

**Caribbean Child Development Centre
University of the West Indies**

**Child Focus III Project:
Strengthening Early Childhood Development**

**Report on the 2006 Consultancy to
Rationalize and Harmonize the Legislative
System for Early Childhood Development
in the Cayman Islands and St. Lucia**

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ACRONYMS

CARICOM – Caribbean Community

CCDC – Caribbean Child Development Centre

CDB – Caribbean Development Bank

CECE – Council on Early Childhood Education (St. Lucia)

CF3 – Child Focus III Project

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

CRC – United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

ECD – Early childhood development

ECE – Early childhood education

ECESU – Early Childhood Education Support Unit (St. Lucia)

ECECD – Early childhood education, care and development

ECI – Early childhood institution

ECU – Early Childhood Unit (Cayman Islands)

GC7 – United Nations General Comment Number 7

NCECCE – National Council for Early Childhood Care and Education
(Trinidad and Tobago)

NCTVET – Technical and Vocational Education and Training

UNCRC – United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child

UNICEF – United Nations Children's Fund

UWI – The University of the West Indies

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Executive Summary

The Caribbean Child Development Centre (CCDC) of the University of the West Indies embarked on a regional and technical assistance project to address policy constraints affecting implementation of the Caribbean Plan of Action for Early Childhood Education, Care and Development. The project, named *Child Focus III - Strengthening Early Childhood Development* sought to increase public awareness and to mobilize national commitment for early childhood development (ECD) throughout the Caribbean. This initiative was part of the regional multidisciplinary effort to find applicable, cost effective solutions to policy constraints.

The CCDC recruited an individual consultant to review the legislative framework in the Cayman Islands and St. Lucia and to propose strategies to rationalize and harmonize all elements of the legislative system for ECD in both countries.

The Consultant visited both countries which generated informed dialogue on key areas of ECD policy issues, and met with key stakeholders; including Ministers of Government, Representatives from relevant Ministries and Departments (Education, Social Transformation, Health, Justice, Planning), Early Childhood Institution (ECI) operators, and others. The Visit Reports are appended.

The report provides a general overview of Early Childhood Development in the Caribbean, in light of regional and international commitments, including the Caribbean Plan of Action for ECD. It examines the regional models of legislation, regulations and standards (from the Bahamas, Belize, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago) to inform the development of such in the Cayman Islands and St. Lucia. Issues affecting the implementation, such as political mobilization and fragmented authority, are highlighted and addressed.

The existing statutory provisions, in both countries, were insufficient for implementing an effective regulatory framework for the integrated and coordinated delivery of quality early childhood programmes and services, to provide equity and access for children birth to eight years within safe, healthy and nurturing environments. Lessons learned in countries that were ahead in this process were noteworthy. For example, the use of corporal punishment continues to provide major challenges to stakeholders and remains a contentious topic regardless of the regulation banning its use.

Recommendations, including draft ECD regulations and standards, are provided for the restructuring of ECD oversight and establishment of appropriate regulatory frameworks in both countries. These outline the functions, roles and responsibilities, inputs and resources that are required to transform the sector.

Both countries showed considerable interest in implementing the project, but both had more preparations to complete. The suggested strategies for swift implementation include the amendment and enactment of laws, the promulgation of ECECD regulations and the establishment of EC standards. Progress is largely dependent on the support of the relevant Ministers and the Cabinet.

Post-consultancy developments which have occurred since the completion of this project are also noted.

Introduction

Early Childhood is defined as the period from birth to eight years. The care and stimulation that children receive in their first eight years of life has a significant impact on their adult life outcomes.

To a large degree, early childhood programmes operate at the margins of education, social services and health care systems, isolated from coherent policy debate, mainstream planning and consistent funding. The Child Focus III: Strengthening Early Childhood Development Project (CF3) sought to increase public awareness and mobilize national commitment for Early Childhood Development (ECD) throughout the Caribbean. The CF3 public policy component addressed the areas of legislation and standards in two selected pilot countries, the Cayman Islands and St. Lucia. The Caribbean Development Bank's investment was intended to contribute to the long-term national and regional goals of improved mental and physical performance of children, greater economic productivity and enhanced social well-being.

This report aims to provide a comprehensive review of the legislative framework for early childhood development in the Cayman Islands and St. Lucia, and to make recommendations to rationalize and harmonize the framework to improve the delivery of quality early childhood services. This effort was part of a regional, multidisciplinary effort to find broadly applicable, cost-effective solutions to policy constraints and it built on the experience and resources of the numerous governmental, private and international organizations already working in this sector.

1.0 BACKGROUND

Early childhood education, care and development (ECECD) has seen a surge of attention and interest in many countries over the past two decades. This is due in part to the growing body of research that shows the importance of good quality early experiences for children's short-term cognitive, social and emotional developmental outcomes, as well as their long term success in school and life in general. This window of opportunity, if lost, could result in far-reaching, negative social and economic consequences.

Policymakers have begun to recognize that equitable access to high quality Early Childhood Education (ECE) and care can strengthen the foundations of lifelong learning for children, and support the broad educational and social needs of families (OECD 2001).

In the Caribbean, early childhood is defined as the period spanning birth to eight years of age. This period is recognized as the time when young children are in particular need of security, health care, good nutrition and exposure to learning experiences (stimulation).

There is a widespread recognition across the Caribbean that the quality of human resources is the most critical factor in achieving and maintaining a high level of competitiveness in the global economy. The situation in the Region, however, is that the policy direction, administrative co-ordination and concrete programme support fall short of current needs.

Children's participation in early childhood programmes is often determined by their parent's socio-economic circumstances. Allocation by governments and families indicate that childcare provision is not always equitable, nor is it commensurate with importance and need.

Families seeking non-parental arrangements choose from a variety of options. These include early childhood education programmes (preschool and early stimulation programmes), daycare centres (for groups of children in a non-residential setting), in-home care (by a non-relative in a family home) and kith and kin care (provided by a relative, neighbour or friend to the family of the children in-care).

The responsibility to ensure that any and all of these settings protect and nurture the children in their care is shared among many groups. However, families are ultimately responsible for making informed choices about the specific programmes that are most appropriate for their children. Early childhood professionals and others engaged in providing or supporting early childhood services have an ethical obligation to uphold high standards of practice. Others within the community, including employers and

community organizations, that benefit when children and families have access to high-quality Early childhood programmes, also share in the responsibility to improve the quality and availability of early childhood services. Government should serve a number of important roles, including:

- *Licensing* and otherwise regulating so as to define and enforce minimum requirements for legal operation of programmes available to the public;
- *Funding programmes and supporting infrastructure*, including the facilitation of professional development (training) and building activities.
- *Financial assistance*, to help families with programme cost;
- *Research and development* of Early Childhood programmes, child development and learning and data gathering for community planning; and
- *Disseminating information* to inform parents/guardians, service providers and the public about ways to promote children's healthy development and learning, both at home and in care/educational settings.

1.1 The Importance of an Effective System of Public Regulation

The primary benefit from public regulation of the child care and early education sector is to help in ensuring children's right to care settings that protect them from harm and promote their healthy development. The importance of these rights is underscored by a growing body of research evidence that emphasizes the importance of a child's earliest experiences to their development and later learning. (Hart & Risley 1995; Centre for the Future of Children 1995; Bredekamp & Copple 1997; Kagan & Cohen 1997). Emerging research on brain development indicates that the degree of responsive care giving that children receive as infants and toddlers positively affects the connections between neurons in the brain, the architecture of the brain itself (Newberger 1997; Shore 1997). Given the proportion of children who spend significant portions of their day in settings outside their family, ensuring that these environments promote healthy development should be placed high on the agenda.

Research shows that states with more effective regulatory structures have a greater supply of higher quality programmes (Phillips, Howes & Whitebook 1992; Helburn et al. 1995). Additionally, in such states, differences in quality are minimized between service sectors (such as non-profit and proprietary programmes). (Kagan & Newton 1989)

Children who attend higher quality programmes consistently demonstrate better outcomes. These differences are clear in many areas; *cognitive functioning and*

intellectual development (Lazar et al. 1982; Clark Stewart & Gruber 1984; Goelman & Pence 1987; Burchinal, Lee & Ramey 1989; Epstein 1993; Helburn et al. 1995; Pensioner-Feinberg & Burchinal 1997), *language development* (McCartney 1984; Whitebook, Howes, & Phillips 1989; Pensioner-Feinberg & Burchinal 1997); and *social development* ((McCartney 1984; Whitebook, Howes, & Phillips 1989; Howes 1988; Phillips 1989; Pensioner-Feinberg & Burchinal 1997). The demonstrated outcomes appear in cross sectional studies conducted at a specific point in time as well as in longitudinal studies over time (Carew 1980; Howes 1988, 1990; Vandell, Henderson & Wilson 1988; Scheweinhart, Barnes & Weikart with Barnett & Epstein 1993; Barnett 1995). The differences in outcomes occur even when other family variables are controlled for, including maternal education and family income level (Helburn et al, NICHD 1997).

Research is also consistent in identifying the structural factors most related to high quality in Early Childhood programmes:

- Small groups of children with a sufficient number of trained adults to provide sensitive, responsive care giving.
- Higher levels of general education and specialized ECD training for caregivers, teachers and programme administrators; and
- Higher rates of compensation and lower rates of turnover for programme personnel (Whitebook, Howes, & Phillips 1989; Hayes, Palmer & Zaslow 1990; Galinsky et al 1994; Helburn et al. 1995; Kagan & Cohen 1997; Whitebook, Sakai & Howes 1997).

Many of these factors can be regulated directly or significantly influenced by regulatory policy.

1.2 Regional and International Developments

The United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) has been ratified by all governments in the region and provides an excellent framework for developing effective mechanisms to protect, promote and monitor the well being of children. The policy of universal access to quality ECD services is a human rights issue and access to these services is a social equity and economic issue. Caribbean governments have signaled their commitment to develop policies, regulations and standards for ECD services; however, the development of such across the region has been uneven.

In 2005, The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child adopted General Comment #7 (GC7) to strengthen understanding of the human rights of all young

children and to draw States parties' attention to their obligations towards young children. GC7 is expected to contribute to the realization of rights for all young children through formulation and promotion of comprehensive policies, laws, programmes, practices, professional training and research specifically focused on rights in early childhood. Legislative and policy reform are critical measures to which CARICOM members are paying great attention, particularly in the areas of children's health and education. However, a lot of work remains to be done in implementing the CRC principles into practice; into legislation, policy, coordinating mechanisms, and the delivery of services.

The Caribbean Regional Policy, "*The Future of Education in the Caribbean*" endorsed by Ministers of Education in 1993, has set out among its policy goals the improvement of the quality of early childhood education, and the CARICOM Standing Committee of Ministers of Education in 1995 gave further priority to this area of provision. The emerging interest in ECECD and the political will of the governments to address this sector in a coordinated manner, as indicated by the ratification and endorsement of relevant documents, was noted by the Second Caribbean Conference on Early Childhood Education, Barbados, April 1997, which brought together three hundred professionals in this area from across the region. As a result, one important outcome of the conference was the delineation of the Caribbean Plan of Action for Early Childhood, Care Education and Development (CPOA) to address the implementation of initiatives pertinent to issues identified and mandated by Governments in the region. At the Conference, countries of the region committed themselves to developing a legislative framework for coordinating the provision of national services and monitoring standards for the Early Childhood Development sector, in keeping with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and current findings on child development and ECD best practices. The implications are positive for the Caribbean as governments aim to strengthen the governance of their policies that affect children in the region.

