



Financial and Fiscal Commission submission on 2021/22 Division of Revenue – Select and Standing Committee on Appropriations 26th August 2020

The theme of the FFC's submission was 'Sustainable Financing of Social and Economic Infrastructure and Services'. Slide 44 of their presentation focused on ECD and highlighted four findings:

- Stronger prioritisation of ECD required
- Need for greater and better targeted funding – including more funding for non-centre based ECD programmes
- Absence of reliable data to inform decision-making
- Need for more training for ECD practitioners

In the subsequent discussion, the FFC emphasised the importance of greater and more flexible funding for ECD, and the need for differentiated registration requirements:

'Currently, the sector only receives about 1.6% of the total education spent. [...] There cannot be a registration system where the majority of ECD programmes are excluded from it. The FFC is not saying there must be no standards. There must rather be a differentiated set of regulations which can also be considered. For example, one set of regulations for centre-based ECD programmes relative to those for non-centre-based ECD programmes, since its mode of delivery is fundamentally different.'

[Appropriations Committee - FFC submission on 2021/22 Division of Revenue](#)

Parliamentary question on SMME relief grants for ECD centres 28th September 2020

Ms Abrahams (DA) asked the Minister of Small Business Development about the number of applications from ECD centres for the SMME relief grant and the amount that has been paid out. The minister responded that, to date, 11 applications had been received from ECD centres and about R3.1 million was in the process of being paid to these centres.

[PQ on SMME relief grants for ECD centres](#)

ABOUT SMARTSTART SmartStart is taking quality and affordable early learning opportunities to tens of thousands of children. Our vision is to achieve population-level change in access to early learning by building an integrated national delivery platform which can unlock system capacity. Our innovative social franchise model harnesses the experience of implementing partners, who license and support a network of early learning practitioners to deliver the same quality programme for 3-5 year-olds. Find out more at smartstart.org.za.

Children's Amendment Bill briefing by DSD – Portfolio Committee on Social Development

5th October 2020

DSD Counsel briefed the Committee on the Children's Amendment Bill clause by clause. In the discussion on ECD, DSD confirmed that the new part to Chapter 6 for ECD centres, was an administrative rather than a substantive change – in that the same registration requirements overall would still apply to ECD centres.

(NB There appeared to be some errors and misunderstandings in DSD's evidence, which EELC, the Children's Institute, Ilifa and SmartStart subsequently sought to correct in a letter to the Committee.)

[DSD briefing on Children's Amendment Bill](#)

Treasury briefing on Conditional Grants expenditure outcomes – NCOP Committee on Appropriations

7th October 2020

Treasury officials presented figures on final expenditure outcomes for provincial conditional grants in 2019-20. The ECD Conditional Grant was underspent across provinces by 3.7% - about R19.5 million. Slides 54 and 55 show variations in underspend between provinces, including (missed) targets for maintenance projects.

[Treasury briefing on Conditional Grant expenditure](#)

President's speech on the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan

15th October 2020

The President addressed a joint sitting of parliament to present the economic recovery plan. The employment stimulus package includes income support for 111,142 ECD practitioners 'within 3 months'.

[Highlights of Reconstruction and Recovery Plan](#)

Parliamentary question on the number of unregistered ECD centres

16th October 2020

Ms Ngwenya (EFF) asked the Minister of Social Development about the number of unregistered ECD centres in South Africa. The minister responded, '*the total number of unregistered ECD centres identified is 50 118; and 1041 non centre based programmes*'.

[PQ on number of unregistered ECD centres](#)

Report of the Portfolio Committee on Social Development on the Recommendations of the High-Level Panel on the Assessment of Key Legislation and the Acceleration of Fundamental Change

14th October 2020

The Panel highlighted the need to expand access to quality ECD programmes and recommended *‘that it may be best to support the rural and marginalised communities by lowering eligibility requirements for infrastructure as many children live in communities with poor services such as lack of running water, electricity and sanitation’*.

In response, DSD said that the finalised Registration Framework and the infrastructure component of the Conditional Grant would help programmes in under-serviced communities.

The Committee’s findings focused on unequal access to ECD between urban and rural areas, the needs of children with disabilities, staff-child ratios, and qualifications.

