

THE REPULIC OF UGANDA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION POLICY

2025

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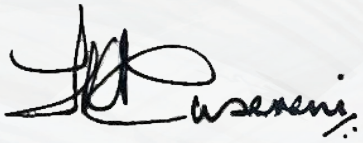
FOREWORD

The Government of the Republic of Uganda recognises that Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programmes offer a strong foundation for quality education and lifelong learning. It is therefore important that all children are nurtured through a regulated ECCE with a safe, supportive and caring environment that enables children to grow into healthy, secure, and confident individuals, equipped with the competencies and capabilities to thrive in an ever-changing world.

Over the years, Government has put in place various policy and legal frameworks to promote equitable access to quality education services for all Ugandans at all levels. Notable among these are the Government White Paper on Education (1992) and Education (Pre-Primary, Primary and Post-Primary) Act, Cap 247. Under section 10 (1) (a) of Cap 247, pre-primary education is the first level of Uganda's four-level education system. However, despite its importance, this foundational level has for long lacked a clear and coherent policy to guide its operations.

Accordingly, Cabinet in May 2024, approved the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Policy. The ECCE Policy provides a holistic framework to guide and harmonize the activities of all stakeholders involved in ECCE service delivery. To operationalize this Policy, my Ministry developed detailed Policy Implementation Standards and Guidelines. These standards and guidelines facilitate implementation of policy actions by all actors in the delivery of quality ECCE.

It is, therefore, my honour to officially present the Early Childhood Care and Education Policy to guide all aspects of ECCE service delivery in Uganda. I urge: all Ugandans; Government Ministries, Departments, Agencies (MDAs); Local Governments (LGs); Development Partners; Private Sector Actors; Civil Society Organisations; and communities to embrace this Policy and actively contribute to its implementation. Together, let us build a strong foundation for our children, and the future of our nation.



Hon. Janet K. Museveni
FIRST LADY AND MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS

ACRONYMS

ACRWC	African Convention on the Rights and Welfare of Children
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CCTs	Centre Coordinating Tutors
CPTCs	Core Primary Teacher Colleges
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ELDS	Early Learning and Development Standards
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESSP	Education Sector Strategic Plan
FBOs	Faith Based Organizations
GWPE	Government White Paper on Education
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MEIU	Master List of Education Institutions in Uganda
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NDP IV	Fourth National Development Plan
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NIECD	National Integrated Early Childhood Development
UDHS	Uganda Demographic Health Survey
UNCRC	United National Convention on Rights of the Child

1.0 Introduction

1. The realisation of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) goals is anchored on a broad vision to facilitate holistic and integrated approaches to re-organise the delivery, financing, management, coordination, and building the capacity of all stakeholders to support the attainment of quality ECCE outcomes for all.

2. Globally, Early Childhood Care and Education targets children in the range of Zero to Eight years. However, this policy restricts itself to the interventions that benefit all the children in the range of zero to six (0-6) years of age.

3. One of the key pre-requisites for holistic and life-long learning is the availability of quality ECCE services. Research evidence shows that investing in ECCE creates the greatest returns for society, enabling children to acquire cognitive, linguistic, socio-emotional and executive function/self-regulation skills. In addition, ECCE creates a competitive human capital base for sustained economic development and improved health and nutritional status across the country. Thus, ECCE is the foundation for quality education.

2.0 Policy and Legal Framework

4. The **Government White Paper on Education (1992)** as the macro policy on education outlines the aims and objectives of pre-primary education and recognises it as the foundational level of education. To achieve the aims and objectives, Government by legal instrument provided for the delivery, management, establishment and coordination of pre-primary education as the first level of education under section 10 (1) (a) of the Education (Pre-primary, Primary and Post Primary) Act, Cap 247.

5. **Government** through the **National Teachers' Policy (NTP), 2019** intends to professionalize the teaching profession, develop standards and improve the development, management, and utilisation of teachers at all levels including teachers of Early Childhood Care and Education.

6. The formulation of the ECCE Policy, 2024 is hinged on key national and international policy frameworks particularly the: National Integrated Early Childhood Development (NIECD) Policy Framework – 2016; Fourth National Development Plan (NDPIV) ; United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - 2030 and the Uganda Vision 2040.

7. The **Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995** under **Article 30** provides that - All persons have a right to education. Under **Article 34(2)** - A child is entitled

to basic education which shall be the responsibility of the state and parents of the child. Under **Article 34(3)** - No child shall be deprived by any person of medical treatment, **education** or any other social or economic benefit by reason of religious or other beliefs.

8. The rights of children including the right to education are internationally recognised under the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** (UNCRC) – 1990, the **African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child** (ACRWC) – 1990, and Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action – 2015. Uganda has domesticated children's rights to education in the 1995 Constitution of Uganda, the Children's Act, Cap 62 and the Education (Pre-Primary, Primary and Post-Primary) Act, Cap 247.

9. The **Children's Act, Cap 62** incorporates the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and emphasises that the determination of any matter relat ing to any child, by the: State, Courts, Tribunals, Local Authorities or Any Person shall have regard to the child's physical, emotional and educational needs **[Section 3 (b)]**.

3.0 Problem Statement

10. ECCE is the most crucial and cost-effective investment to improve the learning outcomes. Studies reveal that the brain grows up to 90% of its adult weight by age five. Therefore, access to quality ECCE programmes helps to boost the children's psychological, perceptual, physical, mental, linguistic, emotional, social, intellectual development and prepares children for lifelong learning. Also, effective ECCE programmes have a significant impact on an individual's abilities, attitudes, values, skills and behaviour in later life.

11. Despite the benefits of ECCE, such programmes are accessed by a handful of children in Uganda. By 2019, there were **3,890, 200** eligible children for pre-primary education (between 3 – 5 years), of which **2,050,403 (52.7%)** children were accessing some form of ECCE programme according to the Master List of Education Institutions in Uganda (MEIU, 2019) Report. This means that 1,839,797 **(47.3%)** eligible children were not accessing any form of pre-primary education. On coverage, access and enrolment, the evidence shows that by 2019, there were 28,208 operational pre-primary schools of which only **4,123** (**14.6%)** were registered. The operational pre-primary schools had a total enrolment of **2,050,403** learners compared to **10,777, 846 (7,345,211 [68.2%] in Government Primary Schools and 3,432,635 [31.8%] in privately owned primary schools) enrolled in 36,314** primary schools. This implies a deficit of 8,106 pre-primary

schools which are required to serve the eligible but underserved learners' population (MEIU, 2019).

12. According to the Uganda Demographic and Health Survey (UDHS), 2011, one in eleven children die before the age of five. Also, the UDHS estimated stunting of **a third (33.4%)/one in every three children** under the age of five by 2014. This evidence suggests that failure to provide effective ECCE in the first and second years of school to establish basic literacy skills creates **inefficiencies** such as **repetition of classes** that resonate over a child's progression through the entire education system. By 2016, there were 682,943 (8.3%) repeaters at the primary level alone. This translates into a loss of Uganda shillings. **6,829,430,000=** billion through repetition. Young children should possess necessary school readiness skills namely; - physical, health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development, communication skills, and general knowledge – in order to learn effectively in school. But, according to the Uganda National Household Survey (UNHS) of 2012/2013, **less than one in five children** aged five years are enrolled in a pre-school programme and many children enrol late in primary schools as 70% of the 4 – 6 age group are not accessing pre-school education at the appropriate time. These challenges suggest inefficiency in the education system and lack of effective ECCE interventions for all.

13. In terms of compliance to the Ministry's policy standards and guidelines, the evidence shows that 85.4% of ECCE centres were not registered (MEIU, 2019) while 58% of ECE centres overall; do not meet the minimum standards for running an ECCE centre (Mott McDonald Survey Report, 2017). Also, while Government can play all the four key roles in ECCE delivery of; (i) actual provision, (ii) funding, (iii) training providers, and (iv) regulation by setting policy standards and guidelines, it has focused on two roles, that is, roles (iii) and (iv) only. This means that roles (i) and (ii) have been largely a function of private providers. While this approach is legally provided for under the Education Act, Cap 247 it has not increased access to ECCE, and thus, many eligible learners (1,839,797) are not able to access any form of ECCE Services.

14. Accordingly, the attainment of quality ECCE is constrained by several challenges namely: (a) Limited access to ECCE services; (b) Ineffective regulation of ECCE delivery; (c) Lack of knowledge on the value of quality ECCE programmes; (d) Inconsistent levels of family and community engagement; (e) Uncoordinated efforts in ECCE delivery; (f) High household poverty levels; (g) High cost of ECCE services; and (h) Limited access to quality ECCE data. Thus, this policy provides a framework to address and/ or improve ECCE provision for all children.

4.0 The Early Childhood Care and Education Policy Rationale

15. The ECCE policy is anchored in the Fourth National Development Plan (NDPIV) which prioritises the interventions to improve the foundations for human capital development for the children aged one to twelve years (1-12) by institutionalising teacher and caregiver training for ECCE and ECD respectively.

16. In addition, six reasons justified the development of the ECCE policy. These are the following: (i) scientific evidence on human development; (ii) evidence of positive correlation between quality ECCE and better educational outcomes, (iii) globalisation (SDG 4- target 4.2) demands for ECCE, (iv) the need to harmonise the current legal instruments vis-à-vis ECCE, (v) education investment and human development economics, and (vi) the need for policy coherence.

17. The **benefits** of the ECCE policy include, but are not limited to:

    (a) Progressive realisation of increased access to quality ECCE opportunities in an equitable and inclusive manner;

    (b) Improved quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the ECCE service provision including thorough training and support supervision, standardisation for all the providers and practitioners, and well streamlined licensing and regulation of all ECCE services;

    (c) Increased overall understanding by parents and communities of the importance of universal access by all children to quality ECCE services and their engagement in the delivery and provision of ECCE services;

    (d) Establishment of a clear criteria for the allocation of responsibility among the various ECCE stakeholders including Government, the private sector, non-state institutions, parents, communities, and ECCE service providers, and

    (e) Streamlining of cross-cutting issues into all the aspects of ECCE management and practice at all levels.

5.0 Policy Direction

18. The ECCE Policy is designed to develop standards, guidelines and procedures to improve the development, management and utilisation of ECCE services for the required improvements in the quality of foundational learning.

19. **Policy Vision is:** "A country where there is equitable and sustainable access to quality Early Childhood Care and Education services."

20. **Policy Mission is:** "To support, standardise, guide, implement, coordinate, monitor, evaluate, regulate and promote quality, relevant, and affordable Early Childhood Care and Education services for increased access, timely and equitable enrolment and smooth transition to primary education for all children."

21. **Policy Goal is:** "To attain adequate Early Childhood Care and Education services in order to improve child growth and development; educational outcomes; health outcomes; in addition, to support the socio-economic development process".

22. The specific objectives of the Early Childhood Care and Education Policy are:

    (i) To increase equitable access to quality, inclusive, and sustainable Early Childhood Care and Education services in Uganda;

    (ii) To strengthen the structures and systems for effective standardisation and management of Early Childhood Care and Education service delivery;

    (iii) To increase public awareness on Early Childhood Care and Education programmes and promote appropriate partnerships with parents / guardians, communities and civil society for effective early learning;

    (iv) To increase staff capacity of the MoES and the Local Governments to; support, standardise, guide, implement, coordinate, monitor, evaluate, regulate and promote quality, relevant, and affordable Early Childhood Care and Education services for all; and

    (v) To mainstream cross-cutting issues into all aspects of Early Childhood Care and Education service delivery and provision.

23. The policy adopts the UNESCO Institute of Education definition for ECCE: "Programmes that, in addition to providing children with care, offer a structured and purposeful set of learning activities either in a formal institution (pre-primary) or as part of a non-formal child development programme. ECCE programmes are typically designed for children aged three years and over, occurring before primary education, and include organised learning activities that last on average an equivalent of at least two hours per day and 100 days per year."

24. Thus, the ECCE policy targets two categories of children:

    (i) Birth to three (0-3) years; and

    (ii) Three to six (3-6) years.

25. In addition, the ECCE policy **targets the parents/guardians and communities.** This is because of the need to: increase the awareness of parents and communities of the benefits of ECCE; promote holistic, integrated approaches to ECCE define quality standards of both of ECD services and of children's early learning and development, and to identify and support groups in need of quality ECD and ECCE services

26. The implementation of ECCE policy is guided by the following **principles**:

    (i) **Effectiveness:** Effective ECCE services are those which strictly achieve the policy goals set by Government during implementation.

    (ii) **Efficiency:** Provision of quality ECCE services to optimise the effort and resources in all aspects of the policy implementation.

    (iii) **Child Welfare:** All decisions and actions during the implementation and delivery of ECCE services and their management must be based on (a) age-appropriate programming and (b) the best interests of the child.

    (iv) **Holistic Approach:** ECCE service delivery must be designed to ensure that all the developmental domains of a child (physical, mental, spiritual, socio-emotional) are supported.

    (v) **Equitable Access and Non-Discrimination:** ECCE programmes to target all children regardless of religion, ethnicity, ability, language, sex, socio-economic status, geographical location, and special needs, among others.

    (vi) **Appropriate Partnerships:** Shared roles and apt collaborations among all stakeholders at all levels of ECCE delivery for purposes of effective delivery on the policy objectives.

    (vii) **Communication:** At all times, all ECCE service providers must communicate effectively to children in a familiar language whether during the process of classroom learning, play based learning or during any other aspect related to ECCE service provision and delivery.

6.0 Early Childhood Care and Education Policy Actions and Strategies

27. To achieve the ECCE policy objectives, Government will implement the actions and strategies here under in line with the policy objectives.

6.1 To increase access to equitable, quality, inclusive and sustainable Early Childhood Care and Education services.

28. Government will; increase equitable access to ECCE services by identifying and allocating sustainable targeted - subsidies for Non-State Provision of ECCE services in under-served communities. Also, it will develop a strategy to develop ECCE learning materials and other inputs in the under - resourced communities.

29. Government will; enhance non-state provision of ECCE delivery through provision of incentives to the various ECCE stakeholders, promotion of collaboration in ECCE delivery, and the development and implementation of policy standards and guidelines aimed at closing the allocation gap between ECCE in both urban and rural areas.

30. Government will; streamline the provision of quality ECCE services for children through **formal** and **non-formal** customised and appropriate programmes, namely: (a) Day care offered in either homes or an institutional setting (targeting children from birth to 3 years) and (b) Pre-Primary Programmes (targeting children aged 3 to 6 years).

31. Government will engage in **direct ECCE service delivery** in areas which have **no viable private sector** to provide the said ECCE services. This will be undertaken in form of **ECCE affirmative interventions** .

6.2 To strengthen structures and systems for effective management of Early Childhood Care and Education services.

32. Quality ECCE services provision depends on; an effective policy and legal framework to guide and regulate delivery, trained staff, effective learning approaches, adequate resources, on-going support supervision and inspection, among others. Consequently, Government will:

    (i) License all ECCE centres and primary schools to offer any of the following programmes: (a) Day Care; (b) Pre-Primary Education (Home-based, Community-based, Kindergarten/Nursery). The licensing of categories (a) and (b) above whether formal and non-formal will be independent of each other.

(ii) Recognize the provision of ECCE services through **formal** and **non-formal** means in accordance with two levels, that is: (1) Day Care; and (2) Pre-Primary Education. The licensing processes of Early Childhood Education Centres will be managed by City / District / Municipal or Local Government authorities in line with the set criteria and standards for specific ECCE programmes. The licensing standards, with adjustments for programmes, will apply to all ECCE Centres (Formal and Non-Formal).

(iii) Prohibit ECCE Centres to operate as boarding institutions in the delivery of any ECCE services at the registration or licensing stage.

33. As a strategy to improve and maintain standards in provision of quality ECCE services, there will be provisional licence for one year followed by full licensing upon satisfactory service delivery and meeting of the Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards (BRMS). There will be periodic inspection of the registered and licensed centres. The licensing certificates will be revoked if it is established that the quality of ECCE service delivery has been and / or is compromised.

34. Professionalisation of the Early Childhood Care and Education personnel must be guided by an approved National Qualification Framework, Accreditation Systems, and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) among others implemented in line with provisions in line with the provisions of the National Teachers' Policy, its policy implementation standards, guidelines and procedures. This will be performed by the National Teachers' Council or any other body approved by the Ministry responsible for Teacher Development.

35. Teaching and training standards for Early Childhood Care and Education provision shall be enhanced through progressive and deliberate enforcement of improvements in qualifications of ECCE teachers and caregivers. In addition, lawful providers of ECCE shall develop a retention strategy for their staff.

36. The management of ECCE centres shall follow the policy implementation standards, guidelines and procedures on the establishment of ECCE centres in support of this policy, including the specific provisions on the constitution and mandate of Centre Management Committees (CMCs).

37. To guide policy implementation in all formal and non-formal ECCE centres, the ECCE policy puts in place uniform child safety and protection standards, guidance, and procedures based on the best interests of the child in line with the welfare principle.

38. The Ministry of Education and Sports has developed policy implementation standards, guidelines and procedures relating to all the aspects of ECCE service delivery and provision. All ECCE service providers whether formal or non-formal shall adhere to the approved policy standards, guidelines, and procedures in support of the ECCE policy.

6.3 Increase public awareness on benefits of Early Childhood Care and Education programmes and promote effective partnerships for ECCE delivery.

39. The Ministry of Education and Sports together with City / Municipal / District Local Governments will work with all stakeholders to mobilise communities and parents through all types of awareness creation campaigns to increase understanding of the value of apropriate ECCE programmes to child development and learning outcomes. In addition, the Ministry responsible for Education will promote social dialogue with all the relevant stakeholders on all aspects of ECCE service delivery and programming.

40. The ECCE Policy introduces parenting programmes to be designed, popularised and effectively implemented in line with the policy provisions. Parenting education programmes to be offered at formal and non-formal ECCE Centres and primary schools accordingly.

41. To increase access to ECCE, the private sector, communities and parents will be mobilised, sensitised and supported to directly engage in the establishment, provision, and management of formal and non – formal ECCE centres.

42. The Ministry of Education and Sports will regulate partnerships and collaborations on funding, stakeholder involvement, capacity development and coordination for effective ECCE programming and service delivery.

6.4 Increase the capacity of MoES / City / Municipality / and District Local Government structures to support, standardise, guide, implement, coordinate, monitor, evaluate, regulate and promote quality, relevant and affordable ECCE services for all.

43. The Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) will develop a comprehensive capacity development plan to support capacity building of ECCE staff to ensure effective implementation of the ECCE policy at Central and Local Government levels and other stakeholders.

44. The City, District / Municipal or Local Governments will support the implementation of key ECCE policy interventions by assigning responsibilities for ECCE delivery within their respective staffing structures.

45. To strengthen and streamline the human resource component for ECCE services, a well-designed and elaborate career path for the various ECCE staff engaged in implementation will be developed. A clear Qualifications Framework for Early Childhood Education personnel will be developed and implemented to guide the teaching and training of the various staff.

46. The Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), through its mandated structures, will: (a) coordinate initial policy implementation activities; (b) facilitate apt consequential policy, legal and institutional adjustments; (c) facilitate structural adjustments and re-alignment with the policy provisions; and, (d) to support full scale policy implementation by the MoES and / the City / Municipality / District / Local Government structures.

6.5 Mainstreaming Cross-Cutting Issues in all aspects of ECCE delivery.

47. The Policy mainstreams all cross-cutting issues (including; gender, ICT, sports, environment, Health and HIV/AIDS, among others) into ECCE service provision and delivery in line with the existing policies, standards, guidelines and procedures. The mainstreaming process will be supported by the appropriate standards, guidelines, laws, regulations and rules. It will also involve participation and consultations involving key Early Childhood Education stakeholders.

48. Government and all the relevant stakeholders will support the ECCE Centres to make linkages and referrals to the relevant services including, but not limited to, health, child protection, nutrition, and sanitation services.

49. The Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) will align all the ECCE policy interventions with the relevant performance areas of the National Integrated Early Childhood Development (NIECD) Framework.

7.0 Financing of the ECCE Policy

50. Government through the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) will develop a resource mobilisation plan in liaison with the Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development to mobilise funds through the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework to oversee, coordinate, monitor and provide support supervision for effective implementation of the policy.

51. The Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) may secure financial support from Education Development Partners (EDPs) and Non-State Actors through appropriate and lawful funding arrangements to support ECCE service delivery.