In collaboration with UNICEF, CARICOM has played an important role in encouraging its member states to adopt the CPOA at the national level.

The Caribbean Plan of Action called for:

- Legislative framework for coordinated provision of services and monitoring standards in this sector;
- Integrated social planning and implementation of initiatives;
- Adequate financing;
- Equitable access to quality provisions to minimize the plight of the large percentage of children in high-risk situations;

- Education and training for all providers of ECED;
- Appropriate curriculum development and materials development;
- Increased parent, community and media awareness and involvement;
- Coordinated action at both national and regional levels; and
- Increased research to inform development of the sector.

One of the key goals of the CPOA was the establishment of legislation for services to children from birth to school entry. While legislation is the central focus of this goal it would clearly cover regulation and monitoring enforcement systems. Legislation by itself will not be sufficient unless accompanied by adequate monitoring and enforcement mechanisms.

The primary objective of this consultancy was the development of strategies to rationalize and harmonize all elements of the legislative system for ECD in the Cayman Islands and St. Lucia. The existing regulatory framework in each country was examined and the respective Government's commitments reviewed in light of regulatory models in other Caribbean countries with similar legislative systems. General recommendations for the laws and regulations that should govern the operations of an ECD sector in the selected countries are provided.

2.0 ST. LUCIA

St. Lucia is located in the Eastern Caribbean region, more specifically in the Windward Islands (Lesser Antilles). With a population of 165,000 living on the 539 square-kilometre picturesque island, St. Lucia's early childhood sector is overseen by the Day Care Unit of the Ministry of Transformation and the Early Childhood Unit of the Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development, Youth and Sports. One of the key policy objectives set for ECECD in St. Lucia is to establish and enforce regulations governing the operation of all Early Childhood Centres within the parameters of prescribed legislation and minimum standards. This includes the monitoring and supervision of all ECECD centres to ensure compliance with stipulated regulations.

The Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development, Youth and Sports through its Early Childhood Education Services Unit (ECESU) indicated that the Child Focus III Project's (CF3) contribution was timely for the following reasons:

1. Having developed both a draft National Early Childhood Policy and a Standards Document, there was an apparent need for technical assistance in pushing for the

ratification of these which would assist the Early Childhood Unit in its mandate to better monitor and regulate the sector.

2. The existing situation of fragmented responsibility for Early Childhood oversight called for a merger of ECECD services to negate possible gaps, duplication and client confusion, as well as to centralize coordination and monitoring.

3. It was imperative that the Government demonstrate its pledged commitment towards improving the welfare of children by creating an enabling environment (ECD supporting legislation and policies) and making substantial provisions in areas that immediately and in the long-term impact on children and their welfare.

4. With the advent of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME), the need for the harmonization and standardization of ECECD practices in terms of service delivery and quality of product was imminent. As persons migrate to work within the region, it is of paramount importance that they be able to access and receive quality ECECD services throughout.

5. Direction was needed in the organization and coordination of ECECD personnel in view of a possible Daycare Unit (Ministry of Social Transformation) and Early Childhood Education Support Unit (Ministry of Education) merger, including indication of the necessary structural and personnel requirements, such as for licensing, monitoring and sector administration.

6. CF3 could assist greatly by providing needed technical guidance for the implementation of the NCTVET Assessment and Certification Project, ensuring professionalization of the sector and defining a clear path for professional growth and development. This could also aid the ECESU staff by suggesting or indicating areas of training for administrative personnel as well as practitioners, and could serve to establish and enforce professional and ethical standards across the ECD sector.

Early childhood professionals in St. Lucia agree on the need for greater coordination and collaboration among various ECECD units, professions and organizations. Collaboration and coordination among preschool programmes have been virtues well recognized and often desired, but they have not often been implemented successfully. This therefore heightens their conviction that the implementation of effective EC legislation and standards can only serve to positively assist with the provision of comprehensive, coordinated services for young children and the promotion of high standards and quality assurance with respect to ECECD.

2.1 Legislation for Early Childhood Development

Section 76 of the Education Act provides that a private educational institution may provide ECE programmes suitable to the needs of children between three (3) and five (5) years of age, *if the parents agree*.

Section 77 provides that a private educational institution offering Early Childhood services shall develop and maintain policies and programmes consistent with Early Childhood services, programmes and plans prescribed by the Minister. The private educational institution is also required to keep in-force a general liability insurance policy or any other form of indemnification. Essentially, what this requires is a liability insurance policy in the event of accidents involving children and/or staff.

Section 79 empowers the Ministers, when they deem it to be desirable, to establish an Early Childhood Educational Council. This means that the Council will only be appointed when the Minister deems it appropriate to do so. The Council's role is to advise the Minister on policies to guide the implementation of the provisions of the Act dealing with ECE services. The Act allows the Minister to make regulations for a range of matters, including:

- Staff Training: Pre-existing academic and professional qualifications of teachers or other persons employed in Early Childhood Educational services,
- Administration: Regarding records to be kept by private educational institutions engaged in Early Childhood educational services.
- Safety: Setting safety standards.
- Health: Regarding health requirements of the environment and of persons engaged in Early Childhood services.
- Staffing: The ratio of staff to children (age-appropriate ratios).
- Developmental and Educational Programming: To provide appropriate programmes to meet the development needs of children of specified ages attending the programmes offered by private early childhood institutions (ECI).
- Physical Environment: Regarding buildings, premises, indoor and outdoor equipment and furnishings to be used in the delivery of ECE services.

Whilst the St. Lucia Education Act (Sections 75-80) does provide for ECE, its provisions are narrow and inadequate. Section 75 specifically states that it *only* applies to *private*

ECE providers. It is unacceptable that there are government institutions which fall outside the scope of the Act. The Education Act is limited to children between the ages 3-5 years. In addition, The Act named only applies to ECE institutions *if the parent of the child agrees*. This makes compliance with the Act voluntary, as parents have the option of disagreeing. In such a case, the Act cannot be considered compulsory. The implications are the final word would be left up to the parents. It would also mean that the Act would not provide for children over 5 years or children less than 3 years. These provisions need to be revised to include children from birth to eight 8 years old.

Other Legislation

Apart from the Education Act, other legislation exists which impacts on ECECD. These laws include the Public Health Act, 1975 (regarding health standards for Early Childhood Institutions), the Children and Young Persons Act, the Family Court Act, and Sections of the Criminal Code, as well as planning legislation.

Pending legislation includes the Draft Children (Care and Protection) Bill and the Draft Status of Children Bill.

2.2 Regulation of Early Childhood Development

No regulation has been promulgated under the Education Act. There is no current proposal to promulgate Regulations.

2.3 Standards for Early Childhood Development Initiatives

St. Lucia has proposed Standards for the Regulation of ECE services under the Draft Education Act but these draft standards have never been finalized and remain a work in progress with changing priorities. In addition, there was no current programme in place for the finalization of the standards.

St. Lucia Draft Standards for Early Childhood Services.

The Draft Standards were prepared in 1999, but have not yet been finalized or approved. The Draft Standards cover the following matters:

- Staffing;
- Child care practice;
- Quality of care and educational provision for newborns -3 year olds;

- Quality of educational provision for 3-5 year old;
- Record keeping;
- Health and safety; and
- Physical environment.

There are also appendices dealing with:

- Process for registration and inspection;
- Protocol to apply for a variance from the registration and inspection standards;
- Child protection guidelines;
- Contents of first aid box;
- Qualifications specified for supervisors and staff in Early Childhood services;
- Proposed equal opportunities statement; and,
- Proposed list of animals which can be housed at centres and their care.

Standards for nutrition and finance (transparency) need to be explicitly addressed.

St. Lucia's draft standards are well-developed and in fact formed the basis for Trinidad and Tobago's ECECD Standards.

2.4 Early Childhood Policies

The Early Childhood Policy aims to provide a framework within which the ECECD services in St. Lucia can be strengthened. It seeks to address the deficiencies identified in the current service provisions and to orient the sector in a direction that will ensure that the children of St. Lucia receive the best possible start in life. It incorporates the most current scientific findings on child development, especially those regarding brain development in the early years.

It is consistent with the national policy mandates on early childhood development as expressed in the Education Sector Development Plan 2000 – 2005 (There is a later draft Developmental Plan than 2005 but there are no changes in the policy), being

implemented by the Minister of Education, Human Resource Development, Youth and Sports. Particular emphasis has been placed on the principles which underpin that Development Plan, especially the principles of equity, access and quality.

It is also consistent with regional and international commitments on early childhood development that the Government of St. Lucia has signed on to.

The core objectives of St. Lucia's Policy are:

- A. To ensure that all children in St. Lucia between the ages of birth and eight have the opportunity to access age-appropriate and developmentally-appropriate early childhood services.
- B. To ensure that the quality of the early childhood service provision is adequate for the health and safety of the children and appropriate for their developmental needs.
- C. To encourage and support the professional development of practitioners; and
- D. To encourage and support active parental involvement in the development of their children.

The policy proposes two approaches to achieve this coordination and consistency, namely to:

1. Promote inter-sectoral collaboration between the different sectors which provide services to children in the early years – health, education, community services, private sector; and
2. Promote integrated management of services where appropriate, such as in the provision of the institutionalized services at the daycare and pre-school level.

The specific actions that should be pursued include:

- Establishment of the Council on Early Childhood Education (CECE) which is provided for in section 79 (1) of the Education Act No.41 of 1999. This Council should have representation from all sectors working on children's issues to ensure that a comprehensive, inter-disciplinary approach to children's development is taken.
- Inter-ministerial collaboration in the development and mainstreaming of child-related policies in services for the child from birth of five (5) years, either through the CECE or with the effective participation of the CECE.

- Encouragement and facilitation of partnerships between Agencies and NGOs responsible for children's welfare and the private sector, to promote ECECD as an integral part of nation building.
- Integration of the management and administration of the daycare and pre-school services under the jurisdiction of the Early Childhood Education Services Unit of the Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development, Youth and Sports.

A variety of strategies are included in the policy document:

- a. Integration of services provided to children to ensure a comprehensive and coordinated approach to children's needs in the early years.
- b. Expansion of services to geographic areas which are currently under-served.
- c. Specific targeting and provisioning of children at-risk, including children with disabilities, children with other special needs, vulnerable children living in situations of poverty, abuse and neglect, and children affected and infected by HIV/AIDS.
- d. Supporting and facilitating the implementation of best practices by the providers of early childhood services at the centre level, in order to ensure that stipulated minimum levels of quality provision are achieved and maintained.
- e. Education and active involvement of parents, guardians and practitioners in the provision of early childhood services.

2.5 International Commitments for Early Childhood Development

St. Lucia is a party to the following international arrangements in regard to Early Childhood.

- I. The Regional Action Plan for Early Childhood Development approved by CARICOM Council on Human and Social Development in October 2002.
- II. The World Fit for Children Declaration of April 2002.
- III. The Ibero-American Plan of Action for Children October 2001.
- IV. The Kingston Consensus of October 2000.

V. Education for All 2000.

VI. The Caribbean Plan of Action for Early Childhood Education Care and Development, endorsed by CARICOM Heads of Government in July 1997.

While St. Lucia has clearly committed to implementing these regional and international commitments, it has not yet introduced the necessary policy and legislative measures to effectively implement these commitments.

