



MEDIA STATEMENT

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT SETS UP WORKSTREAMS TO CONDUCT RISK ASSESSMENT AND STATE OF READINESS FOR THE EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (ECD) CENTRES

Pretoria, 4 June 2020: South Africa officially entered level 3 of the COVID-19 Risk-Adjusted Strategy on 1 June 2020, with the reopening of many sectors of the economy. As more parents/caregivers return to work, one of their major concerns is around child care arrangements and the reopening of early childhood development (ECD) centres.

The ECD programme run by the Department of Social Development caters for children aged 0-4 years and provides them with opportunities for early learning, health and nutrition services that enhance their physical, emotional and cognitive skills. In 2012, the South African Government declared ECD a public good and embarked on expanding universal access by 2030.

With the declaration of the state of the national disaster by the President of the Republic of South Africa, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa in March, ECD centres across the country closed down to comply with the national COVID-19 regulations to protect and save lives.

While the Early Childhood Development (ECD) sector will remain closed under level 3 regulations, the Department of Social Development has set up eight (8) workstreams that will amongst others, conduct sector-wide risk assessment, state of readiness and make recommendations on health and hygiene measures and protocols to contain COVID-19 outbreak.

These measures may include limiting the number of children a centre can take care of, ensuring proper cleaning and disinfecting of the centre, routine screenings and rearranging spaces to encourage social distancing

The workstreams will look into: data and information, assessment of ECD services in terms of COVID-19 compliance, support package, protocols for reopening, COVID-19 education and awareness, ECD programme redesign (parent programmes), practitioner capacity building and monitoring and evaluation. The findings and recommendations of the work streams will be used to map the way forward with regard to required operational adjustments for the sector with the advent of the coronavirus pandemic.

According to the General Household Survey by Statistics South Africa, over 2 million children receive some form of ECD services. Of this number, 800 654 children are currently accessing registered ECD programmes by the Department of Social Development. 626 574 of these children receive a subsidy of R17 per child per day.

There are currently 14 205 registered partial care facilities that operate as ECD while many remain unregistered as they do not meet the minimum norms and standards set out in the Children's Act. To address this, the Department has partnered with the Nelson Mandela

Foundation under the banner of Vangasali-Every Child Counts campaign to find and assist such centres to comply and register as required by law.

This campaign forms part of this year's Child Protection Week under the theme: "***Let us all protect children during COVID-19 and beyond***".

This year's campaign seeks to create greater awareness of the risks that children face in these uncertain times by engaging families and communities to take a stand against any form of child abuse, neglect and exploitation.

As part of the national activities for Child Protection Week, the Department of Social Development, will in partnership with UNICEF and the University of South Africa (UNISA) host a webinar focusing on online safety for children, including how to prevent online bullying, harassment and internet-initiated sex crimes against children.

Members of the media are invited to join the webinar on online safety for children scheduled as follows:

Date: Friday, 5 June 2020

GovernmentZA YouTube: <https://youtu.be/lqIta7hXc1M>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/GovernmentZA/videos/985440885206786/>

Presidency YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/IYCUIWHNLUo>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/PresidencyZA/videos/685914835593743/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SocialDevelopmentZA/>

Twitter: https://twitter.com/The_DSD

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/socialdevelopmentza/>

SABC will provide pool feed as follows:

Satellite Amos7 @ 4 West

Downlink 12649.5 Mhz V

Symbol Rate 2.7 MSym/s

Modulation 8PSK

Video HD H.264 @ 4.2.0

The Child Protection Week campaign was launched on 30 May and will run until Sunday, 7 June 2020.

ISSUED BY THE NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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