Country profile prepared for the

Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2007

Strong Foundations: Early Childhood Care and Education

South Africa

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programmes

Compiled by:
UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE)
Geneva, (Switzerland)
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SOUTH AFRICA

Early Childhood Education and Care (ECCE) programs

A. GENERAL INFORMATION, STATISTICS AND INDICATORS

Starting age of compulsory education (if applicable):

According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) the compulsory education age range is 7-15 years.

The admission age policy compels learners to be in Grade 1 by the year they turn 7. However, the policy permits learners that are age 5 turning 6 by 30 June in the year of admission, to be admitted to Grade 1. Subject to the availability of places, a learner may be admitted to Grade 1 at a younger age if it is in the child’s best interests. (South African Schools Act, Section 5, as amended 2002.)

1. ISCED 0 PROGRAMS (USUALLY, PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION)
   (ISCED = International Standard Classification of Education)

1.1. National definition of ISCED 0 programs:

Pre-primary education. It refers to pre-Grade 1 education directed at learners that are 0 to 6 years old. (See also Section 2 below)

1.2. Normative age group(s) covered by ISCED 0 programs:

0–6 years of age. South African legislation allows the admission of 6-year-old children to post-ISCED 0 programs (Grade 1).
1.3. ISCED 0 programs: statistics and indicators (source: UIS)

1.3.1. Enrolment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gross enrolment ratio</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net enrolment ratio</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of children entering primary education with previous preschool experience</td>
<td>Not available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.3.2. Enrolment ratio by age group, 2002/03 (percentage, also including the first years of primary education when applicable):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Less than 3 years of age</th>
<th>Age 3</th>
<th>Age 4</th>
<th>Age 5</th>
<th>Age 6</th>
<th>Age 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.4(*)</td>
<td>37.3(*)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

UIS estimation. (*) Enrolled in primary education. (**) Primary education enrolment ratio.

1.3.3. Teachers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of teachers</th>
<th>Of whom female (%)</th>
<th>Percentage of trained teachers (all)</th>
<th>Percentage of trained teachers (males)</th>
<th>Percentage of trained teachers (females)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>54,503</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


1.3.4. Funding:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
1.3.5. Main source(s) of financing:

Public expenditure on pre-primary education per learner in 2003 is as follows: Community centres (pre-primary schooling), R720; Publicly funded Grade R learners regardless of institution type, R1,212. Public spending on Grade R is significantly higher than private spending. However, the pattern is reversed for pre-Grade R learners.

2. OTHER ECCE PROGRAMS

(Generally preceding ISCED 0 programs)

2.1. National definition of other ECCE programs:

Pre-primary programmes have two components:

1. Grade R (Reception year), preceding Grade 1, which caters to 5-year-old children.
2. Pre-Grade R programmes, which caters to children between 0 and 4 years of age.

South Africa has an inclusive concept for the education of children from birth to 9 years of age, namely Early Childhood Development (ECD). It includes learners who are in pre-Grade R programmes, Grade R programmes and Foundation Phase (Grades 1–3).

2.2. Normative age group(s) covered by other ECCE programs:

Age 0–4: pre-Grade R programmes.
5–6 year olds: Grade R (Reception year) programmes.

2.3. Estimate number of children covered by other ECCE programs:

Not available

B. BACKGROUND INFORMATION CONCERNING ECCE PROGRAMS (INCLUDING ISCED 0)

3.1. Legislation concerning ECCE:

ECD is governed by the Child Care Act 74 of 1983, currently under review. The Department of Education (DoE) is using the policy framework outlined in the ECD White Paper 5 of 2001 to inform the implementation of ECD programmes. The Admission’s Policy has been amended to accommodate Grade R, and the DoE is in the process of amending the Norms and Standards for Funding Grade R.
3.2. Official body/bodies in charge of supervision or coordination:

The DoE is responsible for the phasing in of Grade R in the system. The Department of Social Development is providing social grants and subsidies to registered ECD sites as well as the provision of psychosocial programmes where needed. The Department of Health provides free care to all young children while the Office on the Rights of the Child in the Presidency is responsible for monitoring implementation of government programmes.

3.3. Other entities involved in the provision (e.g. municipalities, local governments) and main types of providers (e.g. public, private, mixed, community-based, etc.):

Currently there is an approved integrated inter-departmental plan for ECD, comprising the Departments of Education, Health and Social Development. The plan also involves additional support from the Department of Public Works, Home Affairs and the Department of Provincial and Local Governments.

ECD remains dominated by the private/home/community sector. NGOs such as training organizations, community and faith based organizations play a critical role in the sector. Additionally, the government receives support from some donors to address imbalances in ECD provisioning.

From information collected from 21,892 ECD sites (source: Education White Paper on Early Childhood Education. Pretoria, May 2001), the following table provides the distribution across types of ECD provision:

- School-based 3,623 (17%)
- Community based 10,816 (49%)
- Home based 7,453 (34%)

Many different types of ECD services are available. There are two main categories of ECD institution-based provision: public and independent. Public ECD institutions are funded by provincial departments of education and consist of pre-primary schools that provide ECD services and programmes for children aged 3-5.

