REGIONAL GUIDELINES

For Developing Policy, Regulation and Standards in

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Preface

This publication, *Guidelines for Developing Policy, Regulation and Standards in Early Childhood Development Services* is the first of its kind by the CARICOM Secretariat. The Guidelines seek to align and standardise Early Childhood Development Services throughout the Community. They are intended to support the establishment of protective mechanisms and benchmarks at national level and provide a common methodology and set of principles which can be used by member countries in developing early childhood policy, regulatory and standards regimes.

In 1997, the Standing Committee of Ministers of Education approved the Caribbean Plan of Action for Early Childhood Care, Education and Development and this Plan, endorsed by the 18th (1997) Conference of Heads, in the Special Session on Human Resource Development, set the stage for regional support to national planning in Early Childhood Development in the region. Building on the 1997 Plan, a Regional Early Childhood Action Plan 2002-2015 was endorsed by the 5th Special Meeting of the Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD), October 2002. The Plan was also informed by The Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Kingston Consensus from the Fifth Ministerial Meeting on Children and Social Policy in the Americas, 2002, and commitments made at the United Nations Special Session on Children, "A World Fit for Children" 2002.

The varied experiences in the development of Early Childhood Services in the Region led to the convening of a Caribbean Policy Forum on Early Childhood Development (ECD) in Kingston, Jamaica in March 2006. The Forum was aimed at sensitising policy makers to the importance of investment in Early Childhood Development and the extent to which the success of the Caribbean Single Market Economy (CSME) depended on the adequate development of our Human Resources, starting with our youngest citizens.

The CARICOM Secretariat and Development Partners agreed as a priority to support the development of policies, regulation and standards for early childhood development services and to harmonize expectations across the region for quality and equity in access to services. This was seen as an important development especially in the context of the CSME, free movement of skilled nationals and the associated contingent rights. A technical workshop held in Antigua, September 2006, brought together representatives from all Member States and led to the subsequent drafting of the Guidelines.

Consultation on the draft Guidelines, initiated by the Secretariat with Member States during 2007 facilitated multi-stakeholder consideration at the national level over a five month period. The recommendations informed the completion of the final draft which was endorsed for publication by the Special Meeting of the Council on Human and Social Development (COHSOD) on Children held in Georgetown Guyana, 17th – 19th March, 2008.

The publication is supported by UNICEF and UNESCO whose assistance is greatly appreciated.

Future Guidelines to be developed by the CARICOM Secretariat in collaboration with the Regional ECD Working Group will address key areas of implementation of national standards, governance and investment in the development of ECD Services.

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Introductory Remarks

Improving the standard of services for early childhood is absolutely critical in addressing the particular challenges to childhood in the Caribbean, including HIV, violence, and poverty. Studies all over the world have evidenced the high returns brought by investments in early childhood, especially in the reduction of violence and poverty; but equally, they have shown that to pay off substantially, services must have high standards. These Guidelines are part of a drive to improve the quality of education and care for ALL children, especially the most disadvantaged.

Early childhood services have been growing rapidly in the CARICOM region, particularly since the latter half of the 20th Century, as mothers were increasingly employed out of the home and away from the support of extended family networks. Consequently, the Caribbean region saw a rapid expansion of preschool and day care services which were mainly established by private and charitable interest groups.

The 2007 Education for All Global Monitoring Report[1] described Early Childhood Services in the CARICOM Caribbean region as characterized by:

- o Varying standards of care and quality
- o Absence of national standards
- o Weak licensing, certification and monitoring systems
- o A preponderance of small, undercapitalized operators
- o Low levels of training among caregivers

Attention needs to be paid therefore to the quality and type of services provided as scientific and economic evidence show that the Early Childhood Sector is in fact a key building block for national development. In addition, there is the need to clarify the role of government in order to ensure consistency and quality in the services provided to children in a sector that is predominantly private, charitable and community driven.

UNESCO and UNICEF are delighted to support the CARICOM Secretariat in the development and publication of these Guidelines which seek to provide a shared framework for quality early childhood care and education in the context of the increased mobility of people, goods and services within the Caribbean

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[1] "Early Childhood Care and Education in the Caribbean Region (CARICOM States), Education for All: Global Monitoring Report 2007", Background Paper by Leon D. Charles and Sian Williams, www.efareport.unesco.org

Developing Policy, Regulation and Standards in

Single Market Economy (CSME). The Guidelines are a product of a fruitful collaboration at regional level to reach consensus on the articulation of what practical action needs to be taken at the policy and regulatory levels to ensure that children are cared for and educated effectively in their formative years.

UNICEF and UNESCO will continue to support the CARICOM Secretariat and the CARICOM Member States and call on Governments to invest further in early childhood and put in place the necessary policy and regulatory systems that will allow all children, especially the poor and excluded, to benefit from quality early childhood services.

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These Guidelines aim to provide practical guidance to early childhood officers who are charged with the responsibility of delivering a high quality early childhood development experience for the children in their countries. The Guidelines will focus on the educational and development aspects of the early childhood experience in settings such as preschool and day care services. They do not address the aspects that are traditionally handled by the health sector i.e. pre-natal care, post-natal care, immunization, nutrition and developmental screening

The delivery of such a high quality early childhood experience will be significantly affected by the nature of the enabling environment within which the sector operates, in particular as it relates to the existence of clear policy and regulatory frameworks.

These Guidelines are therefore intended to provide a roadmap that can be easily followed by Officers and Policymakers wishing to establish, review and/or strengthen policy and regulatory frameworks. They address three questions from an Officer's point of view – What should I do? Why should I do it? And how should I approach it? The layout and presentation are intended to facilitate this ease of use.

The Guidelines begin with a discussion of the practical reasons why policy and regulatory frameworks are needed.

They then elaborate in detail on each of the reasons, clarifying the main elements that need to be included in a policy framework and in a regulatory framework. In each case, this is followed by a discussion of the process that should be used in developing or reviewing these frameworks, especially in a context where one wants to get ownership and support from all relevant stakeholders.

The final section deals with the type of management and administrative structures that are needed to facilitate effective implementation of these policies and regulations and deliver the high quality early childhood experience that is at that the core of this entire process.

Definitions

Early Childhood Development or ECD is a "comprehensive approach to policies and programmes for children from birth to eight years of age, their parents and caregivers. Its purpose is to protect the child's rights to develop his or her full cognitive, emotional, social and physical potential"[1].

Early Childhood Officers are persons employed by government to coordinate, regulate and develop early childhood services in their countries. Generally employed by the ministries responsible for Education, Human Development, Social Welfare or Social Services, the officers can also be employed by or seconded to statutory agencies established to regulate and coordinate support to the early childhood development sector

Early Childhood Settings or Institutions or Services provide care and education for children. These include day care centres, preschools, infant schools and those family homes in which day care or after preschool services are being provided. Within these contexts:

- *Childminding* describes a service provided in a private home for three children or less by a registered person. Generally this service is provided for children from a few weeks old until they can go to preschool; sometimes childminders continue to provide an 'after preschool' service for children of working parents which may continue until children are 8 or even older.
- *Home based day care* describes a service provided in a private home usually for four or more children by a registered person with assistants. Generally this service is provided for children from a few weeks old until they can go to preschool or primary school.
- *Centre based day care* or day care centre describes a registered and licensed service providing care and learning experiences for children during parents' working hours throughout the year. Generally this service is provided for children from a few weeks old until they can go to preschool or primary school.
- *Preschool or Infant School* describes an education service for children three years and older, for part of the school day or for full day, during the school terms times and in some cases during the normal school 'holiday' periods
- *After School Service* describes a service for the care of children provided in any of the settings listed above between the end of the school day and the time children can safely go home

Early Childhood Practitioners are persons employed as teachers, caregivers, principals and supervisors to care and provide learning experiences for children in day care centres, preschools and other similar early childhood services.

1   UNICEF, The State of The World's Children 2001. pg. 17

Early Childhood Service Operators or Centre Operators generally describe those persons in the private sector including voluntary and community based provision that own and/or operate early childhood services. These terms are not normally used for persons managing services in the public sector (please see the broad definition under Early Childhood Practitioners above)

The Enabling Environment refers to the set of international, national, provincial or local policies and supporting legislation that together constitute the "rules of the game" and enables all the institutions and the stakeholders to play their respective roles. A proper enabling environment is essential to ensure the rights and assets of all stakeholders, individuals, and public and private sector organizations and companies[2].

A Policy is a statement of intent regarding a desirable state of affairs, accompanied by a set of goals or objectives that the government would like to achieve and strategies for achieving these goals and objectives.

A Policy Framework is the Policy Statement, accompanied by the Institutional Structures for implementing the policy and for managing, monitoring and evaluating the policy implementation.

A Regulatory Framework consists of the system of laws and regulations that govern the operations of a sector. In an Early Childhood context[3], this system should include:

(a) Formal standards for the operation of early childhood institutions. Standards provide specifications for the level, quality or principle of service required. They should cover issues like the suitability of the physical environment, health and safety, learning resources, the quality of the child-caregiver interaction, record-keeping, staffing levels and the like.

(b) Regulation establishing procedures for granting approval for the operation of early childhood institutions. This is usually done through licensing systems that include criteria for the issuing of licenses and the revocation of same.

(c) Systems and Procedures for the registration of institutions and for the assessment of the eligibility of institutions to receive licenses and for the monitoring of adherence to the licensing criteria once licenses have been approved.

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2   Adapted from Niels Ipsen, United Nations Environment Programme

3   In the legislative provisions in the CARICOM Caribbean, the development of regulatory frameworks for Early Childhood has generally occurred separately from that for regulatory frameworks for Primary Education. Thus standards and regulations for primary education will apply for children of primary school age and the standards and regulations for early childhood apply for children of pre-primary age. The challenge throughout the region is to harmonise these two regulatory frameworks for a consistent approach in standards and regulations for all services for children from birth to 8 years of age.

Chapter One

Why Do We Need Early Childhood Policy and Regulatory Frameworks?

Policy and Regulatory Frameworks are needed in the early childhood sector and in many other socio-economic sectors for three main reasons.

The first reason is that although provision has been made through Education legislation in the region for universal primary education, in general this legislation does not provide duties or powers to provide for children's education, guidance and progression at the pre-primary level. The early childhood sector is growing rapidly throughout the region without the benefit of an overarching framework of policy and regulation to ensure that it is harmonised and consistent with the expectations for primary education.

> **Policy and Regulatory Frameworks are needed because:**
>
> 1. Expectations for ECD provision need to be harmonized with those for primary education
>
> 2. Governments are faced with many choices.
>
> 3. Different stakeholders have conflicting and contradictory objectives and interests.
>
> 4. Expectations for ECD provision need to be harmonized with those for primary education

The second of these is that Governments, recognising the importance of ECD, are faced with many choices over the manner in which the sector should be allowed to develop, or supported in developing.

In the early childhood field, for instance, the early childhood sector could place an emphasis on custodial care of children, providing mainly for a child's safety and health needs, or it could extend its emphasis to include a child's development needs – physical, cognitive, social, emotional, moral and spiritual. The decision on where to place this emphasis influences everything that happens in the early childhood setting – from the type and quality of caregiver, through to the contents of the physical environment, on to the kinds of activities that are engaged in – and the kind of child that emerges from the setting at the end of the time spent there.

The Government could also decide to allow the sector to develop as a private sector initiative where services are accessed by parents and families who can afford to pay the requisite fees, or it can decide that all children should have access to participation in early childhood programming. The latter option would imply some form of assistance to those parents and families that cannot afford to pay the requisite fees and therefore has implications for government expenditures and fiscal policies. It could also imply that government would become an early childhood service deliverer, similar to its role in delivering primary and secondary education throughout the region.

The third reason is that there are many stakeholders operating within a sector who sometimes have conflicting and contradictory objectives and interests.

