



## basic education

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Department:  
Basic Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

# NORMS AND STANDARDS ISSUED IN TERMS OF THE CHILDREN'S ACT 2005 *APPLICABLE TO ECD PROGRAMMES*

This document contains:

1. **The Norms and Standards for Partial Care** (issued in terms of Section 79 of the Children's Act 2005)

*These apply to all ECD programmes with more than six children, which are attended by children for more than 16 hours per week.*

2. **The Norms and Standards for ECD Programmes** (issued in terms of Section 94 of the Children's Act 2005)

*These apply to all ECD programmes.*

Please note that District Education officials use **The Registration Framework** to assess compliance, which describes all of the requirements in these two sets of norms and standards, at three levels – Bronze, Silver and Gold (where Bronze and Silver enable conditional registration).

# NORMS AND STANDARDS FOR PARTIAL CARE

## 1. A safe environment for children

- (a) Children must experience safety and feel cared for whilst at the partial care facility.
- (b) Premises inside and outside must be safe, clean and well-maintained.
- (c) Equipment used must be safe, clean and well-maintained.
- (d) There must be adult supervision at all times.
- (e) The structure must be safe and weatherproof.
- (f) Floors must be covered in washable and easy to clean material that is suitable for children to play and sleep on and walls must be safe and easy to clean.
- (g) All reasonable precautions must be taken to protect children and staff from the risk of fire, accidents or other hazards.
- (h) Safety measures must be undertaken when transporting children. Such safety measures include ensuring that—
  - (i) transport operators transporting children are registered, suitably trained, screened against Part B of the Child Protection Register and possess the necessary licences and permits as prescribed by the National Land Transport Transition Act, 2000 (Act No. 22 of 2000), and other relevant national transport policies and regulations determined by the Department of Transport;
  - (ii) the requirements published by the Minister of Transport periodically in terms of the National Land Transport Transition Act 2000 are adhered to;
  - (iii) transport is appropriate to the ages of children transported and that it is accessible and suitable to children with disabilities and other special needs;
  - (iv) transport providers comply with safety measures regulated by the Department of Transport, including adherence to speed limits, and that all passengers are seated regardless of the transport mode used;
  - (v) vehicles used to transport children are safe and have the necessary safety characteristics, such as windows and doors opening instructions, safety equipment and appropriate speed devices;
  - (vi) children are not transported in open vehicles;
  - (vii) there is an adult supervisor in a vehicle transporting children under the age of nine years; and
  - (viii) there is no overloading of children in vehicles.

## **2. Proper care for sick children who become ill**

- (a) Staff must have the ability to identify children who are ill and be able to refer them for appropriate health services.
- (b) Policies and procedures relating to the health care of children whilst at the partial care facility must be in place. Such policies and procedures must cover the following:
  - (i) Criteria for identifying ill children;
  - (ii) safe keeping of all medication at a partial care facility;
  - (iii) procedures for dealing with children who are ill; and
  - (iv) guidelines for preventing the spread of diseases at the partial care facility.
- (c) The following procedure regarding children who are ill must be adhered to:
  - (i) After identifying children who are ill, the illness or problem must be reported to the parent(s), care-giver or family as soon as possible;
  - (ii) where the illness is suspected to be infectious, the child is separated from other children;
  - (iii) any child assessed to have an infectious disease (measles, chickenpox, etc) must be immediately isolated from other children and referred to the nearest hospital or clinic for further assessment and treatment;
  - (iv) if a child is already on prescribed medication, that child must receive the medication as prescribed and as advised by the parents; and
  - (v) in cases of emergency, the child must be taken to the nearest hospital or clinic for treatment and appropriate referral.
- (d) The following medical records must be kept:
  - (i) up-to date records of each child's medical history;
  - (ii) records of each child's immunisation programme and Vitamin A schedule; and
  - (iii) records of health incidents and accidents occurring at the facility.
- (e) Every partial care facility must have a first-aid kit.

## **3. Adequate space and ventilation**

- (a) The partial care facility must have adequate ventilation and sufficient light.
- (b) Space for different activities and functions must be clearly demarcated.

(c) Where applicable, new buildings and alterations to buildings must comply with the building standards as set out by the National Building Regulations and Building Standard Act, 1997 (Act No.103 of 1997).

#### **4. Safe drinking water**

(a) Safe and clean drinking water must always be available.

(b) Where water is not from a piped source, it must be treated and made safe using approved national health guidelines for the treatment of water by adding one teaspoon of bleach to 25 litres of water.

(c) All water containers must be covered at all times.

#### **5. Hygienic and adequate toilet facilities**

(a) Partial care facilities catering for toddlers must have potties, toilets and washbasins.

(b) Toilet and hand washing facilities must be reachable for children over the age of three years.

