

CHILD FOCUS III PROJECT

ECD Costs, Financing and Sustainability
In
Anguilla and Belize

Final Report
Leon Charles
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	pg. #
TABLE OF CONTENTS	(i) – (v)
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	(vi)
LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	(vii)
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	(viii - ix)
1. BACKGROUND	1
1.1. Objectives	
1.2. Methodology	
1.3. Limitations	
2. REVIEW OF CHILD FOCUS II ECD COSTING MODEL	3
2.1. Conceptual Basis	
2.2. Input Parameters	
2.3. Output Parameters	
2.4. Organisation and Layout	
3. EVOLUTION OF DECISION SUPPORT MODEL	13
3.1. Rationale for Decision Support Model	
3.2. Design of Decision Support Model	
4. EARLY CHILDHOOD IN ANGUILLA	15
4.1. Country Background	
4.2. Range of Early Childhood Services	
4.3. Management of Early Childhood Services	
4.4. Evolution of Early Childhood Service Provision	
4.5. Early Childhood Policy Environment	
4.6. Status of Early Childhood Services	
4.7. Financial Flows	
5. EARLY CHILDHOOD IN BELIZE	36
5.1. Country Background	
5.2. Range of Early Childhood Services	
5.3. Management of Early Childhood Services	
5.4. Evolution of Early Childhood Service Provision	
5.5. Early Childhood Policy Environment	
5.6. Status of Early Childhood Services	
5.7. Financial Flows	

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

61

- 6.1. General Conclusions
- 6.2. Country Specific Issues
- 6.3. ECD Financial and Costing Models

BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Scope of Work

Appendix 2 – List of Persons Consulted

ANNEXES

Annex 1 – Field Survey Instrument

Annex 1A – Anguilla Sample Selection

Annex 1B – Belize Sample Selection

Annex 2 – Standards At A Glance

LISTING OF TABLES

	pg.#
Table 2.1 – Characteristics of Regional Early Childhood Sub-Sector	5
<u>Anguilla</u>	
Table 4.1 – Selected Economic Indicators	15
Table 4.2 - Participation in ECD Programming	20
Table 4.3 – Quality Ranking for Early Childhood Institutions	21
Table 4.4 – Investment/Establishment Costs	26
Table 4.5 – Operational Expenditures	27
Table 4.6 – Distribution of Pre-school Operating Expenses	28
Table 4.7 – Distribution of Day Care Operating Expenses	28
Table 4.8 – Impact of Quality Differences	28
Table 4.9 – Financing the Direct Service Provision	29
Table 4.10 – Profitability of Direct Service Provision	30
Table 4.11 – Government Support to Preschool Sector (2006)	31
Table 4.12 – Relative Preschool Expenditure (2006)	31
Table 4.13 – National ECD Expenditures (2006)	31
Table 4.14 – Operating Costs/Minimum Standard	32
Table 4.15 – Additional Costs to Strengthen ECD (EC\$)	34
<u>Belize</u>	
Table 5.1 – Population Distribution	37
Table 5.2 – Selected Economic Indicators	37
Table 5.3 – Distribution of Poverty	38
Table 5.4 – Preschool Distribution & Concentration	42
Table 5.5 – Ownership of Day Care Facilities	43

Table 5.6 – Ownership of Preschools (2005/2006 Academic Year)	44
Table 5.7 – Preschool Participation Rates	45
Table 5.8 – Quality Ranking for Early Childhood Institutions	46
Table 5.9 – Multiple Services Provided by Operators	53
Table 5.10 – Day Care Expenditure Profile	54
Table 5.11 – Investment Costs	55
Table 5.12 – Operational Expenditures	56
Table 5.13 – Distribution of Pre-school Operating Expenses	56
Table 5.14 - Impact of Quality Differences	56
Table 5.15 – Financing Sources	57
Table 5.16 – Profitability of Preschools	57
Table 5.17 – Government Financial Support	58
Table 5.18 – Relative Preschool Expenditure	58
Table 5.19 - National ECD Expenditures	58
Table 5.20 – Additional Costs to Strengthen ECD (EC\$)	60

LISTING OF FIGURES

	pg.#
Fig. 2.1 - The Six Main Phases Requiring ECD Interventions	7
Fig 4.1 – ECD Facilities Location Map in Anguilla	19
Fig 4.2 – Preschool Revenue Sources in Anguilla	29
Fig 4.3 – Day Care Revenue Sources in Anguilla	30
Fig 5.1 – Map of Belize	36
Fig 5.2 – Ownership of Pre-schools in Belize	43
Fig 5.3 – Preschool Revenue Sources in Belize	57

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This ECD Costs, Financing and Sustainability Study represents the result of a process that involved key personnel working with children in Anguilla and Belize. This process was utilised to ensure that the Study reflected the reality of Early Childhood programming in the targeted countries and the participants in this process came from a wide range of organisations and institutions.

I will like to make special mention of the assistance and support received from Ellenita Harrigan in Anguilla and from Allana Gillette and Nelson Longworth in Belize. Their support went a long way in ensuring the success of this study.

Notwithstanding the wide range of inputs into the process, the responsibility for this final output rests with the Consultant and any errors and omissions thereof are not to be attributed to the other participants in the process.

I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the many ministries, organisations and individuals that assisted by providing information and sharing technical documents.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS – Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

BZ\$ - Belizean Dollars

CARICOM – Caribbean Community

CBO – Community-based Organisation

CCDC – Caribbean Child Development Centre

CFII – Child Focus II Project

COMPAR - Community and Parenting Education Program

CPOA – Caribbean Plan of Action for Early Childhood Education, Care and Development

CXC – Caribbean Examinations Council

ECD – Early Childhood Development

EC\$ - Eastern Caribbean Dollars

EDP – Education Development Plan

FBO – Faith-based Organisation

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

HIV – Human Immuno-deficiency Virus

IADB – Inter American Development Bank

IMF – International Monetary Fund

MICS - Multi Indicator Cluster Survey

NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation

QADS - Quality Assurance and Development Services

SERVOL - Service Volunteered For All

TVET – Technical and Vocational Education and Training

UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The ECD Costs, Financing and Sustainability consultancy was commissioned to undertake country case studies on a pilot basis in Anguilla and Belize. These case studies were designed to demonstrate the costs, investment and sustainability options for financing an early childhood sub-sector that delivers services of quality and that ensures coverage to those who need them most.

The Study utilised empirical techniques in developing the costs of the current service provision in the targeted countries and in assessing the additional costs required to operate at Minimum Standards that were compatible with positive child outcomes.

The Study found that:

- Policy makers in the targeted countries are operating in an information vacuum as regards the costs of early childhood programming and the financial implications of decision-making to improve the programming.
- These policy makers have taken decisions in the targeted countries to provide financial assistance to the sector, with the full recognition that they do not have sufficient information to assess the adequacy, or impact of this assistance.
- These policy makers have a keen interest in having access to financial data on the costs of ECD programming and having access to a mechanism that will enable them to assess the cost of alternative policy options. They welcomed the input that the results of the consultancy could make in improving their decision-making processes.
- At the service provision level, operators are finding creative ways to meet the costs of delivering ECD services, but most operations were not financially sustainable and were dependent on significant in-kind contributions, fund-raising and grants to cover operational costs.
- A multiplicity of stakeholders share the cost of providing early childhood services with a variety of direct and indirect mechanisms. This indicates strong potential for the use of stakeholder partnerships in programmes aimed at strengthening the sector.
- The majority of service providers were operating below the desired Minimum Standards.
- Operating at Minimum Standard or better will require a significant increase in operating cost by operators in both Anguilla and Belize. Facility maintenance and upgrading represent one-off costs, but the most significant cost is that of employing trained teachers and caregivers - a cost that has to be maintained on an ongoing basis.
- It will be difficult for all parents to pay the increased fees that will be required to meet the costs of upgrading to Minimum Standard or better.

- If the respective governments decide to finance the costs of upgrading the service provision in the sector, it will require an increase in the early childhood budget allocation from 4% to 15% of the current education budget in Anguilla and from 1% to 17% of the current education budget in Belize.

The Study recommended that the key interventions that are needed to improve the quality of service provision in the sector in both countries are:

- The professionalism of the early childhood teaching and caregiving functions, with increased training opportunities being provided and competitive salaries being offered for trained personnel.
- Strengthening of the regulatory environment through the introduction of Minimum Standards backed by a strong monitoring and supervision function.
- Development and implementation of an early Childhood Policy with clear strategies for the development of the sector.

These three interventions are not mutually exclusive and will have to be implemented as a package for any of them to have a significant impact on the operations of the sector.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1. OBJECTIVES

The ECD (Early Childhood Development) Costs, Financing and Sustainability consultancy was commissioned to undertake country case studies on a pilot basis in Anguilla and Belize. These case studies were designed to demonstrate the costs, investment and sustainability options for financing an early childhood sub-sector that delivers services of quality and that ensures coverage to those who need them most.

A financial model to assist this exercise had been prepared by the Child Focus II project drawing on the range of programmes and strategies identified in the Caribbean Plan of Action (CPOA). The model adopted a comprehensive approach to the sub-sector, taking into account the roles and economic contributions of the family, community, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), private sector and the government. It was expected that this current consultancy will review and strengthen this model, as appropriate, and use it as a lens through which to assess the costs, investments and sustainability options for each of the pilot countries.

The outcome of each case study was expected to be a fiscal planning mechanism for the respective countries that will provide policy guidance for national ECD planning and some fresh insights as to the means to sustain improved quality and expanded services to those who need them most.

The full Scope of Work of the Consultancy is attached as **Appendix 1**.

1.2. METHODOLOGY

A variety of methodologies were used in implementing this consultancy. These included:

- Review of research material and papers (published and unpublished) related to financing of early childhood programming in a wide variety of contexts. A listing of materials consulted is included in the **Bibliography**.
- A technical review of the Child Focus II ECD Costing Model.
- A field survey in each of the participating countries conducted by local personnel under the direction and guidance of the Consultant. This field survey was aimed at:
 - Assessing the quality of early childhood service delivery to determine the overall quality of the service provision within the country; and to establish the approaches, facilities and practices which differentiated the good quality providers from the poorer quality ones. The field surveys were based on observations by experienced early childhood practitioners using a standardized instrument as a guide. That instrument was based on one used in Dominica for assessing centres for licensing purposes and is compatible with

the draft Caricom Standards that are being discussed across the region¹. It was modified to meet the needs of the consultancy.

- Assessing the expenditures² and costs³ actually incurred by the service providers to determine the strategies being used locally to finance the service provision; and to identify the differences in expenditures and costs incurred between the good operators and weak ones and the affected approaches, facilities and practices.
- Identifying the financial flows within the sector and the sustainability of these flows.

The instruments used for the Field Surveys and the criteria used for selection of the samples in the Anguilla and Belize are attached as **Annex 1, Annex 1A and Annex 1B respectively**.

- A Field Visit by the Consultant to each country. During the visit, the Consultant met with key officials working in the government departments responsible for delivering services to children – Ministries of Education, Health, Social Development - individual service providers in the sample and conducted Focus Group meetings with the operators in the sample and a representative groupings of operators selected from the same centres that participated in the sample. A listing of persons interviewed in both countries is included in **Appendix 2**.

1.3. LIMITATIONS

The comprehensiveness of the analysis was limited by the weak data collection culture and systems that were used by the service providers. In many cases, there was no systematic record-keeping system and income and expenditure data had to be generated through one-on-one interviews with the service provider(s).

Data on full costs were also not available in many cases and proxy information and estimates had to be used to construct full cost profiles. This is indicated where applicable.

In both Anguilla and Belize, the lack of organization and official attention being paid to the day care sub-sector also meant that it was not possible to develop a full profile of that sub-sector. The implications of the current state of affairs are dealt with in more detail in the analytical sections of this Report.

¹ The CARICOM Secretariat has initiated a process aimed developing guidelines for the development of ECD policies, standards and regulations across the region. A draft of that document has been circulated to stakeholders across the region for review - Draft CARICOM Handbook on Developing Policy, Regulation and Standards in Early Childhood Development Services.

² Expenditures as used here mean the actual direct payments made by the operators

³ Costs as used here mean the total of the resources that were utilized in delivering the service. It includes direct payments, in-kind contributions, applicable amortization and depreciation allocations and the like.

2. REVIEW OF CHILD FOCUS II ECD COSTING MODEL⁴

The ECD Costing Model developed by the Child Focus II project provides a useful overview perspective for assessing the financial implications related to the delivery of a high quality ECD service provision at the national level. As such, it provides a useful starting point for the analysis of the costs related to the delivery of such a service provision. However, there are several elements of the model that needs to be refined if it is to become a useful tool for guiding policy development and investment in the sector.

This review will examine some of these issues and make recommendations for strengthening the model. It will address four (4) aspects of the model - the Conceptual Basis, the Input Parameters, the Output Parameters and the user-friendliness of the Model Layout and Organization.

2.1. CONCEPTUAL BASIS

The Conceptual basis for the model speaks to three (3) issues, viz:

- The *definition of the ECD sector* and the delineation of activities that are considered as relevant in the delivery of ECD services.
- The specification of the target audience for outputs of the model and *the type of information that will be useful to this target audience*.
- The *concept of costing* that is used by the model and its relevance to the information that is required by the target audience.

2.1.1. Definition of the ECD Sector

The model does not use a definition of the ECD sector. Its point of departure is to identify the “... ECD interventions that will make a difference in outcomes for children” and to cost these interventions. The problem with such an approach is that the interventions that affect outcomes for children are varied, wide ranging and often multi-sectoral. Some of them are directly related to the provision of ECD services e.g. the cost of caregivers, while others result from other activities that provide a supportive environment for ECD, along with other aspects of social development e.g. the activities that will result in the development of a mature adult, who will take a responsible approach to citizenship, including parenting.

The approach used leaves the model free to include interventions from a range of service provisions – primary school, secondary school and health services – and to consider them as part of the cost of delivering ECD. It must be noted however, that each of these service provisions are specific systems within themselves, with specific roles to play in the development of a responsible child and adult. To isolate specific activities and include them as part of the cost of providing ECD is highly questionable from a sector costing perspective, as the other service provisions could also claim responsibility for these costs (sometimes more than the ECD sector can!). While such interventions can be considered as part of the broader costs to society of

⁴ Child Focus II Project (2004). A Model for Financing and Investment in Early Childhood Development in the Caribbean Region.

making a difference in outcomes for children, the approach to costing the provision of ECD services needs to distinguish between the costs related to the organization, development and delivery of the ECD service provision and those related to providing a broader supporting environment within which ECD (and other desirable social programmes) will thrive. The former is a relevant ECD cost, the latter is not.

One example that will illustrate this point is that of the cost of producing a medical practitioner. Computation of these costs does not include the cost of a primary school general science program, or a secondary school biology program, although without these, the number of students who will be capable of becoming a medical doctor will be significantly reduced.

It is therefore necessary to explicitly define the ECD sector and to delineate the activities that will be considered as part of the ECD service provision. These activities vary according to the decisions that are made on the following parameters and it is necessary to clarify each of these parameters to ensure consistency in the application of the model (IADB⁵):

- Goals (desired coverage, inputs, processes, desired outcomes).
- Activities (contents or number of services, such as education, health, nutrition, and family services).
- Models (center-based, home visiting, mass media campaigns).
- Technologies (paraprofessionals or professionals, high or low ratios of children to staff and of staff to supervisors).
- Duration (hours per day, days per year, number of years).
- Population served (a large or small group of beneficiaries, the age and health status of children).
- The program context (concentrated or dispersed settlement, high or low per capita incomes).

The CF II model does not explicitly define any of the parameters, although one can deduce some of them from the assumptions used as inputs in the model.

Table 2.1 summarises the characteristics of the early childhood sub-sector in the Caribbean using the parameters identified by the IADB. Using these characteristics, the definition of ECD service provision that is recommended as the basis for the model is “*the provision of services to improve children's physical and psychosocial development and thus to increase their chances of success in school and in life.*” (Adapted from IADB). Such service provisions begin after the completion of the survival phase (normally 0 – 6 months) and continue through to entry into primary school (normally age 5) and could include center-based service provisions and/or home visitation programs. On the continuum of service provisions that have been used elsewhere in recent documentation⁶, this would include the provision of custodial services and school readiness services and their related developmental and administrative supports.

⁵ Inter American Development Bank (1999). Calculating The Costs And Potential Benefits Of Early Childhood Development Projects, IADB ECCD Guide – A Toolkit for Early Childhood Care and Development, 1999

⁶ Charles L. (2006). Presentation to ECD Policy Forum; Regional Policy Scan; Rapid Assessment for UNICEF Italian Project

Table 2.1 – Characteristics of Regional Early Childhood Sub-Sector

PARAMETERS	CHARACTERISTICS IN CARIBBEAN CONTEXT
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Universal coverage - Stimulation and play - Primary school readiness
Activities ⁷	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Psycho-social and physical development - Education
Models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Centre based - Home visiting
Technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Low adult-child ratios - Professional staff
Duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Full day, comparable to primary school cycle
Population Served	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Large numbers of children - Between the ages of six months and five years - Reasonable health status
Programme Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nationwide programming - Majority of families middle to low income⁸

2.1.2. Target Audience Information Needs

The model identifies the target audiences for its output as the Ministers of Finance, Education and Health, with the former being interested in the question “What will it cost?” and the latter two in the question “What are the ECD interventions that will make a difference in outcomes for children?”.

It is the contention here that the manner in which the questions have been phrased are not sufficiently decision-oriented. Take the question of the Minister of Finance, for example. Is the relevant question “What will it cost?” or is it “How much do I have to spend?”. The model assumes that the answers to both questions are the same.

This is not accurate, as the answer to the latter is dependent on the policy options that are implemented. Regardless of definition, essential components of the service provision include the cost of service delivery⁹/centre operations and the cost of management and supervision of the service provision to ensure quality and adherence to standards. In addition, there are many stakeholders involved in ECD – parents, private sector service providers, public sector service providers, and the like. The answer to the question “How much do I have to spend?” will therefore depend on the nature of the financial flows within the sector i.e. the financial responsibilities that are assigned to each of these stakeholders. As an example, a policy that has the government providing a free universal ECD service will require more spending from the government than one where the service provision is based on fee payments by parents to a

⁷ In the Caribbean region there is a very well developed maternal child health system that takes care of children up to the age of 18 months. This is fully integrated into the health sector and is thus not considered as part of the cost of early childhood development.

⁸ This is a reflection of the highly skewed income distribution within the region, where the majority of population is located within the middle and low income brackets.

⁹ Assuming home visitation models are used

private sector service provider, with the government providing only the management and supervisory services. Under both options however, the total cost of the service provision could be the same.

The model therefore needs to provide the explicit spending implications of a range of policy options, if its output is to be relevant to the Minister of Finance.

With respect to the question to the Ministers of Education and Health, while the question is relevant, the answer and related information needs are dependent on a clear definition of ECD services, as discussed in Section 1.1.

2.1.3. Concept of Costing

A Cost in its most basic sense is defined as “the value of resources used by a process of transformation in a system” (IADB). The literature on costing identifies a multitude of costing concepts that are available for use in attempting to cost a product, system or service provision. These include total costs, average costs, marginal costs, relevant costs, opportunity costs, fixed costs, variable costs, investment costs, direct costs, indirect costs and operating costs. These different concepts are necessary, as the nature, longevity and benefits from resources used vary significantly with the circumstances under which they are used.

