



TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

SEAMLESS EDUCATION SYSTEM PROJECT

Early Childhood Care and Education Study

FINAL REPORT

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Education Development Center, Inc.

55 Chapel Street
Newton, MA 02458
617-969-7100
www.edc.org

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We dedicate this final report of the Education Development Center's study to newly elected Minister of Education the Honourable Esther Le Gendre, in hopes that our study will contribute to the Vision 2020 reform.

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The Seamless Education Early Childhood Care and Education Study Team

Costanza Eggers-Piérola, Ed.D, Principal Investigator

Kit Yasin, Ed.D, Project Director

Sheila Skiffington, Senior Research Associate

Barbara J. Helms, Ph.D, Senior Research Associate

Yen Thieu, Research Assistant

Graciela Mann, Project Coordinator

Michael Kallon, Ph.D, on-site researcher

Hazel St. Clair, on-site researcher

This report was developed by Costanza Eggers-Piérola, Sheila Skiffington, and Barbara J. Helms.
Education Development Center, Inc.

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INTRODUCTION

SEAMLESS EDUCATION SYSTEM PROJECT CONTRACT

Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) submitted a technical proposal on September 29, 2006, to the Inter-American Development Bank's (IDB) recruitment bid for a firm to conduct a study on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) for the Ministry of Education (MOE) in Trinidad and Tobago. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago (GOTT) initiated this process through the Terms of Reference (TORs) drawn on December 9, 2005, for the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Study of the reform initiative *Support For A Seamless Education System* (TT-L1005). This study forms part of the *Seamless Education System Project* (SESP), a comprehensive approach that involves a team of external consultants who contribute to the thinking and strategising for educational reform across ECCE and primary levels, building on the secondary education initiative undertaken in previous years, called the Secondary Education Modernisation Programme (SEMP). The purpose of the SESP is to increase access and equity for all children and improve the quality of education, including: curriculum reform at ECCE and primary levels; improved and reformed tertiary education for teachers; and alignment with widespread, world-class standards.

The Ministry of Education of the GOTT awarded EDC the ECCE Study in a contract signed at the end of June 2007 by Permanent Secretary of the MOE, Mrs. Angella Jack and EDC's Senior Vice President and Treasurer, Robert Rotner.

EDC'S APPROACH

During the course of this study, EDC worked with local stakeholders and policy makers (Phase I) and conducted a systematic investigation with direct observation of programmes (Phase II) in order to examine the current state of ECCE in Trinidad and Tobago and to propose innovative responses to current needs. EDC focused its study on three key issues: quality of ECCE, expansion and equity, and institutional strength. As our Terms of Reference (TOR) required, EDC researchers actively and consistently analysed secondary literature, documents, and databases.

that provide a background and understanding of the history, challenges, and opportunities in educational reform most applicable to Trinidad and Tobago. This final report represents the knowledge gained from this contextual information as well as from the extensive data we collected during the second phase of the study.

ORGANISATION OF THE FINAL REPORT

This final report is organised into eight chapters. Chapter 2 presents our research approach, describing the activities we undertook during both phases of the study. We also describe our research methods: document review, interviews, tool development, centre selection, and data collection and analysis.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the ECCE programmes and systems. It covers ECCE's history and advancement, as well as the current vision and educational reform initiative—Vision 2020. The chapter discusses profiles and key issues relevant to the SESP's modernisation initiative in order to frame the three subsequent chapters on Curriculum, Teacher Development and Capacity-Building, and Strategic Partnerships.

In Chapter 4, we lay out the policies and mechanisms for curriculum reform, contrasting different models and pedagogical approaches. We also highlights key elements to reform efforts—family, community, and literacy.

Chapter 5 discusses the SESP's approach to teacher development and capacity building on three levels: teacher qualifications and incentives such as increased salary and free access to tertiary school; new infrastructures for supporting centres, including a new ECCE bachelor's degree programme at University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT) and an enhanced ECCE Division plan; and ventures for ensuring that teacher educators' practices and knowledge are aligned with new standards.

Chapter 6 examines the importance of strategic partnerships for implementing and sustaining decentralisation efforts. Specifically, this chapter discusses the importance of public/private partnerships and the role they play in enhancing family services and involvement as well as ECCE/primary school alignment.

Chapter 7 presents our findings from classroom observations, centre administration questionnaires, and parent surveys.

Chapter 8 discusses all of our findings and present recommendations based on our analyses.

RESEARCH APPROACH

Over the course of the study, the EDC research team employed a combination of research methods to examine the ECCE issues that the Ministry of Education (MOE) outlined in this study's Terms of Reference (TOR). In every aspect of our approach, we have built solid relations and communication with the country's ECCE leadership and other ECCE stakeholders. We fully recognize that these relationships were helpful to our examination of Trinidad and Tobago's ECCE system.

OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN

To provide the overall context of ECCE in Trinidad and Tobago, this study centers on three levels—national, centre, and classroom. With major educational reform efforts underway, the government has begun implementing an ECCE programme to provide more preschool children with equal access to high quality early childhood education experiences. As a result, the government has promulgated new regulations and guidance that are beginning to spearhead change—launching new ECCE centres and calling on existing private, government/government-assisted ECCE programmes to adopt these new requirements. Therefore, the *Proposed National Standards for Regulating Early Childhood Services* (2004), the *National Model for Education in Trinidad and Tobago* (draft 2007), and the *National ECCE Curriculum Guide* provided an important backdrop and resource for EDC's methodology.

Research Questions

Our study is structured around the critical questions in EDC's TOR, centering on primary and secondary research questions. We examined three principal questions:

1. What is the state of quality of ECCE in Trinidad and Tobago?
2. What practices, policies, and systems at the local and national levels promote service quality and access for children and families?
3. How can the institutional capacity and sustainability of MOE be strengthened and expanded to ensure buy-in and support from the community, government, and business?

To address these overarching questions, we analysed the legal, policy, institutional, and regulatory frameworks that support MOE's goals for 2010 and conducted field research to gauge progress toward implementation. To this end, we drafted a series of more refined questions to guide our secondary analyses and field-based investigation. We conceived of these questions to understand the ECCE system's capacities at the national, centre, and classroom levels.

At the *national level*, our questions examined vision, governance, and infrastructure. The current national reform focuses on creating a seamless education system that aligns preschool services with those regulated for primary education. To accomplish this reform, the government has clearly articulated its vision, designed a governance structure to advance efforts at all levels, and created an infrastructure to support the reform efforts.

Vision. At its heart, ECCE aims to build a learning pathway from preschool through secondary school that is aligned with an overarching goal: Developing a modernised system to educate innovative and flexible citizens who will advance economic growth and quality of life for all Trinidadians. As part of the policy framework that supports this vision, established national standards define the desirable knowledge, skills, attitudes, and dispositions all ECCE teachers need. The framework also provides protocols for supporting quality through a system for the professional development and advancement of the teaching force (pre- and in-service); well-articulated curriculum standards and pedagogical practices; and models for financing ECCE.

Governance. The National Model values a decentralised form of governance for ECCE. The model promotes formal, local decision-making structures that empower communities to plan and manage ECCE services. Embedded in this notion of decentralisation is the goal of creating partnerships across sectors that will increase access to higher quality and more comprehensive services.

Infrastructure. The Ministry of Education is establishing permanent and temporary infrastructure to support the vision and governance policies at all levels. As a result, the ECCE Unit has been elevated to a Division and reorganised within the MOE. In addition, various other divisions and units within the government have been strategically aligned with reform efforts to support ECCE quality, equity, consistency, and access.

Our more refined questions related to vision, governance, and infrastructure included the following:

- What policies and mechanisms are in place to promote access?
- What factors facilitate or impede movement to a decentralised model?
- How do pre-existing programmes differ from the newly established government centres with respect to their understanding of the governance model and their stages of implementation?
- How do national bodies and support mechanisms affect the quality, access, and equity of the reform effort?
- What progress has been made in creating public/private partnerships?

At the *centre level*, we examined how centres' governance and practices align with the national vision and are supported by existing infrastructures. There are three main types of centres that serve preschoolers and operate at the local level: government, government-assisted, and private. The variation among programme type is critical to this investigation because of the Ministry's initiative to increase every family's access to quality services. Different programme types have grown out of different traditions and have evolved to meet the unique needs of their communities. With the national reform efforts underway, programme type becomes an important factor to consider. Obviously, we must take into account the challenges presented as different programme structures that strive to attain a consistent level of quality that adheres to national standards *and* capitalizes on local assets.

At the centre level, the questions we addressed were:

- How do centres receive information from MOE units and divisions?
- What are the mechanisms and centre management operations that facilitate or impede access to quality ECCE services?
- What are the existing conditions in centres' governance practices?
- To what extent do programmes understand and accept the proposed model?
- What partnerships exist between centres and government, non-governmental agencies, and with other community stakeholders that contribute to centres' capacities?
- How do ECCE centres (new and existing) address MOE's new standards for ratios, staff qualification, monitoring, and evaluation?

At the *classroom level*, we focused on implementation and capacity. The *National ECCE Guide* provides, for the first time in the nation's history, a common philosophy, standards for classroom practice, and holistic goals for children's learning in all developmental domains. Experience suggests that promulgating and disseminating national standards are the first steps toward change. Such change requires local ownership not only at the centre level, but at the classroom level as well. While programmes' structural features (such as staffing and ratios) provided us with one lens on the state of quality, they only offered limited information about classroom teaching practices and children's learning opportunities. Direct observation of teacher practice and child engagement offered a more complete picture of the necessary steps to successfully implement the reform in various settings. The questions we examined at the classroom level were:

- How do teachers demonstrate that they are implementing principles and practices outlined in the *National ECCE Curriculum Guide*?
- How are children's holistic needs met?
- What human and material resources exist to support quality and help implement reform efforts?
- To what extent do plans and mechanisms exist to support children's transition from preschool to primary school?
- What mechanisms are in place for capacity building, assessment, and identifying children's needs?
- How does classroom staff work with and involve parents?

Methodology

The ECCE study included two distinct phases. Phase I, enacted from June to September, involved document review, 47 stakeholder interviews, submitting an inception report, and delivering a presentation to government leaders and education reform stakeholders that offered initial impressions and identified preliminary issues. Phase I activities provided contextual information and also gave us a baseline from which we could finalize the research plan and instrumentation for data collection in Phase II.

Phase II was designed to supplement our preliminary analyses of the policy and regulatory framework and to systematically collect data on classrooms and key personnel. From October until the middle of December, the EDC research team collected interview, focus group, and observation data from 36 centres in Trinidad and Tobago. To aid our Phase II data collection, we

hired two local researchers who were well-versed in the issues, local context, and research methods we employed. (See Appendix A for detail about Phase I and Phase II activities.)

Instruments. EDC researchers developed a suite of instruments to guide data collection. (See Volume II.) Each tool includes clear instructions for researchers who administer the protocols and classroom observations. These instructions ensure that the researchers elicit and record their data consistently. The following tools were used in this study:

- *Stakeholder Interview Protocol* (Phase I) was used to guide interviews with 47 different stakeholders between June and September. It includes probes that address: MOE's vision of ECCE reform; the current state of ECCE at the national and community levels; strategies for fostering partnerships; and professional development systems.
- A *Classroom Observation Instrument* (Phase II), based on best practices and adapted to the principles and standards in the *National ECCE Curriculum Guide*, was designed to capture and rate the characteristics of interactions, activities, and environment that support the holistic development of young children. The *Classroom Observation Instrument* also included a post-observation interview that helps gather information about teachers' planning practices, learning goals, and assessment strategies.
- An *Administrator's Questionnaire*, designed to be distributed during classroom observation visits, gathered data on: the structure and characteristics of centres; child and family education and other services; and staff activities and development.
- *Focus Group Protocols* captured information from two sets of respondents. We used the *Community Focus Group* protocol to gather information on the centres' governing bodies and their involvement with the centre. Where possible, the research team used a *Teacher Focus Group* protocol to gather further information about the characteristics of teaching and learning in the centres.
- *Parent Surveys* solicited information from parents about their centre's practices and services as well as their beliefs about best practice. These surveys also examined parents' involvement in their children's education and in the centre and home practices that support learning.

To ensure the relevance of these instruments, we submitted drafts to the Ministry of Education for feedback. After incorporating feedback, we conducted our internal review to ensure that the suite of tools was complementary and would enable us to gather data on key questions across types of respondents.

Centre Nomination Criteria. The EDC study involved a total of 36 centres selected to represent the range of ECCE programmes that principally serve three- and four-year-old children and their families. The sample size was determined by the scope and breadth of our study, because the field research complements the secondary research that informs the national level profile. Within

each centre, we observed one to two classrooms and interviewed administrators and teaching staff to understand the ways centres and classrooms implement the Ministry's vision.

For our selection criteria, we drew on "purposeful sampling," to select a small number of information-rich cases, and "extreme sampling," to balance the analysis with a small number of cases that present unusual or contrasting conditions. Together with the in-country researchers, we used the following criteria to nominate the appropriate mix of centres and sites to conduct our research.

- **Nomination by MOE.** First, we asked the MOE to identify four centres that exhibit exemplary understanding and implementation of the National Model of Education in Trinidad and Tobago and the National Early Childhood Care and Education Curriculum Guide. Involvement of such centres provided us a lens to gauge the optimal level of achievement at this stage of system reform. We selected the remainder of our centre sample by seeking a proportional balance among and within three main programme characteristics: centre type, geographic location, and level of community need.
- **Centre Type.** Our sample included an equal representation of the three types of centres: government, government-assisted, and private. Within the government/government-assisted centre selection, we observed three management models of ECCE centres: centres managed by the government; government-assisted centres managed by denominational boards; and government-assisted centres managed by SERVOL.
- **Geographic Location.** We also selected centres that represent each of the eight current educational districts in Trinidad and Tobago: Caroni, North Eastern, Port of Spain, South Eastern, St. Patrick, St. George East, Victoria, and Tobago. We determined the number of centres to visit in each district by complementing this selection with the other selection criteria.
- **Level of Need.** Within the sample, we selected a balance of centres with high enrolment and low enrolment in order to better understand factors that influence access and need. In order to match these criteria, we identified enrolment level per district and per municipality and made selections from centres with over 100 percent enrolment in relation to capacity and those that are underutilized, at less than 70 percent capacity.

Piloting Instruments with Researchers. Because data collection was conducted concurrently by two different researchers in the country, we conducted a day-and-half long training session with them in October. This training session consisted of two main parts. First, we reviewed the suite of tools as well as the specific protocols for administration and recording of data. In particular, we discussed how the instruments would map onto the research plan and provide

information to address key study questions. Training on the Classroom Observation Instrument was more complex to ensure reliability. After a review of the items and rating system, the EDC researcher accompanied local researchers to several classrooms in order to test the tool. After each independent rating, the team calibrated their ratings, focusing discussion on problematic items, variations in interpretations, feasibility of particular questions, and whether the instruments included the measure or examination of unnecessary or irrelevant items.

Subsequently, we piloted these instruments to test for reliability and ease of use, going in research teams to the first several sites and independently completing each instrument. The project's in-country researchers conducted the remaining visits to the other sites during October through mid-December.

Data Collection and Analysis. During the two phases of the study, we collected and analysed qualitative or quantitative data. Initial organising categories driving the instrument design and analysis emerged from stakeholder interviews we conducted and documents we analysed during Phase I. EDC researchers developed and implemented a coding system to analyse qualitative data, including data from documents and interviews. We applied both emic and etic coding processes to formulate the initial recommendations that were included in the midterm report. We then continued to apply these coding processes as we collected additional quantitative data from centres and classrooms, including data from focus groups, surveys, interviews, and classroom observations. We then entered quantitative data into a database that would support analyses.

Our data collection at the end of the study concentrated on two units of analysis, enabling us to complete a comprehensive profile of sample sites. One unit was the classroom. In order to address our essential research questions and inform the government of the current state of ECCE in terms of quality, equity, and access, our observations, surveys, and focus groups were related to the essential elements drawn from the *National ECCE Curriculum Guide*:

- Well-being
- Citizenship/Belonging
- Intellectual Empowerment
- Aesthetic Expression

Our observational research focused on interactions between teachers and students, interactions among students, teacher strategies, learning activities, and environmental factors such as

groupings, use of materials, etc. For this classroom unit of study, we targeted preschool classrooms.

The second unit of analysis was the centre. At the centre level, our study focused on three areas:

- Structure and characteristics, including operations, management, decision making, partnerships, and human and financial resource
- Child and family education and other services
- Staff activities and development

Again, we focused on centres that offered care and education services to 3- to 5-year olds, but also sampled other centres with a broader population (i.e., those that offered extended care or services for infants and toddlers). As the ECCE system evolves through decentralisation, the key link between the national and local reform efforts rests locally. Therefore, working with site administrators, we organised and conducted focus groups at several of the centres we visited, engaging village councils, denominational boards, school boards, support teams, and parent associations, both to build community partnerships and to collect data from key stakeholders who managed centre activities.

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION SYSTEMS REFORM

FOUNDATIONS OF ECCE SERVICES

The landscape of early childhood education in Trinidad and Tobago has evolved dramatically since the 1950s, when untrained providers offered care in private settings that were not subject to any standards or regulations, and facilities exhibited consistently substandard conditions. Beginning in the 1960s, three reform efforts propelled the formalisation of a systematic approach to early childhood care and education.

Early on, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago (GOTT) responded to the need for an early childhood system. First, it piloted two model nursery schools—one in San Fernando and another in La Pastora—in collaboration with the Association of Village Councils.¹ The Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Ministry of Culture created a preschool unit, which established community centres as multi-purpose facilities to serve the comprehensive needs of the communities. Successful initiatives involved whole communities surrounding the centres and made these community centres into hubs for a range of cultural and educational activities. Such activities included the “best village competition,” where families engaged in drawing, music, crafts, and other skills training that were offered to all free of charge. Such ventures served to structure both community-building and educational activities. Village councils, made up of community members and local businesses, managed 50 preschools as such in community centres.

In the 1970s, the non-governmental agency SERVOL established a Regional Training and Resource Centre to prepare ECCE teachers and created 16 new centres in the areas of Trinidad with the most critical needs. By creating 150 centres throughout the Caribbean, SERVOL also initiated a systematic way to involve the community in those centres through the Boards of Education, where parents vote on centres’ management decisions. The GOTT began to collaborate with SERVOL centres in the 1980s, subsidising operations and later assigning SERVOL to manage 50 public centres. Six hundred teachers in the Caribbean received training through this Training Centre, and the organisation continues to manage many centres. This initiative has helped build a foundation; it also provides valuable lessons for shaping the current reform.

