

BULLETIN

A SUMMARY OF THE LATEST NEWS
FROM NATIONAL GOVERNMENT
AND PARLIAMENT

News from parliament

Briefing by the DBE on the first 2022/23 quarterly report – Portfolio Committee on Basic Education

20 September 2022

Officials from the DBE presented on progress related to their quarter one targets and some of the highlights emerging from the current financial year. The DBE also outlined some targets for the current financial year, including training on the Vangasali Online ECD Registration System for provincial education departments, and the drafting of guidelines to support the administration of the ECD subsidy.

Presentation by the DBE on the 2022/23 quarterly report

Parliamentary question on children living with disabilities in ECD centres

27 September 2022

Ms Arries (EFF) asked the Minister of Basic Education about measures that had been put in place to accommodate children living with disabilities in ECD centres. The Minister responded that the Children's Act dictates that all ECD programmes that provide services to children with disabilities must have specialised training to provide quality services that will benefit those children.

Question to the Minister on children living with disabilities

Briefing by the DSD on the 2021/22 Annual Report – Portfolio Committee on Social Development

12 October 2022

The Committee received a report from the Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA) on the audit outcomes for the Department of Social Development (DSD) and its entities for the 2021/22 financial year. In addition, Annual Reports for the 2021/22 financial year were tabled by DSD and its entities. The DSD reported amongst its successes, quarterly monitoring reports to determine the increase in the number of children accessing ECD services; the development of the draft ECD Quality Assurance and Support System; and that over 200,000 work opportunities were developed through the social sector Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), which include increasing the quality of ECD programmes.

Presentation by DSD on the 2021/22 Annual Report

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.

News from parliament

Report of the Portfolio Committee on Basic Education on the first quarterly report of the DBE on its 2022/23 objectives

11 October 2022

The Committee considered the first quarterly report on the performance of the DBE in the 2022/23 financial year. Members of the Committee requested that the department submit the ECD socio-environmental impact assessment, which was requested at a previous meeting. The Committee encouraged the DBE to finalise engagements with National Treasury regarding the ECD funding model, budget and resource allocation to assist with the full implementation of Grade R and ECD.

[Report of the Committee on the DBE's quarterly report](#)

Briefing by the Department of Basic Education on the 2021/22 Annual Report – Select Committee on Education and Technology, Sports, Arts and Culture

02 November 2022

The Deputy Minister of Basic Education and officials from the DBE presented the department's 2021/22 annual report to the Select Committee. The DBE outlined activities conducted in the previous financial year including, the finalisation of the census on early learning programmes and developing a concept note on the envisaged service delivery model for ECD.

[Presentation by the DBE on the 2021/22 Annual Report](#)

Report of the Select Committee on Appropriations on the Expenditure of the ECD Grant for 2021/22

12 October 2022

The Committee assessed the implementation, performance, and expenditure of the ECD Conditional Grant for the 2021/22 financial year. The Committee noted that while the grant had been allocated R1 billion plus a stimulus package allocation of R178 million and R385.6 million in approved roll-over funds for the 2021/22 financial year, members were concerned by the underspend of R416 million, which would have an impact on the delivery of ECD services. The Committee recommended that the DBE continue efforts to increase the number of poor children accessing subsidised ECD services through centre and non-centre based programmes.

[Report of SCOA on the performance of the ECD Grant in 2021/22](#)

News from parliament

Budget Review and Recommendation Report (BRRR) – Portfolio Committee on Social Development

19 October 2022

The BRRR outlines the Committee's observations in relation to the DSD's performance over the course of 2021/22 and makes recommendations. The Committee stated as one of its key observations and concerns the status of the payment of the ECD Employment Stimulus Relief Fund and asked if National Treasury would roll over unspent funds to the new financial year. The Committee also queried the accuracy and true reflection of the reported 1.4 million children receiving ECD services considering the number of ECD programmes that closed down during the pandemic and the number of children who did not return.

[Committee's BRR Report on the performance of DSD in 2021/22](#)

Parliamentary question on the progress of the Vangasali campaign

07 November 2022

Mr Yabo (ANC) asked the Minister of Basic Education about the status of the Vangasali campaign to register ECD centres and the target number for the current financial year. The Minister responded that the DBE has continued to train provincial officials on Vangasali. In addition, provinces have targeted approximately 6,000 ECD programmes to be registered in the 2022/23 financial year.

