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Early Childhood Development (ECD) Training by Department of Basic Education (DBE)

Introduction

The Department of Basic Education (formerly known as the Department of Education) committed itself to the provisioning of Early Childhood Development (ECD) programmes to all the children of South Africa¹. The department committed itself through various international commitments and policy statements. It subscribed to the Education for All (EFA) goal of ensuring that all children have access to good quality education². It further subscribed to the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) number two, which encourages that all boys and girls must complete their primary schooling.

Responsibilities of Department of Basic Education (DBE)

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) is responsible for the provision of basic education for children from 5 years (Grade R) onwards. The White Paper on Education and Training of 1995 mandated the Department of Education³ to ensure access for children to ECD education/centres. By virtue of the above, ECD within the Department of Education is mainly focussed on the Grade R cohort. Resources, both financial and human, are channelled to Grade R.

Some of the key roles and responsibilities of the Department of Basic Education include:

- Mobilizing funds for building the capacity of ECD practitioners and implementing capacity building programmes.
- Providing or facilitating the provision of resources such as equipment and materials to support quality ECD practice.
- Developing curricula and promoting appropriate ECD programmes for children of different ages.
- Supporting future practitioner registration processes led by South African Council for Educators (SACE).
- Managing the inter-departmental process for the development of the ECD Institute, and accommodating the Institute until its long-term status and location is finalised.
- Developing strategies and interventions to address barriers to learning.

¹ White Paper on Early Childhood Development (2001)

² See Education for All (EFA), Country Report: South Africa (2008)

³ Now called the Department of Basic Education



Planned Activities for 2013/14

DBE has planned to develop materials for parents and caregivers to stimulate young children. It will implement this in consultation with other departments, from July 2013 to March 2014.

Planned Targets

DBE has set training targets for each province. This is displayed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Planned Targets

Province	Training Targets
Eastern Cape	4, 219 (ETDP SETA, DBE, Disability, DSD)
Free State	883 (DSD, DBE)
Gauteng	3, 996 (ETDP SETA and DBE)
KwaZulu-Natal	100 (DBE)
Limpopo	889 (DBE)
Mpumalanga	2 010 (DBE and DSD)
Northern Cape	288 (DBE, DSD and ETDP SETA)
North West	1 177 (DBE)
Western Cape	1 000 (DBE and DSD)
TOTAL	14, 562

As can be seen above, training targets are to be achieved by the DBE in conjunction with other government departments such as the Department of Social Development. DBE has put aside a budget of R 335, 221 for the financial year 2013/14.

Issues for Consideration

- How well is South Africa doing in relation to achieving MDG 2?
- What is the working relation between the Department of Basic Education and the Department of Social Development on the matter of ECD? Is it functioning well? What are the challenges, and successes? What more should be done to improve it?
- Working with other departments to achieve the targets, which department's budget gets used for the provision of ECD?
- Are the materials that are going to be developed for parents and care givers going to be in all the official languages?
- Is this programme being rolled out to the rural areas (including farms)?



References

Department of Education. (2008) Education for All, Country Report: Pretoria

Department of Education, (2001) White Paper 5 – Early Childhood Development. Pretoria.

Department of Education, (2013) Presentation on Early Childhood Development Training, 11 June.