Finally, Associations of Denominational Boards and Village Councils managed and supported many private centres that emerged as extensions of the private primary schools. Private centres and primary schools differ widely in characteristics and quality. They also create a stratified system that depends on fees and admission requirements that, in many cases, impose an obstacle to equal access.

In an effort to address universal access for the 30,000 young children whom we expect to enter ECCE centres between now and 2020, the Educational Policy Paper of 1993 generated a set of policies and regulations that concentrate on the governance, staffing, and management of ECCE centres in Trinidad and Tobago, and launched a new vision for early childhood education.

NEW VISION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION

The World Conference on Education for All (EFA) in 1990 set in motion a new agenda for worldwide education, later operated through the Dakar Framework for Action in 2000.² EFA's mission is to "ensure the engagement and participation of civil society in the formulation, implementation, and monitoring of strategies for educational development." This framework provided a prime impetus for the current reform efforts in Trinidad and Tobago. The initiative stresses the value of partnership and civic participation (cross-sector, regional, and international) as ways to define key strategies for achieving sustainable economic development. Trinidad and Tobago's involvement with the Regional Education Project for Latin America and the Caribbean (PRELAC) furthered EFA goals by focusing on changing the culture of schools through modernising teacher practices and decentralising decision-making, to catalyze social responsibility, participatory communities, and individual empowerment. Furthermore, modernising practices for an empowered citizenry required a move away from traditional, teacher-directed instruction, and toward active, student-centered learning. This cultural shift emerged through a series of action areas that began with early childhood care and education, spotlighting an area previously neglected in plans to reshape educational systems.

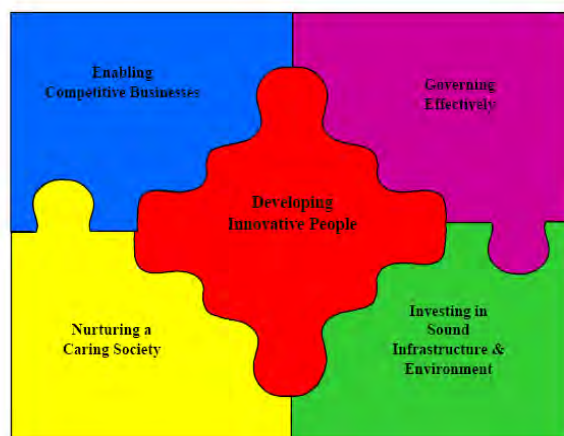
Following the EFA, studies and committee reports provided vital information that brought challenges to light. Inequities in the educational services at the ECCE level became visible, and were made more prominent by the literacy and numeracy scores of children at the primary level, which vary by regions and by school type. These disparities grow throughout schooling; as a result, 28 percent of students do not pass the secondary entrance assessment (SEA), which is the

gateway to secondary and higher education. Experts view quality ECCE as a lynchpin in school readiness. Under the present structure of private, government/government-assisted centres, discrepancies exist in opportunities for the poorest children to access quality educational environments. Given the GOTT's vision of a flexible citizenry that contributes to the growth of the economy, leaving the poorest behind was not a tenable option. Instead, access to quality environments and teachers, and culturally-adapted best practices, became the focus of the Seamless Education System (SES) reform.

The need for appropriate facilities provided another stimulus for ground level reform efforts. According to some, community centres are eliminating early childhood centres from their facilities in order to provide more extensive adult learning opportunities. The lack of permanent spaces for activities in these ECCE centres thus forced administrators to displace equipment, children's projects, and materials each day. This backdrop presented both opportunities and challenges that the architects of the SES reform took into consideration as they designed the structure and key elements for the system.

A SEAMLESS EDUCATION SYSTEM: NEW MODEL OF EDUCATIONAL REFORM

Figure 3.1: The Five Development Priorities



The primacy of the education agenda is underlined by the GOTT's investment in education. Education and health constitute 55 percent of the nation's active loan portfolio as of 2003.³ Building on the reform stimulated by the EFA, Trinidad and Tobago created the SES, an ambitious reform approach that creates continuity across levels of education. The SES includes

enhancements to services, mechanisms, and facilities from ECCE through post secondary and tertiary education levels, aligning goals and outcomes at each stage toward preparing students for an expanding and increasingly technical labour market.

Profile of the SES Reform

The educational reform process the EFA initiated was invigorated in 2002 with the *Vision 2020 Operational Plan 2007 – 2010*. This programme laid out strategies, policies, and initiatives to serve as a blueprint for action in the short- and mid-term. The image of the reform, depicted in Figure 3.1, clearly establishes goals for 2020. The goals are: developing innovative people; nurturing a caring society; governing effectively; and enabling a competitive economy with investments and sound infrastructures that sustain development. One of the salient characteristics is the cutting edge approach of the SES, which takes the long view of alignment and coherence throughout the educational system. As a result, Vision 2020 has put ECCE at the forefront of the nation's development goals. Modernising the educational system includes setting high standards for teachers and children as well as ensuring equal access for all children. Most importantly, the process of setting and revising these standards was participatory and inclusive. Leaders, staff from different ministries, parents, university staff, and community members representing various stakeholders met at length to formulate these documents and then distribute them widely for public comments, both on the MOE web site and in educational district offices.

The *Proposed National Standards for Regulating Early Childhood Services I* (Green Paper) was distributed for comments in 2004. Then, in May 2007, Vision 2020 released a revised draft of the *National Model for Education in Trinidad and Tobago (Early Childhood, Primary, and Secondary)*.⁴ The latter details directions for management and operations at all levels of education. At the ECCE level, directives address physical facilities, monitoring, leadership, teacher qualifications and performance, and day-to-day planning. The *National Model* establishes a model for assuring quality through a common language and shared understandings of the principles and practices that support child development, and refers implementation of standards at the centre level to a new *National ECCE Curriculum Guide*. Chapter 4 delves into the role of the *Curriculum Guide* in the reform and Chapter 5 discusses the effects of the standards in the *National Model* on teacher quality.

Carrying Out the Vision

The major strategies to establish the SES include: (a) a plan for universal access to ECCE; (b) a centralised and cohesive teacher development plan; and (c) a decentralisation initiative to ensure equal access to quality and community investment and involvement in the implementation of quality standards.

Universal Access. The plan for universal access recognizes the existence of a mixed delivery system that varies widely in quality and in attendance opportunities for the poorest students. Its aim, therefore, is to improve quality for all (including private and historically un-regulated government-assisted centres) and to maximize access and equity by constructing new centres in targeted areas of need.

National surveys exposed a profile of the centres that indicated an exponential growth in preschool enrolment. Ten years ago, the majority of children went to private centres with little government oversight. In 1995, surveys showed that approximately half of the 14,000 children aged three to five years in Trinidad and Tobago were enrolled in centres: 4000 in government/government-assisted centres and 3000 in private centres.⁵

In less than ten years, enrolment in preschools increased dramatically, and the balance tipped from government centres to hundreds of private ECCE centres or care settings that were created to respond to community needs. In 2004, 29,000 three to four year old children were enrolled in centres: 6000 in 170 government/government-assisted centres and 23,000 in 805 private centres.

Since 2004, there have been relevant changes noted. In January 2007, a study conducted by Global Competitive Strategies for the MOE indicated that the number of centres had decreased to 154 government/government-assisted and 727 private centres.⁶ In addition, the study by the SESP firm HiFab International revealed that population levels for children aged birth to four years have decreased slightly and should continue to decline until 2020.⁷

Table 3.1: Number of Centres and Children by District and Centre Type shows the distribution of centres that serve preschool children, according to the 2004/2005 survey. The eight educational districts offer different profiles that shed light on possible factors that influence both access and quality. In Phase II of the present study, we examined a sample of centres to explore how these factors, such as high enrolment and high student to teacher ratios, affect curriculum implementation and quality.

Table 3.1: Number of Centres and Children by District and Centre Type

Educational District	Gov't & Gov't Assisted Centres		Private Centres		Total	
	Centres	Children	Centres	Children	Centres	Children
P.O.S & Environs	24	937	145	4753	169	5690
St. George East	21	771	247	6758	268	7529
North Eastern	17	384	37	1093	54	1477
South Eastern	24	947	37	1220	61	2167
Caroni	23	806	131	3286	154	4092
Victoria	27	1068	99	3153	126	4221
St. Patrick	19	689	73	2083	92	2769
Subtotal Trinidad	155	5599	769	22346	924	27945
Tobago	15	580	36	1160	51	1740
Total Trinidad & Tobago	170	6179	805	23506	975	29685

Obstacles to uniform quality for all children include child to teacher ratios, facility capacity, uneven access to materials, and quality of teacher training and monitoring. An MOE-sponsored study noted a wide difference in teacher to student ratios. Many private centres, which make up the vast majority of centres in Trinidad and Tobago, have teacher ratios that exceed the standards outlined in the new regulations. In fact, approximately 285 of the private centres exceed the 15 students to 1 teacher ratio stipulated in the *National Model*. Drawing on the National Policy of 2005, 47 percent of government centres and 44 percent of government-assisted centres are in compliance with ratio stipulations, as opposed to 26 percent of private centres.⁸ In addition, some of the centres are overly subscribed and overcrowded, while others are at less than 50 percent capacity.

The new centre plan aims to rectify inequities by providing uniform resources and quality, as well as maintaining high standards. The 600 new government centres being built as part of Vision 2020 include:

- State-of-the-art facility and equipment, as well as 24-hour security to ensure safety
- Fully credentialed teachers—teachers and administrators with bachelor’s degrees and ECCE credits
- Staff that includes one administrator/teacher, two teachers, two teacher assistants, and one auxiliary assistant

Centres are planned in targeted, high-need areas adjacent to primary schools, in order to promote alignment and optimize transition. Vision 2020 will provide the new centres support to establish management boards that include community members, businesses, and families.

Teacher Development Plan. Teacher training is receiving particular attention because the proposed 600 new public centres will require a large number of credentialed teachers and administrators. The teacher development plan for the nation is three-pronged and will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, but some points are worth noting here, because the SES is promoting a cohesive and comprehensive system. First, tertiary reform will provide a critical mass of teachers with bachelor’s degrees, as specified in the *New Model* and *National ECCE Curriculum Guide*. In addition, the reform will seek out people with doctorate degrees in ECCE and special needs, as well as other education specialties at the University of Trinidad and Tobago, in partnership with other international universities. New credential requirements and incentives have already helped meet the goal of raising teacher qualifications. According to the new plan, ECCE teachers and administrators who attain the credentials required for the new centres will receive the same pay as primary school teachers. This radical shift in salary policies creates a powerful incentive, motivating teachers to continue their education to comply with the new requirements.

In addition, MOE’s ECCE Division, in collaboration with the Quality Assurance Unit, is dedicated to ongoing support, quality assurance, and teacher monitoring. The new administration of the ECCE Division includes a director, an assistant director, and additional leadership positions that will serve as the link between the national reform and the centre (including private centre) implementation efforts. Three co-coordinators (for curriculum programme, quality assurance, and family/community support) will lead the work of 32 curriculum programme facilitators, 16 quality assurance officers, and 16 district ECCE family/community support officers who will provide monitoring and training/technical assistance to all types of centres in the eight districts. Additionally, a research officer will enable the Division to maintain a relevant research agenda.

Lastly, a key element of the teacher development plan is building a core of teacher educators who can support the ongoing development of teachers and the quality of instruction in the classroom. A renewed focus on leadership in the field of ECCE will enable quality research to inform the design of the ECCE system. Past efforts have spotlighted the task of building leadership among early childhood educators to help teachers respond to the needs of Caribbean children. In an effort to strengthen early childhood development in Caribbean member nations, the Inter-American Development Bank funded an online Masters in Leadership in ECCE at the Institute of Education, University of the West Indies (UWI). The research and policy centre at UWI—the Caribbean Child Development Centre—has been involved in broad research, training, curriculum development, and advocacy efforts since its inception in 1973. Moreover, although interviewed stakeholders did not mention the Centre, it may also serve as a repository of concerted and sustained efforts to build leadership, in concert with the University of Trinidad and Tobago.⁹

Some promising practices that offer possibilities for building leadership among teacher educators include a GOTT-hosted regional symposium on teacher education in 2006, where representatives from 25 countries shared and analysed findings from teacher surveys. The gathering underscored the importance of strengthening the network of prepared teacher educators and pushed for regional and national plans for teacher development.

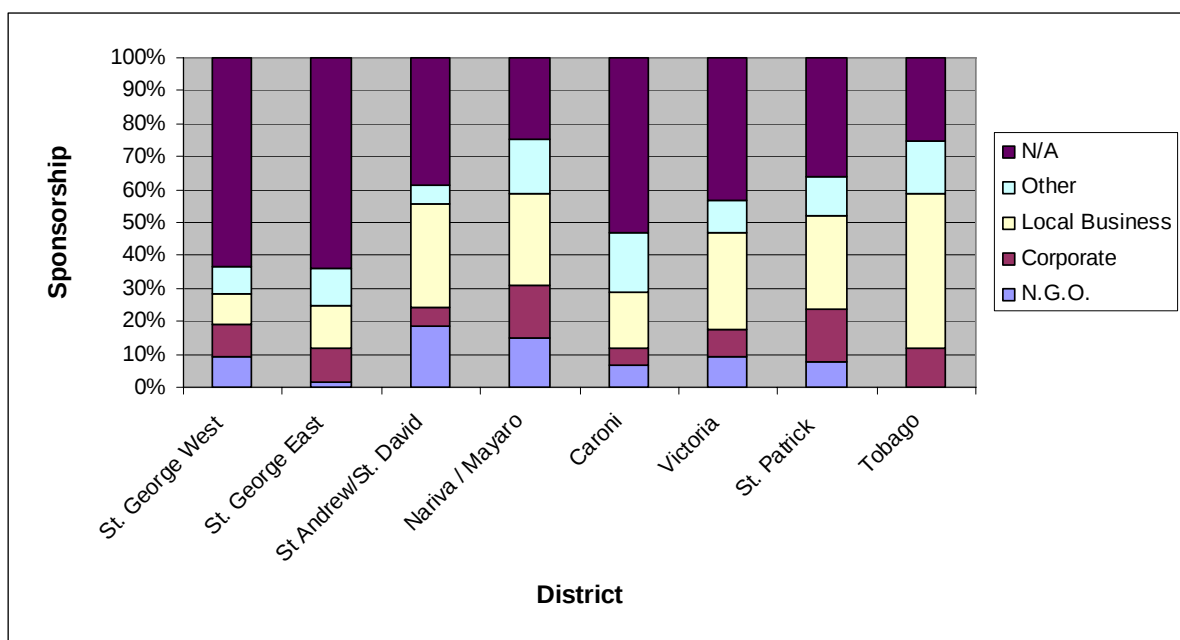
Decentralisation of Centre Management and Community Sensitisation Efforts. The Ministry of Education’s Restructuring and Decentralisation Unit has led a major shift in the management of primary and secondary schools. This temporary body was created to empower and help build capacity to govern at the local level, supporting centres with a model based on the Local School Board and the Site Based Management implemented at the primary and secondary level (SEMP Project). At the centre level, these bodies are called Support Teams and serve to build broad-based community involvement with the centres. Strengthening community involvement is a key strategy for the decentralisation effort, as is the flow of information from the national to the centre level. Key players in this effort are the National Council for Early Childhood Care and Education (NCEECE) as well as the tiers of facilitators and coordinators planned for the ECCE Division (family/community partnership facilitators and coordinators; curriculum programme facilitators and their coordinator, and quality assurance officers and a coordinator).

Decentralisation also aims to facilitate a *seamless transition*, which the World Bank's Early Childhood Development (ECD) Evaluation of *Ready to Learn* identified as a need. Transition issues need to be looked at both as children enter and exit the ECCE continuum as a means to address the high repetition and drop-out rate in Infant I cohorts in primary school. That, according to this ECD Evaluation, requires strong links between ECCE centres and primary schools. As discussed in Chapter 6, the MOE's ECCE Division team has developed a timeline for a transition plan that includes all operational and management needs of the centres, including visiting and communicating with primary schools, and conceptualising developments that highlight the different approaches to teaching and learning that the *Curriculum Guide* promotes.

The structure of the SESP lays out general expectations of children entering primary school. According to this continuum, ECCE should facilitate three and four year-olds' cognitive and social development, as well as the early transmission of values and culture, inquiry, discovery, and learning discipline. Thereafter, we expect that children entering primary school will be ready to acquire socialisation, literacy, and numeracy skills as well as be involved in the transmission of values and culture, inquiry, discovery, and learning discipline. A seamless education means that the child is prepared during two years at ECCE to start primary school with aligned expectations of skills, disposition, and knowledge. However, as of now, expectations at primary school do not match the holistic education described in the *National ECCE Curriculum Guide*.

Investment and sponsorship by local communities, including increased business involvement, form another noteworthy aspect of decentralisation that the SES reform at the ECCE level must account for. More than half of the centres in Trinidad and Tobago did not report any specific sponsorship, according to data collected in 2004 and 2005.¹⁰ Of the centres that claimed sponsorship, the most frequently cited sponsors were local businesses (n=201). Interestingly, Tobago has proportionately more local business involvement than the other districts, as Figure 3.2: Community Sponsorship shows. This fact warrants a closer look at the mechanisms that facilitate business involvement, even at the central level, such as tax credits or other incentives for financial and management support.

Figure 3.2: Community Sponsorship



CONSIDERATIONS FOR ECCE SYSTEM REFORM

Unlike primary and secondary, which have more established mechanisms and larger support systems, ECCE is a fledgling. Nevertheless, it offers possibilities to truly focus the reform on the essential characteristics of the “Ideal Caribbean Person.” Some issues that would enhance the ECCE system are outlined below.

Access and Equity

The presence of over-age or under- age children in a centre has particular consequences for the curriculum and pedagogy, as well as integration of the children. Although the numbers are not large, they are significant: there are a total of 161 documented over-age children in ECCE centres due to a variety of factors. Children labeled “slow learners” or “late starters” are particularly concerning. How are these children supported? How were “slow learners” identified? Another group of over-age children enrolled in preschool centres because primary schools in their districts were not available or, as some have interpreted, because they were excluded from private centres in their areas. Across all categories, St. George West centres have the highest percentage, at 29 percent, of over-age children in ECCE centres.¹¹ Paying close

attention to this population may mitigate problems raised by barriers to readiness and success later on.

Children with identified disabilities numbered 373. Sixty-three percent were boys, and St. George East and St. George West had the greatest numbers of such children, most of whom had speech disabilities. Better information about the identification procedures and tools will enable educators to plan need-specific interventions for each child.

Birth to Three

Another issue in terms of access and equity concerns the services and education available for children from birth to age three. Will they have equal opportunities when they enter ECCE centres? While ECCE has been placed at the forefront, young children from birth to three still remain mostly invisible in the system.