The approach that was used by the CF II ECD Costing Model was based on a combination of total costing and marginal costing. At the macro level, the model attempted to identify the total cost to society and included both ECD service provisions costs and broader support costs that would create a favourable environment for the delivery of ECD services. While this provides an overall picture of the resources that are dedicated to children’s development, it is not a useful output for decision-making purposes by the targeted decision-makers. It would be preferable if, at this level, the model was focused on identifying the relevant costs that would have to be borne by the different stakeholders under different policy scenarios.

At the direct service provision level, the model again used a total cost approach. It distinguished between investment costs and operational costs and identified fixed costs and variable costs. In most cases, the former is allocated by activity level to arrive at a cost per child. In general, this is an acceptable approach.

At the interface between ECD and the health, primary education and secondary provision services, the model used a marginal cost approach and attempted to determine the additional cost that would be incurred by these systems in providing supports for ECD, above and beyond that which they are providing as a normal part of their service delivery. The key question here is whether or not these costs are relevant costs for the provision of ECD services.

The costing approach that is recommended is the use of relevant, marginal costs for all levels of service provision i.e. identifying the additional costs that would be incurred by the relevant stakeholder for providing ECD services, which would not otherwise have been incurred, in the absence of an ECD service provision. Such an approach would not include the costs of providing a wider supportive environment.

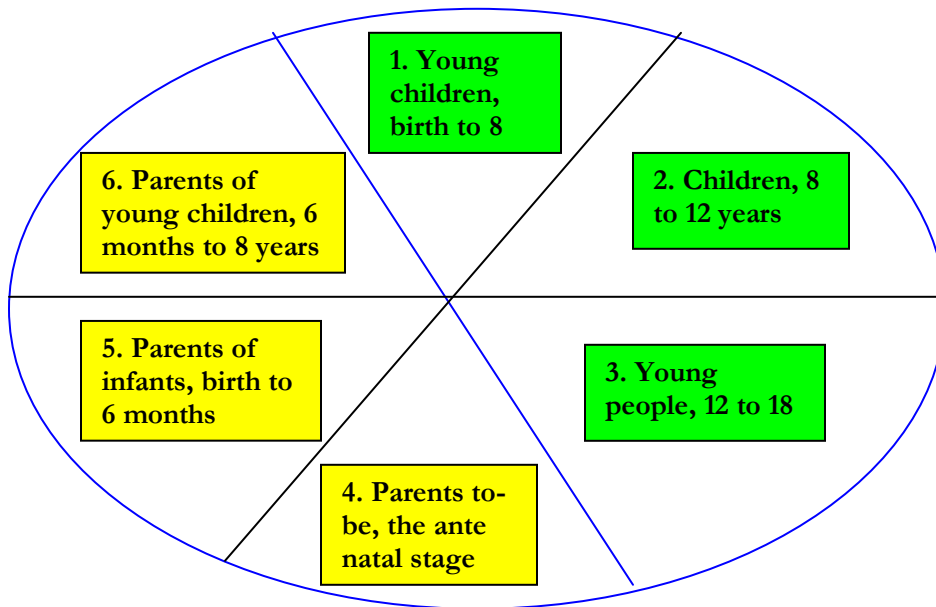
It is significant to note here that all of the internationally referenced cost/benefit studies of ECD services and programmes e.g. Perry Preschool and Abecedarian, only cost the direct service provision, and do not include the wider support costs.

2.2. INPUT PARAMETERS

2.2.1. Model Parameters

The input parameters in the model identify six (6) phases in the life cycle where ECD interventions are recommended (Fig. 2.1) and detail the types of interventions that are required in each phase.

Fig. 2.1 - The Six Main Phases Requiring ECD Interventions



2.2.2. Assessment of Model Parameters

- (a) *Phase 1 – Young Children, Birth to 8*: In general, the elements recommended for costing in this phase are consistent with the definition of ECD services that has been proposed and are relevant to the cost of providing ECD services. Two issues, however, require further consideration within the specific context of the Caribbean:
- The costings for additional teachers and improved ratios for the 6 – 8 age groups need careful consideration. While conceptually, this age range is considered as part of the ECD provision, in reality this service provision is delivered and costed as part of the primary school provision across the region. In this context, isolating one aspect of the provision that is not optimal and including it as part of the cost of ECD is highly

questionable. It raises the question of whether or not the cost of addressing other deficiencies that may be identified should be allocated to ECD on an “as identified” basis. This obviously is not an approach that could be recommended and the modeling will have to decide on whether this element of the cost of this phase – including addressing identified deficiencies - is to be costed as ECD, or as primary education.

The recommendation here is that it be costed as primary education, consistent with the marginal costing approach that has been recommended in this document i.e. even if there was no ECD programme, it will still be necessary to strengthen the primary provision in areas where deficiencies have been identified.

If this recommendation is accepted, then this cost element should be deleted from the model. In this regard, it is instructive to note that the actual application of the CFII model to Jamaica did not cost this aspect on the grounds that “*the models for these provisions are already in use to inform National Education Budgets*” (Section 3, pg. 3, footnote 1).

- The recommended requirements for Management and Development/Support appear to be top heavy, but this is a detail that has to be relevant to the situation and can be refined at that level.

- (b) *Phase 2 – Children, 8 to 12 years*: This phase is part of the primary school service provision and should not be included in an ECD costing model. As indicated earlier, the primary school system has its role to play within the overall education system. One role is to lay the foundation for the development of responsible citizenry, including parenting.

If it is felt that the primary school curriculum is not sufficiently sensitive to parenting issues, then this can be advocated for. But the results of such advocacy will be a strengthening of the primary school service provision, not part of an ECD service delivery model. It is not a relevant cost as far as ECD programming is concerned, although a strengthened output will provide a more supportive environment for the delivery of ECD services. It is therefore recommended that this should not be considered as part of the ECD costing model.

- (c) *Phase 3 - Young People, 12 to 18*: This phase is part of the secondary school service provision and should not be included in an ECD costing model for the same reasons outlined in 2.2.2 (b) above.

- (d) *Phase 4 – Parents to be, the ante natal stage*: Ante-natal programming for parents, including parenting education, is an integral part of the ante-natal service provision provided in most countries across the region. The current programming focuses on the health needs of children and does not include a significant focus on child development. What is required here is a strengthening of the focus on child development within the health system.

The recommendations in the model are consistent with such an approach. What has to be determined here is whether or not the additional costs that will be incurred should be

considered as a strengthening of the service provision by the health sector, or as an ECD service provision. Given that the health sector is already responsible for providing support to parents in the ante-natal stage, it is recommended that this be considered as a strengthening of the health care provision and not as an ECD cost. While this represents a distinct cost to society, this phase should not be included in the ECD costing model, although the ECD sector can/should advocate for such a strengthening of the health service provision as part of the essential supports that contribute to a strong ECD provision.

In addition, regardless of which sector the cost is assigned to, there are two aspects of the proposed costing elements that need to be reviewed:

- The question of whether or not additional personnel are required is questionable, given that what is being proposed is an extension of the content of a programme that is already being delivered.
- If additional personnel are required, the proposed adult to child ratios need to be revisited. The ration of 1:25 is low, given that one person can work with more than one parent group in a single day and will be available to work on more than one day per week.

- (e) *Phase 5 – Parents of infants, birth to 6 months:* A programme of home visitations to all parents of new born children are currently a part of the services provided by the health sector across the region. Like in the ante-natal stage, the current focus is on health related matters – not on child development matters. In some countries, newborns that are privately delivered or home delivered are not visited by the public health system.

The approach taken here is similar to that in 2.2.2 (d) above. The issue here is whether or not the costs that will be incurred should be considered as a strengthening of the service provision by the health sector, or as an ECD service provision. Given that the health sector is already responsible for providing support to parents of infants 0 – 6 months, it is recommended that this be considered as a strengthening of the health care provision and not as an ECD cost. This phase should not be included in the costing model, although the ECD sector can/should advocate for such a strengthening of the health service provision.

- (f) *Phase 6 – Parents of young children, 6 months to 8 years:* The activities recommended for these phase are relevant to the ECD service provision as defined. However, the model of service delivery that was recommended for costing is very top heavy, given that it required the creation of a separate institutional framework. The assumptions to the model also seemed to create a duplication of service provision to the same clientele – home visiting programs to all homes (Section 2, pg. 14), as well as centre-based provisions for all children.

A more cost effective model would be to incorporate such parent education activities into the activities of groups/organizations with whom these parents will come into contact with on a regular basis. For parents with children attending formal day care centres and preschools, this could be incorporated into their ongoing activities; while parents whose children do not attend these formal institutions can be targeted through FBOs, CBOs and

the like. The relevant cost elements here will be the additional training and materials that will have to be provided to these caregivers, FBO and CBO members.

2.2.3. Summary of Recommendations

In summary therefore, it is recommended that the model be refined to include two interventions, and the costs of overall administration and support at the national level¹⁰. The two intervention phases are:

- Phase 1 – Young children, birth to five
- Phase 6 – Provision of parenting support to parents, birth to five

The other phases included in the model are useful support structures that will enhance the delivery of ECD services. However, they are not core elements of an ECD service delivery system.

2.3. OUTPUT PARAMETERS

The main output of the CFII model is a single total cost figure that is provided under the assumption that the government will be responsible for meeting all of these costs. This aspect of the model needs to be expanded to illustrate the impact of alternative policy choices, at a glance.

2.3.1. Major Issues

In this light, it is recommended that the model be structured to address the following major issues and provide answers to the following questions:

(a) Initial Investment

- What is the cost of establishing an early childhood centre as per provisions of minimum standards? Total cost? Cost/child?
- Are there economies of scale with larger centres?
- What is the cost difference between a good quality centre and a poor quality centre?
- What provisions are compromised in the poor quality centre? Why?
- What additional investment is required to provide sufficient centres to enable universal access?

¹⁰ Included in Phase 1 but repeated for completeness

(b) Operating Costs

- What is the annual operating cost of an early childhood centre as per provisions of minimum standards? Total cost? Cost/child?
- Are there economies of scale for larger centres?
- What is the cost difference between a good quality centre and a poor quality centre?
- What provisions are typically compromised in a poor quality centre? Why?

(c) National Administration and Supervision

- What is the cost of the Government's administration and supervision services at current levels of operation?
- What is the cost of Government's administration and supervision services if a fully compliant regulatory and monitoring system is put in place?

(d) Supports for Enhancing the Service Provision

- What is the cost of upgrading all teachers and caregivers to minimum professional qualifications?
- What is the cost of Curriculum Development and Maintenance?
- What is the cost of providing support and training to parents and other guardians?
- What is the cost of ensuring an appropriate transition to primary school?

The answers that are provided should consider these issues from at least three (3) policy perspectives, as detailed below.

2.3.2. Policy Options

- (a) *Full Cost Government Provision* - Under this option, the government is assigned responsibility for the full cost of the service provision to all eligible children and for all development costs related to improving quality in the sector.
- (b) *Full Private Sector Provision* - Under this option, the service provision will be in the hands of the private sector, with parents accessing services through the payment of fees. The government will be responsible for sector oversight and some aspects of the development costs related to improving quality in the sector. This option will also explore the impact of varying the type of sector oversight and development costs that the government will be responsible for. These can include full sector administration and development costs, as well as contributing to the cost of private sector provision through general subventions as well as targeted supports e.g. paying the salaries of all teachers.

- (c) *Government Responsible for Vulnerable Population* - Under this option, the government will be responsible for meeting the cost of the vulnerable population, defined as the children living in poverty and those with special needs; and for all oversight and development costs related to improving quality in the sector. The remainder of the service provision will be accessed by parents through the payment of fees.

The availability of such information will immediately provide the government with the parameters of the answer(s) to the question “How much will I have to spend?” and will provide a clearer basis for consideration of policy options by decision-makers.

2.4. ORGANISATION AND LAYOUT

The layout of the CFII model worksheets is not very user friendly, for the average non-technical user, who may be required to do these costs analyses, like early childhood officers, or finance officers within the Ministry of Education. It attempts to do too many things on the same worksheet – enter the input variables, compute the outputs and analyse the outputs on a cost per child and/or cost per hour basis. As a result, one has to navigate between protected cells and unprotected cells and to scroll down and/or across to see relevant data/sections.

It is recommended that the layout be simplified to include:

- Separate input sheets, organized along common themes, designed to allow the user to only input the data that is relevant to a particular theme in one worksheet. There could therefore be input sheets for the following thematic costs:
 - Management of the sector
 - Sector development costs to include policy and legislative development, curriculum development and teacher training (adequately itemized)
 - Direct investment and service delivery costs at the level of the ECD setting
 - Costs for the parental support activities.
- Separate Output Sheets that contain preset formulae that will automatically compute the outputs, once the input data is entered. There should be at least three outputs, one for each of the policy options recommended above. This could either be presented in separate columns in the same sheet to provide comparison across themes or items, or presented in three separate worksheets. The former approach is recommended.

3. EVOLUTION OF DECISION SUPPORT MODEL

3.1. RATIONALE FOR DECISION SUPPORT MODEL

The attempt to address the issues identified in the foregoing analysis, while responding to the requirements of the Terms of Reference and to the needs identified by the authorities in Anguilla and Belize eventually led to the development of an alternative financial model.

This model was not simply focused on developing a costing for delivery of ECD service at defined levels of service, but was aimed at providing financial information that could be used as a basis for decision making by national authorities. In this respect, it represents a clear departure from the CFII model, and can be considered more as a Decision Support model than as a costing model.

In Anguilla, where the government does not own or operate any preschools, the government had just increased its subvention to teachers, but had no basis for knowing its impact on the overall cost of preschool operations. They were also interested in knowing what would be the impact on the cost of the preschool operations, and the fees that they charged, if the government was to pay the salaries of all preschool teachers.

In Belize, the government had recently instituted a policy of providing financial assistance to preschools on the condition that the preschools that received assistance reduced their fees to the parents. The Government however did not set any benchmarks for the reduced fees as they did not have any information on how the assistance provided would impact on the overall cost of providing the service.

In response to this, the financial model was reconstructed to provide decision support information and to provide answers to the following policy-related questions:

1. What is the investment cost of providing day care and preschool services? At current levels of service? Under a defined Standards regime?
2. What is the operational expenditure per child/month for different types of early childhood services?
3. What is the actual operational costs/child incurred by early childhood institutions operating at different quality levels?
4. What is the operating expenditure profile?
5. How are current costs being financed?
6. Are early childhood services profitable – As currently operated? Under a minimum standard regime?
7. What are the national expenditures on early childhood services?

8. What are the current levels of government expenditures on early childhood services?
9. What would be the cost of various policy actions e.g. paying salaries of all teachers?
Providing services for vulnerable children?

3.2. DESIGN OF DECISION SUPPORT MODEL

This Decision Support Model was designed using Microsoft Excel and uses six (6) separate worksheets.

The first worksheet, Data Input, is used for entry of the key data, while the other five perform the analysis for different aspects of the sector's financing - Startup Costs, Operational Costs, Revenue, Government Supports and Policy Options. This design allows one to change the initial parameters in the Data Input worksheet and to see its impact in the analytical components and on the Policy Options. In some cases however, specific input data for a particular type of analysis is included in the relevant worksheets based on the specificity of the data to the service intervention under consideration e.g. some operating cost data input is required in the Operational Costs worksheet.

The model begins its analysis with the practical experience of the early childhood provider at their current levels of operation and then examines the requirements to move this to the desired levels of care. For consistency of analysis, the level used was that included in the draft Minimum Standards that have been proposed by the CARICOM Secretariat – See summary in Annex 2.

All of the analysis in the model is conducted at three (3) levels, viz:

- The *actual monies received and spent* by the operators and governments.
- The *actual costs and revenues* that were relevant to the operations when in-kind contributions, grants, donations and other forms of non-cash support are factored into the process.

This emerged as a crucial factor, given the extent of NGO and denominational involvement in the sector in both countries. These results demonstrate the costs that would have to borne by an independent operator if one were to attempt to provide the same level of services out of their own resources.

- The *full costs and revenues* that would be applicable if operating at or above the *draft Caricom Minimum Standards*. The requirements for Minimum Standards were determined by an assessment of the operator's current level of service quality and a determination of the changes that would have to be made to meet these Minimum Standards.

With this approach, the analysis did not try to impose a “one size fits all” approach to ECD programming and sought to retain the ability of different operators to differentiate their offerings, while operating within required standards of care.

4. EARLY CHILDHOOD IN ANGUILLA

4.1. COUNTRY BACKGROUND¹¹

Anguilla is the most northerly of the Leeward Islands in the Eastern Caribbean and is located at 18 degrees North Latitude, 63 degrees West Longitude. It is 102 sq. km in size and has a population of 13,638 (2005 estimate).

Anguilla is a British Dependent Territory, having been reverted to that status in 1978 following its breakaway from a Federation with St. Kitts and Nevis, when the Federation was granted statehood in 1967. It is also an Associate Member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

With few natural resources, Anguilla's economy depends heavily on luxury tourism, offshore banking, lobster fishing and remittances from emigrants. Increased activity in the tourism industry has spurred growth in the construction sector. Substantial efforts have been put into developing the offshore financial sector, which is small, but growing.

The economic performance in the 2000 – 2005 period¹² has been positive, with GDP growth in excess of 10% in 2004 and 2005. This has been accompanied by an increase in both incomes and cost of living, with GDP per capita in 2005 being EC\$26,026 and the Consumer Price Index being in excess of 5% for each of 2003 and 2004 – Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 – Selected Economic Indicators

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005 (prel)
GDP at constant factor cost (1990 prices) (EC\$M)	190.76	184.88	190.14	221.39	245.56
Real GDP growth (%)	2.10	(2.0)	2.80	16.40	10.90
GDP per capita at current factor prices (EC\$)	20,740	20,334	20,717	24,564	26,026
Consumer Price Index - % change	2.90	(1.38)	6.94	5.02	3.24

Source: Government Statistical Publications – <http://www.gov.ai/statistics>

A Poverty Survey done in 2002¹³ concluded that “Poverty in Anguilla is low by Caribbean standards – around 20% of households and 23% of the population. Indigence or severe poverty is very low at around 2% of households.” The survey set the indigence and poverty lines at \$3,100 and \$7,900 for an adult per annum.

The Poverty Survey put the unemployment rate at 8%. The situation has changed since then and it is estimated that there is “full employment” in Anguilla at the start of 2006¹⁴.

¹¹ Compiled from data at the Caribbean Community Secretariat website, www.caricom.org and the Government of Anguilla website www.gov.ai

¹² Data for Financial Year 2006 was not available at the time this Report was being prepared

¹³ Caribbean Development Bank, Government of Anguilla, Country Poverty Assessment: Anguilla, December 2002

¹⁴ This is based on the standard economic definition of unemployment and means that all persons that are looking for jobs have been able to find one. It is also evidenced by the fact that Anguilla is now importing labour.

4.2. RANGE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

The Early Childhood sector offers two (2) types of services:

- Daycare for the birth to three age cohorts; and
- Preschool for the three to five age cohorts. Children with special needs are absorbed into regular preschool programming, but the numbers have been minimal.

