

BULLETIN

A SUMMARY OF THE LATEST NEWS
FROM NATIONAL GOVERNMENT
AND PARLIAMENT

News from parliament

Parliamentary question on Wave 2 of the NIDS-CRAM survey and support for the ECD sector

21st December 2020

Ms Abrahams (DA) asked the Minister of Social Development what support was being given to the ECD sector in the light of the findings of the NIDS-CRAM Wave 2 findings. The Minister gave a lengthy response which addressed issues around the comparability of NIDS-CRAM data, and the relevance of the Wave 2 data now that the ECD sector has re-opened.

[PQ on NIDS-CRAM Wave 2 and ECD sector](#)

Parliamentary question on support for ECD centres

21st December 2020

Ms LH Arries (EFF) asked the Minister of Social Development about support for ECD centres in under-resourced communities. In her response, the Minister described the role of the Conditional Registration Framework in enabling a developmental approach by supporting compliance towards registration.

[PQ on support for ECD centres](#)

Parliamentary question on employment of ECD Compliance Officers

4th January 2021

Ms Abrahams (DA) asked the Minister of Social Development whether her department would still

be employing ECD Compliance Officers in the current financial year. The Minister responded that R116 million had been allocated for the support of 25 500 compliance support officers, who are existing staff members at ECD programmes.

[PQ on ECD Compliance Officers](#)

Parliamentary question on challenges for ECD centres with Covid-19 compliance

4th January 2021

Ms LH Arries (EFF) asked the Minister of Social Development about the challenges faced by ECD centres in respect of compliance with the Covid-19 regulations. In her response, the Minister acknowledged that some ECD centres are being forced to close, and that it was difficult to have an accurate picture because of the lack of adequate data.

[PQ on Covid-19 compliance](#)

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

Parliamentary question on back-payments of the ECD subsidy

4th January 2021

Ms Abrahams (DA) asked the Minister of Social Development whether her department had complied with the High Court order to backpay the ECD subsidy to ECD centres that had been unlawfully denied it during the lockdown. The Minister responded that the 40% of the subsidy (nutrition element) that was not paid between April and September 2020 would be transferred to ECD centres from 18 November 2020. A total of 368 centres would be paid about R11 million.

PQ on back-payments of ECD subsidy

Parliamentary question on a) ECD workstreams on Covid-19 response and b) ECD sector stimulus relief allocation

4th January 2021

Ms Abrahams (DA) asked the Minister of Social Development about the ECD workstreams that DSD had instigated to inform Covid-19 regulations for the ECD sector. The Minister provided a list of the members of the workstreams, and confirmed that the workstreams had not recommended that R1.3 billion should be used for the appointment of compliance monitors. She added that while the Presidency announced R1.3 billion as a stimulus relief package for the ECD sector, National Treasury had approved an allocation of only R588 million.

PQ on ECD workstreams on Covid-19 response

Division of Revenue Second Amendment Act

15th January 2021

The Act passed into law, and included adjusted 2020/21 allocations to provinces totalling nearly R496 million for the ECD Conditional Grant.

Division of Revenue Second Amendment Act

Trends in International Mathematics & Science Study (TIMSS) 2019: with Deputy Minister – Portfolio Committee on Basic Education

10th February 2021

Dr Mark Chetty, Chief Education Specialist in DBE, reported that South Africa scored 374 points in Mathematics and 324 points in Science for Grade 5 learners against the 500 TIMSS Scale Centrepoint. While this represents a substantial improvement over the last 20 years, the rate of annual Mathematics improvement has decreased significantly, and DBE is evaluating how to improve these rates so that the target goal of 420 points by 2023 can be met. Dr Chetty noted that, *'DBE must provide more curriculum support before learners enter schooling in order to show benefit in later TIMSS cycles'*.

DBE briefing on TIMSS

News from parliament

Children's Amendment Bill – Portfolio Committee on Social Development

February – March 2021

The Portfolio Committee on Social Development has held several meetings on the Children's Amendment Bill, at which the ECD clauses of the Bill have been discussed.