In the early childhood sector, for example, the major stakeholders are the children, parents, centre operators, teachers and caregivers, policy-makers and the community at large. A major concern of the centre operators will be their ability to operate financially viable centres. This will require them to maximize on fees, and to manage their costs within the constraints of the available finances. This immediately places them at odds with parents, for example, who would want to have access at an affordable fee; with teachers, who would want to receive attractive salaries and benefits in return for their services; and with policy makers, who will want to ensure that the service standards that are provided are in keeping with accepted norms of health, safety, pedagogical quality and social and emotional support.

It is therefore necessary to establish the parameters within which all these stakeholders can have their needs reasonably satisfied, without undue disadvantage being suffered by any other group of stakeholders and without losing sight of the need to provide services that achieve desired outcomes for children's development and well being.

Establishment of these parameters is one of the roles that Governments are expected to play and they do this by establishing an enabling environment that clarifies the "rules of the game" for all stakeholders. Table 1 provides a detailed breakdown of all the components that can be considered as part of the enabling environment[4]. The two components that we will deal with in these Guidelines are the policy frameworks and the regulatory frameworks.

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4   Sourced from "The Enabling Environment for Implementing the Millennium Development Goals: Government Actions to Support NGOs" by Derick W. Brinkerhoff, Senior Fellow in International Public Management, Research Triangle Institute

The Policy Framework is important as it clarifies the direction in which the sector is expected to develop. It provides the answers to two critical questions - Where is the sector heading? And what is the output expected of the sector? These

> The Policy Framework clarifies the direction in which the sector is expected to develop.

questions are critical, as their answers will provide guidance for many other decisions that have to be made by governments, parents, teachers, centre operators and the like. Such decisions include considerations like: What kind of curriculum is needed in the centres? What level of training is needed for teachers and caregivers? What kind of participation and involvement is required of parents? What level of fees should be paid by parents? Should government provide assistance to those who cannot pay fees and if so, how should this be done? Should government provide subsidies or subventions to early childhood centres, especially those serving vulnerable or remote populations? and the like. The answers to these and many more questions will depend on the where the sector is headed and what is expected of the sector.

The Regulatory Framework is also important as it establishes the boundaries within which all players are expected to operate. By establishing defined minimum standards of service delivery, it clarifies expectations for parents, clarifies performance levels for

> The Regulatory Framework establishes the boundaries within which all players are expected to operate.

centre operators and teachers, and provides a basis for government to assess whether or not the centre operators are in fact delivering on the policies that have been enunciated by the Government.

Clear policy and regulatory frameworks are therefore essential, as they provide the basis for orderly development of the sector through planning, monitoring and evaluation and facilitate effective participation by all interested stakeholders.

Category of Environmental Factors	Key Enabling Features	Illustrative Government Enabling Actions
Economic	• Nondistortionary policy framework. • Encouragement of free markets & open competition. • Supportive of investment (including physical security). • Low transactions costs, credible commitment.	• Reducing red tape & unnecssary regulation. • Managing macro-economic policy to control inflation, deficit spending & assure stability. • Reducing tariffs, barriers to investement ("level playing field"). • Investing in physical infrastructure (roads, transportation, etc.). • Controlling criminality (e.g. mafias) & violence.
Politicial	• Democratic system that supports pluralism, accountability, transparency responsiveness. • Processes that encourage participation, social contact & state legitimacy. • Rule of law, contract enforcement, respect for human rights & property rights.	• Conduction free & fair elections. • Making information widely available, promoting free media. • Devolving power & resources to subnational levels of governemnt. • Limiting power & influence of interest groups. • Supporting civil society. • Assuring judicial independence.
Administrative	• Efficient service delivery capacity. • Low levels of corruption. • Institutional checks & balances. • Decentralization. • Civil service meritocracy.	• Curbing abuse & corruption. • Creating incentives for performance. • Separating service procision from financing. • Building cross-sectoral partnerships. • Establishing monitoring & evaluation systems. • Improving coordination across agencies & sectors.
Socio-cultural	• Presence of social capital & trust. • Tolerance of diversity. • Norms of inclusiveness, equity & fairness. • Belief in the value & efficacy of individual effort.	• Supporting marginalized & disadvantaged societal groups - pro-poor affirmative action, need based subsidies, safety nets, etc. • Encouraging civic dialogue, social compacts & consensus building. • Discouraging ethnic-based politics & policies. • Controlling violence (e.g. ethnic cleansing).
Resources	• Policies & investments in health, education, workforce development, information technology, science & research. • Adequate funding & institutional capacity.	• Setting policies & incentives that encourage private investment & corporate social responsibility. • Allocating public resources to assure maximization of social & economic potential.

Chapter Two

Elements of the Policy Framework[5]

The Policy Framework consists of two parts, the Policy Statement and the Implementation Structures.

The Policy Statement

The Policy Statement is the statement of intent which provides the direction in which the sector is expected to develop. It consists of:

<table>
<tr><td>The Policy Statement consists of:

1. The Vision
2. Goals and Objectives
3. Leading Strategies</td></tr>
</table>

1. A National ECD Vision that is well defined and shared. This Vision states the long term national goal for children's outcomes – the desired end state to be achieved.

2. Goals and Objectives that respond to identified challenges and needs. These should specify the ultimate ends sought by the Policy and translate the Vision into measurable outcomes.

3. A statement of leading Strategies that will guide activities towards the achievement of the goals and objectives. These are broad, long-range plans of action that outline the major steps that will be taken in achieving the goals and objectives.

It should be noted that a policy statement without the supporting implementation structures is practically useless!!

The Implementation Structures

The Implementation Structures consist of the institutional arrangements for implementing the Policy Statement. They include:

<table>
<tr><td>The Implementation Structures consist of:

1. Administrative arrangements
2. Investment Plans
3. Advocacy and communications strategies
4. Partnerships
5. Monitoring and Evaluation Processes</td></tr>
</table>

1. ECD administration, coordination and organizational structures

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5 Includes elements adapted from Emily Vargas-Baron, Planning Policies for Early Childhood Development: Guidelines for Action.

at all levels. These mechanisms will address the question of who will be responsible for implementing the strategies and how they will be organized.

2. Investment strategy and provision for the mobilization and allocation of resources: human, institutional, financial and material. This will address the question of how resources will be mobilized e.g. what resources are required; how will the resources be accessed; how much can be made available from local resources; what role can the international donor community play? It can also look at issues like taxation, partnerships, incentives and the like.

3. Policy advocacy and social communications. This will deal with communication issues e.g. how will the message be spread to all stakeholders and interest groups and who will be responsible for doing it.

4. Donor and partnership coordination. This will address the question of the nature of the relationship to be developed with donors and who will be responsible for liaising with them.

5. Policy monitoring and evaluation system and a system of accountability to measure the attainment of policy results. This will address the question of how will the implementation of the Policy and Action Plan be managed; Who will the administrative Unit be responsible to; How regular will it report; and the like.

The contents of the Policy Framework have to be informed by a detailed Situational Analysis regarding the status, problems and needs of children and families. This is absolutely crucial, as a failure to diagnose the existing problems accurately can lead to inappropriate decisions being made, inappropriate policies being enunciated and inappropriate strategies being pursued. Any of the foregoing could result in significant political and financial repercussions for the Government and every effort should be made to ensure that they do not occur.

It is good practice to include a brief summary of the findings of the Situational Analysis as an introduction to the Policy Statement, as this will set the context for the Vision, Goals, Objectives and Strategies.

Chapter Three

Developing the Policy Framework

The policy development process could be viewed as consisting of five (5) distinct phases, viz:

1. Preparation
2. ECD Situation Analysis
3. Community and Stakeholder Consultations
4. Policy Draft and Consensus Building
5. Policy Approval and Adoption

Preparation

This preparatory stage is one that is often overlooked. It is not that officers do not develop some ideas as to how to proceed. Rather, they often underestimate the need to plan at the level of detail that is required to ensure that the process runs smoothly.

This preparatory phase is aimed at mapping out the entire process (developing a detailed work plan), identifying key stakeholders to involve in the process, clarifying lines of authority and responsibility (who is in charge? who do we go to with problems?, etc. etc.), preparing a budget and confirming financing. Starting at the end – the final policy document in implementation phase – and working back through all the steps that are required to achieve this will serve not only to detail the route but also the time it will take to complete the journey satisfactorily.

During the Preparatory Stage:

1. Establish leadership
2. Set up a Planning Committee
3. Identify key stakeholders
4. Develop a workplan
5. Agree on the schedule
6. Develop a budget
7. Confirm financing

Many countries have found it useful to have the entire process coordinated by a Planning Committee comprised of key stakeholders. It is essential that leadership of the process is established and understood by all the stakeholders to minimize any confusion over who is responsible for driving the process and for maintaining the momentum to complete the work.

Situation Analysis

As indicated in the previous chapter, preparing the Situation Analysis is probably the most crucial part of the policy development process as it is the foundation on which the entire policy rests. At a minimum, it should address the following twelve (12) issues:

1. Describe the overall operating context - Political, Economic, Social, Technological.

2. Identify the international commitments binding the country including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Millennium Development Goals, Education For All and the World Fit for Children, amongst others. A summary of the international conventions that are relevant to children's development is contained in Annex 1.

3. Describe the significance for outcomes for children of regional and international trends in Early Childhood Development programming.

4. Describe the current status of sector – what kind of sector is it? Is it vibrant? Growing? Stagnant? Is there an interest among parents in accessing early childhood services? Is there a demand for developmental services? Is there a demand for services of good quality?

5. Identify and describe the driving forces affecting the development of the sector e.g. What is influencing the current state of the sector? What are the motivations and expectations of the key stakeholders? What is driving these motivations (for example, small business interests, philanthropic concerns)?

6. Provide a quantitative analysis (number and percentages) of the sector identifying coverage and gaps in service provision e.g. How many children below primary school age? How many children currently attend early childhood settings and of what type? How many centres/service providers are there? Who owns these centres – Government, Private, Community, NGOs, Churches? Can the unmet demand for services be quantified?

7. Identify the children who are vulnerable (number and percentages) e.g. How many children in the population are in need of services providing care, education or developmental support? How many are living in vulnerable situations e.g. poverty, HIV/AIDS, special needs? How many of these already participate in early childhood services? How many of those children do not have access to early childhood services and where are they located?

8. Identify disparities e.g. Is there any bias due to gender? rural-urban disparity? poverty? HIV-AIDS?

9. Identify available resources and issues affecting access to resources e.g. what is the level of resources currently invested in the sector? historical trends? constraints to further investment by government? by operators? by parents?

10. Discuss the quality of the current service provision including:

    a. Status of Curriculum – content, supporting materials and resources, actual implementation, etc.
    b. Status of physical facilities
    c. Skill level of teachers and caregivers
    d. Adult-Child Ratio

11. Discuss the level of involvement of parents and initiatives underway to strengthen the relationship between parents and centres.

12. Discuss the modalities in place for guiding, regulating or managing the Sector including the existence of policy frameworks, existing operational standards and regulations and existing institutional arrangements including type of regulatory or management structures, number of persons, role of officer(s).

A Situation Analysis that addresses these issues will provide the required information to assist in identifying the main areas of strengths and weaknesses in the sector and will provide the basis for developing an objective policy framework that will respond to the needs of the country.

It is important that specific responsibility is assigned for this task, and it may be necessary to source external expertise/consultants to assist in this process. It is also important that the assigned person has the authority to access key persons in all the relevant sectors and ministries and receives the necessary cooperation regarding access to data and internal reports.

> The Situation Analysis is the most crucial part of the policy development process as it is the foundation on which the entire policy rests.
>
> A failure to diagnose the existing problems accurately can lead to:
>
> 1. Inappropriate decisions being made;
>
> 2. Inappropriate policies being enunciated; and
>
> 3. Inappropriate strategies being pursued.

