

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. The completed questionnaire can be returned to Adendorff.z@dhet.gov.za

Participant:

N 1

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?

1. We are specialist in training and development of ECD workforce (cross-sectoral workforce) by offering skills, education training and development and

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

all the programmes and/or qualifications we are offering are NQF Aligned and SAQA NQF Registered.

2. We are specialist in Curriculum Development, learning and training material development and alignment for ECD training programmes for both historically and occupational qualifications.
3. Advocacy and lobbying around issues of policy and legislations, including the rights of the ECD workforce as well as the ECD employer Organizations.
4. Advocacy and lobbying around ECD qualifications, training and articulation agenda in terms of Credit Accumulation Transfer (CAT) and articulation agenda in terms of Career Pathing, including professionalism and professionalization of the ECD Sector.
5. Specialist in Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Assessment and related RPL services for Early Childhood Development.

2) In your opinion, what implications does the ²MRQECDE policy have for your work?

The purpose and intent of the policy on Minimum requirement for programme leading to qualification in Higher Education for Early Childhood Development Educators, policy which came to effect on the 31st March 2017, is very clear and welcomed and in terms of the implications it does provide the following:

- Articulation opportunities for ECD learners who have obtained both historical and occupational ECD qualifications on NQF Level 4, FET certificate, NQF Level 5, Higher certificate and NQF Level National Diploma to be able to articulate into Institutions of Higher Learning and advanced and higher qualifications pitched at NQF Level 6 and NQF Level 7 (i.e your advanced Diploma and BEd)
- Effective usage and implementation of RPL for Credit Accumulation Transfer as RPL can be very instrumental for access in advanced NQF ECD qualifications and it can be used for admitting learners into Institutions of Higher Learning in order for them to pursue academic endeavours (such as being admitted for an Advanced Diploma and BEd).

² Policy on Minimum Requirements for Programmes Leading to Qualifications in Higher Education for Early Childhood Development Educators (2017)

- RPL and CAT can lead to advance credit standing
- The policy is very clear on qualification that are being selected from the HEQSF for ECCE educators and practitioners so that they can be able to articulate into ECD NQF Level 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 of which NQF Level 10 is about Doctorate and professional Doctorate and this policy also does provide opportunities for learners to articulate vertically, horizontal and diagonal.
- Institutions of Higher learning to admit ECD learners with ECD NQF Level 4 and 5 to pursue higher qualifications (i.e advanced diploma and BEd) as directed by this policy
- Institutions of Higher learning to use RPL and CAT for admission as directed by this policy
- RPL and CAT if it reveals that learners are not academically ready to pursue advanced diplomas and BEd, it can become an opportunity for Institutions of Higher learning to take learners on a bridging course without insisting on matric certificate as a requirement for admission

The above are few of the implications of this policy and this does at the same time constitute opportunities for both learners and Institutions of Higher Learning.

However, there are also some challenges in the realization of these opportunities provided by this policy and some of those challenges are:

- Institutions of Higher learning are reluctant to admit learners without matric certificates but being in position of ECD NQF Level 4 and 5 despite policy recommendations and directives as Institutions of Higher learning are autonomous and reserve the right for admission of learners into various qualifications.
- Institutions of Higher learning admission policies and criteria proves to be problematic as they insist that ECD learners with ECD NQF Level 4 and 5 must have matric certificate before they can be admitted and this insistence and persistence on matric as a requirement is problematic and undermine the spirit of this policy not only this policy, but it deprives ECD learners to grow academically and become professionals and it also compromise ECD Professionalization agenda.

- Institutions of Higher learning admission policies and criteria are not promoting articulation agenda and transformation agenda as underpinning principles of RPL.

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?

Yes, being specialist on RPL we have been using it for baseline assessment for learners who have enrolled into our programmes without any credit transfer and we have also been using it for CAT as a service for learners or applicants who have applied for RPL candidates and we have also been using it to exempt learners in our training programme on certain competences/areas of learning/unit standards in various modules of our programme.(For example, if a learner has done good in as far as mathematics and language (fundamentals) are concerned and there is an evidence perhaps in their matric certificate or any form of legal recognized certificate, we do not allow learners to repeat what they already have, but we administer and use CAT policy and that is part of RPL process). For that, to make learners to repeat what they already have that constitute prejudicial practices and anti-transformational agenda.