Birth to three standards have been outlined in the *Proposed Standards for Regulating ECCE Services* (Green Paper). However, this population of children is served by a blended group of agencies and ministries, not by the ECCE Division. According to the stakeholders we interviewed, a combination of institutions serves their health and care needs and supports

the increasing number of single mothers, but there is a dearth of information on how these young children's cognitive development is supported. Emerging literacy skills begin to develop immediately after birth, as children begin to communicate their needs and understand that words are exchanges of information. How and how often we talk with very young children, how we listen, whether we read to them, and how we play with them affect their literacy development in later years. A change in mindset may be necessary to address this issue effectively. Furthermore, if there are cognitive or other delays, they must be detected as early as possible to reduce the learning gap between children with special needs and other children when they enter preschool

Key Issues

- Early identification of special needs impacts school success.
- Transition plans that guide young children's entry into preschool and primary environments prepare the institutions to receive and guide the development of all young children.
- Strategic partnerships with all who serve the multiple needs of young children ensure an effective and concerted approach to continuity of services for special needs.
- Building a respectful and on-going relationship with families is vital to understanding and serving the individual needs of young children. (Adapted from *Early Childhood Report*, 18, 8:5–12)

and then primary school. Five years ago, survey data showed that 1248 children aged birth to three years were enrolled in care settings, and most of those were private. More research is needed with regard to this population.

Management Systems

Making current profiles of centres available to stakeholders is essential for maintaining an up-to-date picture of the impact of the reform. The Global Strategists study, begun in January 2006 and published in July 2007, provided vital information on the centre facilities and numbers.

However, a number of SESP consultants and counterparts identified factors that could affect data collection about ECCE centres. For example, many private centres, as well as some government-assisted centres, may have more than one name or may change their names, resulting in an inability to track accurately. Given the MOE has not had much control or oversight into the operations of private or, in some cases, government-assisted centres, complete and accurate data collection is further thwarted.

The effort to track private centres and bring them into the more formalized system of ECCE has begun in earnest. One important step is registering centres. Once the government acknowledges them through this registration process, they are included on the government website, a resource for parents who seek access to centres near their work or homes. Parents who do not have access to the internet can access the same information from district offices (parent information centres). Tracking teacher education is also an efficient means to ensure that teacher development programmes respond to the career needs of people in the field. Researching ways to maintain an on-going database for all operating ECCE centres and teachers in Trinidad and Tobago will greatly benefit the SESP.

Communication and Action Channels from National to Local Levels

At the national level, NCECCE's organisation permits attention to diverse issues in ECCE because the cross-ministry composition covers the comprehensive needs of the population, from birth to five. Committees address a variety of policies, but NCECCE must become fully operational. In addition, information and work by committees may not reach the ground level unless representatives from each district serve on each committee and help formalize a follow-up plan or feedback loop. Flow of information, implementation, and action may be stymied as well

by particular approaches to decentralisation. Stakeholders and other counterparts we interviewed commented that careful examination of and alternatives to hierarchical forms of communication are essential to successfully implementing the reform. Many stakeholders stated that they needed efficient channels of communications and information sharing. Some also highlighted the need for more inclusion in the decision-making process at the top. As decentralisation gets off the ground at the ECCE level, it may provide an opportunity to create processes to bring the work and voice of the ECCE support teams to the table at national committees, and vice versa.

Modernisation implies change, and cultural development is a vital area for the nation. Communities, teachers, policymakers, and all stakeholders need to be on the same page, and their voices must be included in the modernisation project. Many pieces are in place to accomplish this task. The government is taking the reins, by building on the strengths and infrastructures that have worked in the past but need modernising.

CURRICULUM & PEDAGOGY

METHODS

One of our most important tasks was formulating the right questions to ask stakeholders about the curriculum and its implementation. To prepare for the interviews, the EDC team began an extensive document review and analysis that provided a profile of curriculum and pedagogy in Trinidad and Tobago. Documents that were invaluable to the analysis are appended in the endnotes. Most notable were the May 2007 draft of the *National Model for Education in Trinidad and Tobago* and the *National ECCE Curriculum Guide*. We coded questions arising from the reviews according to our required TOR categories and developed a stakeholder's interview guide to gather specific data on curriculum and other matters. Dr. Carol Logie's article and the High/Scope study also provided a glimpse of the curriculum and pedagogical practice in a sample of centres ten years ago.¹²

In July, the Principal Investigator collected information on curriculum and pedagogy from interviews, focus groups, and observations of three government sites under construction. Key stakeholders who contributed to our knowledge about curriculum included Dr. Carol Logie, Mrs. Zita Wright, and Mrs. Velma Cropper, who are members of the National Council for Early Childhood Care and Education. In addition, we benefited from the views of ECCE Unit—now ECCE Division—director Mrs. Ann Thornhill and a cohort of field facilitators in the former ECCE Unit. We developed draft interview and survey protocols in July for parent and administrator interviews and supplied them to administrators for feedback, including items on curriculum and practices (see Appendix B). After the July visit, we analysed the new *Curriculum Guide* and created a classroom observation instrument to gather data on teacher practice and curriculum. Modifications to the parent and centre administrator/teacher protocols and three new instruments created in September enabled the EDC team to gather more detailed information on teacher practice and curriculum from mid-October through December.

Background

Curriculum became an important ingredient in building a cohesive ECCE system in Trinidad and Tobago as preschool environments evolved from care-giving to educational settings, bolstered by

Did you know...?

- From birth to age 2 is the most important time for growth of the human brain.
- The capacity of a child to control his or her emotions and make social attachments is formed by age 2.
- By age 3, children have developed most of their capacity to acquire vocabulary.
- 85% of a child's capacity for learning is determined before age 5, while 95% of public investment in education occurs after age 5.
- The future of our community depends on the investments we make today.

new knowledge about the vital importance of the early years to brain development.¹³ Early childhood, an age group previously not served by the educational system, was traditionally thought to be a time for only social and personal development. However, in recent years early childhood has come into the spotlight as a pivotal time for cognitive, as well as holistic, development. As summarized in the box created by Welborn Foundation, key milestones occur in the early years

well before preschool.¹⁴ Given these important new developments and knowledge, stakeholders in the country set about shaping curriculum principles and standards of practice in a participatory, inclusive process, including visiting international models in Italy, Canada, and other nations. Furthermore, they created several cross sector committees to shape the ECCE reform and the ECCE programmes at the University of Trinidad and Tobago and the University of the West Indies—at both the School of Education and School of Continuing Studies.

Placing early childhood at the forefront of the seamless reform ensures that children will start primary school with more advantages and more equal opportunities. Centre experiences involving active learning, in combination with parent education, can positively impact cognitive development in the early years. According to studies, quality centre care raises I.Q. levels by 15 points, especially in young children from poor families with limited education.¹⁵ In addition, as an economic investment, attendance in ECCE has proven to affect children's social, academic, and economic achievements in later life and reduce future costly social expenditures.¹⁶ According to economic projections, every dollar spent in early childhood education saves seven

dollars in later educational and service costs. Moreover, preschool attendance is associated with higher achievement levels, increased graduation rates, and less retention in grade and special needs placements.

In the long run, the per child school cost is lower for children who have attended preschool programmes. These children also have fewer incidences of crime and welfare participation, thereby reducing criminal justice and social services costs to society.¹⁷

As stated in Chapter 3, the documented, formalised inception of ECCE programmes in Trinidad and Tobago began with pilot preschools in the 1960s and 1970s. These programmes echoed the Freirian model that education generated and supported at the grassroots level can lift families out of poverty. Thus, the ECCE movement was as much based on a belief in equity as in the development of an empowered citizenry, which is another key principle that the current reform reflects. Various infrastructures and materials developed during those pivotal years provide the basis for the current reform, which emphasizes equity and quality. These include the *National Curriculum Guide*, which is in synchrony with SERVOL's Social, Physical, Intellectual, Creative, Emotional and Spiritual (SPICES) Curriculum Guide, and also aligned with UWI's Continuing Education programme of study that certifies ECCE teachers.

THE ROLE OF CURRICULUM IN THE REFORM

New Standards for “The Ideal Caribbean Person”

Trinidad and Tobago, along with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), a body of 22 member states and associate members in the Caribbean, worked together to define a plan of action to identify and support the development of “The Ideal Caribbean Person.” Agreed upon by each member state, the plan laid the foundation for regional ECCE standards and curriculum guides.

Beginning in 2000, in concert with a renewed effort based on the conclusions of *Education for All in the Caribbean*, Trinidad and Tobago's Ministry of Education responded to the plan of action by establishing draft standards in accordance with the Caribbean's formulation of world-class standards for education and literacy. Preparing to draft the new Standards and the New Curriculum Model, key stakeholders, including the main authors of the *National ECCE Curriculum Guide*, engaged in investigations and discussion to refine the elements of a

curriculum and pedagogy that would best respond to the needs of the standards of the “Ideal Caribbean Person.” The strategic plan borne of the Vision 2020 Operational Plan, articulated in 2002, included developing and disseminating a revised draft of the *National Model for Education in Trinidad and Tobago (Early Childhood, Primary, and Secondary)* in May 2007.¹⁸ Such efforts show that Trinidad and Tobago prioritised ECCE within the SES reform. The Minister herself has voiced keen interest in enhancing the ECCE system to ensure equal access to quality education.

*These ECCE initiatives are the cornerstone of our education reforms. They are fundamental to the development of a seamless education system that lays the foundation for training, knowledge, skills, aptitudes, and attitudes required to meet the development needs of Trinidad and Tobago in fulfilling the goals of Vision 2020.*¹⁹

The New Model’s ECCE standards align with the Caribbean region standards, and the *National Early Childhood Care and Education Curriculum Guide* draft reflects the standards laid out in the *National Model* as well as best practices in ECCE, adapted to Trinidad and Tobago’s culture. However, according to the chief architect of the *Curriculum Guide*, the purpose of this document is not to lay out specific activities and resources, but to help teachers create and adapt curricula that will reflect the principles of the *Guide*. Trinidad and Tobago plan to distribute the *Curriculum Guide* to centres that will use it as a foundation for quality assurance, curriculum planning, and professional development.

The National Council for Early Childhood Care and Education

The National Council for Early Childhood Care and Education (NCEECE), established in 1987 in dialogue with the GOTT, is an inter-sectoral body with advisory and advocacy capacities that has been instrumental in formulating the standards and the *Curriculum Guide*. The Attorney General, in charge of revising the Education Act of 1966, met with key stakeholders to identify shortcomings and investigate the latest regional and international trends. The NCEECE was established through policies and parliamentary procedure to oversee the development and implementation of curriculum and standards. This body was the main engine of curriculum reform, consulting with all stakeholders to identify policies and refine amendments, contributing to the drafting of the White Paper, and charting the way to universal access. As its term expires,

the GOTT should make the NCECCE a statutory body. At the very least, according to one source, the Minister could recommend that the group reconvene temporarily while procedures and the Education Act are in flux. Stakeholders believe that the roles and responsibilities of NCECCE members need to be discussed and negotiated. Previously, the body had more of an advisory capacity. The committee now needs to define new roles and take actions aligned with the policies, as they have done in the past, via subcommittees. Most vital, however, is a concrete plan and mechanism that communicates with and solicits input from the field. Our research indicates this is one area of great need for both MOE and its associated inter-sectorial committees.

National Early Childhood Care and Education Curriculum Guide

A very readable and not overly complex document, the *Curriculum Guide* comprehensively lays out the basic guiding principles and philosophies that support best practices for ECCE in Trinidad and Tobago. The format is accessible, user-friendly, and clear about its alignment with the *New Model* Standards, as well as with international best practices, while refraining from using prescriptive language and specific directives in terms of pedagogy.

An inclusive process of feedback and sensitisation has already begun with the distribution of the draft *Curriculum Guide* to government and private centres that registered with the MOE. This process serves a dual purpose: (1) registering unregistered centres; and (2) inviting feedback on the draft *Curriculum Guide*. In order to provide access to the newly developed materials across all types of centres, a news release announced that the new *Curriculum Guides* will be specifically allocated for representatives of private centres.²⁰ According to some sources, all government/government-assisted centres received the *Guides*, and our researchers verified this claim after recent visits to several centres, where ECCE administrators and teaching staff were already using it to tailor their planning and practices. Sites in each district in Trinidad and Tobago serve as pick-up points for the new *Curriculum Guides*. Nevertheless, our research indicates that centres received letters about meetings to provide input only after the fact and did not receive any copies of the *Guide* when they inquired.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CURRICULUM MODELS AND PRACTICES

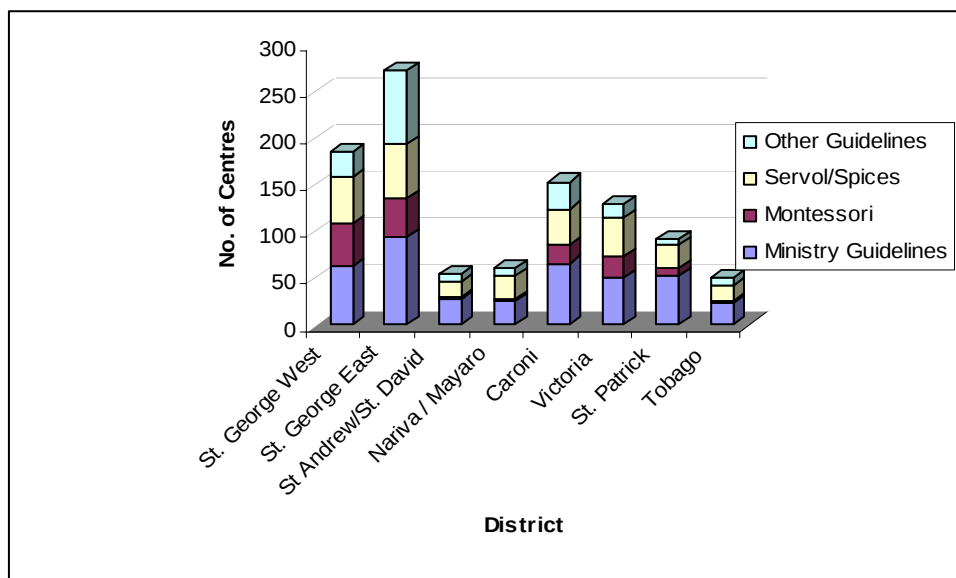
Currently, nearly half of the 998 centres surveyed in 2004/2005 National ECCE Survey report using Ministry Guidelines for curriculum, although in most cases such use may only consist of the draft standards of the previous MOE, as the *National ECCE Curriculum Guide* had not yet been distributed widely for community feedback.

The other most used curriculum was developed by SERVOL, *SPICES: A Curriculum Guide for Early Childhood Educators*.²¹ Montessori and other curriculum options were reportedly in use in other centres.²² No information was available about whether centres indicating that they used “other guidelines” did in fact use a curriculum or guidelines.

EDC’s field research instruments shed additional light on how different types of centres in each educational district use the curriculum and the *Curriculum Guide*. The district with the most centres, St. George East (n=272), has the widest variety of curricula.

That is, a large number of centres chose options other than MOE Guidelines, Montessori, or SPICES curriculum. In the district with the least number of centres, Tobago (n=51), the majority of centres report using MOE Guidelines more than other curricula.

Figure 4.1: Curriculum by District



Although centres reported using MOE Guidelines, we have no clear data as to the specific content they used or whether ECCE Survey respondents were referring to the new Ministry

Guidelines in the Standards document or the *National ECCE Curriculum Guide*. The latter is a binder with specific principles, outcomes, and procedures for implementation. According to sources, school supervisors attended workshops on the MOE guidelines to examine key elements of compliance and operations. The Ministry Guidelines distributed to date include the Standards and Regulations for operation, which centres use as a blueprint for managing ratios, practices, and structured activities. However, the standards document—now incorporated into the *National Model*—discusses the curriculum and curriculum implementation in broad strokes by bulleting areas of learning and desired general outcomes for children, referring to the *National ECCE Curriculum Guide* as the resource for set standards.

Comparing curricula in use in Trinidad and Tobago with other international models used as a source for the *Guide* indicates many commonalities (see Table 4.1). Theoretically, the principles of all four models are geared to helping children with social, physical, intellectual, and creative development. Successful graduates of programmes that use these models are expected to grow up competent, not only in academics, but also as well-rounded citizens who are confident in their own capacities and tolerant of differences in society. The question, though, is how well each model is applied and adapted for the best outcomes of the children.

From the reports and data reviewed, curricula in ECCE centres in Trinidad and Tobago vary widely. “Themes” are the main organiser of the preschool day, according to informants. Stakeholders mentioned that little information has been available about curriculum use and implementation at the centre level, calling for a need to conduct classroom research on a regular basis.

Stakeholders also pointed to inconsistent flow of information from the national level committees to the field. The perception of most is that the centres, especially private centres, were reacting to standards, operation, and facilities regulations as a top-down mandate, but had little knowledge of the curriculum and pedagogical initiatives that were being planned and discussed at the national level and within the NCECCE, the ECCE Division, and the universities. Several respondents indicated that what centres knew about curriculum and implementation was inadequate and uneven, may lack depth, or might be based on a formulaic approach to child-centered teaching.

Table 4.1: Comparison of Curricula

	New Curriculum Guidelines	SPICES	Montessori	Reggio Emilia
Areas of Learning Development	• Spiritual & moral development • Wellness, including physical, personal, social & emotional development • Effective communication • Citizenship & belonging, life skills • Intellectual empowerment, incl. knowledge & understanding of the world, language, literacy & numeracy concepts • Aesthetic expression incl. creative development	• Social • Physical • Intellectual • Creative • Emotional • Spiritual	• Social • Physical • Intellectual • Creative • Personal	• Exploration • Critical thinking • Problem solving • Social inter-action and communication • Collaboration • Literacy • Creative arts • Emergent children's interests
Outcomes for Children	• Respect • Self confidence • Diversity awareness • Sense of community • Respect for cultural heritage • Appreciation of environment • Multiple literacy • Positive work ethics • Creative imagination	• Expression using language • Perceptual, manipulative & motor skills • Apply knowledge & skills in everyday experiences • Social skills to relate with adults & children • Effective work habits • Appreciate aesthetic & creative activities • Express reverence & gratitude for self, others, places & things	• Intellectual development, • Deliberation, • Intuition • Independence, • Self-discipline • Social awareness and behavior needed to function in the world • Teachers and children exercise mutual respect and non-aggressive behavior; competition is discouraged²³	• Appreciate aesthetic and creative activities • Physical, cognitive, intellectual, and social development • Co-constructor of knowledge • Intuition • Sense of community
Nature of Activities	• Active learning • Variety of materials • Investigations • Inquiry • Indigenous materials • Hands-on, active • Communicating		• Systematic presentation of materials to attain discrete, stepped understanding of concept • Indigenous, locally produced materials	• Open exploration • Creative arts • Inquiry • Hands-on, active • Child-initiated • Critical thinking • Problem solving • Collaborative group work

The *National ECCE Curriculum Guide* is an ideal vehicle to help shape and propel forward many aspects of the ECCE system. The *Guide* is a thoroughly researched and clearly articulated foundation of best practices and theories in the field of learning, covering not just ECCE, but life-long learning concepts that align with GOTT's national goals of empowered, flexible citizens. The *Guide* draws on models and theories that include—among others—socio-constructivism; constructivist, humanistic, and ecological inquiry; and multiple intelligences, all of which nurture the holistic approach to development, cultural and national pride, and sense of belonging. The main strands in the *Guide* include: well-being, intellectual empowerment, citizenship, and aesthetic expression, which organise a series of principles, goals, and objectives to shape pedagogical practice. The Reggio Emilia model, discussed later in this chapter, was a crucial inspiration, and the addition of spiritual and moral development responds to the Trinidad and Tobago context.

