



*Catholic Welfare and Development*

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# Catholic Welfare and Development

**Submission to the Western Cape Legislature  
(Provincial Committee on Social Development)  
on the  
Children's Amendment Bill B19-2006  
as introduced in the  
NCOP dated 30 June 2006**

**Presented at Public Hearings  
13 February 2007  
Khayelitsha**

Presented by: Ms Anona AhPoe-Nienaber

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Giving dignity, growing people of all backgrounds and beliefs

Catholic Welfare & Development wishes to acknowledge  
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&  
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in the preparation & compilation of this Submission

## **1. Introduction**

This submission will comment mainly on Early Childhood Development - Chapter 6

South Africa's ratification of CRC (Conventions on the Rights of the Child) and commitments to international and continental agreements is consistent with the South African Constitution that states that a child's best interests are of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child. The Bill of Rights (section 2.28) in particular provides for the right to nutrition, shelter, basic health care and social services, family/parental care, appropriate alternative care; protection from maltreatment, abuse or degradation and, section 2.29 provides for the right to Basic Education.<sup>1</sup>

Catholic Welfare & Development (CWD) welcomes this opportunity and wishes to make its presentation in the spirit of partnership. We offer our insights mainly into the area of Early Childhood Development based on the experience and knowledge gathered from our interventions on the ground

### **About Catholic Welfare & Development**

Catholic Welfare and Development (CWD) is the implementing arm of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Cape Town.

It is an umbrella organisation, comprised of 8 programmes and ten community development centres in the Greater Cape Metropole. In addition, our rural programme covers the West Coast, Boland and Matsikama. Our main focus areas are:

- a. Women, Children and Youth Development
- b. Health and Food Security
- c. Economic Development
- d. Community Development Centres

### **CWD Early Childhood Development Model**

Through years of experience, the organization has drawn up an ECD model based on the experience it has collected. The Features of the ECD model are:

1. Community Initiated and Based where ownership and acceptance by the community ensures a successful working relationship.
2. Holistic, where interventions target the well being of children within the ECD facilities through improving their physical environment, their nutritional needs, their social development and emotional needs, while closely involving their parents, guardians & carers.
3. Empowering, where training interventions assist those working in ECD centres and the parents, guardians and carers of the children.

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<sup>1</sup> Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996.

4. Dynamic, where learnings from the experience on the ground feed back into improving the way the interventions are delivered and therefore the model.
5. Open to children with special needs, through our special interventions targeting “street children” and “refugee children”

## **CWD ECD Interventions**

CWD’s ECD model provides the framework of operation for the following interventions.

1. **Early Learning Services Organisation** providing support and training to informal educare centers in impoverished communities and informal areas of the greater Cape Town area. This includes provision of education equipment, food, upgrading of premises, educator training and access to grant registration.
2. **Women in Need (WIN)** providing good health, nutrition and educare facilities to homeless women and their children.
3. **Bonne Esperance** supporting the educare needs of refugee children.
4. **Rural Development Programme** facilitating the development of a forum for educare service providers that enables provision of equipment, upgrading of facilities, educator training and networking

## **CWD Input into the Childrens Amendment Bill**

### **Chapter 5: Partial Care**

#### **Clause 77(1) Provision of partial care**

**We propose** that the clause should include **Faith Based Organisation** (FBOs) so that it may read: *A facility established or service provided by an organ of state, a non-governmental organization or **Faith Based Organisation** for the provision of partial care only qualifies for funding from money appropriated by a provincial legislature...*

This is so because FBOs provide half of the nation’s services to children.

### **Chapter 6: Early Childhood Development (ECD)**

#### **Clause 92: Strategy concerning ECD**

1. CWD recommends the following:
  - a. Replace the phrase *include in* with that of **integrate into**; the word *securing* with **implementing** and the word *properly* with **well**, so that it may read: *The Minister after consultation with the Minister of Education, must **integrate into** the departmental strategy a comprehensive national strategy aimed at*

***implementing a well resourced, coordinated and managed  
Early Childhood Development System.***

We believe such a system should not be just another chapter but should be incorporated into the whole strategy. The term implementing will transform the uncertainty of the term “securing” to the action of doing. The word properly indicates giving just enough. We believe that a system nurturing the future of our nation deserves a status of utmost importance and therefore the best resources it can be allocated.

2. We also propose a new sentence that reads: “ **the Minister of Social Development must provide funding for ECD.**”
3. Furthermore, we request the addition of three new subsections which may read as follows: ***The Early Childhood Development System may include:***
  - (a) Clear guidelines on the set up, monitoring & evaluation, and determining the impact of ECD facilities and interventions
  - (b) A comprehensive information system to facilitate the collection, processing and storage of data, information and knowledge to inform & support national, provincial and local decision making on ECD, and determining their impact.
  - (c) Clear criteria for nutrition programmes for ECD facilities.

We propose those additions and changes in our submission, with reference to a famous saying that “If you can not measure it, you can not manage it.” Furthermore, the President in his recent State of the Nation address, clearly indicated that ‘expanding access to Early Childhood Development...’is part of the government’s social programme for 2007. On the other hand, he alluded to some of the defects in our systems resulting in the need to :

- Define clearly the poverty matrix of our country
- Develop a proper database of households living in poverty;
- Identify and implement specific interventions relevant to these households;
- Monitor progress in these households as the programmes take effect in graduating them out of poverty;” (Presidency, 2007)

Improving our ECD systems are very much part of the above.

On the nutrition side, this is a point we would like to emphasise very strongly in agreement with our fellow organizations, for it is the foundation of the well being of a child, and one upon which everything else depends.

