

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 in as much detail as possible. The completed questionnaire can be returned to Adendorff.z@dhet.gov.za

Participant

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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 is the role of the organisation/institution/department where you work in relation to early childhood development?

Training of ECD practitioners levels 4, Higher Certificate and Diploma. Working closely with ETDPseta, Department of Education (Grade R) and Department of Social

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

Development (pre Grade R). Reporting to the Office of the Premier on ECD training done in the province.

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

It affects the institution's reputation implying that the qualification has no credibility and the learner not being able to be appointed permanently at a school. After completing the ECD Level 4 the learner receives 140 Credits and after completion of ECD Diploma which consists of Level 5 Higher certificate and 5 diploma 240 Credits. The outcome of the qualification specifies that the learner can after completion of the Diploma go on to do the Bed degree and receive credits for modules completed.

Unfortunately this is not possible in practice as the universities do not accept the ECD Diploma as an entrance to the degree programme.

3. Do you think that the 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?

Yes they do have a role to play. The institution needs to embark on getting accreditation for the level 6 ECD which is accepted by the Department of Education for purposes of permanent appointments and salary structures. The Level 6 is necessary for those candidates who will not be accepted into the degree programme. It is important that the Seta empowers TVET colleges to obtain the qualification by financially assisting the institutions to apply for accreditation and obtaining accredited learning material.

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

Yes. This will mean that the learner with the potential to complete the Bed qualification will be able to proceed and those not being able to proceed to the Bed degree being able to complete the Level 6 qualification.

5. What do you see as the constraining factors that may hinder or prevent the successful implementation of this policy, aimed at professionalising the ECD educator workforce?

The factors which can prevent the professionalising of the ECD educator are:

- Institutions not offering the Level 6 qualification
- Universities not coming to the table and enrolling learners for the Bed degree with the ECD Diploma

6. What do you see as the enabling factors which could contribute to the successful implementation of this policy, aimed at professionalising the ECD educator workforce?

- Universities working closely with colleges and offering bridging courses
- ETDPseta financially assisting colleges to obtain accreditation and learning material

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

The policy as a whole covers all aspects necessary for professionalising the ECD educator workforce.

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?

That the practitioner in the (birth to 4) workforce has to complete the ECD level 6 to become an educator.

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?

No, the ECD programme which is being offered at present is sufficient for the ECD practitioner to successfully operate in the (birth to 4) group. The program is very hands-on

and practical and covers all aspects of the ECD curriculum. It is important that the practitioners receive recognition for the ECD Diploma and their salaries be on par with their qualification. At present salaries are not set on a specific scale and at time practitioners do not receive salaries at all.

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?

No, if the manager has ECD level 5 diploma and at least 5 years' experience it should not be a requirement. The ECD programmes offered at present Level 4 (140 credits) Diploma (220 Credits) is sufficient as it covers a wide curriculum.

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?

The ECD Seta qualification is sufficient for being an ECD supervisor. The majority of supervisors have the ECD Diploma and the necessary working experience.

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.

It could lead to them losing their positions at the institutions they are working or a down-scaling in their salaries.

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?

The ECD educator starting at Grade R should be professionalised and universities should accommodate those in the profession at present. The practitioner has already spent 3 years in training to obtain the ECD diploma and it just does not make sense to spend another 3

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

years to obtain the Level 6 and then another 3 years to do the Bed degree. There is a lot of duplication and learners should receive credits for modules completed.

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

The fact that there are no plans to create posts for ECD practitioners and employing them as people with professional qualifications as teachers are.

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.

The ECD departments at TVET colleges are doing a sterling job and should be congratulated on what they have achieved in the last ± 15 years offering ECD programs. The time has come where the Universities and the TVET colleges work together to upgrade the past and present ECD educators who had received the seta training. Nobody needs to spend ± 9 years to obtain a degree in education which is what will happen if the learner does not receive credits from the university for modules completed. Not all who have received the ECD Diploma will be able to enter for the Bed degree program but that is why the Level 6 has been implemented for those who will not qualify for university.