SPICES is a curriculum guide developed by SERVOL and used in concert with its teacher development programme, Harmonized Curriculum. The SPICES Guide was developed as a teacher planning tool and later used for both informing parents and teacher trainers about holistic development of the Trinidadian child. The SPICES Guide first introduces the basic philosophies and theories behind the pedagogy and then presents brief themes, objectives, and bulleted activity ideas for different areas of social, physical, intellectual, creative, emotional, and spiritual development. The curriculum identifies and briefly discusses the teacher's role, skills, and planning for implementing the guidelines in SPICES. Studies showed limitations and gaps in the SPICES curriculum guide as well as in the Harmonized Curriculum programme for teachers, but further research is needed to describe how to implement this curriculum.

Other Key Curriculum Areas Addressed Across the Models

Literacy. The *National Curriculum Guide* purports to help build children's literacy skills through meaningful exploration and experimentation, thereby developing emergent reading and understanding abilities of written, visual, and multimodal texts, as well as communication of students' thoughts and ideas. The *Guide* also expects children to communicate effectively in standard English in a variety of situations and contexts.

In Montessori schools, literacy practices are controlled and sequenced by children's use of specialized materials. Children learn shapes and letter sounds, develop motor skills for writing,

expand vocabulary, and match words with pictures. They are also encouraged to read sentences or stories out loud and silently, and play games using parts of speech, such as nouns, verbs, and adjectives.

Reggio Emilia teachers help children develop literacy skills through emergent literacy and visual documentation of their work. Teachers encourage children to represent ideas and feelings symbolically through any of their “hundreds of languages.” Such “languages” can be expressive, communicative, and cognitive, and include words, movement, drawing, painting, building, sculpture, shadow play, collage, dramatic play, music, etc. Teachers foster emergent literacy as children record and manipulate their ideas and communicate with others without focused instructions for reading and writing.

Community Involvement. Early Childhood Care and Education must bring the activities of home-life and the needs of families and communities into its curriculum, and links among the home, the wider community, and the ECCE centres must now become an over-riding concern of ECCE providers.²⁴

The *National ECCE Curriculum Guide* echoes this mandate and stresses the importance of community and family involvement in the children’s learning as it recognizes the relationship between children and their environment. Therefore, the curriculum expects community members to establish formal and informal partnerships to support children’s learning. Family partnership is an essential part of the curriculum and needs to extend beyond communication and outreach strategies. The *Guide* encourages family-centered content and strategies, such as using story telling as a classroom routine or inviting family members to share significant experiences and daily rituals.

Similarly, the Reggio Emilia model reflects the principle that children, teachers, parents, and the community are interactive and should work together. Setting family as an important component in these collaborations, this model seeks to build a community of inquiry between adults and children through meaningful problem-solving projects. The thrust in both the *National Curriculum Guide* and Reggio Emilia is on contextualized, real-life learning, in contrast to the de-contextualized, discrete skills transmitted in primary school, which is discussed later in the report.

PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES AND SUPPORTS

The curriculum model defined in the new standards suggests a unified approach to teaching preschool children that centers on the holistic development of children and encourages teachers to enact child-initiated activities. A High/Scope study and interviews with stakeholders, however, revealed the difficulties in enacting those standards. Our research did not discover significant improvement in children's active learning after SERVOL took over the management of government centres. Teachers, whether trained in child-centered approaches or not, reverted to teacher-directed pedagogy. Administrators and stakeholders interviewed claimed that parents, pressured by the national test, expect their children to master the required skills that are articulated in Infant I. Additionally, primary schools and the best private centres test children in reading and writing before they are admitted, although this practice is not sanctioned by the government. Even three year-olds are tested, thereby creating a filtering system that tracks children by ability before they even begin preschool.

Emergent Literacy

Implementing the curriculum fostered by the new regional standards for the Caribbean child requires highly skilled teachers. This poses a challenge if teachers have not had preparation in the kinds of support that allow emergent literacy to flourish without the traditional "barking at the print" that they experienced in their own schooling. Intensive, hands-on inquiry and targeted professional development prepare teachers to recognize and promote emergent literacy development. Without continuous and onsite support, teachers tend to revert to accustomed ways of teaching. From all accounts, the familiar home ground is the traditional, teacher-directed transmission model whereby students memorize de-contextualized information and perform other didactic, rote learning expected in Infant I. Although social development, physical education, social studies, and creative arts outcomes are often consistent across preschool and primary, inconsistencies surface in literacy and numeracy goals. In primary school, such goals tend to spotlight discrete language skills, such as:

- Making short sentences using: I am + Noun, I am + adjective, I am + adjective phrase, etc.
- Saying the alphabet

- Identifying basic sight words
- Matching sentences to pictures

Yet empowerment, disposition, knowledge of the world, and respect for the environment—all pillars of learning promoted through the *Curriculum Guide*—are not explicitly advanced in the same way in primary school in Trinidad and Tobago. Even in schools that use the Continuous Assessment Practice (CAP) promoted by the SESP, end-of-term marks indicate clearly what is most valued: Term test marks = 50%; Weekly tests = 20%; Projects = 15%; Participation = 5%; and Homework and Learning life skills = 5% each. The results of the National Tests may unfortunately pressure both lower primary and preschools to veer toward primary outcome expectations and away from the child-centered approach espoused in the New Model’s modernisation goals. Seamless efforts, such as the transition plan laid out by the ECCE Division, can potentially address these inconsistencies and perhaps promote a more balanced approach across levels.

Emergent literacy, unlike the traditional way of learning that is widely tested, requires a different set of skills. Emergent literacy assumes the scaffolding of certain techniques and critical involvement of children beyond the mechanics of holding books, turning pages, and knowing which pictures match the text. Talking about books, asking open-ended questions, eliciting predictions, and co-creating texts and illustrations that depict the life of the child and family are a few examples of emergent literacy techniques. These activities take literacy to a level of engagement that builds a strong foundation for a successful and motivated reader.

Such knowledge of emergent literacy is, however, not yet widely understood among educators or the general population. According to facilitators and other stakeholders, teachers, parents, and primary schools need a deeper understanding of how emergent literacy serves as a strong foundation for language and literacy development, as well as for play and interactions. In order for this understanding to result in cultural change, however, primary teaching and testing must be aligned with the principles of modernisation and the *Curriculum Guide*. As our colleagues in the SESP noted, we must discuss alignment across levels in clear detail, so the transition into primary and then secondary school follows a consistent path to development that echoes coherent principles and practices.

Opportunities and Challenges

Possible obstacles to adopting a child-centered, emergent curriculum include the following:

- Teachers are wary of implementing a child-centered curriculum because they fear losing control. Behavior issues stood out as a problem in classrooms from preschool through secondary. Both in our document reviews and in our interviews, teachers maintain discipline by using traditional, directive methods that discourage defiance or behavioral problems.
- Long hours and environmental factors such as poverty, health, and nutrition likely affect behavior as well. Attending to these needs, some of which are addressed in the standards and the *Curriculum Guide*, will likely facilitate the transformation of teachers' practices.
- There is a general lack of early intervention and diagnosis of behavioral and other special needs that may require teachers to modify the curriculum.
- Few teachers experienced emergent, inquiry-based learning in their own educations. We need resources and rich examples to make the emergent curriculum “visible” to teachers.

Furthermore, as we will discuss in the following chapter, teacher development and capacity building that sustains an emergent curriculum and a child-centered approach requires on-going, reflective, and on-site pedagogical support:

Learning to engage in learner-centered practice involves more than acquiring a new set of learnings. It also, to a great degree, involves unlearning—that is, re-conceptualising one's image of self and others, genuinely questioning what is and ought to be, and re-imagining the relationship between authority and education.

Since testing is the driving force behind teaching and learning at the higher levels, instruction in preschools also reflects what some refer to as “barking at print,” which is quite incongruent with the principles of the *Curriculum Guide* as well as the ECCE Division's philosophy. One issue that emerged throughout the interviews with key stakeholders was the difference in philosophies and practices between the new ECCE standards and *Curriculum Guide* principles and the actual teaching practice and philosophy in most ECCE centres and primary schools (both private and public). The high-stakes testing starts at Standard I with a national test of mathematics and language arts and constitutes the driving force for teachers' practices and use of the curriculum. Subsequent national testing occurs in Standard III. Secondary Test outcomes on the Secondary

Entrance Assessment determine which school students are admitted to, which in turn influences students' access to tertiary levels of education. The largest gaps in scores are in language arts in Standard 1 between students in public and private schools.²⁵

Stakeholders say that as a result of these gaps, parents worry about access to the best quality schools and do not typically think about preparedness in terms of play, emergent literacy skills, or holistic development. Stakeholders tell us that they need a great deal of sensitisation at the local level as well as in teacher development. There is a severe discontinuity between the new model's child-centered curriculum that is "characterized by creative and constructive activities" and a transmission model based on memorisation and "barking at the print" that teachers use to prepare children for entrance tests.²⁶ This incongruity also appears in primary school, according to other Seamless Education Project consultants, our review of the available data, and an interview with one primary school principal. In the eyes of this principal, the new plan for ECCE centres has provided an opportunity for a tentative transition plan to bring together his teachers at the Infant I level and teachers from the ECCE centre adjacent to his school. United in conversation, those teachers can now discuss appropriate subjects to teach in preschool, as well as tools for kindergarten teachers to help the children transition into the new academic environment.

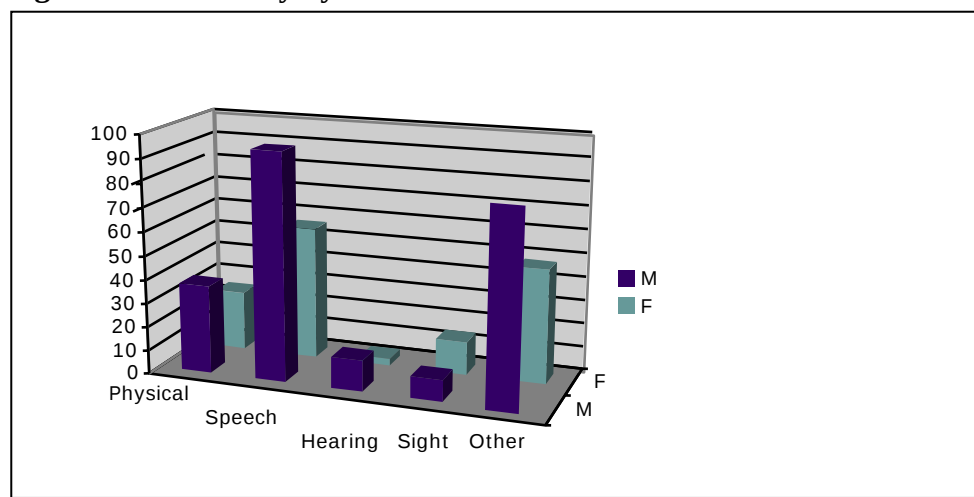
Pedagogical practices were negatively affected by a lack of appropriate teacher training and teachers' discomfort in implementing non-traditional, child-centered approaches.²⁷ The last available studies suggest that, as of ten years ago, preschools used structured, whole-group, teacher-directed routines as well as specific, "timetabled" activities during the day. In private centres, the language and literacy activities mimicked those of primary schools, including the use of primary books and ditto sheets.

Attention to Gender Issues

Behavioral issues and early identification may influence how well teachers can adapt to individual needs and implement a child-centered curriculum. Preschool data indicate that boys are overrepresented in identified special needs groups, but there is little data identifying early intervention services that can help them get a head start in preschool. As Figure 4.2 shows, boys are identified with almost twice as many disabilities as girls in each category. The category

“Other” may combine various disabilities, including behavioral and developmental, although we wonder how widespread identification of early needs is in the different types of centres. These findings are significant for the implementation of curriculum in support of language development, especially beyond preschool where the achievement gap between males and females widens in Standard I and Standard III.

Figure 4.2: Disability by Gender



CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORTS

The major role of the new ECCE Division is to support and monitor curriculum programme implementation more effectively and comprehensively, including outreach to private centres and family/community partnerships. The operating and organisational structure of the ECCE unit was undergoing profound changes when this study began. In the past, the ECCE Unit Head, Mrs. Ann Thornhill, led a group of seventeen ECCE Curriculum Facilitators who covered the eight educational districts and met in MOE offices twice a month to report on their field work and to receive training. These facilitators were the centres’ most regular point of contact, logged their observations, and evaluated the physical plant. From time to time, these curriculum facilitators also intervened in the professional development of teachers of children aged two through eight (toddlers through Standard II). The role of the curriculum facilitators was thus to “provide the first feedback at the first level of implementation, on the first testing ground.”²⁸ They visited government and government-sponsored centres in their home districts, observing, monitoring, and training teachers, sharing information, and serving as primary links to the Ministries. They

were also responsible for running workshops for the ECCE Unit, providing in-service training on developing philosophy, mission, and goals in the centres, instituting the curriculum, and establishing learning goals. The facilitators were recently primary teachers with ECCE training or SERVOL teachers, most of whom also worked closely with the ECCE specialist who was part of the unit and spent the last three years working on the *ECCE Curriculum Guide*.

The current specialists are either hired as administrators or waiting to be deployed, but may be a resource to tap for future curriculum implementation initiatives. Facilitators are more than monitors, also serving as mentors and supervisors who provide teachers with feedback to enhance their teaching and examine developmentally-appropriate methods and activities for different age groups. The workshops and guidance the facilitators offer focus on changing mindsets: moving from teacher-centered to child-centered approaches and identifying the needs of individual children, as well as designing the physical environment for optimum learning, such as creating learning centres that promote independent and group activities.

The new ECCE Division is poised to serve as the main link between the *Curriculum Guide* and the local programmes. First, adding a *curriculum coordinator* shows the Division's commitment to focus on curriculum implementation based on the standards and *Curriculum Guide*. Several stakeholders argued strongly against using a universal curriculum to complement the *Curriculum Guide*. Stakeholders also see the absence of a universal text throughout the centres as essential to the plan. Reasons for this view include:

- Ensuring that teachers are not followers, but rather critical consumers of curricula; avoiding the mechanical and indiscriminate implementation of activities and thus failing to treat each child's needs individually
- Moving away from transmission model of pedagogy so that teachers become learners along with the children
- Urging teachers to become lifelong learners according to the UNESCO pillars of learning, through activities like crafting plans in collaboration with others and in response to children's individual needs.

In addition, stakeholders understand that some of the 800 plus private centres will need to get on board without feeling subject to a complete, centralized takeover of their operations and philosophy.

Building on the strengths of the old curriculum facilitator model and addressing the challenges needing to be encountered in the field, the new structure of the ECCE Division—

which includes four times as many facilitators as before—promises to extend the facilitators’ reach to private centres in their districts. We expect this mechanism to serve as a vehicle to both share information and discuss ways to apply the principles and practices in the *Curriculum Guide* at each centre. Adding the curriculum coordinator and the quality assurance and the family/partnership coordinators also promises to engender cohesive and informed support and monitoring of the field, as well as to possibly create a link between the field and the national level decision-makers such as the NCEECE.

The MOE—with a new and revitalized ECCE Division and the complementary Quality Assurance Unit—is poised to move forward, disseminating and implementing the *Curriculum Guide* with a logical and planned approach. The new structure of the ECCE Division enables this process to work, but certain protocols, resources, and technical assistance would further help motivated centres to align themselves with the principles and practices in the curriculum.

First, a curriculum committee that includes the developers of the *Guide*, representatives of the NCEECE, and international partners and consultants can help create uniform procedures, protocols, and resources for different types of centres to apply the *Curriculum Guide*. Centres with an established curriculum source will need discussions and support to synchronize with the existing curricula—Montessori, SPICES, High/Scope, etc.—to review curricula that may be adapted to the needs of the island nation.

A few questions remain as the new government centres open and new ECCE positions are filled: What resources, texts, and training will prepare the facilitators to support the use of the *Curriculum Guide* in a generative, yet effective way? What tools will they have to provide teachers in private centres, as well as others, the opportunity to see and experience first hand inquiry-based and child-centered, yet appropriately scaffolded, teaching and learning?

As of today, neither protocols nor training agendas for support and monitoring at the centre level are available to our researchers. Stakeholders did share information about a new administrator intensive training programme that took place in August and focused on a variety of topics. According to some of the stakeholders we interviewed, however, administrators need more time to learn from hands-on experiences using the new *Curriculum Guide* and activity centres—they need to see what good practice looks like, not just learn about theoretical principles.

In addition, how will the GOTT fill the increased demands for highly prepared staff to reach and support the centres in the short term? There is a plan to prepare 1500 teachers, but only 300 are in the pipeline now, and applicants for the teacher positions are currently limited. The MOE may consider modifying and amending the qualifications of facilitators and coordinators at the ECCE Division, but the lengthy procedural steps in interviewing and selecting teachers and teacher assistants influence the positions available for facilitators and coordinators at the ECCE Division, as some may come from the same pool of applicants. In an effort to remain democratic and reduce conflicts of interest, MOE carefully recruits members of interviewing committees and this consideration—as well as the legal procedures involved in hiring contracts—further slow the wheels of action.

TEACHER DEVELOPMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

METHODS

The development and on-going capacity building of ECCE teachers is one of the main thrusts of the SES reform, which EDC has investigated through a variety of sources. First, we reviewed the standards and new requirements for teachers and so developed a preliminary understanding of the knowledge, abilities, and dispositions expected of teaching staff and administrators at the ECCE level. Government and university web pages provided us with a basic framework of the plan for the development of human resources in ECCE. These and other sources in our reference section provided us with information necessary to formulate questions to focus our exploration of the teacher education landscape and investigate the human, programmatic, and material resources that positively affect teacher quality. Our initial questions were the following:

1. What is the current profile of teacher training institutions and what role do they play in the SES reform?
2. What is the plan for teacher training and the proposed framework for this training?
3. How do training plans align with future ECCE teacher certification requirements and standards?
4. What is the typical preparation or education for an ECCE director? An ECCE teacher?
5. What on-site supports exist to help teachers implement the new standards and curriculum?