[Question to the Minister on the Vangasali campaign](#)

Update on the status of the Basic Education Laws Amendment (BELA) Bill – Portfolio Committee on Basic Education

01 November 2022

Committee members received an update from their Content Advisor on progress regarding the BELA Bill. It was reported that 18,000 submissions had been made on the Bill, but due to capacity constraints about 5,000 written submissions had been processed. The Content Advisor reported that from the submissions already processed, it was clear that stakeholders reject the Bill. In relation to a clause that introduces compulsory Grade R attendance, it was reported that stakeholders were concerned about the capacity of schools to admit an additional cohort of learners considering outstanding infrastructure backlogs and shortage of educators in the public school system.

[Update on progress of the BELA Bill](#)

News from parliament

Briefing by National Treasury and PBO on the 2022 Division of Revenue Amendment Bill – Select Committee on Appropriations

10 November 2022

National Treasury stated that an additional R1.6 billion will be allocated to the ECD Grant over the MTEF (the next three years) to build the DBE's oversight and monitoring capacity, and to improve and expand ECD services in provinces. The Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) highlighted that Stats SA had found a decline from 36.8% in 2019 to 28.5% in 2021 in children aged 0 to 4 who attended some form of ECD provision. Children from poorer households are more likely to stay at home with parents or guardians than attend ECD centres.

Presentations by NT and PBO on the revised 2022 Division of Revenue

Questions addressed to Ministers in Cluster 2: Social Services – National Assembly

02 November 2022

The Minister of Social Development briefed Members of the House on the ECD Employment Stimulus Fund and some of the issues faced in disbursing the funds. The Minister outlined the purpose of the Stimulus Fund, which was targeted to benefit ECD programmes whether registered, conditionally registered or unregistered. The Minister also updated on the status of the Vangasali campaign, where ECD programmes are assisted with registration processes. Through the campaign, the department was able to record more than 52,000 ECD services, 60% of which were not registered.

Minister's responses to questions posed by the House



News from parliament

Financial and Fiscal Commission (FFC) briefing on the 2022 Division of Revenue – Standing Committee on Appropriations

08 November 2022

The FFC in its submission stated that it has historically recommended the need to strengthen funding and quality for ECD services and is thus looking forward to more detail on ECD when the 2023 Budget is tabled. The FFC told the Committee that it believes shifting the ECD function from DSD to DBE allows the government to strengthen its investment in the sector. In addition, the MTBPS mentions that additional funding is being added to the function for ECD to improve monitoring, oversight and service delivery in provinces.

[FFC submission on the 2022 MTBPS](#)

Public hearings on the Basic Education Laws Amendment (BELA) Bill – Portfolio Committee on Basic Education

15 November 2022

The Portfolio Committee on Basic Education held oral hearings on the BELA Bill. Eight organisations and stakeholders presented oral submissions to the Committee, including the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU), SECTION27, Centre for Child Law and COSATU. Concerns raised included making Grade R compulsory. Many of the organisations presenting supported compulsory Grade R, but highlighted that this grade needs support from government.

[Submissions by stakeholders on the BELA Bill](#)

Briefing by the Presidency's Red Tape Reduction (RTR) Task team – Portfolio Committee on Small Business Development

16th November 2022

The RTR task team – based in the Presidency – presented to the Committee the priorities and interventions of the RTR programme. The objective of the programme is to tangibly reduce excessive and complex rules, regulations and processes that hinder economic growth and job creation in key areas of the economy. The task team noted as one of its possible priorities, the registration of ECD centres and the red tape around this process. The task team said that letters were being prepared to the Premiers of each province to engage and encourage the establishment of red-tape-reduction units in each province.

[Presentation by the RTR task team on progress related to the programme](#)

News from government

Call for comments on the Expanded Public Works Programme Policy – Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI)

16 September 2022

In September, the DPWI put out a call for public comment on the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) Policy. Included as one of the proposed EPWP policy positions, the draft policy calls for the optimisation and massification of the ECD conditional grant. The draft policy suggests that this would prioritise the creation of employment, poverty alleviation and socio-economic redress.

[Draft Expanded Public Works Programme Policy](#)

President Ramaphosa says ECD holds the key to our future – Newsletter from the President

10 October 2022

In his newsletter President Cyril Ramaphosa reflected on his attendance at the opening of an ECD centre in the Eastern Cape. The President outlined that foundational learning is key to a child's success in later years. He noted that ECD centres do not just prepare young children to succeed in school, but that they are also an important source of entrepreneurship and job creation. He said that the ECD sector sustains livelihoods, especially for women.

[President's newsletter](#)

Call for comments on the National Infrastructure Plan: 2050 – Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI)

21 October 2022

The DPWI issued their draft National Infrastructure Plan:2050 (NIP:2050) for public comment. The draft NIP:2050 contains information relating to ECD built infrastructure and government's plans to unlock public land and buildings to be utilised for this service. The draft plan states that features of education infrastructure by 2050 include infrastructure that will support the delivery of high quality, accessible education from early-learning, primary and secondary to tertiary. The draft policy notes that there is a shortage of ECD facilities, and that, if the target is to double the number of learners in ECD by 2030, then more facilities will be required.