Day care services are offered throughout the year on weekdays (except for public holidays) from 7:30am to 5:30 pm, while preschool services are offered from 8:30 am to 1:00 pm to coincide with the formal academic calendar. Many parents utilize aftercare services to take care of their children after the completion of preschool, until they leave work at, or after, 4:00 pm.

4.3. MANAGEMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

The responsibility for managing the ECD service provision is shared among two departments, viz:

- The Department of Social Development, which has responsibility for the day care centers and has one staff member whose responsibilities include working with day care centres;
- The Department of Education which has responsibility for the preschool sector and has 1 Curriculum Officer who works with the sector in addition to performing other duties at the primary and secondary levels. The responsibilities of that officer include monitoring the quality of provision, identifying areas for training and providing in class support.

4.4. EVOLUTION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICE PROVISION

4.4.1. Preschool Programming

Formal Early Childhood programming in Anguilla commenced in 1976 with the establishment of a preschool by the Methodist Church. This initiative was supported by the Government which provided input in the form of the secondment of an Infant teacher from the primary school system.

This was followed in 1983 by the establishment of a preschool by the Anglican Church Community. The Government again assisted with the secondment of an Infant teacher from a primary school to head the programme. In that same year, training of preschool teachers at SERVOL¹⁵ in Trinidad was initiated with one teacher being trained every two years. Government contributed to the cost of this training.

¹⁵ SERVOL in Trinidad and Tobago offers an accredited training programme in Early Childhood to Certificate level to which many regional countries send a small number of students annually.

Between 1983 and 2006, nine (9) other preschools were opened in other parts of the island, and enrolment had increased to 411 by the start of 2006. The Government supported this expansion of preschool services in a number of ways:

- By providing supervisory personnel based at the Ministry of Education to work directly with the pre-schools in a supportive function – providing technical guidance, training and materials;
- By enhancing the salaries of all preschool teachers with a subsidy of EC\$200 per month from 2000. This subsidy was increased to \$300 per month from January 2006.
- Financing the cost of training 11 preschool teachers to the Certificate level over an eighteen month period at SUNY Cobleskill in New York. This was done during the 2001-2004 period at a cost of US\$91,000.

At the same time, increased attention was being given to how young children learn and regulations concerning the establishment and organisation of pre-school centres were formulated in 1997 as part of a package of Education Regulations for the entire sector. These regulations have *not yet been approved* by Government.

A preschool curriculum focusing on activities that were developmentally appropriate for a child's age level was also developed and implemented during this period. Implementation activities included the development of a curriculum guide and training in the use of the curriculum guide.

It is also important to note that in 1979, early childhood educators organised themselves into the Early Childhood Education Foundation, which continues to function to this day. Members meet on the last Friday in the month and provide assistance with local training activities for pre-school teachers, organisation of Child Month and the like.

4.4.2. Day Care Programming

Provision of day care services also started during the early 1980's and was conducted on an informal basis with the emphasis on "caring for one's own children or one's family's children". Provision of these services has continued to be done on an informal basis and there is minimal official oversight over the services being offered.

4.5. EARLY CHILDHOOD POLICY ENVIRONMENT

There is no formal policy framework guiding Early Childhood programming in Anguilla.

4.5.1. Day Care Programming

There is no formal oversight of day care programming. The responsibility for the programming currently rests with the Social Development Department, but this department does not have any specific staff or programming in place to monitor, guide or develop the provision of day care services.

A draft Day Care Services Act was developed in 2005 and includes provisions for issuing of licenses and administration of day care centres. This Act has *not yet been approved*. It is instructive to note however that the draft Act places the responsibility for implementation under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Education.

4.5.2. Preschool Programming

Oversight over preschool programming has been assigned to the Ministry of Education. The programming for the preschools is guided by the Five Year Education Development Plan (EDP) 2005 – 2010 which was developed in September 2004, but has *yet to be approved*.

The provisions in the EDP with regards to preschools include plans for review and monitoring of the preschool curriculum, for the review and monitoring of preschool standards, for completing the training of all untrained preschool teachers, for strengthening parenting programmes and for improving the transition between pre-schools and primary schools. However, these do not substitute for a clear policy statement on the orientation and desired outcomes from the early childhood processes to include:

- Overall access to early childhood education, including access for disadvantaged and vulnerable children;
- The desired standards of service delivery in early childhood institutions;
- Supporting structures for the operation of the sector to include processes for the attraction, development and retention of teachers and caregivers; and processes for ensuring that operators perform to the desired standards of service delivery.

Such a clear policy statement is in fact needed to establish the benchmarks against which the interventions proposed in the EDP could be planned and implemented.

A draft Education Act was developed in June 2004 which provides in Article 14 for the provision of “an Early Childhood Services Programme” by a private educational institution for children “three years of age or older but under five years of age, if the parent of the child agrees”.

While this Act has *not yet been approved*, significant points to note here are:

- The early childhood services are to be provided for children at least three years of age. This raises questions of consistency and compatibility with the Day Care Facilities Act given that the latter caters to services for children from six weeks of age. It also raises questions on the degree to which these two aspects of the early childhood service provision will be harmonized, if these two Acts are approved and become law.
- The early childhood services are to be provided by private educational institutions. A critical question here is whether this excludes the government from being a provider of early childhood services.
- Parental agreement is necessary for provision of early childhood services. It is therefore not considered as a part of the compulsory education system.

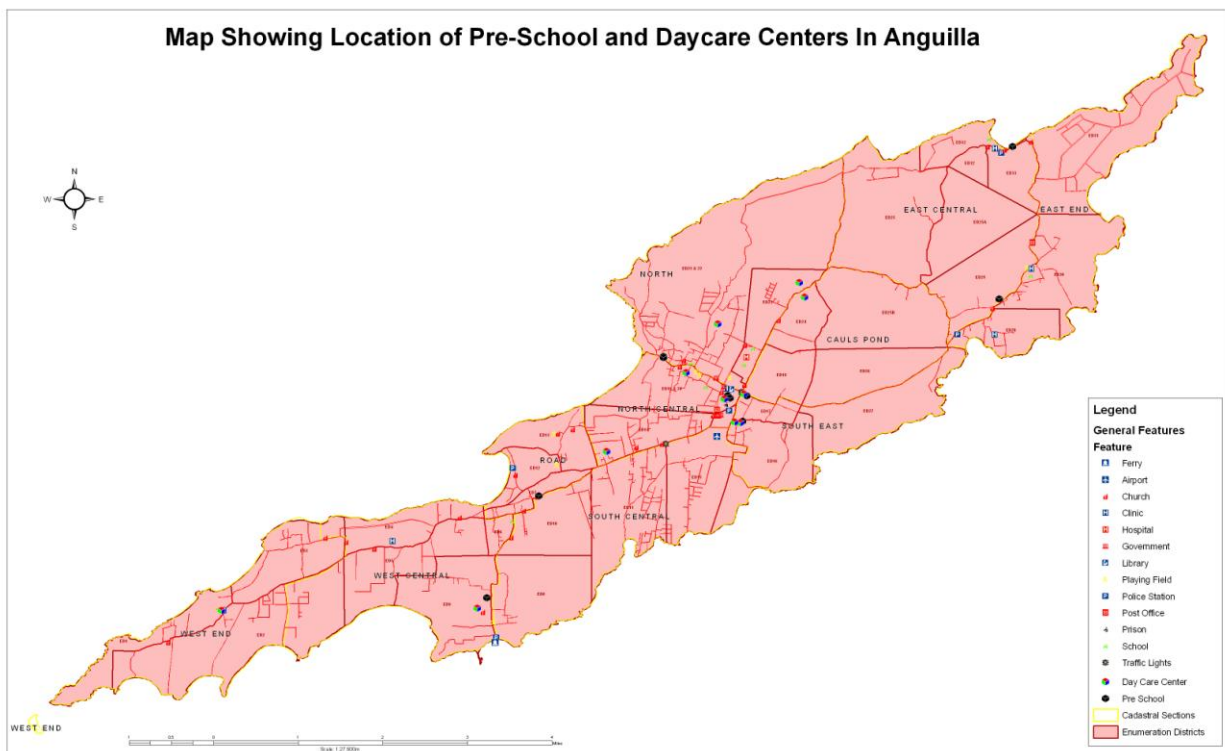
There is therefore a need for a more in-depth review of the desired outcomes of the programming for the children between birth and five and on the modalities for achieving these desired outcomes, including the role of government in the process. One output of such a review should be the development of a clear policy statement on the vision, goals and strategies for the advancement of early childhood programming in Anguilla. This could then be used to further revise the Education Development Plan, the Day Care Facilities Act and the Education Act, to ensure consistency and compatibility. Following this, they all should be submitted for formal approval as soon as possible.

4.6. STATUS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

4.6.1. Early Childhood Institutions

There are 21 early childhood institutions catering for the birth to five age cohort - 10 day care centers and 11 preschools – See Fig 4.1.

Fig 4.1 – ECD Facilities Location Map in Anguilla¹⁶



7 of the day care centres are privately owned and 3 are owned by an NGO while 10 of these preschools are owned by NGOs (mainly churches) and 1 is owned by a private operator. 56% of the institutions are located in the rural areas. Fig 4.1 shows the distribution of these early childhood institutions throughout the island.

¹⁶ Government of Anguilla, Statistics Department

4.6.2. Participation in Formal Early Childhood Programming

(a) Day Care

Based on the available data (Table 4.2) for the enrolment in day care centres, 17% of the birth to two cohorts is enrolled in formal centres.

Table 4.2- Participation in ECD Programming

Type of Service	# Eligible Children¹⁷	Enrolment	% Participation
Day Care	670	115	17
Preschools	403	411	100

However, it is common knowledge that there are informal day care centres in operation – many of them extensions of child care arrangements that were initially intended to accommodate one’s family and other relatives. The number of such operators and the number of children that use these services are not known.

The existence of these modalities is implicitly recognized in the draft Day Care Facilities Act which provides for three categories of operators, viz:

- Small family-based day care – where the day care facility is situated at the residence of the applicant and is to provide care for not more than three children.
- Large family-based day care - where the day care facility is situated at the residence of the applicant and is to provide care for not more than eight children.
- Centre-based day care – where the day care facility is to provide care for more than eight children.

The question of the cost of accessing such services will also need to be taken into consideration. Fees currently range between EC\$300 and EC\$375 per month.

(b) Preschools

The available data (Table 3.1) indicates that 100% of the eligible children participate in preschools. This was verified by analyzing the current kindergarten classes in all the primary schools to determine the number of children who had not attended pre-school. The results showed that only one (1) child had not attended preschool. Another one (1) had attended for less than one year and another fourteen (14) had attended for only one year.

The data on the number of children attending for only one year is significant, as the reason for this is the inability of the parents to afford the requisite school fees for the duration of the two year program¹⁸. Instances were also found where the churches allow children whose parents

¹⁷ Based on estimates from the Government of Anguilla Statistics Department. The last official Census was done in 2001

¹⁸ Based on discussions with operators and parents

cannot afford to pay the fees to still attend the preschool. The pre-school operators indicated that on average 25% of the parents do not pay their fees on time.

There is therefore an underlying problem of the cost of access which could prevent children from participating in pre-school education in the future. The costs (fees) have been rising with the current school fees ranging between \$300 and \$525 per term. Some parents also have to pay for after care services which average \$125 per month.

4.6.3. Service Quality

There are no national reports available on the overall quality of ECD services in Anguilla. However, a ranking of the service providers by the Ministry staff indicated that most of them are operating below the desired quality levels, viz:

Table 4.3 – Quality Ranking for Early Childhood Institutions

	Day Care	Preschools	Comments
On Standard	1	3	Meets or exceeds minimum standard ¹⁹
Below Standard	0	4	Below standard, but could reach standard with targeted interventions
Poor	10	4	Below standard and in need of significant interventions

The sample survey conducted for this Consultancy identified a number of weaknesses that need to be addressed. In the day care centres, the major deficiencies identified were in the areas of health and safety - with none of the centres having been visited by the Health Department; inadequacy of the teaching and learning environments – mostly lacking in stimulation, with a focus on meeting children’s physiological needs and inadequate caregiver-child ratios - as high as 18:1 in one case.

In the preschools, the major deficiencies were identified in the teaching and learning environments, especially in the use of books and manipulatives and in the development of social skills and language skills.

The deficiencies in the both the day care centres and preschools point to the need for the introduction and enforcement of supervision and monitoring systems, for implementation of structured curriculum and for the training of caregivers and teachers.

¹⁹ Draft CARICOM Handbook on Developing Policy, Regulation and Standards in Early Childhood Development Services.

(a) Supervision and Monitoring Systems

There are no supervision and monitoring system for the day care sector. There is one in place for the preschool sector and there are provisions in the draft Education Regulations for preschools to comply with certain minimum standards of health, safety and programming content. However, these regulations have never been approved and as a result, the ministry lacks the authority to take action in cases where there is a breach of these provisions.

(b) Curriculum

There is a national curriculum in place for the preschools that provides for the delivery of a developmentally-appropriate early childhood experience. The problem is that the curriculum is not consistently implemented, due in part to the low levels of knowledge and skill by the teachers and owner/operators.

(c) Caregivers and Teachers

The situation with teachers and caregivers is a particularly challenging one as highlighted by the following:

- *ECD Knowledge and Skills* – The minimum qualification for lead staff at all levels is the completion of secondary education. The minimum qualification for support staff is similar, except for the day care centers where “some secondary education” is deemed acceptable. It is not surprising therefore, that none of the day care caregivers and 51% (20 out of 39) of the preschool operators have had any formal training in early childhood development. This exists in a context where none of the owners/operators have any training in early childhood development.

It must be noted however that the Government has invested heavily in the last five years on preschool teacher training. Eleven (11) teachers were trained at SUNY/Cobleskill in New York at a cost of US\$91,000 and an additional 11 have received support for training at either SERVOL or VINSAVE in the region.

- *Salaries* are very low with the average salary of a preschool teacher being \$800 - \$1100 per month (before a direct Government subsidy of \$300 per month).
 - Such salaries only attract person with minimal educational qualifications as the starting salary in the public service is \$2197 per month – with 4 CXC passes, including English. One reason advanced for the low salary is that preschools operate for only half of the day. The teachers are therefore expected to do other jobs in the afternoon and some of them work on a part-time basis in hotels and other companies. Others substitute at the primary schools when the teachers are out on training.
 - *Turnover* – there is a high level of staff turnover among preschool teachers.
- (d) *Transition to Primary* – A related issue is the question of the transition from preschool to primary school. The evidence suggests that the transition is abrupt with children experiencing a drastically different approach to teaching and learning at the kindergarten

level. One reason for this is the lack of training of the kindergarten teachers in early childhood methods. Of the ten (10) kindergarten teachers in the primary schools, five (5) are trained teachers, but only one has had any specific early childhood training. The other five are not trained teachers and of these, only one (1) has had any exposure to early childhood methodologies.

4.6.4. Parental Involvement

There is very little attention being paid to parenting involvement and participation. There is no requirement or programme for formal parenting programmes in place and most preschools hold one parent teacher meeting per term, while the day care centres do not have any parenting activities. Other methods that are used to keep parents informed include monthly newsletters, bulletin boards and the like.

4.6.5. Summary of Challenges

The foregoing has highlighted a number of challenges that have to be addressed by Anguilla in order to achieve the full benefits of early childhood programming. The challenges relate to provisions for access to early childhood programming, initiatives to improve the quality of the programming and overall strengthening of the management of the early childhood service provision.

4.6.6. Responding to the Challenges

(a) Access

The first step in addressing *access for the birth to three cohorts* is to determine the current situation as regards care for these children. With the economy at full employment and women making up a significant proportion of the work force in the tourism industry, the question of adequate care for children is a matter of national importance.

The indications are that most of these children are being cared for in low quality formal and informal settings. However, the lack of information on the coverage of these settings and the extent of their use by parents, make it impossible to determine whether there really is an access problem, or whether the emphasis needs to be placed on improving quality only.

It is therefore recommended that as a matter of *top priority*, that a survey be conducted to determine the modalities being used to care for children between the ages of birth and three when their parents are out to work.

The question of *access for the four and five year olds* is primarily that of the ability of their parents to continue to afford the cost of preschool education. This will be directly influenced by the financial strategies pursued by the government in relation to the early childhood sector and will be addressed in Section 3.7.

(b) Quality of Early Childhood Provision

This is an area of major concern across the spectrum and extending to the transition to kindergarten. The major concerns are the adherence to standards of health and safety – especially for the birth to three cohorts and the lack of adequate developmental programming across the spectrum.

These problems can be addressed through the following:

- **Initiatives to enhance the status of early childhood caregivers and teachers**, thus increasing people’s motivation to want to work in these positions. Strategies to achieve this would include:
 - establishing minimum skill requirements for these positions thus making them professionally listed positions within the public service job classification system;
 - providing the training for persons interested in working in these positions; and
 - increasing the remuneration for these teachers so that they become more competitive with other positions requiring similar skill sets.
- **The establishment of a regulatory framework for the early childhood sector comprised of Minimum Standards for the operation of early childhood facilities, which are backed by regulations that have the force of law.** The implementation of these Standards should be supported by a strong monitoring and enforcement function within the Ministry of Education that has the authority to implement penalties and other sanctions, when standards are not being adhered to.

Provisions to this effect have already been included in both the draft Day Care Facilities Act and the draft Education Regulations and could form the basis for a more comprehensive regulatory system based on the recommendations contained in the Draft Caricom Handbook on Developing Policy, Regulation and Standards in Early Childhood Development Services.

- **Managing the transition to primary.** This can be improved by providing training and orientation to the kindergarten teachers to ensure a smooth transition process and by the development of specific transition plans as a joint activity between the early childhood curriculum officer and the teachers/principals at the primary schools.

(c) Management of Early Childhood Service Provision

The management of the Early Childhood Service Provision could be further strengthened by the following actions:

- **Development and approval of a comprehensive Policy Framework on Early Childhood.** Such a Policy Framework should detail the objectives and outcomes to be achieved for children during these early years, as well as the strategies to be followed in achieving these outcomes, including the involvement and participation of parents. Such a

framework should be developed in a participatory fashion with the involvement of key stakeholders – parents, operators, teachers, caregivers. Once approved, this would form the basis for review and approval of the Standards and Regulations governing the sector.

- **Rationalisation of the Management of the Sector.** The current situation is confusing – with the Social Welfare Department nominally responsible for day care, but the draft Day Care Facilities Act including provisions for matters to be referred to the Minister of Education and the Education Advisory Board.

It is recommended that the provisions of the draft Day Care Facilities Act be used as the starting point in this process and that the management of the entire sector be placed in the hands of one unit within the Ministry of Education, with a *full time* officer assigned to the early childhood function. Such an approach would result in better outcomes for children and more efficient utilisation of resources, viz:

- One entity would be responsible for the development of children from birth and would therefore provide for a more harmonised approach to child development, including management of the transition between the different levels. This will result in better coordination of the curriculum offerings, more consistency in the methodologies being applied and a more consistent development experience for the participating children.
- More efficient use of resources in monitoring, field supervision and regulation as one officer could now visit and work with all facilities in a geographical region with one visit. A second officer will be required if the day care and preschool are managed by different departments.
- Better coordination of training and development opportunities for caregivers and teachers, thus enabling the delivery of more integrated training and development opportunities.

