

The ECD Landscape in South Africa

What is ECD?



In broad terms, it is the development that takes place in a child between birth and school-going age.

Important aspects of ECD:

- Nutrition
- Health care
- Age-appropriate physical activity
- Love and affection
- Social interaction
- Opportunities for learning



Benefits of ECD:

Children who are given a strong foundation in early childhood are:

- More likely to overcome developmental problems.
- More likely to be school-ready when they reach school-going age.
- More likely to be physically healthy.
- More likely to reach their full potential.
- More likely to grow into responsible citizens.
- More likely to become economically active adults.
- More likely to have a positive effect on the next generation through good parenting of their own children.



Providers of ECD

Informal Providers:

Parents, family members, and other caregivers such as nannies provide children with opportunities for early childhood development in an informal manner through, for example:

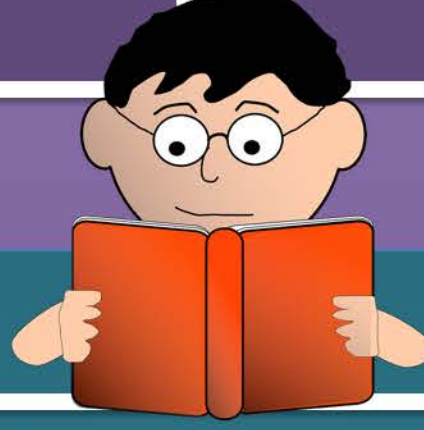
- Giving them educational toys to play with.
- Providing them with healthy meals and adequate medical care.
- Showing them love, care and affection.

Formal Providers:

In terms of the Children's Act 38 of 2005, all facilities that provide care for pre-school age children must provide ECD programmes.

These facilities must:

- Be registered with the Department of Social Development.
- Must be run (and staffed by) suitably qualified and experienced ECD practitioners.



ECD in terms of the Children's Act 38 of 2005

The Children's Act regulates the provision of ECD Services and ECD Programmes in various childcare facilities, including partial care facilities such as crèches and pre-schools.

ECD Services:

(s91(2) of the Children's Act)

- Aimed at promoting childhood development.
- Provided on a regular basis by someone other than a child's parent or caregiver.
- Provided to children below school-going age.

ECD Programmes:

(s91(3) of the Children's Act)

Programmes that are provided in the context of an ECD service, and that are designed to "provide learning and support appropriate to the child's developmental age and stage."

ECD Practitioners:

Suitably qualified individuals who work in ECD Centres and who run ECD programmes.

ECD practitioners are often employed as:

- Playschool teachers
- Pre-school teachers
- Pre-school directors

How to Become an ECD Practitioner

To become an ECD practitioner, you need to:

- Undergo training in implementing ECD programmes.
- Be able to identify serious childhood illnesses and know how to respond to them.
- Undergo first aid training.

To be able to apply for the registration of an ECD programme, you need to:

- Have a National Certificate in ECD at NQF 1-6 level, OR
- Have an appropriate ECD qualification, OR
- Have at least 3 years' experience in implementing ECD programmes

South African ECD qualifications include:

- National Certificate: N4 Educare
- National Certificate: N5 Educare
- National Certificate: N6 Educare
- National Diploma: Educare
- Bachelor of Primary Education in ECD (NQF7)
- BEd in Early Childhood Development - Foundation Phase (NQF8)