[Draft National Infrastructure Plan: 2050](#)

Delivery of the 2022 Medium Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS) – Minister of Finance

26 October 2022

At the tabling of the MTBPS, Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana stated that following the shift of the ECD function from DSD to DBE, funding had been added to build the oversight and monitoring capacity of the latter, as well as to improve and expand early childhood development services in provinces.

[2022 Medium Term Budget Policy Statement](#)

From around the world

Women need creches: A study in women's participation in paid work and childcare arrangements in India – Mobile Creches

October 2022

The objectives of the study included looking at the need for childcare facilities among women in the informal sector. The study also sought to examine linkages between access to childcare and women's ability to engage in paid work. One of the findings was that 89% of the women interviewed stated that childcare in the home is the main reason they are not able to work.

[Study on the need for childcare to enable women to work](#)

Working paper on the effects of childcare on women and children in Burkina Faso – Centre for Global Development

November 2022

The study examined whether providing affordable childcare improves women's economic empowerment and child development, using data from a sample of women participating in a public works programme in Burkina Faso. The study found that women's employment and financial outcomes improved through the programme, and that child development scores increased.

[Working paper on the relationship between child care and women's access to work](#)



From around the world

ECD webinar series from UNICEF and RISE Institute

December 2022

The organisations shared recordings of webinars that took place over the course of the year. The goal of this webinar series was to inform and support data specialists and ECD leaders to build capacity to develop multisectoral ECD monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

[Recordings of ECD webinar series](#)



Different is not deficient: respecting diversity in ECD – The Lancet

December 2022

This article speaks to some possible biases in a report titled, *Estimates of a multidimensional index of nurturing care in the next 1,000 days of life for children in low-income and middle-income countries: a modelling study*, and argues that using child outcomes measures based on WEIRD (western, educated, industrialised, rich, and democratic) norms, will inevitably label differences as deficits.

"conventional intelligence tests build on definitions, symbols, and procedures that are derived from the WEIRD world. LMIC communities might not only provide different learning contexts for children, but also favour other conceptualisations of intelligence. Through standardised testing, such differences become deficits. Taken together, large-scale assessments of early childhood development tend to conflate difference with deficiency because these studies do not sufficiently consider underlying WEIRD biases."

[Article on respecting diversity in ECD interventions](#)

[Response by the authors of the original report](#)

In case you missed it

Educational resources on promoting gender equality in ECD – VVOB Education for Development

June 2021

VVOB has released a variety of resources geared towards supporting teachers and ECD practitioners in developing knowledge and skills to promote gender equality. The educational material assists teachers and practitioners in South Africa to recognise gender stereotypes and biases and to apply a gender-responsive pedagogy through the learning environment, learning materials, learning activities, interactions and language use in the classroom and interactions beyond the classroom.

[VVOB resources on promoting gender equality](#)

2021 ECD census data – DataFirst

August 2022

DataFirst has collated the raw data used in the compilation of the DBE's ECD Census 2021, including the questionnaire used for interviews, forms recording observations and responses and the actual report. Data collected from the Census includes the of registration status of the facility, its geographical location, access to basic infrastructure and type of ECD programme it is (school-based, home-based or community based).

[Micro data on the ECD census](#)



In case you missed it

Report: Transforming Education through African-led Research and Solutions

September 2022

This research report stems from a virtual symposium for *Education Research in/for/by Africa*. The gathering sought to provide a space for local researchers to share ideas and co-design relevant solutions. Participants were asked to consider questions such as, what it would take to shift more power to African education researchers, what the gaps and opportunities are around communication, translation and use of research, and the role of funders in building a regional community of practice of local researchers and institutions. Documenting this process in the report will hopefully contribute to actionable insights in empowering local education researchers on the continent.

[Report on transforming education through African-led research](#)

Real Reform for ECD on the important role municipalities play in the provision of ECD services – GroundUp

10 October 2022

This short article examines the challenges facing the ECD sector at a municipal level including onerous, unrealistic, and unaffordable regulations such as the registration of crèches. It also notes that municipal officials are not always clear about their role in early childhood development plans, and that work needs to be done to illustrate that some specific reforms can and should be implemented at local government level.

[Article on the role of municipalities in ECD provisioning](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION

Useful links:

[Government of RSA](#)
[Parliament of RSA](#)
[Parliamentary Monitoring Group](#)

Useful resources:

[Children's Act](#)
[National Integrated ECD Policy](#)
[Children Count \(UCT\)](#)