A much greater variety of ECD services exists in the category of independent ECD institutions. These institutions are funded through parents’ fees, community fundraising and/or donations of materials, with little or without financial support from the government. Independent ECD provision currently includes:

- The Reception Year (Grade R) at independent schools;
- The Reception Year (Grade R) attached to public schools, but managed by the school governing body and operated by a private individual or the community;
- Independent pre-primary schools for children of 3-5 years of age;
- Privately operated or community run crèches or nursery schools for children under 5 years of age;
3.4. Type of personnel involved:
Caregivers, educators and support staff

3.5. Type of staff training (requirements):
*Not available*

3.6. Recent national policies and reforms:
The *White Paper 1* (1995) acknowledged that ‘the care and development of young children must be the foundation of social relations and the starting point of human resources development strategies from community to national levels.’ Early childhood development (ECD) is defined as: ‘an umbrella term which is applied to the processes by which children from birth to 9 years of age grow and thrive, physically, mentally, emotionally, morally and socially.’

The National ECD Pilot Project was launched in 1997 after the announcement of the *Interim National Policy on ECD* in 1996. The aim of the Pilot Project is to conduct research and to develop systems and models for the implementation of new policy to ensure that children eligible for the reception year (Grade R) have improved access to quality education programmes.

The ECD Pilot Project reached 2,800 non-governmental ECD establishments serving approximately 70,000 of the most disadvantaged learners. About 3,000 practitioners received fully accredited professional training and orientation in the new curriculum for the Reception year. (Source: *Education White Paper on Early Childhood Education*. Pretoria, May 2001.)

The DoE recently published the National Norms and Standards for Funding Grade R for public comment. This will assist the Department in ensuring that all schools with Grade R receive government funding by 2010. Special focus will be on poor and vulnerable children.

3.7. Efforts targeted at vulnerable or disadvantaged children:
The DoE is tasked to coordinate the government plan of action for the development of an integrated service delivery plan for young children (age 0–4) with special attention on vulnerable children (poor, orphaned and HIV&AIDS infected and affected).

3.8. Special projects/programmes aiming at expanding or improving ECCE:
- Incorporation of Grade R into the formal education system;
- Increased budgets to expand access to Grade R. Funding for Grade R is now part of the line budget allocation to provinces;
- The introduction of a Grade R teacher training programmes;
– Improvement in the provision of facilities through the Expanded Public Works Programme (Treasury has approved a special budget line for this purpose);
– The target date of 2010 has been set to make Grade R programmes available to all 5-year old children.

3.9. Information concerning the curriculum (if applicable) or the contents of ECCE programs

The National Curriculum Statement Policy (2002) caters for Grade R as part of the Foundation Phase of schooling. The DoE is working on curriculum guidelines for children in the age group 0–4 years in collaboration with other key departments (Health and Social Development).

3.9.1. Objectives and aims:

In general terms, the curriculum aims to develop the full potential of each learner as a citizen of a democratic South Africa. It seeks to create a lifelong learner who is confident, literate, multi-skilled with the ability to participate in society as an active citizen.

3.9.2. Learning areas and teaching-learning methods:

As regards general education and training, the National Curriculum Statement provides for eight learning areas: language, mathematics, life skills, technology, arts and culture, social science, natural science, and economic and management sciences. The Foundation Phase comprises three learning programmes: Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills. The curriculum builds on the vision and values of the Constitution and principles, which include social justice, a healthy environment, human rights and inclusion. The pedagogy promotes learner-centeredness and group work.

3.9.3. Average number of hours per week and average amount of weeks per year:

For Grade R learners, the suggested percentage of time allocation is as follows: Literacy, 40%; Numeracy, 35%; and Life Skills, 25%.

3.10. Any other relevant and pertinent information

The DoE is making progress in dealing with ECD challenges in the country. Grade R is continuing to be phased in. Around 500,000 learners were enrolled in Grade R classes in 2005. The target for 2010 is to have all learners (approximately 1 million) enrolled in an accredited Reception Year programme.
C. SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION REGARDING ECCE (TO BE COMPILED IN COLLABORATION WITH UNICEF OFFICES WHERE POSSIBLE)

4.1. Parenting programmes are usually addressed to parents and families of children less than 6 years of age. Please provide information about any parenting programmes in your country according to the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of programme</th>
<th>Yes or No (note for each programme)</th>
<th>Please estimate the number of beneficiaries (if possible)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parenting education through early learning centres and child care centres</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As component of health and nutrition programmes, such as information about child development included in health and nutrition visits</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent groups that meet to discuss issues of their young children, including health, nutritional status, and development</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As component of adolescent, livelihood or literacy programmes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media broadcast, such as Sesame Street, with media for and with children</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Are any of these programmes targeted specifically toward the vulnerable, poor, disadvantaged or excluded? If so, which ones? (Please provide/attach any additional and relevant information if available).

There is no system in place yet, but a process is underway.

4.2. Is there a national-level system for monitoring children’s development or school readiness prior to entering primary school?

Not available
4.3. Is there a policy on early childhood (ECCE, ECD, etc.) that has been accepted? If not, is there one under development?

The Education White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Development (2001) reflects the current policy on ECD.

[Information revised and additional data provided by the Department of Education, June 2006.]