

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@dhet.gov.za

Participant

H 1

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 a guiding framework for how programmes should be offered and this policy was useful when I was developing the Diploma for ECCE. As such it provided important information related to how the knowledge mix should be integrated into the development of the Diploma. I also believe that it will be useful for the development of future programmes.

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?

I think that the policy will play a huge role in the design of future programmes

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

Yes most definitely. ECD especially the birth to four sector was always seen as a babysitting service and not deemed professional. The professional status given to ECD workers working with children from birth to four was always undermined and there was very little recognition given to the valuable work that ECD practitioners did. The policy casts a positive perspective on the professionalization in that it augments the sector to gain recognition at undergraduate and postgraduate level.

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

I do not see any constraining factors

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

There are many enabling factors. The policy provides clear guidelines on the professional pathways that ECD professionals can embark on to enhance their career. The policy also provides a good knowledge mix which can be used when developing programmes. The policy also integrates the principles that are reinforced by the principles of other policies such as the NDP, White paper 5, the NELDS and NCF which amongst the many principles place emphasis on a socially just society and embraces the concepts of lifelong learning.

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

No

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?

My answer to the above question is two fold

1. Acquiring the necessary ECD qualifications and experience to teach children in the birth to four sector.
2. Professionalizing the practitioner educator (lecturer) workforce to teach students who are studying towards a qualification in birth to four

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?

Yes most definitely. Research abroad has indicated that successful ECD programmes are those programmes in which children are taught by ECD educators who have qualifications obtained from higher education institutions. Additionally research also shows that a young child’s brain develops significantly in the first few years of his life. He therefore needs educators who are able to provide and support positive early experiences for the child. The foundations for children’s cognitive, social, aesthetic, physical and emotional development

are also laid in the first few years therefore ECD educators need to gain this knowledge through their 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 principal or centre manager should aim to achieve one of the qualifications as highlighted in the MRQECDE Policy as he or she needs to have sound knowledge of ECD. Additionally, the principal can also use this document to encourage staff to upskill their 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 most definitely. When supervisors supervise students during work integrated learning or supervise an early childhood centre they could refer to the principles highlighted in the policy.

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.

The policy will provide a pathway for ECD practitioners to enhance their qualifications. Although the policy provides clear guidelines for early childhood development educators about how teaching and learning should be facilitated when working with children from birth to four this information can also be useful to practitioners.

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?

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

Yes. There is a shortage of ECD educators. There should be opportunities for staff members at universities and other institutions to complete a qualification in ECD in order to lecture on ECD programmes with specific emphasis on birth to four

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

Whilst I do think there are some constraining factors such as a limited number of educators who want to teach ECD and the perception of ECD and what it stands for from an educators perspective, I also believe that the higher education buy in for implementation of ECD courses specifically for birth to four is slowly increasing.

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.

I do think that there should be more media coverage on how the professionalization journey began in relation to the implementation of the policy and associated projects. The public needs to be made aware of the developments of ECCE in the country and how the face of ECCE professionalization is taking a transformative angle.