

# BULLETIN

A SUMMARY OF THE LATEST NEWS  
FROM NATIONAL GOVERNMENT  
AND PARLIAMENT

## News from parliament

### Children's Amendment Bill public hearings – Portfolio Committee on Social Development

May 2021

The Portfolio Committee on Social Development held a series of hearings on the Children's Amendment Bill. Presenters included SmartStart, Ilifa Labantwana, Real Reform for ECD, and many other representatives and stakeholders from the ECD sector, including practitioners. Common themes included the need for a simplified one-step registration process, appropriate registration standards, and wider use of conditional registration, in order to create a more enabling and inclusive regulatory framework for ECD programmes.

[Children's Amendment Bill: Public Hearings Days 1-5](#)

### Status of ECD clauses in Children's Amendment Bill – Portfolio Committee on Social Development

7th May 2021

The Parliamentary Legal Advisor and Office of the Chief State Law Advisor briefed the Portfolio Committee on Social Development on whether or not the Committee had the legal authority to amend or reject the ECD provisions in the Children's Amendment Bill. After receiving advice, the Committee resolved to reject the ECD clauses in the Bill.

[Status of ECD clauses in the Children's Amendment Bill](#)

### Report on the Budget Vote: Basic Education – Portfolio Committee on Basic Education

18th May 2021

The report included an overview of DBE's Annual Performance Plan 2021/22. The Council for Education Ministers agreed six education priorities including *"urgent implementation of two years of ECD before Grade 1"*. Annual outcome indicators include four national reports on ECD – on the legislative framework, funding model, ECD census and human resource development plan. In its recommendations, the Portfolio Committee on Basic Education recommended that SACE should prioritise training for ECD practitioners, and *"ensure that they support professionalization of the ECD practitioners below NQF level 4, to acquire a qualification at NQF level 4"*.

[Report on the Budget Vote: Basic Education](#)

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

## News from parliament

### Progress on Children's Second Amendment Bill – Portfolio Committee on Social Development

19th May 2021

The Department of Social Development briefed the Portfolio Committee on progress towards a Children's Second Amendment Bill to deal with all ECD provisions. It was agreed that a technical team should be set up, led by DSD and DBE. The urgency of making progress on ECD matters was also emphasised.

#### Progress on Children's Second Amendment Bill

### South African Council of Educators Annual Performance Plan – Portfolio Committee on Basic Education

7th May 2021

The South African Council of Educators (SACE) briefed the Portfolio Committee on Basic Education on its Annual Performance Plan for 2021/22. SACE have established a committee to work closely with the DBE on ECD migration issues. SACE is also working with DHET towards finalising a qualifications framework for ECD.

#### SACE briefing on Annual Performance Plan 2021/22

### Minister of Basic Education Budget Vote Speech

20th May 2021

The Minister of Basic Education, Mrs Angie Motshekga MP, delivered the Basic Education Adjusted Budget Vote speech for 2021/22. There was a strong focus on ECD matters, and five strategic priorities for improving quality in ECD were set out:

- *curriculum-based early learning for all children from birth to 5 years, by implementing the National Curriculum Framework;*
- *ECD programmes for all children from birth to 5 years, which entail a continuum of strategic ECD programmes;*
- *training and development for all those who are working in ECD for career-pathing with intensive, but flexible training opportunities;*
- *strategic implementation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of all ECD services, including a flexible funding, administration, management, governance and provisioning framework; and*
- *a strategic consultation plan with timelines, that will involve the broader ECD sector.*

#### Minister of Basic Education Budget Vote Speech

## News from parliament

### Parliamentary question on applications to the ECD Employment Stimulus Relief Fund

4th June 2021

Ms Abrahams (DA) asked the Minister of Social Development how many applications to the ECD Employment Stimulus Relief Fund (ESRF) were received in each province, and the proportion that fall within poor wards. In her response, the Minister provided a full provincial breakdown of applications. 39% of all applications fell within poor wards, ranging from 12% in Gauteng, to 67% in Eastern Cape, and to 84% in Limpopo.