Different models of this integrated approach to early childhood management are already in use in Jamaica, St. Kitts-Nevis, Dominica, Trinidad and Tobago and is now under active consideration in St. Lucia.

4.7. FINANCIAL FLOWS²⁰

4.7.1. Costs of Direct Service Providers

Separate cost assessments were done for investment/establishment costs and for recurrent operational costs. Both these assessments were done for three (3) levels of costs, viz:

- Actual expenditures incurred by the centres.

²⁰ Based on the analysis done with the Decision Support Model

- Actual costs incurred, which was the sum of the actual expenditures and the support received including in-kind contributions, donations, grants, government subventions and the like.
- Costs that would be incurred if the center’s operations were to be classified as meeting minimum standards. This latter assessment was based on the results of the field surveys which specifically assessed the actions that would be needed and the costs that would be incurred in upgrading to minimum standards, based on the recommendations of the draft Caricom Handbook.

As far as possible, startup costs are expressed in cost per child, while operational costs for preschool are expressed in cost per child per term and for day care costs as cost per child per month. These time periods are used in the analysis as these are the time periods used for the payment of fees by parents. All decision-making therefore revolves around these time periods.

All cost data is presented in local currency – Eastern Caribbean dollars (EC\$).

These analyses showed the following:

(a) Investment Costs

The establishment cost of a day care centre, build to Minimum Standard ranged from \$9,020 - \$10,411 per child, while that of a preschool ranged from \$9,044 to \$9,582 per child – Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 – Investment/Establishment Costs

		Preschool	Day Care
Actual Expenditures	High	2,656	7,426
	Low	104	0
Actual Costs	High	13,957	25,542
	Low	2,656	179
Minimum Standard	High	9,582	10,411
	Low	9,044	9,020

The actual costs incurred varied in the case of the day care centres for a number of important reasons, viz:

- One of the centres in the sample reflected a much higher cost because it had a capacity to accommodate at least 25 children, but was operating with 17; and
- The numbers clearly illustrated the strategies being used to minimize cost and return a profit on the operation. The high cost centre, for example, provided books, manipulatives, outdoor play equipment, television and the like, while the low cost operator only provided a television and play pens.

In the case of the preschools, one of the schools in the sample reported a higher cost per child, again influenced by the number of children in attendance, while the others were lower, reflecting inadequate space requirements.

One of the factors that emerged here is the issue of aligning the design capacity of the centre with the expected demand. Some of the operators highlighted the impact of demographic trends, where a school located in one area was no longer necessary due to changing demographic trends.

It is important to note that when the costs are adjusted for the Minimum Standards, that the range of costs were reduced significantly, even though the differences in strategies were maintained.

(b) Operational Costs

Table 4.5 – Operational Expenditures

The total operational cost of a day care centre operating at Minimum Standard ranged from \$996 to \$1,070 per child per month, while that of a preschool ranged from \$1,716 to \$2,492 per child per term – Table 4.5. These costs are significantly higher than the actual costs being incurred and the actual expenditures being incurred.

		Preschool	Day Care
Actual Expenditures	High	776	353
	Low	501	144
Actual Costs	High	1,183	521
	Low	979	144
Minimum Standard	High	2,492	1,070
	Low	1,716	996

In the case of the preschools, this difference is a reflection of two factors, viz:

- The levels of salaries being paid to teachers are a reflection of the skill levels of the teachers being employed. The Minimum Standard, for example, assumes a principal operating at the degree level and earning a monthly salary of \$5,428 in line with the Public Service salaries for that level of qualification and responsibility. The highest salary currently paid to a Principal is \$2,000. Similarly, the Minimum Standard assumes that at least 50% of the teachers are trained and are receiving a salary of \$3,284, that of an Uncertificated Teacher, compared to the \$800 to \$110 currently being paid respectively.
- The size of the school population and its impact on the spreading of fixed costs e.g. a trained Principal. The lowest operational cost per child was returned by the school with the highest enrolment – 86. The enrolment of the other schools in the sample was 27 and 18. The higher enrolment enabled the larger school to spread its fixed costs – Principal, Maintenance, Utility, Equipments – over a large base and therefore was able to operate at a lower cost per child per term.

In the case of the day care centres, the higher costs at Minimum Standard also reflected the impact of paying trained caregivers a competitive salary, as well as the introduction of the required adult/child ratios.

The foregoing clearly illustrates the impact of economies of scale on the cost of operations and raises the question as to whether or not here is an optimal size (number of students, scale of equipment) from a cost-benefit perspective.

(c) Distribution of Direct Operational Expenditure

Tables 4.6 and 4.7 illustrate the average distribution of direct operational expenses from the two sets of samples. They clearly illustrate the impact of personnel costs in the expenditure mix – 83% in the preschool and 76% in the day care centre, increasing to 93% and 95% under a Minimum Standard regime.

Table 4.6 – Distribution of Pre-school Operating Expenses

	Actual Cost	Minimum Standard
Personnel	85	93
Utility	4	2
Administrative Overheads	1	1
Other Operational Costs	7	3
In-kind Contributions	2	1
Total (%)	100	100

Table 4.7 – Distribution of Day Care Operating Expenses

	Actual Cost	Minimum Standard
Personnel	76	95
Utility	14	3
Administrative Overheads	0	0
Other Operational Costs	9	2
In-kind Contributions	1	0
Total (%)	100	100

(d) Impact of Quality Differences

Table 4.8 illustrates the actual operational costs/child incurred by centres operating at different quality levels. It shows that the cost range is relatively small, especially for the preschools. The reason for this is that the fixed nature of the operational cost, with a high personnel content, means that all centres face broadly similar operational costs with the major scope for differences being in the expenditure on equipment (an upfront investment cost), books and manipulatives. It emphasises the fact that many differences in quality are the result of the skill levels of the teachers and their ability to create a stimulating learning environment and reinforces the reports from the sample survey, as to the nature and causes of the main quality problems that were identified.

Table 4.8 – Impact of Quality Differences

	Preschool	Day Care
On Standard	1,166	521
Below Standard	979	220
Poor	1,183	144

In the case of the day care centres, the wide range of costs reflects the differences in the adult/child ratio, where the low cost “weak” centre was operating with a ratio of 18:1.

4.7.2. Financing the Direct Service Provision

(a) Financing of Direct Service Provision

Table 4.9 and Figs. 4.2 and 4.3 illustrate the major revenues sources from which the costs of the early childhood service provision are met.

In the case of the preschools, the main revenue sources are fees paid by parents (34%), charitable and in-kind contributions (29%) and government support (27%). The picture is markedly different for the day care centres, where 97% of the revenue comes from fee payments by parents.

This difference in revenue sources reflects the high non-governmental input into the preschool sector and the fact that the government has given some attention to that sector – features that do not exist in the day care sector.

Table 4.9 – Financing the Direct Service Provision

	Pre-school	Day Care
Parental Fee Payments	34	97
Government Income Support	27	0
Fund Raising	3	0
In-kind Contributions	29	1
Donations	7	2
Total (%)	100	100

Fig 4.2 – Preschool Revenue Sources in Anguilla

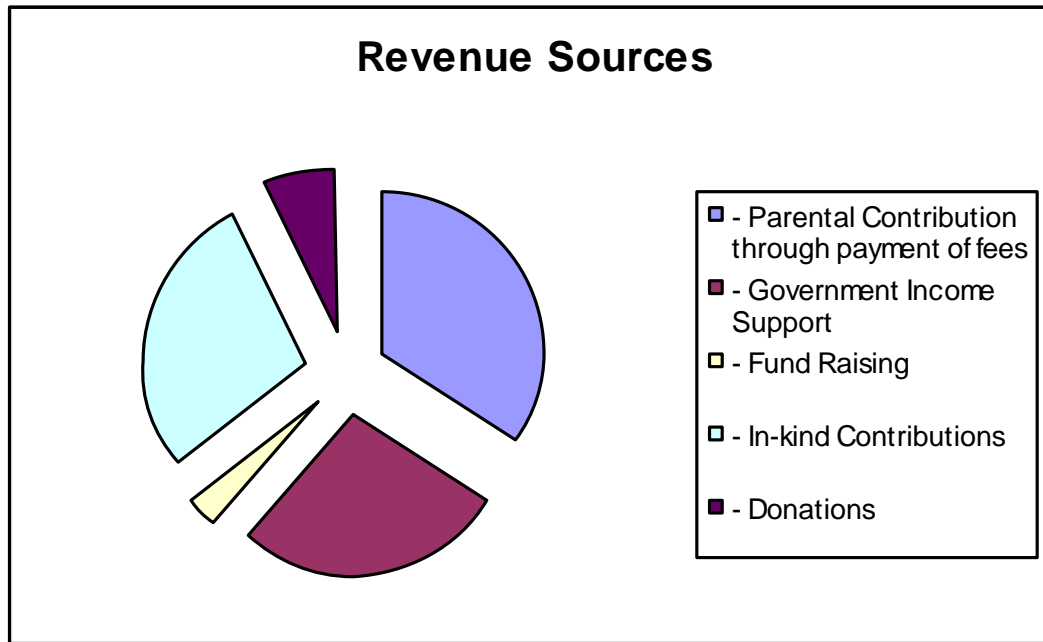
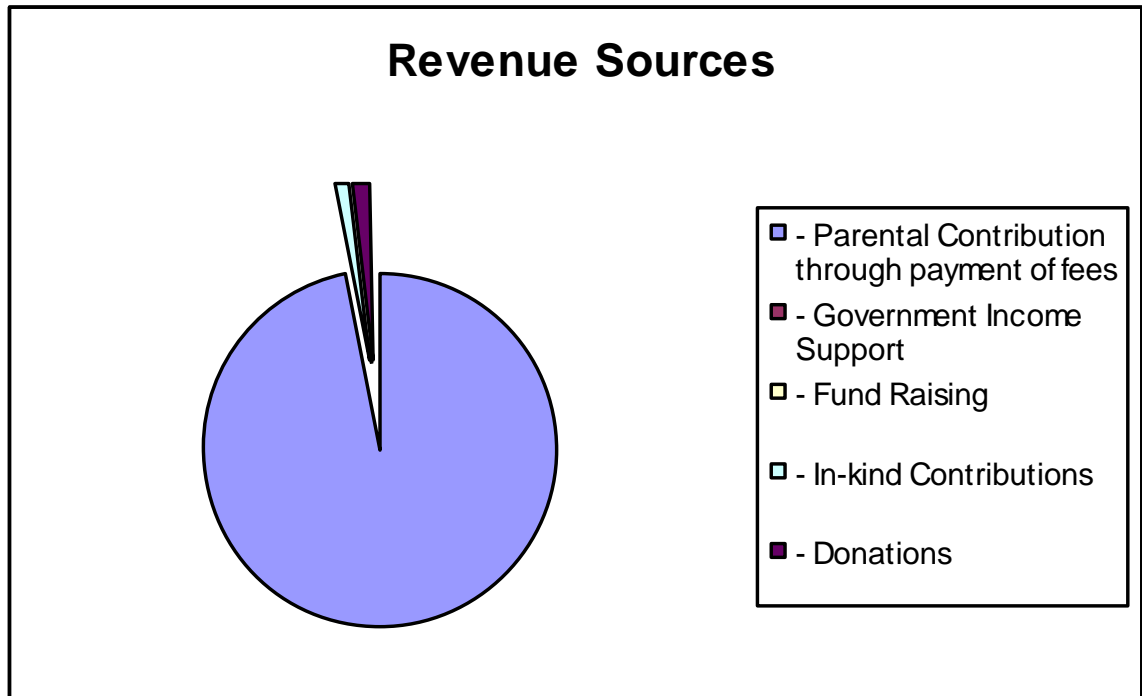


Fig 4.3 – Day Care Revenue Sources in Anguilla



(b) Profitability of Direct Service Provision

Table 4.10 shows that at current operating costs, fees structures and levels of government support, preschools are marginally able to cover their costs, with the profitability ranging from \$18 - \$197 per child per term. If the analysis is adjusted to provide for the Minimum Standards, with no change in the fees charged and the government contributions, the operations move to a significant loss ranging from \$352 to \$1,406 per child per term, with the centres experiencing the higher losses being those which cannot take advantage of the economies of scale referred to earlier.

Table 4.10 – Profitability of Direct Service Provision

		Preschool	Day Care
Actual Expenditures	High	174	232
	Low	32	(33)
Actual Costs	High	197	242
	Low	18	(202)
Minimum Standard	High	(352)	(610)
	Low	(1,406)	(750)

In the case of the day care centres, the profitability ranges from a loss of \$202 per child per month to a profit of \$242 per child per month. The centres that are currently making a profit are those that cannot meet the Minimum Standards with their current operations. When adjustments are made for the Minimum Standards, with no change in the fees charged, all operate at a significant loss – from \$750 per child per month to \$1,406 per child per month.

These results highlight a factor that will be central to all attempts to improve the quality of the early childhood provision in Anguilla i.e. how does one finance the additional costs that will be incurred in improve quality to the Minimum Standards?

4.7.3. Government Support to Early Childhood Sector

The Anguilla Government does not provide any support to the day care sector, while it provides a range of supports to the preschool sector.

Table 4.11 – Government Support to Preschool Sector (2006)

Government supports to the preschool sector comes in four forms as illustrated in Table 4.11, viz:

	Pre-school	Day Care
Government Supervisory Services	240,111	0
Subventions to preschools	214,200	0
Teacher Salary Subsidies	140,400	0
Teacher Training and Development	70,000	0
Total (EC\$)	664,711	0

- Direct subventions of \$600 per child per year to all preschools that meet space and teacher/child ratio. 87.5% is paid directly to the school and the remainder is retained by the Ministry of Education and distributed to preschools in the form of books and materials;
- Subsidies to teachers of \$300 per month that are paid directly to them.
- Provision of supervisory services at an annual cost of \$240,111 (2006);
- Teacher training and development, budgeted at \$70,000 in 2007.

Table 4.12 – Relative Preschool Expenditure (2006)

The total annual support of \$664,711 represents 4% of the annual budget for the education sector – Table 4.12.

	EC\$
Education Budget	15,429,704
Preschool Expenditure	664,711
Proportion spent on preschools (%)	4

4.7.4. National Expenditure on Early Childhood Services

Table 4.13 – National ECD Expenditures (2006)

When the contributions from all sources are accounted for, Anguilla currently spends \$1,343,992 per year on preschool services and \$277,124 on day care services. What is significant about this is that *80% of the monies spent on preschools (\$1,058,485) and 61% of the monies spent on day care services (169,181) are spent on services that do not meet Minimum Standards* – Table 4.13.

	Pre-school	Day Care
On Standard	258,507	107,943
Below Standard	479,268	0
Poor	579,217	169,181
Total	1,343,992	277,124

4.7.5. Financial Implications of Strengthening the Early Childhood Sector²¹

The analysis in Section 4.6.6 highlighted a number of challenges that have to be addressed if Anguilla is to receive the full benefits of early childhood programming. This section will examine the financial implications of the options discussed in that section.

(a) Increasing Access

It was recommended that improving access at the day care level required a preliminary analysis of the extent and nature of the problem. Responding to this would require a field survey of the modalities being used to care for children in the birth to three age group. There are a number of options for carrying out this survey – from assigning the activity to the Statistics department to outsourcing it to independent consultants/agencies. The cost of the latter option should not exceed \$25,000.

Access at the preschool level, was described as a function of parental ability to afford the increasing cost of preschool education. This was reinforced by the analysis which showed that attaining the Minimum Standards would incur additional costs that parents will find it difficult to afford. The churches and charitable organisations have also indicated that the increasing operational costs are becoming very burdensome for them.

Table 4.14 – Operating Costs/Minimum Standard

The analysis shows that at Minimum Standard, the maximum operational cost per child per term will be \$2,494²² distributed as per Table 4.14. The current average revenue intake is \$1,195 per child with the parents and charitable organisations providing \$875 (73%) of that.

	Actual Cost	%
Personnel	2,319	93
Utility	50	2
Administrative Overheads	25	1
Other Operational Costs	75	3
In-kind Contributions	25	1
Total	2,494	100

If one assumes that the parents and charitable organizations cannot afford to increase their contributions, the only option left is for the Government to make up the difference – by adding \$1,299 per child per term to the \$320 per child per term that they are currently paying. This will result in a maximum cost of \$1,619 per child per term, or \$1,981,656 per year being provided as income support to preschools.

This will be a 239% increase (\$1,589,976) on the current support being provided (\$664,711) and will increase the expenditure on preschools to 14.6% of the current education budget – from the current level of 4%.

²¹ All costings of consultancies are based on the experience of regional agencies like UNICEF and CCDC in performing similar activities.

²² Used higher cost as both preschools with small enrolments had similar costs. Small enrolments are the norm.

(b) Improving Quality

The recommendations for improving quality addressed teacher qualifications and skills, introduction of a regulatory framework and improved management of the transition to primary school.

Implementation of the recommendations on teacher training requires two sets of actions:

- ***Providing training opportunities for the 19 untrained teachers*** – The government has already invested \$247,238 (US\$91,000) in training eleven (11) teachers at SUNY/Cobleskills in New York - \$22,476 per teacher. If this approach is used for the remaining 19 teachers that are not trained, the additional costs that will be incurred will be in the region of \$427,047. This is a high cost option and represents a maximum outlay for this activity. The Government is exploring other options for accessing the required training at lower costs. Any effort in this regard will also have to consider a process where new teachers can be trained to replace those that move on for one reason or the other.
- ***Increasing the remunerations for those teachers once they are professionally trained in ECD.*** Teachers within the system who attain the Certificate in Early Childhood education are classified as an Uncertificated Teacher if they have a minimum of 3 CXC passes and as a Teaching Assistant, if they do not have the minimum CXC requirements. The minimum salary for an Uncertificated Teacher is \$3,284 per month and for a Teaching Assistant is \$2,686 per month. If all teachers are trained to the Certificated Teacher Level, the cost of paying them competitive salaries will be \$1,536,912. The government already pays \$140,400 in subsidies to teachers' salaries and this would therefore represent an increase of \$1,396,512.

It is important to note that this will not necessarily be an increased cost over that discussed in the access section, as the cost of trained teachers was also built into that analysis of operating at Minimum Standard.

With regards to the recommendations on establishing a Regulatory Framework and Minimum Standards, there are a number of options for doing this - from assigning the activity to the Legal Department in Anguilla to outsourcing it to independent consultants/agencies. The cost of the latter option should be a one-off cost and should not exceed \$75,000. Implementation and follow-up will require an additional staff member assigned to managing the regulatory function within the Ministry of Education at an annual recurrent cost of \$65,136 (Grade E -= Degree level training). The existing ministry support staff can provide the necessary support.

The recommendations for managing the transition to primary require the design and implementation of training and orientation workshops for the kindergarten teachers. There will be no need to increase their salaries as they already receive competitive salaries as part of the primary school system. The cost of these training workshops should not exceed \$5,000.

(c) Strengthening Management

The recommendations on strengthening management require two sets of actions:

- **Development and Approval of a comprehensive policy framework** – there are a range of options for doing this from assigning the activity to the Ministry of Education’s Planning department to outsourcing it to independent consultants/agencies. The cost of the latter option should not exceed \$25,000.
- **Rationalisation of the Management of the Sector** through the integration of responsibilities for managing the day care and preschool sectors – this will require the removal of non-early childhood responsibilities from the ECD Curriculum Officer and the reassignment of these duties among the other curriculum officers. This will leave the ECD Curriculum Officer available to work with the sector on a full-time basis. This will not immediately require any new employment and would therefore not attract any increase in personnel cost.

