

BULLETIN

A SUMMARY OF THE LATEST NEWS
FROM NATIONAL GOVERNMENT
AND PARLIAMENT

News from parliament

Parliamentary question on front-line workers and Covid-19 vaccine

2nd September 2021

Ms Bridget Masango (DA) asked the Minister of Health which categories are considered front-line workers in terms of prioritisation for the Covid-19 vaccine roll-out. In their response, the Minister confirmed that the ECD workforce was prioritised in the roll-out programme.

[PQ on vaccine roll-out and front-line workers](#)

Report on the performance of the Department of Basic Education – Portfolio Committee on Basic Education

7th September 2021

The Portfolio Committee on Basic Education published its report on the Fourth Quarterly Report on the Performance of DBE in meeting its strategic objectives for 2020/21. The report gives an overview of the presentations made by DBE, which included the following updates on ECD:

- **Amend legislation to regulate the new ECD landscape:** Determination submitted to DPSA and updated proclamations are back from the office of OCSLA and are being processed by DPSA.
- **Develop new funding models for ECD delivery:** The target was for an approved report with recommendations. The financial diagnostic report on the current funding model for ECD has been approved.

- **Conduct an ECD census to inform the integration of ECD into the EMIS:** Preparation for ECD census is concluded and a service provider appointed.

- **Develop and operationalise an ECD Human Resource Development Plan:** The HRD plan is approved and the financial diagnostic report on the current human resources connected to the ECD functions has been approved.

[Report on DBE progress against 2020/21 strategic objectives](#)

Meeting on DSD's 2020/21 Annual Report – Portfolio Committee on Social Development

12th November 2021

The Portfolio Committee considered DSD's 2020/21 Annual Report. DSD's presentation included updates on the ECD-ESRF and on the Vangasali campaign.

[Meeting on DSD Annual Report](#)

[Presentation on DSD Annual Report 2020/21](#)

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

News from parliament

Meeting on DBE's 2020/21 Annual Report – Portfolio Committee on Basic Education

9th November 2021

In the discussion on DBE's 2020/21 Annual Report, DBE officials provided an update on progress on the Second Children's Amendment Bill (SCAB). They confirmed that the draft SCAB had been produced by the Technical Team and would be presented to the Heads of Education Departments Committee and the Council of Education Ministers within the DBE. After that the Bill could progress in Parliament, but was likely to move with greater speed after the function shift in April 2022, when there would be clarity around who was responsible for the Bill.

Meeting on DBE Annual Report

Parliamentary question on roll-over of ECD Employment Stimulus Relief Fund monies

22nd October 2021

Mr Hill-Lewis (DA) asked the Minister of Finance about approvals to provinces for the budget roll-over of unspent ECD Employment Stimulus Relief Fund monies. In their response, the Minister confirmed that, of the budget of R496 million for ECD Stimulus Relief Funds, provinces underspent by around R392 million. Eight provinces, except for Western Cape who had fully spent their allocation, subsequently applied for the unspent funds to be rolled over to the 2021/22 financial year. National Treasury gave approval for R351 million to be rolled over.

Roll-over of ECD Employment Stimulus funds

Social Development Budgetary Review and Recommendations Report – Portfolio Committee on Social Development

24th November 2021

The Portfolio Committee discussed its Budgetary Review and Recommendations Report for the social development portfolio for 2020/21. MPs raised a number of issues and concerns relating to ECD, including the lack of progress reports on the Vangasali campaign; difficulties encountered by ECD programmes trying to access the ECD-ESRF; fraud in the ECD-ESRF; accessibility of ECD programmes to children with disabilities; and the need for better geographic planning of ECD programmes.

Meeting on the Social Development Budgetary Review and Recommendations Report



News from parliament

Basic Education Laws Amendment Bill

10th January 2022

The Basic Education Laws Amendment Bill was formally introduced into Parliament. The Bill makes attendance in Grade R compulsory by placing a new duty on parents to ensure that their child attends Grade R from the age of six years old. The maximum penalty for non-compliance is increased to one year's imprisonment. The accompanying memorandum outlines the financial implications for the state:

- *In terms of the provision of Grade R, it is estimated that an additional amount of R5.26 billion will be required. The amount is composed of both the funding needed for equalisation of conditions of service and the funding of appointment of additional educators to address the estimated increased learner enrolment.*
- *In terms of additional infrastructure, a total of 7 888 schools still need to be provided with Grade R classrooms, and an amount of R12 billion is required to address the shortfall. The shortfall will continue to be funded from the Education Infrastructure Grant, the equitable share and other funding mechanisms[...]*

Basic Education Laws Amendment Bill



News from government

Draft National Infrastructure Plan 2050 - Department of Public Works and Infrastructure

11th August 2021

The DPWI published the draft National Infrastructure Plan 2050 for public comment. The plan addresses essential infrastructure for economic growth. There is no reference to infrastructure for ECD programmes.

[Draft National Infrastructure Plan 2050](#)

Medium Term Budget Policy Statement

11th November 2021

The MTBPS allows government departments to apply for adjustments to their budgets and indicates how government intends allocating the upcoming national budget. It also includes spending estimates for the first half of the year, and adjustments to the proposed revenue and spending estimates for the second half of the year.

