It also means that the educator does not assume a technicist stance in his/her role, but uses her knowledge and skills to critically engage in her role, taking into account all the factors that influence the teaching and learning young children such as contextually relevant approaches.

2. Do you think that qualifications in higher education should be a requirement for becoming an ECD educator for babies, toddlers and young children from birth to 4 year old? Why, or why not?

HE qualifications are good benchmarks in professionalising ECD, but the socially diverse South African context must be taken into account to give people opportunity to enter the sector as lifelong learners and then be supported to attain professional qualifications.

3. Do you think that the higher education qualifications provided for in the MRQECDE policy should be a requirement for being a principal/centre manager of an ECD centre? Why, or why not?

Yes, a manager is supposed to have the competency levels to provide leadership in different areas of the functioning of the ECD centre. However, the manager also has to have the requisite experience before assuming such a role. Again the South African context cannot be ignored, given the disparities of the past and its ongoing effects currently. So, this matter needs to be addressed with sensitivity and support for those who currently manage ECDs but do not have HE qualifications.

4. Do you think that the higher education qualifications provided for in the MRQECDE policy should be a requirement for being an ²ECD supervisor? Why, or why not?

Yes in line with the response to the previous question

5. How do you think the MRQECDE policy will affect ECD practitioners currently involved in the care and education of babies, toddlers and young children from birth to 4 yrs old?

Please explain.

Hopefully it will provide impetus to the acquisition of further qualifications. It is hoped that those who are currently unqualified and working in the sector will be given support (financial and other) to attain such qualifications.

6. Do you agree that the ECD educator workforce should be professionalised and if so, what are your recommendations for enabling and/or promoting the MRQECDE policy implementation, and for professionalising the ECCE workforce?

7. What do you see as the constraining factors in professionalising the ECD educator workforce in South Africa?

² "ECD supervisor" refers to provincial supervisors employed by the DSD or DBE or supervisors/mentors employed by NGOs.

Financial and other support for those who want to improve their qualifications

8. Please add any comments or other insights related to the topic of professionalising the ECD educator workforce or the professionalisation agenda of the policy on MRQECDE, should you wish to do so.