(d) Summary

Table 4.15 – Additional Costs to Strengthen ECD (EC\$)

In summary therefore, implementation of the recommendations will cost the Government:

- a one-off cost of \$557,047 - an additional 3.6% of the education budget - 77% of which will be invested in preschool teacher training; and

Actions	One-off costs	Recurrent Costs
Increasing Access		
- Day Care Survey	- 25,000	
- Payment of Additional Fees to support Minimum Standard		- 1,589, 976
Improving Quality		
- Teacher Training	- 427,047	
- Teacher Remuneration		- 1,396,512
- Regulatory Framework	- 75,000	- 65,136
- Training KG Teachers	- 5,000	
Improving Management		
- Policy Framework	- 25,000	
TOTAL	557,047	1,655,112²³

- an increase in annual recurrent costs for preschool operations of \$1,655,112 – Table 4.15.

There will be additional costs for strengthening the day care sector. These cannot be quantified at this time given the absence of information on the types, numbers and nature of operations of the service providers in that sub-sector.

4.7.6. Resource Allocation Processes and Sustainability

The Ministry of Finance has indicated that its modus operandi is to consider proposals from departments on their merit and to provide support once the justification is sound and funds are available.

The positive economic growth experienced in Anguilla in the recent past has placed the government in a very strong fiscal position. One of the major achievements has been the establishment of Fiscal Reserves that will be maintained at a minimum target of 45 days of

²³ The additional teacher remuneration has already been taken into consideration in the payment of additional fees that was analysed under the Increasing Access heading.

recurrent expenditures. The government also believes that it is in a position to maintain the strong growth rate achieved in recent years, with an average of 5% to 7% annual growth deemed sustainable into the future, thus providing a sustainable basis for all current and new initiatives.

Against this background, the Government has declared its intention to “put the social sector first” in developing Anguilla – and this includes the early childhood sector. This was clearly demonstrated during the 2007 Budget, when the allocations to preschools were increased from \$500 per child per month, to \$600 per child per month.

It is therefore reasonable to assume that opportunities now exist for the further development of the early childhood sector, once the case for such can be made. The basis for building such a strong case exists in the science of early childhood development and its conclusions on the impacts of early childhood development programming on children’s growth and development; in the developments on early childhood taking place in other countries in the region; and in the regional initiatives that are being led by the Caricom Secretariat, to name a few.

It is therefore up to the Ministry of Education to present the case for increased resources to develop the sector so that Anguillan children can reap the benefits of high quality early childhood programming.

5. EARLY CHILDHOOD IN BELIZE

5.1. COUNTRY BACKGROUND²⁴

Belize is situated on the Caribbean coast of Central America with Mexico bordering on the north and part of the west, and Guatemala on the southwest and is located between 15° 45' north latitude and 18° 30' west longitude. It is 22,966 sq. km in size and has a population of 301,300 (2006 estimate). The population at the time of the 2000 Census was 249,800, but this has increased by 20.6% in the intervening years, partly as a result of high rates of immigration²⁵.

Belize was originally part of the Mayan empire of Central America which flourished between 300 and 900 AD. The country changed hands between Spain and Britain from the early 1600s until 1862, when the country became British Honduras. It was renamed Belize in 1973 and gained independence from Britain in September 1981. It became a member of CARICOM in May 1974.

The population and culture reflect its storied history with the ethnic composition of the population varying from one part of the country to the other. The country is divided into six (6) districts, viz:

Fig 5.1 – Map of Belize



²⁴ Compiled from data at the Caribbean Community Secretariat website, www.caricom.org and the Government of Belize website <http://www.belize.gov.bz>

²⁵ National Poverty Elimination Strategy, 2007 – 2011, pg. 9

Table 5.1 – Population Distribution

- The northern districts of Corozal and Orange Walk – that consist of predominantly Mestizo and Spanish-speaking ethnic groups;
- The Belize district which is comprised primarily of English-speaking Creole; and
- The Cayo district, located in the centre of the country which has a mixed population.
- The southern districts of Stann Creek and Toledo – that consist of Garifuna and Mayan ethnic groups respectively;

District	Population	%
Corozal	35,800	12
Orange Walk	46,000	15
Belize	90,000	30
Cayo	70,000	23
Stann Creek	31,100	10
Toledo	28,400	9
TOTAL	301,300	100

53% of the population lives in the central districts of Belize and Cayo, while 27% live in the northern districts and 19% live in the southern districts – Table 5.1.

The economic performance in the 2000 – 2005 period has been relatively stable with GDP growth ranging averaging in the region of 4% – Table 5.2. Deficit reduction and macro economic stability are the major fiscal challenges to government following a rapid build-up of government and government-guaranteed debt in the 1998 to 2003 period which led to downgrades in the country’s credit rating. Fiscal performance in 2006 was positive with revenue collections in 2006 exceeding targets in all major revenue categories.²⁶

Agriculture is the leading economic sector. Efforts are advancing to diversify into non-traditional crops such as papaya, cucumber and ginger. Other export crops include cocoa, vegetables and tropical fruit. Marine products have become an important source of foreign exchange as well as being a vital domestic food source. The forestry industry has been growing in recent years. Government has initiated a national reforestation programme, adding new impetus to this sector's development. There is also a nascent petroleum industry, which was expected to begin generating revenues to the Government from the end of the 2006 Fiscal Year.

Table 5.2 – Selected Economic Indicators

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005 ²⁷	2006
GDP at constant factor cost prices (BZ\$M) ²⁸	1,746	1,835	2,006	2,099	2,172	2,259 ²⁹
Real GDP growth (%) ³⁰	4.9	5.1	9.3	4.6	3.5	4.0 ³¹
Real GDP per capita ³² (BZ\$)	6,784	6,918	7,329	7,668	7,441	n.a.
Consumer Price Index - % change	1.1	2.2	2.6	3.1	3.7	4.3 ³³

Source: www.cso.gov.bz/statistics

²⁶ Budget Presentation for 2007/2008, Minister of Finance

²⁷ Preliminary figures

²⁸ IMF Country Report No. 06/370, Belize Selected Issues and Statistical Appendix, October 2006, unless otherwise stated

²⁹ Budget Presentation for Fiscal Year 2007/2008, Minister of Finance

³⁰ IMF Country Report No. 06/370, Belize Selected Issues and Statistical Appendix, October 2006, unless otherwise stated

³¹ Budget Presentation for Fiscal Year 2007/2008, Minister of Finance

³² IMF Country Report No. 06/370, Belize Selected Issues and Statistical Appendix, October 2006

³³ Budget Presentation for Fiscal Year 2007/2008, Minister of Finance

Table 5.3 – Distribution of Poverty

District	Poverty Rate (%)	Indigence Rate (%)	% Poor Children
Corozal	26.1	6.2	29.9
Orange Walk	34.9	7.1	40.7
Belize	24.8	4.9	28.0
Cayo	27.4	4.8	32.0
Stann Creek	34.8	5.6	38.4
Toledo	79.0	56.1	84.5
National	33.5	10.8	39.0

A Poverty Survey done in 2002 concluded that 33.5% of the population lived below the poverty line and 10.8% were indigent. The extent of poverty varied across districts with the highest incidence in Toledo and the lowest in Belize – Table 5.3.³⁴ The incidence of poverty in rural areas (44.2%) is almost double that of urban settlements (23.7%).

The survey also reported that 39% of the children aged 0 – 17 years lived in poverty, ranging from 84.5% in Toledo to 28% in Belize. This was the highest poverty rate among any age group.

The indigence line ranged from BZ\$1,091 - BZ\$1,544 per adult per annum across the various regions, while the poverty lines ranged from BZ\$1,812 – BZ\$2,842 for an adult per annum³⁵. The GDP per capita at the end of 2005 was BZ\$7,441.³⁶

The Annual Labour Force Survey conducted in 2006 reported that unemployment fell from 11% to 9.4%³⁷.

5.2. RANGE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

The Early Childhood sector offers two (2) types of formal services:

- Daycare for the birth to three age cohorts; and
- Preschool for the three to five age cohorts. Children with Special Needs are absorbed into normal preschool programming. Information on the extent of special needs cases was requested, but was not available.

Day care services are offered throughout the year on weekdays (except for public holidays) from 7:30am to 6:00 pm.

Preschool services are offered on a shift basis, with services for 4 - 5 year olds being offered in the morning from 8:30 am- 11:30 am and services for 3 - 4 year olds being offered in the afternoon from 1:00 pm – 3:30 pm. Availability of preschool services coincide with the academic year and most preschools consider their financial year as consisting of ten (10) months.

³⁴ National Poverty Elimination Strategy, 2007 – 2011, pg. 18 - 19

³⁵ Government of Belize, 2002 Poverty Assessment Report, pg. 28

³⁶ IMF Country Report No. 06/370, Belize Selected Issues and Statistical Appendix, October 2006

³⁷ Ibid

5.3. MANAGEMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

The responsibility for managing the early childhood service provision is shared among two (2) ministries, viz:

- The Ministry of Human Development, which has responsibility for the day care centers through its Department of Human Services. One staff member is assigned to day care services, along with other responsibilities within the Ministry. This officer visits the formal day care centres on average once every three months.
- The Ministry of Education which has responsibility for the preschool sector and manages the Unit through the Pre School Unit – which is staffed by two full time officers and support staff. This Unit operates under the oversight of the Quality Assurance and Development Services (QADS) Unit of the Ministry. Monitoring of the preschool operations in the field is supported by the District Education Officers of the Ministry of Education who perform this task in addition to monitoring primary and secondary schools.

5.4. EVOLUTION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICE PROVISION

Programming for early childhood in Belize has focused primarily on preschool education, with very little attention being given to the development of formal day care services. Initial efforts can be traced back to the pioneering efforts of Ms. Priscilla Elliot who began her work as a nanny for English civil servants in the then British Honduras and later expanded her programme to include children of those Belizeans who could afford to pay for “nursery school education”. These programmes were designed to give children of those parents who could afford it a head start in the academics. Often children from as early as 2 years were enrolled in these programmes spending their day trying to learn to read.

During the 1950s, many denominational primary schools established kindergarten classes. However, many nursery schools were forced to shut down in 1962 with the passage of the Education Ordinance which reinforced compulsory school age to mean any age between 5 and 14 years and the Department of Education’s stipulation that its provision for teachers’ salaries did not include kindergarten or nursery schools. Those which chose to continue their early childhood programmes, were forced to hire less qualified teachers and meet their salaries from higher fees and fund raising.

During the early 1970s, the Belize Council of Churches (then called the Christian Social Council) began acting as a coordinating body for the provision of early childhood education, organizing training programmes for teachers and supervisors. This led, in 1974, to the formation of an ad hoc committee for the promotion of early childhood education comprised of teachers and child-minders. Growing out of this effort, the Ministry of Education became involved and, with the assistance of UNICEF, established the Pre-school Education Unit in 1979.

In its early years, the Unit focused on collaborating and coordinating with ECE partners to ensure that all preschool centres met the requirements as set out by the ministry. In 2001 a draft Early Childhood Education Policy was developed but this has not yet been approved.

Since then, however, the government has shown increasing interest and at an Education Summit in 2004, early childhood education was one of the major areas of concern. A Five-year Strategic Plan for the Ministry of Education was developed, which included a specific Action Plan for early childhood education. This has been followed by a number of initiatives including the development of new preschool centres some of which have been attached to existing primary schools, provision of financial assistance to preschools, the development of an early childhood curriculum and teacher training activities.

Early childhood education has also attracted the attention of the main political parties. Both the ruling and opposition parties cited it in their 2003 Election Manifestos, with the current government promising to invest \$10 million in early childhood education and day care centers during their current term, which runs from 2003 to 2008.

5.5. EARLY CHILDHOOD POLICY ENVIRONMENT

There is no formal policy framework guiding Early Childhood programming in Belize.

A draft Early Childhood Policy has been developed, but it needs significant strengthening if it is to be used as the basis for guiding the development of the sector. Such strengthening has to begin with the development of a more robust Situation Analysis which would analyse the key features of the sector and identify the key challenges. This would then be used as an objective basis for the identification of long term objectives and response strategies.

5.5.1. Day Care Programming

Formal oversight of day care programming rests with the Ministry of Human Development, through its Department of Human Services.

The legal framework for day care services is contained in the *Social Services (Operators of Day Care Facilities) (Registration, Licensing and Minimum Operating Requirements) Regulations, 1998*. This Act prohibits the operation of a day care facility without a formal license and sets out requirements for obtaining said license. It also sets out Minimum Operating Standards for day care facilities covering Administration, Physical Environment, Programming Requirements, and Health and Safety Requirements. It also includes standard forms to facilitate a variety of stipulated procedures.

Key provisions include:

- The definition of Day Care as “Care and supervision of five or more children aged between one day to five years old for up to twelve or more hours a day”³⁸.
- A staff/child ratio which “... shall never exceed twelve children for each member of staff or assistant”³⁹.

³⁸ Part I, Preliminary

³⁹ Part II, Section 8(2)

- A requirement that “There should be a minimum of 22 square feet per child indoors for rest and play areas should be separate.”
- A requirement to establish “... a planned program of developmentally appropriate activities at the day care facility to promote the social, emotional, intellectual and physical development of each child there and individualizing each program where appropriate to meet the special needs of some children”⁴⁰.

Notwithstanding these provisions, formal oversight in terms of the frequency and content of visits to centres and follow-up of findings is not designed to ensure full enforcement of the provisions.

5.5.2. Preschool Programming

Oversight over preschool programming is the responsibility of the Preschool Unit in the Ministry of Education.

The legal framework for the programming is contained in the Education Act (1991) (Revised 1996), the Education Rules 2000 and the Handbook of Policies and Procedures for School Services (2000).

The Education Act (1991) (Revised 1996) defines a preschool as “... an educational institution or programme for children between the ages of three and five.”

The Education Rules, 2000 includes preschool education in the formal education process describing it as part of the “... formal process of education”.⁴¹ However, Compulsory School Ages is defined as being between “... five years and fourteen years of age.”

The Handbook of Policies and Procedures for School Services provides guidance for all aspects of the education system – Ownership and Licensing of Schools, Facilities and Health Conditions, Managing Authorities and Boards, Professional Staff, School Records, Curriculum, Inspection, and the like. It specifies that the provisions are applicable to all four levels of education – Early Childhood, Primary, Secondary and Tertiary and there are no separate standards in place for the operations of preschools.

5.5.3. Implications of Policy Environment

The previous two sections point to the need for further development and rationalisation of the early childhood policy and legal/regulatory framework in the following areas:

- There is an overlap between the definitions of day care and preschool with both sets of services having legal jurisdiction over the provision of centre-based services for children between the ages of three and five.

⁴⁰ Part III, Section 13(2)(h)

⁴¹ Section 10(1)

- The stipulated staff/child ratios for the day care facilities have to be adjusted, as a ratio of 1:12 is grossly inadequate for children below the ages of three, based on the recommendations of the draft Caricom Minimum Standards⁴².
- The floor space of 22 square feet per child for the day care facilities is much lower than the 40 sq. ft per child recommended by the draft Caricom Minimum Standards.
- The lack of specific standards governing the operations of the preschools.
- The specification that preschool is part of the formal process of education, yet is not included in the classification for compulsory education.

In addition, there is a need for a clear policy statement on the orientation and desired outcomes from the early childhood processes to include:

- Overall access to early childhood education, including access for the high levels of poor children identified in the Poverty Assessment Report;
- Desired standards of service delivery in early childhood institutions that are consistent with regional best practice. These could be guided by the provisions of the Draft Caricom Handbook.
- Supporting structures and processes for ensuring that operators perform to the desired standards of service delivery.

5.6. STATUS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

5.6.1. Number of Early Childhood Institutions

During the 2006/2007 academic year, there were 21 formally registered day care centres and 151 formally registered preschool centres operating in Belize.

The number of preschools has increased in recent years as a result of government action aimed at increasing access. In 2004/05, for example, 20 new preschools were attached to primary schools. Additional schools were added in 2005/06, and in 2006/07, but the numbers were not available. The result

Table 5.4 – Preschool Distribution & Concentration

	Preschool	#	#
District	Population	Preschools	Children/ Preschool
Corozal	2,008	28	72
Orange Walk	2,576	16	161
Belize	5,040	47	107
Cayo	3,920	27	145
Stann Creek	1,742	20	87
Toledo	1,590	13	122
NATIONAL	16,876	151	112

⁴² Draft CARICOM Handbook on Developing Policy, Regulation and Standards in Early Childhood Development Services

of this is that the number of preschools *Source: Preschool Unit*

has increased in recent years - by 30% between 2004/05 and 2006/07 – from 116 to 151.

The distribution of the preschools varied across the different districts as illustrated in Table 5.4. Corozal had the lowest ratio of one preschool for every 72 children in the district, while Orange Walk has the highest - a ratio of one preschool for every 161 children in the district. The national average is one preschool for every 112 children in the population. The average preschool enrolment is 33, which means that for every preschool that is filled, there are 79 children of eligible age who are not attending one.

For the day care sector, 71% of the formally registered centres are located in Belize City.

One distinguishing feature of these institutions is the fact that very few of them offer only one “pure” service. There is a multiplicity of business models in use, offering multiple services to multiple target clienteles, using same resources. It is normal for a day care centre, for example, to be offering full-day day care service to one clientele, a half-day service to another, and an after care service to yet another, at the same time. In fact, for one centre in the sample, the most income was generated from the after care service.

5.6.2. Ownership of Early Childhood Institutions

(a) Day Care Facilities

The majority of the day care facilities are operated by private entities – 66%. Other operators include the government, NGOs and community based organisations - Table 5.5.

Table 5.5 – Ownership of Day Care Facilities

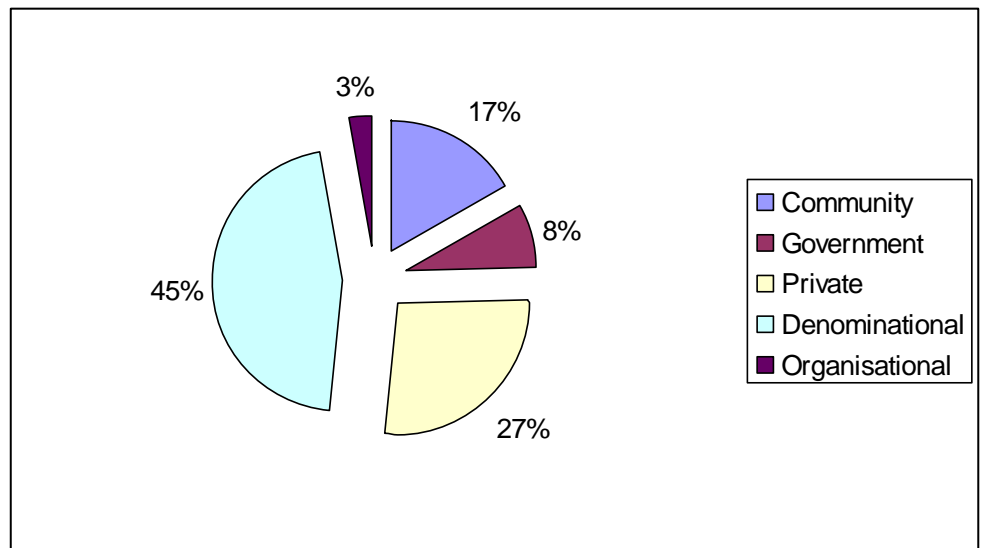
Type of Ownership	# Centres	% Centres
Community	2	10
Government	2	10
Private	14	66
Denominational/NGO	3	14
Total	21	100

Source: Ministry of Human Development

(b) Preschools

The ownership of the preschools is more diverse and varies across districts. Fig 5.2 and Table 5.6 highlight the number of different entities that were involved in offering preschool services during the 2005/2006 academic year. Only 8% of the preschools are owned by government

Fig 5.2 – Ownership of Pre-schools in Belize



and it is significant to note how the ownership interest varies with the economic fortunes of the district. All organizational preschools and 71% of the privately-owned preschools are located in the Belize and Cayo districts. The denominational preschools, on the other hand, are fairly well distributed throughout the country.