52. The ECCE policy allows non-State support and involvement through promotion of partnerships and collaboration with all stakeholders in the provision of skills, resources, materials, infrastructure, and other related inputs for ECCE service provision, delivery, and effective implementation.

8.0 The ECCE Policy Implementation Framework

53. The policy adopts and requires the MoES to apply an inter-sectoral and integrated approach with all the relevant ECCE stakeholders. The policy makes MoES the lead agency in implementation and obliges other Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to perform their roles.

54. The ECCE policy maintains that the establishment and management of ECCE centres is a responsibility of Non-State Actors; that is, the private sector, including Faith Based Organisations (FBOs), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), communities, and individual proprietors.

55. The ECCE policy provides that nothing in this policy prohibits Government from also investing in direct delivery of Early Childhood Care and Education services when deemed necessary.

56. To support effective implementation of Early Childhood Education policy actions, the key state actors shall play their roles as indicated in specific portfolio stated below. Relevant MDAs shall play their respective roles by integrating them in the planning and budgeting processes.

(a) Role of the Ministry of Education and Sports

57. The role of Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) and all its Statutory Agencies in the implementation of the Early Childhood Care Education policy is to:

    (a) Develop and routinely disseminate policy implementation standards, guidelines, and procedures for purposes of operationalising the ECCE Policy as well as reviewing the existing policy and legal frameworks where needed for effective policy implementation;

(b) Develop and disseminate the ECCE relevant laws, regulations and rules for purposes of giving legal effect to the policy intentions by providing for appropriate legal remedies.

(c) Spearhead public and community mobilisation and sensitisation activities related to ECCE service delivery and provision;

(d) Spearhead and coordinate effective training, assessment, Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programmes and other technical and professional support to both the private and public sector stakeholders offering Early Childhood Care and Education services;

(e) Streamline ECCE training programmes, licensing, registration of ECCE training institutions and different levels and to undertake periodic reviews and update of ECCE training materials;

(f) Design and develop appropriate curricula for the age categories covered under the ECCE Policy including curricula for parenting education programmes;

(g) Develop guidelines for setting up and equipping appropriate learning environment for Early Childhood Care and Education Centres as well as assessing learning competencies;

(h) Develop, disseminate and provide guidance on appropriate curricula, teaching methods and instructional materials for use in Early Childhood Care and Education service delivery;

(i) Develop teaching guides to support the interpretation of both existing and new curricula as well as undertaking of periodic review of the Early Childhood Care and Education Learning Framework;

(j) Ensure availability of appropriate materials, facilities and programmes for learners with special educational needs;

(k) Set and define the Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) and the Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards (BRMS) for Early Childhood Care and Education Centres;

(l) Ensure adherence to set standards for ELDS and ECCE programmes through monitoring, inspection, and support supervision to inform actionable recommendations which must be implemented and bind all stakeholders;

(m) Provide guidance, counselling and psycho-social support to the various ECCE stakeholders within the decentralised framework of service delivery;

(n) Provide technical guidance on the principles, standards and procedures for the establishment and / or revocation of establishment of an ECCE centre, licensing and / or revocation of a license to start an ECCE centre, classification and/ or de-classification, of ECCE centres, registration and / or de-registration ECCE centres and overall management of ECCE Centres;

(o) Develop an appropriate learning delivery and assessment framework for all Early Childhood Care and Education centres and lower primary education to guide effective implementation by all stakeholders;

(p) Undertake policy relevant studies and research to generate evidence to further inform the strengthening of Early Childhood Care and Education service delivery practices; and,

(q) Monitor and evaluate the implementation of all ECCE programmes to ensure quality and relevant feedback to implementers and decision makers to plan for Early Childhood Care and Education services.

(b) Role of the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM)

58. In the implementation of the ECCE Policy, the OPM will:

(a) Ensure effective coordination of all Early Childhood Care and Education programmes through a multi sectoral approach.

(b) Advise on nutritional programmes to be implemented by all stakeholders in Early Childhood Care and Education provision.

(c) Role of the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG)

59. The role of MoLG and all its Statutory Agencies in the implementation of the Early Childhood Care and Education Policy is to:

(a) Ensure that Local Governments play their various roles in the implementation of the Early Childhood Care and Education Policy within their respective areas of jurisdiction;

(b) Participate in the activities of Early Childhood Care and Education service provision and management of ECCE in Local Governments in liaison with the MoES; and,

(c) Mobilise and sensitise the communities and other stakeholders at the National and Local Government levels on all aspects relating to Early Childhood Care and Education Policy.

(d) Role of Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MoGLSD)

60. The role of MoGLSD and its Statutory Agencies in implementation of the Early Childhood Care and Education Policy is to:

(a) Promote and protect the Children's Rights at all Early Childhood Care and Education service delivery centres;

(b) Promote community empowerment programmes to increase household income and reduce vulnerability;

(c) Activate and support the probation and family welfare system and structures to play a supportive role in all aspects of implementing this ECCE Policy;

(d) Inspect and certify the occupational safety and health standards for the Early Childhood Care and Education structures;

(e) Undertake community mobilisation and sensitisation on Early Childhood Care and Education;

(f) Advocate for and train the parents/communities on children's rights and responsibilities and protection against child abuse; and,

(g) Train and support the communities and families with parenting programmes and skills.

(e) Role of Ministry of Health (MoH)

61. The role MoH and all its Statutory Agencies in the implementation of the Early Childhood Care and Education policy is to:

(a) Provide medical care services such as immunisation, de-worming, micro-nutrient supplements, among others, to promote growth and development of children;

(b) Advise and guide parents/caregivers on how to safely keep all children's records (Immunisation, health and others) for reference during other related Early Childhood Care and Education activities;

(c) Sensitise parents and communities on safe motherhood and family planning practices; and,

(d) Provide guidance on all health and nutrition issues to the parents / guardians and caregivers for the benefit of all children.

(f) Roles of Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development

62. The role Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED) in the Implementation of the Early Childhood Care and Education Policy is to:

(a) Mobilise the necessary financial resources to support implementation of the Early Childhood Care and Education Policy interventions; and

(b) Ensure that the planning and budgeting processes for Early Childhood Care and Education guarantee effective financial management practices at both the Central and Local Government levels.

(g) Role of Local Governments

63. In the implementation of the Early Childhood Care and Education Policy, the role of the City / District / Municipal and Local Government authority is to:

(a) Identify a position(s) within the existing staffing structure of Local Governments or Municipalities which shall be assigned the roles and responsibilities of Early Childhood Care and Education.

(b) Plan and budget for effective implementation of Early Childhood Care and Education service delivery;

(c) Promote, regulate, license, control, manage, and administer Early Childhood Care and Education service delivery implementation in the respective City /District /Municipality and Local Government, in line with provisions of the Education Development Plan for respective local governments;

(d) Undertake inspection, monitoring and evaluation of the various activities relating to Early Childhood Care and Education service delivery; and,

(e) Mobilise and sensitise communities on all aspects of the Early Childhood Care and Education Policy implementation.

(h) Role of Non-State Actors

64. In the implementation and delivery of quality Early Childhood Care and Education Policy, the role of non-state actors is provided for as per the sub sections below:

A. Role of the Civil Society and the Private Sector

65. The role of Civil Society is to support the mobilisation of communities and participate in the delivery of Early Childhood Care and Education services and programmes, in accordance with the provisions of this Policy, related Laws and Regulations.

66. In the implementation of the Early Childhood Care and Education Policy, the role of the private sector is to establish, manage and administer Early Childhood Care and Education services in line with provisions of the Early Childhood Care and Education Policy, its standards, guidelines and procedures. Also, the role involves complying with the relevant legal frameworks.

B. Role of the Education Development Partners

67. The role of the Education Development Partners (EDPs) is to:

(a) Provide technical and financial support in the implementation of the Early Childhood Care and Education Policy;

(b) Support monitoring and evaluation of implementation of the Early Childhood Care and Education Policy;

(c) Support research into innovative Early Childhood Care and Education solutions in accordance with the provisions of the Early Childhood Care and

Education Policy and its related Implementation Standards and Guidelines, Laws and Regulations;

(d) Advocate and disseminate the findings on good practices in Early Childhood Care and Education service delivery.

C. Role of the Professional Networks and Associations

68. These will ensure that Early Childhood Care and Education staff adhere to professional standards, in addition to undertaking other activities in accordance with the Policy provisions, the relevant Laws and Regulations.

D. Role of the Foundation Bodies of Educational Institutions

69. Close collaboration and partnership will be promoted as a strategy to leverage synergies and team work towards achievement of ECE policy objectives. Thus, Foundation Bodies of Educational Institutions will:

(a) Establish and manage their respective Early Childhood Care and Education Centres;

(b) Undertake community mobilization and sensitization on all aspects relating to Early Childhood Care and Education;

(c) Undertake advocacy on aspects relating to Early Childhood Care and Education;

(d) Provide financial support towards tasks related to Early Childhood Care and Education service delivery such as infrastructure, instructional materials, and salary payment, among others.

E. Roles of the Parents and Guardians

70. Parents and guardians have the primary responsibility for caring for their children. Consequently, parents and guardians will provide their children with basic requirements; food; clothing; medical care e.g., immunisation; moral and cultural guidance; and loving environments; among others, in line with different policy requirements to be issued from time to time.

9.0 Monitoring, Evaluation and Review of ECCE Policy

71. A monitoring and evaluation strategy will be put in place by the Ministry of Education and Sports to assess the implementation and impacts of the various policy strategies. The purpose of the monitoring and evaluation will be to:

    (a) Determine whether the policy is working as intended (outcomes);

    (b) Understand any constraints impacting on the implementation of the Early Childhood Care and Education policy (processes);

    (c) Make recommendations on how to improve Early Childhood Care and Education service delivery; and,

    (d) Describe any unintended consequences from the implementation of the policy, both positive and negative.

72. The MoES will develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy with indicators for ECCE being incorporated within the Education Management Information System (EMIS). This will as much as possible augment the existing templates and where necessary develop new templates, procedures, and responsibilities for reporting by Local Governments and the MoES. Relatedly, a comprehensive baseline survey will be undertaken to guide subsequent monitoring and review of the ECCE Policy.

73. The Government will undertake and/or authorise research studies to measure and understand the impact of ECCE programmes on child development and learning outcomes and also demand recommendations to improve Early Childhood Care and Education service delivery and implementation.

10.0 Communication Strategy for the ECCE Policy

74. Because there are many other sources of information competing for the attention of decision makers and implementers, an effective communications strategy is needed to attract their attention, deliver the Early Childhood Education message to them, and build support for the desired policy change.

75. The Early Childhood Education policy has identified the clear message and its audience as important first steps in developing an effective communication strategy. On this basis, an effective communications strategy with a national approach will be developed and disseminated to ensure that all citizens are

engaged to understand the value of various Early Childhood Care and Education policy interventions.

76. A National Early Childhood Care and Education Policy Communications Strategy will include annual advocacy events, awards and campaigns led by the MoES and other line Ministries to raise awareness and promote implementation of Early Childhood Care and Education interventions and related early childhood development interventions.

77. The key elements of a communications strategy will essentially include, the message embodied in the Early Childhood Care and Education Policy as well as its Policy Implementation Standards and Guidelines. The policy strategies and actions will be communicated through the various channels to the various policy implementers for appropriate action.

78. The content and packaging of the Early Childhood Care and Education policy interventions must be adapted to the audience's level of understanding and interest in the message. The desired behavioural changes by the policy must be identified (actual policy change). These specific behavioural changes will provide strategic and definable goals useful in focusing and evaluating the communications strategy for the Early Childhood Care and Education Policy.



THE REPULIC OF UGANDA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION POLICY IMPLEMENTATION STANDARDS

MAY 2025

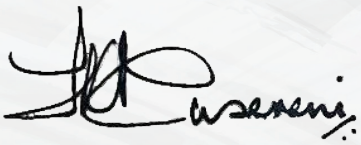
FOREWORD

The Government reorganized that early years of a child's life are foundational to their holistic development, well-being, and lifelong learning and hence developed the Early Childhood Care and Education Policy. To facilitate the implementation of the ECCE policy, Government developed the Early Childhood Care and Education Policy implementation standards to translate policy interventions into actionable and measurable principles in order to sustain early learning delivery.

These standards are binding and rooted in the understanding that quality ECCE is not merely a preparatory stage for formal schooling, but a critical period that shapes cognitive, emotional, social, and physical growth. These standards serve as a practical guide for all ECCE actors in Government, Departments, Agencies, and Local Governments as well as service providers, educators, caregivers, and development partners to align their interventions in order to deliver high quality early childhood services.

Accordingly, all ECCE actors need to work together to realize the goals of equitable delivery and these standards reaffirm the collective responsibility to ensure that every child has the opportunity to thrive in their early years. The purpose of these policy implementation standards is to inform all Actors involved in the delivery of ECCE of the policy decisions of Cabinet which from now on words form part of the executive practice of Government.

Finally, let me extend our gratitude to all the stakeholders who contributed their insights and experiences to the development of this important resource. It is our hope that these implementation standards will serve as a catalyst for strengthening the ECCE ecosystem, fostering collaboration, and ultimately building a more just and nurturing foundation for our youngest citizens. Therefore, I call upon all stakeholders in the delivery of ECCE to support the implementation of these policy implementation standards, and the resultant guidelines to enable achievement of the overall ECCE Policy objectives.



Hon. Janet K. Museveni
FIRST LADY AND MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

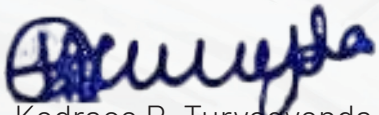
The Government of the Republic of Uganda developed the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Policy to serve as a comprehensive framework guiding the implementation of ECCE interventions across the country. Following the approval of the Policy, it became imperative to develop accompanying implementation standards to support and streamline policy actions by all ECCE stakeholders.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank Hon. Janet Kataaha Museveni, the First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports; Hon. John Chrysostom Muyingo, Minister of State for Higher Education; Hon. Dr. Joyce Moriku Kaducu, Minister of State for Primary Education; and Hon. Peter Ogwang, Minister of State for Sports, for their invaluable political guidance and wisdom. Their leadership significantly facilitated the timely development of the ECCE Policy and its corresponding implementation standards.

On behalf of the Ministry of Education and Sports, and in my own capacity, I extend heartfelt appreciation to all organizations, development partners, and institutions that supported the formulation of the ECCE Policy and the development of the Implementation Standards. I also wish to thank all stakeholders who actively participated in the consultations, your contributions were instrumental in shaping a responsive ECCE policy framework.

I further acknowledge, with deep gratitude, the technical staff of the Education Policy and Research Department and the Basic Education Department for their expertise, dedication, and commitment throughout this process.

Finally, I call upon all education and sports stakeholders to embrace and support the implementation of these standards and the related guidelines. Your continued collaboration is vital for realizing the objectives of the ECCE Policy and ensuring a strong foundation for Uganda's youngest learners.



Dr. Kedrace R. Turyagyenda
PERMANENT SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

DES	Directorate of Education Standards
EAC	East African Community
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECCGs	Early Childhood Caregivers
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ID	Identity Card
LC	Local Council
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
PPP	Public Private Partnership
SACCO	Savings and Credit Cooperative Company
TVs	Televisions
UCC	Uganda Communication Commission
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

1. Government of Uganda approved the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Policy on 14th October 2023. The approval of this policy set in motion a process to build a firm background for effective policy implementation and this entails undertaking of preliminary activities to enable roll out of the key reforms envisaged under the policy. Critical among these undertakings is formulation of standards, guidelines and procedures to guide implementation of the Policy.

2. Therefore, the information contained herein entails the ECCE Policy Implementation Standards. These Standards prescribe a set of mandatory metrics which are to be complied with by all stakeholders for successful implementation of the ECCE Policy. The Standards are complimented by Guidelines and collectively, they provide a framework to guide the ECCE sub sector and enable translation of the ECCE Policy commitments to achieve the intended policy goals and objectives.

3. The standards to guide implementation of the ECCE Policy are provided in line with the themes highlighted hereunder.

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE POLICY IMPLEMENTATION STANDARDS

4. The **general purpose** of these ECCE Policy Implementation Standards is to provide detailed guidance on the mandatory metrics that must be adhered to by all stakeholders in the process of ECCE service delivery.

5. The **specific objectives** of the Standards are to:

   (a) Provide a legitimate basis for developing Principles that may be used in undertaking consequent legal reforms aimed at supporting effective implementation of the strategic direction and reforms adopted under the ECCE Policy.

   (b) Provide a mechanism for international, regional and intra-country collaboration in all aspects of ECCE service delivery.

(c) Make provisions pertaining to the administrative reforms and actions that must be adopted by all stakeholders in the process of implementing the ECCE Policy.

(d) Provide detailed guidance on the mandatory roles and duties to be played by respective stakeholders in ECCE service delivery.

(e) Clarify and delineate the extent of mandate to be exercised by respective stakeholders in ECCE service delivery.

1.2 SCOPE AND APPLICATION OF THE POLICY IMPLEMENTATION STANDARDS

6. These ECCE Policy Implementation Standards provide mandatory parameters that all stakeholders, as elaborated under the different sections, are obliged to adhere to in designing and undertaking interventions aimed at enhancing ECCE service delivery in Uganda. Consequently, the provisions made herein shall apply to all stakeholders in line with the themes provided hereunder.

7. Any category of persons or stakeholder(s) who are desirous of being granted an exemption from being bound by any provisions of these Policy Implementation Standards shall apply to the Minister responsible for education who may grant the said request.

8. The Minister responsible for education shall be guided by the best interest and welfare of the child as the overriding principle in considering any such application for exemption from application of any provision made under these Policy Implementation Standards.

9. The following key terms are used in these Policy Implementation Standards and they are defined as follows: -

(a) Under-served areas: These mean local governments (district/city/municipality) which have inadequate private sector capacity to establish and provide ECCE services at village level.

Chapter Two

THE ECCE POLICY IMPLEMENTATION STANDARDS

2.1 LEGAL STANDARDS

10. The delivery of ECCE in Uganda shall be based on an elaborate legal framework that emanates from the 1995 Constitution of Uganda. Particularly, implementation of the Policy will be anchored to provisions of objective XVIII (iii) of the Directive Principles of State Policy, which provides that, 'Individuals, religious bodies and other non-governmental organisations shall be free to found and operate educational institutions if they comply with the general educational policy of the country and maintain national standards.'

11. Consequently, the following legal standards shall apply in implementation of the ECCE Policy: -

S1. The law regulating education service delivery in Uganda, namely; the Education (Pre-primary, Primary and Post-primary) Act Cap 247 shall be reviewed to align it with the different provisions of the ECCE Policy and its resultant Policy Implementation Standards.

S2. The amendment of the Education (Pre-primary, Primary and Post-primary) Act Cap 247 will aim at making provisions for aspects which include: empowering government to establish and run ECCE centers in areas where it is not feasible for the private sector to provide this service, through affirmative action; creating sanctions for non-compliance and an enforcement mechanism for obligations and duties bestowed onto different actors under the ECCE Policy; creating an applicable legal regime for Caregivers; and licensing and registration of ECCE institutions, among others.

S3. The provisions of the ECCE Policy as well as its supporting policy implementation standards, guidelines and procedures shall be binding to all state and non – state actors involved in ECCE service delivery.

S4. Non-compliance with the ECCE policy requirements shall attract both administrative and legal sanctions as applicable.

2.2 STRATEGIC OVERSIGHT AND MANAGEMENT STANDARDS

2.2.1 Standards for Inter-Ministerial Approach to ECCE delivery

12. The following standards shall apply to inter-ministerial aspects of ECCE delivery and oversight: -

S5. The core mandate over ECCE service delivery in Uganda shall lie with the Ministry responsible for education.

S6. Other Ministries, including the Ministries responsible for: Local Government; children, probation and family protection; health; food and nutrition; child protection; and coordination of government business, among others, shall play their respective roles in advancing the objectives of the ECCE Policy.

S7. The inter-Ministerial collaborations in ECCE service delivery shall take into consideration provisions of the National Integrated ECD Policy pertaining to mandates and obligations bestowed on respective Ministries and sectors.

2.2.2 Standards on EAC regional cooperation in ECCE delivery

13. The following standards shall apply to regional cooperation and collaboration in all aspects pertaining to ECCE: -

S8. Regional collaboration and partnership shall be encouraged and promoted, especially in the East African Community, to build synergies and extract lessons and best practices that can be domesticated to achieve the desired policy reforms in the area of ECCE.