(c) For children up to the age of three years—

(i) there must be appropriate toilets;

(ii) where there are no sewerage or ablution facilities, potties must be made available;

(iii) there must be one potty for every five toddlers;

(iv) waste from potties must be disposed of hygienically;

(v) potties must be cleaned after use and disinfected in a properly demarcated area;  
and

(vi) there must be a clearly demarcated nappy changing area with a surface that can be easily cleaned. This area must be situated away from the food preparation area.

(d) For children between the ages of three and six years—

(i) where sewerage systems are available, there must be one toilet and one hand washing basin for every 20 children;

(ii) where no sewerage facilities are available, an appropriate toilet must be available at the partial care facility or immediately adjacent to the partial care facility;

(iii) where no running water is available, there must be a minimum of 25 litres of drinkable water supplied on a daily basis;

(iv) where no washbasins are available, one suitable container for every 20 children must be made available, provided that such container is cleaned and changed regularly and closed; and

(v) all toilets must be safe and hygienic.

(e) For children of six years and older, there must be—

(i) hygienic and safe toilets; and

(ii) one toilet and one hand washing basin for every 20 children.

(f) There must be adult supervision at all times when children use the toilet.

(g) Where applicable the local authority regulations and by-laws in respect of physical characteristics of building and health requirements must be adhered to.

## **6. Safe storage of anything that might be harmful to children**

(a) Medicine, cleaning substances and any dangerous substances must be kept out of reach of children.

(b) Medicine and dangerous substances must be kept in separate locked or childproof cupboards.

(c) Dangerous objects, materials, sharp instruments and utensils must be kept out of reach of children.

(d) Dangerous substances may not be used in the vicinity of children.

(e) Electrical plugs must be covered.

(f) Paraffin, gas and other electric appliances must be kept out of reach of children.

(g) Cleaning agents must be kept in clearly marked containers and out of reach of children.

## **7. Access to refuse disposal services or other adequate means of disposal of refuse generated at the partial care facility**

(a) Where possible, refuse must be disposed of according to municipality regulations.

(b) Waste disposal methods must be safe and covered.

(c) Waste must be kept out of reach of children.

(d) Waste disposal areas must be disinfected regularly.

## **8. A hygienic area for the preparation of food for children**

- (a) There must be a separate, clean and safe area for the preparation of food as well as for cleaning up after food preparation.
- (b) There must be a separate clean and safe area for serving food to the children.
- (c) There must be cooling facilities for storage of perishable food.
- (d) The food preparation area must be clearly marked and out of reach of children.
- (e) There must be a sufficient supply of clean water as well as cleaning agents.
- (f) There must be sealed containers to store all prepared food before serving such food.

## **9. Measures for the separation of children of different age groups**

- (a) Where possible, children must be separated into the following age categories in separate rooms or places to ensure their development:
  - (i) Children under the age of 18 months;
  - (ii) children between the ages of 18 and 36 months;
  - (iii) children between the ages of three and four years; and
  - (iv) children between the ages of four and six years.
- (b) Where a partial care facility provides after care facilities to children of school going age, these children must be kept separate from the the children in the abovementioned age groups in order to ensure that they are able to rest and complete their homework upon their return from school.
- (c) Where more than 50 children are enrolled for a full day at a partial care facility, there must be a separate room or place to be used as an office and as a sickbay.

## **10. The drawing up of action plans for emergencies**

- (a) Reasonable precautions to protect children from risk of fire, accidents and other hazards must be taken.
- (b) Policies and procedures for dealing with structural and environmental emergencies and disasters must be in place.
- (c) Emergency procedures with relevant contact details must be visibly displayed.
- (d) Emergency plans must include evacuation procedures.
- (e) Emergency plans must be up-to-date, regularly tested and reviewed.

- (f) Staff must be trained in dealing with emergencies.
- (g) Children must be made aware of emergency procedures.

### **11. The drawing up of policies and procedures regarding health care at the partial care facility**

Policies must—

- (a) include procedures to deal with infectious diseases at the partial care facility;
- (b) include procedures for dealing with the medical needs of sick children and of children with chronic illnesses;
- (c) ensure that there are standards relating to cleanliness and hygiene at the partial care facility;
- (d) ensure that there is an adequate supply of cleaning agents and towels at the partial care facility;
- (e) provide for the training of staff in first aid;
- (f) include record keeping and registers pertaining to storage and use of medicines at the partial care facility;
- (g) promote confidentiality when dealing with health related information;
- (h) encourage staff to take care of their health, undergo regular medical check-ups, and must include procedures to deal with contagious diseases contracted by staff in order to prevent transmission to children; and
- (i) promote ongoing staff training and development on keeping a healthy environment, identifying illnesses, preventing the spread of diseases and infectious diseases as well as promoting universal health precaution.

# NORMS AND STANDARDS FOR ECD PROGRAMMES

## **1. The provision of appropriate developmental opportunities**

Programmes must—

- (a) be delivered by members of staff who have the knowledge and training to deliver developmental programmes;
- (b) be appropriate to the developmental stages of children;
- (c) respect and nurture the culture, spirit, dignity, individuality, language and development of each child;
- (d) provide opportunities for children to explore their world; and
- (e) be organised in a way that each day offers variety and creative activities.