Based on the importance of such an issue, we **propose the insertion of a Clause on Nutrition.** The Children’s Bill must make provision for the inclusion of a comprehensive Nutritional Plan as a very specific requirement. There is a need for community health workers to educate ECD service providers on adequate nutrition requirements for young children. This type of information sharing should take into account the practical constraints faced by these

service providers and provide them with guidance on how to meet nutrition requirements with the minimum resources at hand

The bill furthermore, should not only address criteria for new nutrition interventions, but they should also look at improving the nutritional value of existing school feeding schemes. Some schools do receive food assistance, but the nutritional of food provided is very low.

### **Clause 93: Provision of Early Childhood Development Services**

1. In Section 93(2) We request the insertion of **Civil Society** in the consultations for determining national norms and standards. The rich experience of the implementing organizations can help government a great deal in refining those standards based on user feedback from the ground.
2. We also propose the addition of a third Section to Clause 93, similar to Clause 192 (1) to **Plan Strategies for the establishment of an appropriate spread in each province, of Early Childhood Facilities**. We strongly believe that we need to have a minimum number of ECD facilities for each proportion of the population determined appropriate by the department and regulate the maximum number in order to ensure quality.

### **Clause 94: Minimum standards for ECD services**

1. **We propose** that the national norms and standards should set a minimum value on the subsidy per child per day and make it clear that no province should pay the subsidy lower than the national standard.
2. We also **propose** the increase of the full subsidy for the child. The current subsidy is not enough to cover all the needs for children and the ECD facility; as such children are asked to pay fees. Increasing levels of chronic poverty, destitution, unemployment and HIV/AIDS in South Africa reinforces the critical importance of subsidizing ECD services and programmes. Poor parents and caregivers do not manage to pay fees and this results in their children not attending ECD services and programmes that is a very critical foundational phase. There are many young children who are excluded from ECD facilities because they cannot pay the prescribed fees.
3. **We further propose** the review of National Standards. The ECD centre based facilities are unreachable for many without conditional grants from the government. Thus ECD remains the most vulnerable sector in relation to Provincial budgets.
4. On *Section (3)*, We recommend that the phrase **while ensuring quality and school readiness**, be added to the end of section 3 so that it may read, *Any early childhood development services provided in terms of this section must be appropriate to the needs of the children to whom the services are provided while ensuring quality, and ultimately the school readiness of the children*. We believe that the

culmination of attending Early Childhood Development Programmes, is to be ready for the next stage of life which is to enter school.

### **Clause 95: ECD programme to be registered**

1. In section (1) **we propose** the addition of a section that reads, “the Provincial Head of Social Development must:
  - a. set realistic and attainable registration guidelines
  - b. ensure such guidelines and associated registration forms are available in a language, the applicant can understand.

The current form is too complicated for an ordinary person to fill in and the language should be that which the applicant can read and write.

The registration procedure is one of the biggest stumbling blocks we encounter in the implementation of our work and especially in accessing funds for the roll out of activities. We urge the department therefore to refine and simplify the registration procedures to provide an enabling environment for the ECD facilities to be established and developed, thereby speeding up service delivery.

We also request a **provision within the bill to cater for emergency cases** – a safety net or an emergency fund. As we know, some of the areas that need ECD services the most, are also the most susceptible to disasters such as fires, floods and the like. Such funds and resources need to be disbursed in response to such emergencies.. At present, the procedure of accessing funds again after the event of a fire or another disaster is so complicated that it threatens the revival of the affected ECD facility.

### **Clause 96: Consideration of application**

We propose the addition of the following sections:

1. **Registration shall take place at a central point where all necessary departments are present**
2. **The time frame for consideration of an application shall be between 1-3 months.**
3. **The Department of Social Development must acknowledge receipt of the application,**
4. In section (3) where it states that a person unsuitable to work with children is not a fit and proper person to provide or assist in the provision of ECD services or programmes. **We propose** that there should be **categories of such unfit persons similar to Clause 105.**

### **Section 101**

5. On *Section 101 (1) on Assessment of Early Childhood Development Services*, CWD would like to endorse the recommendation it delivered to the Provincial Department of Social Development at its Budget Public Hearings in 2006 that, Intergovernmental Task Teams comprising of the relevant departments involved in assessing crèches such as the Fire department, Health Department, Social Development Department and others, be implemented to assess Early Childhood Development Services. We believe that this solution will help speed up

the assessment procedures and therefore the registration process. The long waiting list of crèches particularly in the areas of Khayelitsha, Mbekweni, Cross Roads, Nyanga, and Sir Lowry's Pass Village is a problem in the roll out of our assistance to the children of the respective areas. Also, in reference once again to our concerns about the quality of the programmes to be offered to our children, we recommend the addition of two subsections as follows:

- b. the addition of a subsection under Section 101, to mandate the initiation and operation of an ECD Intergovernmental Task Team or a similar entity.**
- c. The addition of another subsection that governs quality assurance for Early Childhood Development facilities and programmes, similar to Clause 211.**

## **Conclusion**

It is important to note that exposing young children to appropriate early stimulation, nutrition, health and care through a range of services and appropriate programmes has countless benefits that can reduce the need in later years for costly medical, remedial and welfare services and which can impact positively on the child's general well being and prospects in life. ECD can assist children's transition to schooling and improve efficiency in the education system by reducing costly repetition rates. Therefore, the government and civil society should work in partnership to advance the wellbeing of children. The government should prioritise in their budgeting the ECD services and programmes.

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**Thank you**

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