It may be useful to get the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry responsible to issue a formal letter to all relevant parties, advising that this activity is being carried out and indicating the level of cooperation that will be required.

The draft Situation Analysis should be submitted to the Planning Committee for review prior to finalization by the person conducting the exercise.

Once finalised, the Situation Analysis should then be used to prepare an Issues Paper that will be used as the basis for the next phase, the stakeholder consultations. This Issues Paper should highlight the main findings of the Situation Analysis and identify the key issues that need to be addressed by the country. It will be useful if these issues can be posed as questions which can then form the basis for the preparations for the consultations to be held in the next stage.

Community and Stakeholder Consultations

This next stage is crucial for the successful implementation of the Policy. Involvement of members of the community and stakeholders provides many benefits to the process:

1. It generates ownership of the final product. Involving stakeholders, listening to their concerns, addressing their concerns in a straightforward manner and discussing the extent to which they can be taken on board in the policy, or giving reasons why not, means that stakeholders and members of the community will see the final product as something that they contributed to and created. They will therefore be more inclined to provide support during implementation.

2. It creates trust. The discussions with stakeholders will have provided all parties with an opportunity to consider and discuss each other's viewpoints, thereby enabling greater understanding of the different perspectives that influence the final decisions. This will reduce suspicions that the process is being used to promote a particular (sometimes hidden) agenda.

> **Community and Stakeholder Consultations:**
>
> 1. Generate ownership of the final product
>
> 2. Create trust
>
> 3. Ensure that that the policy response is realistic
>
> 4. Provide an opportunity to resolve difficult issues in advance
>
> 5. Build awareness
>
> 6. Create a network of partners

3. It ensures that that the policy response is realistic. The mutual discussions will have considered the issues from a number of perspectives and the final result will be reflective of these different perspectives and realities.

4. It provides an opportunity to resolve difficult issues in advance. The mutual discussions could also provide a forum where difficult issues, which will have to be worked through at some time, could be dealt with in advance, instead of being deferred for the implementation stage.

5. It builds awareness. Involvement of stakeholders also generates awareness among critical constituencies at an early stage in the process. This makes it easier to implement the final policy, as the main persons that will be affected are already aware of it and have some idea of why it is being done and what it contains. This saves on the time and money that will be involved in designing and implementing an awareness programme to "sell" the policy after it has been approved.

6. It creates a network of partners. The consultations provide an opportunity for people working on the issues and affected by the issues to meet each other – sometimes for the first time. The networking that is created can prove useful during the implementation stage.

Key stakeholders to involve are:

1. Parents of children currently receiving ECD services;

2. Members of faith based and community organizations, parish and district level authorities, health centres/polyclinics and chambers of commerce;

3. Teachers and caregivers;

4. Private sector operators and service providers;

5. Government regulators e.g. fire services, public and environmental health services, child protection services, police, health personnel, physical planning personnel; and

> Key Stakeholders are:
> 1. Parents
> 2. Members of community-based organizations
> 3. Teachers and caregivers
> 4. Private sector
> 5. Government Regulators
> 6. Policy-makers

6. Policy-makers e.g. political leaders and senior public servants, including Permanent Secretaries.

The Issues Paper should be used as the basis for the preparation of a Consultation Document to be circulated widely to the key stakeholders.

The Consultation Document should have a user friendly format that encourages response by stakeholders, such as a pamphlet setting out the issues for consultation with a tear off questionnaire portion. The questionnaire should use YES/NO options for answers as much as possible to enable responses to be quantified as numbers in agreement or disagreement. Space should be allocated for respondents to comment and provide alternative suggestions.

Consultation meetings should be arranged and publicized well in advance. The Consultation Document should be in the hands of stakeholders at least one week in advance of the scheduled date for the consultation, together with the Agenda for the meeting. This latter should provide for a summary presentation and discussion of the Issues Paper and a process for discussing the key questions posed in the Issues Paper. The responses of the participants in the consultation meetings should be recorded in writing and be appended to the report of the consultation process.

> Documentation is essential at every step of the consultative process:
>
> 1. Consultation Document – to be used at stakeholder consultations
>
> 2. First Draft (of Policy) – to be discussed by Planning Committee and key implementation personnel
>
> 3. Revised First Draft(s) – same audience as First Draft
>
> 4. Second Draft – to be discussed by National Consultation
>
> 5. Formal Draft Policy – to be submitted to Cabinet

Policy Drafts and Consensus Building

The outcomes of the stakeholder consultations should be used to prepare the First Draft of the Policy Document. The timeliness of this first draft is critical to ensure continuing momentum from the consultation process to the consensus building stage. This first draft should be discussed by the Planning Committee and, if possible, key personnel in the line ministries that will be responsible for implementation. This latter initiative is recommended, as it is important that the persons who will have the responsibility for implementation are not presented with "surprises" at the end of the day.

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The feedback from these discussions should be used to prepare a revised draft. Depending on the nature and scope of the initial comments, it may be necessary to submit this Revised First Draft (and other revised drafts) through the same process until there is some consensus at this level that the draft is fit for submission to a wider audience.

The approved Second Draft should then be submitted to a National Consultation Forum, lasting one or two days, for review. This Consultation should comprise senior personnel from all the main stakeholder and interest groups and should be used to critically review the proposed policy. It should be approached as an opportunity for the full range of stakeholders to examine the desirability and feasibility of the proposed policy and to make recommendations for further changes if the proposals are deemed inappropriate. Use of small breakout groups to focus on specific aspects of the policy e.g. Vision Statement, Strategies, Goals and Objectives, have been found to be useful in this context.

The outcomes of this National Consultation should be used to prepare the Formal Draft Policy that will be submitted to the national authorities (usually Cabinet) for approval and adoption. Some countries have found it useful to do a formal presentation to the relevant Minister to ensure that there is comfort at that level, before submitting to the final authority (usually Cabinet). Any amendments proposed by the Minister should then be incorporated into the formal draft prior to submission to the final authority.

Policy Approval and Adoption

This stage involves making the formal presentation to the authority with responsibility for policy decision making. This is usually a Cabinet function. It may be necessary for a technical person to accompany the Minister to this meeting and to do a technical presentation to accompany the submission.

Once the Policy Document is approved, the attention should immediately shift to implementation planning. This will include the development of an implementation work-plan addressing the setting up of administrative structures, the preparation of a budget, meetings with donors and partners to plan for coordination and funding, dissemination of the policy to all stakeholders and publicity of the policy and its implications for the early childhood sector.

> The Implementation Process should commence as soon as possible, in order to maintain the interest and commitment of stakeholders

It is important that the momentum that was generated by the policy formulation process be maintained and that the implementation processes be initiated as soon as possible after approval. Experience has shown that it is easy for the start of the implementation process to be delayed while the implementation details are being worked on. This could result in a loss of interest from the stakeholders whose expectations would have been raised as a result of the participatory policy formulation process.

Chapter Four[6]

Elements of the Regulatory Framework

Regulation means the requirement to comply with stipulated legal obligations that highlight how early childhood development services are to be administered, by whom, in what manner and under what conditions.

Regulation is usually instituted where there is a public interest that needs to be protected. International research has demonstrated that the quality of a child's early childhood experience makes a significant difference to school preparation and participation, completion and achievement and to the reduction in costs to society of remedial and rehabilitative actions in later childhood and adulthood.

In this context, the public interest in the welfare and education of children, together with a need to institute a measure of control where the interests of our most vulnerable children are at stake, provide compelling reasons for regulation. Regulation in this context ensures order, encourages standardization, develops quality and protects the vulnerable.

A Regulatory Framework is established by enacting legislation (statute and subsidiary legislation) that embodies the responsibilities and outcomes that are expected from early childhood development service providers and can include:

1. Statute (legislation) that provides for matters such as registration, licensing, and compliance with standards.

2. Standards that address the quality of service provided by the practitioners and that are agreed and settled. These can form the basis for regulation in subsidiary legislation, or be enacted as key elements in the statute.

3. Provisions for monitoring compliance and imposing appropriate sanctions.

> The Regulatory Framework consists of legislation – statute and subsidiary - that addresses:
>
> 1. Registration
> 2. Licensing
> 3. Standards
> 4. Compliance
> 5. Sanctions
> 6. Processes and procedures to guide the above.

6   Based on presentations by Barry Carrington and Idamay Denny at the Antigua Workshop

4. Provisions that bind the State or the Crown (in the case of Commonwealth countries).

The Statute (legislation) should provide for the powers and duties required for regulation of the sector. These include:

1. Clear definitions of key concepts (e.g. private early childhood institution, proprietor/owner);

2. Registration and licensing requirements, including provisions such as: "No person shall keep or maintain a private early childhood institution unless it is registered under this Act."

3. Provision for Standards e.g. "A proprietor of a licensed private early childhood institution must comply with the Minimum Service Standard contained in Regulations made under this Act."

4. Identification of penalties for breach of the Act (Licensing/Registration), or the Standards (Regulations).

5. Provision for monitoring the quality of service e.g. visits to institutions for monitoring purposes, requirements for reports, responsible agency for implementing monitoring functions.

6. Provision for periodic inspection and review of service prior to renewal of license to operate.

7. Penalties for failure to comply with licensing requirements or standards.

8. Provision for establishment of a Complaints Procedure and Authority/Body to receive complaints, investigate and resolve.

9. General Provision for making and or amending regulations through subsidiary legislation.

In some countries, the statute has also been used to strengthen the enabling environment by requiring government to:

1. Assess the need for early childhood development services, and to plan with the private sector how to meet the needs of children, especially the most vulnerable and those with disabilities.

2. Work with the private sector to improve the outcomes of all children

Developing Policy, Regulation and Standards in

prior to primary school entry and to reduce inequalities between them by ensuring that early childhood development services provide equitable access and quality of service.

3. Provide information to all parents, in language and formats that are accessible to them, on the education and care children require in order to achieve desired outcomes for their development and well being.

4. Introduce curricula in early childhood development services that harmonise with regional expectations for learning outcomes and standards in early childhood.

The Subsidiary Legislation (Rules, Regulations, Orders, Statutory Instruments etc.) elaborates on the detail of the regulatory framework established under powers created by the Statute. Separating the Statute from the subsidiary legislation in this way provides capacity for revising the subsidiary legislation from time to time without having to amend the Statute, thereby providing flexibility to respond to changing conditions in the sector. Subsidiary legislation should include:

1. Definitions.

2. Minimum Standards covering physical facilities; qualifications of staff; and any other requirements (procedure in case of accidents, sickness etc.).

3. Procedure for compliance.

4. Provisions for enforcement.

Developing the Regulatory Framework

Development of the Regulatory Framework for Early Childhood Development Services requires adequate processes to be designed and implemented for carrying out the various regulatory functions. These will include:

1. Registration/Licensing processes to ensure that all service providers and operators are approved by the competent authority.

2. Quality Assurance processes to ensure that the required standards are maintained on an ongoing basis.

3. Compliance and Enforcement processes to respond to situations where the standards are not being maintained, despite being drawn to the attention of the service provider.

The Registration/Licensing Process

Registration and Licensing processes are both aimed at providing operators with formal authority to operate, although they differ in their level of formality and in the legal basis from which they are implemented and enforced.

A Registration process is usually aimed at ensuring that all operators are known to the authorities. It normally requires the submission of basic information to the authorities and may include the issuing of a formal document by the authorities acknowledging that permission has been granted to provide services. There may or may not be conditions attached to the provision of these services.

A Licensing process, on the other hand, is more formal. The issuance of a license acknowledges that the operator has received formal authority to operate, usually with the undertaking that specific requirements e.g.