[Portfolio Committee on SD report on Recommendations of High-Level Panel](#)

ECD Migration and BELA Bill update by DBE – Portfolio Committee on Basic Education

20th October 2020

DBE gave a detailed presentation on progress in terms of the ECD function shift, including budget, human resources, legal/policy, and technical aspects. A timeline and implementation plan were also presented with a target date of February 2021 for gazetting the Presidential Proclamations. The timeline indicated that *‘stakeholder consultation and communication’* (with practitioners and the wider sector) will be *‘ongoing’*.

DBE Counsel briefed the Committee on the draft Basic Education Laws Amendment Bill. The Bill includes provisions to make compulsory school attendance start at Grade R (not Grade 1) and to increase penalties for non-compliance. It also includes an amendment which would empower parents to enrol their child for Grade R at a younger age. The draft Bill must still complete a number of internal stages (including Cabinet approval) before it is tabled in parliament.

The ensuing discussion was wide-ranging and included concerns about (non-)alignment between the BELA Bill process, the function shift and the Children’s Amendment Bill provisions and process.

[DBE update on function shift and draft BELA Bill](#)

Medium Term Budget Policy Statement and Second Adjustments Appropriation Bill

28th October 2020

In the government's MTBPS, the Minister of Finance announced R588 728 000 for *'Support for early childhood development and social workers, and appointment of registration support officers'*.

The Second Adjustments Appropriation Bill was introduced into Parliament and shows how the above allocation is broken down: (1) a conditional allocation to provinces for *'ECD Grant: Presidential Employment Intervention'* of R496 250 000, and (2) R92 478 000 for compensation of employees in DSD.

[Medium Term Budget Policy Statements 2020](#)

[Second Adjustments Appropriation Bill](#)

DSD Quarter 2 performance – Portfolio Committee on Social Development 28th October 2020

DSD's presentation to the Committee included updates on progress on ECD workstreams.

'In preparation for drafting the Regulations on Children's Amendment Bill, a concept document as well as the project plan for the drafting of regulations were developed.

A Framework for the development of the ECD Service Delivery Model for Social Development Sector has been developed.

A research report for ECD Quality Assurance and Support System has been analysed.'

[DSD Quarter 2 performance 2020-21](#)

DBE Quarter 1 performance – Portfolio Committee on Basic Education 10th November 2020

The Committee session focused on DBE's Annual Report 2019-20 and on their Quarter 1 performance 2020-21. DBE's presentation included updates on three ECD workstreams:

- Data collection for the Early Years Index and baseline assessment of Early Learning Programmes (commenced on 2 March 2020 but paused due to COVID-19 outbreak).
- Prioritisation of the census of all Early Learning Programmes.
- Support for the ECD function shift.

[DBE Quarter 1 performance 2020-21](#)

Financial and Fiscal Services Commission briefing on DSD audit outcomes and performance – Portfolio Committee on Social Development

18th November 2020

FFC's presentation included an analysis of challenges relating to ECD (slides 13 – 22). The FFC made five recommendations on ECD: A nationwide audit of ECD services, finalisation of legislation on ECD with an implementation plan, further targeted funding for ECD infrastructure upgrades in quintiles 1-3, professionalisation of ECD career paths, and:

'Government should take urgent steps to strengthen funding for ECD in South Africa. Particular priority should be given to funding all non-profit, non-centre based ECD programmes serving quintiles 1 to 3. Related to this, the process and requirements for registration should be simplified, and specific and appropriate registration requirements for non-centre-based ECD programmes should be finalised with haste.'

[FFC briefing on DSD audit outcomes and performance](#)

2020 MTBPS & Second Adjustments Appropriation Bill public hearings – Joint meeting of National Assembly and NCOP Appropriations Committees

27th November 2020

Briefings by the Centre for Early Childhood Development, WC Children's Commissioner and UNICEF all highlighted the importance of greater investment in ECD. CECD's presentation set out the high numbers of children not in any kind of ECD provision (3.2 million children), and the high numbers in unregistered provision (1.5 million children).

[MTBPS public hearings - with CECD submission](#)

[NCOP Select Committee on Appropriations report](#)

Parliamentary question on registration status of ECD recipients of NLC grant

14th December 2020

Ms Abrahams (DA) asked the Minister of Social Development about the registration status of the ECD facilities listed as grant beneficiaries of the National Lotteries Commission.

[PQ on registration status of ECD grant beneficiaries of National Lotteries Commission](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION

Useful links:

[Government of RSA](#)

[Parliament of RSA](#)

[Parliamentary Monitoring Group](#)

Useful resources:

[Children's Act](#)

[National Integrated ECD Policy](#)

[Children Count \(UCT\)](#)