Although the Sector Development Plan was revisited in 2006, it does not differ from the 2000-2005 Sector Plan. It is the same plan being revised and rewritten to be more user-friendly, and remains in essence the same; a work in progress. The Legislation is still a draft copy but the commitment to ratify appears definite although no timeframe is slated for its completion. It is believed that this may be completed in the near future.

No new ECECD laws have been introduced.

3.0 THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

Situated approximately 400 miles south of Miami and 170 miles northwest of Jamaica, the Cayman Islands, comprised of Grand Cayman, Cayman Brac and Little Cayman, has a population of 47,000 and total land area of 264 square kilometers. Grand Cayman is the largest of the the islands and houses the capital, Georgetown, the fifth largest banking centre in the world.

Historically, the development of programmes servicing young children in the Cayman Islands was spearheaded by the private sector. At the time of the consultation, there were 23 day nurseries and preschools, nine private schools with pre-kindergarten classes, and four government primary schools with reception classes. The Reception Programme is designed to help four to five year old children transition into primary school. Education is administered by the Ministry of Education, Aviation and Planning. The Minister of Education has overall responsibility for policy and for the maintenance of the system. The Permanent Secretary heads the Ministry and links the Executive Council and Government policy with the work of the Education Department and other areas of responsibility.

The recently established Early Childhood Unit is a partnership between the Schools' Inspectorate and the Education Department. In late 2005, an Education Conference Report, *The National Consensus on the Future of Education in the Cayman Islands*, was debated and passed unanimously in the Legislative Assembly. The report summarizes the views and desires of the various stakeholders for Cayman's education system. It also identifies policy implications and states how the Ministry will respond to these findings. As a result of these developments, the Cayman Islands then had a blueprint, based on national consensus, for changing and improving their education system. Feedback from the consultation identified a range of concerns about EC services, including the curriculum and oversight of the services. In response, the

Ministry identified improvements in ECD as one of the key strategies in the education reform process.

The strategy reads as follows: “The development of an Early Childhood Unit to set standards, evaluate performance and support improvements in day-care centres, pre-schools and the reception programme. The Unit will be charged with developing:

- National Standards to cover provision and outcomes in early childhood education and care settings;
- Indicators of good practice to support the standards;
- Plans for an inspection programme and self-evaluation model for early childhood education and care settings;
- A handbook for ECECD staff and inspectors, with guidance on standards and on the curriculum; and,
- A template for an annual report on early childhood education in the Cayman Islands.

The Ministry has pledged its commitment to providing the necessary personnel and other resources to implement this strategy through the Early Childhood Unit.

3.1 Legislation for Early Childhood Development

The Children Law Act of 2003 contains a variety of provisions relating to Early Childhood. However, the Act deals with many other legal matters relative to children, such as foster care and parental responsibility among others. Only parts 3 and 9 of the Act specifically regulate ECECD.

Part 3 Section 20 of the Law, specifies that The Department of Children and Family Services should provide day care for children who are in need, under the age of five (5), or not yet attending school. Day care is defined as any supervised activity provided for young children during the day. Additionally, for children who are attending school and in need, the Department is required to provide such care or supervised activity as is appropriate.

Part 9 of the Law makes provisions for child ‘minding’ and daycare for young children. As made clear in section 72(1), this stipulates that a register of child minders is to be kept by the Educational Department. That is, of persons who provide day care for children under eight (8) on premises other than domestic premises.

Section 74 makes specific requirements to be adhered to by persons providing day care. These include: the maximum number of children within a specific age group who may be cared on the premises; the security of the premises; and, record keeping.

Section 75 of the Act outlines the steps that the Department is to take in order to ensure that there is proper maintenance of the day care and child minding facilities. It explains the guidelines for application procedures, disqualification from registration, and the inspection of the facilities.

It appeared that not all providers were fully aware of the existing policies; there was need for regulations to be distributed and effectively communicated to all ECECD settings, accompanied with the training of staff and monitoring to ensure that they are implemented, is evident.

The Children Law had not yet been brought into effect. Hence, its provisions relating to ECD were not yet in operation. Furthermore, the Children Law only deals with childcare and does not address other aspects of ECD. No timetable has been set for bringing the Children Law into operation although the government has indicated a need for its early implementation.

Apart from the Children Law, there are other statutory provisions dealing with ECIs, such as the Public Health Law and Planning Legislation.

3.2 Regulation of Early Childhood Development

There are no regulations under The Children Law or any other laws dealing with any aspect of early childhood development.

3.3 Standards for Early Childhood Development Initiatives

There were no legal minimum ECECD standards. The following non-legally binding documents exist:

- I. *Educational Council Guidelines for Early Childhood Programmes (2002)* clearly state that the document is intended to provide guidelines and does not represent legislation. The document refers to exceptions for health and fire safety practices in keeping with the requirements of Public Health and Fire Department.

These guidelines seek to provide consistency in approach to registration responsibilities.

These guidelines refer to daycare (serving children from birth and two years old) and pre-school (serving children between the ages from three years until admission to year one (usually age five years)).

The guidelines address the following areas:

- Process for opening and registering a day care centre/pre-school
- Procedure for annual inspection of premises
- Administration
- Staffing/including guidelines for staff: child ratio.
- Physical environment
- Health
- Nutrition
- Staff qualification and development
- Curriculum
- Disciplinary measures
- Staff/parent relationships
- Daycare of children with special needs

II. Guidelines for the Operation of Preschools and Day Care Centres (January 2001)

These guidelines deal with:

- Physical environment and safety
- Lighting and ventilation
- Water supply
- Pest control
- Garbage disposal

- Sewage and waste water disposals
- Food hygiene/ sanitation
- General sanitation

A small group, led by the ECU, with representatives from Education, the School's Inspectorate, Public Health, Environmental Health and Planning informally inspected and monitored ECECD service provision.

3.4 Early Childhood Policies

There were two existing policies, recently developed by the ECU:

1. The Early Years Complaints Procedures (2006)
2. Discipline in Early Years Setting (2006)

These policies were the first in the series of policies and guidance for early years practitioners that would be promulgated by the Early Childhood Unit. The 'early years' refers to ECECD settings and institutions that cater for children who are under compulsory school age (five years) and who are looked after in schools (government and private), pre-schools, day nurseries (day care centres) and by child minders.

The *policy on complaints* was written in response to a number of complaints against staff in ECECD settings, when it was realized that there were no clear systems for following-up the complaints and no written guidelines for ECECD settings and stakeholders. This policy includes a set of guidelines to be followed when a complaint is made directly to the ECECD setting or to the Early Childhood Unit. In the interim period, before the Unit is set up, complaints will be handled by the Schools Inspectorate, in liaison with the Education Officer for Early Years. The policy also includes a template for recording complaints, documenting follow-up and resolution.

The *policy on discipline* was written in 2005 in response to a number of incidents that came to light in relation to the complaints referred to above. The Senior Inspector for ECE also highlighted concerns following visits to ECIs, accompanied by the Education Officer for Early Childhood. It was apparent that staff in ECIs needed more training and guidance on developmentally-appropriate techniques to discipline young children and babies, as some of their practices were inappropriate.

The National Consensus on the Future of Education in the Cayman Islands, a government policy developed in 2005, also outlines a policy framework for ECD. The

policies have been shared with the providers and there is an active programme to engage providers through regular visits and consultations.

4.0 ECD ISSUES IN ST. LUCIA AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

In both St. Lucia and the Cayman Islands, there are unresolved issues concerning the definition and scope of ECD. There are also differences in terminology. In St. Lucia, the Education Act provides for early childhood education between 3-5 years. There are no statutory provisions for early childhood education for birth to 8 years. Further, the provisions of the Education Act are not mandatory, but merely per consensual (it relies on parental consent). The standards in Trinidad and Tobago are based on the draft St. Lucia standards.

Nevertheless, the draft Early Childhood Policy in the Cayman Islands (which has not received Government approval) applies to children under 8 years of age. The Cayman Islands is now in the process of developing its own Early Childhood standards. In this regard the Cayman Islands Early Childhood Unit is examining standards documents from the Bahamas, Belize, Jamaica, St. Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, and elsewhere. It is expected that ECECD Standards should be in place in the Cayman Islands in the near future.

There is a broad similarity between the standards documents of Bahamas and Trinidad and Tobago, whilst the structure of the Jamaican standards document differs from those.

5.0 CARIBBEAN ECD STANDARDS, LEGISLATION AND POLICY MODELS

Standards and policy models for early childhood development in other Caribbean countries were reviewed with a view to building on these to establish clear policy and a regulatory framework for the Cayman Islands and St. Lucia.

5.1 Standards

Formal standards for ECIs should address issues of the operation, management and administration of ECIs. Each category should describe what the standard is trying to achieve and clearly state the measures (performance criteria) by which the standard will be assessed, such as staffing, physical environment, safety and administration. Some of the performance criteria are set out in law and some are voluntary. Those that

must be met under the law are those that are required for registration. Voluntary standards are also monitored by the central ECD authority and the voluntary criteria provide ECIs with guidance to improve the quality of service they provide to a level higher than minimum standards.

There is a range of ECD standards within the Caribbean, and models from the Bahamas, Belize, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago were reviewed. The ECD standards do not address care conditions for young children in residential child care institutions, such as children's homes and places of safety. These matters are dealt with by separate Acts, such as, the Child Care and Protection Act in Jamaica, and by separate institutions, such as the Department of Family and Children Services in the Cayman Islands,

For the standards to be effective, the government has a responsibility (legal duty) to inspect ECIs to ensure that standards are met and maintained. Hence, it is critical to have an effective enforcement and compliance structure in place; an inspectorate with an adequate number of properly trained inspectors and sufficient resources for the inspectors to carry out their duties. Proper records and reports will have to be kept as they will have a bearing on subsequent regulation processes.

It is also important to ensure that all standards are realistic. For example, with Staffing, it is important to ensure that practitioners are suitable, both by their training/qualification and their character. Many practitioners have many years of experience, well-developed skills but little or no formal EC qualification. If there is a shortage of qualified individuals, it is unrealistic to expect ECIs to comply, particularly within their tight operating budgets. Staffing requirements have significant implications for parents and their ability to pay fees. As well, appropriate training opportunities need to be readily available and accessible to those in need of certification. Table 1 illustrates the differences in standards between countries.

Jamaican Standards

The Early Childhood Commission Act (2003) established a special body, the Early Childhood Commission (ECC) to coordinate all early childhood activities and to develop appropriate plans and programmes for the entire early childhood sector. This includes supervision and regulation of ECIs to ensure that they are operating above minimum standards.

The Early Childhood Act (2005) and the Early Childhood Regulations (2005) explicitly describe the requirements that an ECI must meet in order to be registered by the ECC as a legally operating ECI. The ECC translated the provisions of the law and regulations

into a user-friendly document, *Policies and Standards for the Operation, Management and Administration of Early Childhood Institutions*, particularly for ECIs.

There are 12 categories of standards for the operation of ECIs, and each is accompanied by performance criteria:

- Section 1: Staffing
- Section 2: Development and Educational Programmes
- Section 3: Interactions and Relationships with Children.
- Section 4: Physical Environment.
- Section 5: Indoor and Outdoor Equipment, Furnishing and Supplies
- Section 6: Health
- Section 7: Nutrition
- Section 8: Safety
- Section 9: Child Rights, Protection and Equality.
- Section 10: Interactions with Parents and Community Members
- Section 11: Administration.
- Section 12: Finance

The Enhancement of Basic Schools Project, jointly funded by the Government of Jamaica and CDB, aims to enable young children to learn and develop optimally. The Project has contributed to the strengthening of Jamaica's institutional capacity through support for the legislative framework for improving management and service delivery in ECIs, among other contributions such as upgrading facilities, training, and public education.