S9. Stakeholders in ECCE may partner and collaborate with stakeholders from all regions of the world in pursuit of shared goals and objectives in the realm of ECCE.

S10. Public sector collaborative efforts in the East African Community (EAC) region shall be undertaken in partnership with the Ministry of East African Community Affairs.

2.2.3 Standards on decentralization of ECCE

14. Under this, the following standards shall apply: -

S11. The mandate of managing ECCE delivery shall fall under and be undertaken by

respective local governments in line with provisions of the Decentralization Policy and the Local Government Act, Cap 138.

S12. All interventions undertaken by local governments in the area of ECCE shall be aligned to and adhere to provisions of the ECCE Policy as well as its Policy Implementation Standards and Guidelines.

S13. Respective local governments shall develop an Education Development Plan (EDP) pursuant to section 27 of the Education Act, Cap 247 and this shall specifically provide for interventions and budget allocations to support ECCE delivery and regulation within their respective areas of jurisdiction.

S14. The Ministry responsible for education shall retain the mandate of strategic guidance and direction over the delivery of ECCE in Uganda.

S15. Respective local governments shall assign at least one Inspector within the department of education to be in charge of ECCE service delivery within their respective areas of jurisdiction.

2.2.4 Capacity development standards

15. The following standards shall apply when it comes to capacity development under ECCE: -

S16. All stakeholders, including Ministries, local governments, development partners and respective ECCE providers shall undertake periodic capacity building measures so as to attune and enhance the competences of duty-bearers to effectively execute their respective mandates.

S17. The staff structure for the Ministry responsible for education as well as local governments shall be reviewed so as to provide the said institutions with adequate human resources to undertake the functions and duties bestowed onto these institutions in delivery and regulation of ECCE.

S18. All staff of ECCE centers shall be required to undergo periodic capacity development training so as to ensure that the execution of their due tasks and obligations is compliant with best practices and emerging trends in ECCE service delivery.

2.3 REGISTRATION AND LICENSING STANDARDS FOR ECCE

2.3.1 ECCE institution registration and licensing standards

16. The following standards shall apply to the registration and licensing of ECCE providers: -

S19. The registration of all pre-primary schools in Uganda shall be open-ended and shall be undertaken by the Ministry responsible for education through the EMIS, in line with provisions made under theme 2.11 on ECCE data and information management standards prescribed below.

S20. The licensing of all pre-primary schools in Uganda shall be undertaken by respective local governments within which they are located, in line with the licensing guidelines for pre-primary schools.

S21. All other ECCE service providers, apart from pre-primary schools, shall be licensed and registered by respective local governments within which they are located in line with the licensing and registration guidelines for other ECCE providers.

S22. It shall be prohibited for all ECCE providers to operate when they are not registered and licensed to operate in line with the provisions of the ECCE Policy and these Policy Implementation Standards.

S23. The licensing of providers for ECCE services in Uganda shall be periodically renewed so as to ensure adherence to the set standards and requirements for ECCE service delivery in Uganda.

2.3.2 ECCE teacher registration and licensing standards

17. The following standards shall apply to registration and licensing of ECCE teachers: -

S24. Respective pre-primary school teachers shall be registered and licensed in line with provisions of the National Teacher Policy, and resultant National Teachers Act.

S25. It shall be prohibited for any person to teach among pre-primary schools without being registered and licensed to operate.

S26. The duty to enforce the requirement on registration and licensing of pre-primary teachers shall fall under the National Teacher Council.

2.3.3 ECCE Caregiver registration and licensing standards

18. The following standards shall apply to registration and licensing of ECCE Caregivers: -

S27. All Caregivers employed in ECCE centers must be registered and licensed to work as Caregivers by respective local governments.

S28. Caregivers shall be registered and licensed to operate in line with provisions made under section 2.6 of these Policy Implementation Standards.

S29. The licensing of Caregivers to work in ECCE centers shall be decentralized so as to enhance efficiency and context-based responses in the licensing regime for the said Caregivers.

S30. The Ministry responsible for education shall develop an Information Management System for all ECCE Caregivers in Uganda, and this shall be deployed and utilized by respective in line with provisions of the Education Data and Information Policy.

2.3.4 Enforcement mechanism for the licensing and registration standards

19. The following standards shall apply to enforcement of the registration and licensing requirements under the ECCE Policy and these Policy Implementation Standards: -

S31. The primary duty of enforcing the registration and licensing requirements under the ECCE Policy and these ECCE Policy Implementation Standards shall lie with respective local governments.

S32. At the implementation level, proprietors of ECCE centers shall have the duty of ensuring that they comply with the registration and licensing requirements stipulated under the ECCE Policy and these ECCE Policy Implementation Standards.

S33. Necessary modifications shall be undertaken in applicable laws, mainly the Education (Pre-primary, Primary and Post-primary) Act to provide for a statutory mechanism to enforce the policy requirements on registration and licensing of the different ECCE service providers and actors.

S34. The requirements on registration and licensing of the different actors involved in ECCE service delivery shall be backed by an elaborate sanctions regime which will be statutory, administrative and professional, as the context requires.

S35. The Ministry responsible for education shall be responsible for the enforcement of registration standards, conducting periodic reviews, inspections, and audits to ensure compliance by ECCE centers and caregivers.

S36. All ECCE centers, teachers, or caregivers found operating without proper registration or failing to meet standards for licensing shall face clear consequences, which may include; severe reprimand, fines, temporary suspension, revocation of their licenses or prosecution, among others.

S37. A formal complaint and reporting system shall be put in place for parents, community members, and other stakeholders to report any concerns or violations of the licensing standards, including unsafe environments or unethical behavior.

S38. All ECCE centers, teachers, and caregivers must be subjected to routine and unannounced inspections to ensure ongoing compliance with the established standards.

S39. A register for all ECCE teachers, and caregivers (including licensed, de-licensed and un-licensed) shall be maintained, allowing parents and guardians to verify the legitimacy and compliance of personnel with the registration and licensing requirements.

2.4 ECCE INSTITUTIONAL STANDARDS

2.4.1 Standards on categorization of ECCE institutions

20. The following standards shall apply to categorization of ECCE institutions: -

S40. ECCE services in Uganda shall be delivered in the following forms: -

(a). ***Formal ECCE services:*** This refers to ECCE services that are provided in a formally designated facility that has been registered and licensed as a gazzetted place for ECCE service delivery as per the provisions of the ECCE Policy, and its Policy Implementation Standards.

(b). ***Non-formal ECCE services:*** This refers to all avenues for acquisition of foundational knowledge and competences aimed at preparing learners to transition and effectively participate in primary education, and they include learning from parents, caretakers at home, private tutors, media channels such as Televisions (TVs) and internet sources, among others. Provides structured but flexible learning through play based programs Activities, community led coutters, home based programs often reaching children with limited access to formal schouts/settings.

S41. The different ECCE service providers in Uganda shall fall under the following categories: -

(c). ***Daycare Centers:*** These are institutions which are registered and licensed to provide formal early childhood care services to children below three (03) years of age.

(d). ***Pre-primary schools:*** These are institutions which are registered and licensed to provide formal ECCE services following an approved curriculum to children between the ages of three (03) and six (06) years.

(e). ***Home-based care centers:*** These are institutions which are authorized and gazzetted to offer non-formal early childhood care to children below three (03) years of age in a home setting.

S42. The licensing and registration regime for ECCE providers shall clearly distinguish the different providers basing on the forms and categorizations provided in (a) and (b) above.

2.4.2 Leadership and Management standards for ECCE institutions

21. The following standards shall apply to leadership and management for ECCE institutions: -

S43. All Daycare centers and Pre-primary schools shall have a center management committee consisting of: the Proprietor; representative of teachers (in case of a pre-primary school); representative of Caregivers; representative of parents; representative of support staff (if any); as well as a representative of the Local Council One; and, a representative of the Village Health Team of the area in which the center is located.

S44. All home-based care centers shall establish a center management team comprised of: the proprietor; Caregiver and representative of the Local Council One in which the center is located.

S45. It shall be mandatory for all ECCE institutions to establish center management committees prior to their operation in line with the provisions of the ECCE Policy and these Policy Implementation Standards.

S46. Members constituting center management committees shall be approved by the respective City/District/Municipal Education Officers.

S47. The center management committees for ECCE institutions shall be comprised of persons who possess local knowledge and developmentally appropriate requirements for children under six (06) years of age.

2.4.3 Basic Standards for ECCE institutions

22. Under this, the following standards shall apply: -

S48. Every formal ECCE provider shall have a center management committee that is established in accordance with provisions of the ECCE Policy and its Policy Implementation Standards.

S49. Every formal ECCE provider shall conduct its business in gazzetted premises which possess, among others, the following:

(a) Fencing and boundary for the land occupied by the center,

(b) Learning facilities,

(c) Age appropriate sanitary facilities,

(d) Playing area,

(e) Inclusive and stimulating learning environment, and

(f) Registration certificate and license.

S50. The Ministry responsible for education, through its mandated agencies, will develop detailed Requirements for all ECCE institutions in Uganda.

S51. It shall be mandatory for all ECCE institutions in Uganda to comply with the basic standards set herein these Policy Implementation Standards as well as the resultant detailed Requirements that may be prepared by the Ministry responsible for education.

2.4.4 Accountability and Performance Management Standards

23. The standards applying to accountability and performance management under ECCE shall be as follows: -

S52. All ECCE providers shall strive to achieve the highest form of excellence and client satisfaction in all aspects of ECCE service delivery.

S53. All actors along the ECCE value-chain shall conform to the accountability standards and requirements expected of them as will be communicated to them periodically and under the different laws, statutes and administrative instruments applicable to them.

S54. A performance management strategy shall be developed and rolled out to guide all strategic, managerial and operational aspects of ECCE service delivery.

2.5 ECCE DELIVERY STANDARDS

2.5.1 Standards on Establishment of ECCE Centers

24. The following standards shall apply to establishment of ECCE centers in Uganda:

S55. It shall be permissible for stakeholders including; the private sector, faith-based organizations, cultural institutions, civil society organization, community-based organizations and local governments to establish and operate ECCE centers in line with provisions of the ECCE Policy and the resultant Policy Implementation Standards and Guidelines.

S56. All stakeholders desirous of establishing ECCE centers must apply to respective local governments, prior to doing so, for them to be authorized to establish the said Center(s).

S57. Affirmative interventions shall be undertaken to correct the prevailing imbalance in establishment of ECCE centers between rural and urban areas as well as between the different sub-regions of Uganda.

S58. Foundation bodies may establish ECCE centers, but these shall be established as separate establishments from grant-aided primary and secondary schools with clearly distinct and appropriate school facilities, sanitary facilities and personnel.

2.5.2 Standards on Location of ECCE Centers

25. The following standards shall apply to location of ECCE centers in Uganda:

S59. The establishment of ECCE Centers shall be guided by the Education Development Plan for respective local governments, and this shall provide guidance on the locations which are under-served and hence in need of ECCE services.

S60. There shall be equity in the spatial distribution of ECCE centers by ensuring that all rural, peri-urban and urban areas are served with ECCE providers in line with the needs of the catchment population.

S61. The establishment of ECCE centers shall strive to achieve the national target of having an ECCE center in each village.

S62. The licensing regime for ECCE centers shall uphold an appropriate distance from one center to another, and also strive to achieve equity and fairness in the spatial distribution of ECCE centers between rural, urban and peri-urban areas.

2.5.3 Standards on ECCE facilities

26. The standards applicable to ECCE facilities shall be as follows:

S63. All ECCE centers shall put in place appropriate school facilities including, but not limited to: learning spaces; separated sanitary facilities for girls and boys as well as staff; and designated play area.

S64. All ECCE centers shall clearly demarcate the premises they occupy and fence off the land on which respective ECCE centers are located.

S65. Physical facilities in ECCE centers shall adhere to prescribed standards including standard size and dimensions for classrooms, furniture, classroom equipment and sanitary facilities.

S66. All physical facilities in ECCE centers shall provide the required modifications and facilities, including ramps, to enable their accessibility and utilization by learners with special needs.

S67. All physical facilities in ECCE centers shall put in place mechanisms to safeguard and ensure the safety and security of learners in respective centers, including escape facilities from classrooms in case of fire and other hazards, warning signs and cordoning off potentially hazardous areas such as falling debris and tree branches, childproofing through provision of features such as rounded corners on furniture, safety locks on doors and windows, among others.

S68. The establishment of ECCE centers shall be set in a safe, child-friendly, and inclusive physical environment, including prescribed space requirements, classroom designs and outdoor space as contained in the ECCE Implementation Guidelines, and other applicable instruments.

S69. The Ministry responsible for education shall develop Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards (BRMS) for pre-primary schools and these will incorporate the guidance provided herein under standard 2.5.3. In addition, respective local governments shall develop Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards (BRMS) for caregivers in their respective areas of jurisdiction and these shall also be aligned to the guidance provided herein under the afore-mentioned standard.

2.5.4 ECCE Curriculum Standards

27. The standards applying to ECCE curriculum shall be as follows: -

S70. The delivery of ECCE in pre-primary schools shall be based on the formal curriculum as developed and approved by the agency of MoES responsible for curriculum development, and disseminated to the entire service by the Ministry responsible for education via circularization.

S71. The ECCE curriculum shall be driven by the strategic objective of equipping children with foundational competences, including socio-emotional skills as well as pre-literacy and pre-numeracy competences, so as to enable them transition into and effectively engage in learning at primary and subsequent levels of the education system.

S72. The application of the ECCE curriculum shall be restricted to pre-primary schools.

S73. A clear learning framework shall be developed and rolled out to guide all aspects of day-care and parental education programmes in Uganda.

2.5.5 Standards on Admission and Enrollment of learners into ECCE

28. The following standards shall be adhered to in admission and enrolling of learners into ECCE centers in the country: -

S74. All children in Uganda below the age of six years are eligible for admission into ECCE centers.

S75. The practice of administering examinations to children prior to their admission in ECCE centers is prohibited henceforth.

S76. The admission of children into ECCE centers shall be undertaken on a non-segregative basis, be it on the basis of tribe, disability/ability, religious affiliation, nationality or gender. In this regard, the practice of establishing single-sex ECCE centers is henceforth prohibited.

S77. The admission of learners into boarding pre-primary schools is prohibited. In this regard, pre-primary schools are not permitted to establish and run boarding facilities for children below the age of six (06) years.

2.5.6 ECCE Assessment Standards

29. The following standards shall apply to assessment at ECCE level: -

S78. Learners in ECCE centers may be assessed using non-examination assessment methods such as; naturalistic observation, simple project assignments, formative assessment, play-based assessment, portfolio assessment, anecdotal records and checklists, and group presentations among others.

S79. Respective ECCE centers shall maintain and keep assessment records for respective learners enrolled under the said centers.

S80. The assessment results for respective learners at ECCE shall be utilized to develop a learner profile and be used to guide other aspects of learner placement at primary level, and to also develop a learner-focused and responsive learning approach at subsequent levels of the education system.

S81. Assessment processes must be ethical, non-intrusive, and conducted in a manner that respects the child's dignity and emotional well-being.

2.5.7 Standards on inspection, monitoring and support supervision for ECCE

30. The standards applicable on inspection, monitoring and support supervision for ECCE shall be as follows: -

S82. All ECCE centers shall be inspected on a routine basis by designated officials from mandated local governments, and the inspection reports shall be periodically submitted to the Ministry responsible for education, in addition to their normal reporting processes and obligations.

S83. The Ministry responsible for ECCE shall undertake periodic monitoring and support supervision to all local governments and individual ECCE centers to ensure that their operations comply with provisions of the National ECCE Policy and these Policy Implementation Standards and Guidelines.

S84. Respective ECCE centers shall be prohibited from constraining or denying an authorized officer of the local government or central government, who has properly identified him/herself, entry to the premises of the said center to conduct inspection, monitoring or support supervision.

2.5.8 Pre-primary teacher standards

31. The following standards shall apply to ECCE teachers:

S85. All pre-primary teachers shall be professional teachers who are trained, certified and regulated in line with provisions of the National Teacher Policy and National Teachers Act.

S86. It shall be mandatory for all pre-primary teachers to be provided formal written contracts with clear terms and conditions of their engagement.

S87. All pre-primary teachers shall be trained and qualified in Early Childhood Care and Education to deliver ECCE services and must engage in mandatory professional development sessions.

2.5.9 ECCE teaching standards

32. The following standards shall apply to teaching and delivery of ECCE in Uganda: -

S88. The delivery and teaching of ECCE will be driven by the primary objective of nurturing the social, physical and emotional development of the children rather than their cognitive development alone.

S89. All delivery models for ECCE will adhere to the following principles as part of the learning experience: (i) fostering peer interaction and relation-building; (ii) development of the brain-hand-eye interface; (iii) developing communication skills of the children; (iv) life skills; and (v) building values of team-work, Godliness, forgiveness, personal care and hygiene and self-esteem, among others.

S90. The medium of instruction in all ECCE centers shall be the local language of the area within which the Center is located. In cosmopolitan areas, the language of instruction shall be English complimented by the dominant local language in that area.

S91. The delivery of ECCE in Uganda will be anchored on different delivery models including play-based learning, task-based learning, among others, as core avenues for nurturing social, emotional, cognitive and physiological development among learners at this level of education.

S92. The delivery of ECCE shall endeavor to eliminate early exposure of children to social media and digital technologies, but will rather promote physical engagement as the predominant form of teaching.

S93. The teaching at ECCE level shall be responsive to children's needs as identified through ongoing assessments, with activities and learning experiences adapted to the children's progress and developmental stages.

2.5.10 Standards on ECCE learning materials and environment

33. The following standards shall apply to ECCE learning materials and environment:

S94. All providers of ECCE shall endeavor to provide adequate and appropriate learning materials to be utilized in accessing quality ECCE services.

S95. The infrastructure and furniture in ECCE institutions shall be adequate and conducive to cater to the learning, socialization and playing needs for children who are enrolled in these institutions. In this regard, ECCE centers shall provide child and age-appropriate furniture that is comfortable, safe and appropriate for the age group utilizing the said furniture.

S96. The learning environment in all ECCE institutions shall be stimulating for learning and appropriate to all learners at their respective ages, and will be aligned with the developmental needs of children, promoting sensory, motor and emotional development among the children.

S97. All ECCE centers which retain children beyond 1:00 pm shall have appropriate resting facilities for the children to enable them take rest during the day.

S98. The preparation of learning materials for ECCE shall strive to utilize locally-available materials and resources, including materials prepared by teachers and learners at the different levels of the education system.

2.5.11 Standards on transportation and movement of learners

34. The following standards shall apply to movement and transportation of learners to and from ECCE centers: -

S99. Children shall at all times be accompanied by a familiar adult or older child / children when going to and from ECCE centers.

S100. Parents have the duty of ensuring that their children are transported to ECCE centers using safe and appropriate means which do not put the lives and health of the children at risk of harm.

S101. Respective ECCE centers shall ensure that the person who picks children from the center are known both to the center and, if possible, the child prior to releasing the child to them.

2.5.12 Standards on other ECCE support staff

35. The following standards shall apply to all other support staff in ECCE centers: -

S102. All support staff, including Volunteers, in ECCE centers shall be offered a written contract detailing the terms and conditions of their engagement.

S103. Support staff in ECCE centers shall be provided with periodic training in child safety and protection to ensure that they don't antagonize the welfare of children during their course of working in respective centers.

S104. All personnel in ECCE institutions must adhere to strict child protection protocols, ensuring that the safety and well-being of children is a priority at all times.

2.6 EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE STANDARDS

2.6.1 Standards on qualifications of Early Childhood Care Givers (ECCGs)

36. The standards applying to Caregivers at ECCE level shall be as follows:

S105. There shall be designation of Caregivers as a distinct and separate cadre from teachers, and these will offer services in line with the job profile of the Caregiver cadre.

S106. All Caregivers involved in ECCE service delivery shall be registered by respective local governments.

S107. All Caregivers shall obtain training in caregiving and child safety prior to their registration and licensing as Caregivers.

S108. The Ministry responsible for education, through its mandated agency for curriculum development, and working closely with the Ministry responsible for child welfare, shall develop a standardized curriculum for training Caregivers in Uganda, and this curriculum may be modularized.

S109. Education institutions and civil society organizations desirous of offering training to Caregivers may apply to the Ministry responsible for education to be accredited and authorized to offer the said training.