First, we posed these questions to other SESP team members and MOE counterparts in preparation for the July visit. We found our initial calls to the Miske and Simon Frasier teams, as well as ECCE Division Director Mrs. Ann Thornhill, most useful in illuminating the complexities of the new efforts to reshape teacher development and SESP priorities for teachers in Trinidad and Tobago. These initial contacts and document analyses helped us refine our questions for the *Stakeholder's Interview Protocol* (see Appendix B). During and after our first visit to Trinidad in July 2007, interviews with various stakeholders, notably Mrs. Zita Wright, Sister Ruth Montrichard, and members of the National Council for Early Childhood Care and Education informed this chapter's findings and recommendations.

During the EDC team's August visit and workshop, we extended our knowledge of teacher education issues at the primary and secondary levels. The National Study of ECCE and documents and interviews from UWI's School of Continuing Studies also contributed important information. Since that visit, we have regularly retrieved further documentation from the internet, particularly the SESP blog page. These sources provided additional material on regional, international, and national teacher development and tertiary educational reform.

PROFILE OF THE ECCE TEACHING FORCE

Achieving both universal ECCE by 2010 and the SESP's vision of increased access to quality ECCE education will require a two-pronged approach to ensure a critical mass of well-prepared teachers. First, this approach must streamline the process for staffing the 600 new centres that will serve 30,000 children with new student-to-teacher ratio requirements. Second, Trinidad and Tobago must increase the quality and qualifications of new and existing ECCE teachers through cohesive and aligned pre-service and in-service professional development programmes at the tertiary and post-secondary levels.

According to self-reported surveys conducted in 2006 and 2007, 68.1 percent of ECCE teachers are trained. In government-assisted centres, 81 percent of teachers claim some kind of training, whereas 65.5 percent of teachers in private centres and 76.2 percent of those in existing government centres are trained.²⁹ Since the majority of existing centres are managed privately, this discrepancy in levels of training is an area the reform should confront. Various stakeholders reported difficulty in determining precisely what training these teachers had received and whether that training met the New Model's standards. For instance, some of the professional development that led to certification was conducted through a distance-learning model with the University of Oxford, which, according to stakeholders, may be difficult to accredit because conceptual depth and achievement measures may not transfer to the credit requirements now being formulated at the tertiary level. Participants have put forward some discussions and recommendations and established an Accreditation Unit. Nevertheless, work still remains to be done to provide past credit for workshop experiences while at the same time ensuring that quality standards are maintained and that concepts and approaches align with the new tertiary ECCE programme plans.

Previous teacher training models at the ECCE level included a SERVOL Teacher Training Programme that uses a grassroots approach, drawing on committed community members and focusing on empowering teachers. The SERVOL professional development programme includes regular visits by field officers who provide support for reflection on and evaluation of practices at SERVOL centres. Many existing private and government-assisted centres—such as those managed by SERVOL—yielded a core of teachers who may not have received accredited training, but were committed and stable in their regions. Furthermore, those teachers formed partnerships with the community, NGOs, and the government, which partially subsidizes SERVOL operations and teachers’ salaries. However, many ECCE teachers in SERVOL programs, as well as in a majority of other government, private, and government-assisted centres, have a lower matriculation level and, in many cases, lack an A-level education. The greatest number of ECCE teachers with bachelor’s degrees, however, work in SERVOL-managed centres, although many have recently left for positions in the newly built government centres, lured by pay increases and state-of-the-art facilities. Practicing teachers—especially those with less education, less time to participate in staff development activities, and less time to visit and learn from model ECCE programs—may have limited inquiry-based learning experiences and limited opportunities to support children in acquiring learning habits that produce life-long learners. Isolation, schedules, centres’ size, transportation, and regional characteristics all influence teachers’ access to professional development opportunities, even when free tuition and regional campuses make continuing education easier.

Stakeholders believe that many existing teachers may not be prepared to make the necessary change in mind set. New standards provide incentives as well as requirements to guide motivated teachers in this cultural change, but many will be displaced by the new centres and unable or unwilling to achieve further credentials in order to remain in the field.

NEW TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS & INCENTIVES

A teacher is a teacher is a teacher.

The goal of equal access to quality early childhood care and education has triggered a set of regulations and policies that promote teacher quality through higher qualifications for teaching staff and create pay parity for teachers across ECCE and primary levels. All teachers in primary

schools and preschools who hold bachelor's degrees will be paid on the same scale. This admirable effort emphasizes the importance of ECCE and should attract more qualified applicants.

According to the *Proposed Standards for Regulating Early Childhood Service*, there are five levels of certificate requirements for five distinct levels of ECCE staff.³⁰

1. Early childhood untrained assistant teacher: less than three CXC/O Levels and no professional certification
2. Early childhood assistant teacher I & II (lowest entry points for new staff): four CXCs or four O Levels and professional certification including Language and Mathematics
3. Early childhood teacher level I: five CXCs or five O Levels (English, Mathematics, one Science subject, and any other two subjects) and professional certification
4. Early childhood teacher level II: level I and tertiary certification in ECCE education or Teacher's Diploma and Certificate in Education in ECCE
5. Early childhood teacher level III: Level II and bachelor's degree in ECCE or bachelor's degree in education with ECCE specialisation

Initially, the transition plan to increase teachers' qualifications gave practicing teachers until 2010 to achieve five courses and O levels. This deadline has been extended to 2012. Some stakeholders introduced the possibility that UTT could give a stamp of approval to SERVOL's one-year foundation course. To date, most in-service training is not credit bearing; rather, it only gives certificates of participation. Alternative paths to certification, such as credit for prior life experience, past teaching, and relevant professional development (including SERVOL's and other in-service workshops), need to be examined to assess their alignment with current standards. Such alternatives must also reflect rigorous, continuous attention to the principles of teaching in the *Curriculum Guide* and new ECCE standards.

In response to the heightened teacher qualification requirements, the ECCE Division began to advertise new staffing and administrator/teacher positions broadly in May 2007. ECCE administrator/teacher positions require a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education, a minimum of eight years of experience in ECCE, and considerable experience in management, curriculum development, or relevant certification and training. By August, 18 administrators with bachelor's degrees were hired and some were deployed in existing centres as new centres were being constructed, and Dr. Logie provided these administrators with standards-aligned

administrator training. Teacher positions for the new centres also require bachelor's degrees as well as a teacher's diploma and five years of experience in the field, or the equivalent in a combination of training, certification, and experience. As of the end of 2007, the pool of applicants for these two positions was limited, as the existing ECCE degree programs have not yet developed the needed capacity. There was, however, a large pool of applicants for the Teacher Assistant positions for the new centres. Many of these staff come from private centres in the East West corridor. According to the Human Resource department, the program still needs greater representation of applicants from the different educational districts.

One challenge in hiring staff for the new public centres is the terms of the contract. The new procedures offer a limited three-year contract. When that contract expires, incumbents must re-apply for their present positions with no guarantee of continuance. For some, this uncertainty pushes them away from ECCE and leads them to primary school teaching instead. Salaries for both options are equal but employment conditions may make the primary option more attractive.

Another challenge stakeholders voice is that, in some cases, applicants to the new ECCE positions may have a bachelor's degree but little true calling or experience in ECCE. Some question whether these newcomers to the field—coming in from other professions—are opting for a position in ECCE because it offers an attractive salary with summers off. In fact, interviewer comments suggest that some applicants do not even read up on ECCE to prepare for their interviews.

Still other challenges to filling available ECCE positions remain. For instance, the lengthy hiring process for these as well as teacher support positions (coordinators and facilitators at the ECCE Division) delayed the launch of the new centres and the infrastructure needed at the ECCE Division. To date, teachers only needed a certificate in ECCE and assistant teachers only the A Level with five exams. These requirements—including the exam topics required for A and O Levels—are changing. Therefore, teachers who were previously qualified need to take refresher courses and exams in some of the five required subjects, in addition to ongoing professional development to keep up with the standards.

ACCESS AND QUALITY IN TERTIARY AND POST-SECONDARY TEACHER EDUCATION

Two approaches to expand access and increase the quality of teacher education are now in place thanks to Vision 2020: the extension of the “universal” access concept to tertiary (that is,

facilitating entry with financial supports and incentives); and a deep level of reform at the university program level. We address each approach below.

Increased Access to Tertiary Education

The Government Assistance for Tuition Expenses (GATE) financing programme, established in 2005, has increased access to tertiary education by 40 percent; all higher education studies are now free.³¹ Consequently, GATE has prompted teachers across the nation to apply to tertiary programmes and obtain professional certifications in all fields offered by the universities (both public and private). Some stakeholders, however, noted that private institutions in particular have greatly increased registration, exams, and other fees, so access is not equal across the board. In addition, location, transportation, and book fees limit the possibilities for teachers in remote areas to take advantage of GATE opportunities. To remedy this situation, the government has created a new Memorandum of Understanding with private institutions to express its intention to create a fee assistance structure.

Quality and Alignment across Tertiary Programmes

As the Honorable Hazel Manning, Minister of Education, pointed out in an October 8, 2007, address, the main educational goal in 2007 is “fitness of purpose.”³² In other words, access to tertiary is not enough. Programmes need to respond to the needs of the field as well as to align with the new standards. The most successful models of educational reform involve what Villegas calls “dual restructuring”: transforming schools for children goes hand in hand with transforming the universities that prepare those who teach and shape their education.³³ The reform effort’s post-secondary and tertiary training component, currently in the design stage, addresses this need. A government decree has charged the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT) with developing a comprehensive ECCE program to support the education of 1500 ECCE teachers. This effort will nearly double the number of trained ECCE teachers in the nation, which now stands at 1724, according to the National ECCE Study. Three hundred teachers are currently in line to receive ECCE degrees at UTT; we expect these teachers will qualify for the positions in the new centres.

UTT’s designation as the official government institution in charge of teacher education and its expansion to satellite campuses in different regions will greatly enhance the MOE’s goals of

making quality teacher education accessible in the ECCE field. UTT is in the process of designing an ECCE program that adheres closely to the standards. During the initial phase of this study, UTT offered a bachelor of education degree but not a certificate for auxiliary or assistant teachers. In addition, the university offers a one-year, full time program for teachers-in-training, including attitudinal skills and observation of children. Professional training essential for ECCE teachers also includes attention to child development, communication skills with children and families, and appropriate curriculum. A comprehensive ECCE program will include a certificate program and a life experience credit. It also must respond to the schedules and needs of practitioners in the field and the administrators and teachers who run private centres, as this sector has the greatest need for accessible opportunities for professional development. Education programs exist currently in the School for Studies in Learning, Cognition, and Education, which also houses a Center for Assessment and Learning. The GOTT has granted provisional registration to this and other post-secondary and tertiary educational institutions until May 2008 so that they may comply with the requirements set by Parliamentary Act No. 16 of 2004, which lays out accreditation standards and procedures for tertiary institutions.

Efforts to align UTT's teacher education programme with the new standards will benefit from past experience. The lead in this UTT initiative previously worked in the ECCE unit and was primarily responsible for the development of the new *Curriculum Guide*. In addition to the bachelor's programme, planning for a post-graduate teacher education partnership with universities in Canada has begun, marking another effort to enhance the quality of the teacher education on the twin islands.

In the past, the University of the West Indies (UWI) was the primary source of ECCE certificate programs, first in Jamaica and now through the Division of Continuing Education at UWI. The School of Continuing Education at UWI also hosts the Caribbean Child Development Centre (CCDC). This body leads the research and training efforts in ECCE in Trinidad and in the region, including specialized topics in Early Childhood Education, Parenting Education, and the Role of Fathers in the Caribbean Family. CCDC also addresses other critical topics such as curriculum development and assessment, national and regional policy development, development of regional networks, and national training standards and accreditation systems. First developed 1973, its Tutor-Coordinator Janet Brown has retired and EDC received no specific information during our visits, nor was CCDC mentioned as a source for research and training.

Pre- & In-service Credential Programs

The School of Continuing Education at UWI opened in 1984—in collaboration with SERVOL—and built a credentialing program. In response to a MOE directive, the School designed a *Harmonized Curriculum* to help create a unified approach to training across institutions. Its program targets those teachers who most need support to attain tertiary entry and whose certificates have now become obsolete because of increased exam levels. The two-year certificate program of study was designed in collaboration with Mrs. Wright, the new architect of UTT’s ECCE Program, and other key stakeholders, and offers the flexibility practicing teachers need to enrol and achieve their CXC levels at the same time.³⁴ For full-time students, the first year includes eight ECCE-specific courses, including diagnostic and remedial education, administration, and parent-community interaction. The second year is a full internship program during which teachers can use their own classrooms as practice sites. This program also provides alternative paths for practitioners who had only 1 to 3 CXC/O level passes.

Forty percent of the courses aim to “fill the gaps” in practicing teachers’ secondary education, especially their English language requirements, as well as to provide educational theory applicable to their work situations. Students who progress (attaining a full certificate with a B+ average and 5 CXC O Level passes) are eligible to apply to UWI’s bachelor’s degree program in the School of Education. The MOE used the School of Continued Education’s *Curriculum Guide* to develop a common examination for preschool teachers from 1998 to 2005.

Sustained On-Site Capacity-Building

The new structure of the ECCE Division—once fully staffed—has great potential to support teachers’ on-going, reflective development. The core of facilitators and coordinators at the ECCE level are now deployed for specific yet aligned functions. The increase in curriculum program facilitators will enable the Division to reach more private centres in the eight districts, offering regular support to teachers. These facilitators, according to their job descriptions, will also supervise the implementation of the *Curriculum Guide*. One important consideration is the extent to which mentoring support should be separated from accountability or supervisory functions. Sixteen quality assurance officers will also visit the centres. Will they also be versed in the new curriculum and pedagogy or is their function simply to comply with standards and regulations? If the latter, the MOE might wish to consider whether external guidance could help formulate a

plan that separates supervisory functions from development functions. Research shows that teachers resist change more and take fewer risks when they are being evaluated or “supervised.” However, when mentors have dual roles, strategies exist to enable protégés to take risks and change practices. For this approach to be successful, facilitators who take on a supervisory role must be very aware of balancing power relationships and developing a non-evaluative, strength-based mentoring style. In addition, coordinators and facilitators must “assure that the distinction between mentoring and evaluative supervision and confidentiality expectations are clearly articulated.”³⁵

Curriculum programme facilitators, with adequate training for the trainers and continued leadership from their coordinators in the central ECCE Division, hold the potential to create opportunities for continuous relationship and hands-on teacher development using rich examples and resources. Many of the ECCE leaders, including a facilitator, have visited international sites and observed child-centered, developmentally responsive education in action. We discussed these models in Chapter 4 and explained the challenges to enacting such a dramatic change in mindset, especially considering the test-driven instruction and expectations of teachers at the primary and secondary levels.

Development of Teacher Educators and Leaders

Many systemic reforms efforts have realized the challenges in moving from a transmission model to a “transformational” model, as discussed in Simon Fraser’s August presentation on Teacher Development and in the literature on professional development in various cultural and economic contexts. Successful reforms that have long-term consequences on student learning, as well as success on high stakes testing, have taken approaches that immerse teachers in hands-on inquiry, reflection, and the co-construction of knowledge. For example, both the New York Statewide Systemic Initiative and the South African overhaul of science education relied on highly intensive (three-week, full-time) institutes that trained select teachers to deeply investigate phenomena, apply that new knowledge in the classroom, and later form networks to share and examine their experiences with inquiry-based teaching. These highly trained, select teachers then provided models, mentoring, and professional development for their colleagues. They became teacher educators and leaders in their districts, empowering a critical mass of teachers who shared a common philosophy and pedagogy. Thus, building capacity “at the top”—teacher

educators, administrators, and highly-qualified teachers with bachelor's degrees—and “at the floor”—practitioners with limited education working in areas of need—depends on ongoing, on-site, and self-initiated support networks.

Various enablers must be in place to help all stakeholders internalize and take ownership of the new methods and culture of teaching. As one administrator noted, “This requires a paradigm shift.” This shift must happen at the personal as well as the professional level, since most teachers, administrators, and teacher educators have limited experience with constructivism or any other type of inquiry. The regional network of teacher educators we mentioned in Chapter 3 is one venue for discussing a comprehensive plan for continuous development across different reform contexts. Sharing ideas and engaging in dialogue are key. At times, going back to the field presents new knowledge about the context in which reform plays out. Providing incentives and release for faculty to spend extended time in centres is a means to achieve this end. For example, Dr. Courtney Cazden, a leader at Harvard University's School of Education, went back to the classroom to teach and used this field experience to gain a deeper understanding of ways to support language development with diverse students. She then incorporated this knowledge in her teaching and writing, building on the lessons learned to prepare new and experienced teachers.

One question to pursue in the future is how to design on-going supports that are available for teacher educators at the university and other training institutions. The current initiative in UTT to create doctoral programs in education in collaboration with Canadian universities presents one possibility for faculty exchange and renewal. Another avenue is providing a clearinghouse of resources (articles, conference links, activities, etc.) and disseminating information broadly about ways to participate in and generate teacher educator networks. Another effort that many educators mentioned was a yearly leadership institute at Harvard University, which a number of stakeholders attended. However, as with teachers in the ECCE centres, ongoing professional development of faculty is the most effective way to maintain a cohesive quality approach in all the education faculties in Trinidad and Tobago. The shared Caribbean vision and standards are a substantial step in that direction. As with many European universities now engaged in defining and monitoring new standards and practices at the higher education level, faculty development institutes within universities are beneficial to transitioning to interactive, student-centered methodologies promoted through the universalizing of new standards. Teaching practices aligned

with the standards benefit faculty outside of the education departments, and a university-wide faculty development body could serve as the link with international higher education institutions engaged in faculty innovation.

The SESP has much in place toward that end. A decentralisation initiative aims to increase investment and involvement of the community. Family/community sensitisation efforts—beyond publicising new centre openings—will promote shared expectations and exposure to quality standards and projects. The SESP could expand these efforts with strategic collaborations with the media and external technical advisors who can help shape a concerted, inclusive plan that pays keen attention to grassroots involvement and avenues for community-centeredness in a way that teachers will not see as top-down or directive.