The Division of Revenue Amendment Bill and the Adjustments Appropriation Bill enact the proposed adjustments in the MTBPS. While the MTBPS statement itself did not refer to ECD, the Bill included an adjustment of R178 million to the ECD Conditional Grant ‘to provide unemployment risk support to early childhood development related workers currently employed in ECD centres’.

[Medium Term Budget Policy Statement](#)

[Division of Revenue Amendment Act](#)

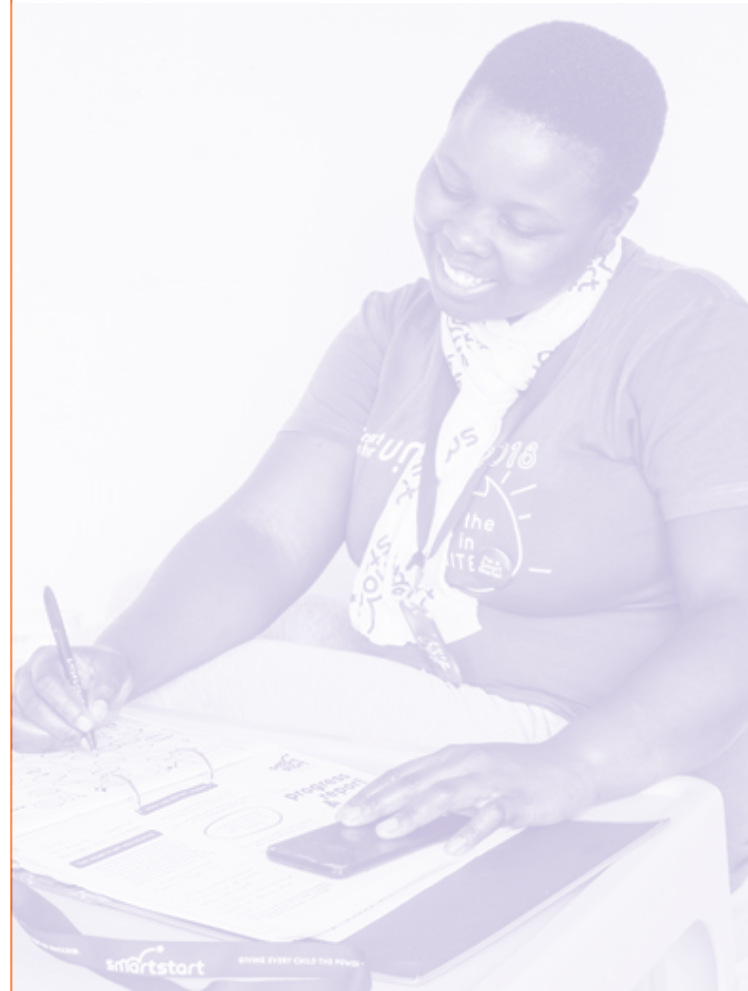
[Adjustments Appropriation Act](#)

General Household Survey 2020 – Statistics South Africa

2nd December 2021

Statistics SA published the General Household Survey 2020. Due to Covid-19 the survey was conducted telephonically and fewer households were reached – therefore the direct comparability with previous years is uncertain. The data indicates that the percentage of 0-4 year-olds who were not attending an ECD programme in South Africa, increased from 59% in 2019, to 70% in 2020. This figure rose to 76% in KwaZulu-Natal and 82% in Northern Cape.

[General Household Survey 2020](#)



From around the world

Build Forward Better – Save the Children

September 2021

Save the Children published a new report on the post-Covid education landscape called 'Build Forward Better'. It uses an index to identify education systems that are at high risk of collapse. Out of the 100 countries most at risk, South Africa's education system is ranked 14th. The report includes interesting findings and lessons on early learning (pages 31-33) including the powerful role of home-based early learning.

[Build Forward Better](#)

Promoting men's engagement in ECD – Plan International

September 2021

Plan International and Promundo launched a report entitled *Promoting Men's Engagement in Early Childhood Development*. The report focuses on programming and influencing and includes resources, guidance and tools.

[Promoting men's engagement in ECD](#)

Global Partnership Strategy for Early Childhood – UNESCO

December 2021

UNESCO and partners launched the Global Partnership Strategy for Early Childhood, which aims to ensure that ECD services are fully inclusive, accessible, affordable, gender-responsive, and equitable for every child without exception. As part of the initiative, the Call to Act Together was launched, with the goal of mobilising governments, organisations, networks and individuals for a renewed commitment to action for young children. (The Call can be signed using the link below until April 2022.)

[Global Partnership Strategy for Early Childhood](#)

[Call to Act Together](#)

Covid-19 and ECD research round-up – Early Childhood Development Action Network

December 2021

ECDAN have published a research round-up of more than 400 studies focusing on Covid-19 and ECD in low- and middle-income countries. The research covers the core areas of health and nutrition, responsive caregiving, learning, and child protection.

[Research round-up on Covid-19 and ECD](#)

In case you missed it

Making the investment case for ECD

October 2021

The Heckman Equation website has published its top 20 resources for making the case for investing in quality early childhood education. The resources include videos, scientific papers, infographics and research summaries.

[Heckman top 20 resources](#)



FURTHER INFORMATION

Useful links:

[Government of RSA](#)

[Parliament of RSA](#)

[Parliamentary Monitoring Group](#)

Useful resources:

[Children's Act](#)

[National Integrated ECD Policy](#)

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