

BULLETIN

A SUMMARY OF THE LATEST NEWS
FROM NATIONAL GOVERNMENT
AND PARLIAMENT

News from parliament

Briefing by the DBE on School Readiness in the 2023 academic year – Portfolio Committee on Basic Education

07 February 2023

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) briefed the Committee on the state of readiness of schools for the 2023 academic year. In relation to ECD, the department reported that Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) were supported in ensuring the disbursement of the fourth tranche of the ECD subsidy, to eligible programmes. Furthermore, education departments were in the process of training practitioners on the implementation of the National Curriculum Framework (NCF).

[Presentation by the DBE on 2023 school readiness](#)

President Cyril Ramaphosa's 2023 State of the Nation Address (SONA) – Joint Sitting

09 February 2023

In his SONA, President Ramaphosa highlighted a few developments in relation to ECD. The President stated that the Red Tape Reduction task team has been working with various departments to make it easier to conduct business, including cutting down red tape on the registration of ECD centres and businesses in the informal sector. He went on to say that the DBE is streamlining the requirements for ECD centres to access support to enable receiving subsidies from government.

[2023 State of the Nation Address by the President of South Africa](#)

Briefing by the DBE on the implications of the State of the Nation Address (SONA) on the education system – Portfolio Committee on Basic Education

21 February 2023

Department officials highlighted that the President's speech placed a particular emphasis on ECD support and expansion. The DBE provided an overview of its performance in the provisioning of early learning in relation to previous SONAs, as well as the challenges faced. Focus areas over the last three years have included an investigation into a Presidential Stimulus Package for ECD; the review of the ECD subsidy guidelines to assist provinces in managing the disbursement of the subsidy through the equitable share and the ECD conditional grant; implementation of the Vangasali campaign to massify registration; drafting of the Second Children's Amendment Bill; and conducting an evaluation that looks at the implementation of the National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy (NIECDP).

[Presentation by the DBE on the implications of SONA](#)

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

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

28 February 2023

The DBE presented on progress related to 2022/23 targets and some emerging highlights. A study, which looks at the current implementation of the NCF, for children from birth to four years, was conducted. The DBE also reported that Memoranda of Agreement in relation to the development of an ECD MIS system and use of the Vangasali Registration Management Tool, are in progress. Finally, Committee members were informed that the Human Resource Development Plan (HRDP) task team members, consisting of both state and non-state actors, had been appointed.

[Presentation by the DBE on the 2022/23 third quarterly report](#)

Briefing by DBE, DSD and the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities (DWYPD), on developing and implementing programmes to enhance the lives of people living with disabilities – Portfolio Committee on Social Development

01 March 2023

The departments presented to the Committee on their roles in developing and implementing programmes to enhance the lives of persons living with disabilities, including children. The DBE stated that since 2020, 8 727 ECD practitioners have been trained on the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) policy. The department reported that focus has shifted away from training on the policy to its implementation.

[DBE presentation on programmes to enhance the lives of children living with disabilities](#)



News from parliament

Briefing by the DBE on the 2023/24 Annual Performance Plan (APP) – Portfolio Committee on Basic Education

22 March 2023

The DBE briefed the Committee on the APP. Outputs to be delivered during the 2023/24 financial year – and into the next three years – include the implementation of an online registration system for ECD registration, a review of legislation governing the provisioning of ECD, the development of a Quality Assurance and Support System, and the development of a national report on piloting a new funding model for ECD. The department highlighted that up until the third quarter of the 2022/23 financial year, 315,198 children had received the ECD subsidy through the conditional grant, and 523,575 children through the equitable share.

[Presentation by the DBE on the 2023/24 APP](#)

Briefing by the Department of Social Development (DSD) on the draft policy of Integrating Children’s Grants to Government Services – Portfolio Committee on Social Development

22 March 2023

In a presentation to the Committee, DSD stated that while children’s services are in place in South Africa, including access to education, health care and social grants, child well-being and protection remains a problem. DSD informed Committee Members that most of these programmes are provided in a fragmented manner, and integrating these would be more effective in reducing the extent of the vulnerability of children. Developing a policy proposal that integrates the Child Support Grant (CSG) with other government services will have a particularly significant impact during the earlier years of life, including ECD.