Aligning teacher development efforts by complementing offerings across the universities would enable the SESP to prepare highly qualified teachers and raise the field to the new standards and practices. As we discussed above, one promising current program we researched is geared toward increasing coordination among tertiary institutions. Mrs. Wright, the director of the new ECCE Programs at UTT, also contributed to shaping the certification program in UWI's Continuing Education department and was the chief writer of the new *National ECCE Curriculum Guide*. Dr. Logie of UWI's School of Education has also been involved in most of the initiatives and research in Trinidad and Tobago. These efforts show that the seeds of participation and collaboration are there. In addition to fostering the vision of child-centered, intellectually empowered, and civically minded development, the programs should support each level of the ECCE career ladder.

We wonder whether an enabling body, such as a permanent working consortium of teacher colleges and institutions that includes representatives from the teacher training programs (including SERVOL, UWI, UTT, and any NGOs that provide training technical assistance or services, such as Centre for Excellence in Educational Training) could join UTT to coordinate and shape teacher education programs and curricula and discuss criteria for providing credits for prior learning. Such a dedicated consortium, advised by the NCECCE, could also deal with assessment procedures and requirements for teacher education programs.

In sum, Trinidad and Tobago need alternative pathways and high intensity supports to bring up the “floor”—those teachers who fell through the cracks of the traditional exam system, but whose dedication and experience are strengths to build on. To facilitate alternative pathways to

certification, consider how the consortium can come up with a set of concepts for each course requirement in the ECCE degree and work with test developers to create authentic tests that are reliable and accessible to the population of in-service, motivated teachers. For instance, at EDC, we have developed pre- and post-tests that consider experience, cultural ways of communicating, and education level, because we are interested in raising teachers' understanding of inquiry approach in science. We include interactive, reflective performance tasks, such case studies that demand an interpretation and suggestions for strategies, and video analysis that allow teachers to express their understanding of best practices in multiple ways.

Most importantly, the new teaching mode must be “visible” to teachers in the field. To be sure, many leaders have visited several international models, such as Reggio Emilia, Sweden, and Canada. Teachers in remote, isolated centres or those where the pressure of test performance looms largest, however, must also observe teaching models that put children in charge of their own learning and allow them to attain the dispositions, knowledge, and skills that will prepare them for the future. Concurrently, primary schools must examine ways to better support children's development that are consistent with the child-centered, holistic approach of ECCE.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

One of the major goals of the SESP reform effort is to decentralise decision making, ensuring that ECCE programmes in each community establish decision-making bodies that support centres in their operations. With the decentralisation effort, the government hopes to foster partnerships at all levels—across ministries, between the government and local ECCE centres, and at the community level between the public and private sectors. Decentralisation and partnerships are complementary; together they are intended to promote quality, equity, and access.

METHODS

EDC has used a variety of methods in its initial investigation of MOE's efforts to promote partnerships. To examine all aspects of partnership, we began by thoroughly reviewing pivotal documents. Documents such as the *Vision 2020*, the *National ECCE Curriculum Guide*, and the draft White Paper of ECCE programme standards gave us an understanding of the government's expectations for the reform effort. While these documents do not discuss specific inter-sectoral partnership plans, we gathered new information from interviews with MOE staff and by reviewing its draft of five management models and accompanying Memoranda of Understandings (MOUs).

Our participation in the August Workshop deepened our appreciation for these models. At the Workshop, the ministry presented information on its plan to create partnerships with government and private centres by creating new ECCE centres and improving existing ones. The Workshop also offered us opportunities to interview additional ECCE centre leaders and government staff. These interviews, documents, and our own knowledge of all aspects of inter-sectoral partnerships, enabled us to formulate questions at multiple levels. Initial questions that focused on the government's plan to launch its ECCE programme and its plans to improve quality and access through decentralisation and enhanced coordination at all levels formed the basis of the interviews we conducted during our July and August 2007 visits. Once we integrated the data, we crafted additional questions about how the government's plans are unfolding and what types of partnership activities are in place and planned at the centre level. We incorporated these new questions into the various research instruments developed for Phase II of the study.

For example, questions on the instruments examine the role of parents and other community members in planning and decision-making. We also presented questions about MOE's communication with and support of centres during this time of change for ECCE.

In Phase II of the EDC study, we used interview protocols and other tools to collect information on the nature of current partnerships with families and primary schools. We also gathered additional information about MOE's ECCE partnerships that were already underway, and examined the issues that centre administrators believed were important to government decentralisation reform efforts and their ability to implement change. This additional information rounded out the picture of the ways inter-sectoral partnerships can support centres and add value.

PUBLIC/PRIVATE MANAGEMENT MODELS

Through five management models, the government plans to create quality ECCE centres across the country. The GOTT recognizes that providing quality facilities is critically important to enabling and inspiring existing ECCE centres to reach the proposed higher standards. This action was urgently needed. A report from the Global Competitive Strategists (2007) provides detailed data confirming that a high proportion of ECCE centres occupy facilities with significant safety and health-related issues. The government recently closed some of these facilities, including several located in community health centres. The report also indicated a significant over-enrolment of children in a large percentage of centres; these children suffer from crowded and often unsafe learning environments.

With the launch of the five management models, the government has embarked on an ambitious plan to address some of these critical infrastructure problems. The models are designed to improve families' access to high quality ECCE services across Trinidad and Tobago. Many of the models' provisions focus on facility improvements, from the construction of new state-of-the-art centres on land provided by the government or made available by ECCE entities (such as denominational boards), to structural improvements to existing facilities.

To date, the Educational Facilities Company, Ltd. has constructed nine new centres. It completed the first centre in April 2007 in La Romaine and handed it to the local government to operate. Currently, there are nearly 40 facilities under construction, and an additional 12 centres are slated for completion shortly. In the years ahead, the government expects to complete a total of 600 facilities to serve nearly 30,000 three- and four-year-olds.

All such efforts, guided by these management models, lay out the provisions for not only the creation but also the operation of these new ECCE facilities. The models specify the government's terms for supporting the centres as well as the government's expectations of both the government and private centres, including denominational groups. For example, the models call for parental and community involvement in centre management and community coordination.

The first model to create the newly constructed centres has commanded much attention and significant press coverage. Nevertheless, the government is also instituting other management models that are designed to make structural changes that will enable existing centres to better meet health and safety standards. The models also have provisions for centres to acquire better classroom equipment and materials. In all cases, the management models promote ECCE quality, equity, and access through written MOUs that specify operational and governance provisions. For denominational schools, these agreements also adhere to the *Concordat*.

While management models with government and private entities to create and improve ECCE facilities are recent, the government has long held standing partnerships with some private ECCE centres. These partnerships have provided centres with funding to support their operations and even to support the development of other ECCE centres. For example, for many years the ministry has provided SERVOL with funds to employ ECCE teachers. Such government support is essential for SERVOL's centres across the country to maintain their operations. In past years, the government also engaged SERVOL to offer workshops and provide technical support to other ECCE centres. One of the management models will now facilitate support to SERVOL.

Efforts to create new and improved facilities are commendable, yet such undertakings alone cannot sustain a quality countrywide ECCE system. A necessary ingredient for success is the capacity to foster centres' understanding of and ability to implement new pedagogical and decentralisation practices. To this end, MOE is introducing a cadre of ECCE specialists who will offer technical support and expert advice to ECCE centres across Trinidad and Tobago. To date, the government is interviewing and selecting those specialists. To further support the development of all ECCE centres, the government also plans to designate some of the new ECCE centres as research and demonstration sites. As an ECCE hub in the community, such a centre's responsibilities will include coordinating services and providing technical support to the registered ECCE centres assigned to it.

The initiative to open new centres is, by all reports, filling a well-established need. Not surprisingly, however, the creation of new centres has led to apprehension and concerns among a number of ECCE leaders. Initial interviews revealed that some ECCE centre administrators expect child enrolments to decrease when the newly constructed facilities open in their communities, thereby having a negative effect on revenues from parent fees and tuition collected by these centres. We also learned that some administrators are discouraged because their most qualified teachers have resigned to work for higher wages at the new sites. Administrators also indicated that their limited operating budgets impose challenges for meeting new curriculum and operating standards. Some worry that newly constructed centres could possibly serve mostly middle class children, while children from low-income families will remain underserved in substandard facilities. While all the administrators that we interviewed recognized the need to improve ECCE facilities and services, they noted that such improvements require strategic short- and long-range plans and adequate resources. They stress that factoring in the needs of existing programmes is critical if the reforms are to ultimately yield desired results. In response to these and other concerns, MOE has begun to meet regularly with SERVOL to jointly work on solutions to many of these issues.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER PRIVATE AND PUBLIC COMMUNITY ENTITIES

At the core of the government's vision of reform is the notion that all ECCE centres must be deeply rooted in and supported by the community. Effective ECCE programmes engage community stakeholders and leaders, gaining their support and recognition that ECCE plays a vital role in sensitising communities and enlisting their participation. From the interviews we conducted and document analysis we completed in Phase I, we gained an understanding of the history of village councils, denominational boards, and other groups that assist centres in maximising community resources. Several administrators saw the role of these bodies as vital to ensconcing their centres in the life of the community.

Centre Support Teams

One major mechanism for establishing the link between the community and ECCE is ensuring community representation in ECCE decision-making and activities. As numerous documents articulated, the primary goal is to decentralise decision-making and management through

effective, community-based boards of management. These boards can be centre support teams, cluster management groups, village councils, or parent/teacher associations. Management models sanction these decision-making bodies—known as centre support teams—with responsibilities that are similar to those of local school boards. Support teams are encouraged to play active roles in: (1) planning centre activities; (2) helping to link ECCE with the district’s primary schools; (3) developing and overseeing ECCE management systems; and (4) advocating for, identifying, and securing community services and financial resources. While such decision-making management structures are not new to some ECCE centres, we learned that, for others, the support team mechanism presents a new way of doing business.

Initial data indicate that one of the support teams’ most challenging roles might be to identify and secure resources to extend and sustain child and family services. Considering the limited resources available for such services, administrators reported that this task, while worthy, will likely be daunting and unrealistic. For example, the new government centres initially planned to offer only part-day programming, leaving support teams responsible for accessing funding to extend the day for children of working parents. Because this initial decision affected child enrolment—working parents in the community needed extended day care for their children—we learned that in one centre the government stepped in with financial support for full-day services.

In Phase II, we examined more closely how centre administrators viewed the role of support teams, as well as their understanding and expectations of the government’s role. For instance, given support teams’ overall management responsibility, some teams or administrators may believe this responsibility includes day-to-day supervision of centre staff. Some administrators expressed concern about the potential problems such a management system might create. In our initial recommendations to the government, we raised such questions as:

- How will the government provide clear guidance to teams on their decision-making role?
- What ongoing support and training will teams receive?
- Will teams be encouraged to assume oversight and planning responsibilities of centre budgets?
- What is the team’s role in data review and planning?

- What, if any, will be the support teams' role in addressing community complaints and resolving staff and/or community conflicts?
- How will support teams interface with school boards and MOE?

The decentralisation unit (not a permanent body) is slated to offer workshops to support teams. For training to be effective, however, it must be coupled with ongoing support and technical assistance.

Addressing Comprehensive Family Needs. Centre support teams will play an essential role in advocating for families' needs and linking their centres to available and often limited community resources. Well established and effective centre support teams can develop strong advocacy voices in communities, securing services or resources from existing community service agencies and businesses. Teams can help forge new community service partnerships to yield much-needed children and family services. Ideally, services in ECCE programmes that serve low-income populations should be comprehensive—offering medical, dental, nutritional, mental health, housing, employment, legal, and other family support and educational services. Our initial interviews taught us that while centres rarely offer such services directly, they do recognize families' needs. Several respondents discussed the significant impact of a family's social, economic, educational, and physical needs on a child's well being and ability to succeed. While we had spent little time to date examining or discussing early intervention and infant and toddler services, such programmes are also essential for the government to undertake in the coming years.

Family and Community Outreach. Effective centre support teams will bring needed energy and commitment to fostering meaningful family partnerships, as well as engaging the community in the life of the centre. Key documents that we reviewed stress the importance of strong centre and family partnerships to support children's learning by engaging children in their family context. The *National ECCE Curriculum Guide* and *Standards for Regulating Early Childhood Services* both address effective home/ECCE communications. They establish expectations for two-way communication—home to school and school to home—and offer strategies for engaging parents.

SEAMLESS ALIGNMENT WITH PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The government's educational reform efforts seek to create a more seamless alignment between ECCE and the primary grades. While some ECCE centres in Trinidad and Tobago are located within primary schools, others are not. Whether or not ECCE is a part of the primary school, however, partnerships are essential to align pedagogical, curriculum, and assessment practices and support children's and families' transitions from ECCE to primary school.

Alignment of Primary Schools with ECCE Practices

A major aim of a seamless system is to align pedagogical practices across the education system. The government has taken major steps toward this goal by promulgating new curriculum standards, articulating a pedagogical philosophy, and establishing a decision making structure in ECCE that mirrors those of schools. The government is also addressing standards for teacher qualifications. To ensure that these initiatives take hold at the community level, the government envisions strong partnerships between ECCE and primary.

Identification and Services to Children with Disabilities

Several reports indicate that many preschool (and even primary school) age children with disabilities are not in school. Overwhelmingly, research confirms that the earlier children with disabilities are identified and served, the more successful the intervention. Integrating children with disabilities into regular classroom settings has many benefits for the child and society as a whole. Strong ECCE and primary school partnerships can share knowledge and resources and conduct early screening and identification efforts together.

New and promising emerging practices set goals for children with disabilities in the early years. Furthermore, such practices also establish data collection and analysis systems to track and manage support services. These systems help ensure that each child with a disability receives the support and resources to reach his or her full potential in the school years.

Transition to Primary School

The ministry has put considerable thought into how support teams should work within schools and communities to affect the alignment. To systematise this effort, MOE has outlined a three-phase approach that specifies the role support teams from government-supported sites will

assume with ECCE centres in their communities. In Phase I, support teams from government ECCE sites will reach out to schools and other ECCE centres to begin discussions to improve alignment with primary schools. In Phase II, those teams will focus on activities to build an understanding of the transition and the link to the government reforms. Phase II also includes professional development on developmentally appropriate practices and the design of teaching and learning environments. The phase culminates with the development of a transition plan. In Phase III, the government will support centres as they tailor the transition plan to their particular centre and partnered primary schools. The plans will include specific information that details how children will transition from ECCE to primary school, as well as how parents will be orientated to their new primary schools.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM OTHER NATIONS

Across the world, many countries have implemented decentralising reforms to improve the quality of and access to ECCE services. Such decentralisation efforts also help adapt services and resources to local community needs. In addressing these issues, most nations have struggled with two significant challenges: (1) how to balance of national authority with local responsibility and discretion; and (2) how to ensure that finance resources are adequate, sustainable, and targeted to support local efforts.

Balance of Authority

Several countries have struggled to strike the right balance with decentralisation reforms: too much local discretion leads to uneven implementation of efforts that are vital to reform. Yet when national governments try to tightly direct local decision-making, they are often met with local apathy and lack of initiative.³⁶ Most countries have found that any decentralisation effort depends on creating and supporting the implementation of national standards that set clear goals for early childhood services and practice. Countries such as France, Belgium, Korea, Denmark, Mexico, Scotland, Germany, and Ireland, as well as most states in the United States, have established such standards, but use varying expectations and structures to oversee implementation and enforcement. Most countries struggle to implement standards evenly in both private and public early childhood centres. Many countries, like Trinidad, have established broad

national guidance that allows communities to tailor and implement their own early childhood care and education services to respond to each community's unique context and needs.

Sustaining Reforms

While the MOE has instituted plans to construct and operate its own centres, providing existing ECCE centres with support to meet newly enacted or proposed standards remains critical. While providing such support can be challenging, since many centres reportedly suffer both facility and operational deficiencies, it is essential to maintaining a private ECCE sector. Furthermore, all sectors must hone their abilities to access different funding sources.

Countries such as Canada, Japan, France, Mexico, and the United States have learned that they can only achieve high quality services if ECCE taps into a variety of public and private funding sources. Many ECCE centres are adept at combining funding from the national government, district or local governments, businesses, charitable organisations, and parent fees. While the government of Trinidad and Tobago's effort to serve all preschool children through its ECCE effort is admirable, questions remain about the sustainability of this plan in the years ahead. A national economic downturn may reduce resources currently devoted to ECCE. Therefore, while ECCE reform efforts are in the early stages, the government would benefit from initiating efforts to build ECCE capacity to maximise all financial support sources. Many governments across the world have stimulated private ECCE initiatives through government and business partnerships. For example, some have instituted legislation to earmark for ECCE efforts some or all of the revenue from taxes on gasoline, cigarette, alcohol, luxury items, and business development. Government can also encourage businesses to pay a portion of the ECCE services that employees need. Through diversified funding, ECCE services are more sustainable and likely to become part of the nation's fabric.

FIELD RESEARCH FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

The findings presented in Chapter 7 are the result of data collected and analyzed in Phase II of the study. First, we describe program characteristics of centres in our sample, including hours of operation, fees, and services for young children with special needs. Next, we discuss centre structures and managements systems. These sections are followed by a discussion of teacher qualifications, professional development, and monitoring along with curriculum. Finally, results from classroom observations in 31 centres are presented along with findings on parent involvement and sensitization efforts.

PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

Study Sample

Data was collected from 31 centres that comprise the analytic sample. Our sample consists of 16 government/government-assisted centres serving a total of 647 children with 54 teachers. These government/government-assisted centres serve on average 40 children with total enrollment ranging from 27 to 56 children. The 15 private centres visited serve 791 children with 73 teachers. Private centres have a higher level of enrollment on average, with 53 children per center, ranging from 12 to 30 children. Table 7.1 presents data on our sample.