So, [] we already do our best to give MRQECDE policy a practical meaning and we firmly believe that we have a pivotal role to play as far this policy is concerned and we are also keen to work and partner with Universities and other related Institutions of Higher Learning to assist in the implementation of this policy.

First and foremost, we need to look into Institutions of Higher learning admission policy and criteria by addressing the following:

- Institutions of Higher learning are reluctant to admit learners without matric certificates but being in position of ECD NQF Level 4 and 5 despite policy recommendations and directives as Institutions of Higher learning are autonomous and reserve the right for admission of learners into various qualifications.
- Institutions of Higher learning admission policies and criteria proves to be problematic as they insist that ECD learners with ECD NQF Level 4 and 5 must have matric certificate before they can be admitted and this insistence and persistence on matric as a requirement is problematic and undermine the spirit of

this policy not only this policy, but it deprives ECD learners to grow academically and become professionals and it also compromise ECD Professionalization agenda.

- Institutions of Higher learning admission policies and criteria are not promoting articulation agenda and transformation agenda as underpinning principles of RPL.

Coupled to this, we need to have a frank conversation with the Institutions of Higher Learning around issues of pedagogical approach in Early Childhood Development and begin to look into the 6 levels of complicities in terms of blooms-taxonomy and other related theories who influence what constitute what is competency so that we can begin to address the “big argument” and that is the argument that says Early Childhood Development Qualifications pitched at NQF Level 4, 5 and National Diploma lacks academic grounding and impetus for ECD learners to be admitted into Institutions of Higher Learning in terms of this policy and this conversation will help both Universities and NGO/Private ECD Training Organizations to begin to address challenges of the imbalances, injusticeness and inequalities of the past and even of the present in as far as education, training and development practices are concerned in South Africa and begin to address issues of transformation in our Education system and this will also create an opportunity for ECD Cross-Sectoral workforce to becomes professionals and be part of various Statutory Council Bodies (for example, SACE or Council of Social Worker Profession) which will look into the professional conduct, ethics and ethos of the profession and also help in the professionalization of the ECD Sector.

I am also of the view that this argument is quite valid but also to a certain degree invalid as not all of us as ECD Training Providers are offering inferior quality education and training to the ECD practitioners some of us we are offering top qualify and our standard is pitched at a highest level, and besides, RPL and CAT can assist in addressing this quandary because if learners are being found not having what it takes in terms of RPL, then let the bridging course be recommended to address the gabs in the qualification and assist learners to meet the entry requirements of the advanced diplomas and BEd offered by Institutions of Higher learning and begin to give this policy a practical meaning

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

Yes, this policy is a very powerful initiative in Early Childhood Development Sector as it will provide the following opportunities for both ECD Sector and Universities:

- Articulation opportunities for ECD learners who have obtained both historical and occupational ECD qualifications on NQF Level 4, FET certificate, NQF Level 5, Higher certificate and NQF Level National Diploma to be able to articulate into Institutions of Higher Learning and advanced and higher qualifications pitched at NQF Level 6 and NQF Level 7 (i.e your advanced Diploma and BEd)
- Effective usage and implementation of RPL for Credit Accumulation Transfer as RPL can be very instrumental for access in advanced NQF ECD qualifications and it can be used for admitting learners into Institutions of Higher Learning in order for them to pursue academic endeavours (such as being admitted for an Advanced Diploma and BEd .
- RPL and CAT can lead to advance credit standing
- The policy is very clear on qualification that are being selected from the HEQSF for ECCE educators and practitioners so that they can be able to articulate into ECD NQF Level 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 of which NQF Level 10 is about Doctorate and professional Doctorate and this policy also does provide opportunities for learners to articulate vertically, horizontal and diagonal.
- Institutions of Higher learning to admit ECD learners with ECD NQF Level 4 and 5 to pursue higher qualifications (i.e advanced diploma and BEd) as directed by this policy
- Institutions of Higher learning to use RPL and CAT for admission as directed by this policy
- RPL and CAT if it reveals that learners are not academically ready to pursue advanced diplomas and BEd, it can become an opportunity for Institutions of Higher learning to take learners on a bridging course without insisting on matric certificate as a requirement for admission