> Effective Registration and Licensing Processes require:
>
> 1. Designation of responsibility for process
>
> 2. Clear registration and licensing requirements
>
> 3. Clear criteria and processes for granting approvals
>
> 4. Record keeping

7   Based on presentations by Barry Carrington and Idamay Denny at the Antigua Workshop

standards, will be adhered to. Failure to adhere to these standards could result in penalties, which may include, under specified circumstances, the revocation of the license. In some regimes, licensing is preceded by formal registration.

A fully functional registration and licensing process requires:

1. Designation of overall responsibility for the process – establishing which agency or department of government will be responsible for ensuring that registration and licensing procedures have been followed and for granting approvals to operate.

2. Identification of registration and licensing requirements – determining what information is needed, how and when it should be provided, how it would be evaluated and verified and the like. This is usually incorporated into a Guide to the Registration Process and a Registration Form which all applicants are required to complete and which will be reviewed and approved by the relevant authorities. Samples of a Guide and Registration Form are provided in Annex 2.

3. Granting of approval – establishing the criteria that have to be satisfied for granting approval, the length of time for which the license is valid, the process for making final decisions and the manner in which the registration will be formally granted e.g. issuing of a Certificate of Registration, or a Formal License to Operate.

4. Record keeping – formal records, with supporting documentation, will have to be maintained of applications received, registrations approved, licenses granted, expired licenses, licenses that have been revoked and the like. Such record-keeping should ideally be done by the formal authority that is responsible for the process, and should be designed in a manner that will facilitate easy retrieval of documentation, when needed.

Quality Assurance Process

The Quality Assurance function needs to address three (3) issues, viz:

1. Indicators of quality, usually expressed through Minimum Standards and related performance indicators.

2. Monitoring and inspection.

> **Effective Quality Assurance Processes require:**
> 1. Indicators of quality
> 2. Monitoring and inspection processes – personnel, inspection routines, checklists
> 3. Feedback and follow-up

3. Feedback and follow-up with service providers.

Minimum Standards

The desired levels of performance are normally expressed in the form of Minimum Standards. Minimum Standards have a number of uses in the efforts to improve the life chances of young children[8]. They can be used to provide benchmarks to:

1. Improve the quality of learning opportunities for children;

2. Improve the quality of adult-child interactions;

3. Monitor the progress of children;

4. Monitor the involvement of parents and the community by the staff of the early childhood setting;

5. Improve the preparation and in-service training of the practitioners;

6. Monitor the effectiveness of the programme and approach at the early childhood setting;

7. Assist efforts to identify needs for individualized approaches to meet children's special educational needs;

8. Improve public knowledge and awareness of children's development (through public information materials, parent information etc).

Minimum Standards cover the learning and care aspects of the functioning of the early childhood setting and are intended to ensure that the children attending are able to achieve the learning outcomes that have been established by Policy, enabled by Statute and detailed in Regulation. A Draft ECD Minimum Service Standard for the Caribbean has been developed based on the strategies and conditions necessary for achieving the Learning Outcomes that have been developed for the Caribbean Region (CARICOM States)[9].

8   Kagan, S and Britto, P (2005) Steps to developing standards for early learning: Process Guidelines , for the Early Childhood Development Unit, UNICEF New York

9   The Caribbean Learning Outcomes Framework for Early Childhood was developed by representatives of 18 CARICOM countries in a regional technical workshop in Barbados, May 2004 (University of the West Indies in collaboration with IADB, UNICEF and CDB). This was followed by the production of Learning Outcomes for Early Childhood Development in the Caribbean: A Curriculum Resource Guide launched in May 2005, widely used in the region for curriculum development. The regional technical workshop in Antigua, September 2006, participated in by all 20 CARICOM Member and Associate Member States, developed the ECD Minimum Service Standard for achieving the Learning Outcomes referred to in this Guidance.

The Draft ECD Minimum Service Standard has been defined as "an <u>essential</u> requirement for achieving desired outcomes for children's development and well being"[10]. It addresses twelve (12) areas deemed critical to optimal early childhood development, viz:

> Minimum Standards are intended to ensure that the participating children are able to achieve the desired learning outcomes

1. The development of a healthy, strong and well adjusted child.

2. The development of a child's ability to communicate effectively.

3. The development of a child who values his/her own culture and that of others.

4. The development of a child who is a critical thinker and independent learner.

5. The development of a child who respects him/herself, others and the environment.

6. The development of a resilient child.

7. The profile and preparation of persons providing care and learning experiences for children.

8. The management of challenging child behaviours and the use of positive discipline practices.

9. The provision for safety, security, health and beneficial nutrition.

10. The inclusion of children with different needs and abilities.

11. The protection of children from harm and neglect.

12. The involvement of parents and communities.

This Minimum Service Standard provides the basis for the establishment of benchmarks or Performance Indicators that can be used by an assessor to determine whether or not the early childhood setting is performing at the desired level.

Annex 3 sets out the Draft ECD Minimum Service Standard that is based on the Learning Outcomes that have been developed for the Caribbean Region. This can be used as a template for developing Minimum Standards at the national level.

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10   Report of the Regional Technical Workshop on Policies and Standards in Early Childhood Development in the Caribbean, 25th to 28th September 2006, Antigua. (CARICOM in collaboration with UNESCO, UNICEF, IADB and CDB)

Annex 4 provides samples of Performance Monitoring Frameworks for Standards, one from Jamaica and, based on this example, one that could be developed for the Draft ECD Minimum Service Standard for the Caribbean.

Annex 5 provides 'Standards at a Glance". This Annex provides a quick summary of what is required to lay the foundation for the ECD Minimum Service Standard.

Monitoring and Inspection

It is necessary for the regulating entity to have clear mechanisms for providing support to the early childhood settings and also to challenge them to improve and develop their services to children. In addition, there needs to be a rigorous inspection system in place.

Governments can organise Monitoring Functions through:

1. Dedicated officers, for example in an Early Childhood Unit in a line Ministry, or in a special entity set up for the regulatory purpose such as a Child Care Board or Early Childhood Commission.

2. Designated officers, usually within a line Ministry who perform a number of generic functions, such as early childhood training, curriculum advice, child care and protection, assessment and evaluation, and support at the district level.

3. A combination of the two, such as a core dedicated officer overseeing the deployment of other officers (subject to resource constraints) in conjunction with experienced practitioners (principals, supervisors) designated as being able to provide monitoring functions on behalf of the government in a particular area (special educational needs) or location (remote rural, island in a multi island state).

Monitoring functions include ongoing reviews of compliance with registration/licensing processes and identification of support requirements to meet minimum standards. Monitoring Officers generally combine monitoring functions with key development responsibilities within the sector which might include curriculum, special educational needs, inclusion, etc. as part of a team of experienced early childhood officers qualified at the tertiary level.

The Inspectorate can be established by government in one of two ways:

1. The setting up of an Early Childhood Inspectorate as an internal department of government.

2. The setting up of an Early Childhood Inspectorate under Statute as a body independent of government.

The inspectorate function generally involves a pre-arranged annual inspection of early childhood settings to review progress against performance indicators in children's learning outcomes, development and well being and to generally promote the development of a culture of self improvement and development. Prior to the pre-arranged visit, the early childhood setting undertakes a self evaluation process to prepare. The Inspectorate generally organises one other visit to each early childhood setting in the year; this additional visit is unannounced and serves as a cross check for the annual inspection. Inspectorates are led by Chief Inspectors, who are highly qualified and experienced practitioners in early childhood development.

The number of Monitoring Officers (dedicated and designated) and Inspectors in the Inspectorate team depends on the extent to which the early childhood settings require support to register, become licensed and to meet minimum standards. A phased implementation of a regulatory framework would be needed in most Caribbean countries, where the systems for regulation are new, the sector largely made up of private operators and where data collected (through surveys of the learning environments in early childhood settings) reveal the training and resource requirements for meeting minimum standards. A proposed complement of officers and inspectors for a national population of a hundred thousand and an early childhood sector of a hundred settings would be as follows:

1. A ratio of one dedicated monitoring officer to twenty early childhood settings is practicable where half of the settings meet the standards and half of which require human or financial assistance to meet them. Where designated officers can assist, it may be possible to intensify efforts to support a setting through mentoring or 'twinning' arrangements. Where this level of intensity in support cannot be provided, a longer period for phased implementation of standards will be needed.

2. A core dedicated staffing of at least three early childhood officers (with combined monitoring and development responsibilities) with in addition an agreed system for designating officers across line Ministries to provide support and monitoring functions as required to provide full coverage of the sector.

3. An inspectorate with two inspectors. It is useful if the early childhood inspectorate functions are combined with inspectorate functions for other services in the wider care and education services (for example training in tertiary institutions, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and teacher training and assessment, child protection services, private and independent schools, etc) thus providing a wider pool of expertise and experience from which to obtain guidance.

These Inspectors should have standard forms for assessing and reporting back to the regulatory entity in the early childhood sector with provisions for an objective rating of the performance of the setting on all key indicators. These ratings and the recommendations would be used to determine follow-up action as a result of the inspection report.

Feedback and Follow-up

This should be provided in writing to each setting after every inspection visit, together with recommendations for follow-up action by the management. The implementation of these recommendations should be closely monitored by the regulating entity through follow-up visits – scheduled and unscheduled.

> Feedback should be provided after each inspection visit

Compliance and Enforcement Process

These processes represent the "last resort" when settings are not performing at the minimum standard and are not responding to the recommendations made by the inspector for improving service provision. They include:

1. Clear guidelines on the interpretation and implications of the ratings that are provided by the inspector.

> Compliance and Enforcement Processes should only be used as a last resort!!

2. Clear articulation of applicable penalties, including classification of the different levels of violation and their relationship to the inspector's ratings and the applicable penalties for each level.

3. Clear procedures for addressing violations e.g. a staged process which includes warnings prior to application of harsher penalties.

4. Clear procedures and requirements for lifting of penalties once compliance has been verified.

Implications for Implementing the Regulatory Framework

In developing the Regulatory Framework, it is important to note that private care providers may be apprehensive about regulation. It is important therefore to be as inclusive as possible in approach and to avoid creating an "us" vs. "them" scenario.

In this regard, the processes that are used to develop statute and regulations are important and it is recommended that a stakeholder consultative process, similar to the one recommended in Chapter 3 for policy development, be used. This is especially important for reaching a consensus on the Minimum Standards,

as it is the service providers and operators that will have to implement and sustain these on a day to day basis.

Experience in some countries has also shown that the initial implementation of regulatory frameworks may have to be done on a phased basis. This is especially useful in situations where the majority

> It may be useful to do the initial implementation of the regulatory framework on a phased basis

of service providers are operating below the desired minimum standards. In such situations, it may be useful to initiate "light regulation" such as core requirements for meeting standards in the early stages of implementation and to provide a moratorium (3 – 5 years) for service providers to upgrade their operations to the desired level. Provision of technical and financial assistance, as well as training and capacity building activities, has also been found to be beneficial in such circumstances.

Management and Administrative Requirements

The final step in developing effective policy and regulatory frameworks is to put in place effective management and administrative requirements. Without these, all the efforts to design and develop these frameworks will have been in vain.

To be effective, management and administrative processes have to satisfy two (2) criteria:

1. Availability of appropriate technical and administrative competence; and

2. Appropriateness of the organizational structure, with clearly lines of authority and responsibility.

Technical and Administrative Competence

Appropriate technical and administrative competencies MUST be available to perform the following tasks, viz:

Policy Implementation

1. Coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the policy implementation process.

2. Establishing systems for data collection and review.

3. Implementation of the various policy strategies.

4. Coordination of training and assessment of caregivers and teachers in partnership with tertiary institutions and TVET systems.

5. Developing mechanisms for increased access for disadvantaged children.

Effective management and administration require:

1. Technical and administrative competence to perform:

   (a) Policy implementation functions

   (b) Regulatory functions

2. An organizational structure with:

   (a) Clear lines of authority

   (b) Clear lines of responsibility

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6. Providing leadership to quality improvements at the service provider level.