Table 7.1: ECCE Study Sample

Educational District	Government/Government Assisted ECCE Centres			Private ECCE Centres			Total of Gov't/Gov't & Private Centres Visited by EDC		
	No. of Centres	No. of Children	No. of Teachers	No. of Centres	No. of Children	No. of Teachers	No. of Centres	No. of Children	No. of Teachers
Caroni	1	27	2	2	97	10	3	124	12
Port of Spain	0	0	0	5	370	33	5	370	33
St. George East	6	260	23	6	269	26	12	529	49
St. Patrick	2	94	7	0	0	0	2	94	7
Tobago	5	200	16	2	55	4	7	255	20
Victoria	2	66	6	0	0	0	2	66	6
Total	16	647	54	15	791	73	31	1438	127

Program Features

Administrators from 20 centres completed questionnaires (Volume II) that provided information on program features and characteristics including:

- Hours of operation
- Enrolment fees
- Services for young children with special needs

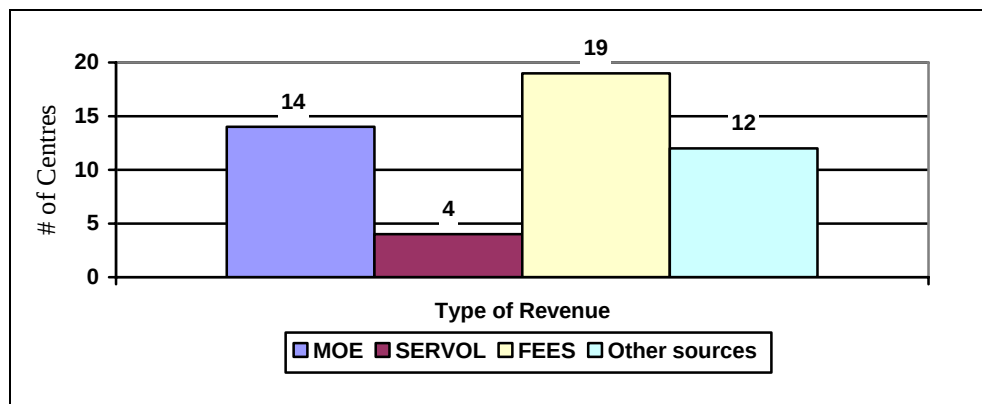
Hours of Operation. Both government/government-assisted and private centres generally start receiving children at 8:00 or 8:30 am. One government/government-assisted and one private centre reported starting later (9:00 am), while six government/government-assisted and two private centres reported receiving students before 8:00 am. Almost half end the day at either 2:00 pm or 3:00 pm, resulting in six hours of operation – a schedule that differs from a typical work day for parents.

Enrolment fees. Nineteen centres report charging parental fees to cover costs. Private centre fees showed the most variation, ranging from TT\$250 to \$2,000 per month. Fees reported by government/government-assisted centres ranged from TT\$63 to \$200 per month at the time of data collection. At the beginning of 2008, the MOE enacted a policy that eliminates enrolment fees at either government or government-assisted centres in order to equalize supports and reduce disparities between SERVOL-managed and new government/government-assisted centres.³⁸

All centres tend to have various sources of revenue to support their programme operations. Figure 7.1 depicts types of revenues accessed by responding centres (n=20).

Almost 70 percent of the respondents report funds from the MOE. An even greater number (95 percent) derive support from parent fees. It is interesting to note that even though all private centres/respondents indicated they charge fees, four also receive ministry funding, though they are not considered government-assisted centres. A total of 12 centres (60 percent) report that they supplement their revenue by other means. For instance, respondents indicate that they receive funds from community organisations such as religious groups and business entities. Several specified that they conduct their own fund raising events.

Figure 7.1: Distribution of Funding Sources



Services for Young Children with Special Needs. Most administrators (85 percent) report that they currently do not enrol children with identified special needs. In fact, only 3 of the 20 respondents (15 percent) indicate that children with documented disabilities are integrated into their centres. Of these three centres, one enrolls the majority of children with special needs and two offer some specialized services.

Four centres (20 percent) indicate that they screen for developmental problems and report that either they conduct these screenings themselves or use the services of another organisation. What is striking about programmes' apparent capacity to identify children with special needs and provide services is the lack of information or availability of standard protocols. For example, the majority of respondents either reported that they conducted no screening or indicated that they don't know whether they have such services available. In some cases, their responses to multiple items about screenings and services were inconsistent. The one area in which respondents appeared confident is with respect to dental exams; a total of 8 (40 percent) indicated they provide this health benefit.

Seven out of 20 centres (4 government/government-assisted and 3 private) reported having referral systems. When asked to indicate the capacity of their centres to respond to the particular disabilities, 12 administrators of the 20 respondents reported that they were unable to serve children with physical disabilities, developmental delays, and/or behavioral challenges with the majority (n=9) citing inability to accommodate children with physical disabilities.

CENTRE STRUCTURES AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Structural factors relating to decentralization efforts were examined by analyzing data on governance and partnerships, communication between MOE and centres, allocation of MOE funds, and alignment with new standards.

Governance and Partnerships

A main strategy of the seamless reform is decentralisation. Most government/government-assisted centres report being governed by a board of directors (41.7 percent) or a local school board (41.7 percent). Private centres vary in their governance across several types of governance or management structures. Two of the private centres did report having a parent decision-making body as their governance body. Table 7.2 presents governance structure by type of centre.

Table 7.2: Governance Structure by Center Type

Governance and Management Structure	Government/Government Assisted Centres (n=12)	Private Centres (n=8)
Board of Directors	5 (41.7%)	1 (12.5%)
Local school board	5 (41.7%)	2 (25.0%)
Parent decision-making body		2 (25.0%)
Centre support team		
Administrator and/or staff make decisions	2 (16.7%)	2 (25.0%)

Respondents were asked to indicate partnerships they currently have with local schools, community, family and health centres. Centres report having one or more partnerships with such agencies. More than half (58.3 percent) of the government/government-assisted centres report partnerships with community health organizations, 50 percent report partnerships with community family services and 41.7 percent with local elementary schools. The private centres were more divided in their partnerships, including community agencies as well as elementary schools, churches and other early childhood programs. The most cited partner activity mentioned by centres is dental screenings (n=10).

Support Teams are MOE's vehicle to carry forward decentralization as well as to promote community sensitisation. Transition plans revolve around building support teams that manage the centre and serve as links to the primary school adjacent to the new centres. Seven centres report they are formally associated with a primary school, and 12 out of 20 (80 percent) claim to

support transition into primary. Nine centres (45 percent) report providing activities to support children's transition to primary school including visiting primary schools to meet teachers and share information about students.

Information and Communication from MOE

There is a variety of communication channels across both centre types, as shown in Table 7.3. Most centres do not receive information from MOE face-to-face, but rather via mail or phone. When separated by centre type, we see similarities and differences worth noting. While 75 percent of government/government-assisted and 75 percent of private centres receive their information mostly from the mail, private centres tended to receive relatively fewer phone calls, organized meetings, and visits from Ministry staff.

Table 7.3: Patterns of Information and Communication from MOE by Centre Type

Information and Communication from MOE	Government/Government-Assisted Centres (n=12)	Private Centres (n=8)
In the mail	9 (75.0%)	6 (75.0%)
Organized/planned meetings	5 (41.7%)	2 (25.0%)
Telephone calls from the ministry	9 (75.0%)	3 (37.5%)
Centre training sessions		1 (12.5%)
Word of mouth	1 (8.3%)	2 (25.5%)
Visit from ministry staff	6 (50.0%)	3 (37.5%)
From officials of my organization	2 (16.7%)	1 (12.5%)
Rarely receive any information	2 (16.7%)	2 (25.0%)

Support provided by the Ministry of Education

According to the respondents, the most frequent support provided by the ministry to the government/government-assisted centres is in the form of books (11 or 91.7 percent) and teacher salaries (10 or 83.3 percent). Private centres report support in the form of books (4 or 50.0 percent) and supplies (4 or 50 percent). Training support was low for both types of centres: two for government/government-assisted and one for private centres.

Meeting new standards

Government/government-assisted standards require a ratio of one teacher to 15 children in the age group 4-5 and one to ten children in the 3-4 age group. Ratios have been determined by considering the total number of 3-5 year olds and the total number of full-time paid teachers. In

two of the centres, children younger than 3 (starting at approximately 2.5 year old) were included in the ratio counts. In 65 percent of the government/government-assisted centres and 50 percent of the private centres, the teacher:pupil ratio was 1:11-15 children.

Table 7.4: Teacher:Pupil Ratio by Centre Type

Teacher:Pupil Ratio	Government/Government-Assisted Centres (n=20)	Private Centres (n=16)
1 Teacher for 8-10 children	7 (35.0%)	5 (32.3%)
1 Teacher for 11-15 children	13 (65.0%)	8 (50.0%)
1 Teacher for 16+ children		3 (18.8%)

As indicated in Table 7.4, 100 percent of the government/government-assisted centres maintained a ratio relevant to the standard for 4-5 year olds and 35 percent had ratios appropriate to 3-4 year olds. On the other hand, 82 percent of private centres met the standard of 1 teacher to 15 students. Of these, 31 percent had ratios appropriate for 3-4 year olds. Three centres, however, had 16 or more children per teacher.

The *Administrator Questionnaire* asked administrators to identify steps taken to address the new government/government-assisted standards. (See Table 7.5).

Table 7.5: Steps to Address New Standards

Steps to Address New Standards	Government/Government-Assisted Centres (n=12)	Private Centres (n=8)
Made facility improvements	7 (58.3%)	5 (62.5%)
Staff work on meeting new qualifications	11 (91.7%)	6 (75.0%)
Implemented new curriculum	9 (75.0%)	5 (62.5%)
Conducted staff training on new standards	1 (8.3%)	3 (37.5%)
Established procedures for assessing children	3 (25.0%)	5 (62.5%)
Improved child/staff ratios	6 (50.0%)	4 (50.0%)
Organized centre support team	1 (8.3%)	5 (62.5%)
Revised centre policies	7 (58.3%)	5 (62.5%)
Established new curriculum planning procedures	7 (58.3%)	3 (37.5%)
Conducted meeting/s with parents	8 (66.7%)	4 (50.0%)
Have or working on a partnership with MOE	3 (25.0%)	4 (50.0%)

The majority of centres, both government/government-assisted (91.7 percent) and private (75 percent) indicate that their staff is working on meeting new qualifications. Similarly, 75 percent of the government/government-assisted centres and 62.5 percent of the private centres report implementing a new curriculum. More than half of the government/government-assisted centres conducted meeting/s with parents, made facilities improvements, and established new curriculum planning procedures. More than half of the private centres (5 or 62.5%) have established procedures for assessing children, made improvements to their facilities, organized a centre support team, and revised centre policies. Very few centres, however, have conducted staff training on the new standards.

Management challenges

Lastly, management challenges were examined to ascertain perceived barriers to decentralization efforts and/or meeting new standards. Respondents checked one or more challenges from a list of nine challenges. Table 7.6 illustrates the biggest challenge mentioned by 75 percent of government/government-assisted centres and 50 percent of the private centres was maintenance of the facilities. Another challenge mentioned by half of the private centres was hiring qualified teachers, while more than half of the government/government-assisted centres mentioned meeting new government regulations as a challenge.

Table 7.6: Management Challenges

Management Challenges	Government/Government-Assisted Centres (n=12)	Private Centres (n=8)
Meeting new government regulations	7 (58.3%)	2 (25.0%)
Maintaining the building/facility	9 (75.0%)	4 (50.0%)
Meeting increased centre operating expenses	4 (33.3%)	3 (37.5%)
Hiring qualified preschool teachers		4 (50.0%)
Keeping qualified teachers		2 (25.0%)
Training teachers on centre practices		
Meeting parent expectations	1 (8.3%)	
Getting parents to complete paperwork		
Facility costs/development		

TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS

Teachers' current qualifications, recent professional development experience, and monitoring support are reported below. Correlations between teacher characteristics and ratings on the *Classroom Observation Instrument* revealed no significant findings.

Teachers' Education Credentials

Administrators report the level of education for 74 teachers out of our sample of 132. The education credential attained by most teachers in the study was O' Levels—98.1 percent at government/government-assisted centres and 57.9 percent at private centres. The majority of these have O' Levels plus ECCE courses—81.8 percent of teachers at government/government-assisted centres and 10.5 percent at private centres. Teachers with O' levels will require new exams and/or courses to qualify for A' levels. Two teachers in our sample attained A' levels and seven have a Bachelor's degree in ECCE. Differences in credentials between the two types of centres were indicated. As Table 7.7 shows, private centres had a relatively higher percentage of O' levels without ECCE courses and a higher percentage of BAs as compared to government/government-assisted centres (31.6 percent to 1.8 percent). The only A' levels were also reported in the private centre group. Therefore, 42.1 percent of private centres had A' levels and Bachelor's degrees.

Table 7.7: Teachers' Credentials

Teachers' Credentials	Government/Government-Assisted Centres (n=55)	Private Centres (n=19)
O' Levels	9 (16.4%)	9 (47.4%)
O' Levels with ECCE Courses	45 (81.8%)	2 (10.5%)
A' Levels		
A' Levels with ECCE Courses		2 (10.5%)
Bachelors in Early Childhood	1 (1.8%)	6 (31.6%)

Professional Development

As Table 7.8 indicates, a majority of the government/government-assisted centres (66.7 percent) report participating in workshops outside of their centres, while the majority of private centers (75 percent) report attending workshops within their centres. Teachers at 41.7 percent of the government/government-assisted and 37 percent of private centres report taking ECCE or

tertiary level courses during the past year. None of the centres reported any distance learning activities.

Table 7.8: Types of Professional Development

Professional Development	Government/Government-Assisted Centres (n=12)	Private Centres (n=8)
Workshops at your centre	5 (41.7%)	6 (75.0%)
Workshops not at your centre	8 (66.7%)	3 (37.5%)
ECCE or tertiary level courses	5 (41.7%)	3 (37.5%)
Distance Learning	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)

Professional development topics reported in the past year ranged from training on curriculum use to diversity training. Respondents had the option of checking more than one category of training, resulting in 21 types of training checked. The most frequently cited professional development for government/government-assisted centres were courses in ECCE or tertiary level (33.3 percent) and training on curriculum use (25.0 percent). Half of the private centres report receiving training on curriculum use the past year. Table 7.9 presents responses by centre type and topic.

Table 7.9: Professional Development Topics by Centre Type

Professional Development Topics	Government/Government-Assisted Centres (n=12)	Private Centres (n=8)
Training on curriculum use	3 (25.0%)	4 (50.0%)
Literacy training	1 (8.3%)	2 (25.0%)
Diversity training	1 (8.3%)	0
Parent involvement training	1 (8.3%)	1 (12.5%)
ECCE or tertiary level courses	4 (33.3%)	2 (25.0%)
Child assessment	2 (16.7%)	2 (25.0%)

Child assessment procedures were examined to both describe the systems in place at centres and to determine how the assessments were used, both elements encouraged by the new standards. Eighteen of the centres conduct assessments. Of these, 11 of the 20 centres conduct assessments using centre or teacher-designed tools; the remaining nine centres use an assortment of developmental checklists or assessment forms, with only one using a published child assessment tool. Respondents report that assessments are used to plan curriculum approaches and activities (n=19) and to determine services needed as well (n=15). Table 7.10 captures assessment procedures and uses by centre type.

Table 7.10: Assessment Practices by Centre Type

Child Assessment Procedures & Uses	Government/Government-Assisted Centres (n=12)	Private Centres (n=8)
Do teachers conduct preschool child assessments?	11 (91.7%)	7 (87.5%)
Teacher or centre designed tool	8 (66.7%)	3 (37.5%)
Formal published tool	1 (8.3%)	
Development checklist, narratives	3 (25.0%)	1 (12.5%)
Observation/assessment form	1 (8.3%)	1 (12.5%)
Used to determine the services the children need	9 (75.0%)	6 (75.0%)
Used to plan curriculum approaches and activities	11 (91.7%)	8 (100.0%)

Monitoring of teacher practice

Centre administrators report that monitoring is largely conducted in-house by centre administrators. (See Table 7.11). Five of the government/government-assisted centres report that MOE staff conduct monitoring at their centres. Frequency of monitoring ranges from daily to rarely.

Table 7.11: Detail on Monitoring

Monitoring	Government/Government-Assisted Centres (n=12)	Private Centres (n=8)
Who conducts		
• Supervisory teacher		2 (25.0%)
• Centre Administrator/teacher	6 (50.0%)	5 (62.5%)
• Organization's official	1 (8.3%)	1 (12.5%)
• Centre/organization's social service worker		1 (12.5%)
• Servol staff	3 (25.0%)	
• Ministry of Education Staff	5 (41.7%)	3 (37.5%)
• Not sure if monitoring is conducted	1 (8.3%)	2 (25.0%)
• No monitoring is conducted		
Frequency of monitoring visits		
• Daily		2 (25.0%)
• Weekly	2 (16.7%)	2 (25.0%)
• Twice a month	2 (16.7%)	1 (12.5%)
• Monthly	4 (33.3%)	
• Rarely	3 (25.0%)	
• Quarterly	1 (8.3%)	1 (12.5%)

CURRICULUM

Administrators were asked to identify from a checklist, the curriculum used in their centres. The list was constructed from curricula that teachers mentioned they used to plan activities in their classrooms. Some respondents use the Harmonized Curriculum—a training program for teachers—as a resource for planning curriculum. SPICES—the SERVOL-created curriculum guide—was used in 45 percent of the centres: five or 41.7 percent of the government/government-assisted and four or 50 percent of the private.

It is interesting to note that during classroom observations teachers were asked whether they had received the draft *National ECCE Curriculum Guide* and how they used it. While most of the government/government-assisted (91.7 percent) reported that they have a copy of the *Guide*, they said that they had not as yet received guidance on how to use the guide as a tool for curriculum planning. Only 62.5 percent of the private centres reported having a copy of the *Guide*. Only one centre—a government/government-assisted centre—reported having any training in its use.

RESULTS FROM CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Analytic Process

In this section we report findings that relate to pedagogical practices and use of the environment. The principal data source for these findings is the *Classroom Observation Instrument*, which was adapted to reflect the strands and competencies outlined in the *National Early Childhood Care and Education Curriculum Guide*.

The *Classroom Observation Instrument* has three global subscales: (Table C1 in Appendix C) provides a complete list of items and indicators for each subscale)

- The *Interactions* subscale is composed of 7 items with 23 indicators and focuses on how teachers interact with children to foster socio-emotional and pro-social development (e.g., how teachers show affection, interest, and respect); how teachers encourage equity and equal opportunities (e.g., children are not divided into play groups by race or gender); and how teachers encourage and model collaboration and effective communication (e.g., teachers promote cooperation through group projects, and teachers work together as a team).

- The *Learning Activities/Curriculum* subscale includes 12 items and 47 indicators that examine how teachers promote learning opportunities in language (e.g., read aloud, foster conversations among children, encourage children to write); how teachers stimulate children's understanding of science, math, and technology (e.g., encourage children to represent what they observe in nature, offer opportunities for counting, labeling, measuring); and how teachers promote overall wellness (e.g., promote outdoor play, provide nutritious meals and snacks, encourage personal hygiene).
- The *Environment* subscale is comprised of 8 items and 36 indicators and focuses on the overall organization of the physical environment (e.g., activity centres, space and layout that accommodates individual and group activities, equipment) and resources and displays (e.g., pictures, displays of children's work, books, parent information).