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

The following constitute impediments and bottlenecks in the implementation of this policy:

- Institutions of Higher learning are reluctant to admit learners without matric certificates but being in position of ECD NQF Level 4 and 5 despite policy recommendations and directives as Institutions of Higher learning are autonomous and reserve the right for admission of learners into various qualifications.
- Institutions of Higher learning admission policies and criteria proves to be problematic as they insist that ECD learners with ECD NQF Level 4 and 5 must have matric certificate before they can be admitted and this insistence and persistence on matric as a requirement is problematic and undermine the spirit of this policy not only this policy, but it deprives ECD learners to grow academically and become professionals and it also compromise ECD Professionalization agenda.
- Institutions of Higher learning admission policies and criteria are not promoting articulation agenda and transformation agenda as underpinning principles of RPL.

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

We need to have a frank conversation with the Institutions of Higher Learning around issues of pedagogical approach in Early Childhood Development and begin to look into the 6 levels of complicities in terms of blooms-taxonomy and other related theories who influence what constitute what is competency so that we can begin to address the “big argument” and that is the argument that says Early Childhood Development Qualifications pitched at NQF Level 4, 5 and National Diploma lacks academic grounding and impetus for ECD learners to be admitted into Institutions of Higher Learning in terms of this policy and this conversation will help both Universities and NGO/Private ECD Training Organizations to begin to address challenges of the imbalances, injusticeness and inequalities of the past and even of the present in as far

as education, training and development practices are concerned in South Africa and begin to address issues of transformation in our Education system and this will also create an opportunity for ECD Cross-Sectoral workforce to become professionals and be part of various Statutory Council Bodies (for example, SACE or Council of Social Worker Profession) which will look into the professional conduct, ethics and ethos of the profession and also help in the professionalization of the ECD Sector.

I am also of the view that this argument is quite valid but also to a certain degree invalid as not all of us as ECD Training Providers are offering inferior quality education and training to the ECD practitioners some of us we are offering top quality and our standard is pitched at a highest level, and besides, RPL and CAT can assist in addressing this quandary because if learners are being found not having what it takes in terms of RPL, then let the bridging course be recommended to address the gaps in the qualification and assist learners to meet the entry requirements of the advanced diplomas and BEd offered by Institutions of Higher learning and begin to give this policy a practical meaning.

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

Not at this stage as I find the policy to be very appropriate and progressive and this does not withhold the fact that this policy is in an evolving policy environment and is not a rigid document.

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

1. What in your view does the term “the professionalization of the ³ECCE workforce” mean?

Professionalization of ECCE workforce and I will prefer to use the term Cross-Sectoral ECD workforce as that jells nicely with all the kind of cadres defined in chapter 10 of ECD

³ Early Childhood Care and Education (birth to 4)

Integrated policy of 2015 where various categories of workforce are provided and defined which you can find in health, education and social disciplines.

Professionalization refers to competencies and qualifications that the Cross-Sectoral ECD workforce ought to possess in dealing with children in different aged cohorts and this also speaks to issues of recognition, job opportunities and remunerations.

Whilst professionalism refers to issues of ethics, code of conduct, ethos and norms and standard and being part of a particular Statutory Council.

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

I am of the view that the current historically and occupational qualifications should be allowed and become a requirement for ECD workforce to practice and deal with different aged cohort of children in the Foundation Phase and the reason why I am saying these qualifications should be a pre-requisite for an ECD practitioner to practice in the field is because when you looked into the genealogy of Early Childhood Development pre and post-apartheid area, you will realize that the ECD Sector has not evolved and transformed that much as we would like to see where advanced diplomas and BEd can be a requirement for ECD workforce to practice in the field; be it as part of specialization or general application.