7. Liaising with funding agencies and international development partners.

8. Managing processes for communications and advocacy.

Regulatory Enforcement

1. Providing guidance in the registration process, including site visits.

2. Supporting private sector operators to raise standards and realize the benefits.

3. Assessing new applicants for approval for registration and licensing.

4. Approving the issuing of licences.

5. Monitoring service providers to ensure compliance with the standards to include feedback and follow-up.

6. Liaising with the Inspectorate, following up on recommendations.

7. Compliance and Enforcement, as necessary.

Organisational Structure Options

Effective performance of the policy and regulatory tasks could be achieved using a variety of organizational structures, viz:

1. Self-contained Early Childhood Development (ECD) entities – where all of the functions are housed in the ECD Entity, whether it is a Unit or a Department of a line Ministry or in an autonomous agency such as a Council or Commission.

2. ECD functions mainstreamed within the broader line Ministry, where there is no separate ECD Unit but the ECD functions are performed as part of the responsibilities of central departments within the ministry e.g. Policy functions could be performed by Planning Units and Regulatory functions could be done by Education/Curriculum Officers.

3. A Mixed Structure which includes combinations of different approaches e.g.:

   a. ECD Unit does some functions, while Ministry department does others, OR

   b. ECD Unit and/or Ministry do some functions, while others are outsourced to independent agencies.

The option chosen will have to be specific to the national situation and will be influenced by considerations of cost, available personnel, and overall development strategy to name a few. The important point to note here is that regardless of the option chosen, the structure must be clearly defined, with the relevant officers having clearly defined and appropriate levels of authority and responsibility to effectively carry out the functions described above

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Relevance of Major International Conferences and International Human Rights Convention on Children to the Early Childhood Development Sector "They are all about investing in children."			
WORLD FIT FOR CHILDREN GOALS	**UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD**	**MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS**	**EDUCATION FOR ALL GOALS**
• Promoting healthy lives	Art. 24 Every child has the right to good health and access to effective health services	• Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger • Reduce child mortality • Improve maternal mortality • Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	
• Providing quality education	Art. 23 Children with disabilities have the right to an education and special care Art. 28. Every child has the right to education and appropriate school discipline. Art. 29. The purpose of every child's education is to develop his/her talents, personality and mental and physical abilities and to create an understanding of the rights of other people	• Achieve universal primary education • Promote gender quality and empower women	• Expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children
• Combating HIV/AIDS	Art. 24. Every child has the right to good health and medical care	• Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	

• Protecting children from harm, abuse, exploitation and violence	Art. 7. Every child has the right to a name, nationality and to know and be cared for by his/her parents. Art. 19. Every child has the right to be protected from all forms of mental and physical abuse and violence Art. 32. Every child has the right to be protected from work which is harmful to their lives Art. 33. Every child has the right to be protected from the sale and peddling of illegal drugs Art. 34 Every child has the right to be protected from sexual abuse	• Ensure environmental sustainability • Global partnership for development (governance)	

Sample Registration Guide and Registration Form

THE REGISTRATION PROCEDURE

Initial application enquiries should be made directly to the [NAME THE MINISTRY/DEPARTMENT]

The Early Childhood Minimum Service Standard and Administrative Policies and Guidelines are available to applicants for review at the [NAME OFFICE OF THE REGISTRATION AUTHORITY]. Applicants can request an initial visit by an Early Childhood Officer to advise on the suitability of the premises for an Early Childhood Service.

Those wishing to obtain more information and/or proceed with an application for registration are then required to purchase an Early Childhood Development Service application pack that includes the application form.

If Planning Permission is required for the premises, an early application for this must be made. It may be necessary to seek [VERIFICATION OR CERTIFICATE] from the [NAME THE MINISTRY RESPONSIBLE FOR PLANNING PERMISSION]. The registration process cannot proceed very far until any necessary planning permission is granted.

Upon receipt of the completed application forms and correct remittance, contact will be made by an Early Childhood Officer to arrange a 'site visit'.

On the visit, an assessment will be made of the premises and its suitability for the proposed venture.

Officers of the Fire Service and the [NAME THE SERVICE RESPONSIBLE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH OR ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH] will inspect the premises and make recommendations.

All areas of improvement/amendment will be given in writing, with timescales for completion.

The registered provider will be interviewed. The suitability of the supervisor of the Early Childhood Development Service will be assessed by means of discussion and observation. A check will be performed through the Police and

Social services as to the appropriateness of the character of the registered provider, supervisor and the staff for work with children.

The number of children that may be cared for on the premises will be agreed, depending on the available space indoors and outdoors, together with the proposed staffing arrangements and any restrictions imposed by the Planning Department.

When all checks have been satisfactorily cleared and requirements met, the registration of the applicant as a provider of the specified numbers and age ranges of children at the particular premises will be endorsed on behalf of the Government.

At this point, the Certificate of Registration will be issued, which will indicate the following minimal requirements:

- The number of children and age range to be provided for
- The Minimum Service Standard with which the registered provider must comply
- Any variance to the registration requirements or compliance with the Minimum Service Standard

Where a registered provider/supervisor proposes to set up more than one establishment a separate registration will be necessary.

Should a registered provider also wish to provide <u>after school services</u> and/or <u>holiday services</u> for older children (up to age 8) within the setting, a separate registration will be required.

REFUSAL TO REGISTER

The (NAME THE ACT] empowers the Government to refuse registration if the applicant is deemed not fit to look after children and/or someone living or working on the premises is not fit to be in the proximity of young children, and/or the equipment and/or the premises in which an early childhood service is to be provided are unsuitable.

An appeal can be made against any proposal by the [NAME THE MINISTRY/ DEPARTMENT] on behalf of the Government to refuse registration. See the Appeals section.

INSPECTION

The Government has a legal duty to inspect Early Childhood Development Services to ensure the Registration requirements and the Minimum Service Standard are met and maintained. The annual planned inspection will be conducted by a person authorised by the Government and will pay particular regard to:

- Staffing
- Quality of child care provided
- Quality of learning experiences provided
- Inclusion of vulnerable children
- Inclusion of children with different needs and abilities
- Records
- Health care, safety, security, nutrition
- Physical environment

Prior to the inspection, the registered provider will be asked to complete a Self-Evaluation Form with the supervisor and staff. This form will provide data on performance of the service (enrollment, attendance, inclusion) and an assessment of capacity to meet the Minimum Service Standard and identifying the challenges in doing so. The Inspector will seek the views of users by means of a questionnaire to parents and guardians. The views of children will also be ascertained

A draft report of the inspection, with requirements and recommendations, will be sent to each registered provider and/or supervisor.

A follow-up meeting will be arranged between the [NAME THE MINISTRY/ DEPARTMENT] and registered provider/supervisor when the report is discussed, amendments agreed and timescales for the requirements and recommendations set.

The final inspection report is an open document which may be obtained from the [NAME THE MINISTRY/DEPARTMENT] by users, prospective users or interested parties. Any sensitive information will be held in a confidential appendix.

An unannounced inspection visit later in the year completes the annual inspection cycle.

The Government has prescribed a fee [NAME THE AMOUNT] for each annual inspection and failure to pay within 28 days of the inspection taking place may result in cancellation of registration.

Authorised monitoring officers of the Government must also be allowed to visit the setting at any time in addition to inspection visits.

Any person who intentionally obstructs an authorised officer in the exercise of his/her duty will be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine.

CANCELLATION OF REGISTRATION

The [NAME THE ACT] empowers the Government to cancel registration in the following circumstances:

- The circumstances would justify refusing to register someone as a provider of an Early Childhood Development Service.
- The care being given to an individual child is considered seriously inadequate, having regard to the needs of the child concerned. This may include reference to the child's religious persuasion, cultural and linguistic background amongst other matters.
- The person has contravened or failed to comply with a requirement imposed on their registration.
- Failure to pay the annual inspection fee.
- Where the condition of the premises makes them unfit to be used for looking after children, unless there is a requirement to carry out repairs, alterations or additions to the premises and the imposed time limit to carry out those works has not yet expired.

An appeal can be made against any proposal by the [NAME THE MINISTRY. DEPARTMENT] on behalf of the Government to cancel registration. See the Appeals section.

In an emergency, where the children are considered at risk of significant harm the Government has power under [NAME THE ACT] to apply to the Court:

- To cancel a person's registration
- To vary an imposed requirement
- To remove or impose a requirement

Where Government does so apply to the court, the registered person will be informed.

APPEALS

Under the [NAME THE ACT] the Government which intends to:

- Refuse registration
- Cancel registration
- Refuse consent to a person disqualified from registration
- Impose, remove or vary any registration requirement
- Refuse to grant and application for variation for removal of a requirement

is required first to notify the applicant or registered person of its intention and the reasons for it and give him/her 14 days in which to lodge an objection in writing.

The applicant or registered person will then be afforded an opportunity to make objection to the [NAME THE AUTHORITY/DEPARTMENT]. Having heard the applicant's objections, the applicant will be given written notice of the decision made.

The applicant or registered person then has the right of appeal to a [NAME THE COURT]

OFFENCES

It is an offence to provide an Early Childhood Development Service for children under the age of 8 on any premises without being registered by the Government. On conviction this offence carries a fine of up to [HOW MUCH].

It is an offence to provide an Early Childhood Development Service or be involved in the provision of an Early Childhood Development Service whilst disqualified. On conviction this offence carried a penalty of up to six months imprisonment or a fine of up to [HOW MUCH] or both.

It is an offence to fail to comply with or contravene a Registration requirement. On conviction, this offence carries a penalty of a fine up to [HOW MUCH].

PROTOCOL FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS TO APPLY FOR A VARIANCE TO THE REGISTRATION AND INSPECTION STANDARDS

A variance is an exception to a standard for a temporary, time-bound period usually given to enable an ECD service time to meet an area within the Minimum Service Standard. This protocol does not cover disagreement about the setting of such timescales in order to achieve standards.

Application for variances to a standard will not be accepted in the following circumstances:

- If the standard is directly linked to a legislative requirement.
- If the variance requested would involve the [NAME THE MINISTRY/ DEPARTMENT] condoning the delivery of poor physical or emotional care to an individual service user or group of service users.

Any request for a variance to a standard must be made on the appropriate form by the service provider.

Each request for a variance must be on a separate form.

The request must clearly state what type of variance is being applied for and the reasons why.

The application will initially go to the [NAME THE MINISTRY/DEPARTMENT] for decision.

If agreed, all variances will be reviewed [HOW OFTEN? ANNUALLY?].

SAMPLE APPLICATION FORMS: **REQUEST FOR A TEMPORARY VARIANCE FROM THE MINIMUM SERVICE STANDARD**

NAME OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT SERVICE

PREMISES ADDRESS

TEL.

NAME OF REGISTERED PROVIDER

NAME OF SUPERVISOR

REGISTERED AS A:

AGE RANGE OF USER GROUP

STANDARD TO WHICH A TEMPORARY VARIANCE IS APPLIED FOR:
(Please state standard in full)

APPLICANT'S NAME

POSITION

DATE OF APPLICATION

REASONS FOR THIS APPLICATION

Signature of Applicant: **Date:**

DECISION OF
(Name of Officer making the decision)

Signature: **Date:**

SUGGESTED AREAS TO INCLUDE IN AN APPLICATION FORM FOR REGISTRATION

The form is to be completed by the person responsible for the Early Childhood Development Service. This could be the owner of the business or the designated officer in the organization running the Early Childhood Development Service.