[Presentation on the draft policy of Integrating Children’s Grants to Government Services](#)

News from parliament

Parliamentary question on the DBE's medium to long-term plans to transform the ECD landscape

09 March 2023

Mr Sewela (ANC) asked the Minister of Basic Education what the medium to long-term plans of her department are in relation to ECD. Minister Motshekga responded that the focus of PEDs has been on stabilising ECD since the migration from DSD to DBE. The Minister highlighted that the development of a 10-year sector plan for ECD was taking place, which will include formulating a national strategy for the delivery of early learning programmes at scale. The department is also scoping and exploring the development of a primary piece of legislation for ECD.

[Question to the Minister on plans to transform ECD](#)

Parliamentary question on whether primary schools have formal Grade R classes and the kind of formal qualifications early learning practitioners need

22 March 2023

Ms Van der Walt (DA) asked the Minister whether she plans to establish a national network of centres for children aged 0- 4 years old, whether every primary school in the country has a formal Grade R class and finally, what qualifications are required for Grade R and Grade RR teachers. The Minister responded that her department is developing an integrated Service Delivery Model to increase access to ECD services, recognising that such a model needs to respond to the different modalities of early learning programmes and the needs of caregivers and parents.

[Question to the Minister on the establishment of ECD centres](#)



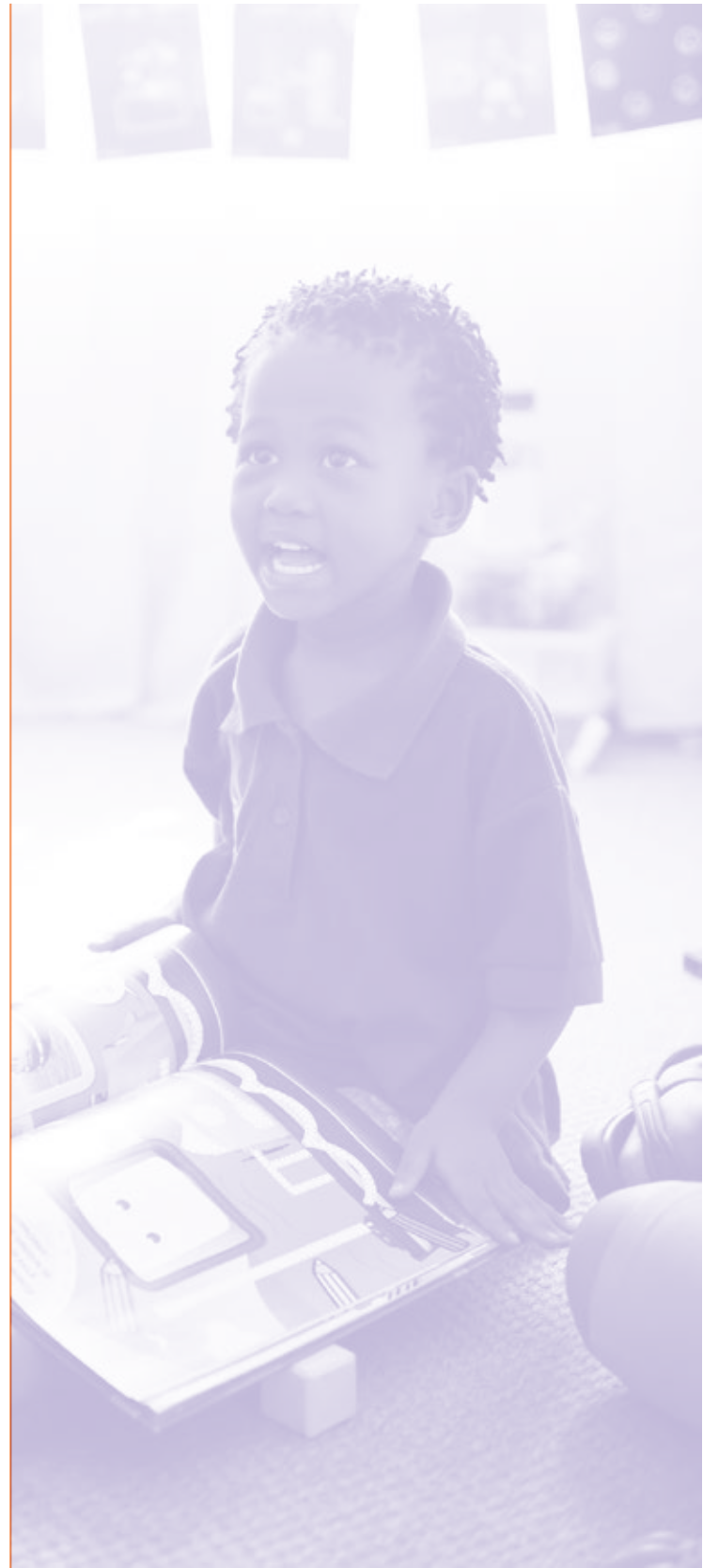
News from parliament

President Ramaphosa's responses to Members of Parliament on red-tape reduction – National Council of Provinces (NCOP)