The ECD Sector is not yet there as qualifications ought to be linked to job opportunities and remunerations and currently few if not none of the ECD employer Organizations that can afford to employ ECD practitioners with advanced qualifications, such as advanced diplomas and BEd and this is in both NGO and Private ECD employer Organizations and the Department of Education is currently not an employer of ECD workforce and even on Grade R, the Department of Education does not have a policy that regulate employment of Grade R practitioners and there are reluctant event to become or assume employer responsibility and even if they can start becoming employers, the ECD Sector is not ready to can provide such workforce in terms of human resource supplier and demand.

The genealogical and transformational factors ought to be looked into before we can make such recommendations and failure in which this can compromise millions of the current existing ECD Workforce and this current ECD Workforce may even lose employment opportunities and unemployed youth with matric, including unemployed post graduates with no clue whatsoever about Early Childhood Development may be prioritized over the current existing workforce with the intention to address high rate of unemployment and these are people with wealth of experience, skills, knowledge and expertise and we cannot afford to lose these pool of people and if we were to lose these pool of people, the situation will be catastrophic for Early Childhood Development Sector, in particular for children of South Africa and the ramifications will be very dire for the children and for the future of South Africa.

Having said that, there is nothing wrong with the ECD Cross-Sectoral ECD workforce to pursue qualifications pitched at NQF Level 6, 7, 8,9 and 10 but this should not be a requirement for an ECD practitioners to practice in the field given issues of genealogical and transformational factors that I have alluded to above.

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, my thinking as I have explained on point 2 above is simple and my recommendation for one to become a Principal or an ECD Manager is Higher certificate in Early Childhood Development pitched at NQF Level 5 and this is a legacy qualification and National Diploma in Early Childhood Development pitched at NQF Level 5.

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

No, my thinking as I have explained on point 2 above is simple and my recommendation for one to become a Principal or an ECD Manager is Higher certificate in Early Childhood

⁴ "ECD supervisor" refers to provincial supervisors employed by the DSD or DBE or supervisors/mentors employed by NGOs.

Development pitched at NQF Level 5 and this is a legacy qualification and National Diploma in Early Childhood Development pitched at NQF Level 5.

The ECD Sector is not ready for this when you look into the genealogical factors during and post-apartheid area and transformational factors.

5. How do you think the MRQECDE policy will affect ECCE practitioners in the field?
Please explain.

The policy is good in terms of advancing and promoting articulation agenda in Early Childhood Development in terms of professionalization of the Sector but this should not be used as a requirement at this moment for employment as in terms of supply and demand of human resource, we are not ready at this stage.

6. Do you agree that the ECCE 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, the ECD Workforce should be professionalized and begin to adhere to certain ethics, ethos, norms and standards of particular Statutory Council so that their conduct can be regulated and so that the Sector can be professionalized and issues of employment opportunities and remunerations be looked at and ECD practitioners ought to have qualifications and competencies recognized to deal with children in different cohort in the Foundation Phase and our starting point should be ECD NQF Level 4, 5 and ECD National Diploma pitched at NQF Level 5 and gradually gravitate to the qualifications provided in the MRQECDE policy of the 31st March 2017.

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

The constraints in the professionalization of the ECD Workforce is lack of funding towards training and capacity building of the ECD Workforce, including, reskilling and up skilling and another issues is that often resources for training are channelled to TVET Colleges who does not have expertise, skills and experience in Early Childhood

Development and the NGO/Private ECD Training Services Providers are marginalized and disregarded in the professionalization of the ECD Workforce and coupled to this other constraints are:

- Institutions of Higher learning are reluctant to admit learners without matric certificates but being in position of ECD NQF Level 4 and 5 despite policy recommendations and directives as Institutions of Higher learning are autonomous and reserve the right for admission of learners into various qualifications.
- Institutions of Higher learning admission policies and criteria proves to be problematic as they insist that ECD learners with ECD NQF Level 4 and 5 must have matric certificate before they can be admitted and this insistence and persistence on matric as a requirement is problematic and undermine the spirit of this policy not only this policy, but it deprives ECD learners to grow academically and become professionals and it also compromise ECD Professionalization agenda.
- Institutions of Higher learning admission policies and criteria are not promoting articulation agenda and transformation agenda as underpinning principles of RPL.

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.