Belize Standards

The following standards exist and affect early childhood development in Belize:

- Minimum standards for day care
- Minimum standards for pre-school

- Minimum standards for children's homes

Bahamas Standards

The Bahamas Standards for Early Childhood Services cover a wide range of early childhood service criteria, including:

- Registration, licensing and inspection
- Centre administration and documentation
- Staff requirements
- Physical facility requirements
- Programme requirements
- Health requirements
- Transportation requirements

Trinidad & Tobago Standards

The National Council for Early Childhood Care and Education is the cabinet-appointed body that is responsible for introducing appropriate legislation and administrative guidelines for the effective operation of all public and private ECCE centres in Trinidad and Tobago.

The ECCE Standards cover:

- Registration of the institution and licensing.
- Staff
- Care and services
- Quality care stimulation of children between birth and four (4) years of age.
- Stimulation and education of children between four (4) and eight (8) years of age.
- Administration
- Health and safety

- Physical environment

5.2 Legislative Frameworks for Early Childhood Services

Within the Caribbean region, legislation for early childhood services exists in a number of countries. These include:

a. Jamaica

- Early Childhood Commission Act, 2003 (in operation).
- Early Childhood Act, 2005 (enacted 2007)
- Early Childhood Regulations, 2005 (enacted 2007)
- Child Care and Protection Act (2004)

b. Bahamas

- Early Childhood Act, 2004

c. Barbados

- Child Care Board Act, 1981
- Child Care Board (Private Child Care Centres Regulations), 1986

d. Bermuda

- Children Act, 1998
- Day Care Centre Regulations, 1999

e. Belize

- Education Act, 1991
- Families and Children Act, 1998
- Social Services Regulations, 1998 (operators of daycare facilities), (registration, licensing and minimum operating requirements).
- Statutory instrument on Mandatory Reporting of Abuse.

f. Cayman

- Children Law, 2003

g. St. Lucia

- Education Act 1999

h. St. Kitts

- The St. Christopher and Nevis Probation and Child Welfare Agency Act, 1994

Differences exist among the various statutes, for example:

- The Early Childhood Act (Jamaica) applies to all aspects of early childhood development and covers children less than 8 years.
- The Early Childhood Care Act (Bahamas) applies to daycare centres and pre-schools but the Act applies only to children under 5. The Act establishes a Pre-School and Day Care centre Council which has a wide mandate including registering buildings as day care centres and pre-schools. The Council is also empowered to regulate the conduct of operators of day care centres and pre-schools. The Council establishes standards and issues a Certificate of Registration for early childhood institutions.
- The Belize Social Services Regulations regulate operations of day care facilities and cover the registration, licensing and minimum operating requirements for daycare facilities.

5.3 Policy Frameworks

The policy framework is the policy statement that includes institutional structures for implementing the policy and for managing, monitoring and evaluating the policy implementation. The policy statement is a government committed statement of intent regarding desirable outcomes that include a set of objectives and strategies for achieving these goals or objectives.

The Belize Policy for Early Development and Education

The Belize Policy for Early Childhood Development and Education includes the following:

- Brief situational analysis of the state of ECD and education in Belize.

- Principles
- Policy Framework
- Convention on the Rights of the Child and ECECD policies.
- Current Legislation
- Governance, organization, administration and management

Trinidad and Tobago

In Trinidad and Tobago the National Council for Early Childhood Care and Education (NCECCE) has prepared a Policy Document and Implementation Plan (2006-2007) to deal with early childhood care and education. The policy document focuses on the following:

- i. The policy framework structure and function of the NCECCE;
- ii. Policy issues which have emerged the policy statements and principles; and,
- iii. The plan of action and implementation strategies for effective management of the section during the period 2005-2007

Table 1**Comparison of Existing Standards**

	Registration/Physical Environment		Health & Safety	Staff	Nutrition	Transport	Parents participation	Finance	Child Protection	Inspection	Administration
Jamaica	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Belize	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓
Bahamas	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Trinidad & Tobago	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 2

A Model Legislative Framework

ACT	REGULATIONS	STANDARDS
Establishment and functions of Commission Establishment of ECD Council Powers of the Minister Regulations Fines and penalties Registration/licensing of early childhood institutions.	Form of licence/registration	Confidentiality/access to records
	Display of Licence/registration	Health – safety
	Discipline	Performance Criteria for staff
	Record keeping	Indoor and outdoor equipment
	Medical examinations and Health	Development/educational programmes
	Sanitary requirements	Parents Participation
	Food and nutritional requirements	Performance criteria for administration
	Child: staff ratio enforcement	Performance criteria for nutrition

Table 3

**Legal Framework for Early Childhood Development
(The Jamaican Model)**

The Early Childhood Act establishes the Legal Framework for early childhood development in Jamaica

Components	Functions
Early Childhood Commission Act & Regulations	Requires operators of Early Childhood Institutions to apply for registration, to facilitate the process of inspection, to comply with specific physical health and safety requirements.
Child Care and Protection Act	Standards and regulations for the protection from child abuse and the provision of care and protection for children in-need.
Public Health Act	Regulate Public Health matters, promote healthy environment and healthy lifestyle practices within children developmental programmes.
Country Planning Act	Regulates location and zoning of building and the construction of buildings.
Fire Department Regulation	Fire and disaster safety, ensuring that there will be adequate protective and fire fighting equipment.

6.0 DEVELOPING ECD STANDARDS FOR THE CAYMAN ISLANDS AND ST. LUCIA

Standards are the defined minimum levels of service delivery at which ECIs are allowed to operate. Below these levels, ECIs will not be allowed to operate and will not be registered. There are two types of standards; namely, those that are legally binding and others which may not be legally binding but are considered best practices. These standards help to clarify expectations for parents, establish acceptable performance levels for operators and practitioners, and provide a basis upon which government can objectively assess whether or not centre operators are delivering services in keeping with policies. The Regulations would indicate which standards are legally binding and which are best practice targets.

Representatives from twenty CARICOM countries reached a consensus on a draft ECD Minimum Service Standard at a regional workshop on Policies, Standards and Regulation for ECD services, in 2006. This Standard is now viewed as an essential requirement for achieving desired outcomes for children's development and well-being. It should be accompanied by administrative policies and guidelines.

Some countries, such as the Bahamas, Belize, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, have already established standards that are comprehensive in most areas; however, there remain areas such as record keeping and licensing that need to be improved. In Jamaica presently, there are standards for such areas as finances, health, safety, child rights, child protection and equality, nutrition, interaction with parents and community members, interaction and relationship with children, education, physical environment staffing and administration. These countries could become models for the Cayman Islands and St. Lucia which are presently seeking to establish Early childhood development standards in their country.

In the case of St. Lucia, the standards established in Trinidad and Tobago would be the ideal model to revise and adopt as the Trinidad and Tobago model is based on St. Lucia's draft standards.

It would be expedient for all Caribbean countries, that have not already done so, to adopt a set of standards that reflects comprehensive consultation among key stakeholders, and to establish an inspectorate to monitor the implementation and adherence to the standards. This is achieved through the development of a policy framework.

6.1 Establishing a Policy Framework

The policy development process requires time, leadership and resources for preparation through completion; including conducting research to ascertain the current situation within the EC sector (identification of strengths and weaknesses), facilitating stakeholder consultations (consensus building), the drafting of the policy, and approval and adoption of the policy. The key stakeholders include parents, community members, EC practitioners (teachers and caregivers), operators, private sector, donor agencies, government officers and policy-makers. Documentation of each step of the process is important and should be shared via user-friendly communication media. Once the formal draft policy is ready, it should be presented to the relevant authority, usually Cabinet. Upon approval and adoption, the implementation plan and process should commence without loss of momentum.

7.0 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR ECECD SERVICES

The regulatory framework for Early Childhood Services consists of statute and subsidiary legislation that address matters such as registration, licensing, standards, compliance, sanctions, process and procedures to guide the process. This legal framework is critical to the positive development of the EC sector through planning, monitoring and evaluation. It also facilitates the participation of interested stakeholders.

Statute legislation provides for the powers and duties required for regulation of the EC sector, such as registration and licensing requirement, provisions for monitoring and inspecting, or penalties for failure to comply. Subsidiary legislation explains the details of the regulatory framework created by the statute and provides the flexibility for the legislation to respond to changing conditions in the EC sector, such as definitions, minimum standards and compliance

procedures. Prior to the establishment of the regulatory framework described above, an Early Childhood Act would be passed to facilitate the entire process.

The process of registration and licensing should now be a basic requirement for operation. Operators of licensed private early childhood institutions must comply with the Standards and Policies established under the Act. Minimum standards express desired levels of performance and provide benchmark for assessing and improving the quality of services delivered and ECECD environments. This requires clearly delineated responsibility (for various key stakeholders) for the process, unambiguous requirements for registration and licensing, objective criteria and processes for granting approval, and record keeping. Failure to comply attracts penalties and such penalties can lead to the revoking of license or the closing of the institution.

In order to check compliance, indicators of quality and monitoring and inspection processes must be in place. As well, clear guidelines and procedures for enforcement, along with a process for feedback and follow-up services are required. An EC inspector (a qualified and experienced ECD practitioner) would visit/inspect assigned ECIs and monitor all aspects of the operation on a regular basis. Quality assurance processes ensure that the required standards are maintained on an ongoing basis. Compliance and enforcement processes respond to incidents of non-compliance. The regulating body must have clear mechanisms for providing support to ECIs and authority to challenge ECIs to comply.

The goal of the Caribbean Plan of Action is to ensure that there is comprehensive legislation for early childhood development for children, age birth to 8 years old, in both public and private ECIs. This goal has not been fully realized as in both the Cayman Islands and St. Lucia, existing legislation is inadequate.

The situation has recently been addressed in the Cayman Islands, as steps have been taken to develop an Early Childhood Law as well as comprehensive Early Childhood Regulations and Standards which could be implemented in the near future. This process has not yet begun in St. Lucia.

Based on the experience of the countries examined, implementation of the regulatory framework on a phased basis is most practical. Generally, many ECIs operate below the

desired minimum standards and require technical and financial assistance for meeting standards. As well, governments do not have the facilities or sufficient resources to implement all of the measures over a short period of time.

8.0 MODEL ECD COUNCIL

A Council should be established in both the Cayman Islands and St. Lucia for effective, integrated (rather than fragmented between ministries) management and administration of the ECD sector.

The composition of the Early Childhood Development Council must ensure appropriate technical and administrative competence, through an appropriate, clearly defined organizational structure, with clear lines of authority and responsibility. It should include the following:

- I. Representatives from Ministries responsible for Education, Health, Labour and Finance, Culture, Youth.
- II. At least seven (7) ECD qualified and/or experienced persons who work in the area of young children's welfare and best interests, who have demonstrated their capacity in matters relating to early childhood development, including child care, child psychology, nutrition, paediatrics, nursing and administration.
- III. Non- governmental and private sector representatives.
- IV. Donor representatives (optional).