S110. Qualifications to successful trainees on the Caregiver programme shall be processed and awarded by the Ministry responsible for education following assessment of the trainees by the said Ministry.

S111. It shall be prohibited for any person to be engaged and employed as a Caregiver without possessing the requisite training and qualification in Caregiving.

S112. The standards on other ECCE staff as prescribed under theme 2.5.12 above shall equally apply to all Caregivers employed in ECCE centers.

S113. The Ministry responsible for education, in collaboration with the Ministries responsible for child welfare and health shall develop a Code of Ethics to govern all aspects of early childhood care in Uganda.

S114. The Ministry responsible for education, in collaboration with Ministries responsible for gender and labour development as well local government shall establish and maintain a National Register for Caregivers.

2.6.2 Delivery standards for ECC in ECCE centers

37. The delivery of early childhood care in ECCE centers shall be based on the following standards: -

S115. The primary mechanism for delivery of care to children in Uganda shall be parental care in a home-based setting, and this duty on parents shall persist even when the said children are enrolled in day-care centers in line with the provisions of these Policy Implementation Standards.

S116. All day-care centers in Uganda shall be run and operated as day learning centers.

S117. Regardless of the standard set in S116 above, exceptions to the rule shall be permissible in the following circumstances: -

(i) ***Temporary full-day care:*** This shall entail caring for children in facilities that over full day and night services for parents who are unable to provide night care for their children by virtue of the nature of their employment or other adverse conditions such as sickness, imprisonment, long distance travel and other justifiable circumstances.

(ii) ***Emergency care services:*** This will entail provision of full-time care in boarding facilities for children in emergency situations such as war, displacement and lost children.

S118. All day-care schools shall recruit qualified Caregivers in line with the provisions under standards 105 to 114 above.

S119. Pre-primary schools shall recruit and deploy Caregivers to offer care to children alongside the ECCE teachers, but the Caregivers shall not be construed to be equivalent to ECCE teachers.

S120. The delivery of care to children in ECCE centers shall respect and adhere to the best interest of the child principle as elaborated in the National Children's Act and other applicable laws and policies.

2.6.3 Standards on Nutrition and Feeding at ECCE

38. The following standards shall apply to nutrition and feeding of children at the stage of early childhood care: -

S121. All children at ECCE shall be provided with nutritious meals to meet their development and physiological needs.

S122. ECCE centers shall put in place appropriate and safe food preparation and (or) custody facilities so as to ensure that the food to be fed to children is safe and does not pause adverse health effects to the said learners.

S123. The duty of feeding children in ECCE centers shall be on the parents, guardians or any other person having parental authority over respective children. However, nothing shall restrict any person, well-wisher or philanthropic organization from supporting children in an ECCE center to access good quality and appropriate food.

2.6.4 Standards on Learner Protection

39. The following standards shall apply to learner protection as a core tenet of early childhood care: -

S124. All Caregivers shall have a duty to protect the children under their care from mental and physical harm.

S125. Caregivers shall promptly report any child whom they identify to be subject to any circumstances that compromise their safety and protection to the appropriate and nearest probation and welfare officers for corrective action.

S126. Caregivers shall ensure that the children under their care are not subjected to any treatment that may exert physical, mental and social harm to respective children.

2.6.5 Standards on home-based care for children

40. The following standards shall apply to home-based care for children:

S127. Home-based care shall be the primary and most preferred form of care for children below three (03) years of age.

S128. Parents who are unable to offer home-based care may enroll their children in licensed and registered day-care centers.

S129. Parents shall be bound by and adhere to the principle of best interest for the child in all aspects of home-based care.

S130. Any person who is desirous of offering care to children, other than their own, in their home shall apply to the local government under which their home is located for authorization and registration prior to offering this service.

S131. Parents will be encouraged to obtain parenting information to equip them with the necessary competences to offer appropriate care to children under home-based care.

2.7 SAFETY AND SANITARY STANDARDS

2.7.1 Standards on provision and access to WASH facilities

41. The following standards shall apply to WASH facilities in ECCE centers: -

S132. Every ECCE center shall have sanitary facilities including latrine or toilets that are age appropriate.

S133. ECCE centers shall recruit Caregivers to take care of the sanitary and hygiene requirements of children under their care.

S134. ECCE centers shall put in place access points for safe water and soap to be utilized by children to ensure their personal hygiene and safety.

2.7.2 Standards on tracking, reporting and referral of learners

42. The following standards shall apply in tracking, reporting and referral of children under ECCE: -

S135. Respective ECCE centers shall keep an individual file for each learner depicting key personal details such as: name, contact and location of the parent or

guardian; name, age and gender of the learner; basic health information; and special needs information, among others.

S136. All ECCE centers shall keep a record of the responsible child and welfare officer in charge of the area where the center is located, and will inform him or her of any matter that is brought to their attention which puts the welfare and safety of any child at risk of being abused.

S137. It shall be the duty of respective ECCE providers to disclose information to parents on any matter pertaining to their child and failure to comply this duty shall attract both administrative and penal sanctions.

S138. Respective ECCE centers shall promptly refer any learner who experiences health challenges while at the center to the nearest health facility, and inform the parent as soon as they notice the health challenge.

2.7.3 Standards on security and safety of ECCE institutions

43. The following standards shall apply to security and safety of ECCE centers in Uganda: -

S139. Respective ECCE centers shall ensure that the physical environment in and around the center is free from any materials, facilities and items that pause a risk to the health and safety of children enrolled in the said centers.

S140. Caution shall be taken to ensure that all play materials and items in ECCE centers are safe and do not pause a risk of harm to respective children in these centers.

S141. Every ECCE center shall have a dedicated point for disposing biological and physical waste, and this shall be cordoned off to guard against un-supervised access by children.

S142. All learning spaces in ECCE centers shall be designed and constructed of the safety needs for children, including making provisions for appropriate escape avenues in case of hazards such as fire outbreaks.

S143. Respective ECCE centers shall fence their premises so as to safeguard the lives and health of children enrolled under them.

2.8 STANDARDS ON CROSS CUTTING ISSUES

2.8.1 Special Needs Education Standards

44. The following standards shall apply to special needs in all aspects of delivering ECCE in Uganda: -

S144. All ECCE centers shall be constructed in a manner that is accessible and utilizable by all persons regardless of their physical or mental constraints.

S145. ECCE centers shall conduct learner profiling at the point of admitting them so as to ensure that they are provided with appropriate services which take into consideration the unique needs of respective learners.

S146. All staff of respective ECCE centers shall be offered periodic retooling training on handling children with special needs.

S147. The learning materials in all ECCE centers shall be user-friendly and appropriate for all children, especially those with special education needs.

2.8.2 Gender mainstreaming standards

45. The standards applying to gender mainstreaming in ECCE shall be as follows: -

S148. ECCE services shall be delivered to all children in Uganda on a non-discriminative basis regardless of gender considerations.

S149. ECCE centers shall endeavor to achieve gender equality in the recruitment and deployment of staff to offer ECCE services.

S150. The reporting processes and activities in all ECCE centers shall provide gender disaggregated data on all aspects being reported on.

2.8.3 ICT and digital technology standards

46. The standards applying to technology in ECCE centers shall be as follows: -

S151. ECCE centers may adopt and integrate age and developmentally appropriate technologies in delivery of ECCE services in Uganda.

S152. The application and utilization of technologies in ECCE centers shall respect the best interest of the child, and will specifically refrain from exposure of children to harmful aspects of technology such as social media and pornography.

S153. All ECCE centers will be integrated to digital platforms which collect and maintain education data and statistics such as the EMIS.

2.8.4 Environmental management standards

47. The following standards shall apply to environmental management in all ECCE centers: -

S154. ECCE centers shall preserve the natural environment by ensuring that the environment in and around the center is provided with adequate trees and other environmental maintenance measures.

S155. All ECCE centers in Uganda shall ensure that they introduce appropriate environmental preservation and awareness knowledge and information to enrolled children as early as possible.

S156. The ECCE curriculum shall incorporate in and provide information on prudent and appropriate aspects of environmental management.

2.8.5 Learner and staff health standards

48. The following standards shall apply to the health of learners and staff in ECCE centers: -

S157. All ECCE centers shall train and build the competence of all learners in primary health care as a foundational competence to enable them transition and ably participate in subsequent levels of the education system.

S158. All ECCE centers shall put in place mechanisms to guard against potential transmission of diseases and ailments, such as airborne diseases, from staff to learners and from learner to learner.

S159. The physical facilities and infrastructure in all ECCE centers shall be designed and built in a child-friendly manner that safeguards the health and welfare of both staff and learners.

2.8.6 Physical Education and Sports mainstreaming standards

49. The following standards shall apply to mainstreaming of physical education and sports in ECCE centers: -

S160. ECCE centers in Uganda shall utilize games, sports and playing as one of the key delivery models for ECCE, in addition to other models such as task-based learning, for delivering learning in respective centers.

S161. All ECCE centers shall establish and designate appropriate facilities for games and sports as part of the learning spaces to be provided in respective centers.

S162. Measures shall be undertaken to build the capacity of all staff employed in ECCE centers in appropriate undertaking of physical education and sports which is age-appropriate for all enrolled children.

S163. Mechanisms for utilizing sports facilities belonging to near-by primary, secondary and tertiary institutions as well as community facilities shall be established so as to enable ECCE centers which don't own sports facilities to utilize the said facilities.

2.8.7 Policy integration and cross-referencing standards

50. The following standards shall apply to policy integration and cross-referencing: -

S164. The undertaking of ECCE service delivery shall be conducted in conformity with other applicable laws and policies, which include, but are not limited to; Education Data and Information Policy, School Health Policy, the National School Feeding Policy, Gender in Education Policy and ICT in Education Policy.

S165. The implementation of interventions in the realm of ECCE shall be aligned to the strategic direction and guidance as elaborated in Government White Paper on Education, and the ECCE Policy.

2.9 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT / ENGAGEMENT STANDARDS

2.9.1 Standards on definition and categorization of parents / guardians under ECCE

51. Under this, the following standards shall apply: -

S166. The persons bearing and exercising parental authority over children shall be as follows:

(a) ***Biological parents*** – these are persons who gave birth to the child.

(b) ***Adoptive parents*** – these are persons into whom parental authority over a given child have been vested by Court or by custom, and they include familial relations.

(c) ***De facto parents*** – these are persons, non-state actors, government, faith-based organizations and any other institutions who practice parental authority over a child on account of their lawful duties and functions.

S167. Respective ECCE centers shall obtain and keep properly identification and personal records of persons who bring children for enrollment.

S168. All persons possessing parental authority over children shall be deemed to be parents under these Policy Implementation Standards.

2.9.2 Standards on Parental Roles and Duties in ECCE

52. Under this, the following standards shall apply: -

S169. Parents shall have the primary duty of providing ECCE services to their children.

S170. Specifically, parents shall play the following roles in ECCE delivery:

(a) Enrolling children in ECCE

(b) Provision of the required food and meals

(c) Provision of individual learning materials

(d) Provision of clothing

(e) Payment of prescribed school fees to support other aspects of running ECCE centers

(f) Protection of children from all forms of violence and abuse

(g) Participation in school processes and activities aimed at ensuring quality ECCE delivery

S171. All parents shall undertake and fulfill the duties and responsibilities bestowed unto them under auspices of the ECCE Policy and these Policy Implementation Standards.

S172. Parents shall be mobilized to actively participate in the ECCE processes through engaging in parental education programs; involvement in learning activities and other related interventions designed for parents e.g. collecting local available material for learning activities and playing their duties and obligations under the ECCE Policy and these Policy Implementation Standards.

S173. Respective ECCE centers shall organize periodic parents' meetings to provide a platform for parents to participate in and contribute towards ECCE service delivery.

2.9.3 Enforcement mechanism for Parental Roles and Duties

53. Under this, the following standards shall apply:

S174. The enforcement of parental responsibilities shall be undertaken in a bottom-up manner with the Local Council (LC) system providing the primary dispute resolution mechanism on all aspects pertaining to implementation of parental responsibilities.

S175. The probation and family welfare structures of government shall be activated, engaged and involved in enforcement of parental duties and responsibilities pertaining to ECCE.

S176. All ECCE centers shall have a duty to notify the parent, LC authorities and probation office sequentially in cases of parents who do not fulfil their roles and duties pertaining to ECCE.

2.9.4 Monitoring and support supervision mechanism

54. Under this, the following standards shall apply: -

S177. The primary duty of monitoring operation of ECCE center shall lie with the mandated authorities at the local government level, specifically in the office of the Sub county Chief.

S178. ECCE centers shall be regularly inspected in line with the quality assurance mechanisms for education service delivery.

S179. The information from monitoring and inspection activities for respective ECCE centers shall be consolidated and form part of the periodic performance reports for respective local governments.

S180. The Ministry responsible for education may conduct support supervision activities involving cities, districts, municipalities, sub counties, villages, ECCE centers and parents as part of its efforts to promote quality delivery of ECCE services.

S181. The family welfare and probation mechanisms of government shall be invoked to undertake family level monitoring of compliance with the different

provisions made herein these Policy Implementation Standards and the ECCE Policy.

2.10 ECCE FINANCING STANDARDS

2.10.1 Standards on financing ECCE

55. Under this, the following standards shall apply: -

S182. The delivery of ECCE in Uganda shall primarily be financed and delivered by the private sector to parents who shall access it upon payment of the prescribed fees and other obligations stated herein and determined by respective ECCE providers.

S183. Government shall finance the establishment and operationalization of ECCE centers in areas where there is no viable private sector to play the role of providing ECCE services, as an affirmative intervention.

S184. A deliberate ECCE Financing Strategy shall be developed by government and this will leverage the different ECCE Policy financing options, including subsidies, Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), revolving financing and any other incentives to provide affordable and sustainable financing for ECCE service delivery in Uganda.

S185. Every local government desirous of establishing and running an ECCE center using funds from the consolidated fund shall apply to the Ministry responsible for education, which will consider the application jointly with the Ministry responsible for finance, and may provide clearance prior to proceeding with establishment.

S186. Local governments may partner with civil society and other non-state actors to establish and run ECCE centers in areas that are under-served by the private sector provided that they develop a feasible sustainability strategy to ensure continuity beyond the external financial support.

S187. Stakeholders including the central government, local governments and development partners will participate in financing ECCE service delivery in line with the detailed provisions contained in the ECCE Policy Implementation Guidelines.

2.10.5 Standards on ECCE fees and charges

56. The following standards shall apply to ECCE fees and charges: -

S188. ECCE centers shall charge school fees which are reasonable and adequate to ensure provision of quality and contextually appropriate ECCE services.

S189. ECCE centers are prohibited from levying school fees and other charges that are not directly related to provision of ECCE services.

S190. Respective local governments shall be empowered to review and revise the fees charged by ECCE centers on ground of irrationality, excessiveness and misapplication to items which are provided under the Policy Implementation Standards and any resultant laws.

S191. Parties who are aggrieved by school fees and charges levied in ECCE centers and their grievances are inadequately resolved by local governments shall reserve the right of petitioning the Ministry responsible for education to intervene and revise the fees and charges complained of, complaint meeting the test set in standard 190 above.

2.11 ECCE DATA AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT STANDARDS

2.11.1 Standards on linking ECCE centers to EMIS

Under this, the following standards shall apply: -

S192. All ECCE centers in Uganda shall be coded and assigned a profile on the Education Management Information System (EMIS).

S193. The profile assigned to respective ECCE center shall be linked to the nearest primary school.

S194. The total summation of ECCE centers that are linked to a primary school shall form the catchment area of the said primary school and will be utilized when planning for transition of the children into primary education.

2.11.2 Standards on coding and entry of ECCE institutions

57. Under this, the following standards shall apply: -

S195. It shall be mandatory for all pre-primary schools in Uganda to apply for coding and entry onto the EMIS, in accordance with provisions of the Education Data and Information Policy.

S196. Registration of respective pre-primary schools in EMIS shall be followed by issuance of a Registration Certificate for the said provider.

S197. Nothing in this standard shall constrain respective local governments to develop and deploy local-based information management systems to keep and track the performance metrics and indicators on ECCE in their respective areas of jurisdiction.

2.11.3 Standards on reporting and data submission on ECCE

58. Under this, the following standards shall apply: -

S198. Respective ECCE shall have a duty to comply with and provide information required of them by EMIS and this information shall be fed into the system in a prompt and timely manner.

S199. All stakeholders in ECCE charged with any role to play in data and information shall adhere to provisions of the Education Data and Information Policy as well as its Policy Implementation Standards and Guidelines.

2.12 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIP STANDARDS

2.12.1 Standards on involvement of development partners in ECCE

59. The following standards shall apply to involvement of development partners in ECCE service delivery: -

S200. All development partners (including civil society and community-based agencies)whose founding instrument provides for them to engage in activities pertaining to ECCE and community development shall have the liberty to design and undertake intervention aimed at uplifting ECCE delivery in line with provisions of the ECCE Policy, these Policy Implementation Standards, and the resultant guidelines.

S201. The Ministry responsible for education, in collaboration with the Ministry responsible for child welfare and probation shall keep and maintain a register of all development partners involved in ECCE service delivery.

S202. The Ministry responsible for education, in collaboration with the Ministry responsible for child welfare and probation shall provide periodic updates to development partners on existing and emerging areas where support is required in order to plug the gaps existing in ECCE service delivery across Uganda.

2.12.2 Standards on participation of foundation bodies in ECCE delivery

60. Under this, the following standards shall apply: -

S203. All faith-based and cultural institutions, and individual persons/group of people in Uganda shall have the right to participate in establishment and running of ECCE centers in accordance with provisions of the ECCE Policy and its Policy Implementation Standards as well as other applicable laws and regulations.

S204. The participation of foundation bodies in ECCE service delivery shall be separate and distinguished from their efforts and processes to establish and manage primary, secondary and tertiary education institutions.

2.12.3 Accountability standards for state and non-state actors in ECCE delivery

61. The following standards shall apply to accountability for state and non-state actors in ECCE service delivery: -

S205. A multi-stakeholder coordination platform shall be created bringing together all actors in ECCE service delivery at local government level so as to ensure prudent execution of the roles and obligations bestowed on respective actors under the ECCE Policy and these Standards.

S206. All state actors shall be bound by and adhere to applicable accountability laws and regulations, including the Leadership Code Act, Audit Act and Public Service Standing Orders, in all aspects of conducting their duties and obligations pertaining to ECCE.

S207. All non-state actors shall provide publicly-accessible accountability for the resources they obtain from third parties and parents in their endeavors to provide ECCE services for Ugandans.

S208. The resources solicited and received on grounds of promoting or undertaking different tasks in the realm of ECCE shall be strictly applied to the tasks for which they were obtained.

2.13 INFORMATION DISSEMINATION STANDARDS

2.13.1 ECCE information preparation and handling standards

62. The following standards shall apply to preparation and handling of information pertaining to ECCE: -

S209. The primary role of collating and preparing information pertaining to ECCE service delivery shall lie with respective local governments across Uganda.

S210. The Ministry responsible for education shall prepare aggregated nation-wide statistics on all aspects of ECCE service delivery in line with provisions of the Education Data and Information Policy.

S211. All stakeholders shall have the right to prepare, maintain, keep and disseminate institution-specific data and information pertaining to the activities they undertake in the realm of ECCE.

S212. The Ministry responsible for education may prepare and disseminate specific data and information pertaining to an ECCE center, community, local government or region as and when required by the prevailing circumstances at the time.

2.13.2 Standards on dissemination channels for ECCE information

63. The following standards shall apply to dissemination of ECCE information: -

S213. National information and statistics pertaining to ECCE service shall be released and disseminated by the Ministry responsible for education, following acquisition of clearance from the Ministry's political leadership.

S214. All stakeholders engaged in dissemination of ECCE information shall uphold and adhere to principles of truthfulness, verifiability and full-spectrum reporting.

S215. The dissemination of information on ECCE shall endeavor to translate the said information into user-friendly formats including translation into local languages, and preparation of abridged versions and infographics, among others.

2.13.3 Media engagement standards in ECCE

64. The following standards shall apply to media engagement on all matters pertaining to ECCE: -

S216. There shall be utilization of all lawful forms of media to ensure dissemination of ECCE information to all stakeholders involved in and those who ought to be involved in different aspects of ECCE service delivery.

S217. All state actors shall ensure that they obtain clearance from the responsible accounting officer for any information that they intend to disseminate through media engagements.