30 March 2023

President Ramaphosa told Members of the NCOP that bureaucratic red tape constrains economic activity in the country. The Red Tape Reduction task team is, amongst others, reviewing the regulatory burden on informal enterprises and traders that operate in townships and rural areas. He stated that the Department of Small Business Development (DSBD) had identified 29 pieces of legislations that negatively affect small businesses across the three spheres of government and that every department should be involved in the process of reducing red tape, as a key enabler to growing South Africa's economy.

[President's responses to the NCOP](#)



News from Provinces

Briefing by the Eastern Cape, Free State and Gauteng departments of Education on the 2023/24 Annual Performance Plans (APP) – Select Committee on Education and Technology, Sport, Arts and Culture

19 April 2023

The Committee was briefed in a by the Eastern Cape, Free State and Gauteng education departments on their 2023/24 annual performance plans and budgets. In terms of priorities across the three provinces, the following were identified: the registration of early learning programmes, training of 0-4 ECD practitioners on the NCF, the professional development of ECD practitioners in 0-4 programmes and Grade R to obtain NQF level 4 qualifications.

Eastern Cape: In the current financial year, the ECDDoE aims to: mobilise and upscale access for 0-6-year-old children to early stimulation, meaningful and effective education, enough nourishment, quality health care and safety; audit ECD practitioner qualifications and develop a credible ECD practitioner database; strengthen public-private and international partnerships that support the integration, expansion, and sustainability of ECD interventions. Furthermore, the province states that 142 000 children will access programmes this year and that 390 ECD centres will be registered.

Free State: The PED reported a decrease towards the ECD budget, due to redirection of a portion of this budget to the compensation of employees and other administrative costs. In terms of targets, in 2023/24 the aim is to ensure that 615 public schools offer Grade R, 1 406 ECD centres are registered and 81 180 children access ECD programmes.

Gauteng: Amongst others the GDE aims to continue with the development of an Education Management Information System (EMIS) specifically for pre-Grade R and Grade R, to ensure that the ECD service delivery model is realigned and remodelled, expand pro-poor interventions to provide school nutrition to the ECD programmes for children aged 0-5 years old wherever required, and to construct at least one stand-alone ECD centre in each of the 15 Districts. In this year the department plans to register 1 300 ECD centres and provide access to ECD to 70 000 children.

[FS, EC, and GP 2023/24 Annual Performance Plans](#)

News from government

NPO registration no longer required for ECD programmes

26 January 2022

One of the eligibility criteria for ECD programmes to receive the per learner subsidy was to acquire not-for-profit (NPO) registration status. The DBE has stated that the removal of this requirement is to enable the expansion towards universal access to early learning programmes, particularly for the poorest children.

[Removal of NPO registration requirement of ECD programmes](#)

Basic Education Sector Lekgotla

26 – 28 January 2023

The DBE hosted the annual Basic Education Sector Lekgotla under the theme, *“equipping learners with knowledge and skills for a changing world post COVID-19 pandemic.”* One of the issues covered during the convening, included challenges around the early learning years, and how some of these sectoral challenges prohibit children from thriving. Recommendations emanating from Lekgotla, included ensuring that there is a properly resourced, coordinated ECD system, and that there is support for models to scale up access to ECD delivery.

[DBE 2023 Education Sector Lekgotla: Part 1](#)

[DBE 2023 Education Sector Lekgotla: Part 2](#)

[DBE 2023 Education Sector Lekgotla: Part 3 \(Commission discussions and recommendations\)](#)

2023/24 Budget Speech by the Minister of Finance

22 February 2023

Minister Enoch Godongwana announced an increase of the ECD conditional grant from R1.24 billion to R2.34 billion, between 2023/24 and 2025/26 – nearly doubling the allocation over this period. Treasury documents highlight that R1.6 billion has been added to the ECD grant over the medium term to increase the number of children accessing the early childhood development subsidy, provide pre-registration support to early childhood development centres, and introduce a nutrition support programme and provide early learning resource packages, which include daily activity plans.