ECD Council Functions

The Council will, on behalf of the government, undertake responsibility for ensuring that the nation's young children have access to quality ECD services. As the national coordinating body for all early childhood activities, the Council will:

- I. Advise the Minister on the policy matters relating to early childhood care, education and development, including initiatives and actions to achieve early childhood development goals;
- II. Assist in or facilitate the preparations of plans and programmes concerning early childhood development.
- III. Monitor and evaluate the implementation of the plans and programmes and make recommendations for the plans and programmes, including supervision and regulation.

9.0 RECOMMENDED STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS FOR MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTING ECD REGULATIONS

The structure and functions for monitoring and implementing ECD regulations must be established to ensure a coordinated and integrated delivery of quality EC services. The convergence of all activities under a single unified organizational arrangement is expected to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of EC services. This concept was born out of the need to establish a liaison between the ECD sector and the government authority, such as the ECD Council or Early Childhood Commission, as well as to strengthen the roles and functions of officers.

Stakeholder Consultation

In the case of Jamaica, authorities realized that the transformation of the EC sector must consultatively engage all levels of participants within the sector to help ensure that the process of transition was managed carefully and sensitively. CDB was instrumental in facilitating the national consultation and public education campaign, in collaboration with the ECC and Ministry of Education (Enhancement of Basic Schools Project), prior to the 2007 enactment of the Act and Regulations, as well as upon implementation/enforcement. The participation of stakeholders, from preparing the policy framework through implementation, builds awareness while providing opportunity to resolve conflicting issues in advance and helps to ensure that

the policy is realistic. This approach is likely to generate stakeholder ownership of the initiatives, create trust, and build a network in the spirit of partnership.

Public Education

Public education is critical to getting stakeholders ready for the new dispensation. The dissemination of information to all stakeholders on the imminent changes in the EC sector must be timely. On-going dialogue and communication is important for stakeholder buy-in; cooperation and collaboration. Such communication must clearly explain the responsibilities of the different stakeholders and expected outcomes as they relate to the processes and procedures of registration, licensing, standards, compliance, and sanctions.

Monitoring

The regulating entity must have clear mechanisms for the provision of support to the EC sector for the improvement and development of services for young children. This monitoring function may be facilitated by the designation of monitoring officers or establishment of an Inspectorate to ensure compliance and provide support to ECIs. The number of officers/inspectors would depend on the level of support required by ECIs to register, become licensed (to meet minimum standards) and to provide full coverage of the sector.

An Inspector's function is inclusive of guidance, examination, inspection, and observation of the entire early childhood operation, including child care and stimulation practices, record keeping, the physical plant, and other areas delineated in the standards; to be conducted in a spirit of cooperation. The well-being of the children in-care may very well depend on the alertness of the inspector and the alacrity with which she/he helps operators to make improvements.

After her/his inspection of an ECI, the inspector would record her/his findings and makes her/his recommendation to the regulating entity. Upon her/his recommendation, a license may either be granted or refused. An application for registration may be accepted, delayed or

rejected. The inspector's primary objective is NOT to find fault, deny access or become a figure of terror that generates hatred and resentment. Instead she/he guides and accommodates the operators, makes recommendations for adjustments and ensures that operators are abiding by the guidelines that are recommended. Of course, the Inspectorate has the authority to revoke or refuse the license and an appeals process would be readily available.

Competence and Resources

The structure of this governing entity will be designed to function as an effective sector management and administration body; with technically competent staff to provide legal and corporate services, integrated programme support, enforcement, and strategic planning, policies and projects.

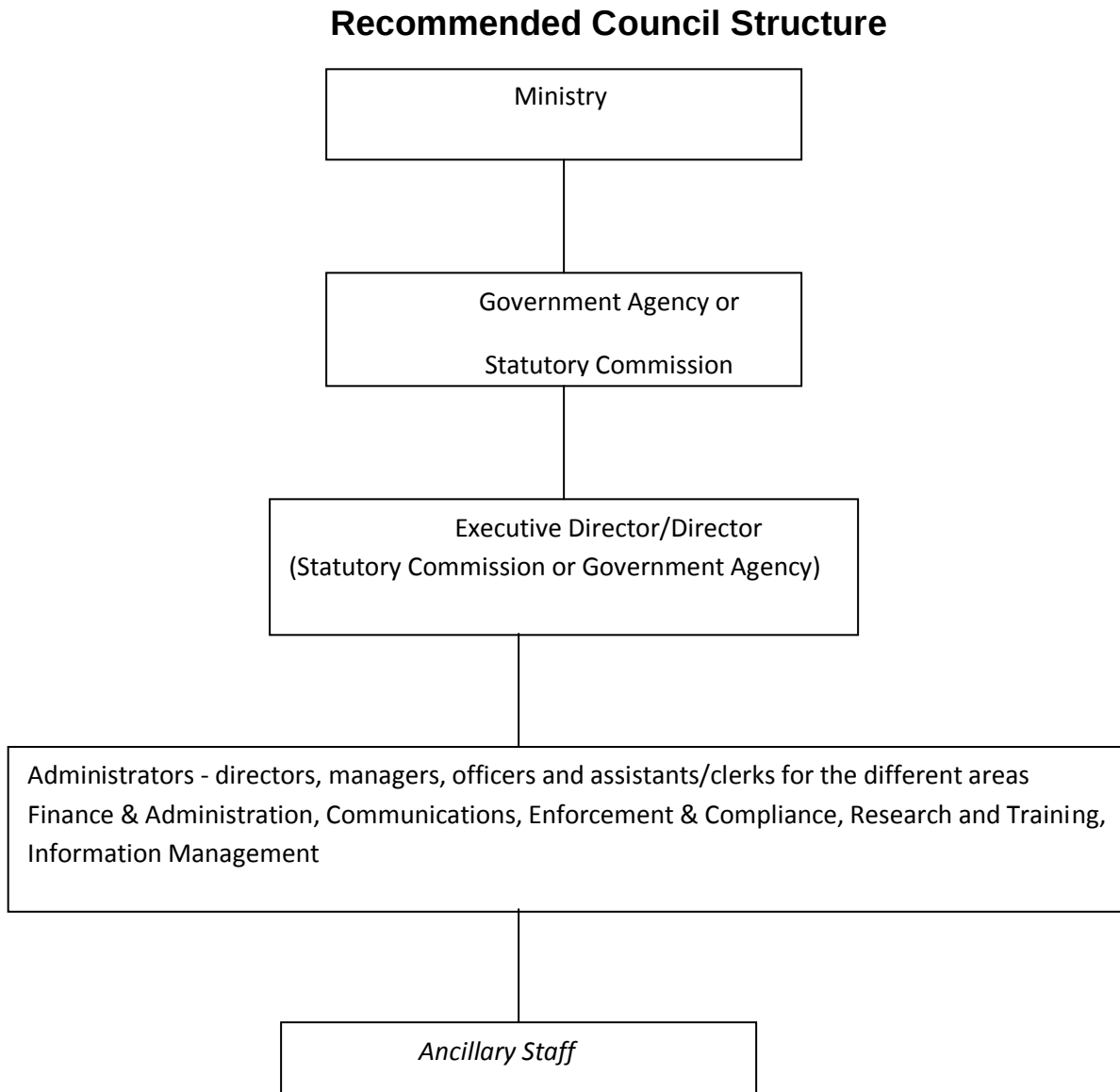
Of equal importance is the matter of finances. Adequate financial structures must be available for operations to function adequately. An appropriate, approved policy for budgetary needs must be in place for the transparency and adequate resource allocation that is necessary for operations.

While a competent staff exists in both the Cayman Islands and St. Lucia, they alone are inadequate; additional staff is needed in both countries to successfully serve the existing sector. Cayman has adequate appropriate budgetary structures in place while St. Lucia has a proposal for a restructured early childhood institution framework that is set out in Appendix 2.

Role Clarity

Lines of authority and responsibility must be explicitly clear and translated into user-friendly information for all stakeholders. Leadership must ensure that the structure is clearly defined, with the relevant officers and stakeholders having clearly defined and appropriate levels of authority and responsibility to effectively carry out expected functions.

Figure 1



10.0 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSED REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

To be followed by the Cayman Islands and St. Lucia

For these countries which have not implemented a legislative and policy framework for early childhood development, a structured approach will be necessary to establish a regulatory framework.

Critical to the implementation of the regulatory framework will be policy appraisal by the Minister and the Cabinet to introduce legislation for early childhood development. In tandem with the formulation of a new Act, regulations should also be developed to accompany the Act, in consultation with all stakeholders.

The process could be completed in a three-year timeframe, which will involve the following steps:

- a) Preparation of policy document
- b) Consultation on the policy document with the involvement of all key stakeholders
- c) Submission of policy document to the Cabinet for approval
- d) Preparation of Cabinet submission for approval of the drafting of legislation
- e) Submission of Cabinet
- f) Submission of Cabinet approval
- g) Cabinet approval to prepare drafting instructions
- h) Preparation of drafting instructions and submission to Parliament Counsel.
- i) Review by relevant agency of draft Act and Regulations and versions submitted to Parliament Counsel.
- j) Draft Act and regulations prepared by Parliament Counsel.
- k) Preparation of Cabinet submission for tabling draft Act in Parliament.
- l) Cabinet approval for tabling draft Act.
- m) Act tabled in Parliament
- n) Draft passed by Parliament and approved by Governor General or President.

11.0 RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

For each country, the governing entity is to be placed under the Ministry of Education and the following key resource requirements must be in place.

- An Executive Director – This is someone who is responsible for the daily management of the commission. He/she is appointed directly by the commission in meeting.
- Early Childhood Specialists - Advises the Commission on matters such as curriculum development, special needs, and training.
- Inspectors – ECD qualified, trained personnel who visit the early childhood institution to check for compliance to standard in all areas. They also conduct investigations relating to complaints received. Inspectors secure correct information/ by observation for the commission so they act accordingly. A senior inspectorate validates the actions/findings of the Early Childhood Commission inspector.
- Public Relations Officer – Encourages public awareness and coordinates advocacy efforts, media relations and public education
- Community Outreach Officer – community liaison with a focus on parent relations
- Training Officers – Providing strategic planning, facilitating professional development of practitioners and keeping abreast with current competencies and training/education.
- Administrative Assistants/Clerks
- Ancillary Staff

The actual size of the staff will depend on the individual country as different factors (not the least of which is size and population) will determine that decision. Funding requirements for the Early Childhood Commission/ Unit must be done in consultation with the Ministry of Finance in each country. The committee/persons responsible must prepare projections, budgetary plans and all matters relating to finance in the programme. It is assumed that a sufficient operating budget will be allocated with the establishment of the authority.

Table 4**Pre- and Post Enactment Activities**

Events	Purpose/benefits
Public Awareness	Programmes to be directed by providers of early childhood development, to raise the awareness of the general public, parents/guardians and facilitators
Staff Training	All staff members, principals, teachers, assistant teachers, cooks, ancillary staff members, nurse and secretary must have formal meetings at least once per month to ensure that standards are maintained, new ideas are shared and practices are reviewed.
Publication of Literature	The written word has a long lifespan and the print medium is an effective means of long term communication. Reader-friendly booklet for providers, parents and children should be available and explain regulatory requirements for all early childhood institutions.
Use of Media	For parents with low literacy levels or those who simply do not read, news items and advertisements, catchy phrases, audio and video broadcasted information programmes and bulletins can provide access to information regarding requirements for early childhood institutions. Pictorial posters can also be used.