Table 5.6 – Ownership of Preschools (2005/2006 Academic Year)

District	Community	Government	Private	Denominational	Organisational	Total
Corozal	4	3	4	17	0	28
Orange Walk	1	2	4	7	0	14
Belize	10	4	17	11	3	45
Cayo	5	0	8	10	1	24
Stann Creek	4	1	3	11	0	19
Toledo	0	1	2	9	0	11
TOTAL	24	11	38	65	4	142
%	17	8	27	46	2	100

Source: Preschool Unit

5.6.3. Participation in Formal Early Childhood Services

(a) Day Care

The population data indicate that there were 25,970 children between the ages of birth and two in Belize in 2005 – all eligible for participation in a day care program. Formal data on the number of children formally enrolled was not available, but the relatively small number of day care centres is an indication that the participation rate is not very high. Fees range from \$35 to \$50 per child per week and is believed by the authorities to be one of the constraints to increased use⁴³.

The authorities also indicated that there were other day care facilities offering services that operated below the threshold for formal classification i.e. admitted less than five (5) children. In addition, anecdotal information from parents and operators indicated that the traditional approach to child rearing for the birth to three cohorts is for the child to be cared for at-home by a live-in helper or sibling, or by a member of the extended family. This “child minding” service would be extended to other members of the community if the demand existed. The fee for such services ranged between \$50 and \$75 per child, per week.

The number of children being cared for in these other settings is not known and there is a general lack of knowledge on the part of the authorities of the conditions under which children between birth and three are being reared. This needs to be addressed given the importance of the experiences in these early years for the growth and development of the child.

⁴³ The Poverty Line ranges from \$38 to \$59 per week

(b) *Preschool*

Participation rates in preschool education for the 2005/2006 academic year varied across the regions, from a high of 46% of the eligible population in Belize to a low of 16% in Toledo – Table 5.7. The national average was 29%.

This reflects an increase from the rate of 24.5% reported in 2003/04⁴⁴ and is believed to be due in part to the recent initiatives by the government to open new preschools. However, this also means that 71% of the children are not participating in preschool education and is a major problem, given the fact that *it is formally considered as one of the stages in the formal process of education.*

Table 5.7 – Preschool Participation Rates

	Preschool	Preschool	Enrolment
District	Population	Enrolment	Ratio (%)
Corozal	1,945	603	31
Orange Walk	2,500	419	17
Belize	4,886	2,265	46
Cayo	3,791	598	16
Stann Creek	1,683	570	34
Toledo	1,536	247	16
NATIONAL	16,341	4,702	29

Many reasons have been advanced for the low participation rates, viz:

- **High Cost** – 75% of the preschools are run by private operators and denominational authorities and as such fees are required to meet the operational costs. These fees range from \$10 to \$40 per child per month. In addition, parents also have expressed difficulties in meeting the additional costs of uniforms (\$12 per set), transport and meals (\$25 per month).
- **Voluntary Nature** – Attendance at preschools is not mandated by law and some parents therefore think that it is not important. Focus group participants indicated that participation would improve if it was made a mandatory pre-requisite for entry into primary school.
- **Accessibility** – Low preschool coverage make accessibility difficult, especially in rural areas.
- **Social Attitudes** – The center operators also cited cultural factors including the belief in some communities that children should not be brought to school before age 4, and the belief that formal early childhood development is not important.
- **Lack of Knowledge** – Operators and parents who participated in the Focus Groups cited a lack of knowledge of the benefits from early childhood education as another factor inhibiting increased participation. They cited the benefits that their children had received from participation in early childhood programmes and felt that more should be done to educate parents on these potential benefits.

⁴⁴ Belize Report, Hemispheric Project for the Preparation of Policies and Strategies for the Prevention of School Failure, June 2005, Pg. 15.

The Ministry has responded to the access problem by opening more preschools as indicated earlier. In addition, they have tried to address the cost constraint by either paying the full salary of the preschool teacher at existing schools or providing a grant to eligible preschools, on the condition that the fees to the parents are reduced. It is believed that this has been another reason for the increased participation over the last two years.

It must be noted however, that the criteria for deciding on the preschools that are eligible for receiving assistance and for determining the quantum of assistance provided is not clear and some operators requested clarification at the Focus Group meeting.

5.6.4. Service Quality

There are no national reports available on the overall quality of ECD services in Belize.

(a) Preschools

An assessment of the current preschool service providers by the staff at the Preschool Unit indicated that 86% of them are operating below the draft CARICOM Minimum Standards - Table 5.8. The summary in the table shows that only 14% of the centres are considered to be operating at or above the Minimum Standards and that 16% will require significant interventions to meet minimum standards. 46% of those in the latter category are in the Belize district.

Table 5.8 – Quality Ranking for Early Childhood Institutions

Rating	Corozal	Orange Walk	Belize	Cayo	Stann Creek	Toledo	National Total	National %	Comments
On Standard	1	1	10	4	3	2	21	14	Meets or exceeds minimum standard ⁴⁵
Below Standard	24	14	25	19	12	10	104	70	Below standard, but could reach standard with targeted interventions
Poor	3	1	11	4	5	0	24	16	Below standard and in need of significant interventions

The sample survey conducted for this Consultancy confirmed this general distribution and identified the following key issues, viz:

- **Health and Safety** – Poor sanitation and cleanliness, absence of first aid kits and fire extinguishers, inappropriate toilet facilities and unsafe electricals (uncovered fittings within reach of children).

⁴⁵ Based on the Draft CARICOM Handbook on Developing Policy, Regulation and Standards in Early Childhood Development Services Minimum Standards

- ***Teaching and Learning Environment*** – Unstimulating learning environments characterized by limited learning materials, inappropriate indoor and outdoor space and equipment and inappropriate furniture.
- ***Curriculum Development Programme*** – Absence of varied and appropriate learning opportunities, limited lesson planning and low levels of knowledge of early childhood development.
- ***Management*** – High adult/child ratios especially for the morning sessions, poor record keeping and little emphasis on staff training and development.
- ***Parental involvement*** – No parent education activities.

The parents in their Focus Group session sessions also cited concerns over the absence of suitable play areas and equipment and the general condition of buildings, bathrooms and fencing.

These deficiencies point to the need for the introduction of Minimum Standards of service delivery supported by an appropriate regulatory framework; a defined curriculum supported by appropriate teacher training and the availability of teaching and learning materials; and a strong supervision and monitoring system.

The Ministry of Education has attempted to address some of these issues and have embarked on a number of initiatives as part of the Action Plan 2005 – 2010. These include:

- ***Minimum Standards*** - The introduction of these Minimum Standards requires urgent attention, especially given the health and safety issues that were identified. One reason for this is that less than half of the preschools (38%) were constructed specifically for the function of a preschool.⁴⁶ At present there are no Minimum Standards in place, although the Ministry has recognized the need for them and has indicated that it is working on them.
- ***Curriculum Development*** - The Ministry of Education has embarked on a Curriculum Review process and is the final stages of rolling out a new curriculum for the 3 -4 year olds. This new curriculum was designed to facilitate a smoother transition to the lower primary school by linking it with the Infant School Curriculum. Activities to date include:
 - Development and testing of a new preschool curriculum for both year one and year two preschool students. The results of the tests were used to develop a revised version of the curriculum.
 - Development and testing of a student workbook for the year two students.
 - Development of a teacher's Guide for year one.
 - Development of a Revised Assessment programme for preschool children, with supporting checklists and assessment sheets.

⁴⁶ EmergentCorp (2004) Belize National Preschool Services Recommendations for Expansion, pg. 13

- Training of preschool teachers in the delivery of the revised curriculum.

It is important that the introduction of this new curriculum be supported by ongoing teacher training, by the availability of appropriate teaching and learning materials and by strong monitoring and supervision to ensure its implementation at the centre level.

- ***Teacher Training and Development*** - There are 275 preschool teachers in the 152 preschools in Belize. Of this total, 86.5% (238) have no training in working with young children - only 28 are fully trained at the teachers' college level and another 9 are trained at Level 1. The Ministry has responded to this by initiating workshops for preschool teachers throughout the country targeting the teachers with little or no training in the delivery of the preschool programme. It has also developed a teacher-training Manual for a Certificate in ECED in collaboration with UNICEF, Belize.
- ***Monitoring and Supervision*** - The Preschool Unit does not have the staff to visit all preschools in the country. The responsibility for such monitoring visits has therefore been assigned to the District Education Officers. The feasibility of using these officers for these tasks in addition to their regular duties was not examined in detail by this consultancy. However, an assessment of the time spent by these officers on early childhood monitoring as provided by the preschool Unit indicated that 2256 hours per year were being spent on preschool assessments for the entire country – that is equivalent to two persons working fulltime on early childhood monitoring and is clearly inadequate for servicing 151 preschools, distributed throughout the country.

The ministry has also acknowledged that there is a need for these officers to receive additional training to engage in meaningful preschool supervision. An effective supervision system will need to be supported by appropriate benchmarks, expressed through defined standards of care and service delivery.

(b) Day Care

The sample survey assessed 20% of the sample as capable of meeting Minimum Standards, 60% as operating below Minimum Standard but with the ability to reach Minimum Standard with targeted interventions and 20% requiring significant interventions to reach Minimum Standard.

The deficiencies identified were similar to those at the preschool level, namely inadequate health and safety provisions, lack of a stimulating environment and organised programme of activities, low adult-child ratios, low levels of parental involvement and low or non-existent caregiver skills in child development.

Addressing these deficiencies require:

- ***Monitoring and Supervision*** - More effective supervision to enforce the existing standards and programme contained in the Day Care Facilities Act and the Day Care Operating Manual – which provides guidance on the types of activities that can be carried out, including detailed menu options for meals.

- **Caregiver Training** – This is very badly needed and it does not seem that independent opportunities for upgrading caregiver skills exist in Belize. The Ministry of Human Development therefore needs to address this issue as a matter of priority and to consider initiating training activities for caregivers. It should also consider extending the training to include caregivers in the more informal operations that were discussed in Section 4.6.3(a).

5.6.5. Parental Involvement

A low level of parental involvement in early childhood programming was identified at both the day care and preschool levels. Two reasons were advanced for this:

- **Lack of parental interest** – This reason was advanced by the preschool operators and some of the parents who participated in the Focus Groups. Attendance at PTA meetings was very low, despite the operators’ best efforts, including provision of incentives. The operators and parents could not advance any reason for this lack of interest.
- **Lack of Initiative by Operators** – The results of the sample survey indicated that many centres were not making an effort to actively involve parents in the programming at the centers.

Despite this, the parents indicated an interest in learning more about their children’s development and how they can assist in enhancing it.

In this regard, the only formal parenting programme that was identified by the Consultancy was the Community and Parenting Education Program (COMPAR) that was run by the Ministry of Human Development. It was implemented by ministry officials at the district level and delivered parenting sessions in a modular fashion following a defined curriculum. The Ministry officials indicated that the programme was experiencing some organizational problems, as some of the coordinators had left the programme.

It was interesting to note that none of the parents in the Focus Groups, which included representatives from every district except Corozal, had ever heard of the COMPAR programme.

5.6.6. Vulnerable Children

The challenges identified in the foregoing sections in providing children with access to high quality early childhood services are exacerbated by the high levels of vulnerability of significant segments of the Belizean population.

(a) Children in Poverty

The high numbers of children living in poverty has already been identified in Section 4.1 - 39% of the children aged 0 – 17 years ranging from 84.5% in Toledo to 28% in Belize. While data on the numbers of the 0 - 5 population that live in poverty was not available, data from the 2006 Multi Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) indicated significant levels of stunting that may in part be a reflection of the high levels of poverty.

Stunting prevalence was assessed at an average of 22.1% for the national population of under five children, rising to a high of 45% in Toledo. These high levels were described by local authorities as and indicating the presence of malnutrition within these communities and the data showed that the highest levels were found in children between the ages of 18 months and 42 months and then again at 60 months.

This is a cause for concern, as children with such high levels of nutritional deficiencies cannot maximize the benefits of early childhood education – irregardless of the ease of access, or quality of the service provision. There is therefore a need to address these vulnerabilities as a complement to any efforts to improve early childhood programming in the affected areas.

In this regard, the Ministry of Human Development initiated a programme to provide a fortified nutrition snack to children in need from preschools to grade 3.

(b) Children Infected/Affected by HIV/AIDS

Belize has the third highest rate of HIV infection in the Caribbean region and the highest in Central America. The Strategic Plan for Multi-Sectoral National Response to HIV/AIDS in Belize estimates that 6% of all HIV cases are children under the age of five. However, data on the specific numbers of children living with HIV, or affected by HIV e.g. orphans, is not available. The data from the HIV/AIDS Commission indicate that 3,154 individuals have acquired HIV in the 1986 to 2005 period.

The data however points to the existence of a significant number of children infected and/or affected by HIV/AIDS and in response, one NGO, Hand-in-Hand Ministries, has established a day care centre, with an enrolment of fourteen (14). They plan to increase the operation to provide preschool services to the same children as they grow older.

The incidence and impact of HIV/AIDS among children will continue to be a factor affecting children's ability to access services into the future and needs to be addressed in any plan aimed at strengthening early child programming.

(c) Children with Special Needs

Data on children with special needs were not provided, despite requests to the authorities for same.

5.6.7. Summary of Challenges

It is clear from the foregoing that there are many challenges being experienced in delivering quality early childhood programming in Belize. These challenges include the need to rapidly increase access, to improve the quality of service provision in the majority of day care and preschool facilities, to strengthen the policy and regulatory environments, to strengthen monitoring and supervision at both day care and preschool levels and to provide special supports to enable vulnerable children to effectively participate and benefit from early childhood programming.

The effects of the existing “*low access-poor quality early childhood programming*” are clearly evident in the performance of the primary school system, where for the period 1996 – 2003, the highest grade repetition rates were experienced in Infant 1 i.e. among children entering primary school for the first time. The repetition rate for that period ranged from 13.8% to 17.2%, while the overall primary school repetition rate ranged from 8.3% to 10.6%.⁴⁷

5.6.8. Responding to the Challenges

(a) Access and Participation

The first step in addressing *access for the birth to three cohorts* is to determine the current situation as regards care for these children. The indications are that most of these children are being cared for in informal settings. However, the lack of information on the coverage of these settings and the extent of their use by parents, make it impossible to determine whether there really is an access problem, or whether the emphasis needs to be placed on improving quality only.

It is therefore recommended that **as** a matter of *top priority*, that a survey be conducted to determine the modalities being used to care for children between the ages of birth and three when their parents are out to work and the quality of care being provided.

The question of *access for the four and five year olds* requires a multi-faceted response and many useful initiatives have already been introduced by the Government.

The attachment of preschools to primary schools is a useful initiative, as are the efforts to reduce the delivered cost by providing financial support to preschools to enable them to reduce their operating costs. It is recommended however that the criteria for receipt of assistance and the procedures for accessing this assistance be clearly spelt out so that all operators understand it.

However, the extent of the unfulfilled access needs (71% of eligible population) leads one to conclude that the government will have to adopt a more aggressive approach to increasing access – one where the provision of additional space is supported by the development and deployment of trained teachers.

(b) Quality of Early Childhood Provision

Many initiatives to address the preschool quality issues have already been initiated including the teacher training programme, the revision of the curriculum, and the strengthening of the Monitoring and Supervision systems. These initiatives are all appropriate and needs as much support as can be provided.

However, for these initiatives to produce any benefits, they will have to be complemented by the development and implementation of Minimum Standards that are supported by a robust regulatory framework. This will be necessary to provided relevant officials with the power and authority to ensure that the actual delivered service quality meets the desired levels. The current

⁴⁷ Belize Report, Hemispheric Project for the Preparation of Policies and Strategies for the Prevention of School Failure, June 2005, Pg. 19

arrangement of having the monitoring and supervision of preschools done by the District Officers needs to be evaluated with a view of either strengthening or replacing with a more effective modality.

In the case of the day care centers, more rigorous implementation of the provisions of the day Care Facilities Act would provide immediate improvements in the quality of care. This can be achieved by the assignment of one full time officer to work with the day care centers.

Based on the results of the sample survey, it may also be necessary to provide assistance for upgrading some of the physical facilities in both the day care and preschool sectors, as deficiencies were identified in some aspects. The required outlays may be small, but the financial constraints under which some of these operators are functioning may make it difficult for them to initiate the required upgrades on their own.

(c) Management of Early Childhood Service Provision

The management of the Early Childhood Service Provision could be further strengthened by the following actions:

- **Development and approval of a comprehensive Policy Framework on Early Childhood.** Such a Policy Framework should detail the objectives and outcomes to be achieved for children during these early years, as well as the strategies to be followed in achieving these outcomes, including the involvement and participation of parents. Such a framework should be developed in a participatory fashion with the involvement of key stakeholders – parents, operators, teachers, caregivers. Once approved, this would form the basis for development and approval of the Standards and Regulations governing the sector.
- **Rationalisation of the Management of the Sector.** The current situation is confusing, with both the Ministry of Human Development and the Ministry of Education having responsibility for programming for children between the ages of three and five. This needs to be rationalised.

In addition, a study should be conducted into the feasibility of placing the management of the entire sector in the hands of one unit within the Ministry of Education. Such an approach could result in better outcomes for children and more efficient utilisation of resources, viz:

- One entity would be responsible for the development of children from birth and would therefore provide for a more harmonised approach to child development, including management of the transition between the different levels. This will result in better coordination of the curriculum offerings, more consistency in the methodologies being applied and a more consistent development experience for the participating children.
- More efficient use of resources in monitoring, field supervision and regulation as one officer could now visit and work with all facilities in a geographical region with one visit. A second officer will be required if the day care and preschool are managed by different departments.

- Better coordination of training and development opportunities for caregivers and teachers, thus enabling the delivery of more integrated training and development opportunities.

This integrated approach to early childhood management is already in use in Jamaica, St. Kitts-Nevis, Dominica, Trinidad and Tobago and is now under active consideration in St. Lucia.

5.7. FINANCIAL FLOWS⁴⁸

5.7.1. Day Care Services

The assessment of financial flows for this sub-sector proved to be a very challenging task in the Belize context. The ability to conduct an accurate assessment was compromised by the following features of the Belize environment, viz:

- **Multiple Services** - The multiplicity of services offered in the same facility, during the same day, using the same staff. The case of the day care sample will illustrate this:
 - Port Loyola – Full Day Care, Half Day Care & After Preschool Care to different groups of children.
 - Ma Joan – Day Care and After Care to older children.
 - Valgarten – Day Care Preschool and After Care to preschool children.
 - Kids First – Day Care, Preschool, Junior Primary and After Care to different groups of students. Joint programming is done with the Day Care and Preschool students.