[PQ on provincial breakdown of ESRF applications](#)

### Parliamentary question on accessible ECD centres for children with disabilities

4th June 2021

Ms Arries (EFF) asked the Minister of Social Development about the number of ECD centres in South Africa that provide for the needs of children with disabilities. In her response, the Minister provided a provincial breakdown of ECD centres that are accessible to children with disabilities and other measures that have been taken to improve accessibility. The data seemed inconsistent, with Western Cape reporting that only five registered facilities accommodate children with disabilities, while KZN reported that all funded facilities are equipped to accommodate children with disabilities.

[PQ on accessible ECD centres for children with disabilities](#)

### Parliamentary question on unspent provincial social development funding

25th June 2021

Ms van der Merwe (IFP) asked the Minister of Social Development how much each provincial DSD returned unspent to the National Treasury at the end of 2020-21, and the impact on welfare programmes. In her response, the Minister provided a provincial breakdown of returned PDSF funds, which ranged from R5 million in Western Cape to over R430 million in Gauteng. The main reason given for unspent funds was outstanding ESRF payments for ECD practitioners.

[PQ on unspent PDSF funding](#)

### Parliamentary question on administration costs of the ESRF

28th July 2021

Ms Abrahams (DA) asked the Minister of Social Development about the costs of administering the ESRF. In her response, the Minister explained that provision was made for each province to use a maximum of 2% of their total ESRF allocation for administration, including capacity to manage the initiative.

[PQ on administration of the ESRF](#)

## News from parliament

### Update on ECD function shift – Portfolio Committees on Basic Education and Social Development

25th August 2021

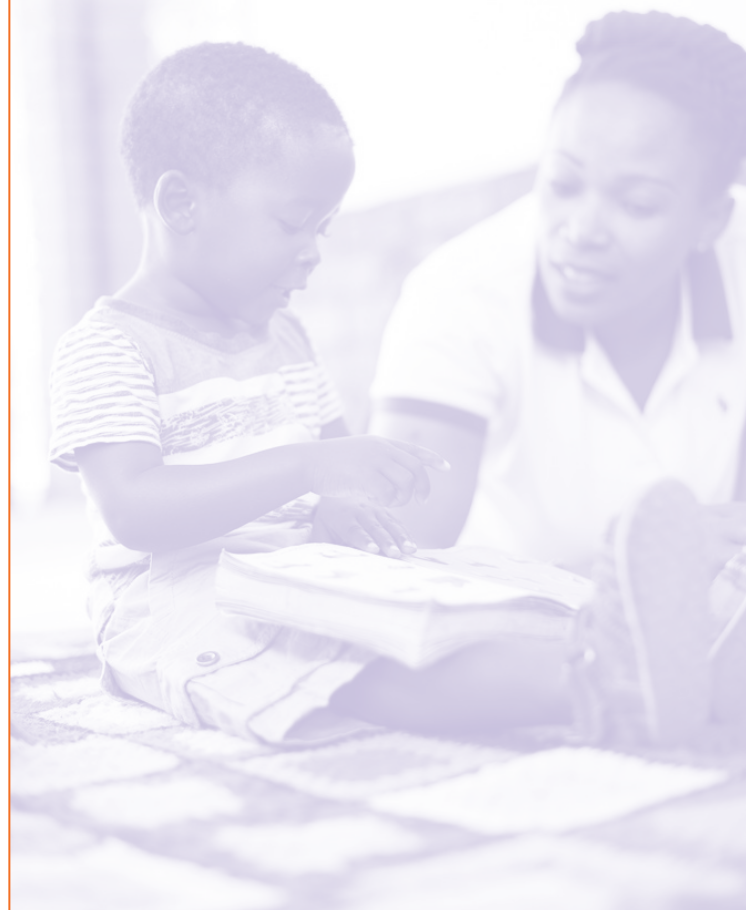
The Department of Social Development and Basic Education briefed a joint sitting of the Portfolio Committees on progress with the ECD function shift. In their presentation, the departments gave detailed updates on all elements of the function shift. Some highlights included:

- outline of an integrated ECD service delivery model for the period between birth and six years old (slide 11);
- the role of COGTA and municipalities in terms of strategic planning for and co-ordination of local ECD services, provision of appropriate infrastructure, and registration and funding for childminding services (slide 13);
- the new organisational structure for DBE, with a new 'Foundations for Learning' Chief Directorate (slide 20);
- five strategies for improving the quality of ECD – curriculum, mixed modalities, training, co-ordination, and funding (slides 38-43);
- collaboration with the World Bank on a Public Expenditure and Institutional Review (slide 44);
- the Second Children's Amendment Bill (slides 46-47);
- components of an upscaling strategy (slide 51).