On 20th February, the Committee heard representations from SALGA that municipalities had not been properly consulted on the ECD provisions. The Parliamentary Legal Advisor, advised the Committee to send the Bill back to DSD to address these concerns. ECD matters were also mentioned during Committee meetings on 3rd, 5th March, 11th and 16th March.

At the Committee's meeting on 17th March, DSD presented their response to SALGA's concerns, and proposed that only clauses 103A-M should be withdrawn and dealt with separately in a Second Amendment Bill. This would mean that DSD's other amendments relating to ECD in Chapters 5 and 6 of the Children's Amendment Bill would remain.

[Children's Amendment Bill 20.2](#)

[Children's Amendment Bill 17.3](#)

Report on the Second Quarterly Report on DBE Performance – Portfolio Committee on Basic Education

3rd March 2021

The report included updates on various indicators relating to ECD, including revising the legislative framework, developing new funding models for

ECD, and developing an ECD Education Information Management System (EMIS).

[Report on Second Quarterly Report on DBE Performance](#)

ECD migration from DSD to DBE: Progress report with ministers – Portfolio Committee on Basic Education

16th March 2021

The Ministers of Social Development and Basic Education jointly gave a presentation to the Portfolio Committee on Basic Education regarding progress with the ECD function shift. The presentation stated that:

- all of Chapter 6 of the Children's Act will migrate to DBE, and all elements of Chapter 5 (partial care) insofar as they relate to partial care facilities that provide ECD programmes (slides 14-18);
- DBE will take full responsibility from 1st April 2022, with various areas, including registration, starting the process of transition over the next year;
- there has been good progress in some provinces in terms of identifying the posts that will transfer from PDSs to PDEs, but the process is moving slower in other provinces (slides 21-24).

[DSD and DBE briefing on function shift](#)

News from parliament

DBE Annual Performance Plan 2021/22 – Portfolio Committee on Basic Education

17th March 2021

The Minister of Basic Education briefed the Committee on her department's strategic plan for 2021-24. The presentation included a summary of the department's vision for ECD:

'The five strategies for improving the quality of ECD in South Africa:

1. Curriculum-based early learning for all children birth to 5 years – implementing the National Curriculum Framework (NCF).
2. Access to early childhood development programmes for all children birth to 5 years – a continuum of programmes.
3. Training and development for all those working in ECD – career paths, with intensive but flexible training opportunities.
4. Co-ordination of all early childhood development services.
5. A flexible funding and provisioning framework.'

Specifically in 2021/22, the Department aims to complete four national reports on:

- new legislation required to regulate ECD;
- a new funding model for ECD;
- a census of ECD services and integration into EMIS;
- a new ECD service delivery model and its workforce implications.

[DBE briefing on Annual Performance Plan](#)

Parliamentary question on the re-opening of ECD programmes

23rd March 2021

Ms Abrahams (DA) asked the Minister of Social Development about what figures her department was collecting on the re-opening of ECD programmes after lockdown. In her response, the Minister stated that Employment Stimulus Relief Fund's ECD (ECD-ESRF) grant would provide 108,833 ECD related workers with income support through about 28,283 existing ECD programmes.

[PQ on ECD programme re-opening](#)



News from parliament

Parliamentary question on reduction in the ECD-ESRF allocation

23rd March 2021

Ms Abrahams (DA) asked the Minister of Social Development why the initial allocation of R1.3 billion for the ECD-ESRF had been reduced. The Minister stated that, *“The initial indication of R1.3 billion announced in July 2020 was subsequently revised based on the outcome of the assessment of the bid process through the National Treasury.”* The final sum received from Treasury was R588 million: This comprised R380 million for unemployment risk support for 83 333 existing ECD related workers; R116 million for support of 25 500 compliance support officers, who are existing staff at ECD programmes; R16.5 million for registration support officers; and R76 million for 1 809 social workers appointed on contract.

The Minister also provided a provincial breakdown of the allocations.