Table 5.9 – Multiple Services Provided by Operators

	Day Care	Preschool	After Care	Junior Primary
Port Loyola	√		√	
Ma Joan	√		√	
Valgarten	√	√	√	
Kids First	√	√	√	√

- **Joint Expenditures** - Facilities and equipment are used for all the services offered and it is therefore a complex task to assign proportions of these costs to one service, or the other. In addition, recurrent costs like staffing and the utilities also apply to the entire day's operations and also have to be allocated to the different services if one is to develop an accurate cost of these services.

⁴⁸ Based on the analysis done with the Decision Support Model. All costs in Belizean currency.

- ***Different Combinations of Services*** – Different providers offer different combinations of services, making it difficult to develop a standard model.

Developing a “true” cost of a particular service is therefore a complex task that is beyond the scope of the original Child Focus II ECD model or the new Decision Support System. This is further compounded by the unavailability of critical data, especially as related to size and cost of the basic facilities – size of building and land area on which building is located.

Due to the constraints described above, it was not possible to perform the full range of analyses on the day care sector, viz:

(a) Investment Cost

This could not be calculated as major component of these costs are the facility costs – land and building. Building costs were only available for one day care centre in the sample and the investment cost per child (excluding the cost of land) was \$3,853.

(b) Operating Costs

Calculation of full operating costs was only possible for one centre due to the problems with costing the initial investment which then had to be amortised into the operating costs.

It was possible however to calculate the direct operational cost i.e. the day-to-day cost of operating the centres, within constraints⁴⁹. These costs were within a narrow range of \$90 - \$125 per child per month. When the amortization and financing charges were added to the one centre with the data, this operating cost was increased to \$164 per child per month.

Table 5.10 – Day Care Expenditure Profile

	Actual Cost
Personnel	84
Utility	7
Administrative Overheads	0
Other Operational Costs	6
In-kind Contributions	4
Total (%)	100

The main areas of operating expenditure are highlighted in Table 5.10 and highlight the significant impact of the personnel costs – 84%.

(c) Revenue

The only source of revenue for the day care centres was fees paid by parents. The fees varied widely - \$40 to \$200 per month (some were paid on a weekly basis). It must be noted however that the operators did not depend on the fees from the day care services alone to cover their costs, as they treated the full range of services offered as one business. The calculation of this full revenue was outside of the scope of the analysis.

⁴⁹ This calculation costed the resources under the assumption that the centre was providing day care services only and therefore includes some costs that were being utilized in the delivery of other services e.g. the utility bills, the full cost of personnel and the like. For the purposes of the analysis, these costs were treated as fixed costs that would have been incurred if the centre was to provide day care services only. Under such circumstances, a full costing approach would treat the revenue from the other services as pure profit, as all operating costs would have already been accounted for.

(d) Profitability

It was not possible to assess the profitability of the entire operation due to the constraints described above.

(e) Minimum Standard

It was not possible to develop a cost for operating at minimum standard as the salary scales to compute the costs of trained caregivers were requested, but not provided. In addition, one has to question the utility of developing a minimum standard cost for the day care centre alone, when the facility and all its resources will be used for multiple purposes.

5.7.2. Preschool Services

Separate cost assessments were done for investment/establishment costs and for recurrent operational costs. Both these assessments were done for three (3) levels of costs, viz:

- Actual expenditures incurred by the centres.
- Actual costs incurred, which was the sum of the actual expenditures and the support received including in-kind contributions, donations, grants, government subventions and /the like.
- Costs that would be incurred if the center’s operations were to be classified as meeting minimum standards. This latter assessment was based on the results of the field surveys which specifically assessed the actions that would be needed and the costs that would be incurred in upgrading to minimum standards, based on the recommendations of the draft Caricom Handbook.

As far as possible, startup costs are expressed in cost per child, while operational costs for preschool are expressed in cost per child per term and for day care costs as cost per child per month.

These analyses showed the following:

(a) Investment Costs

The establishment cost of a preschool, built to Minimum Standard ranged from \$1,500 to \$1,828 per child - Table 5.11.

The highest actual cost of \$8,494 was a reflection of a situation where the preschool with the smallest enrolment was occupying a very large building. The high cost reflects the cost of that building. Outside of this, the next highest investment cost incurred was \$1,884 per child.

Table 5.11 – Investment Costs

		Preschool
Actual Expenditures	High	1,329
	Low	0
Actual Costs	High	8,494
	Low	39
Minimum Standard	High	1,828
	Low	1,500

(b) Operational Costs

The total operational cost of a preschool operating at Minimum Standard ranged from \$100 - \$242 per child per month – Table 5.12. These costs are significantly higher than the actual costs being incurred and the actual expenditures being incurred. This difference is a reflection of two (2) factors, viz:

Table 5.12 – Operational Expenditures

		Preschool
Actual Expenditures	High	42
	Low	7
Actual Costs	High	156
	Low	20
Minimum Standard	High	242
	Low	100

- The levels of salaries being paid to teachers and are a reflection of the skill levels of the teachers being employed. The Minimum Standard, for example, assumes a principal operating at the degree level and a staffing with at least 50% of the teachers trained.
- Economies of scale with respect to the spreading of fixed costs e.g. a separate Principal, the cost of which would be the same for a wide range of enrolments and therefore lower the cost per child as the enrolment increases. The schools with the highest costs are the schools with the smallest enrolments.

(c) Distribution of Operational Expenditure

Table 5.13 – Distribution of Pre-school Operating Expenses

Table 5.13 illustrates the average distribution of direct operational expenses for the preschools in the sample. It clearly illustrates the impact of personnel costs in the expenditure mix – increasing from 86% to 97% of expenses under a Minimum Standard regime.

	Actual Cost	Minimum Standard
Personnel	86	97
Utility	7	2
Administrative Overheads	5	1
Other Operational Costs	2	1
In-kind Contributions	0	0
Total (%)	100	100

(d) Impact of Quality Differences

Table 5.14 illustrates the actual operational costs/child incurred by centres operating at different quality levels. The differences in cost reflect the different salary levels paid to teachers – the On Standard employed a trained teacher at \$2,500 per month, while the Below Standard and Poor Standard centres paid their untrained teachers \$550 and \$260 per month respectively.

**Table 5.14
Impact of Quality Differences**

	Preschool
On Standard	101
Below Standard	77
Poor	20

(e) Financing of Direct Service Provision

Fig. 5.3 and Table 5.15 illustrate the major revenue sources from which the costs of the preschools are being met. The high contribution of in-kind contributions reflects the high level of involvement of the church denominations in the sector, while the low contribution from the parents (33%) reflects the low levels at which fees have to be maintained to make the service affordable to parents.

Fig 5.3 – Preschool Revenue Sources in Belize

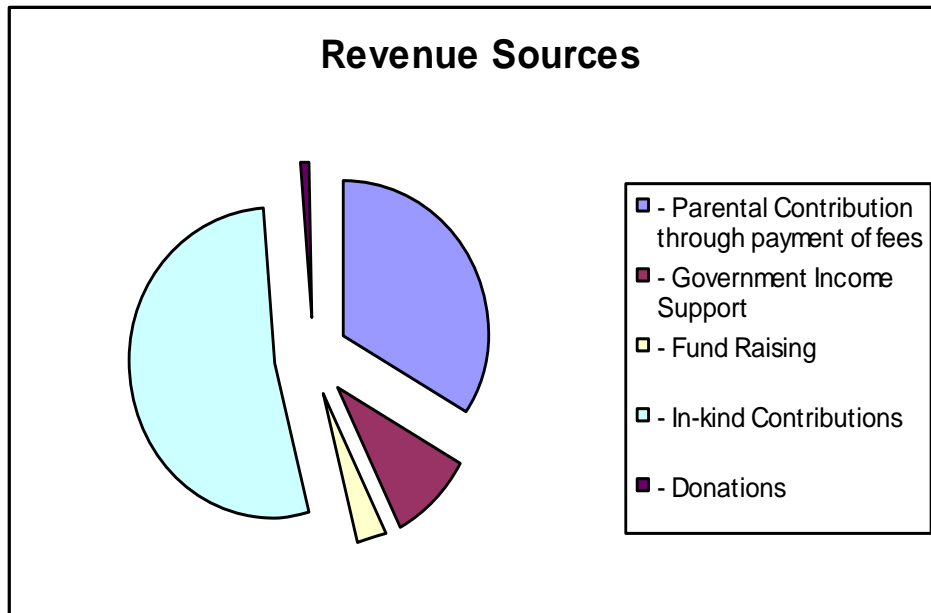


Table 5.15 – Financing Sources

Revenue Sources	Pre-school
Parental Fee Payments	33
Government Income Support	9
Fund Raising	3
In-kind Contributions	52
Donations	1
Total (%)	100

(f) Profitability of Direct Service Provision

Table 5.16 shows that at current operating costs, fees structures and levels of government support, preschools are barely able to pay operational expenditures. When provisions are made for moving the operations to Minimum Standard, all preschools in the sample reflected operating losses.

Table 5.16 – Profitability of Preschools

		Preschool
Actual Expenditures	High	43
	Low	(15)
Actual Costs	High	18
	Low	(28)
Minimum Standard	High	(6)
	Low	(220)

(g) Government Support to Preschool Sector

Government supports to the preschool sector comes in 4 forms as illustrated in Table 5.17, viz:

- Provision of supervisory services
- Subventions to preschools
- Teacher salary subsidies
- Training and Development activities

Table 5.17 – Government Financial Support

	Pre-school
Government Supervisory Services	457,445
Subventions to preschools	125,000
Teacher Salary Subsidies	720,767
Training and Development	100,000
Total (BZ\$)	1,403,212

The support provided in the 2006/07 financial year was \$1,403,212 and constituted 1% of the budget of the Ministry of Education – Table 5.18.

Table 5.18 – Relative Preschool Expenditure

	EC\$
Education Budget	121,766,868
Preschool Expenditure	1,403,212
Proportion spent on preschools (%)	1

(h) National Expenditure on Early Childhood Services

Nationals in Belize spent \$4,031,303 on early childhood services in 2006. 80% of this was for the provision of services that were below minimum standards.

**Table 5.19
National ECD Expenditures**

	Pre-school	%
On Standard	797,617	20
Below Standard	3,055,780	76
Poor	177,906	4
Total	4,031,303	100

5.7.3. Financial Implications of Strengthening the Early Childhood Sector⁵⁰

The analysis in Section 5.6.8 highlighted a number of challenges that have to be addressed if Belize is to receive the full benefits of early childhood programming. This section will examine the financial implications of the options discussed in that section.

(a) Increasing Access

It was recommended that improving access at the day care level required a preliminary analysis of the extent and nature of the problem. Responding to this would require a field survey of the modalities being used to care for children in the birth to three age group. There are a number of options for carrying out this survey – from assigning the activity to the Statistics department to outsourcing it to independent consultants/agencies. The cost of a full national survey should not exceed BZ\$100,000, and a structured sample survey could be done at a lower cost.

Access at the preschool level requires a continuation of the multi-faceted approach of lowering the cost of existing spaces, providing additional preschool spaces and training teachers, with a focus on the vulnerable children.

⁵⁰ All costings of consultancies are based on the experience of regional agencies like UNICEF and CCDC in performing similar activities.

Based on the model results, the cost of establishing new school spaces to accommodate the 39% of the children in the early childhood cohort that are living in poverty will be \$11.7 million, while the annual recurrent cost (excluding supervision costs by the ministry) of providing fully funded preschool spaces for these children will be \$7.6 million, including payment of trained teachers at competitive salaries.

The cost of establishing new school spaces to accommodate all the 71% of the children that do not have access will be \$21.2 million, while the annual recurrent costs of providing fully funded preschool spaces will be \$19.6 million.

(b) Improving Quality

The recommendations for improving quality addressed teacher qualifications and skills, curriculum revision, the strengthening of monitoring and evaluation systems backed by the introduction of a regulatory framework and management of the transition to primary school.

Implementation of the recommendations on teacher training requires two sets of actions:

- ***Rapidly increasing the numbers of trained teachers*** – Costs for doing this locally were not readily available and thus could not be included in this analysis. One low cost alternative that could be considered is to include the Level 1 Early Childhood training in the TVET options that students at secondary school could sit at the CXC level. This would not only lower the cost of training persons in entry level early childhood skills but could also provide high numbers of trained personnel in a relatively short time frame.
- ***Increasing the remunerations for those teachers once they are trained*** - It is important to note that it will not necessarily be an increased cost over that discussed in the access section, as the cost of trained teachers was also built into that analysis of operating at Minimum Standard.

The implementation of the revised curriculum is already underway and will be treated as part of the ongoing ECD cost that is being borne by the Ministry of Education.

The strengthening of the monitoring and supervisory system may incur significant costs, as it may necessitate employment of additional staff, if the recommended evaluation finds that the preschool monitoring could not be incorporated into the work of the existing district education teams. Use of the ratio recommended in the draft Caricom Handbook gives a requirement of six monitoring officers for the existing number of schools – with a 29% access ratio. A 100% access ratio will require a tripling of this number, assuming that the size distribution of the preschools remain the same. This will require a total of 18 monitoring officers at an annual recurrent personnel cost of \$720,000.

With regards to the recommendations on establishing a Regulatory Framework and Minimum Standards, there are a number of options for doing this - from assigning the activity to the Legal department to outsourcing it to independent consultants/agencies. The cost of the latter option should be a one-off cost and should not exceed BZ\$60,000. Implementation and follow-up will require at least two additional staff member assigned to managing the regulatory function within

the Ministry of Education with relevant support staff and logistics – at an annual recurrent cost of at least \$100,000.

The management of the transition to primary is part of the curriculum review process that is being implemented and will not incur additional costs.

(c) Strengthening Management

The recommendations on strengthening management require two sets of actions:

- **Development and Approval of a comprehensive policy framework** – there are a range of options for doing this from assigning the activity to the Ministry of Education’s Planning department to outsourcing it to independent consultants/agencies. The cost of the latter option should not exceed \$20,000.
- **Rationalisation of the Management of the Sector** through the integration of responsibilities for managing the day care and preschool sectors – the recommended action is to conduct a feasibility study to determine the feasibility of such an integration. The cost of this should not exceed \$15,000.

(d) Summary

Table 5.20 – Additional Costs to Strengthen ECD (EC\$)

In summary therefore, implementation of the recommendations will cost the Government a one-off cost of \$21,400,000, of which 99% will be invested in providing access to high quality early childhood

Actions	One-off costs	Recurrent Costs
Increasing Access		
- Day Care Survey	- 100,000	
- Providing access for all children	- 21, 200,000	- 19,600,000
Improving Quality		
- Teacher Training	- 0	
- Monitoring and Supervision	-	- 720,000
- Regulatory Framework	- 60,000	- 100,000
- Training KG Teachers	- 5,000	
Improving Management		
- Policy Framework	- 20,000	
- Integration survey	- 15,000	
TOTAL	21,400,000	20,420,000

facilities and an increase in annual recurrent costs for preschool operations of \$20,420,000 – Table 5.20. These recurrent costs represent 17% of the current education budget compared with the current level of 1%.

There will be additional costs for strengthening the day care sector. These cannot be quantified at this time given the absence of information on the types, numbers and nature of operations of the service providers in that sub-sector.

5.7.4. Resource Allocation Processes and Sustainability

The Ministry of Finance has indicated that its modus operandi is to consider proposals from departments on their merit and to provide support once the justification is sound and funds are available.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The process that was utilized in the implementation of this consultancy has highlighted the following general conclusions.

6.1.1. Policy-making Level

- Policy makers in Anguilla and Belize are interested in developing early childhood programming in their countries. This is evidenced by the range of initiatives that have been taken in both countries in recent years.
- These policy makers are operating in an information vacuum as regards the costs of such programming and the financial implications of decision-making to improve the programming.
- Policy makers have taken decisions in both countries to provide financial assistance to the sector, with the full recognition that they do not have sufficient information to assess the adequacy, or impact of this assistance.
- Policy makers have indicated a keen interest in having access to financial data on the costs of ECD programming and having access to a mechanism that will enable them to assess the cost of alternative policy options and welcomed the input that the results of the consultancy could make in improving their decision-making processes.

6.1.2. Service Provider Level

- Operators are finding creative ways to meet the costs of delivering ECD services. The multiple service offering in Belize may be an indicator of a trend that could develop in the future. This has implications for how one assesses the financial viability of an institution – as the day care on its own may not be profitable but the overall combined service provision may be very profitable. In fact, there was one **day care** centre where the income from after care services exceeded the income from day care operations – at no additional cost!!
- Multiple stakeholders are sharing the cost of providing early childhood services with a variety of direct and indirect mechanisms. This indicates strong potential for the use of stakeholder partnerships in strengthening of the sector. The parameters for such partnerships will have to be clearly defined.
- Teacher training and upgrading is an urgent priority and is necessary to improve quality, to facilitate implementation of Minimum Standards and to facilitate increased access (in Belize).

6.1.3. Cost of Service Provision

- There is a cost to operating at minimum standard or better. That cost is significantly above that now being incurred by operators in both Anguilla and Belize. Facility maintenance and upgrading may represent a one-off cost, but the cost of employing trained teachers and caregivers is a cost that has to be maintained on an ongoing basis.
- Some cost issues need to be determined in a strategic policy context, viz:
 - The issue of the salary level for a trained early childhood teacher's salary and caregiver needs to be established. Is it necessary that they be paid the same as a primary and/or secondary school teacher? There are precedents in other sectors where persons with equivalent training are paid different salaries depending on the sub-sector in which they are working.
 - The issue of economies of scale which surfaced in the analysis raises questions about the optimal size of a preschool and its ability to afford highly paid management and teaching staff. This raises difficult questions e.g. should a minimum threshold be placed on the number of children that a preschool or day center should accommodate?

6.2. COUNTRY SPECIFIC ISSUES

At the country level, the analysis has shown that both Anguilla and Belize face similar challenges in providing access to quality ECD services to their eligible populations. These challenges include:

- Developing a better understanding of the modalities and care practices that are being used for the birth to three cohorts;
- Providing continuing and increased access to preschool education in a context where the cost of a high quality service is higher than most parents can afford;
- Improving the quality of service provision in the day care centres and preschools;
- Strengthening monitoring and supervision of the early childhood service provision across the spectrum; and
- Strengthening management of the sector

Recommendations have been made to address these challenges including:

- Government financing of the additional costs of upgrading the sector in partnership with existing partners who will continue to contribute to the sector's development. The costs involved are significant and will require an increase in the early childhood budget allocation from 4% to 15% of the education budget in Anguilla and from 1% to 17% of the education budget in Belize.

- The professionalism of the early childhood teaching and caregiving functions, with increased training opportunities being provided and competitive salaries being offered for trained personnel.
- Strengthening of the regulatory environment through the introduction of Minimum Standards backed by a strong monitoring and supervision function.
- Development and implementation of an early Childhood Policy with clear strategies for the development of the sector.