S218. Efforts shall be undertaken to utilize the free media space allocated to government programs, pursuant to regulatory requirements by Uganda Communications Commission (UCC), to disseminate information and create awareness on different aspects of ECCE service delivery.

Chapter Three

TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

3.1 TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Transitional, in the context of these Policy Implementation Standards, means those aspects relating to a change, or a process of change, from one form or type to another system. Therefore, this section outlines the safeguards necessary for effective transition of the Policy reforms envisaged in the ECCE Policy into reality.

Effective implementation of the ECCE Policy shall be supported by the required modifications and amendment of the applicable laws – key among which is the Education (Pre-primary, Primary and Post-Primary) Act, 2008. The said amendment will change the statutory provisions therein to empower government to establish and run pre-primary schools in areas which are under-served by the private sector.

The Ministry responsible for education will develop the ECCE Policy Implementation Guidelines, Procedures, exemplar forms and templates to give effect to the different provisions of the ECCE Policy and these Policy Implementation Standards. Relatedly, the transitional period – as stipulated in the National Teacher Policy – for ECCE teachers shall apply to all pre-primary teachers so as to ensure that they comply with provisions of the said National Teacher Policy.

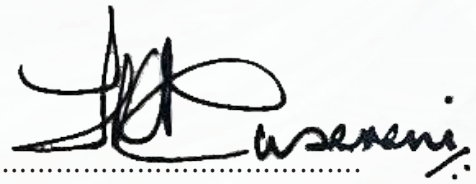
All the ECCE Policy Instruments, namely; the ECCE Policy, ECCE Policy Implementation Standards and Guidelines, Procedures and exemplar forms and templates shall be read together with the relevant documents regarding the ECCE reforms, and these shall be considered alongside any other legal or administrative reforms and guidance that may be issued periodically in the realm of ECCE. sss

3.2 COMMENCEMENT OF THE STANDARDS

These ECCE Policy Implementation Standards shall commence and become effective at the date and time on which the ECCE Policy shall be launched and rolled out by the Ministry responsible for education, for nation-wide implementation.

3.3 DECLARATION

I, hereby approve the aforesaid Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Policy Implementation Standards as binding and mandatory to all the actors and the stakeholders in the implementation of the ECCE Policy.

Signed  .....

Hon. Janet K. Museveni

FIRST LADY AND MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS



THE REPULIC OF UGANDA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION POLICY IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

MAY 2025

FOREWORD

The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Policy was approved by Cabinet in 2024 as a framework to guide the delivery of ECCE. This indicates that Government recognizes early childhood as a critical stage in a child's life. Government notes that, it is during the formative years that children begin to develop the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical capacities that will shape their future. As such, ECCE is an investment in individual children, and in the future of societies and economies.

In recognition of the transformative potential of early childhood, the ECCE Policy Implementation Guidelines have been developed to guide the effective and sustainable implementation of ECCE interventions. These guidelines provide a clear framework that ensures quality, equity, and delivery of ECCE services.

The implementation guidelines provide a framework for all actors to consider when implementing the ECCE Policy. These guidelines provide detailed and elaborate guidance on implementation of all aspects of the ECCE Policy. Also, these guidelines provide practical and actionable steps to all those involved in the ECCE sub-sector, empowering them to work in a coordinated and systematic way to create an environment that is supportive of every child's development. Through these guidelines, we envision a future where every child, has access to quality early childhood care and education. It is only by upholding these principles and working together that we can achieve the transformative vision of universal access to quality and equitable ECCE for all children.

The policy implementation guidelines are a result of a consultative process undertaken by the Ministry of Education and Sports with key stakeholders to ensure that the ECCE Policy is implemented effectively and consistently in line with the its objectives. On behalf of the Ministry, I extend our gratitude to all those who contributed their knowledge and experience in shaping these guidelines. It is our hope that, by following these guidelines, it will create a more equitable, and effective early childhood education system that will serve the needs of every child in country.

Therefore, I invite all stakeholders to join the Education and Sports sector in this important journey, as we lay the foundations for a brighter future for the children of today and the generations to come.



Dr. Kedrace R. Turyagyenda

PERMANENT SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The development of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Policy was a consultative and collaborative effort involving a wide range of stakeholders. Their valuable insights, expertise, and commitment were instrumental in shaping the policy that is both evidence-based and responsive to the real challenges facing the ECCE delivery.

Following the approval of the Policy in May 2024, it was recognized that the development of implementation standards and guidelines was essential to support effective and coherent policy execution. These guidelines serve as a practical resource to guide all actors involved in the delivery of ECCE services across the country.

On my own behalf, and on behalf of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and Sports, I extend sincere appreciation to all stakeholders for their active participation and meaningful contributions to the development of these ECCE Policy Implementation Guidelines.

I also wish to thank the Permanent Secretary for the unwavering technical and financial support provided to the Department of Basic Education throughout this process. Special thanks go to the Education Policy and Research Department for their critical role in offering technical guidance and support during the development of both the policy and the accompanying guidelines.

My gratitude also goes to the Department of Basic Education for its leadership and collaboration with stakeholders, which ensured the successful completion of this important milestone.

I am especially grateful to the political leadership for their continued guidance and support, particularly Hon. Janet Kataaha Museveni, the First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports; Hon. Dr. John Chrysostom Muyingo, Minister of State for Higher Education; Hon. Dr. Joyce Moriku Kaducu, Minister of State for Primary Education; and Hon. Peter Ogwang, Minister of State for Sports.

Finally, I call upon all stakeholders; Government Ministries Departments, and Agencies, as well as Development Partners, Civil Society Organisations and communities to actively support the implementation and delivery of ECCE services across the country for the benefit of our youngest learners.

Dr. Cleophus Mugenyi
COMMISSIONER, BASIC EDUCATION

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

3Rs	Recycle, Reuse and Reduce
AVR	Augmented Virtual Reality
CBO	Community Based Organization
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
CDO	Community Development Officer
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DES	Directorate of Education Standards
EAC	East African Community
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECCGs	Early Childhood Caregivers
EDPs	Education Development Partners
EMIS	Education Management Information System
G	Guideline
HDC	Human Capital Development
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ID	Identity Card
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
LC	Local Council
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MoGLSD	Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development
MoH	Ministry of Health
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Center
NCHE	National Council for Higher Education
NTC	National Teacher Council
PHC	Primary Health Care
PPEs	Personal Protection Equipment
Q&A	Question and Answer
SACCO	Savings and Credit Cooperative Company
SAS	Senior Administrative Secretary
TVs	Televisions
UCC	Uganda Communication Commission
VHT	Village Health Team
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

1. The success of any adopted Policy depends on how well it is implemented. One of the reasons for policy adoption and implementation failure is lack of clear policy implementation guidelines. Implementation encompasses the actions by all the stakeholders directed at the achievement of all the adopted Policy objectives.

2. Government of Uganda discussed and approved the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Policy on 14th October 2023. The approval of this policy set in motion a process to build a firm background for effective policy implementation and this entails undertaking of preliminary activities to enable roll out of the key reforms envisaged under the policy. Critical among these undertakings is formulation of standards, guidelines and procedures to guide implementation of the Policy.

3. Consequently, the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) developed the ECCE Policy Implementation Standards which provide mandatory metrics to be adhered to by all stakeholders in implementation of this Policy instrument. The ECCE Policy Implementation Standards require complimentary Implementation Guidelines so as to provide holistic guidance to all stakeholders involved in ECCE service delivery. Therefore, the information contained herein entails the ECCE Policy Implementation Guidelines.

4. The Guidelines prescribed in this instrument are complimentary to the ECCE Policy Implementation Standards and collectively, they provide a framework to guide the ECCE sub sector and enable translation of the ECCE Policy commitments to achieve the intended policy goals and objectives. All stakeholders involved in ECCE are therefore implored to utilize these guidelines in undertaking the various activities they are involved in within the realm of ECCE.

5. The Guidelines for implementation of the ECCE Policy are provided in line with the themes highlighted hereunder.

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE POLICY IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

6. The **general purpose** of these ECCE Policy Implementation Guidelines is to provide complimentary guidance to all stakeholders in the process of adopting, adapting to and rolling out the ECCE Policy.

7. The **specific purposes** of the Guidelines are to provide:

   (a) Legitimate information and guidance to ECCE service providers and all actors and stakeholders in the realm of ECCE as they undertake their respective mandated activities in ECCE service delivery.

   (b) An instrument for all the stakeholders to consider when rolling out and implementing the ECCE Policy and its Policy Implementation Standards.

   (c) Guidance on critical elements of the ECCE Policy for its effective implementation and to promote effectiveness, efficiency, equity and accountability while minimising all the institutional risks in the implementation process.

   (d) Information relating to the discretionary powers of all stakeholders in all aspects of rolling out and implementing the ECCE Policy as well as its Policy Implementation Standards.

   (e) Guidance pertaining to government involvement in ECCE service delivery and the scope of its involvement in this level of education.

1.2 SCOPE AND APPLICATION OF THE POLICY IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

8. These ECCE Policy Implementation Guidelines provide parameters within which all stakeholders involved in ECCE service delivery can exercise their discretion in all their efforts and endeavors to implement the different provisions of the ECCE Policy and its Policy Implementation Standards. Consequently, the provisions made herein shall apply to all stakeholders in line with the themes provided hereunder.

9. The implementation of these Guidelines shall be less stringent and will endeavor to empower duty-bearers with discretion to determine how they ought to undertake the respective functions they are entrusted with under the ECCE Policy and its Policy Implementation Standards.

10. Nevertheless, all stakeholders shall adhere to the principle of the best interest and welfare of the child as the overriding doctrine in undertaking all functions and interventions pursuant to provisions of these ECCE Policy Implementation Guidelines.

Chapter Two

THE ECCE POLICY IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

2.1 LEGAL GUIDELINES

11. The following legal guidelines apply in implementation of the ECCE Policy: -

G1. The Ministry responsible for education will develop the necessary Regulations, Rules and Templates to guide all aspects of operationalizing the resultant law following its review to align it with provisions of the ECCE Policy and its Policy Implementation Standards.

G2. The Ministry responsible for education will work in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs and other mandated stakeholders to undertake the necessary legal reforms aimed at aligning the education sector's legal regime with provisions of the ECCE Policy and its Policy Implementation Standards.

G3. The Ministry responsible for education will undertake extensive stakeholder consultations and adopt a collaborative approach in undertaking all the required legal reforms that are necessary to bring the sector's legal regime in compliance with provisions of the ECCE Policy and its Policy Implementation Standards.

G4. The necessary legal reforms and development to bring the prevailing education sector legal regime in conformity with provisions of the ECCE Policy and Standards will be undertaken within a reasonable time from commencement of these guidelines. In any case, the preliminary legal reforms will be undertaken within a period not exceeding two (02) years from the commencement date for these guidelines.

G5. A deliberate monitoring and evaluation framework will be developed and rolled out to enhance compliance, accountability, and alignment of interventions by the different ECCE stakeholders with the legal provisions they are bound to adhere to.

G6. Non-compliance with the different ECCE legal and policy requirements shall attract specified administrative and legal sanctions, such as warnings, fines, license suspensions, or revocations, among others. These sanctions will be enforced by the entire government machinery including central and local

governments, civil society actors as well as private citizens, among others, following a defined legal process.

2.2 STRATEGIC OVERSIGHT AND MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

2.2.1 Guidelines on Inter-Ministerial Approach to ECCE delivery

12. The following guidelines apply to inter-ministerial aspects of ECCE delivery and oversight: -

G7. The Ministry responsible for education will exercise its core mandate in ECCE service delivery mainly through coordinating efforts with other ministries via regular inter-ministerial meetings, joint planning, and shared monitoring frameworks, among others, so as to ensure integrated service delivery.

G8. Mandated Ministries as detailed in standard 6 of the ECCE Policy Implementation Standards will provide detailed roadmaps for executing interventions which include, but are not limited to; nutritional support, child welfare, community mobilization, provision of WASH facilities, child protection, family strengthening, special needs children, and healthcare provision, among others, as they collectively endeavor to provide holistic ECCE experiences to children in Uganda.

G9. Bi-annual updates and engagements with the Secretariat for the Human Capital Development (HCD) Programmes will be undertaken and these shall be aimed at mainstreaming and reporting on related ECCE interventions by the different actors in the HCD programme.

2.2.2 Guidelines on EAC regional cooperation in ECCE delivery

13. The following guidelines apply to regional cooperation and collaboration in all aspects pertaining to ECCE: -

G10. All interventions undertaken by stakeholders in partnership with EAC regional stakeholders in ECCE service delivery will be aligned to and adhere to the ECCE Policy as well as its policy implementation standards and guidelines.

G11. All players in ECCE shall ensure that they adhere to the societal norms and acceptable values for the Ugandan society in all matters of collaborating and partnering with stakeholders from all regions of the world in pursuit of shared goals and objectives in the realm of ECCE.

G12. Efforts shall be undertaken to build and nurture working relationships between the different MDAs involved in ECCE service delivery with their counterparts in all the EAC member states.

G13. ECCE service providers in border communities will strive to utilize the local languages shared with the neighboring EAC member state so as to facilitate cross-border learning exchange and social integration.

2.2.3 Guidelines on decentralization of ECCE

14. Under this, the following guidelines apply: -

G14. Local governments will manage and oversee ECCE delivery in line with the Decentralization Policy and the Local Government Act, Cap 138. They shall develop ECCE service delivery plans aligned with local development strategies and collaborate with the Ministry responsible for education to ensure effective resource allocation, capacity building, and compliance with ECCE standards. Local governments shall regularly report on ECCE implementation progress to both local councils and the Ministry responsible for education.

G15. Local governments will ensure that all ECCE interventions adhere to the ECCE Policy, Implementation Standards, and Guidelines. This includes establishing clear monitoring mechanisms, engaging local councils for support, involving community stakeholders in planning, and implementing strategies to address resource gaps. Annual evaluations will be conducted to ensure compliance and effectiveness.

G16. The Ministry responsible for education will develop and operationalize regular stakeholder coordination mechanisms and engagements, including biannual reviews and joint monitoring exercises with mandated MDAs, so as to ensure alignment of local implementation efforts for ECCE to the strategic national goals and objectives.

2.2.4 Capacity development guidelines

15. The following guidelines apply to capacity development under ECCE: -

G17. All stakeholders, including ministries, local governments, development partners, and ECCE providers, will conduct biannual capacity-building sessions targeting ECCE managers, teachers, and caregivers. These sessions will, among other issues, cover curriculum implementation, child development practices, inclusivity, and compliance with ECCE policy

implementation standards. The Ministry responsible for Education will ensure overall coordination of capacity building trainings at local government level, while periodic progress assessment and impact evaluation will be conducted to ensure effectiveness.

G18. Government will put in place mechanisms to ensure adequate staffing ratios and the provision of qualified personnel to meet the delivery and regulatory needs of ECCE by the private sector and other actors involved in ECCE service delivery. Staffing requirements shall specify roles, qualifications, and skill sets, with provisions for periodic review every five years to adjust them based on evolving ECCE demands and standards.

G19. The Ministry responsible for education, in collaboration with local governments, will conduct an annual review of staff structures for ECCE at national and district levels. This review will ensure equitable distribution of staff based on regional needs, with a focus on underserved areas. Staffing adequacy will be assessed using metrics such as child-to-teacher ratios, geographical coverage, and service demand.

2.3 REGISTRATION AND LICENSING GUIDELINES FOR ECCE

2.3.1 ECCE institution registration and licensing guidelines

16. The following guidelines apply to the registration and licensing of ECCE providers: -

G20. Local governments, with support from the Ministry responsible for education, shall register all ECCE centers through the EMIS. Local governments will support the verification of center information and compliance with ECCE standards before data is entered into EMIS. Regular audits of the registration data will be conducted to ensure accuracy, consistency, and compliance with ECCE standards and guidelines.

G21. Local governments shall be responsible for licensing ECCE centers within their jurisdiction, in coordination with the Ministry responsible for Education. Licensing shall include compliance assessments based on ECCE standards and guidelines; and shall be subject to periodic reviews and renewals every after three years, to ensure ongoing compliance. Local governments must also maintain a public registry of licensed centers and collaborate with the Ministry of Education and Sports to address non-compliance.

G22. Local governments will register and license providers of specialized and

unique care packages including public and private play centers, work-based care centers, community-based care centers, and child care centers run by non-governmental organizations. In licensing and registering these service providers, local governments will adhere to the following guidance: -

(a) Each service provider registered and licensed under this category shall have a unique identifier in form of a unique name, registration number and file.

(b) The application for registration and licensing under this guideline shall be recommended by the LC 1 Chairperson as well as the Local Council 1 member in charge of children affairs, in the respective village where the said service provider is located.

(c) In considering the application, respective local governments shall uphold the best interest of the child and ensure that the facilities, personnel, and physical environment of the center or service provider are adequate to guarantee the safety, integrity and developmental needs of the children going to the said center or service provider.

(d) Respective local governments may develop Ordinances and Byelaws to provide detailed guidance on the criteria applicable to registering and licensing this category of ECCE service providers.

G23. The legal regime governing ECCE should be reviewed within two (02) years of coming into force of the ECCE Policy and its policy implementation standards and guidelines to provide for:

(a) Making the running of an ECCE center or service delivery point without valid registration and licensing an offence.

(b) Prescription of penalties for committing the offence of operating an ECCE service delivery point without acquiring the requisite registration and licensing.

(c) Administrative remedies that can be pursued by local governments and other duty-bearers to enforce the prohibition against operating an ECCE service delivery point in absence of a valid registration and license.

G24. The Ministry responsible for education shall maintain a National Register of all ECCE service providers comprised of all providers that have been entered on the Register of ECCE providers in respective local governments across the country.

G25. Respective local governments shall prepare and maintain a Register of ECCE service providers who have applied and been authorized to establish the said centers, and this Register will depict the following categories: -

(a) Operational ECCE service providers

(b) De-registered ECCE service providers

(c) ECCE service providers under suspension

(d) ECCE service providers that ceased operations

G26. The license granted to ECCE service providers shall be valid for a period of three (03) years, and will be renewed after its expiry subject to adherence to the expected standards and requirements for service delivery. The Ministry responsible for education shall develop and issue detailed Procedures and Practice Guidelines to guide all local governments in the process of renewing licenses for ECCE service providers in Uganda.

2.3.2 ECCE teacher registration and licensing guidelines

17. The following guidelines apply to registration and licensing of ECCE teachers: -

G27. The licensing of pre-primary teachers in Uganda will be subject to the following guidelines: -

(a) All pre-primary teachers in Uganda must be registered with the National Teacher Council in line with provisions of the National Teachers Policy and resultant law.

(b) The registration of pre-primary teachers will be undertaken subject to performance of the following pre-requisites:

(i) Applicant must have completed a course leading to award of a degree in pre-primary education, or any other higher education programme that is sanctioned by the NCHE, in collaboration with NTC.

(ii) Applicant must have paid the prescribed application and registration fees as per the guidance of the NTC and the National Teachers Act.

(iii) Applicant must attach their national identification card, if they are Ugandan, or any other legitimate identification document, as will be guided by NTC, in case of non-Ugandan citizens.

(iv) The application must adhere to the format and process prescribed by NTC.

(c) The registration of pre-primary teachers will be done once for each teacher, but they will be licensed to operate periodically in line with the requirements

set under the National Teacher Policy, and resultant National Teachers Act.

(d) All pre-primary teachers who are licensed to teach shall be issued with a Practicing License by the NTC, and possession of this License will be a mandatory requirement for any person teaching in pre-primary schools.

(e) All pre-primary teachers will be required to undertake CPD training as a mandatory requirement preceding renewal of their Practicing Licenses.

G28. The following guidelines will apply to the prohibition on teaching in pre-primary schools without being registered and licensed to teach at this level of education: -

(a) Local governments may explore a number of administrative remedies to penalize individuals and schools that permit or undertake teaching in pre-primary schools without valid registration and licensing:

(i) Severe reprimand of the defaulting individual or school

(ii) Suspension or revocation of operating license for the school

(iii) Imposition of an administrative fine, to be determined and gazzetted by the Ministry responsible for education, on the defaulting school

(iv) Imposition of penalties prescribed under the National Teachers Act for committing the offence of teaching without a valid registration and license

(b) Local governments shall prepare, maintain and keep a register of offending teachers and schools who don't adhere to the registration and licensing requirements under these Guidelines, and this register shall be shared with the NTC periodically.

