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**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER:18/2020**

**1007. Ms A L A Abrahams (DA) to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

What are the details of the joint phasing-in plan of her department working jointly with the Department of Social Development for the reopening of early childhood development centres (ECDs) under level 3 of the risk- adjusted approach to Covid-19 within the Republic with regard to the

(a) date ECDs will be allowed to open under level 3,

(b) opening of ECDs in provinces which remain on level 4,

(c) provision by the Government of personal protective equipment (PPE) to ECDs,

(d) total number of children that will be permitted in each ECD facility,

(e) enforcement of social distancing and PPE regulations within ECDs and

(f) training ECD facilitators and/or practitioners will receive in preparation to receive learners?

**Response**

**What are the details of the joint phasing-in plan of her department working jointly with the Department of Social Development for the reopening of early childhood development programmes (ECDs) under level 3 of the risk-adjusted approach to Covid-19 within the Republic?**

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the Department of Social Development (DSD) are still in the process of the early childhood development (ECD) function shift. To date, the ECD function has not yet been transferred to DBE by Proclamation, and the primary responsibility for the re-opening of ECD programmes, rests with the DSD.  That said, the DBE is supporting DSD in developing a plan towards the safe re-opening of ECD programmes.

The DSD, in collaboration with the DBE, Department of Health and civil society, have embarked on a process to look into the options, conditions, requirements and risks associated with the re-opening of ECD programmes.  The first engagement was on 26 May 2020, where eight workstreams (data, monitoring, assessment, support packages, protocols for re-opening, general COVID-19 awareness, programme re-design and practitioner training) were agreed upon, and immediately commenced their work.  This will provide important information regarding the measures and timing for the re-opening of ECD programmes.

**(a) date ECDs will be allowed to open under level 3**

The overall workplan that will be developed by the workstreams will determine this date.

**(b) opening of ECDs in provinces which remain on level 4**

The overall workplan that will be developed by the workstreams will determine this date.

**(c) provision by the Government of personal protective equipment (PPE) to ECDs**

The Support Packages Workstream is developing a basic package of support to enable ECD programmes to implement the protocols and standard operating procedures. Funding options for this are considered, including using the budget from the ECD conditional grant to provide the appropriate PPEs.

**(d) total number of children that will be permitted in each ECD facility**

The Protocols Workstream will develop the required protocols and standard operating procedures for ECD programmes to re-open.

**(e) enforcement of social distancing and PPE regulations within ECDs and**

The Protocols Workstream will develop the required protocols and standard operating procedures for ECD programmes to re-open, whereas the Support Packages Workstream is developing a basic package of support to enable ECD programmes to implement the protocols and standard operating procedures. On 2 June, the DSD will also launch the Vangasali campaign as part of Child Protection week. The purpose of the campaign is to crowd-source information on where ECD programmes are located so that the DSD can monitor the readiness of ECD programmes to re-open.

**(f) training ECD facilitators and/or practitioners will receive in preparation to receive learners?**

The workstream that focuses on practitioner training will develop a strategy to train all practitioners to prepare adequately before children return to ECD programmes. The general COVID-19 awareness workstream will also develop information packages to programmes and parents to educate them around the required measures that need to be in place.