[2023 Budget Speech by the Minister of Finance](#)

[Vote 16: Estimates of National Expenditure](#)

[2023 Budget Review](#)

News from government

Media briefing by the Social Protection, Community and Human Development Cluster

26 February 2023

The Social Protection, Community and Human Development Cluster, chaired by the Ministers of Health and Basic Education, held a media briefing to discuss the contents of President Ramaphosa's SONA. In relation to ECD, Minister Motshekga remarked that an inter-sectoral task team, comprised of the DSD, CoGTA, SALGA, and sector experts has redrafted the Children's Amendment Bill to strengthen coordination in the ECD sector, as well as to streamline the regulatory framework.

[Social Protection, Community and Human Development Cluster post-State of the Nation Address media briefing](#)

Call for public comment on the revision of the Recognition of Prior Learning Policy – Department of Higher Education and Training

30 March 2023

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) put out a call for public comment to repeal the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Coordination policy to be replaced by a RPL Implementation Framework. The purpose of the original policy is to provide an enabling environment for prior learning across post-school education and training systems and across all levels of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

[Call for public comment on the revised Recognition of Prior Learning Coordination Policy](#)

Call for public comment on the draft Norms and Standards for Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA) – Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development

19 May 2023

The Department of Agriculture, Land reform and Rural Development has issued a call for comment on the draft Norms and Standards for SPLUMA. The purpose of the Norms of Standards is derived from the need to, amongst others, promote social inclusion, spatial equity, rural revitalisation, urban regeneration, and sustainable development, as well as developing mechanisms for identifying strategically located and vacant or under-utilised land.

[Call for public comment on the draft Norms and Standards for SPLUMA](#)

News from government

Basic Education budget vote speech (vote 16) – Minister of Basic Education

18 May 2023

Minister Motshekga provided an overview of budget allocations towards the basic education sector and provided a few highlights. The department has identified ECD as one of its six critical priorities. Furthermore, work is being done to amend the Children's Act and, along with the Presidency through the Red Tape Reduction task team, identifying ways to streamline registration processes.

Basic Education budget vote

Call for public comment on draft Children's Amendment Bill – Private Members Bill

19 May 2023

Ms Bridget Masango has introduced a draft Children's Amendment Bill (2023) in Parliament and has invited public comment on the draft Bill. The draft Bill proposes introducing the concept of micro-partial care to cater for less than six children at these facilities; differentiating between partial care facilities- as currently provided for in the Children's Act- and micro-partial care facilities (as proposed in the draft Bill) and providing for the regulation of micro-partial care facilities.

Call for public comment on draft Children's Amendment Bill (Private Members Bill)



From around the world

Increasing Female Labour Force Participation: World Bank Evidence and Practice Note

January 2023

This policy brief notes that there is mounting evidence showing how removing barriers to female labour force participation (FLFP) can be central to driving inclusive economic growth. However, according to the brief, FLFP has stagnated in most regions across the world, over the past three decades, such as in the case of South Asia. In countries with relatively smaller gender gaps in participation, such as Sub-Saharan Africa, a large share of women in the labour market engage in vulnerable employment with inadequate earnings and poor working conditions. There is growing evidence that, *“...demonstrates that day-care and preschool interventions can relax women’s time constraints and circumvent social and cultural norms around women’s care roles. Addressing barriers to the uptake of these services – including attributes of childcare centers, such as location, hours, and costs, and norms around outsourcing childcare – is critical...”*

[Evidence and Practice note on female labour force participation](#)

Collapse and Recovery: How the Covid-19 Pandemic eroded human capital and what to do about it

February 2023

The World Bank report assesses the impact of the pandemic using, amongst others, new household-level data from low- and middle-income countries. One of the chapters of the report is titled, *‘The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Early Childhood Development and Subsequent Human Capital Accumulation’*. This chapter looks at how the pandemic disrupted household investment in children’s nutrition, their access to essential services, and quality of child-care received at home. It notes that the deficits in these inputs translated into declines in motor, language, cognitive, and social-emotional development in both high- and low-income settings.

[Report on how the Covid-19 pandemic eroded human capital and what to do about it](#)

From around the world

Global joint statement: Supporting children and their families during the on-going crises in Syria and Türkiye

February 2023

Organisations from around the globe released a joint statement to highlight their concerns on the impact of two major earthquakes on the communities – especially children – of Syria and Türkiye. The collective stated that they are concerned about the wellbeing and safety of young children and their caregivers, particularly women and girls. The statement calls on governments and donors to support communities by enabling access to psychosocial services and the expansion of investments in the five components of nurturing care (good health, adequate nutrition, opportunities for learning, safety and security, and responsive care) as well as availing early childhood interventions to all children aged 0–17 years.