G29. The NTC as well as local governments, in collaboration with the Ministry responsible for education, will be charged with the duty of undertaking compliance monitoring and inspection to ensure that all ECCE teachers and service providers adhere to the registration and licensing requirements set forth under these Guidelines.

2.3.3 ECCE Caregiver registration guidelines

18. The following guidelines apply to registration of ECCE Caregivers: -

G30. The registration of caregivers by local governments in collaboration with the Ministry responsible for education and Ministry responsible for children welfare will be undertaken in line with the following guidelines:

(a) Intending Caregivers should obtain structured training covering key areas of early childhood care such as: child safety and protection; child nutrition; child psychology and development; and, Primary Health Care (PHC), among others, prior to applying for registration and licensing.

(b) Applicants for registration as Caregivers should provide proof of training obtained in line with guideline G30 (a) above.

(c) Caregivers will be registered once, and this registration will authorize them to offer Caregiver services in line with the provisions of these ECCE Policy Implementation Guidelines and any other applicable instruments.

(d) Respective local governments will prepare, keep and maintain a register of Caregivers operating in their respective area of jurisdiction, and they shall avail this information to the Ministry responsible for education as and when the said information is requested for.

(e) The Ministry responsible for education, in collaboration with the Ministries responsible for health as well as gender and social development, will develop a Caregiver Manual and Code of Conduct to provide detailed guidance on the competence requirements for Caregivers, and this will be used in design and delivery of caregiver trainings as well as licensing and registration of Caregivers in Uganda.

2.4 ECCE INSTITUTIONAL GUIDELINES

2.4.2 Leadership and Management Guidelines for ECCE institutions

19. The following guidelines apply to leadership and management for ECCE institutions: -

G31. The law governing delivery of ECCE services will be reviewed to clearly provide for establishment and constitution of Center Management Committees for all Day care centers and pre-primary schools.

G32. The minimum requirements for persons constituting Center Management Committees for Daycare centers, pre-primary schools and home-based care centers shall be:

(a) Possession of a valid National Identification Card

(b) Be of good moral standing and with no previous conviction, especially one involving immorality and acts that may put the safety and welfare of children at risk of harm.

(c) Possess basic competence in literacy and numeracy.

(d) Any other requirement as may be prescribed by the Ministry responsible for education.

G33. Management Committees for respective ECCE centers will adopt measures to ensure their operationalization, and these include:

(a) Convening of termly Management Committee meetings, as the minimum frequency of meeting.

(b) Preparation and keeping of records, including Minutes, for Management Committee meetings.

(c) Collective involvement of Management Committee members in decision making for affairs of the ECCE service provider.

2.4.3 Basic Guidelines for ECCE institutions

20. Under this, the following guidelines apply: -

G34. The Inspection Tool for ECCE service providers will reflect the parameters reflected in the ECCE Policy Implementation Standards, which require conducting of ECCE services in gazzetted premises that meet the following requirements:

(a) Fencing the boundary for the land occupied by the center

(b) Learning facilities, including appropriate learning spaces that provide shelter to children from the elements of the weather.

(c) Appropriate sanitary facilities, including latrine, water access point and urinals, among others

(d) Playing area

(e) Stimulating learning environment

(f) Registration certificate and license issued by the mandated authorities as per the ECCE Policy and its attendant Policy Implementation Standards and Guidelines.

G35. The Ministry responsible for education, through its mandated agencies, will develop a specific set of Minimum Requirements and Standards for all ECCE institutions in Uganda.

G36. The decision to renew or revoke the operating license for ECCE Institutions in Uganda will, among others, be based on the level of adherence to the

ECCE Policy Implementation Standards, Guidelines and other instruments developed to guide ECCE service delivery.

2.4.4 Accountability and Performance Management Guidelines

21. The following guidelines apply to accountability and performance management in all aspects of ECCE service delivery: -

G37. All pre-primary schools will develop a Service Delivery Charter depicting the values, aspirations and measures to be adopted in their quest to deliver the highest form of excellence and client satisfaction.

G38. Respective local governments will put in place mechanisms to ensure adherence to the expected accountability requirements and standards for ECCE service providers in Uganda.

G39. Respective local governments in Uganda will develop and roll out a performance management plan for the respective ECCE service providers in their respective areas of jurisdiction.

2.5 ECCE DELIVERY GUIDELINES

2.5.1 Guidelines on Establishment of ECCE Centers

22. The following guidelines apply to establishment of ECCE centers in Uganda:

G40. Persons or stakeholders desirous of establishing ECCE centers will adhere to the following guidelines:

(a) Prepare a technical proposal depicting: (i) the target market and catchment area; (ii) competition analysis and existing supply for ECCE services; (iii) analysis of existing primary schools in the catchment area and the off-take capacity in these schools; (iv) proposed members to constitute the interim Center Management Committee; (v) proposed site for the center including size and ownership status of land as well as location for the said center – i.e. whether rural, urban or peri-urban; and, (vi) facilities development plan catering for appropriate learning spaces, play areas, sanitary facilities and staff facilities that meet the ECCE Policy, its standards and these guidelines.

(b) Prepare a financial proposal depicting the projections for finances to be utilized and how they will be developed at least over the next five (05) years.

(c) Submit the said technical and financial proposal to the respective local government under whose jurisdiction the proposed ECCE center is set to be located.

(d) The local government will receive, evaluate and prepare a report with a verdict on whether the application has been granted or rejected, and this will be made in strict adherence to provisions of the Education Development Plan (EDP) for respective local governments.

(e) The verdict in (d) above will be formally communicated to the applicant in writing.

(f) In case the application is approved, the local government shall register the applicant and file a return, of all registered ECCE service providers in their respective area of jurisdiction, to the Ministry responsible for education on a quarterly basis. In this respect, the Ministry responsible for education will develop and issue an Instrument showing the detailed processes to guide registration of ECCE service providers, and filling returns on the said entries into the Register of ECCE service providers to the Ministry for consolidation under the National Register of ECCE service providers.

G41. The following guidelines shall apply to establishment and management of ECCE centers by foundation bodies: -

(a) Foundation bodies that are desirous of establishing an ECCE center at a grant-aided primary school will adhere to the establishment guidelines stated under Guideline 40 above.

(b) Foundation bodies intending to establish ECCE services alongside existing grant-aided primary schools will adhere to the following requirements in addition to the guidelines stipulated above: -

(i) A clear and distinct demarcation (fence) delineating the site to be occupied by the ECCE centers should be established, and this should distinguish the land to be occupied by the ECCE center from that occupied by the grant-aided primary school.

(ii) Common user facilities such as a playing ground should also be clearly delineated and the proposal accompanying the application for authorization to establish the ECCE center should clearly indicate whether the center will use common-user or specific facilities, including recreational facilities. However, it shall be forbidden for an

ECCE center to share sanitary facilities with a primary school.

(iii) The ECCE center established by the foundation body must have a separate and functional Center Management Committee that adheres to provisions of the ECCE Policy, its Implementation Standards and Guidelines. In this context, it is prohibited for the School Management Committee of the adjoining grant-aided primary school to play a dual role as a management committee for the ECCE center established by the foundation body.

(iv) The personnel employed at the grant-aided primary schools shall be prohibited from working concurrently as staff of an ECCE center established by the foundation body, at a site or nearby the grant-aided school.

2.5.2 Guidelines on Location of ECCE Centers

23. The following guidelines apply to location of ECCE centers in Uganda:

G42. Respective local governments will make a provision in their Education Development Plan providing for: -

(a) Baseline figures on existing ECCE service providers

(b) Baseline and projected numbers of children eligible for enrollment at ECCE level.

(c) Target access ratios for ECCE, including the target number of ECCE providers, and size of enrollment for respective ECCE centers as well as the permitted distance from one ECCE center to another.

(d) Areas that are significantly underserved by ECCE

(e) Capacity assessment of the private sector in respective local government to provide the required ECCE services

G43. ECCE centers will be equitably distributed across rural, peri-urban, and urban areas based on specific metrics, including population density, demand for ECCE services, and proximity to existing centers. Local governments will conduct annual assessments to identify gaps in ECCE access, ensuring that underserved areas receive prioritized support. Implementation should be monitored using key performance indicators (KPIs) to track progress and address disparities.

G44. The establishment of ECCE centers should ensure equitable access, with spatial distribution criteria adapted to local needs and contexts. As a general guideline, ECCE centers should be established within a 2 km radius in rural and peri-urban areas, and 1 km in urban areas. Adjustments to these criteria may be made based on population density, demand, and existing infrastructure, with priority given to underserved areas. Local governments should conduct needs assessments to determine optimal distances from each ECCE service provider to the next one.

G45. Local governments which are under-served and less attractive to private sector capital will be mapped following a deliberate means-test to identify their capacity to provide ECCE services. Relatedly, identified local governments with inadequate capacity to provide ECCE, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, will develop village-specific plans that identify needs, resource requirements, timelines, and potential partnerships to deliver ECCE. Priority will be given to areas with the highest demand and the least access to ECCE services.

G46. ECCE centers shall be located in areas that are easily accessible to families and communities, ensuring safe routes for children to travel to and from the center. The centers should be located in areas that are easily accessible, with safe and secure routes for all children, including those with disabilities or mobility challenges. Routes to centers should be regularly assessed to ensure safety, accessibility, and minimal travel risks.

G47. ECCE centers should be located in secure areas, free from potential hazards, such as proximity to busy roads, entertainment centers, industrial sites, or any other high-risk areas. Local government authorities, in collaboration with ECCE providers, must conduct regular safety checks and risk assessments to identify and mitigate hazards. Security measures, including fencing, access control, and emergency evacuation protocols, should be implemented to ensure the safety and protection of children

G48. ECCE centers should be centrally located within the community they serve and be responsive to the cultural, social, and linguistic contexts of the area. Centers must incorporate local cultural values, use the local language for communication and instruction, and actively engage community members to ensure cultural relevance. Additionally, centers must ensure inclusivity, providing access for all children, including those with special needs, by adapting facilities, resources, and teaching methods

2.5.3 Guidelines on ECCE facilities

24. The guidelines applicable to ECCE facilities are as follows:

G49. ECCE centers should have well-defined facilities that include: (a) designated learning spaces with child-friendly furniture and materials; (b) separate sanitary facilities for girls, boys, and staff, which are clean, secure, and regularly maintained; (c) an outdoor play area with safe, age-appropriate play equipment; and (d) accessible features, such as ramps and handrails, to accommodate children with physical disabilities.

G50. ECCE centers must clearly demarcate their premises with child-safe fencing that is at least 1.5 meters high and constructed using non-hazardous materials. The fencing should allow for visibility to ensure proper supervision of children. Additionally, all entrances and exits must be secured with child-proof gates to enhance safety while maintaining accessibility in case of emergencies.

G51. ECCE centers must ensure that physical facilities, including classrooms, furniture, classroom equipment, and sanitary facilities that are age-appropriate, inclusive, and developmentally suitable standards. Classroom dimensions should allow for a minimum of 1.5 square meters per child, and furniture should be adjustable to accommodate children of different sizes. Centers must also include facilities such as ramps, modified toilets, and sensory-friendly spaces to ensure accessibility for children with special needs.

G52. All ECCE centers must ensure that physical facilities are accessible to children with diverse needs. Modifications should include ramps for wheelchairs, tactile guides for the visually impaired, soundproof spaces for children with auditory sensitivities, and flexible classroom layouts to accommodate mobility aids. Facilities should also have adjustable furniture, wide doorways, and accessible sanitation amenities such as handrails and lower sinks

G53. All physical facilities in ECCE centers must adhere to safety guidelines that include minimum standards for fire safety, evacuation plans, safe playground equipment, first aid protocols, childproof furniture, and secured hazardous areas. These measures shall align with the National School Health Policy and other relevant safety regulations. Regular inspections shall be conducted by local authorities to ensure compliance, and centers failing to meet safety requirements shall be subject to corrective actions, including temporary closure until compliance is achieved.

G54. All physical facilities in ECCE centers shall provide navigable spaces which make it easy for children to navigate independently, with clear pathways and child-friendly signage.

2.5.4 ECCE Curriculum Guidelines

25. The guidelines applying to ECCE curriculum are as follows: -

G55. The ECCE curriculum will aim at primarily developing the social, physical and emotional domains of respective learners which are key pre-requisites for effective development of the cognitive domain.

G56. The ECCE curriculum will be a developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant, and evidence-based curriculum which fosters cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development, including play-based approaches as key pre-requisites for holistic child development for children aged 3 to 5 years.

G57. The ECCE curriculum will be flexible and adaptable to meet the diverse needs of all children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities.

G58. The ECCE curriculum will reflect community values, language, and culture while promoting respect and understanding for diverse cultures within a national framework.

2.5.5 Guidelines on Admission and Enrollment of learners into ECCE

26. The following guidelines are to be adhered to in admission and enrolling of learners into ECCE centers in the country: -

G59. Children aged between 3 and 5 years are eligible to be enrolled in pre-primary schools whereas those aged 1 to 2 years are eligible to be enrolled in daycare and home-based centers, which are established and managed in line with provisions of the ECCE Policy, and its policy implementation standards and guidelines.

G60. The enrollment of children at ECCE level will take into consideration the following guidelines: -

(a) Attainment of the prescribed age that renders them eligible for enrollment.

(b) Undertaking of diagnostic assessment to establish the individual learning needs and create a learner profile for respective children.

(c) Existing capacity of the ECCE service provider. In this context, efforts should be taken to ensure that the enrolled learners are aligned to the existing facilities, space and resources to enable provision of quality ECCE, and also guard against learner enrollment beyond the existing capacity.

(d) Undertaking of basic health assessment to ensure that the safety, welfare and health of the collective body of learners is given appropriate care and support.

G61. Respective ECCE centers shall require up-to-date health records and vaccination information for children as part of the enrollment process to ensure that they provide appropriate and quality services to the child(ren).

G62. Parents and caregivers shall be involved in the enrollment process and be oriented on: ECCE curriculum; expectations of the provider towards the parent; the ECCE policy provisions as well as its attendant instruments including the ECCE Policy Implementation Standards and Guidelines, so as to ensure strong and sustainable partnerships between the center and the family.

2.5.6 ECCE Assessment Guidelines

27. The following guidelines apply to assessment at ECCE level: -

G63. The results from learner assessment at pre-primary education shall be utilized to inform and improve the children's learning experience by developing learner-specific and appropriate interventions.

G64. The assessment practices at ECCE level shall be holistic, developmentally appropriate and culturally sensitive.

G65. Assessments must be child-centered, developmentally appropriate, and aligned with the learning outcomes of the ECCE curriculum, avoiding high-pressure or formal testing.

G66. Assessment shall accommodate the diverse needs of children, including those with disabilities and learning challenges, to ensure that all children's progress is accurately measured.

G67. Regular feedback on children's progress shall be shared with parents and caregivers in a clear, understandable manner.

G68. Parents must be encouraged to contribute to the assessment process through sharing their insights on the child's learning at home and supporting the child's learning by contributing to addressing the identified gaps.

2.5.7 Guidelines on inspection, monitoring and support supervision for ECCE

28. The guidelines applicable on inspection, monitoring and support supervision for ECCE are as follows: -

G69. The inspection of ECCE service providers will be integrated in the mainstream annual inspection plans for respective local governments in Uganda.

G70. Respective local governments will ensure that each ECCE service provider is inspected at least once every term.

G71. Respective local governments will assign an office or officer(s) in the education department to be charged with the responsibility of undertaking inspection among the different ECCE service providers.

G72. All ECCE centers shall be inspected at least once every term.

G73. In order to ensure availability of the required persons to undertake school-level inspections, the staff structure for local governments will be reviewed to provide for specialized inspectors in the areas of pre-primary, primary and secondary education.

G74. The reports from inspection, monitoring and support supervision will be relayed to mandated duty-bearers at local government level, and matters which can't be handled at this level will be escalated to the Ministry responsible for education, for appropriate action and follow-up.

G75. ECCE centers will receive ongoing professional support and supervision from qualified officials or educational authorities, with a focus on improving quality, addressing challenges, and promoting best practices.

G76. Monitoring and supervision must involve local stakeholders, including parents and community leaders, to ensure the center remains accountable and reflective of the needs of the community.

2.5.8 Pre-primary teacher guidelines

29. The following guidelines apply to pre-primary teachers:

G77. Proprietors and managers of pre-primary schools will be required to coordinate and ensure the provision of annual CPD sessions to their teachers, and these will be undertaken in consultation with respective local governments as well as the National Teacher Council.

G78. Respective pre-primary teachers have a duty of care towards the children entrusted to them, and they shall be forbidden from engaging in any activity, conduct or practice that puts the life, welfare, emotional wellbeing or safety of the learners entrusted to them at risk of harm or jeopardy.

G79. Pre-primary teachers must adhere to high professional standards, with a clear focus on safeguarding children's rights, ensuring their protection, and creating a positive, nurturing environment.

G80. Pre-primary teachers must engage in reflective practices, regularly assessing their teaching approaches and adjusting to meet the individual needs of their learners.

2.5.9 ECCE teaching guidelines

30. The following guidelines apply to teaching and delivery of ECCE in Uganda: -

G81. All lessons at ECCE centres will have a maximum duration of 30 minutes, and these will include regular breaks so as to keep up with the average attention span for toddlers. In addition, the daily contact time shall not exceed three (03) hours, except when it comes to learners with special learning needs.

G82. The instructional hours in all pre-primary schools in Uganda shall be between 9:00 am and 1:00 pm, and on formal working days. Respective pre-primary schools may provide other non-instructional activities such as nap-time as well as games and sports, beyond the instructional hours prescribed in this guideline. In this respect, all ECCE institutions should not start teaching before 9:00 am.

G83. Children in ECCE centers should be provided with meals at regular intervals, which should not exceed 3 hours.

G84. The target teacher-to-child ratio will be 1:25 for children aged 3-5 years and 1:15 for children aged 1-2 years to ensure effective learning and individual attention for every child. However, nothing in this standard will restrict individual providers from providing a lower target ratio in line with their institutional means and objectives. Relatedly, children with multiple disabilities will have a target teacher-child-ratio of 1:3 and 1:1 for severe cases.

G85. Teaching methods will be interactive, engaging, playful and shall encourage exploration, inquiry, and hands-on learning to help children develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

G86. Teaching practices must reflect and respect the cultural and linguistic diversity of the children, using culturally relevant materials and approaches to foster inclusion.

G87. Teachers must create a safe, nurturing, and supportive environment that promotes positive interactions, emotional well-being, and encourages the development of social and emotional skills.

2.5.10 Guidelines on ECCE learning materials and environment

31. The following guidelines apply to both in-door and out-door ECCE teaching, learning materials and environment:

G88. The learning environment for all ECCE centers shall endeavor to integrate the natural environment and provide open spaces for children to explore and interact with their surroundings.

G89. The print learning materials for ECCE shall be prepared both in local languages and English so as to introduce children to the medium of instruction at later stages of the learning cycle.

G90. Learning materials shall be eco-friendly, age-appropriate, durable, and safe for use by young children, avoiding sharp edges, harmful substances, or materials that could pose choking hazards.

G91. Learning materials must be inclusive, adaptable and accessible, including resources designed for children with disabilities, ensuring that all children can participate fully in learning activities.

G92. Learning materials should encourage active engagement, exploration, and interaction, fostering curiosity, creativity, and problem-solving skills in young learners.

2.5.11 Guidelines on transportation and movement of learners

32. The following guidelines apply to movement and transportation of learners to and from ECCE centers: -

G93. Children who commute to school on foot shall travel to ECCE centers in morning hours, specifically not earlier than 7 am, when the risk of harm from adverse weather conditions and other hazards has significantly reduced.

G94. All persons transporting children to ECCE centers shall ensure that they strictly comply with traffic and road safety laws and regulations, and more

importantly those provisions relating to overloading of children on vehicles including motor-vehicles and motorcycles.

G95. All ECCE centers shall keep a record of persons who deliver and pick children from the respective centers.

2.5.12 Guidelines on other ECCE support staff

33. The following guidelines apply to all other support staff in ECCE centers: -

G96. All ECCE centers shall maintain a personnel file for respective support staff detailing the personal records on parameters including: identification details; next of kin; home address; age; criminal record information; and marital information.

G97. Staff shall provide support to teachers and contribute to maintaining a positive, child-friendly learning environment, ensuring that all children's physical and emotional needs are met.