Meeting with Early Childhood Commission	Meeting with agencies and government bodies which are responsible for health, fire, water, planning and building must be held to ensure the safety and the proper establishment of the early childhood institution.
Planning With inspectors	This collaboration is crucial for the registration and licensing processes. Schools, daycare centres, must get the approval of an inspector. This inspection checklist is based on the Jamaican model: 1. Staffing 2. Educational/developmental Programmes 3. Physical Environment 4. Indoor/Outdoor equipment 5. Supplies 6. Health 7. Nutrition 8. Safety 9. Child Rights, Child Protection and Equality 10. Interaction with parents and Community 11. Administration 12. Finance

12.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Transformation of the EC sector in the Cayman Islands and St. Lucia requires cooperation and collaboration from a wide range of stakeholders, individuals and organizations, in order to succeed. The process must consultatively engage all levels of stakeholders to help to ensure that all play their part in strengthening ECD.

1. There should be licensing for all Early Childhood Centres.
2. Legislation for ECECD should be enacted in all parts of the Caribbean. The legislation should be comprehensive and would cover both the Act and Regulations.
3. In addition to the Act and Regulations, non binding best-practice standards should be developed as targets or goals.
4. Once new legislation has been enacted a public awareness programme should be instituted, providing general awareness of the public, as well as key stakeholders of the new regulatory framework for ECD.
5. The Legislation should cover all aspects of ECD for children under 8 years of age.
6. Establishing a support system to include health, education and social welfare specialists to provide guidance and assistance to, and evaluation of ECIs.
7. The institution of approved training programmes for all proprietors, operators, educators and caregivers in ECIs to ensure maximum standards of care.
8. The CARICOM *Draft Handbook on Developing Early Childhood Policy and Regulatory Frameworks* is a useful guide for the establishment, review and/or strengthening of policy and regulatory frameworks. The Handbook therefore should be followed in the establishment of a regulatory framework for early childhood development, in the Cayman Islands and St. Lucia.

Further detailed recommendations are noted in the appended Visit Reports.

13.0 CONCLUSION

The Cayman Islands and St. Lucia are faced with choices and opportunities that cannot develop without the political will to redefine and to invest in establishing a centralized effective management and administration system for the sector. This process should not be rushed;

however, it requires urgent attention, diligent oversight and consistent mobilization of stakeholders and resources in order to progress. The Cayman Islands and St. Lucia are poised for phased implementation of a regulatory framework for ECD.

14.0 POST-CONSULTANCY DEVELOPMENTS

In 2007, following the completion of this Consultancy, the CARICOM Secretariat drafted the *Early Childhood Policy and Regulatory Frameworks Handbook* to provide practical guidance to early childhood officers, and to serve as a roadmap that could be easily followed by anyone wishing to establish, review and/or strengthen policy and regulatory frameworks.

The Draft Handbook acknowledges the groundwork undertaken by a number of entities, the technical and financial assistance to ECD in the Caribbean, and the development of standards and regulatory mechanisms in many countries. It also highlights the need for comprehensive policy in the ECD sector as the delivery of a high quality early childhood experience is significantly affected by the nature of the enabling environment within which the sector operates.

The CARICOM Early Childhood Development Working Group, comprised of international development partners and regional organizations including CCDC, supports the development of policies, regulation and standards for ECD services and aims to harmonize expectations across the region for quality and equity in access to services. Some Working Group members, namely Leon Charles and Sian Williams, who were key contributors to the Handbook, also contributed to the development and implementation of the Child Focus III Project CF3. Initial outputs from this Consultancy were therefore considered and integrated into elements of the Handbook, and the Handbook was considered in the final revision of this report.

As Governments are faced with many choices (and limited resources, and different stakeholders with conflicting and contradictory objectives and interests), the Handbook explicitly clarifies the need for ECD policy and regulatory frameworks to establish the parameters within which all stakeholders can have their needs reasonably satisfied. It asserts

that the role of Government to establish an enabling environment; to clarify the direction in which the ECD sector is expected to develop and the boundaries within which all stakeholders are expected to operate. The Handbook also provides step-by-step guidance for the orderly development of the sector through planning, monitoring and evaluation whilst facilitating effective participation by all interested stakeholders. As well, it provides a sample registration guide and registration form.

The Handbook is geared for those who are charged with the responsibility of the delivery of a high quality early childhood development experience for children in their countries. It addresses three questions from an Officer's (either Education, Preschool, Day Care, or Early Childhood) point of view – What should I do? Why should I do it? And, how should I approach it? The Handbook does not address the aspects of ECD that are traditionally handled by the health sector.

A change of Administration has taken place in St. Lucia since the completion of this Consultancy. The new Administration is revising the existing Sector Development Plan and redefining it with a new mission, vision and core values, but the essence remains the same. There has been no progress with the draft legislation and policy, however the Minister has committed to ratification (although no timeframe was given) and it is anticipated that ratification will take place in 2009.

More progress has been made in the Cayman Islands than St. Lucia, and much of it has been credited to the CF3 Consultant's work, which reportedly assisted in raising the profile of the Early Childhood Unit. The Head of the Unit credits Dr. McCalla's timely consultations and advocacy with government representatives for the restructuring of the Early Childhood Unit, which has been redefined, relocated and strengthened to become the new Early Childhood Services; with a staff complement of six officers, triple what it was in 2006. Upon completion of the Consultancy, in December 2006, the Unit submitted the draft Early Childhood Law and accompanying Regulations. It was accepted by the Government and scheduled to be enacted in March 2007. The Government, however, then decided to revise the Education Law, under which they hope to include Early Childhood Development, therefore enactment of the Early Childhood legislation was postponed. It is expected to be enacted by December 2008. The Early Childhood Services Head also credits Dr. McCalla's involvement for the strengthened

interagency collaboration now taking place, such as their input into child care and protection policy.

A section of the Early Childhood Unit's 2006-07 Annual report is appended, in Appendix 3, as it outlines some of the specific developments that have occurred.

APPENDIX 1

**REPORT ON
THE CAYMAN ISLANDS VISIT**

from August 29-31, 2006

Dr. Winston McCalla

September 8, 2006

First Study Visit to the Cayman Islands

- 1.0 The Consultant visited Cayman Islands from August 28 to August 31, 2006
- 2.0 On 28th August, 2006, the Consultant arrived in Cayman Islands and was met by Ms. Katie Marnock, Head, Early Childhood Unit. On 29th August, 2006, the Consultant had a detailed briefing session with Mrs. Katie Marnock. Later on 29th August, 2006, met with Mrs. Nyda Flatley, the Chief Education Officer.
- 3.0 On Wednesday, 30th August, 2006, the Consultant met with the Hon. Alden McLaughlin, Minister of Education, Mr. Gareth Long from the Ministry of Education and Mrs. Katie Marnock of the Early Childhood Unit. The Minister expressed strong support for the implementation of a legislative framework for early childhood development at an early date.

The Consultant also met with Renee Rankin, the Assistant Secretary to the Trade & Business Licence Board.

Currently all private day care institutions apply for licences under the Trade and Business Licensing Law. The procedure normally is to apply for this licence only after registration has been granted under the Education Act. Section 3 of the Trade & Business Licensing Law provides that the Law does not apply, *inter alia*, to any trade and business licenced to carry on as such under any other law without reference to this law. The fee under the Trade & Business Licensing Law is \$300, the fees are prescribed under the Trade and Business Licensing (Fees) Order, 2006.

- 4.0 The following meetings were held on 31st August, 2006:
 - a At 9:25 a.m., the Consultant met with Teldra Lewis, School Nurse, Public Health Department. There was extensive discussion regarding the requirements of the Public Health Act and the arrangements for multi-agency visits to day care and pre-schools.
 - b At 10:00a.m., the Consultant met with Mr. Ron Sanderson, Assistant Director of Planning. There was a review of the procedure involved in the application for a new day care or pre-school to be registered. At the end of the meeting, it was agreed that the Early Childhood Unit would play an integral role in decisions taken for future applications of day care and early childhood institutions.
 - c At 11:00 a.m., the Consultant had a meeting with Dr. A.K. Kumar, Medical Officer of Health. In this meeting there was a review of the role of the Public Health Department and the Environmental Health Departments.

- 5.0 Legal Framework for Early Childhood Institutions

The legal framework should apply to all early childhood institutions providing services whether privately or publicly owned for children up to the age of six years; whether privately owned or public; whether a day-care institution, a pre-school, basic school, infant school or infant department. The framework should comprise of an Early Childhood Act, Early Childhood Regulations and the Standards (Guidelines) for Early Childhood Institutions.

The Early Childhood Act

The Early Childhood Act would require operators of Early Childhood Institutions to apply for registration with the Early Childhood Commission and to facilitate the process of inspection. The Act would also require that operators comply with specific personnel, physical, health and safety requirements to ensure that institutions offer a safe and stimulating environment in which children can play and learn. Failure to comply with the requirements of the Act would carry significant legal consequences.

The Act would make provision for the Minister to make regulations, including the provision of standards for the efficient operation of early childhood institutions.

The Early Childhood Regulations

The Early Childhood Regulations are subsidiary to the Act and would be put in place to give effect to the provisions of the Early Childhood Act. Regulations generally give much more detail than an Act, and often include procedures and requirements which are more likely to change with time, allowing for easier and more timely amendments. Failure to comply with the Regulations also carries legal consequences, but the penalties are generally less severe than those resulting from the violation of the Act.

Standards for the Operation, Management and Administration of Early Childhood Institutions

The standards would serve to improve practice voluntarily and are not legally binding.

How the Act, Regulations and Standards Work Together

The Act and Regulations would specify the legal minimum levels of practice below which institutions will not be registered or allowed to operate. The Standards would define best practices for early childhood institutions and serve to encourage institutions to raise their level of practice above minimum requirements. Institutions should try to achieve the highest possible standards to ensure the best outcome for children.

6.0 Conclusions

The Consultant received considerable support and cooperation of the Early Childhood Unit (Mrs. Katie Marnock) during the course of the visit within the Ministry of Education and all key government agencies. There appears to be strong support of the project.

Recommended Actions

- Enact an Early Childhood Act
- Amend the Children Law
- Promulgate regulations relating to Early Childhood Education and care.
- Establish Early Childhood Standards
- Establish a National Advisory Committee on Early Childhood Care & Education comprising the following agencies:
 - Children & Family Services Public Health
 - Environmental Health Department
 - Fire Department
 - Planning Department
 - Representatives of the Cayman Islands Early Childhood Association
 - Other private sectors

Visit Itinerary

Monday, 28 th August, 2006	7:30 a.m. Meeting with Mrs. Katie Marnock
Tuesday, 29 th August, 2006 Officer	9:00 a.m. Meeting with Mrs. Nyda Flatley, Chief Education 1:00 p.m. meeting with Reina Jefferson, chair of the Cayman Islands Early Childhood Association and other members of the executive committee
Wednesday, 30 th August, 2006	12:30 p.m. Lunch at the Brasserie with the Minister, Alden McLaughlin and Gareth Long 3:00 p.m. meeting with Renee Rankin the Assistant Secretary to the Trade & Business Licence Board

Thursday, 31st August, 2006 9:00 a.m. Press briefing/photo

9:15 a.m. meeting with Teldra Lewis, School Nurse,
Public Health

10:00 a.m. meeting with Ron Sanderson, Planning
Department at the Early Childhood Unit

11:30 a.m. meeting with Dr. Kumar, Medical Officer of Health

2:30 p.m. Michael Pratt, Building Control at Planning
Department

4:00 p.m. debriefing session with Mrs. Katie Marnock, Early
Childhood Unit

List of Documents Reviewed

Laws

Education Law (1999 Revision)

Draft Education Law, 2004 (draft)

Children Law, 2003 (Law 4 of 2003)

Children (Amendment) Law, 2003 (Law 24 of 2000)

Trades and Business Licences Law

Public Health Law and Regulations

The Day Care and Child Minding
(Disqualification) (England) Regulating 2005 (UK)

Other Documents

Enduring High Quality Early Childhood Provision in the Cayman Islands (School's
Inspectorate, July 2004).