PQ on reduction in ECD-ESRF allocation

Parliamentary question on data collected through the Vangasali campaign

23rd March 2021

Ms Abrahams (DA) asked the Minister of Social Development for an update on the Vangasali campaign. In her response, the Minister stated that data on 52,288 ECD services had been collected during phase 1 of the campaign, and about 35,000 (67%) of these services are unregistered. The Minister also set out the next phase of the campaign which will include the roll-out of a registration application pack and tools.

PROVINCE	(i) NUMBER OF FULLY REGISTERED	(ii) NUMBER OF CONDITIONALLY REGISTERED	(iii) NUMBER OF UNREGISTERED SERVICES
EC	1 174	1 816	1 685
FS	310	972	1 674
GP	1 242	624	13 717
KZN	1 696	1 854	4 516
LP	478	3 021	2 695
MP	578	919	3 011
NC	95	197	660
NW	386	842	2 188
WC	850	635	4 839
TOTAL	6 423	10 880	34 985

PQ on Vangasali update

News from government

General Household Survey 2019 – Statistics South Africa

15th December 2020

The General Household Survey figures for 2019 were published (delayed from last May). The figures indicate a decline in the number of 0-4 year-olds attending ECD programmes, *before* the onset of Covid-19. Access to ECD programmes in 2019 was lower than it was in both 2018 and 2017. The table below consolidates categories and compares 2019 with previous years.

	Pre-school, creche, educare, day mother	At home with parent or another adult
2019	40.7%	57.7%
2018	43.9%	55.1%
2017	41.9%	56.9%
2016	40%	58.5%

General Household Survey 2019

Employment Stimulus Relief Fund for ECD – Department of Social Development

February – April 2021

The government launched the Employment Stimulus Relief Fund for ECD (ECD-ESRF), aimed at helping ECD services to recover from the loss of income brought on by Covid-19. All types of ECD services, including centre and non-centre based, registered and unregistered, were invited to apply. In April, DSD published a press notice on progress and delays in paying out the grant.

Launch of ECD-ESRF

Update on ECD-ESRF

Admission Policy for Ordinary Public Schools published for comment – Department of Basic Education

11th February 2021

The Department of Basic Education published the Admission Policy for Ordinary Public Schools for comment. Under 'Age requirements for the admission of a learner to an ordinary public school', the Policy confirms:

- '29. The admission age of a learner to a public school to—*
- (i) Grade R is age four turning five by 30 June in the year of admission; and*
 - (ii) Grade 1 is age five turning six by 30 June in the year of admission.'*

Admission Policy for Ordinary Public Schools

News from government

Budget Statement – National Treasury

24th February 2021

The Minister of Finance delivered the annual budget statement. While the headline figure for ECD suggested an increase in spending on the ECD conditional grant over the MTEF period (to R3.5 billion), the detailed figures show that the value of the per child subsidy will now decrease in real terms between 2020/21 and 2023/24.

The ECD conditional grant budget will rise by 4% between 2022 and 2023 (an inflationary increase). The annual increases in the per child subsidy have been revised downwards from last year's budget. 50,000 more children are forecast to receive the ECD subsidy between 2020 and 2024.

2021 Budget statement

Vote 19 (Social Development)

Education Series Volume VII: Children's education and well-being in South Africa, 2018 – Statistics South Africa