G98. All staff and personnel in ECCE institutions must maintain professional conduct, demonstrating respect, care, and empathy when interacting with children and parents.

2.6 GUIDELINES ON EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE

2.6.2 Guidelines on delivery of Early Childhood Care

34. The following guidelines apply to delivery of early childhood care in ECCE centers: -

G99. The delivery of parental care to children in a home-based setting will be guided by, among other applicable instruments, the Parenting Guidelines developed by the Ministry responsible for gender and social development.

G100. Subject to the guidance in G99 above, the following additional guidelines apply to delivery of care to children in home-based care centers: -

(a) The care center must be registered and licensed to operate in line with provisions of the ECCE Policy, and its implementation standards and guidelines.

(b) Enrollment of a child in a care center should be done under exceptional circumstances which include:

(i) Lack of a dedicated caregiver(s) at home

(ii) Both parents being employed in jobs that render them unable to provide care to their children

(iii) Both parents being outside the country or working far from where their child stays

(iv) Both parents being indisposed due to disease, illness, disability or any other infirmity that renders them unable to provide care to their children

(c) The enrollment of children below one year in a child care center shall only be permitted upon production of a Report from the child welfare and probation officer of the jurisdiction where the parent stays, offering justification and approval for the parent to enroll their child in the said care center.

2.6.3 Guidelines on Nutrition and Feeding at ECCE

35. The following guidelines apply to nutrition and feeding of children at the stage of early childhood care: -

G101. All children, below six years of age, shall be provided nutritious meals to meet their development and physiological needs, in line with the following guidance:

(a) Children should be fed with small and manageable food portions which are served to them in periodic intervals, not exceeding three (03) hours.

(b) Feeding assistance should be provided to minor children, who are incapable of properly feeding themselves.

(c) Good hygiene and proper food handling must always be adhered to in all aspects of preparing, storing, serving and post-service handling of food for children.

(d) Meals for children should be prepared with fortified foods, vitamin-mineral supplements or local foods bearing the required mineral and vitamin amounts to meet the development and physiological needs of children.

(e) Children should be fed with a balanced diet entailing the following categories of foods: -

(i) Proteins

(ii) Carbohydrates or starchy foods

(iii) Fruits and vegetables

(iv) Dairy products

(v) Minerals, including iodized salt

(vi) Safe and boiled water

2.6.4 Guidelines on Learner Protection

36. The following guidelines apply to learner protection as a core tenet of early childhood care: -

G102. In adherence to their duty to protect children under their care from mental and physical harm, caregivers will be expected to perform the following: -

(a) Ensuring that the child's surroundings are free from hazards, such as sharp objects, hot surfaces or toxic substances.

(b) Supervising children, during play and other center-based activities, to prevent accidents such as falls, drowning or poisoning.

(c) Safeguarding children from any form of violence or abuse.

(d) Offering a nurturing and supportive environment where children feel comfortable expressing their emotions, and relating with their peers and elders.

(e) Recognizing and validating children's emotions thereby helping them develop emotional regulation skills.

(f) Encouraging children to report any form of abuse to a trusted teacher or adult.

(g) Encouraging children to develop coping strategies and resilience to deal with challenges and setbacks.

(h) Keeping track of children's physical and mental health as well as seeking or referring the children for medical attention, where necessary.

(i) Encouraging children to adopt healthy habits such as regular exercise, regular eating and proper hygiene.

(j) Informing authorities, including family protection, child welfare and probation office, if concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing arises.

(k) Cooperating with authorities if, and during, investigations into allegations of child abuse or neglect arise.

(l) Seeking support services such as counselling or therapy for children who have experienced severe trauma or abuse.

2.6.5 Guidelines on home-based care for children

37. The following guidelines apply to home-based care for children:

G103. In applying for authorization to run a home-based child care center, the applicant will adhere to the following guidelines: -

(a) The applicant should have an appropriate home setting to provide early childhood care to multiple children, and this should entail: (i) a suitable habitat to protect the children from elements of weather; (ii) appropriate sanitary facilities; (iii) appropriate play area that is secure and safe; (iv) a safe and secure rest area; and (v)a source for clean and safe drinking water.

(b) The applicant should have at least two (02) dedicated caregivers, who may include the applicant – if they meet the requirements for being a caregiver.

(c) The applicant should have a recommendation letter from the Local Council of the village where they intend to establish the home-based care center, and this letter should be signed by the Chairperson LC 1 as well as the Council Member in charge of women and children affairs.

G104. In granting authorization to any applicant to operate a home-based child care center, the local government will base its decision on the following considerations: -

(a) The adequacy of the facilities and structures in the home to guarantee provision of safe, quality and appropriate care to children.

(b) The adequacy and competence of the applicant's human resource to provide quality, safe and appropriate care to children.

(c) General acceptability and opinion of the local authority on the moral standing, character and general capacity to run a home-based child care center.

(d) Level of saturation of formal and home-based early childhood care centers in the vicinity or area where the applicant intends to establish a home-based care center.

2.7 SAFETY AND SANITARY GUIDELINES

2.7.1 Guidelines on provision and access to WASH facilities

38. The following guidelines apply to WASH facilities in ECCE centers: -

G105. Sanitary facilities for children in ECCE centers shall be located at a reasonable distance from learning spaces for the children and will be secured to eliminate chances of un-supervised access which may lead to harm for the children.

G106. Stakeholders will take all measures to ensure that all ECCE centers have access to safe and reliable water sources which provide adequate water quantity and of safe quality for human consumption.

G107. Adequate sanitation facilities, including latrines and handwashing stations which are regularly cleaned and well-maintained, will be provided in all ECCE centers, and these should be separated for staff and children, as well as for males and females.

G108. Proper hygiene practices should be maintained in all aspects of running ECCE centers, and these include establishment of proper and accessible handwashing stations, ensuring regular handwashing by staff and learners, as well as regular cleaning and disinfection of sanitary facilities.

G109. Prudent waste management procedures will be adopted in all ECCE centers and these include proper human and non-human waste disposal, encouraging recycling and composting as well as regular waste collection, including picking rubbish from the compound of the center.

G110. ECCE service providers should undertake regular staff training and awareness creation activities on all aspects of safety and sanitation requirements in respective centers.

G111. Efforts should be undertaken to enhance parental education so as to create awareness and involvement of parents within proper hygiene practices, sanitation and waste management.

2.7.2 Guidelines on security and safety of ECCE institutions

39. The following guidelines apply to security and safety of ECCE centers in Uganda: -

G112. In order to ensure physical safety within ECCE centers, respective ECCE service providers will ensure that: the entrance and exit points for the center

are secured with locked doors and gates, and supervised by staff; the center is fenced and has clear boundaries to prevent unauthorized access; and safety equipment such as first aid kits, fire extinguishers and emergency phones – including contacts for all parents of the children in the center, are available and accessible.

G113. Respective ECCE centers should conduct thorough background checks and screening for all staff members, including teachers, caregivers, and support staff.

G114. ECCE centers will provide regular training for staff on safety and security procedures, including emergency response plans, first aid, and child protection policies.

G115. Efforts will be undertaken to enhance child supervision and monitoring in ECCE centers through maintenance of a safe child-to-staff ratio, establishment of clear supervision policies, including procedures for drop-off and pick-up, outdoor play, and transitions, and installation of monitoring systems, including CCTV cameras where feasible, so as to ensure the safety and security of children.

G116. ECCE centers will prepare and adopt emergency preparedness strategies including: emergency response plans including procedures for fires, earthquakes, and other natural disasters; establishment of exclusion policies for children and staff who are sick or have contagious illnesses; conducting of regular fire drills and evacuation procedures to ensure staff and children are prepared in case of an emergency; as well as establishment of procedures for responding to medical emergencies, including first aid and calling emergency services.

G117. Efforts will be undertaken to promote regular communication with parents and guardians about safety and security procedures, including emergency response plans and exclusion policies as well as to enhance collaboration with local authorities, emergency services, and community organizations to ensure a coordinated response to emergencies. In addition, efforts will be undertaken to ensure that staff communicate effectively with each other and with parents and guardians about safety and security concerns.

2.8 GUIDELINES ON CROSS CUTTING ISSUES

2.8.1 Special Needs Education Guidelines

40. The following guidelines apply to special needs in all aspects of delivering ECCE in Uganda: -

G118. The construction of ECCE centers will adhere to the following accessibility guidelines:

(a) The center should have ramps and wide doorways to ensure access for children with mobility impairments.

(b) The center should have adaptive play equipment such as swings and climbing structures, that can be used by children with physical disabilities.

(c) The center should incorporate natural lighting to reduce sensory overload.

(d) The center should use calming colors and textures to create a soothing environment for all learners.

(e) The center should provide quiet spaces for children who may be overwhelmed by noise.

(f) The center should design areas that encourage social interaction such as group play areas and shared activity spaces.

G119. ECCE centers should provide staff with disability awareness training to ensure they understand the needs of children with special needs.

G120. ECCE centers should encourage staff to use inclusive teaching practices such as differentiated instruction and universal design for learning.

G121. Respective ECCE centers should collaborate with therapists, counsellors and other professionals to ensure that children with special needs receive the support they require.

2.8.2 Gender mainstreaming guidelines

41. The guidelines applying to gender mainstreaming in ECCE are as follows: -

G122. The delivery of ECCE shall be conducted in line with the following guidelines so as to achieve gender mainstreaming: -

(a) The learning content delivered in ECCE centers should promote gender

equality, challenge stereotypes and foster positive attitudes towards diversity. The said content should also avoid materials that perpetuate gender stereotypes such as limiting girls to nurturing roles or boys to aggressive roles.

(b) Respective ECCE centers should use materials that reflect diversity in gender, culture and ability and this should be reflected in play materials, classroom books, pictures and other instructional resources.

(c) ECCE service providers and other duty-bearers in the realm of ECCE should train their personnel and themselves to recognize and challenge their own gender stereotypes and biases.

(d) ECCE teachers and caregivers should promote equality and fairness in all interactions including play and learning activities; and they should also use differentiated instruction to cater to the diverse needs and interests of all children, regardless of their gender.

(e) The play and learning environments in ECCE centers should provide opportunities for children to engage in play that challenges traditional gender roles such as boys playing with dolls or girls engaging in block play.

(f) ECCE centers should ensure that all children feel safe and respected in the learning environment.

(g) ECCE centers should be sensitive to cultural backgrounds and values of all families and incorporate these in the learning environment.

(h) ECCE centers should encourage parents to participate in the learning process and promote gender equality at home.

2.8.3 ICT and digital technology guidelines

42. The guidelines applying to technology in ECCE centers are as follows: -

G123. The integration of ICT and digital technologies in ECCE service delivery will be subject to the following considerations: -

(a) Children in ECCE centers will not be subjected to more than two (02) hours, cumulatively, of exposure to ICT and digital gadgets in a single day at their respective center.

(b) Children in ECCE centers will not be exposed to ICT and digital gadgets for a continuous period lasting more than 30 minutes during the process of their learning at respective ECCE centers.

(c) Children in ECCE centers must not be introduced to deeply intrusive ICT and digital technologies such as Augmented Virtual Reality (AVR) which render them prone to addiction and disruption of their brain development.

G124. The integration of ICT and digital technologies in delivery of ECCE curriculum and learning framework will serve the primary objective of supporting the cognitive, social, emotional and physical development of children at this level of education.

G125. Play materials may incorporate digital tools as a delivery mechanism in play-based learning so as to promote exploration, creativity and problem-solving.

G126. ECCE centers will provide teachers with ongoing professional development opportunities to enhance their ICT and digital technology skills; and also offer guidance to their staff on effective pedagogical practices for integrating ICT and digital technology into early childhood education.

2.8.4 Environmental management guidelines

43. The following guidelines apply to environmental management in all ECCE centers: -

G127. Respective ECCE providers will adopt and implement sustainable environmental management through adherence to the following: -

(a) Adopt the 3Rs strategy – Reduce, Reuse and Recycle, through implementation of recycling programs, reduction in paper usage and encouraging reuse of materials.

(b) Enhanced energy efficiency through use of energy-saving technologies.

(c) Enhancing water conservation through installation of low-flow fixtures, encouraging children to turn off taps when not in use and fixing leaks promptly.

G128. ECCE centers will integrate environmental education into the ECCE learning framework and curriculum by focusing on sustainability, conservation and environmental responsibility. The centers will also implement hands-on environmental protection activities such as: environment themed songs, stories and discussion; gardening; nature walks; as well as rubbish picking and disposal, so as to introduce children to these aspects during their formative years.

G129. Respective ECCE centers will take proactive measure to safeguard and improve indoor air quality through:

(a) Maintaining a regular cleaning schedule to reduce dust, dirt and allergens.

(b) Ensuring proper ventilation and opening windows to reduce indoor air pollution.

(c) Use non-toxic materials for cleaning, painting, construction and other activities in the center.

G130. Respective ECCE centers will provide appropriate outdoor spaces through: -

(a) Creation of natural play areas with native plants, trees and outdoor play areas.

(b) Utilization of outdoor spaces for environmental education, while at the same time promoting exploration and discovery.

(c) Ensuring outdoor spaces are safe and accessible for all children.

G131. ECCE centers will adopt sustainable waste management approaches, which among others, include: recycling programmes for paper, plastic and organic waste; composting programs for organic waste; and proper disposal of hazardous waste.

2.8.5 Learner and staff health guidelines

44. The following guidelines apply to the health of learners and staff in ECCE centers: -

S132. All children in ECCE centers will be offered training in the following critical aspects of primary health care: -

(a) Personal hygiene, covering handwashing, oral hygiene, bathing and bodily cleanliness, among others.

(b) Nutrition and healthy eating, including balanced diet as well as the distinction between healthy and unhealthy foods.

(c) Physical activity and exercises through regular physical activity, promotion of outdoor play and exploration as well as limiting screen time and exposure to ICTs and digital technologies.

(d) Safety and injury prevention through training in fall prevention, road safety and fire safety, among others.

(e) Emotional wellbeing and mental health support through emotional regulation, empathy and kindness as well as teaching children to seek help whenever they are distressed.

(f) Health promotion and disease prevention through training children and parents to embrace vaccination, immunization, supplementary feeding, and adoption of healthy habits.

G133. In order to guard against emergency outbreaks, potential transmission of diseases and ailments, such as airborne diseases, from staff to learners and from learner to learner, the following guidelines will be adhered to:

(a) Adoption of infection control practices, including; hand hygiene, proper cleaning and disinfection of surfaces, equipment and materials, as well as proper disposal of waste.

(b) Promotion of immunization and health checks for staff and learners.

(c) Provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) such as gloves – when handling bodily fluids such as blood and vomit as well as masks – when caring for children with severe respiratory infections.

(d) Establishment of environmental controls such as proper ventilation, temperature control and pest control.

(e) Provision of disease control and prevention education and training to staff, parents and ECCE learners.

2.8.6 Physical Education and Sports mainstreaming guidelines

45. The following guidelines apply to mainstreaming of physical education and sports in ECCE centers: -

G134. In sharing sports facilities between ECCE centers and other education institutions, respective stakeholders will adhere to the following guidance: -

(a) Collaborating education institutions – including the ECCE centers, should adopt scheduling and access control measures which include: -

(i) Allocation of designated / specific times for early childhood center use and ensuring minimal overlap with primary and (or) secondary school activities.

(ii) Implementing access control measures such as locks, gates or fences to restrict unauthorized access to the sports facilities during early childhood center use.

(iii) Ensuring adequate supervision of infants during the sports facility use, with sufficient staff-to-child ratio.

(b) Undertaking of regular maintenance and safety inspection of sports facilities to identify potential hazards such as uneven surfaces, sharp objects, broken equipment, holes and ditches. In addition, maintenance schedules, involving all users of the sports facility should be developed and implemented, thereby ensuring prompt repair or replacing of damaged equipment / grounds to prevent accidents.

(c) Collaborating education institutions should enhance communication and collaboration through: -

(i) Establishment of clear inter-school agreements and protocols with adjacent primary and (or) secondary schools regarding shared facility use, access, safety, and maintenance.

(ii) Schedule and conduct regular meetings with school administrators, staff and maintenance personnel to discuss shared facility use, safety concerns and maintenance schedules.

(iii) Establish a system for reporting incidents or near-misses ensuring that all parties are informed and can take corrective action.

(d) Infant-specific safety measures will be implemented for shared sports facilities and these may entail: -

(i) Ensuring that sports facilities used by infants have soft play surfaces such as mats, sand, straw or rubber flooring to reduce the risk of injury.

(ii) Installation of fencing and gates around sports facilities used by infants to prevent them from accessing hazardous areas such as hard-surface fields and swimming areas.

(iii) Maintenance of a higher staff-to-child ratio for infants during sports facility use to ensure adequate supervision and response to potential hazards.

(e) Collaborating education institutions will organize and provide regular staff training programmes in critical areas such as: child safety and emergency care / aid procedures; infant-specific training for instance in recognizing and responding to infant distress signals. In addition, the institutions will ensure that their staff receive regular updates on safety protocols, facility maintenance and incident reporting procedures.

2.9 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT / ENGAGEMENT GUIDELINES

46. The following guidelines apply to parental involvement and engagement in delivery of early childhood care and education: -

G135. Parents have the duty of nurturing and giving care to their children and this shall, among others, be adhered to through:

(a) Creation and provision of a warm, loving and nurturing environment that promotes emotional security and well-being.

(b) Ensuring that children's basic needs are met, including nutrition, hygiene and health care needs.

(c) Establishing predictable routines for sleeping, eating and playing to provide a sense of security and stability.

G136. Parents will support the education and stimulation of learning for their children through:

(a) Encouraging children to explore, learn and discover new things through play and interactive activities.

(b) Providing opportunities for socialization and engagement with both peers and adults.

(c) Supporting cognitive development through engagement in activities such as reading, puzzles and problem-solving games.

G137. It is the duty of parents to support the health and wellness of their children through: -

(a) Prioritizing and ensuring that their children have regular health check-ups, vaccinations, immunizations, supplementation and medical care as may be needed.

(b) Promoting and encouraging healthy habits such as regular exercise, healthy eating and adequate sleep.

(c) Serving as role models for healthy behaviors by behaving in an inspiring, correct and acceptable manner that serves as good learning and imitation guide for their children.

G138. Parents will ensure the safety and protection of their children through the following means: -

(a) Ensuring children's physical safety by providing a secure and safe environment, supervising them and taking steps to avoid their exposure to harmful situations and conditions.

(b) Protecting children from emotional, physical or psychological harm, including abuse, neglect and bullying.

(c) Teaching children safety skills such as what to do in case of an emergency, how to cross the street safely and how to respond to strangers.

G139. Parents have the duty to communicate and collaborate with key stakeholders and this will be adhered to through the following: -

(a) Regular communication with caregivers, teachers or other duty-bearers to ensure consistence and coordination.

(b) Collaboration with professionals such as pediatricians, therapists and counsellors to address any issues that may arise.

(c) Staying informed about their child's development, education and well-being by attending school meetings for parents, reading reports and asking questions where things are not clear.

2.10 ECCE FINANCING GUIDELINES

47. The financing of ECCE will be undertaken by central and local governments as well as other development partners in line with the following guidelines: -

2.10.1 Central government financing guidelines

48. The following guidelines apply to financing of ECCE by the central government: -

G140. An ECCE Financing Strategy will be developed, and this will among others provide for: -

(a) Creation of a Revolving Fund for ECCE service delivery using seed capital from philanthropic organizations, non-state actors, government support and any other source of legitimate financing, and this Fund will be managed under the Uganda Development Bank.

(b) Provision of affordable credit options for the private sector to enhance investment in quality ECCE service delivery, through a credit facility under the Revolving Fund for ECCE services.

(c) Harnessing subsidies and tax reductions / exemptions from government to leverage and support private sector investment in areas which are under-served when it comes to ECCE service delivery.

(d) Streamlining Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in ECCE service

delivery by clearly delineating the aspects of ECCE service delivery to be borne by government and those by the private sector and how to entrench accountability measures for funding commitments by respective duty-bearers.

G141. The central government will finance strategic aspects of ECCE delivery, among others, including:

(a) Development and rollout of ECCE teacher training curriculum for both public and private institutions

(b) Training of ECCE teachers

(c) Development of ECCE curriculum

(d) Development of instructional materials for ECCE

(e) Undertaking quality assurance and inspection on ECCE

(f) Supporting awareness creation and information dissemination on the ECCE Policy and other applicable instruments

(g) Professional management for ECCE teachers

(h) Development of a Training Framework for Caregivers and coordinating Caregiver training

G142. The central government may finance the establishment and running of ECCE centers by local governments in areas which are underserved by the private sector, after formal application and presentation of a compelling justification for this intervention.