6.3. ECD FINANCIAL AND COSTING MODELS

The consultancy used the CFII Costing Model as the jump off point to develop a Decision Support Model in response to the expressed demand for specific information at the country level. The latter model has shown that it is capable of generating information that could address decision-makers' concerns and provide information for policy-making.

This initiative should not end with this Consultancy, as the provision of such information to decision-makers is important in advocating for improved early childhood programming. Decision-makers will always be more willing to consider alternative courses of action when the costs of the alternatives can be objectively quantified.

In this light, the following recommendations are made for the further development of the model, viz:

1. Move the model to a database platform from the current spreadsheet. Working from such a platform will make it possible to:
 - a. Work with larger, more representative samples;
 - b. Perform more complex interactive processing and cross tabulations; and
 - c. Develop amore user friendly and less cumbersome use interface.

The move to such a platform could also provide a basis for merging the two approaches into one model that addresses different aspects of the early childhood service provision.

2. This process needs to be approached more as a research project, funded by a research grant rather than as a consultancy with fixed time schedules, delivery dates and predetermined outputs. The process is experimental and has revealed more interactions than previously anticipated. Developers need room to experiment, to revisit and revise approaches and to respond to additional information and increased understanding of the financial functioning of the sector.
3. The ability to effectively use such a model will depend on the quality of data that is available. In this regard, it is recommended that urgent action be taken to strengthen the data collection and analysis systems and skills in use in the early childhood sector at the national level.

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APPENDIX 1

SCOPE OF WORK

The Cost, Financing and Sustainability Consultant will be responsible for undertaking the following activities:

- (a) review the elements of the financial model developed by CCDC to identify the cost of providing ECD services under defined standards of care, specified learning outcomes, adequate physical facilities, and appropriately skilled human resources, as developed under the Caribbean POA (1997);
- (b) use the model as a “lens” through which to review the country’s ECD sector (to include the range of programmes in the country from birth to eight years of age, including home-based infant care, day care for toddlers, kindergarten for the preschooler, the transition period into primary school, special education and parenting education) in collaboration with representatives of the sector to determine current range and status of services, desirable expansion and targeting of services to those in need, and improvements required to strengthen compliance with standards of quality in service provision;
- (c) undertake a country case study in Anguilla and Belize, examining fiscal policies, priority-setting and resource allocation procedures in relation to services and support to young children and their families;
- (d) analyse future demographic trends and current coverage rates, areas of potential savings/waste, and considerations of return on such investments in the future;
- (e) analyse the viability of setting up and sustaining investments in national programmes for young children, utilising resources from all available sources – national government, local government, private sector, NGOs, Community-Based Organisations (CBOs,) international donor/lending organisations, etc.;
- (f) identify the fiscal tools necessary to recognise ECD as a separate sub-sector, identifying the roles and economic contributions of the family, community, NGOs, CBOs, private sector and the government; to measure, target and monitor investments in the welfare of young children; and to assist in specific targeting of resources to populations of children at particular risk (in conditions of poverty, with disabilities, etc.); and
- (g) organise a workshop in the selected countries in collaboration with relevant agencies to include senior technical advisers in the Ministries of Finance, Health, Education and Social Services and ECD sector representatives, at which the findings of the consultancy are presented.

APPENDIX 2

List of Persons Consulted

Anguilla:

- Ellen Harrigan - *Curriculum Officer, Pre Primary*
- Veda Harrigan - *Education Officer, Pre/Primary*
- Daphne Hodge - *Director, Family and Social Services*
- Brenda Lawrence - *Consultant on Parenting*
- Lori-Rae Alleyne Franklin - *Chief Statistician*
- Ken Banks, Bursar - *Maranatha Preschool*
- Murielle Owen, Treasurer - *Soroptimist Day Care*
- Jackie Connor, Education Officer - *Multi Professional Support Services (MPSS)*
- Rodney Rey, Permanent Secretary - *Ministry of Education and Rhonda Connor, Chief Education Officer*
- Patricia Beard, Coordinator - *National AIDS Program*
- Bernice Battick, Coordinator - *Health Promotion and Nutritional Health Program*
- Carl Harrigan - *Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance*
- Pastor Gumbs - *Island Harbour Preschool*
- Gertrude Saunders - *Executive Assistant, Chief Education Officer*
- Gracita Christopher - *Coordinator, Community Nursing*
- Focus Group of Operators in the Survey Sample
- Parents Focus Group

Belize:

- Nelson Longworth – *Quality Assurance and Development Services, Ministry of Education*
- Allana Gillette - *National Assistant to Consultant*
- Dian Hall – *Inspector, Social Services Institutions*
- Evan Dakers - *Social Services Planning Officer, Policy and Planning Unit, Ministry of Human Development*
- Anna Melendrez - *Finance Officer, Ministry of Human Development*
- Manuel Martos - *Finance Officer, Ministry of Education*

- Jeanette Garcia - *Ministry of National Development and Culture*
- Dr. Largaespeda Beer - *Maternal and Child Health Technical Adviser*
- Dr. Carla Barnett - *Financial Secretary*
- Marion McNab - *Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Education*
- Alan Genitty - *Deputy Chief Education Officer*
- Glen Avilez - *Director General, Statistical Institute of Belize*
- Anita Zetina - *Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Human Development*
- Margaret Williams - *Education Officer, Early Childhood Education and Development Centre*
- Ruth Jaramillo - *Technical Director, National AIDS Commission*
- Judith Alpuche - *ECD and Education Officer, UNICEF, Belize*
- Parents Focus Group
- Focus Group of Operators in the Survey Sample
- Individual Meetings with Selected Operators in the Sample

ANNEX 1
Field Survey Instrument

CHILD FOCUS III PROJECT
EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT COSTS, FINANCING AND SUSTAINABILITY

Inspection/Evaluation Checklist For Use In Assessing Early Childhood Education Centres

Institution No: _____

Type of Centre/Service Provision:

Pre School Day Care Other Centre _____

NAME OF CENTRE: _____

NAME OF ADMINSTRATOR: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NO.: _____

DATE (S) OF INSPECTION: ____/____/____

1. Licensing Permit seen: Yes No

2. Health and Safety Certification seen: Yes No

3. Enrolment: No. of Boys _____ No. of Girls _____
Ages From _____ to _____ years.

4. No. of adults/teachers: _____

5. Adult/child ratio: _____

Numeric rating scale Codes:

4= Excellent

3= Satisfactory

2= Inadequate

1= Unacceptable

N/A=Not Applicable

(Circle the appropriate number that is consistent with your opinion):

(A) Issue: HEALTH AND SAFETY

Overall rating: _____

(i)	General Cleanliness of facility.	4	3	2	1	N/A
(ii)	Kitchen cleanliness (hygienic, insect & rodent free)	4	3	2	1	N/A
(iii)	Food preparation and washing facilities.	4	3	2	1	N/A
(iv)	Cleanliness and condition of stove/refrigerator.	4	3	2	1	N/A
(v)	Effective garbage disposal.	4	3	2	1	N/A
(vi)	Ventilation (free circulation of air)	4	3	2	1	N/A
(vii)	Cleanliness of floors and walls (no dust or grime)	4	3	2	1	N/A
(ix)	Suitability of entrance or reception area.	4	3	2	1	N/A
(x)	Provision for naptime.	4	3	2	1	N/A
(xi)	Fully stocked First Aid Kit available.	4	3	2	1	N/A
(xii)	Safety and cleanliness of outdoor area (free of hazard, fenced)	4	3	2	1	N/A
(xiii)	Sick bay (cot or special area for emergencies)	4	3	2	1	N/A
(xiv)	Hand washing and toilet facilities for children & Staff.	4	3	2	1	N/A
(xv)	Structural safety of building.	4	3	2	1	N/A
(xvi)	Building maintenance.	4	3	2	1	N/A
(xvii)	Condition of equipment. (fridge/stove)	4	3	2	1	N/A
(xviii)	Condition of electrical system.	4	3	2	1	N/A
(xix)	Safety of electrical outlets (protection/level)	4	3	2	1	N/A
(xx)	Condition of fire extinguishers(s).	4	3	2	1	N/A
(xxi)	High traffic areas – free of clutter and obstacles.	4	3	2	1	N/A

(xxii) Exits – clear, easily accessible and clearly marked.	4	3	2	1	N/A
(xxiii) Regular emergency drills conducted.	4	3	2	1	N/A
(xxiv) Safety rules provided.	4	3	2	1	N/A
(xxv) Supervision provided indoors.	4	3	2	1	N/A
(xxvi) Supervision provided outdoors.	4	3	2	1	N/A

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendations to achieve Minimum Standard	Rationale for Recommendations	Estimated Cost of Implementation

Numeric rating scale Codes:

4= Excellent

3= Satisfactory

2= Inadequate

1= Unacceptable

N/A=Not Applicable

(Circle the appropriate number that is consistent with your opinion):

(B) Issue: TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Overall rating** : _____

(i)	Organization of space (flexible).	4	3	2	1	N/A
(ii)	Variety and use of teaching/learning materials.	4	3	2	1	N/A
(iii)	Use of suitable toys/books etc.	4	3	2	1	N/A
(iv)	Quality, safety, and condition of learning materials.	4	3	2	1	N/A
(v)	Provision for indoor play.	4	3	2	1	N/A
(vi)	Provision for outdoor play.	4	3	2	1	N/A
(vii)	Defined learning/interest centers inclu. home corner.	4	3	2	1	N/A
(viii)	Furniture (size, condition, availability)	4	3	2	1	N/A
(ix)	Evidence of children's work (displayed)	4	3	2	1	N/A
(x)	Use of teaching aids/stimulating environment.	4	3	2	1	N/A
(xi)	Varied learning opportunities (small and large groups)	4	3	2	1	N/A
(xii)	Activities – varied, stimulating, appropriate.	4	3	2	1	N/A
(xiii)	Daily schedule – well sequenced, age appropriate.	4	3	2	1	N/A
(xiv)	Warm, child-friendly environment.	4	3	2	1	N/A
(xv)	Evidence of parent involvement.	4	3	2	1	N/A
(xvi)	Opportunities for indoor movement/play.	4	3	2	1	N/A
**	The building, surrounding premises and equipment meet the environmental and related standards and requirements stipulated in the regulations for accommodation.	4	3	2	1	N/A

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendations to achieve Minimum Standard	Rationale for Recommendations	Estimated Cost of Implementation

Numeric rating scale Codes:

4= Excellent

3= Satisfactory

2= Inadequate

1= Unacceptable

N/A=Not Applicable

(Circle the appropriate number that is consistent with your opinion):

(C) Issue: CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME Overall rating:** _____

(ii)	Learning experience/opportunities (well planned)	4	3	2	1	N/A
(iii)	Programme for Language Development.	4	3	2	1	N/A
(iv)	Programme for numeracy.	4	3	2	1	N/A
(v)	Activities which foster social skills development.	4	3	2	1	N/A
(vi)	Activities to foster communication.	4	3	2	1	N/A
(vii)	Opportunities for private or individual or free play and small group activities.	4	3	2	1	N/A
(viii)	Activities for artistic and creative expression.	4	3	2	1	N/A

(ix)	Activities for gross motor development.	4	3	2	1	N/A
(x)	Activities for fine motor skill development.	4	3	2	1	N/A
(xi)	Opportunities for music appreciation and movement.	4	3	2	1	N/A
(xii)	Activities for nature/science appreciation.	4	3	2	1	N/A
(xiii)	Activities for cultural appreciation.	4	3	2	1	N/A
**	Curriculum or other developmental programmes meet the requirements stipulated in the regulations.	4	3	2	1	N/A

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendations to achieve Minimum Standard	Rationale for Recommendations	Estimated Cost of Implementation

Numeric rating scale Codes:

4= Excellent

3= Satisfactory

2= Inadequate

1= Unacceptable

N/A=Not Applicable

(Circle the appropriate number that is consistent with your opinion):

(D) Issue: MANAGEMENT Overall rating:** _____

(i)	Management structure – Working Board of Management and/or PTA.	4	3	2	1 N/A
(ii)	Up-to-date record – keeping (activities, attendance, finances, etc)	4	3	2	1 N/A
(iii)	Evidence of or opportunities for staff training.	4	3	2	1 N/A
(iv)	Child/staff ratio.	4	3	2	1 N/A
(v)	Child (crib)/space ratio.	4	3	2	1 N/A
(vi)	Updated health records (children).	4	3	2	1 N/A
(vii)	Updated staff records (incl.health records).	4	3	2	1 N/A
(viii)	Teacher’s duties clearly written out and posted.	4	3	2	1 N/A
(ix)	School goals and philosophy – explained to staff and posted for parents/staff to view.	4	3	2	1 N/A
(x)	General Administration.	4	3	2	1 N/A
(xi)	Fund raising activities.	4	3	2	1 N/A
(xii)	Emergency numbers posted in a strategic location.	4	3	2	1 N/A

**** School, staff and children’s records are implemented and maintained in accordance with the requirements stipulated in the regulations.**

4	3	2	1 N/A
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RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendations to achieve Minimum Standard	Rationale for Recommendations	Estimated Cost of Implementation

(F) GENERAL COMMENTS ON:

Health & Safety _____

Teaching/Learning Environment _____

Curriculum/Development Programme _____

Management _____

School-Parent Relationship _____

Signature & Name: _____

Date: _____

- N.B:** (1) Additional notes can be written overleaf.
(2) Comments/recommendations should be discussed with the Administrator or Principal.

ANNEX 1A

Anguilla Sample Selection

1. BACKGROUND

The Terms of Reference (TOR) of the CFIII consultancy requires *inter alia* that the consultant work “in collaboration with representatives of the sector to determine current range and status of services, desirable expansion and targeting of services to those in need, and improvements required to strengthen compliance with standards of quality in service provision.”

This document outlines the methodology that will be utilised in determining the current status of the services being provided and the improvements required to strengthen compliance with standards of quality in service provision.

2. METHODOLOGY

The basic information required will be gathered through a quality survey of a representative sample of ECD institutions. The results from this sample will be extrapolated to the national level to determine desirable. The survey will use a standard questionnaire that will rate the existing service provision according to pre-determined criteria, thus providing a basis for identifying the improvements that are needed to strengthen compliance with standards of quality in service provision.

The questionnaire will be based on the Draft Minimum Service Standards that were developed at the Regional Policy and Standards Workshop held in Antigua in September 2006. It will utilise a modified version of the Assessment Checklist that was developed and used by the Dominica Government as the basis for assessing the readiness of their ECD institutions to receive formal licences in January 2006.

This will be followed up by a cost questionnaire, which will identify the current cost of the service provision at these institutions and the additional cost that would be required to bring them to the desired level of service provision.

3. SAMPLE

Anguilla has 23 early childhood institutions catering for the birth to five age cohort - 11 day care centers, 1 play group and 11 preschools. 22 of these centers are owned by NGOs (mainly churches) and one is owned by a private operator. 56% of the institutions are located in the rural areas.

The project will use a sample of six institutions (25%), stratified according to age cohorts and rural-urban distribution, and covering the full spectrum of service delivery standards in the country. The recommended distribution is:

- **Day Care Centres:** - 2 urban, 1 rural – include in these the center that is perceived as having the highest standards of quality, the centre that is perceived as having the lowest standard of quality and one that is perceived as average.
- **Pre-schools:** - 1 urban, 2 rural - include in these the center that is perceived as having the highest standards of quality, the centre that is perceived as having the lowest standard of quality and one that is perceived as average

All centers participating in the project should be required to sign a simple agreement agreeing to work with and provide information that is required by the project. This will include providing full access to all costings and financial records as required, as well as working with project-related personnel and the consultant, when the latter visits the country.

The final sample selection has to be cleared with the Consultant before the start of the field work.

4. QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire for the quality survey is attached.

ANNEX 1B
Belize Sample Selection

1. Sample Size – The proposed sample size is 20% of the number of institutions i.e. 4 day care centres and 28 preschools.
2. Sample Distribution – The proposed sample distribution is:
 - a. Day Care Centres
 - i. 1 government centre located in a rural area
 - ii. 2 private centres – 1 urban and 1 rural
 - iii. 1 NGO owned centre located in an urban area
 - b. Preschools
 - i. 2 government centres – 1 urban and 1 rural
 - ii. 8 private centres – 4 urban and 4 rural
 - iii. 13 denominational centres – 5 urban and 8 rural
 - iv. 5 NGO owned centres – 3 urban and 2 rural
3. The sample should include the 2 day care centres and 2 pre-schools that are perceived by the authorities as having the best and worst quality settings in the country, respectively.
4. The remaining 2 day care centres and 26 pre-schools should be randomly chosen within the constraints of the criteria set out above.

ANNEX 2

Standards At A Glance

1. Space is organized for child learning: The group size does not exceed 30 children in one space; adult to child ratios are safe; staff are adequately trained, meet and organise cooperatively; space is arranged so that children can see their interests reflected in the organisation (such as displays of work), access and choose learning resources in at least two or three designated areas (such as reading materials, home ‘corner’, drawing materials), work, interact and play with one or two friends in small groups for at least some of the time

2. Care and Learning activities are scheduled: Adults plan and provide at least two to three scheduled activities each day, indoors and outdoors, to develop children’s emotional, moral, physical, emotional and intellectual capabilities, social relationships, and comprehension of what is right and wrong

3. Care-givers and educators are suitable: Adults providing care and learning experiences for children are supervised, competent in their work, warm and welcoming in their interactions with children

4. Environment is safe and appropriate: Premises are safe, secure, ventilated, well lit, serviced by a phone and suitable for access and use by children; children’s toilet facilities are sanitary; adults have space separate from the children for preparation, meeting parents, breaks from work, storage of personal items and washroom facilities

5. Furniture and equipment is sufficient: child sized furniture and equipment for routine care, play and learning is sturdy and well maintained

6. Health and Safety is practiced: No major hazards prevent children’s safe play indoors and outdoors; preparations are made for authorized administration of medicines, care in the case of sudden illnesses, accidents and emergencies, including fire; basic first aid is practiced by at least one adult; children and adults wash hands after toileting and before handling food; children have time and space to rest appropriately.

7. Food and drink is nutritious: Children are provided with a balanced intake of food, complying with dietary and religious requirements; parents guided to provide acceptable snacks; running potable water provided on site

8. Interactions and behaviours are positive: Adults listen to children, interact with them warmly, demonstrate and praise positive behaviours, manage challenging behaviours in a way that promote children’s understanding and development; corporal punishment or humiliating treatment of children is not practiced.

9. Parents are informed about what their children are doing: Conversations with parents occur regularly and informally about their children to engage interest in how they develop

10. Special needs are anticipated: Adults are aware that some children will have special needs; are proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when a child comes to the service; and include children in ongoing activities with other children as far as possible

11. Documentation is maintained: Records needed for children's welfare and development are maintained and kept secure and confidential; these are shared with the individual children's parents; registers, procedures for admission and finances, accounts, and other records needed for the efficient and safe management of the service are set up and maintained.

12. Additional standards are practiced for babies and children under two years old: Adults must have specific preparation for care of babies; the group size and adult child ratios are appropriate for their safety and care; toys and activities are appropriate for their age and provide a variety of language and sensory activities both indoors and outdoors; children have a consistent adult to interact with at frequent intervals throughout the day; separate arrangements are made for their feeding, rest and toileting; information is exchanged with parents on a daily basis about their changing developmental and care needs and routines.