Guidelines for the Operation of Pre-Schools and Day Care Centres, Department of
Environmental Health, Cayman Islands Government (January, 2001)

Education Council Guidelines for Early Childhood Programmes (September 2002 revised edition)

National Consensus on the Future of Education in the Cayman Islands (Cayman Islands Government, 2005)

Discipline in early years settings (February, 2006). (Early Childhood Unit)

Early Years Complaints Procedures (February, 2006) (Early Childhood Unit)

Education Council Guidelines for Early Childhood Programmes

Caribbean Plan of Action for Early Childhood Education Care and Development 1999-2000

Implementation of the Caribbean Plan of Action for Early Childhood Education, Care and Development 2000

Review of the Cayman Islands Education Department: Summary and Principal Recommendations of the External Consultant (Ministry of Education, Aviation & Planning) (April 2002)

APPENDIX 2

REPORT ON

THE ST. LUCIA VISIT

24-28, July 2006

Dr. Winston McCalla
Consultant

August 15, 2006

First Study Visit to St. Lucia

- 1.0 The Consultant traveled to St. Lucia on 23rd July, 2006
- 2.0 On 24th July, 2006 the Consultant met with Mr. Antonius Thomas who provided the consultant with the documents referred to in Appendix. A schedule of meeting was also reviewed. While at the Early Childhood Unit the Consultant had detailed briefing meetings with the following: Mr. Thomas, Ms. Ruth Philip-Dennehy and Ms. Ruth Phillips Fevner.
- 3.0 Later on 24th July, 2006 the consultant had meetings with the following persons:
 - Agnes Prince, Acting Day Care Services Coordinator,
 - Ministry of Social Transformation, Nurse Marcia Jonny, Community Nurse Supervisor, Region 7,
 - Ministry of Health, Ms. Elaine Clement, Child Development & Guidance Centre
 - Dr. Jacqueline Bird, Ministry of Health
- 4.0 On 25th July, the consultant had meetings with the following persons:
 - **Attorney General's office:** Mrs. Georgis Taylor Alexander, Solicitor General, Ms. Karen Dalton, Director of Legislative Drafting (discuss content of meetings).
 - **Family Court** - Discussions were held on state of pending legislation relating to Children with Mrs. Christine Phuldchere, Magistrate, Family Court, and Ms. Lucietia Wilkinson, Assistant to Director of the Family Court. Discussions focussed on the role of the Family Court as well as on the proposed Family & Child related Legislation.
 - **Division of Human Service:** There were extensive discussions with Ms. Clementia Eugene on the role and function of the Division of Human Services and day care centres.

The Day Care Unit of the Ministry of Transformation covers children from birth to 2 ½ years. Currently the Early Childhood Unit and the Day Care Unit operate separately though there is regular coordination between these two units.

5.0 Current Situation in St. Lucia

Early Childhood Unit is under the Ministry of Education. The Unit deals with early childhood education, registration and monitoring. Under the Education Act, early childhood education covers children from 3 years to 5 years.

Early Childhood Policy has been formulated but so far cabinet approval has not been obtained.

Minimum standards document has been drafted but not yet finalized.

The Education Act will need to be reviewed/amended to deal more comprehensively with early childhood education.

6.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

Mr. Antonius Thomas greatly facilitated all aspects of the Consultant's visit. He also provided comprehensive documentation on early childhood development in St. Lucia. His cooperation and assistance were invaluable.

There was strong interest and support for the project in St. Lucia. The key for further progress is Cabinet consideration of the proposals for early childhood development. In addition, St. Lucia already has draft Standards for Early Childhood Development. Once there is a commitment the Standards could be implemented at an early date.

Meeting Itinerary

Mrs. Georgis Taylor Alexander, Solicitor General

Mrs. Karen Dalton, Director of Legislative Drafting.

Mrs. Christine Phulchere, Magistrate, Family Court

Mrs. Lucretia Wilkinson, Assistant to Director

Ms. Clementia Eugene, Director – Human Services, Ministry of Health

Mrs. Gujagahar, OECS Legislative Drafting Office

Early Childhood Education Services Unit

Marguerite Gustave (Mrs.)	Education Officer (on leave)
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Antonius Thomas	Curriculum Officer
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Ruth Philip-Dennehy	Curriculum Officer
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Ruth Phillips Fevner (Mrs.)

Co-ordinator/Roving Caregivers

Programme (RCP)

St. Lucia: List of Documents

Legislation

Education Act, 1999

Draft Early Childhood Standards

Children and Young Persons Act, 1972

Criminal Code (No. 9 of 2004) Sections 122-175 & 1157-1173).

Family Court Act No 4 of 1994

Pending Legislation

Draft Children (Care & Protection) Bill

Draft Status of Children Bill

Other Documents

Protocol for the Management of Child Abuse and Neglect in St. Lucia (July 2005) (Ministry of Health, Human Services, Family Affairs & Gender Relations)

Proposed Standards for the Regulation of Early Childhood Services under the Draft Education Act

Monthly Multiple-Disabled Care

Stakeholders' consultation (26.01.05)

Draft National Policy on Persons with Disabilities

Report of the Committee on Family Law (July 26, 2004)

Ready to Learn – Early Childhood Education Quality to Prevent School Failure in Trinidad & Tobago (OAS Hemispheric ECCE).

Team Report, October 2004

National Policy on Childcare

Standards for Regulating Early Childhood Services

Draft White Paper

Ministry of Education

Government of the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago

Supporting Children, Older Persons & Vulnerable Individuals and Families, Division of Human Services & Family Affairs, Ministry of Health, Human Services, Family Affairs and Gender Relations.

CF3 Project Committee Members

NAME	UNIT	TELE#	CELL#	EMAIL
Ann Jean Baptist	Corporate Planning, Ministry of Education	968-3251	287-4743	Annjean.Baptist@hotmail.com
Betty Combie	Saint Lucia Bureau of Standards	453-0049	720-4530	b.combie@stbs.org
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Agnes Prince	Day Care Services	468-5112 453-0651	384-0297	senganp94@hotmail.com
Myrtle Murray	Director the Montessori Centre	452-8114 452-6674	485-6226	school_director@candw.lc
V. Georgis Taylor Alexander	Solicitor General, Attorney General's Chambers	468-3207	484-6497	vivian.georgis@lawyer.com
Antonius Thomas	ECESU		717-0116	mr.antoniusthomas@yahoo.com

INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

NB: \$ indicates actions with financial implications that cannot be quantified at this time.

GOVERNMENT OF ST. LUCIA

Draft Early Childhood Policy

STRATEGIC ACTIONS	Responsibility	Technical Support	Y1	Y2	Y3
1. Integration of Services - Establish Council for Early Childhood Education - Establish modalities for inter-ministerial collaboration - Integrate management of day care and pre-school services - Establish partnerships with key stakeholders	PS-MOE PS-MOE PS-MOE/MOST ECESU	Technical Support	US\$7K		
2. Expansion of Services - Identification of under-served geographical areas - Development of costing model for EC service provision - Design and implement incentive regime for EC services - Make excess space in primary schools available for EC	ECESU ECESU ECESU PS –MOE/CEO	MOE Statistics MOE Financial MOF		\$	\$
3. Targeting Children at Risk - Identification of “at risk” communities - Inclusion of EC Services in PRF and BNTF programs - Design/implement incentive regime for targeted EC services - Design/implement incentives for retro-fitting re disabilities - Provision of subventions to programmes for children-at-risk	ECESU PS – MOE/CEO ECESU ECESU PS – MOE/CEO	MOE Statistics PRF/BNTF MOF MOF MOF		\$ \$ US\$1.15-2.3M	\$ \$ US\$1.15 - 2.3M
4. Enhancing Service Quality - Approval, implementation and dissemination of Standards - Curriculum Review and Revision - Establishment of model centres - Design/implement incentives for	PS - MOE/CEO PS – MOE/CEO	Technical Support		US\$5K US\$765K	

- improving environments ▪ Ongoing research & dissemination of research information ▪ Development of upgrading plans for each EC setting ▪ Develop and implement SOPs for monitoring Standards ▪ Include ECD as part of Educational District's responsibility	ECESU ECESU ECESU Centres ECESU PS – MOE/CEO	MOW MOF ECESU		\$	\$
5. Professional Development of Practitioners ▪ Formation/Strengthening of National EC Association ▪ Inclusion of practitioner representatives in policy-making ▪ Designate EC as eligible for tertiary scholarships ▪ Introduce EC option in SALCC Teacher Training Program ▪ Ongoing professional development activities ▪ Introduce competency-based certification system ▪ Make training tax deductible for EC businesses/individuals ▪ Harmonize pay and working conditions ▪ Recognition of outstanding practitioners at national level	Practitioners PS – MOE/CEO PS – MOE/CEO PS – MOE/CEO ECESU PS - MOE/CEO PS – MOE/CEO PS – MOCE/CEO PS – MOCE/CEO	MOF Technical Support		US\$6K \$	\$ US\$5M
6. Parental Involvement ▪ Formation & active involvement of PTAs in EC programmes ▪ Ongoing parent education activities ▪ Mass education activities e.g. Billboards, Mass media ▪ Training for providers of Home Care services	Centres Centres/ECESU ECESU ECESU				

APPENDIX 3



Excerpts from the Annual Report
of
the Cayman Islands' Early Childhood Unit

For the 2006/7 Financial Year

**(Received from Kate Marnock, Head
August, 2008)**

1. Overview of Performance for the Year

Introduction

This annual report details the performance of the Early Childhood Unit for the fiscal year ending 30 June 2007.

It includes information about outputs actually delivered during the year as compared to the planned performance documented in the Annual Budget Statement for the Early Childhood Unit for 2006/7, or as amended through the supplementary appropriation process.

It also reports those aspects of ownership performance that were contained in the Annual Budget Statement for 2006/7 or as amended through the supplementary appropriation process.

Summary of Performance

Output Performance

The work of the Unit was previously undertaken by an officer in the Education Department and a Senior Inspector in the Schools' Inspectorate. The relevant outputs from those departments were moved to the Unit and the two outputs for the Unit are:

ECU1 (previously SI06)	Early Childhood Education
ECU2 (previously EDU8)	Provision of Services to Early Education Programme

Significant work was undertaken drafting an Early Childhood Law and accompanying Regulations. These cover minimum standards required by all day care centres and pre-schools. This was presented to the Minister in December 2006.

International Standards have been researched and consultations have been held with all early childhood settings, Cayman Islands Early Childhood Association, the Fire Service, Department of Environmental Health, Public Health, the RCIP, Panning and the Ministry of Health and Human Services. Discussions have also been held with UNESCO and UNICEF to look at minimal regional standards.

Best practices in early childhood early education and care have been researched and international comparisons have been made in preparation for reviewing the Cayman Islands Pre-school Curriculum.

All pre-schools had an annual inspection and were visited each term to ensure staff were following health and safety procedures. Advice and support were also offered during these visits.