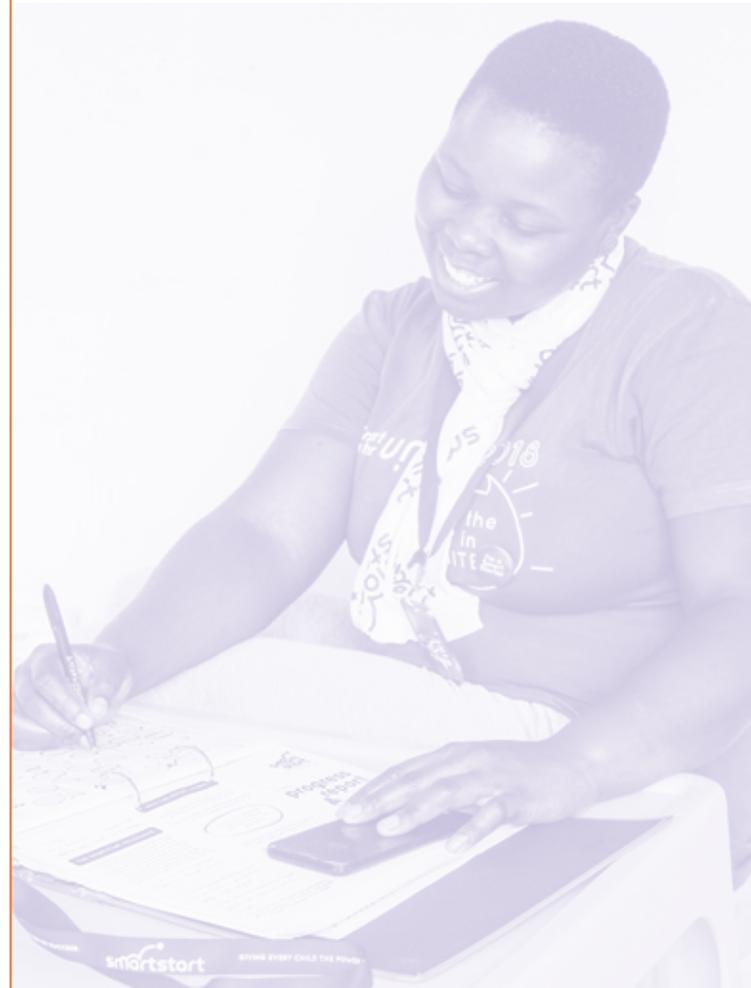
25th February 2021

The government has published volume VII in their education series, entitled, 'Children's education and well-being in South Africa, 2018'. The analysis is based on data from the General Household Survey 2018, and does not take into account the later data from GHS 2019. The findings include:

- While school/ECD access for the 0-6 year-old group increased overall, between 2016 and 2018:
 - access for 4 and 5 year-olds decreased slightly
 - access to ECD centres specifically (i.e. not schools) was stagnant

- In 2018, 54.5% of parents reported not paying any fees for their 0-6 year-old to attend ECD/school. A further 27% reported spending a monthly fee of between R1 and R300.
- 41% of all 0-6 year-olds were never read/told stories at home by someone in their household.
- 30% of all 0-6 year-olds had parents reporting that they never talked to their children about things they had done.

Children's education and well-being in South Africa 2018



From around the world

New Nurturing Care Handbook

5th February 2021

The World Health Organisation and partners launched a new handbook for implementing the Nurturing Care Framework. The handbook is made up of six guides, which correspond to the five strategic actions of the Nurturing Care Framework – Lead and invest; Focus on families and communities; Strengthen services; Monitor progress; Scale up and innovate.

[Nurturing care handbook](#)

Launch of the Global ECE Accelerator Toolkit

15th February 2021

This Global ECE Accelerator Toolkit is aimed at governments and implementing partners, to support the inclusion and strengthening of Early Childhood Education (ECE) in the context of Education Sector Planning (ESP) processes. The toolkit will be added to over time.

[Global ECE Accelerator Toolkit](#)

In case you missed it

Better Jobs and Brighter Futures: Investing in Childcare to Build Human Capital – World Bank

March 2021

This new report from the World Bank examines how scaling up access to quality ECD can unlock pathways out of poverty, build employment and productivity, and level up outcomes for children. SmartStart is used as a case study of an organisation that is taking early learning programme delivery to scale, through providing a systems solution.

The report concludes that in order to ensure equity for children, governments should prioritise coverage for the most vulnerable families, and establish the financing and institutional arrangements that will ensure that quality ECD provision is available and accessible to all.

[Better Job and Brighter Futures](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION

Useful links:

[Government of RSA](#)

[Parliament of RSA](#)

[Parliamentary Monitoring Group](#)

Useful resources:

[Children's Act](#)

[National Integrated ECD Policy](#)

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