1.   State what Service is to be provided: day care, preschool, out of school care
2.   Name of the Service (or proposed service), Address, Contact phone, fax, email
3.   Name of the Applicant, Address for Correspondence, Contact phone, fax, email
4.   Type of Organisation represented (for applicants representing organizations) e.g an NGO, a Company, a Committee, a Partnership and address, contact information, date the organization was established
5.   State whether an Early Childhood Development Service has been provided before and if so under what name, and at what address.
6.   Targeted opening date OR date service started and number of years of service
7.   Previous registration date (if any, give date)
8.   Previous license issued (if any, give date)
9.   State whether registration for this service or any previous service has ever been refused (if relevant)
10.   State whether a license for this service or any previous service has ever been revoked (if relevant)
11.   State whether there are any circumstances that might affect the applicant's suitability to be running a service for children, or to be in regular contact with children
12.   State whether the service has/will have sole use of the premises
13.   State who owns the premises
14.   State whether the premises are ready for a visit from the Monitoring Officer
15.   State the number of rooms for the children's use and their functions
16.   List the number of toilets and washbasins available for children
17.   List separate facilities for adult workers including office, toilets, washbasins
18.   State number of children under the age of primary school entry that the service is to be registered for
19.   State number of children in each age group: 0-2; 2-3; 3-4; 4-5; 5-6 (if needed)
20.   State days and hours of opening
21.   State whether the service is to be provided all year round, school terms

only, mornings only, morning and afternoons (same children), morning and afternoons (different shifts), etc

22. State whether children will be cared for overnight or on weekends
23. State whether children of primary school age up to the age of 8 years are to be included <u>after</u> school
24. State whether children with disabilities are to be included in the service (motor, physical, sensory, social emotional, learning and communication)
25. Provide summary of the programme to be offered
26. State the name and date of birth of the manager of the service
27. Signature of applicant, date

Supporting details required by applicants for registration

Applicants for registration will need to provide in advance:

1. Where the Government has provided assistance to upgrade or subsidise services, evidence would be required of accountable financial practice.
2. Character reference from a JP or other appropriate person supporting the suitability of the applicant to be responsible for a registered Early Childhood Development Service.
3. Disclosure of Criminal Record.
4. Evidence of the teaching or other qualifications of the Manager of the service.
5. Disclosure of Criminal Record for the Manager of the service.
6. Disclosure of Criminal Record for ALL the adults working with the children: the administrative, caregiving, teaching and ancillary staff.
7. Health checks for Manager and ALL staff in the service.

Draft Early Childhood Development (ECD) Minimum Service Standard for the Caribbean

Consensus on a draft ECD Minimum Service Standard was reached by participants from twenty CARICOM countries at the regional technical workshop on Policies, Standards and Regulation for Early Childhood Development Services, Antigua on September 28th 2006.

The working definition reads as follows:

"An Early Childhood Minimum Service Standard (ECD) is an essential requirement for achieving desired outcomes for children's development and well being"

In order to identify the essential requirements, participants used the regional Learning Goals and Outcomes Framework in Early Childhood Development agreed in May 2004 by representatives of eighteen CARICOM countries. The use of this framework ensured that the standards requirements were addressed from the perspective of the child's development and well being. Proceeding from this foundation, the requirements were then set out for the profile of the caregivers and teachers who work with the children and for how they manage their role and the involvement of parents and communities in the care and education of children.

The requirements set out below have been developed for children attending early childhood services before admission to formal primary schooling. Once in primary school, requirements are established by Education legislation. However, the requirements for primary school should reflect and harmonise with those for early childhood development services.

In total there are twelve areas that make up the ECD Minimum Service Standard, followed by suggested areas for Administrative Policies and Guidelines.

In devising the minimum requirements, participants emphasized the need for countries to qualify and certify teachers and caregivers who work with the youngest citizens. Participants further emphasized that all the minimum requirements apply equally to boys and girls, men and women.

The twelve areas of the draft ECD Minimum Service Standard are as follows:

1. The development of a healthy, strong and well adjusted child requires:

- ➢ 25 sq. ft (2.25 sq. m) per child indoors or 40 sq. ft. (3.5 sq m) for babies
- ➢ 40 sq. ft per child outdoors, preferably adjoining the premises, to provide for free movement and safety for play
- ➢ Child sized, age appropriate and safe equipment, furniture and utilities to ensure gross and fine motor development and body coordination
- ➢ A group size that does not exceed 26 children over the age of two years or 12 children under the age of two years, to ensure as much continuity of staffing as possible and attention to individual children
- ➢ Adult child ratios that ensure safety and promote development as follows:
    - o Any group of children requires a minimum of one member of care or education staff present at all times, with access to another assigned early childhood development practitioner or assistant shared with other groups when required. In a single group setting (for example a small preschool class) there should be a minimum of two care or education staff present at all times
    - o The adult child ratio should reflect the requirements of the age of the child:
        - ▪ 1:10/12 for children 3-5 year olds
        - ▪ 1:4/6 for children 2-3 years old
        - ▪ 1:3/4 for children 1-2 years old
        - ▪ 1:2/3 for infants from birth to 1 year old
- ➢ Higher staff ratios for children with special educational needs as necessary to be negotiated on an individual basis depending on the nature and severity of the need and in general will be 1:2
- ➢ A safe and secure learning environment, physically and emotionally, fostering the growth and development of trust
- ➢ Encouragement and consistent supervision of gross motor development activities
- ➢ A plan for all children, boys and girls, for daily physical activity and gross motor play appropriate to their needs and abilities
- ➢ Monitoring development including physical growth, nutrition and psycho-social well being and screening for developmental delay by qualified health visitors or nurses assigned to a cluster of settings
- ➢ A learning environment that provides for the rights and responsibilities of all children and practitioners and parents to be respected and acknowledged in the sharing of ideas, participation in activities and in implementation of positive disciplinary practices
- ➢ Groups of children aged two years old and younger to be cared for

in their own room, with proper and convenient facilities for nappy changing, preparation of feeds and sterilisation of all equipment

➢ Staff rotas for children aged two years and younger to be organised to ensure continuity of carer

➢ The daily routine for children two years and younger to be consistent offering opportunities for child-initiated and adult-initiated times, indoor and outdoor play, active and quiet times, rest and toileting opportunities, and the opportunity to play alone or in groups

➢ All children to be able to spend at least 50% of their time in activities they have chosen for themselves

➢ Established consistent routines including varied activities with clear ground rules and expectations

➢ Adequate resting or sleeping facilities to be provided for each child. Parental wishes to be sought so that agreements can be made concerning the children's sleeping or resting arrangements. Particular care to be taken to discuss needs of children who appear not to want to rest or sleep according to parental requests

➢ A child friendly, participatory interactive curriculum using both small and large group activities, providing equal opportunities for girls and boys, including those who need assistance to access the curriculum

➢ Activities or role playing for children to learn about personal hygiene, how to keep themselves healthy, what to do if they hurt themselves or if other children are hurt and how to handle themselves in emergencies

➢ Support to children in learning to protect themselves from harm or abuse and what to do in the event that they experience abuse

➢ Routine activities to practice personal hygiene, cleaning up and garbage disposal to maintain cleanliness and safety in the environment of the setting

➢ Education for parents on the rationale for stimulation activities, nutrition choices, elective breastfeeding for 6 months, gross motor development and physical exercise, emotional and social development and what to expect, and suggested strategies used for managing children's behaviour and for early detection of special needs

➢ Psycho social support in times of emergency and crisis, involving parents as helpers

➢ Social activities which include children, parents and community members e.g. field trips, sports day, cultural events

➢ Community referral systems providing access to specialist support, for example nurses, social workers, assessment services and child protection teams

➢ Written guidance and procedures for admission and care to include birth registration, immunization, drop off and pickup arrangements and administration of routine medication/therapies to children who require it

2. The development of a child's ability to communicate effectively requires:

- ➢ Acceptance of and respect for the child's first language, the language of their family and home
- ➢ Children to be exposed gradually to the country's standardised language as a second language they will be learning later in school, not as a replacement for their first language
- ➢ Bilingual education in which confident expression in the child's first language must be allowed to develop before the second language can be fully introduced as the medium of instruction
- ➢ Opportunities for all children, boys and girls, including those who need assistance to access the curriculum, to express themselves freely in conversation, dance, drama/role play, art, song, music and movement
- ➢ Timely screening for early detection of sight, speech, hearing and other communication impairments
- ➢ Participation of parents in monitoring children's progress in communication and in encouraging children's communication skills at home
- ➢ Support for emergent literacy through the provision of:
  - o a print rich environment in displays and books
  - o opportunities to develop the skills and interest needed for reading by being read to daily from a story or picture book appropriate to the age and developmental experiences of the child
  - o a minimum of 2 story books per child in every age group
  - o access to books on a variety of themes and subjects
- ➢ Children two years old and younger to be encouraged to use and understand spoken and gestured language through eye contact, body language, the expression of feelings, and the description of what is happening around them. Opportunities to be provided for children to look at books, listen to stories, rhymes and songs, recognize pictures, symbols and letters and hear familiar stories re-told
- ➢ Opportunities to develop the skills and interest needed for writing by scribbling, tracing, drawing, colouring, painting, crayoning and putting stories in symbols/words that can be shared and read out to others
- ➢ Opportunities to join in and recite rhymes, songs, jingles to develop use of language, speaking and listening skills
- ➢ Opportunities for exposure to radio and TV programmes specially made for children and if possible to the use of computer-based technologies for children as appropriate for age, stage of development, ability and culture

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> Observation of children to identify and document progress and intervene in activities to extend learning

3. The development of a child who values his/her own culture and that of others requires:

> Appropriate curricula and activities that focus on both national and other cultures and address the issues of tolerance, respect and cultural heritage and diversity

> Learning through experience to express one's culture as well as the provision of opportunities for the expression of the culture of others

> A learning environment that is responsive to the diversity of children and reflects community/national, regional and international/other cultural symbols and icons including local persons

> Diverse materials, books and equipment for all children including those two years and younger, consciously drawn from a wide variety of cultures/concepts common to all cultures such as foods, music, dance, language, families, shelter, dress etc. when providing opportunities for play

> The approach of staff to the children's use of play materials to be non-discriminatory. Children of both genders, all abilities and cultures must be actively encouraged to use all the equipment and materials available. Children's preferences must be the driving factor in what they choose to do

> Children to be encouraged to develop their own acceptable rules for generous, fair and non-discriminatory treatment of one another, their parents or staff

> Children to be encouraged in their own spiritual development and in the appreciation of the spiritual development of others who may hold different beliefs

4. The development of a child who is a critical thinker and independent learner requires:

> Age appropriate and developmentally appropriate curricula
> A non threatening environment that:
>> o is loving, accepting, caring, nurturing, respectful and warm
>> o positive and stimulating with regard to initiatives by children
>> o is respectful with regard to cultural background
>> o encourages freedom of speech that is respectful
>> o fosters creative and independent thinking
>> o encourages the development of initiative and leadership skills
> Access to programmes and material that will stimulate creativity,

imagination and challenges and provide adventurous experiences

➢ Access to space and playing/ learning material that will stimulate children to safely discover, examine and explore situations, learn by trial and error and risk taking, enabling them to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills e.g. classification, sorting, counting, ordering, making comparisons, constructing, analyzing, synthesizing and evaluating

➢ Access to Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) where possible and available to be integrated into the curriculum and used in key aspects of learning to collaborate, communicate, explore and role-play

➢ Opportunities for play for all children including those two years old and younger that build on their own interests and experiences with learning resources, materials and equipment accessible to enable choice, exploration and discovery, fostering each child's independence, problem-solving and decision-making skills, including for example:
   o A creative area (sand, water, paints, malleable materials),
   o A role play area,
   o A quiet area (books, puzzles) with rugs and cushions
   o A construction area (blocks, construction, small worlds)
   o Sufficient floor space for uninterrupted play
   o Low level storage to promote children's independence
   o Sufficient numbers of child-sized chairs and tables

➢ Opportunity to choose the activities they want to be engaged in, both individually and in groups