Ownership Performance

Activities undertaken during the financial year were in full compliance with the strategic goals and objectives specified in the 2006-7 Annual Budget Statement, with two exceptions, and some targets were exceeded within the approved budget. The budget included plans to develop a set of National Standards for Early Childhood and a Handbook explaining the Standards. Although a draft Early Childhood Law and Regulations were produced, the decision was made to wait until the Law was enacted and the Unit fully staffed before producing the Standards and Handbook. The Law is still in draft format, as soon as it is enacted the Standards and Handbook will be finalised.

Part A

Outputs Delivered During the Year

2. Statement of Outputs Delivered

ECU 1	Early childhood Education		
Description This output will include: • The development of a set of national standards(and indicators of good practice) for provision and outcomes in early childhood education and care settings • Review the curriculum for early childhood education and care and prepare a handbook for staff and inspectors with guidance on standards and on the curriculum • Plans for an inspection programme and self-evaluation model for early childhood and care settings • Visits to each setting (at least one per year), with notes of visit written • Provision of an annual report on the quality of provision in each setting and across the Cayman Islands • Provision of training, seminars and meetings for early years staff			
Measures Quantity • Set of standards • Visits to settings – guidance notes for each visit (on average twice a year) • Handbook of guidance • Annual report • Training/seminars Quality • Standards, curriculum guidance to be developed in collaboration with the Education Department and other stakeholders • Handbook to reflect best practice internationally and needs of local context • Training and seminars to reflect best practice and comply with QA standard Timeliness • Completion of Handbook, standards and guidance • Annual report Location • Cayman Islands Cost (of producing the output) Price (paid by Cabinet for the output)	2006/7 Actual	2006/7 Budget	Annual Variance
	0 67 0 0 9	1 50 1 1 6	-1 +17 -1 -1 +3
Related Broad Outcome: 3: Improve Education and Training			

Explanation of Annual Variances:

The Early Childhood Law is still in draft form, as such the guidance and handbook cannot be produced.

ECU 2	Provision of Services to Early Education Programmes		
Description This output will include: Provides supervision of Pre-School Programmes including the assessment and award of Pre-School Assistance grants. Provides early intervention programmes for children younger than school age who have been identified with various developmental problems. Programmes are also supervised in accordance with existing guidelines and accepted protocols. Services to support pre-schools, including contributions to the development and implementation of a National early Years Unit.			
Measures	2006/7 Actual	2006/7 Budget	Annual Variance
Quantity • Number of pre-schools/day care centres monitored • Number of students served in pre-school programme • Number of students served in Early Intervention Programme • Number of pre-school evaluation reports • Number of annual reports on pre-school provision and performance • Number of pre-school meetings and training sessions facilitated	26 193 150 21 0 9	24-30 200 100 20-40 1 6	-7 +50 -1 +3
Quality • Pre Schools monitored in accordance with Pre-School Curriculum with Inspections done in compliance with Pre-School Regulation Requirements • Early Intervention Programme is monitored in accordance with Education Council's Guidelines for Early Childhood Education • Progress detailed in regular reports • Pre-schools evaluated against Pre-school Curriculum and inspections in compliance with Pre-School Regulation requirements or other policy and procedures as approved by the Ministry • Pre-school evaluation reports to be approved for distribution by the Head of the Early Childhood Unit • Training sessions to be provided by appropriately qualified and experienced persons	100% 100% 100% 100% 100%		
Timeliness • Supervision is done on on-going basis throughout school year • Pre-school inspection reports to be submitted to Head of Early Childhood Unit within 10 working days of an evaluation visit • Pre-school inspection reports to be completed within 20 working days of an inspection visit. • Pre-school training programmes implemented between September and June	100% 100% 100% 100%		
Location • Cayman Islands, Day Care Centres, Pre-Schools, private schools and private homes.			
Cost (of producing the output)			
Price (paid by Cabinet for the output)			
Related Broad Outcome: 6: Embrace Cayman Brac and Little Cayman			

Part B

Ownership Performance Achieved During the Year

3 Nature and Scope of Activities

Approved Nature and Scope of Activities

The Early Childhood Unit is a unit within the Ministry of Education, Training, Employment, Youth Sports and Culture. Its mission is to set standards, evaluate performance and support improvements in day-care centres, pre-schools, pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, reception programmes and family child care providers. It will do this through rigorous external evaluations of early childhood provision and by providing high quality policy advice and training.

The Early Childhood Unit will advise, on the basis of its inspection evidence and from research, on such matters as the effectiveness of different types of early childhood care and educational provision and the effect of government initiatives.

The Early Childhood Unit reports directly to the Minister for Education, Training, Employment, Youth, Sports and Culture.

Performance management is given a high priority in the Early Childhood Unit. Each team member prepares an Annual Performance Agreement (APA) at the beginning of the financial year, in consultation with the Head of the Early Childhood Unit. This APA sets out their contributions to the internal and external outputs along with their training needs. The APA is reviewed half way during the year and an assessment is undertaken shortly after the end of the financial year. Members of the team are encouraged to undertake professional development to support their own needs as well as those of the Early Childhood Unit as a whole.

In support of our central strategic aim, we set ourselves the goal of being a well-run organization, using public resources efficiently and effectively. We are committed to equality of opportunity and access.

Scope of Activities

The Early Childhood Unit evaluates and reports on the quality of care and early childhood education provided in government and private early childhood provision, through:

- A programme of annual inspections of individual early childhood institutions
- Other inspection visits (at request of Minister or Education Department)
- Visits to each early childhood setting by their link officer- aiming for two visits or equivalent each term per school per year
- Managing and delivering the Pre-school assistance programme

The Early Childhood Unit is establishing a comprehensive training programme, including:

- Accredited training for early childhood staff, (NCTVET) in partnership with UCCI or John Gray High School or any other NCTVET accredited provider in the Cayman Islands
- Training for Managers and Directors of government and private early childhood settings concerning issues to do with improving their leadership and management skills

- Organisation of an annual conference for early childhood practitioners, managers and directors from government and private early childhood settings, focussing on current research and initiatives in child development and early education
- Training for staff from other government departments and agencies (such as, Department of Public Health and Environmental Health) to act as local occasional team members on inspections
- Reports on good practice in care and early childhood education arising from inspections
- Seminars and meetings for early childhood practitioners to disseminate good practice
- Other training sessions for early childhood settings and staff in other government departments and agencies in response to needs identified by inspection findings and other developments, for example new Child Protection reporting procedures

Policy advice and information

The Early Childhood Unit provides advice and information to assist in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of government policy through:

- Reports summarising early childhood inspection findings, or in response to requests for advice or information by the Ministry of Education or Education Department
- Participation in national educational initiatives and representation on various national bodies
- Contributions to other government initiatives and proceedings, such as the new Child Protection procedures
- Research at the request of the Ministry

Customers and Location of Activities

The services provided by the Early Childhood Unit are primarily to early childhood institutions, the Ministry of Education and the Education Department, and also for parents and the general public via the publication of inspection reports. Services are provided to other government agencies, such as advice or information, as requested.

Compliance during the Year

The Early Childhood Unit was in full compliance with its nature and scope of activities as described above.

4 Strategic Ownership Goals

Approved Strategic Ownership Goals

. Strategic ownership goals for 2006/07

- Creation of the Early Childhood Unit including the recruitment of staff
- Review current Regulations and Legislation concerning early childhood and draft proposed Early Childhood Law and Regulations
- Inspect all early childhood institutions
- Develop a training programme
- Develop a handbook for early childhood practitioners
- Review the Pre-school financial assistance programme

Values

We are committed to:

- Improving early childhood care and education in the Cayman Islands
- Reporting without fear or favour
- Acting with integrity and impartiality
- Communicating clearly and frankly and using our knowledge to promote high standards and high quality provision

In doing so we will:

- Have high expectations of ourselves and others
- Be open about our work and methods
- Carry out evaluations rigorously
- Act with courtesy and sensitivity, respecting diversity
- Meet our objectives in partnership with others

Achievements during the year

The Early Childhood Unit has achieved the majority of its targets as set in the 2006/7 ABS and exceeded many of them. Significant achievements include:

1. The Establishment of an Early Childhood Unit

The Early Childhood Unit was formally opened in June 2006 with one member of staff and a second member joined in September 2006. An administrative assistant was employed, initially part time in February 2007 and became full time later in the year. Two additional Early Childhood Development Officers were employed, one in April and one in June 2007.

2. Early Childhood Law

A consultant Attorney from the University of the West Indies worked with the Unit to harmonize and standardize all the regulations in various laws concerning early childhood issues. We met with Chief Officers, Heads of Departments, members of the Law Reform, the Cayman Islands Early Childhood Association, representatives from churches and community organizations as well as school and pre-school staff. After a meeting with the Minister, it was decided that we should draft an Early Childhood Law and accompanying Regulations. Consultation meetings were held with all relevant stakeholder groups and a draft Law and Regulations were presented to the Minister in December 2006. A workshop was held for the Cayman Islands Early Childhood Association on the draft Law and Regulations, over 70 members attended. Most of the feedback during the consultation period was very positive.

3. Conferences

Staff attended the following conferences:

- 'Internationality in Early Childhood Education' in Pittsburgh USA
- 'Implementing Child Rights' in Jamaica
- 'Mathematics in the Early Years' in Jamaica
- A teleconference on HIV/Aids organised by WCICDC.

The conferences were useful and informative. The information gathered was disseminated to the rest of the Unit and to pre-school staff.

4. Inspections

- 21 pre-schools were inspected and reports written
- Staff from the Unit were involved in the North Side Primary School inspection, and St. Ignatius inspection

5. Link Officer work

The link officers play a significant role in monitoring, maintaining and improving standards of early education and care. Link officers meet with pre-school owners and managers and early childhood practitioners. They undertake training with staff and parents on all aspects of early education and care. Link officers exceeded the target number of visits overall for the year and recorded 67 visits. In addition to the visits, link officers keep in

regular contact with the pre-schools and day care centres by telephone and email and attend functions such as Christmas concerts and leaving ceremonies.

6. Pre-school assistance

A large percentage of the Unit's time is spent on administering the Government's pre-school assistance. Over 200 applications for assistance were received and assistance was granted to 193 families. The assistance is paid monthly, directly to the pre-schools. Each month, registers are collected from the pre-schools, checked and collated and forwarded to the Ministry for processing. Cheques are then issued and returned to the Unit for distribution to the pre-schools.

7. Training

- The first cohort of early childhood practitioners was assessed in May 2007 for level 1 NCTVET accreditation. The assessment consisted of a written exam and a workplace assessment. 27 practitioners undertook the training and 20 were awarded level 1.
- Three seminars were held for parents and pre-school staff on the importance of early literacy, in particular reading and singing to young children. One seminar was held in conjunction with the National Parenting Programme for expectant parents at George Town Hospital ante natal class.
- A two day training programme on phonics and early reading was held with pre-school staff and Year 1 and 2 staff from schools.
- The first two days of a four day programme, 'Birth to three matters' was delivered to 27 early childhood practitioners. This training focused on the importance of quality care for babies and toddlers.

8. Work with other Ministries and agencies

- The Unit established strong links with the Ministry for Health and Human Services working with both the National Parenting Programme and the Young Parents Programme. Joint seminars were held on the importance of early literacy.
- Staff from the Unit supported the Schools' Inspectorate by joining the inspection teams for North Side Primary School and St. Ignatius.