## **2. Programmes aimed at helping children to realise their full potential**

- (a) Children must receive care, support and security.
- (b) Programmes must promote children's rights to rest, leisure and play through the provision of a stimulating environment.
- (c) Programmes must promote self discovery.
- (d) Programmes must be evaluated and monitored.
- (e) Programmes must promote and support the development of motor, communication and sensory abilities in children.
- (f) Programmes must promote self control, independence and developmentally appropriate responsibility.
- (g) Activities must promote free communication and interaction amongst children.
- (h) Programmes must respect and nurture the culture, spirit, dignity, individuality, language and development of each child.

## **3. Caring for children in a constructive manner and providing support and security**

- (a) Creative play and exploratory learning opportunities must be provided to children.
- (b) Programmes must adhere to the following conditions:
  - (i) toilet facilities must be safe and clean for children;



- (ii) where there are no sewerage facilities, sufficiently covered potties must be available;
- (iii) every child under the age of three years must have his or her own potty;
- (iv) for ages three to six years, one toilet and one hand washing basin must be provided for every twenty children;
- (v) there must be a place for the bathing of children;
- (vi) discipline must be effected in a humane way and promote integrity with due regard to the child's developmental stage and evolving capacities. Children may not be punished physically by hitting, smacking, slapping, kicking or pinching;
- (vii) programmes must adhere to policies, procedures and guidelines related to health, safety and nutrition practices. These must relate to—
  - (aa) practices aimed at preventing the spread of contagious diseases;
  - (bb) at least one meal per day must be provided;
  - (cc) all meals and snacks should meet the nutritional requirements of children; and
  - (dd) where children are bottle-fed, a suitable facility must exist for cleaning the bottles; and
  - (ee) children must be supervised by an adult at all times.

(c) Programmes must meet the following requirements in relation to staff:

- (i) Staff must be trained in implementing early childhood development programmes;
- (ii) staff must be equipped with basic information, knowledge and skills to recognise children's serious illnesses and how to deal with those;
- (iii) staff must be trained in first aid;
- (iv) the staff-to-child ratio must:
  - (aa) for children between the ages one month and 18 months be, 1:6;
  - (bb) for children between the ages 18 months and three years be 1:12;
  - (cc) for children between the ages three and four years be 1:20; and
  - (dd) for children between the ages five and six years, 1:30; and
- (v) for every staff member stipulated above, there must be an assistant.

#### **4. Ensuring development of positive social behaviour**

- (a) Programmes must promote understanding of and respect for diversity in gender, language, religion and culture.
- (b) Activities must include parents and care-givers in the development of positive social behaviour in children.
- (c) Programmes must promote the development of positive social values.
- (d) Programmes must be conducted in a non-discriminatory manner.
- (e) Staff must demonstrate behaviour that promotes positive behaviour by modelling attitudes and interactions with children.

#### **5. Respect for and nurturing of the culture, spirit, dignity, individuality, language and development of each child**

- (a) Programmes must promote appreciation and understanding for children's culture and language.
- (b) Educators must utilize one medium of instruction in class.
- (c) Children must be allowed to communicate in the language of their choice and preference outside class.
- (d) Cultural diversity must be encouraged and respected by educators and children alike.
- (e) Programmes may, where appropriate, facilitate late birth registration.
- (f) Programmes must contribute to the development of a sense of identity in children.

#### **6. Meeting the emotional, cognitive, sensory, spiritual, moral, physical, social and communication development needs of children**

- (a) Programmes must be appropriate to the developmental stages and evolving capacity of children.
- (b) Programmes must ensure that parents and care-givers are involved in the development of children.
- (c) Programmes must provide education and support to parents, caregivers and families to fulfil their responsibilities towards child-rearing and the holistic development of their children.
- (d) Programmes must be accessible to especially vulnerable children in their homes.
- (e) For children up to three years of age, programmes should, as much as possible, include household visits for increased accessibility to children.
- (f) Programmes must promote cognitive development in children.

- (g) Programmes must promote the development of fine sensory and motor skills in children.
- (h) Activities must promote a positive relationship between the centre, families and the community.
- (i) Programmes must teach age appropriate self control and independent behaviour.
- (j) Existing community resources and strengths must be utilised in promoting the development of children.
- (k) The emotional needs of children must be addressed and children must be encouraged to express their emotions in a safe, supportive and protective environment.
- (l) Parents, care-givers and families of vulnerable children, children with disabilities and child-headed households must be provided with information, knowledge and skills to promote the development of their children.
- (m) Children must be enabled to develop a positive sense of identity and self worth.
- (n) Programmes must be based on an integrated approach.
- (o) Children should feel valued and respected when participating in activities.