5. The development of a child who respects him/herself, others and the environment requires:

➢ Guidance by responsible adults who act as role models in positive interaction and social graces with children, other staff and parents

➢ Guidance by responsible adults in spiritual and moral development, including the development of personal values such as honesty, fairness respect and an understanding and acceptance of self and others

➢ Positive interaction between children and between adults and children, during activities and at playtime, supported and encouraged by adults who speak respectfully, in a moderate tone, to the children

➢ Each child to be treated as an individual who has rights that are respected and responsibilities to him/herself and others

➢ Each child to be praised generously and consistently encouraged in and celebrated for his or her efforts

➢ Opportunities for children to explain why disruptive behaviour was displayed and to be consistently assisted in learning how to make

redress or resolve conflict where necessary

- Opportunities for children to develop positive emotional responses such as love, empathy and compassion through activities caring for other human beings (the elderly, the less fortunate, the differently able), living things (plants, animals) and through imaginative play (small worlds, dolls)
- Opportunities to learn conflict resolution skills in social interaction activities using rhyme, drama, movement and free-choice activities
- Each child to learn and practice good manners in relating to adults and children
- Opportunities to develop in children love and respect for other children and adults including those who are physically and otherwise challenged
- Each child to learn how to routinely clean up after him or herself in activities under adult supervision
- Each child to learn to practice keeping him/herself safe and his/her friends safe too
- Opportunities to learn about protecting the manmade and natural environments and how to be environmentally friendly through safe garbage disposal and preventing unnecessary damage
- Opportunities to learn and appreciate the aesthetics of their respective environments and those of others

6. The development of a resilient child requires:

- Daily opportunities/activities/experiences both indoors and outdoors that challenge children's thinking skills and facilitate social emotional development and coping skills
- Opportunities to resolve differences amicably without the immediate intervention of adults
- Encouragement to persevere to complete challenging, difficult or unpleasant tasks in order to experience confidence in achievement
- Opportunities to work independently and confidently on in-depth research projects
- Access to story books and other learning materials that show characters of both genders with whom children can identify both feelings and cultural similarities
- Compassionate and respectful handling of traumatic events such as the experience of crime, natural disaster and family crises and to provide guidance and referral to other social support services where and when necessary
- Opportunities to develop the ability to use adverse experiences for learning and character building

- Education for parents on how children develop coping skills and confidence in completing tasks and in handling difficulties in their lives through collaborative efforts

7. The profile and preparation of persons providing care and learning experiences for children require:

- A warm, nurturing, pleasant and caring disposition
- Capacity to attend and respond to all children equitably and fairly, without discrimination
- Good interpersonal and communication skills
- Ability to work in and contribute to a team
- Good physical and emotional health, sound mind and character
- Good deportment and appropriate behaviour modeling for children
- Tolerance and acceptance of individual differences
- Energy, flexibility and creativity
- Knowledge and understanding of:
    - the policies, procedures, standards and regulations for Early Childhood Development Services and agencies responsible for monitoring such services
    - the international agreements related to children's development e.g. the Convention on the Rights of the Child
    - the characteristics and development of young children and how to plan activities for and with them
    - knowledge of child development of infants and toddlers where staff are working with children two years old and under
- Ability to:
    - support a learning environment and schedule of activities to encourage discovery, choice and independent learning
    - work cooperatively with parent and guardians
    - communicate with children in the languages(s) they use at home
    - learn/be trained in key areas such as extending children's learning, early detection of special educational needs, management of challenging behaviours, positive discipline practices, support to children through difficulties in their lives, lifesaving and CPR and early detection of signs of abuse and neglect
- Teaching or care assistants in early childhood settings further require the ability to work under the supervision and guidance of a certified caregiver, teacher or authorised supervisor
- Staff further require successful completion of secondary education (or equivalent)

- Staff require <u>prior certification</u> in early childhood care, education and development at the appropriate level as follows:
  - o Certification at tertiary level for the management of services for children from 3-5 years of age (e.g. TVET Level 3; Associate/Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Development/ Education), or
  - o Certification as a teacher who is qualified to provide a programme of learning and development in early childhood services for children 3-5 years old, specific to each country e.g. a National Diploma in Early Childhood Education, or
  - o Certification as a caregiver for providing care and development in early childhood settings for children from birth to school entry e.g. TVET Levels 1 & 2
- Regular upgrading of knowledge, skills and competencies
- Sound strategies for family and community involvement in the learning process
- Sound knowledge of developmentally appropriate practices in relation to instruction, assessment, observation and evaluation

8. The management of challenging child behaviours and the use of positive discipline practices require:

- Identification and encouragement of children's positive behaviours
- Promoting and modeling the use of social graces and good manners
- Encouragement of age appropriate self regulating behaviour through focusing and maintaining attention, persisting at tasks and gaining control of physical impulses
- Active encouragement of peer interaction and inclusion of children who appear isolated
- Encouragement of the development of cooperative skills and how to take turns
- Prompt recognition of potential conflicts and negative peer interactions, and intervention to assist children to identify problems and find solutions
- Written policies regarding discipline and punishment that are discussed with every parent, assistant and member of staff, including measures to deal with contravention of policies and procedures
- Expectations of children's behaviour to be communicated to parents verbally and in writing
- Expectation of children's behaviour, including clear instructions and the setting of limits, to be given to children appropriate to their age and understanding
- Disciplinary measures to be explained and discussed with children prior

to action being taken in order that children understand that there are consequences for unacceptable behaviour (NOT unacceptable children")

➢ Redirection and positive guidance in addressing challenging behaviours, using a soft firm tone of voice, to assist children to identify and label unacceptable behaviours

➢ "Time out" to be used to address inappropriate behaviours by taking the child aside, giving him/her a clear explanation appropriate to his/her understanding of a temporary separation from friends and activities and by managing his/her time apart firmly but kindly for the purpose of learning the consequences of his/her actions

➢ No corporal punishment, physical, verbal or emotional abuse or threats or intimidation, physical, or emotional neglect, to be used at any time

➢ Physical restraint, in accordance with agreed training and procedures, to be used by a senior staff member where a child is creating a danger to himself or herself or to others and when all other disciplinary measures have failed

➢ Policies detailing persistent challenging behaviours and how the setting should deal with them, including referral to specialist assessment and treatment services, are written down and discussed with parents and staff

➢ An identified staff member within the service to have responsibility for behaviour management issues with the skills to support staff and to access expert advice if ordinary methods are not effective with a particular child

➢ Policies detailing persistent challenging behaviours and how the setting should deal with them, including referral to specialist assessment and treatment services, to be documented and discussed with parents and staff

9. The provision for safety, security, health and beneficial nutrition require:

➢ Appropriate plans to be discussed with parents, children and staff for disaster preparedness and response including
  o Evacuation or appropriate response procedures
  o One separate entrance and one separate exit – clear of obstacles, easily accessible and clearly marked.
  o Provision for psycho-social support and counseling
  o Appropriate activities to occupy children and reduce impact of trauma
  o Parent and guardian alert mechanism

➢ The provision and maintenance of an emergency 'kit' and supplies for supporting programme activities during and in the aftermath of an emergency. The contents of the kit should be itemized and culturally appropriate

➢ Provision for response to all emergencies (whether the causes are manmade or natural) including fire, crime/civil unrest, floods, hurricanes, earthquakes and volcanoes and positive reinforcement of safety and evacuation procedures through a continuing education programme

➢ Safety and security procedures to include:
  o Physical building to satisfy the requirements of the local planning authority and the national building code
  o Care of babies under two years of age to be undertaken at ground floor level
  o Electrical outlets to have safety guards over them, or to be positioned above the reach of children by 3 to 4 feet
  o Safety rules to be explained to children with demonstrations so that they understand their significance
  o Children to have regular drills in responding to emergencies like gunfire, etc.
  o Premises to be properly maintained, fenced, ventilated and lit either naturally or artificially
  o A well equipped first aid kit with the minimum requirements listed and kept up to date
  o Gates and doors to open outwards and latch properly
  o Doors and windows to be meshed (prevents insect infestation, promotes ventilation)
  o Child-proof opening to windows to ensure children cannot climb or fall out
  o Children to have signed permission slips for field trips/external activities from parents or guardians
  o Children to be signed in and out daily or as necessary
  o Drugs, bleaches, cleaning agents, pesticides and poisonous products to be stored out of the reach of children

➢ A Fire plan to include:
  o the type/brand name and location of emergency fire equipment
  o fire extinguishers to be mounted, checked and refilled as stipulated
  o Routine fire drills and building inspections for fire safety compliance
  o Sand buckets, fire alarms and smoke detectors to be provided and maintained

- o The procedures to be followed in the event of a fire to be discussed with the children and staff
- ➢ A Health Plan to include:
  - o Training of staff in basic medical care in emergencies
  - o The management/provision of a separate room or designated area within a room as a sick bay (area)
  - o Provision for a child with a communicable disease e.g. supervised isolation, comfort, family contact arrangements
  - o Arrangements for regular review of the health of children with chronic diseases
  - o A description of illnesses common to children, procedures for the treatment of such illnesses and precautions to protect the health of other children provided by the Ministry of Health
  - o Universal precautions to be explained to and practiced by staff
  - o Children made to understand not to touch blood in the event of an accident but to get help from an adult
  - o Policies and procedures to secure hygienic use of the kitchen, toilet, bedding and other facilities, clean water supply, garbage disposal, sewage and drainage facilities in accordance with health regulations
  - o Children and staff practice routine and effective hand-washing procedure
  - o Mattresses and bedding to be clean and hygienic. Cots provided for babies to be safe and separated at a distance of 77 cm. Where children are not toilet trained, mattresses to be covered with a water proof covering
  - o Immunization regulations and procedures to be followed including checking of clinic cards by visiting health visitors and nurses
  - o Guidelines on the administration of non prescription and prescription drugs to children
  - o Child-sized partitioned toilets and washbasins to be provided on a ratio of 1:15. Separate toilets can be provided for boys and girls if preferred
  - o Adapted provision for children with disabilities should be made available
  - o Individual potties to be provided for children who are potty-training
  - o Nappy disposal to be by use of plastic bags and special refuse collection, or by incineration. Strict hygienic care to be ensured when dealing with cloth nappies
  - o Sluices for those nurseries with 10 or more infants

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- ➢ A Nutrition plan to include:
    - o Fresh drinking water to be available at all times
    - o Appropriate guidelines for balanced meals and a general nutrition education programme, to include meals provided and snacks brought from home
    - o Appropriate feeding schedules that meet the needs of children individually
    - o Arrangements for appropriate access for breastfeeding mothers
    - o A balanced diet for children according to their age both in meals and snacks provided by the service and brought in from home
    - o Arrangements to be written and posted for children with special dietary needs and meal substitutes developed with families
    - o Menus to be posted and to include food of different cultures
    - o Babies and infants to be held in the arms of a member of staff during feeding and communicated with to encourage ingestion and relaxation
    - o Children's eating patterns to be recorded and any unusual behaviour to be reported
    - o Appropriate serving sizes with age-appropriate utensils for children
    - o Potable drinking water easily available to children at all times
    - o Children and adults seated together to support a pleasant social atmosphere
    - o Education as to value of food for survival and health; food never to be used as a reward or denial of food as a punishment
    - o Communication with parents about balanced nutrition and avoidance of malnutrition, especially the malnutrition that leads to obesity

10. The inclusion of children with different needs and abilities requires:

- ➢ Equal access to early childhood care and education, including the appropriate materials, equipment, learning methodologies and forms of communication
- ➢ Children to be supported by staff who can communicate with them and encourage their participation in the activities of the setting to the fullest extent possible
- ➢ A written statement clearly displayed about special educational needs that is in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