In collaboration with NECT, there will be a programme of monthly stakeholder engagement sessions on specific themes in the function shift, from August onwards.

### Joint Portfolio Committee meeting on ECD function shift

### Presentation on the ECD function shift



## News from government

### Review of Intergovernmental Mechanisms Relating to Social Development – South African Law Reform Commission

3rd May 2021

At the request of DSD, the South African Law Reform Commission has launched an investigation into the mechanisms through which national and provincial government departments involved in the social development sector manage their interdependence and cooperation. As part of the call for comments, the SALRC published a detailed paper which considers the current legislative framework and explores international trends in similar multi-level political systems.

[SALRC paper on review of intergovernmental mechanisms for social development](#)

### Mid-year Population Estimates – Statistics South Africa

18th July 2021

Statistics South Africa published the Mid-Year Population Estimates. These suggest a continuing very gradual decline in the birth rate, and a small increase in the overall number of 0-4 year-olds.

[Mid-Year Population Estimates](#)

### Green Paper on Social Security and Retirement Reform

18th August 2021

The Department of Social Development published a Green Paper on Comprehensive Social Security and Retirement Reform. The paper includes proposals to phase out the means test for the Child Support Grant as part of a new comprehensive social protection floor. It is not clear to what extent the Green Paper represents agreed government policy.

[Green Paper on Social Security and Retirement Reform](#)

### Launch of ECD census - Department of Basic Education

26th August 2021

The Department of Basic Education has launched the ECD Census 2021. The goal is to collect data on every ECD programme in South Africa, in order to create a comprehensive picture of the ECD landscape. A short brochure and FAQ sheet have been made available to explain the census in more detail.

[Launch of ECD Census 2021](#)

# ECD Advocacy BULLETIN

## From around the world

### OECD Starting Strong VI

June 2021

The OECD has published *Starting Strong VI: Supporting Meaningful Interactions in Early Childhood Education and Care*. The interactive platform maps five policy levers and the dimensions of quality beneath each, with indicators of policies that support process quality in ECEC settings (and data on prevalence across countries).

[OECD Starting Strong VI](#)

### Save the Children briefing on early learning programming during Covid-19

June 2021

Save the Children conducted a review of its strategy to ensure continuity of early learning during Covid-19 and considered implications for the future of contactless ECD programming. The briefing suggests that a spectrum of remote and in-person, group and individual interventions is required to ensure continuity of early learning.

[Save the Children ECD Covid-19 strategy portrait](#)

### Meta review of studies of early years parenting interventions

May 2021

A new meta analysis of randomised control trials examining the effectiveness of parenting interventions for the first three years of life, found significantly greater effects in low and middle-income countries compared to high-income countries. The review also found that programmes that focused on responsive caregiving had greater effects on child cognitive development, parenting knowledge, parenting practices, and parent-child interactions, compared to those that did not.

[Meta review of studies of early years parenting interventions](#)



## In case you missed it

### ECD Cost of Inaction Tool – Early Childhood Development Action Network

The Early Childhood Development Action Network (ECDAN) has launched a Cost of Inaction (COI) tool, to contribute to the debate on the need for and rationality of ECD investments.

*“The COI is the net economic benefits foregone in a country for not investing in specific early childhood programmes. It is calculated as the difference between potential economic benefits and costs of a possible ECD intervention that is not being implemented.”*

If customised for South Africa, for pre-school programmes for 3-5 year-olds at 95% coverage, the tool estimates the cost of inaction for South Africa at **\$36 billion per annum, or 10% of GDP**. The tool can also be used to estimate COI for nutrition and home visiting programmes.

[ECDAN Cost of Inaction tool](#)



#### FURTHER INFORMATION

Useful links:

[Government of RSA](#)

[Parliament of RSA](#)

[Parliamentary Monitoring Group](#)

Useful resources:

[Children's Act](#)

[National Integrated ECD Policy](#)

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