



LIMPOPO

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF  
**EDUCATION**



## Early Childhood Development (ECD) Function Shift

President Cyril Ramaphosa in his 2019 State of the Nation Address directed that the responsibility for Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres be migrated from the Department of Social Development to the Department of Basic Education.

The departments have established various governance structures to ensure a seamless transfer of responsibilities. The Government Technical Advisory Centre has been contracted to guide technical aspects of the function shift process.

In her 2021/2022 Budget Speech for the Limpopo Department of Education, MEC Polly Boshielo announced that the deadline for shifting the function from the Department of Social Development to the Department of Education has been moved from 01 April 2021 to 01 April 2022. In the meantime, all Grade R learners are now incorporated in our primary schools across the province. Our National Integrated ECD Policy recognises that “overwhelming scientific evidence attests to the tremendous importance of the early years for human development and to the need for investing resources to support and promote optimal child development from conception”.

ECD’s holistic development of a child’s social, emotional, cognitive and physical needs helps build a solid foundation for lifelong learning and wellbeing. Its all-inclusive nature also makes it an effective poverty intervention tool.

### Key messages

#### The transfer of the ECD function supports learning:

- The shift in responsibility from the Department of Social Development to the Department Basic Education strengthens compulsory pre-grade R learning.
- The move will standardise the ECD function to ensure that there is structured learning programmes across all centres.
- The transfer of function is part of government’s commitment to build a comprehensive ECD programme that is an integral part of the education system.
- In terms of the Basic Education Laws Amendment Bill currently being finalised, Grade R will be made compulsory by 2022 while Grade RR will be declared compulsory in 2030.
- The move will also allow learning programmes to be aligned to subject content of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement. The linking of ECD directly with education outcomes will open the sector to greater support and monitoring.

#### The transfer process will not disrupt ECD learning:

- The shift in function to the Department of Basic Education will not in any way affect teaching or learning taking place at ECD centres.

- We are putting systems in place for a smooth transfer of the function to ensure ECD services are not disrupted.
- This is a transfer of oversight and technical functions; it will not have an impact on the day-to-day running of ECD facilities. ECD centres that are funded by the Department of Social Development will continue to be supported under the Department of Basic Education.

### Pre-school classes lay an important foundation for a child's education:

- Grade R lays the foundation for reading, writing and numeracy, which are critical for a child's education development.
- It helps develop their language proficiency and the skills necessary to interact in the classroom environment.
- Grade R helps fosters critical thinking, problem solving, creativity and the ability to collaborate with other children.
- The motor skills taught in Grade R helps to develop children's hand-eye coordination and physical skills.

### Government is committed to provide all children with a solid foundation through ECD services:

- The ECD transfer is an opportunity to improve access to quality early learning and better serve our children.
- We are developing a publicly funded national ECD system that supports the development of children to their full potential.
- Our ECD aims to create equitable and universal access to services so that no child in our nation is excluded.
- We are committed to provide quality care, early learning education and protection, especially to vulnerable children.
- ECD is a starting block for a child's future and an opportunity to bridge the inequality gap in South Africa.

### The provision of ECD services will ensure we become a prosperous nation:

- Early Childhood Development is central to the development of individual children as well as the nation as a whole.
- ECD is critical to the realisation of our National Development Plan goals of reducing poverty and inequality.
- The NDP recognises quality ECD services as a sustainable and cost-effective way of ensuring the optimal development of children, their resultant educational success and improved employment prospects.
- All young children and their caregivers have access to comprehensive ECD services and support until the child enters Grade R.