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**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER: 2264**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 09 OCTOBER 2020**

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**2264. Ms L H Arries (EFF) to ask the Minister of Social Development:**

(1) What are the challenges faced by Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres in relation to the Covid-19 regulations;

(2) whether any of the specified challenges led to the closure of any ECD centres; if not, what is the position in this regard, if so, what is her department doing to assist the specified centres to operate in a safe environment? NW2836E

**REPLY:**

1. These are some of the challenges faced by Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres in relation to the Covid-19 regulations and these are not exhaustive.

* Non-adherence to COVID 19 health and safety requirements including lack of PPEs,
* Financial constrains due to loss of income during lockdown period.
* ECD centres depend on fees paid by parents and this was not possible as the children were at home.
* COVID 19 has affected economic situation of many households and as such many children are still at home due to loss of income by parents as they cannot afford paying fees for their children.
* Some parents/caregivers are scared that their children will be infected by the pandemic and prefer keeping them at home.
* Some ECD centres might not reopen as practitioners are part of vulnerable groupings with existing co- morbidities and/or are 60 or above.

1. According to guidance from provinces there may be some challenges with ECD centres closing. It will be difficult to have accurate information in this regard due to us not having adequate data of all ECD centres in the country. The department repurposed Infrastructure Conditional Grant to prepare ECD centres for reopening, by facilitating the supply of essential equipment to meet COVID 19 health and safety measures. These include equipment that will enable temperature screening, frequent hand washing, frequent cleaning and basic hygiene to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The department is also continuing to pay subsidy to funded ECD centres.