

QUESTIONNAIRE

Professionalising the Early Childhood Care and Education (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, and in as much detail as you wish to. The completed questionnaire can be returned to Adendorffz@dhet.gov.za

Participant:

N 2

A. Implementation of the Policy on Minimum Requirements for Programmes Leading to Qualifications in Higher Education for Early Childhood 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, what implications does the MRQECDE policy have for your work, if any?

- The need to articulate both content and methodology across levels 05 to 10 within the universities' qualifications to ensure a clear career path into higher degrees for leadership within the country and sub-continent.
- The need to ensure that students registering with a Level 05 from an external source, into universities' B.Ed. can link into the B.Ed. course with additional modules or assistance in areas of need for example, academic development
- A very clear system for supporting and monitoring WIL and therefore staffing costs for both innovative blended learning, face-to-face 'lecturing' and especially for site visits.

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? If so, what would this entail?

- Yes.
- Practice: connecting ideas and sharing good practice and modules
 - Offering the ECD BEd degree
 - Research through higher degrees and publishing.

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

- Yes.
Leadership required throughout the sector, based in competent scholarship and practice.

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

- Primary factor: availability of government posts and funding for the sector to warrant the energies expended on the programme: it would be unethical to embark upon a degree course where there is no guarantee of employment.
- Lack of excellent leadership within the conception to four sector within the university that is, Foundation Phase experience may not be enough to boost this sector.

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

- Worldwide interest in the sector for example, neuroscience and play methodology
- National Focus on children in ECD

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

Not yet, and therefore

- ensuring that there is enough flexibility in the programme to make radical changes should they be required
- enough flexibility at local level to implement changes where required that is, an appreciative - inquiry approach.

B. Views on the professionalisation of the Early Childhood Care and Education (birth to 4) workforce.

1. What in your view does the term “professionalisation”, in relation to the ECD educator workforce, mean?

- See the SACE definition that is, initial capacity-building; registration; CPTD; support and monitoring in a systems-wide approach.
- A very strong focus on critical analytical thinking and so on, within the skills framework for the 21st century - 4IR
- A very strong knowledge base and focus upon the philosophies of ECD and community development
- With a critical reflective role as a teacher
- Within a participatory action research approach
- And ability to mentor others
- In an ethical manner based clearly in the values of the constitution and Batho Pele policy
- This should also, however, as stated above, go along with a professional salary

2. Do you think that qualifications in higher education should be a requirement for becoming an ECD practitioner? Why, or why not?

- No, because there are many people with skills OTHER than academic that are so needed in the ECD space, like compassion and empathy and creativity. Having a degree doesn't necessarily make you better at what you do. There are other types of training that may be less theoretical and more practical that may be better. BUT because people are so snobbish about degrees perhaps we do have to go that route.

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?

This, like all the previous questions, depends upon the view of government on the ECD sector and whether or not government is willing to put funding and care into the sector in the same way as government does for the FET Band!

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?

This again, depends on the government's own view of professionalisation, but certainly so. It is a complex field requiring an integrated approach between Department of Basic Education, DSD and Health as well as all other aspects of development. Leadership is vital.

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?

This again, depends on the government's own view of professionalisation. There are more and more young people coming in to the field. They require professional qualifications. ECD practitioners who are currently in the field and who have been so for more than a decade have been given the opportunity to 'upgrade'. They may remain in the field. The new cohort needs to receive capacity-building support. It is now time to renew the sector.

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?

Yes. It means:
Initial Teacher Education; registration through SACE; induction (mentoring and coaching and support) and CPTD with assessment e.g. through the Quality Management System for Classroom-based Educators.
So, we need to provide all of these aspects and to ensure that SACE is able to carry out its role and responsibilities in ensuring professional conduct.
They should be paid a decent salary

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

The will to actually implement the system
Funding which emanates from the will- for systems, resources, posts, support
Strong systems.
The ECD sector is seen as one of the few entrepreneurial options right now so there might be a resistance on the ground to this route.

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

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.