2006
- ➢ A written policy and procedure for the identification, screening and referral of children for early intervention support and assessment
- ➢ Written information regarding the nature of special educational needs and care and the respect of privacy
- ➢ Communication with parents and experts in the field about the needs for any special services, equipment or respite care for the children
- ➢ Training and education for parents on how to support their children's needs as the children develop, to include group support sessions between parents with similar concerns and experiences to share
- ➢ Appropriate adaptations or supports to enable access to the curriculum and activities (e.g. equipment for those with sensory impairments, adaptive furniture and structures for physical disabilities, special assistance with communication disorders etc)
- ➢ Trained staff members who are capable of meeting the diverse developmental and learning needs of the children including early identification of delays or problems
- ➢ Appreciation by staff of the needs of children for development of moral and ethical values and support for children's understanding and learning
- ➢ Additional staffing to support individual children access the curriculum and activities if needed
- ➢ Availability of support from and referral systems to specialists (physiotherapist, speech therapist, psychologist, social worker)

11. The protection of children from harm and neglect requires:

- ➢ Children to know that they are wanted, loved, respected, protected, guided and accepted
- ➢ Children to be taught their rights and responsibilities in a child-friendly manner appropriate to their age and understanding
- ➢ Children to be taught ways of protecting themselves from harm and neglect
- ➢ Children to be reassured that their concerns and fears will be responded to with understanding and in confidence
- ➢ Staff to be made aware of the signs of abuse and neglect and of the procedures for reporting concerns to senior staff
- ➢ Staff to be knowledgeable of any legal responsibilities they may have in reporting suspected child abuse and neglect
- ➢ A written policy on the reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect to be brought to attention of all staff to ensure adherence
- ➢ Staff to be trained in the rights of the child and responsibilities of the adults

➢ An identified staff member within the service with training in child protection issues with responsibility for supporting staff and for seeking external assistance to determine the best course of action in any given circumstance

➢ All suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to be reported to the designated national authority and to be treated in confidence

➢ Care and support plans for children who have experienced abuse or neglect to be followed by staff in the service

➢ A referral and support system for vulnerable children within the service with additional external assistance if required

➢ Written policies and procedures for counteracting discrimination of children including those infected or affected by HIV AIDS

12. The involvement of parents and communities requires:

➢ A documented schedule and programme rationale to be given and explained to parents/community members. The expectations of the service with regards to both father's and mothers' contributions to be made clear, including written placement agreements

➢ Engagement of parents in what their children are doing and learning and encouragement of parents to undertake complementary activities at home

➢ Consultation with parents on their views as to the support the setting should be providing to their children's spiritual development

➢ Agreement expressed in Policy as to the role of the setting in the spiritual development of children recognizing the diversity of beliefs in the wider community

➢ Regular information to be shared with parents regarding community development and disaster preparedness

➢ Partnership and collaboration between parents, community and children. An activity to strengthen such partnerships to be evident at least once per term either within the setting or external to it such as sporting events, reading days etc

➢ A system to be in place for the regular exchange of information between parents and staff members about children's activities and learning, in which parents are encouraged to share information and in which their views and their concerns are acknowledged and respected

➢ Appropriate and prompt action to be taken on any concerns or complaints raised by parents and a record of all complaints to be maintained with details of their investigation and resolution

➢ Feedback and reporting mechanisms to the parents on the child's development, including informal conversation and feedback on a day to day basis and in a face to face meeting at least three times a year

with written information being made available to the parents

- Parents to have access to all written records about their children and to contribute to the Entry Profile and all subsequent updates
- Legal documentation regarding guardianship or custody arrangements to be made available for the child's file where applicable
- Volunteers and community members to be given adequate information and guidance on their roles and responsibilities
- Engagement of the community – community based organisations, faith based organisations etc - on the work of the early childhood setting to encourage sensitivity and understanding towards child development needs
- Children to be released by staff from the care of the service only to responsible individuals named by the parent as capable of safely escorting children to and from home to the setting

The ECD Minimum Service Standard should be accompanied by Administrative Policies and Guidelines to include:

- Management and professional development of staff including general supervision, management and direction of teachers, caregivers, support and ancillary staff
- Recruitment of staff including obtaining references as to character and suitability, and disclosure of criminal records
- Outdoor and indoor play equipment; the physical lay out of a setting for learning, care and safety; care, maintenance and renewal; scheduling, group size and annual planning
- Health and safety considerations with children on field trips, to include transportation, swimming, management of groups in public spaces, adult-child ratios
- Forms required for parental consent for field trips, admissions, care and nutrition and charging (where applicable)
- Agreements with parents for joint support of care, education and development of children to include the operation of a complaints procedure
- Confidential record keeping for children's development and progress, and accident and incident reports
- Documented financial procedures
- Insurance, accident and public liability insurance
- Emergency procedures to include provision for continuation of service and the programme of learning, provision for temporary service and the support and counseling services
- Compliance with Ministry of Health directives for immunization, disease control, oral health, developmental checks and surveillance,

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administration of routine medication, first aid, no smoking, child protection and nutrition

- ➢ Compliance with planning requirements and building regulations, including ventilation and lighting, bathroom facilities, kitchen facilities, laundry facilities and management of water, utilities and maintenance
- ➢ Compliance with public health and environmental health standards, extermination of pests and rodents, food handling, management of pets, management of utilities and the provisions of Road Traffic Acts
- ➢ Allocation of separate space with adult sized furniture for staff to undertake professional duties, meet with parents in privacy and for having breaks from work
- ➢ Allocation of secure storage for personal; belongings of staff, restrooms, adult toilets and wash basin facilities

Samples of Performance Monitoring Frameworks for supporting early learning outcomes, child development and well being

Two examples of setting a benchmark or Performance Indicator for a Standard are set out below. Each example refers to the area of language and literacy development to enable comparison.

The first example comes from Jamaica[11]. In this example, the Performance Monitoring Framework sets out the standard for the service as a statement of what is 'acceptable,' and positions it in a continuum between a statement of what 'needs improvement' and a statement of a 'good' standard in which the expectations for 'acceptable' have been met and exceeded:

Programme Standards: Language Development			
Category	Needs Improvement	Acceptable	Good
Presence of language development activities	Language development activities not included in the daily programme	Specific language development activities included in the daily programme	Language development activities are integrated with other daily activities
Communication during classroom and learning activities	Teachers do not encourage communication. Children are rarely allowed to speak and adults rarely listen. Responses to children's communication do not encourage further communication. Communication is developmentally inappropriate	Teachers encourage communication. Children are allowed to speak most of the day. Teachers respond in a pleasant voice using developmentally appropriate language	Children's language is encouraged by teachers building on children's spontaneous conversations, initiating conversation using open-ended questions, labeling children's non-verbal expressions and emotions and discussing their activities with them

11   Early Childhood Commission (2005) Policies and Standards for the Operation, Management and Administration of Early Childhood Institutions, Volume 2: Standards, Early Childhood Commission, Kingston Mall, Kingston, Kingston, Jamaica

Exposure to books	Children do not have daily exposure to books. Children are not read to nor have opportunity to look at books on a daily basis.	Children have daily exposure to books. Children are read to and are allowed to explore books on their own on a daily basis	Use of books is not limited to specific times only. Books are incorporated into other programme activities

The second example is a proposed Performance Monitoring Framework for the Draft ECD Minimum Service Standard for the Caribbean, drawing on the Jamaica model. Taking an excerpt from Standard Area 2 as an example, a Performance Monitoring Framework might look like this:

Standard Area 2: The development of a child's ability to communicate effectively			
Standard Area	Needs improvement	Minimum Acceptable	Effective for development
Child's home language is accepted and respected	Child's home language is corrected or treated as inferior to standard English, Dutch or French (as appropriate)	Child's home language is listened to and supported through the assistance of mother tongue speakers	Child's home language is encouraged in expression, in communication of ideas and feelings.
Children are introduced to and guided in the use of the country's standard language in a spoken form	Child is not introduced to standard English, Dutch or French (as appropriate)	Child is introduced to standard form of English gradually as a second language	Child is encouraged to speak in first and second languages, interchangeably as appropriate to the social situation.
Children have opportunities to express themselves freely in conversation, dance, drama/ role play, art, song, music and movement	Children do not have access on a daily basis to activities that encourage expression, such as dance and art	Children are given daily access to at least two activities that encourage expressive language, such as song and role play	Children are encouraged to experience activities that support development of expression (singing, role play, dance, art, movement and music

Children have timely screening for early detection of sight, speech, hearing and other communication impairments	Children are not referred for screening services if there are signs of language delay or sensory and communication impairments	Children are referred for screening services if staff or parents are concerned about their developing language and sensory and communication abilities	Children are screened by staff, referrals made as needed, and an individualised programme put in place to meet need for support with language, sensory and communication development
Participation of parents in monitoring children's progress in communication and in encouraging and children's communication skills at home	Parents are not given information on their child's progress in communication	Parents are given information about their child's progress in communication and the importance of supporting communication development at home	Parents are encouraged to support communication activities at home and to share with the staff observations of the child's progress

Set out in this way a Performance Monitoring Framework can be developed quite easily into a checklist for use by Officers and Early Childhood Inspectors in monitoring centres.

Annex 5

Standards at a Glance

1. Space is organized for child learning: The group size does not exceed 30 children in one space; adult to child ratios are safe; staff are adequately trained, meet and organise cooperatively; space is arranged so that children can see their interests reflected in the organisation (such as displays of work), access and choose learning resources in at least two or three designated areas (such as reading materials, home 'corner', drawing materials), work, interact and play with one or two friends in small groups for at least some of the time.

2. Care and Learning activities are scheduled: Adults plan and provide at least two to three scheduled activities each day, indoors and outdoors, to develop children's emotional, moral, physical, emotional and intellectual capabilities, social relationships, and comprehension of what is right and wrong.

3. Caregivers and educators are suitable: Adults providing care and learning experiences for children are supervised, competent in their work, warm and welcoming in their interactions with children.

4. Environment is safe and appropriate: Premises are safe, secure, ventilated, well lit, serviced by a phone and suitable for access and use by children; children's toilet facilities are sanitary; adults have space separate from the children for preparation, meeting parents, breaks from work, storage of personal items and washroom facilities.

5. Furniture and equipment is sufficient: child sized furniture and equipment for routine care, play and learning is sturdy and well maintained.

6. Health and Safety is practiced: No major hazards prevent children's safe play indoors and outdoors; preparations are made for authorized administration of medicines, care in the case of sudden illnesses, accidents and emergencies, including fire; basic first aid is practiced by at least one adult; children and adults wash hands after toileting and before handling food; children have time and space to rest scheduled appropriately.

7. Food and drink is nutritious: Children are provided with a balanced intake of food, complying with dietary and religious requirements; parents guided to provide acceptable snacks; running potable water provided on site.

8. Interactions and behaviours are positive: Adults listen to children, interact with them warmly, demonstrate and praise positive behaviours, manage challenging behaviours in a way that promote children's understanding and development; corporal punishment or humiliating treatment of children is not practiced.

9. Parents are informed about what their children are doing: Conversations with parents occur regularly and informally about their children to engage interest in how they develop.

10. Special needs are anticipated: Adults are aware that some children will have special needs; are proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when a child comes to the service; and include children in ongoing activities with other children as far as possible.

11. Documentation is maintained: Records needed for children's welfare and development are maintained and kept secure and confidential; these are shared with the individual children's parents; registers, procedures for admission and finances, accounts, and other records needed for the efficient and safe management of the service are set up and maintained.

12. Additional standards are practiced for babies and children under two years old: Adults must have specific preparation for care of babies; the group size and adult child ratios are appropriate for their safety and care; toys and activities are appropriate for their age and provide a variety of language and sensory activities both indoors and outdoors; children have a consistent adult to interact with at frequent intervals throughout the day; separate arrangements are made for their feeding, rest and toileting; information is exchanged with parents on a daily basis about their changing developmental and care needs and routines.

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