[Joint statement on the crisis in Syria and Türkiye following major earthquakes](#)

Status of female childcare workers in Kenya – Uthabiti Africa

March 2023

Uthabiti Africa released a report that looks at the policy environment and implementation regarding childcare provisioning in Kenya. In terms of the policy environment, the study found that Kenyan legislation is highly child-centred and excludes the concerns of the childcare workforce, such as the need for skilling and certification, resourcing, and financial inclusion. Policies are not cognisant of the informal nature of childcare, thus failing to recognise and regulate these programmes. The findings reveal that, while some areas have mechanisms to register childcare facilities, the costs of registration and compliance are high, and the process of registration is unclear.

[Study on the status of status of childcare workers in Kenya](#)



In case you missed it

Launch of the Nurturing Care handbook and practice guide

March 2023

The World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF with other partners have developed the Nurturing Care Handbook. The handbook is the latest in a series of resources to support the implementation of the Nurturing Care Framework. The handbook can be used to enhance advocacy and capacity building efforts around ECD, at regional and national levels. It is organised into five strategic actions which include; leading and investing, focus on families and communities, strengthening services, monitoring progress, and scaling up and innovation.

[Nurturing Care Framework](#)

[Nurturing Care Handbook](#)

[Nurturing care practice guide](#)

Southern Africa Regional Conference on Early Learning Development

28 – 30 March 2023

The Government of Zambia, Southern Africa Network for Early Childhood Development, (SANECD) and the Africa Early Childhood Network (AfECN) convened the Southern Africa regional ECD conference to provide a platform for deepening partnership in advancing quality and inclusive ECD in the region. Following the deliberations, stakeholders agreed to the following resolutions; advocating for increased allocations by governments to ECD, supporting enhanced investment in community-level initiatives including parental support for beneficial childcare practices, women empowerment, the development of infrastructure for ECD hubs and childcare centres, and promoting the availability of quality ECD data that translates into improved quality services.

[Lusaka declaration: Southern Africa regional conference on ECD](#)

In case you missed it

Global advocacy and local action
– Harnessing the power of advocacy to
advance progress towards SDG 4.2 in 2023

March 2023

UNICEF, ECDAN and UNESCO hosted a webinar that discussed how commitments to action made at the Transforming Education Summit (TES) between global, regional, and country-level advocacy initiatives can be leveraged to move the Early Childhood Education (ECE) agenda forward, to collectively meet SDG 4.2 commitments. The panel shared key global resources, such as the ECE Accelerator Toolkit, that can assist stakeholders in developing and implementing contextually appropriate ECE strategies.

[Summary of webinar discussion](#)

[Webinar recording](#)

[ECE advocacy resources and tools](#)

Launch of Public Expenditure and Institutional Review (PEIR) report for ECDs

30 March 2023

The DBE commissioned the World Bank to conduct a public expenditure institutional review in 2021, to provide evidence-based options on how to expand and raise the quality of ECD services. Regarding early learning, the report's recommendations include, streamlining processes for ECD programme registration and subsidy application, providing better access to infrastructure grants for private providers of ECD programmes, providing provinces with sufficient funds for the per child ECD subsidy and returning the subsidy amount to its 2015 purchasing parity, as well as measuring child development outcomes regularly.

[Speech by Minister Angie Motshekga at the PEIR report launch](#)

[Report on South Africa's Public Expenditure and Institutional Review for ECD](#)

In case you missed it

Release of the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2021

17 May 2023

In South Africa, the PIRLS found that 81% of Grade 4 learners and 56% of Grade 6 learners could not read for meaning. In Grade 4, testing took place in 11 official languages and in Grade 6, in English and Afrikaans. The Grade 4 trend achievement declined from a score of 320 in 2016 to 288 in 2021 for South Africa. It was found that 38% of learners who were often/regularly involved in early literacy activities achieved higher scores. Learners who enter school with early literacy skills also scored higher.

[Summary of South African highlights on the PIRLS](#)

[Full PIRLS report](#)



FURTHER INFORMATION

Useful links:

[Government of RSA](#)

[Parliament of RSA](#)

[Parliamentary Monitoring Group](#)

Useful resources:

[Children's Act](#)

[National Integrated ECD Policy](#)

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