G143. The central government may extend non-financial support in form of tax exemptions / holidays and subsidies to support the establishment of ECCE centers by respective local governments or any other stakeholder in areas which are under-served by the private sector.

G144. The central government may establish a Revolving Fund to support the establishment of ECCE centers in areas which are underserved by the private sector.

G145. The central government will progressively increase the budgetary allocation to the ECCE sub sector so as to make it comparable with allocations to other sub sectors of the education system.

2.10.2 Local government financing guidelines

49. The following guidelines apply to local government financing of ECCE: -

G146. Respective local governments shall ensure that they budget for ECCE delivery, regulation and oversight in their annual budget processes.

G147. Local governments in areas which are under-served by the private sector in ECCE delivery shall have the duty to bring this fact with supporting research evidence, and apply to central government to finance direct government provision of ECCE in the said areas.

G148. Local governments shall make clear provisions on planning and budgeting for ECCE service delivery within their respective Education Development Plans.

G149. All local governments in Uganda will work towards a target allocation of at least 10% of their education budget (local government unconditional grant) towards ECCE service delivery.

2.10.3 Development Partner financing guidelines

50. Development partners, who in this context include civil society and community-based organizations, will adhere to the following guidelines in financing ECCE interventions: -

G150. Education development partners will make annual returns to the Ministries responsible for education and finance highlighting their annual budget allocations towards ECCE activities in Uganda.

G151. It will be desirable and prudent for education development partners to make investments in ECCE service delivery in accordance with the established gaps in access to ECCE across the different sub regions of the country.

G152. Education development partners will make periodic declarations of the financial commitments they intend to make towards ECCE service delivery and these shall be collected, collated and utilized by the Ministries responsible for education and finance to inform strategic planning and budgetary projections in the area of ECCE.

2.10.4 Guidelines on ECCE fees and charges

51. The following guidelines apply to ECCE fees and charges: -

G153. The determination of reasonableness and adequacy of school fees for ECCE centers will be based on:

(a) Prevailing market rates

(b) Urban, rural and peri-urban locality

(c) Scope of services provided by the ECCE center

(d) Capacity of the population within the catchment area to pay the fees either in direct cash payment or non-cash payment

(e) Availability of other financing and resourcing options including from development partners, philanthropic agencies and other sources

G154. In line with the ECCE Policy Implementation Standard prohibiting charging of school fees and charges that are not directly related to provision of ECCE services, the following charges will be prohibited in ECCE centers: -

(a) Foundation body fees

(b) Development fees including material contributions for items such as bricks, cement, poles, iron sheets, nails, furniture etcetera

(c) Fees for recreational activities such as graduation parties, graduation gowns, school trips, theme clothes, visits to hotels etcetera

(d) Teacher SACCO fees

(e) Contribution to purchase of school assets such as vehicles, generators, land etcetera

(f) Examination fees

(g) Admission fees

(h) Loan repayment fees

G155. The fees charged in ECCE centers shall not be diverted or put to any use other than that which is necessary and incidental to actual delivery of ECCE services.

2.11 ECCE DATA AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

2.11.1 Guidelines on linking ECCE centers to EMIS

52. Under this, the following guidelines shall apply: -

G156. The coding and assigning of profiles to respective ECCE centers in Uganda so as to onboard them onto EMIS will be based on: -

(a) Formal application for registration on the EMIS

(b) Prior registration of the said ECCE service provider and production of proof of registration by the local government

(c) Provision of the EMIS number of the nearest primary school

G157. The profile assigned to respective ECCE centers will be utilized to among others conduct the following: -

(a) To track respective ECCE service providers from the point of commencement all throughout their lifecycle, inclusive of circumstances where the said center may be suspended or closed.

(b) To provide data / information that can be used for research, tracking of progress and other evidence to inform practice and decision making.

(c) To inform planning by preparing primary schools to absorb children being supplied by the different ECCE service providers.

2.11.2 Guidelines on coding and entry of ECCE institutions

53. Under this, the following guidance apply: -

G158. Respective ECCE centers will be coded and entered on the roll/list of all ECCE providers in Uganda, upon production of:

(a) Proof of application for licensing by the mandated local government

(b) Recommendation letter from the responsible Community Development Officer

(c) Recommendation letter from the Chairperson LC 1 of the area where the center is located

(d) Identification records including National identity card (ID) and phone contacts of the proprietor(s) of the ECCE center

(e) Proof of ownership, lease or letting of the land on which the center is located

(f) List of presumptive teaching, Caregiver and non-teaching staff

2.11.3 Guidelines on reporting and data submission on ECCE

54. Under this, the following guidelines apply: -

G159. ECCE centers will maintain data quality integrity through ensuring that data submitted is accurate, reliable and complete. Relatedly, data collection will be undertaken using standardized data collection tools and protocols to ensure consistency and comparability. Also, measures will be undertaken to validate and verify data to detect errors, inconsistencies or missing information.

G160. Data on ECCE service delivery will be submitted in a timely manner as specified by the relevant authorities or stakeholders and this will be provided following the standardized reporting formats and templates to ensure consistency and ease of analysis.

G161. Data protection and confidentiality measures will be undertaken, and these include: establishment of data protection policies at the ECCE center level, to ensure confidentiality, integrity and availability of data; use of data encryption and security measures to protect sensitive information; as well as implementing access controls and authentication mechanism to ensure that only authorized personnel can access and manipulate data.

G162. Respective ECCE centers will ensure stakeholder engagement and communication through regular interface with parents, caregivers, teachers and community members to ensure that data submission and reporting needs are adhered to. In addition, a feedback mechanism should be established to inform the different stakeholders on the findings or decisions taken following the data and information they provided to the center or to other stakeholders.

G163. The different persons charged with inputting data into EMIS, including heads of ECCE centers, local government officials and MoES personnel will be personally liable for any information they submit or manipulate with fraudulent or malicious intent and objectives.

2.12 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIP GUIDELINES

2.12.2 Guidelines on participation of foundation bodies in ECCE delivery

55. Under this, the following guidelines apply: -

G164. Foundation bodies will be permitted to utilize common-user facilities in grant-aided schools such as playing grounds for ECCE services provided the said utilization doesn't constrain the grant-aided school from effectively executing its school activities in the same premises as and when required.

G165. The utilization of common-user facilities will be undertaken in line with the guidance contained in physical education and sports mainstreaming guidelines contained herein these Policy Implementation Guidelines.

G166. Foundation bodies will participate in ECCE service delivery through provision of grants and scholarships; provision of educational resources as well as capacity building initiatives such as training and mentorship programs to enhance early childhood education.

G167. Foundation bodies may engage in advocacy and policy influence through advocating for policies and programs that support early childhood education, conducting research and community engagement to raise awareness about the importance of early childhood education, and promote parental involvement.

G168. Foundation bodies may design ECCE delivery programmes and also collaborate with other partners to deliver joint programmes in ECCE service delivery.

2.12.3 Accountability guidelines for state and non-state actors in ECCE delivery

56. The following guidelines apply to accountability for state and non-state actors in ECCE service delivery: -

G169. A multi-stakeholder coordination platform will be created to link and bring together key actors and duty-bearers at local government level, who include: sub-county chiefs (Senior Administrative Secretaries); Community Development Officers (CDOs); Community-based organizations (CBOs); Local Council (LC) 1 structures as well as Village Health Teams (VHTs), among others. The said platform will be coordinated by government and civil society actors and efforts will be taken to ensure that lower local government structures are mobilized, activated and linked with the main local government structures at

district/city/municipality level with the aim of ensuring that the whole local government system is operationalized in the endeavor to enhance ECCE service delivery.

G170. The ECCE Working Group will be created, supported and operationalized through regular coordination meetings – which will be organized at least on a quarterly basis, and will be comprised of key stakeholders in ECCE service delivery and strategic direction of this level of education. The ECCE Working Group will be comprised of MoES, MoGLSD, MoH, Education Development Partners (EDPs); civil society organization; donor agencies; academia and research agencies, among others, and will serve as a forum for coordination, accountability, knowledge and experience sharing, learning, advocacy, and resource mobilization, among others.

G171. A National ECCE Symposium will be organized on annual basis to provide a platform for all actors in ECCE to share experiences, advocate for ECCE related issues and provide accountability to the wider public pertaining to the activities and interventions undertaken in the realm of ECCE.

G172. Both central and local government will undertake continuous policy dissemination and information sharing activities on all aspects pertaining to the ECCE Policy as well as its Policy Implementation Standards and Guidelines.

G173. State and non-state actors will adopt transparency and reporting on all aspects of implementing the ECCE Policy and its Policy Implementation Standards and Guidelines.

G174. All actors in the space of ECCE service delivery will adopt prudent accountability measures, which include, but are not limited to, community engagement and participation, accreditation and certification, formulation of clear contracting and grant management processes as well as regular monitoring, evaluation and reporting on various aspects of their performance.

G175. Key performance indicators will be developed for respective aspects of ECCE service delivery, and these will be subjected to rigorous monitoring and evaluation as one of the avenues for tracking and ensuring accountability for execution of mandated roles and obligations.

2.13 INFORMATION DISSEMINATION GUIDELINES

2.13.1 ECCE information preparation and handling standards

57. The following guidelines apply to preparation and handling of information pertaining to ECCE: -

G176. All duty-bearers involved in preparation and handling of information pertaining to ECCE will uphold the confidentiality and data protection rights of children and other individuals supplying the said information. In this aspect, all efforts will be undertaken to ensure that all information collected is kept confidential and only shared with authorized personnel, and adherence with applicable data protection laws and policies is upheld at all times.

G177. In all matters of handling ECCE data and information, the following guidelines will be adhered to: -

(a) Information verification: Efforts should be undertaken to verify the accuracy of all information collected, including child and family-related data.

(b) Reliability of sources: Efforts should be undertaken to ensure that reliable sources of information are utilized, and these include MoES records such as EMIS, medical records and child protection information, among others.

(c) Regular update on information: Efforts should be undertaken to regularly update information pertaining to various aspects of ECCE so as to ensure that it remains accurate and relevant.

G178. Efforts will be undertaken to ensure that all ECCE information adheres to principles of inclusivity and inclusivity, and this will be undertaken through: use of clear and simple language; provision of information in multiple formats such as print, digital and audio; as well as cultural sensitivity and ensuring respect for diverse backgrounds, values and cultural norms.

G179. In order to ensure transparency and accountability in all aspects of managing ECCE information, the following will be adhered to: -

(a) Provision of transparent information about ECCE services, including policies, implementation standards, guidelines, procedures and expected outcomes / impact.

(b) Establishment of accountability mechanisms such as complaints handling and grievance redress procedure as well as review processes to ensure that information is accurate and reliable.

(c) Ensuring regular reporting on ECCE service delivery including outcomes and progress towards set policy goals and objectives.

G180. In order to enhance ownership and utilization of ECCE information, the following guidance will be adhered to:

(a) Family friendly information: There will be provision of family-friendly ECCE information which is accessible and is easy to understand.

(b) Family participation: Efforts will be undertaken to encourage family participation in ECCE service delivery including decision-making and planning processes.

(c) Feedback mechanisms: There will be establishment of feedback mechanisms such as surveys, focus groups and collaborative research studies to ensure that families have a voice in ECCE service delivery.

2.13.2 Guidelines on dissemination channels for ECCE information

58. The following guidelines apply to dissemination of ECCE information: -

G181. The dissemination of ECCE data and information will uphold the principles of timeliness and relevance for the said information, and this will also entrench regular updates to the said information.

G182. In selecting which media channel to use for dissemination of ECCE information, the following considerations will be put into consideration: -

(a) ***Complexity of the information:*** Consideration should be given to the complexity of the information being disseminated. For example, detailed policy information may require written reports or academic journals, while simple health messages may be effectively conveyed through social media or posters.

(b) ***Urgency and timeliness of the information:*** Efforts should be undertaken to use dissemination channels that allow for timely and urgent communication, such as social media or text messaging, for critical information like health alerts or emergency procedures.

(c) ***Engagement and interactivity needs:*** Dissemination channels that promote engagement and interactivity, such as workshops, webinars, or social media groups, for information that requires discussion, feedback, or Q&A should be prioritized in circumstances where there is need for detailed in-person engagement and interaction.

(d) ***Effectiveness and reach of the channel:*** Due consideration should be paid to cost-effectiveness of different channels for instance, social media or email newsletters may be more cost-effective than printed materials or in-person events. In addition, there is need to select dissemination channels that can reach the target audience effectively, and which allow for feedback mechanisms.

(e) ***Equity and inclusion:*** There is need to consider the equity implications of different dissemination channels, for example, using digital channels may exclude those with limited digital access or literacy. Relatedly, there should be use of inclusive language and imagery in dissemination materials to promote diversity and inclusion.

(f) ***Audience characteristics:*** Due consideration should be paid to the age and literacy level of the target audience when selecting dissemination channels. For example, visual aids and simple language may be more effective for young children or parents with limited literacy. Consideration should also be paid to language and cultural diversity through use of dissemination channels that cater to the language and cultural diversity of the target audience.

G183. Information pertaining to ECCE shall be disseminated through formal channels, which among others, include the following: -

(a) Dissemination conferences and workshops

(b) Media releases, on platforms such as Newspapers, Television and Radio

(c) Social media

(d) Community media platforms, including markets, community centers, churches, hospitals, Local Council offices, etc

(e) Word of mouth

(f) Policy briefs, digests, opinions and reports on ECCE

(g) Administrative instruments including circulars, practice directions, among others.

2.13.3 Media engagement guidelines in ECCE

59. The following guidelines apply to media engagement on all matters pertaining to ECCE: -

G184. Adequate preparations will be undertaken to ensure prudent media engagement and these will be undertaken through:

(a) Development of clear media engagement strategies both among state and non-state actors, which outlines goals, target audiences, key messages, and communication channels for different ECCE information.

(b) Identification of key media contacts including journalists, opinion leaders, bloggers, and influencers, who cover ECCE-related topics and regularly engaging them on various aspects of ECCE.

(c) Preparation of media kits that include information about the ECCE program, services, and contact details.

G185. Stakeholders in ECCE will embark on regular media outreach activities to: build relationships with key media contacts by providing them with valuable information, insights, and expert opinions; pitch stories and feature ideas to media contacts that highlight the importance of ECCE, success stories, and best practices; and, respond promptly to media inquiries, providing accurate and timely information.

G186. Adequate preparations for media interviews will be undertaken through: preparation of key messages and talking points that align with the ECCE program's goals and objectives; being clear and concise when communicating with the media, avoiding jargon and technical terms; as well as, showing enthusiasm and passion for ECCE when speaking with the media, highlighting the importance of early childhood education.

G187. Stakeholders in ECCE will harness and leverage the power of social media to spread messages and information on ECCE through adhering to the following:

(a) Development of a social media strategy that aligns with the ECCE policy goals and objectives as well as the provisions of the ECCE Policy Implementation Standards and Guidelines.

(b) Development and utilization of engaging content, including images, videos, and infographics, to promote ECCE and share information on different social media channels.

(c) Encouraging interaction with followers by responding to comments, answering questions, and sharing user-generated content in a prompt manner.

G188. An elaborate crisis communication system will be developed and rolled out through:

(a) Development of a crisis communications plan that outlines procedures for responding to media inquiries during a crisis.

(b) Promotion of transparency and honesty when communicating with the media during a crisis, as well as providing accurate and timely information in such times.

(c) Showing empathy and concern for those affected by the crisis, highlighting the ECCE service provider's commitment to their well-being.

G189. Efforts will be undertaken to entrench monitoring and evaluation through: tracking media coverage of ECCE-related topics, including press clippings, social media mentions, and website analytics; evaluating media engagement efforts, including the effectiveness of media outreach, social media, and crisis communications; as well as, adjusting the media strategy as needed based on evaluation findings, emerging trends, and changing priorities.

Chapter Three

TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

3.1 TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Effective implementation of the ECCE Policy is largely hinged upon undertaking of the necessary legal reforms to enable proper implementation of the commitments contained in the new strategic direction for ECCE service delivery in Uganda. In this context, review and reform of the Education (Pre-primary, Primary and Post-Primary) Act, 2008 is a key pre-requisite for effective implementation of the ECCE Policy.
The processes which must be undertaken in the legal reform process for the aforementioned law entail:

(a) Undertaking of legal analysis on ECCE

(b) Preparation and Cabinet approval of the Principles for reform of the Education (Pre-primary, Primary and Post-Primary) Act, 2008.

(c) Preparation of the Bill for amendment or repeal of the Education (Pre-primary, Primary and Post-Primary) Act, 2008.

(d) Supporting approval processes for the Bill through Cabinet and Parliament.

(e) Supporting operationalization of the new legal framework governing ECCE delivery in Uganda.

The Ministry responsible for education will spearhead and coordinate the initiation and execution of legal reform processes in the area of ECCE, while working closely with the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, as well as other mandated stakeholders.

All the ECCE Policy Instruments, namely; the ECCE Policy, ECCE Policy Implementation Standards and Guidelines, Procedures and exemplar forms and templates shall be read together with the relevant documents regarding the ECCE reforms, and these shall be considered alongside any other legal or administrative reforms and guidance that may be issued periodically in the realm of ECCE.

3.2 COMMENCEMENT OF THE GUIDELINES

These ECCE Policy Implementation Guidelines shall commence and become effective at the date and time on which the ECCE Policy shall be launched and rolled out by the Ministry responsible for education, for nation-wide implementation.

3.3 DECLARATION

I, hereby approve the aforesaid Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Policy Implementation Guidelines to provide detailed guidance to all the actors and the stakeholders in the implementation of the ECCE Policy.

Signed .....

Dr. Kedrace R. Turyagyenda
PERMANENT SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS

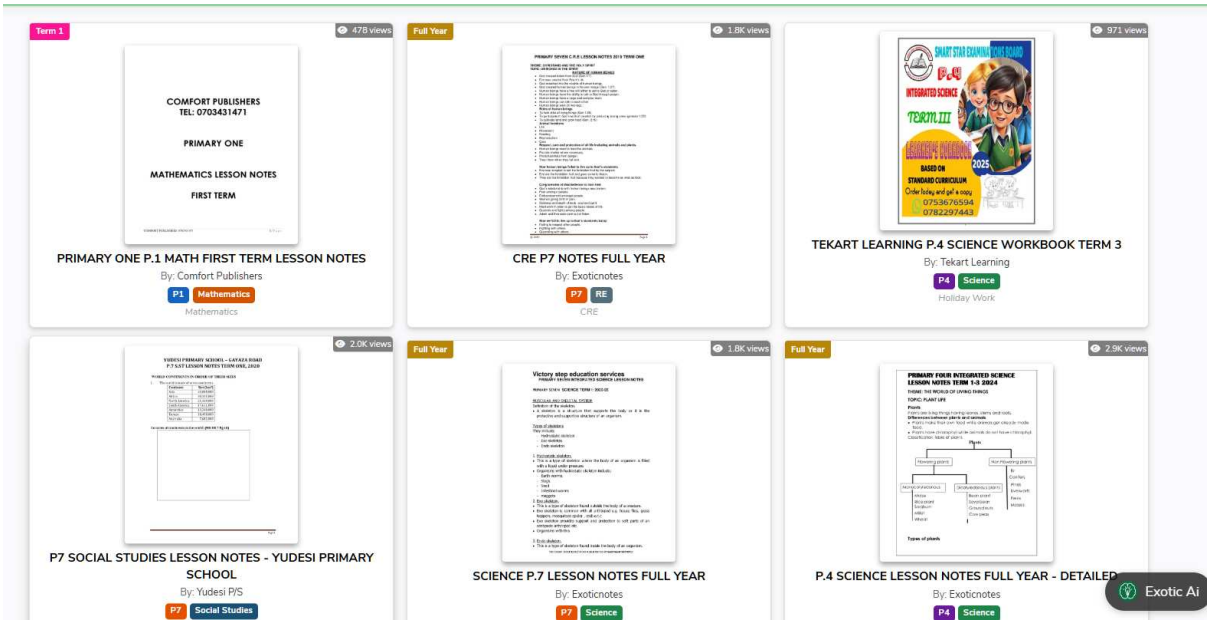
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