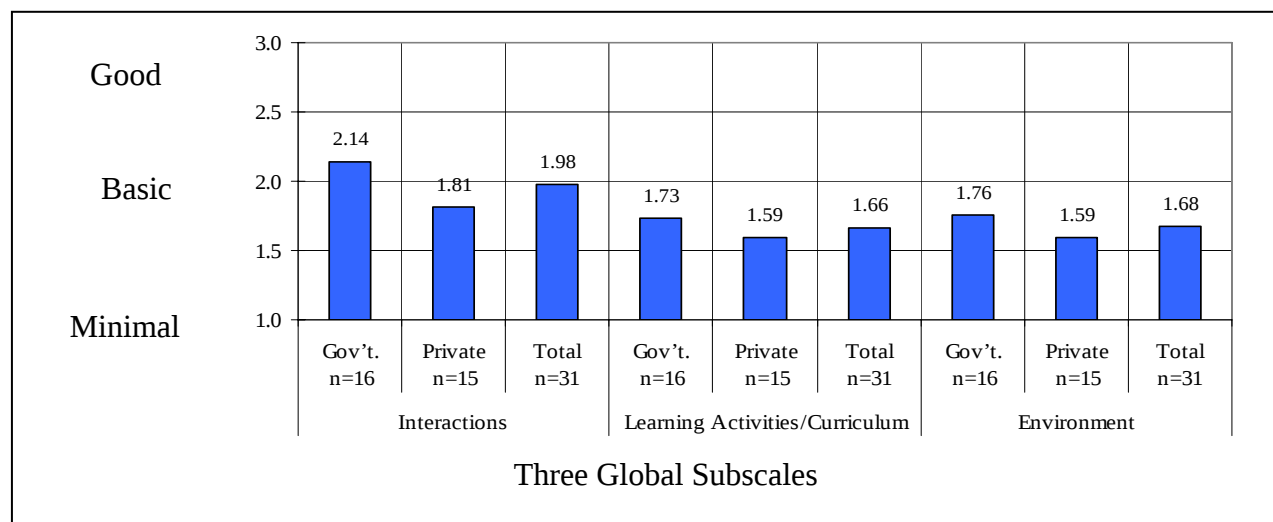
We followed a deliberate process to analyse these findings. First, we reviewed overall patterns of results from the *Classroom Observation Instrument* used in 31 classrooms, using the mean scores for the three global subscales: *Interactions*, *Learning Activities/Curriculum* and *Environment*. We then moved to a more extended discussion of the results at the level of individual *items* and the *indicators* that were used to arrive at the item scores. *Items* are an overview of a particular, salient aspect of classroom behavior and are rated on a three-point scale: 1=minimum, 2=basic, 3=good. For example, *Item 4: Teachers provide opportunities and activities for children to develop social skills*. *Indicators* are observable aspects of an item in the classroom and are noted as being present or not. An example of an indicator is *4b: Teachers promote cooperative play through group projects (e.g., block play, group art painting, games, etc.)*. While overall results give a general sense of the quality of ECCE, data at the item and indicator levels provide insight into actual classroom practice.

Overall Quality

The mean overall quality rating for both types of centres across the three subscales is 1.77, ranging from 1.00 to 2.74, with government/government-assisted centres scoring 1.88 and private centres scoring 1.66. (See Figure 7.2.) When looking at individual centres, only one of the government/government-assisted centres has a subscale score greater than 2.5, scoring well above the basic level (2.0). Two private centres and one government/government-assisted centre have mean scores of 1.0 (minimum) across all three subscales. See Appendix C for detailed *Classroom Observation* data tables.

These classroom observation data provide overwhelming evidence that both government/government-assisted and private centres, on the whole, are scoring at or below the basic quality level in all subscales. While government/government-assisted centres have somewhat higher mean scores than private centres on all three subscales, these differences are not of sufficient size to be statistically significant.

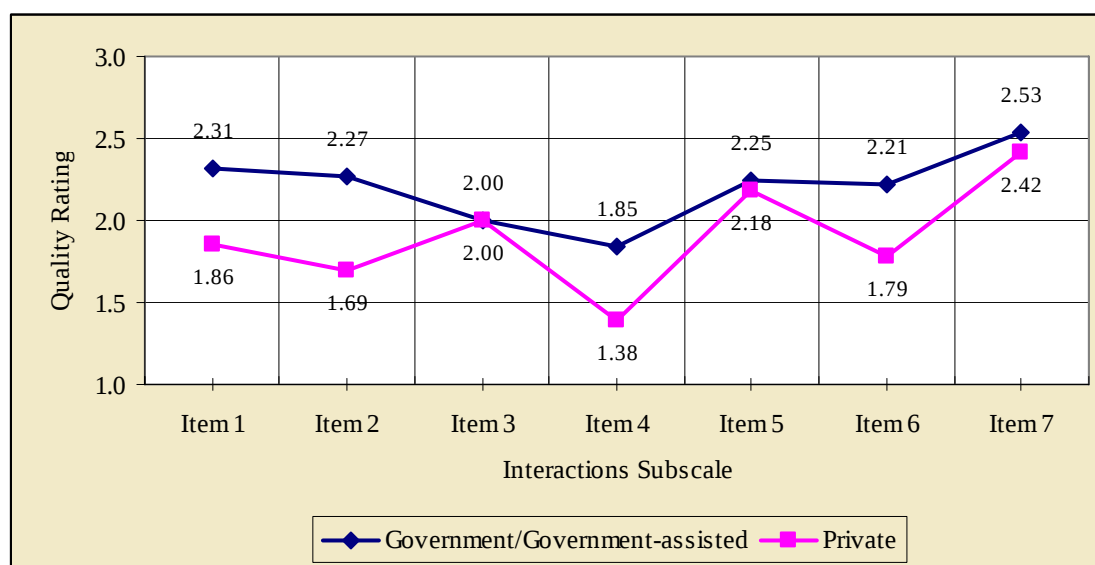
Figure 7.2: Comparison of Global Subscale Scores



Interactions. The Interactions subscale, which examines how teachers promote socio-emotional and pro-social development, has the highest mean score of the three subscales for both types of centres. The overall mean score for the Interaction subscale is 1.98, with the government/government-assisted centres having a subscale mean of 2.14 compared to a 1.81 for the private centres. While the overall difference between the government/ government-assisted and the private centres is not statistically significant at $p < .05$, there are some comparisons that are worthy to note. More than half of the centres received a score of 3 (3=good) on *Item 7: Providing interactions that model respect, collaboration, and effective communications*. The mean score for this item is 2.53 for the government/government-assisted centres and 2.42 for the private centres. On the other hand, only one centre of each type received a score of 3 on *Item 4: Providing opportunities and activities for children to develop social skills*. Further, on this item, 9 of the 12 government/government-assisted centres scored at the basic level compared to 3 of the 8 private centres (government/government-assisted mean score: 1.85; private: 1.38). None of the items within this subscale are statistically significant.

Aside from the seven global items, the Interactions subscale also has 23 observable quality indicators. While the percent of quality indicators observed at the government/government-assisted centres (57.6 percent) is higher than that observed at the private centres (40.3 percent), this was not statistically significant. The overall percent of observed quality indicators for the 31 centres is 49.3 percent of the possible total (ranging from 0 to 100 percent). The most frequently observed indicators are *Item 1a: Shows affection and care* (observed in 27 centres); *6b: Children are not divided into activities or areas by race, ability or language* (23 centres); and *7b. Teachers work together to manage the schedule and activities efficiently* (24 centres). Figure 7.3 presents average scores for each item in the interaction subscale.

Figure 7.3: Average Scores on Interaction Subscale



Learning Activities/Curriculum. The second subscale explores learning activities and curricula across a range of areas including language and literacy, math, science, health and well-being, and the integration of students with special needs. Of the twelve items that comprise this category, the overall mean score is 1.66, with the 16 government/government-assisted centres attaining a mean score of 1.73 and the 15 private centres a mean score of 1.59. While the overall subscale means for the two centre types are not significantly different, one of the items within the subscale does show a statistically significant difference between the government/government-assisted and the private centres. Specifically, *Item 8: Teachers provide a balance of teacher initiated and children-directed activities*. The mean score for the government/government-

assisted centres—1.92—is significantly higher than the mean score—1.36—for the private centres [$t=2.31$; $df\ 25$; $p<.05$]. This item has three indicators of quality of which two were observed in more than half of the government/government-assisted centres: *Item 8a: Choice time is evident in the classroom schedule* and *Item 8c: Teacher-directed activities are age appropriate and engaging for children*; however, in only three centres were teachers observed *encouraging children to select from a variety of activities (Item 8b)*. Only a fraction of the private centres (13.8 percent to 26.7 percent) were observed engaging in any of these three indicators.

Another point worth mentioning is that certain quality indicators were not observed across several centres. For example, *Item 16: Teachers use technology (computer, video, television) appropriately to foster active learning* was scored for only five of the government/government-assisted centres and four of the private centres. Another example is *Item 18: Teachers integrate children with special needs*, where only three government/government-assisted centres and four private centres were scored.

This subscale comprised 47 observable indicators of quality. The average percent overall is 19.4 percent ranging from 0 to 61.7 percent. The average percent for the government/government-assisted centres is 24.6 percent and for the private centres 13.9 percent. Noting that this subscale has the largest number of observable indicators, it is striking to note the extremely low percentages. Ten centres (four government/government-assisted and six private centres) had fewer than 10 percent and three of these had zero percent.

The Learning Activities and Curriculum subscale comprises items related to several specific curriculum areas; namely, language and literacy development, mathematics, science and technology, and wellness.

Language and Literacy Development. Three items pertain to language and literacy development through reading, communication and writing. The overall scores for these three items range from 1.94 to 2.00. For example for *Item 11: Teachers encourage language and literacy development through reading and talking about books*, government/government-assisted centres' mean score is 2.25 and private centres mean score is 1.75. Similarly, in *Item 13: Teachers provide age-appropriate support for language and literacy development in all language areas (spoken, written, read, and viewed)*, government/government assisted centres' mean score is 2.10 and private centres' mean score is 1.71. While there is no statistically significant difference

between the two groups on any of these three items, the government/government-assisted centres score higher than the private centres.

When reviewing the observable indicators relative to language and literacy, it appears that fewer than half of the centres were observed on any of the 15 quality indicators except in *Item 12c: Teachers ask children open-ended questions that promote discussion of the characters and ideas presented in books*. See Volume II, Table C3: Summary of Means Across Subscales for a detailed breakdown of these data.

Mathematics. Only one item related to math concepts, *Item 15: Teachers promote development of math concepts* received any scores. Of the 31 centres, only six government/government-assisted centres received scores on this item, with a mean score of 1.50; only five private centres received scores with a mean score of 1.40. Of the four indicators related to this item, fewer than three centres were observed stimulating children's awareness of numbers, patterns, shapes, space and positions (15a); offering children opportunities for counting, labeling, measuring and ordering (15c); and supporting children in their use of a variety of manipulatives (15d). Only teachers in one centre were observed encouraging children to use mathematics in problem-solving (numbers, special relationships, size, etc.) (15b).

Science and Technology. Two items in this subscale dealt with science concepts and technology: *Item 14: Teachers promote development of science concepts* and *Item 16: Teachers use technology (computer, video, television) appropriately to foster active learning*. Again, only a small percentage of the centres were observed engaging in these activities. Of the 16 government/government-assisted centres that were observed, only four were scored on science with a mean of 2.00, and five were scored on the technology component with a mean score of 1.60. Six of the 15 private centres were observed in the science area and had a mean score of 1.67 while only 3 received scores on the technology item (Mean=1.33). Based on the individual indicators it would appear that there is little to no science or technology integrated into classroom practice.

Wellness and Behavioral Issues. Two items in this subscale relate to wellness or special needs; namely, *Item 17: Teachers promote children's overall wellness* and *Item 19: Teachers appropriately handle children's behavioral issues*. The government/ government-assisted centres had slightly higher mean scores on these two items—2.27 and 1.82—compared to the private centres—1.80 and 1.75. Again, fewer than half of the centres were observed engaged in

the activities related to these areas, with the exception of item 17b, providing opportunity for outdoor play/field trips.

Environment. The third section of the *Classroom Observation* tool examines the classroom environment. While the government/government-assisted centres generally had slightly higher mean scores, there are two items in this category where private centres had higher mean scores. In the first case, *Item 25: Classroom displays and materials promote children’s self-concept and community and ethnic pride*, had a mean difference that was not statistically significant. However, in the second case, *Item 27: The centre/classroom has materials posted/available for parents, visitors, and volunteers*, the mean score of the government/government-assisted centres is 1.33 compared to that of the private centres—2.00 [$t -2.552$; $df 19$; $p < .05$], a difference that is statistically significant. Of the quality indicators related to this item, most centres post a curriculum schedule; nearly half have notices posted for all to read; and display children’s creative work. However, only one centre displays material that explains the importance of play in the lives of children as well as other principles.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Data included in this section is taken from 20 *Administrator Questionnaires*, 18 *Parent Questionnaires* that were collected from three centres, and one parent-related item on 31 *Classroom Observation Instruments* completed during our visits.

Parent Questionnaire Data

Table 7.12 displays parents’ responses to the question “Does your centre make home visits?” Of the 18 parents solicited from two government/government-assisted and one private centre, there were 16 respondents.

Table 7.12: Home Visits

Your Centre Makes Home Visits?	Parents at Government/Government-Assisted Centres (n=8)	Parents at Private Centres (n=8)
• Always true	2	0
• Often true	2	0
• At times true	2	6
• Never true	2	1

Home visits are conducted by 41.7 percent of government/government-assisted centres and 37.5 percent of the private centres. Table 7.13 captures responses from administrators about the purposes for home visits, along with information about parents' involvement in general.

Table 7.13: Purpose of Home Visits

Parent Involvement	Government/Government-Assisted Centres (n=12)	Private Centres (n=8)
Do teachers at your centre visit families of preschoolers in their homes? Yes	5 (41.7%)	3 (37.5%)
• Share information	2 (16.7%)	1 (12.5%)
• Discuss problems	2 (16.7%)	
• See children in home environment	2 (16.7%)	3 (37.5%)
• Support parents	1 (8.3%)	1 (12.5%)
Does your centre provide parent/teacher conferences for parents of preschool children? Yes	10 (83.3%)	7 (87.5%)
• Every other month	1 (8.3%)	1 (12.5%)
• Once a month	5 (41.7%)	1 (12.5%)
• Twice a year	3 (25.0%)	2 (25.0%)
Does your centre have an organized group of parents who participate in the centre's activities? Yes	10 (83.3%)	5 (62.5%)
• PTA	8 (66.7%)	4 (50.0%)
• School Board	1 (8.3%)	
Does your centre provide opportunities for preschooler's parents to participate in the school board or a management body of the centre? Yes	7 (58.3%)	7 (87.5%)
Does your centre have a process for working with families to set goals for their preschoolers?		
• Yes—all families	5 (41.7%)	3 (37.5%)
• Yes—some families		2 (25.0%)
Does your centre arrange educational support activities, such as workshops or support groups for parents? Yes	9 (75.0%)	7 (87.5%)
• Monthly	2 (16.7%)	2 (25.0%)
• Several times a year	6 (50.0%)	3 (37.5%)
• Yearly		1 (12.5%)

These data indicate that the majority of centres hold parent conferences, most frequently once a month for government/government-assisted centres (41.7 percent), and twice a year for private centres (25 percent). Furthermore, an organized parent group exists in 15 of the centres and 14 centres provide opportunities for parents to participate in boards or management bodies at the centre. In terms of involving parents to set goals for their children, 41.7 percent of government/government-assisted centres and 37.5 percent of private centres report to have a process in place for all families to be involved in this effort. Finally, educational activities to support parents are provided in 16 of the 20 centres

Classroom Observation Data

In our observation of centres, we found that few centres that display information and notices for parents that are useful in helping them understand the value of play or other educational needs of their children. This quality indicator reveals significant differences between the two types of centres. Two centres rated high on this question, both private centres. These two centres had a variety of visual displays and information for parents close to the doors, easily accessed by all. However, few had welcoming spaces where parents could stay, watch their child, or sit and read materials.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLANS

As *Vision 2020* comes into focus, a plan is emerging that brings to life the eloquent words that shape the vision and the values of the future citizen of Trinidad and Tobago. As discussed in Chapter 3, start-up operations have already been shaped by the policies and initiatives laid out in the *Vision 2020 Operational Plan 2007-2010*. The past year saw the execution of a universal access plan, a centralized teacher development and incentives initiatives, and a decentralization plan that will involve community stakeholders. The *National ECCE Curriculum Guide* has been distributed to serve as a platform for dialogue, planning, and professional development. The ECCE Unit and the NCEECE have taken on new dimensions and responsibilities. The next three years present an opportunity for concerted and strategic actions. We offer here suggestions for a “third space” where the next steps of the reform take hold with high visibility, and in a coordinated way. Prizing teacher experimentation, inquiry, and accessibility to resources and uniform, aligned support, this third space serves to bridge central to local ECCE systems.

In Chapters 3 through 7 we offer some insights and findings identified to date in our interviews, document analysis, and field research. To conclude our final report, we propose specific recommendations for immediate action and long term change that will address some of the challenges uncovered in our study. Our recommendations echo lessons learned in the Inter-American Development Bank’s Bahamas study: *Project Concept Document: The Bahamas, September 7, 2005*, which called for:

- Investing for timely implementation
- Outsourcing start-up operations
- Strengthening the pool of expertise available to MOE
- Emphasizing training
- Disseminating information and best practices

Our action plan lays out immediate steps for investing a portion of the US\$12 million slated for the ECCE system reform in the future. While long-term plans for expansion and coordination of the system and improving teacher qualifications are underway, parallel strategic actions need to

take place. Investment in targeted infrastructures and interventions will address gaps in the system in the short term and lay the foundation for continued action.

Education Development Center's team proposes two major recommendations.

Recommendation 1 focuses on creating a coordinated system for scaling-up that ensures more localized support. This recommendation has four sub-recommendations that have a set of actions that support Recommendation 1. Recommendation 2 offers a plan to refine the planning and execution of a data management system. While we understand a 10-year span of reform lies ahead, these recommendations propose a plan for Trinidad and Tobago for the first three years.

RECOMMENDATION 1: CREATE A COORDINATED SYSTEM FOR SCALING UP THAT ENSURES MORE LOCAL SUPPORT—A HUB MODEL

For the GOTT's restructuring and decentralisation vision to take root across Trinidad and Tobago, the ECCE system and its programs must be coordinated and aligned. GOTT has begun this coordination and alignment by constructing centres of excellence throughout the country. According to the ECCE Division's plan, the new centres are intended to serve as models, or laboratories, becoming a resource for other ECCE centres in their communities. We believe it is not possible for all of the new centres to fulfill these leadership roles. Therefore, the GOTT must determine and create a carefully planned, functional, and effective system of ECCE support. Such a system will promote the government's goals for decentralisation, sensitisation, and improvement in curriculum and pedagogical practices. We propose that the Ministry develop a process for thoughtfully selecting and designating some of the new government centres as ECCE leadership hubs. Those selected as hubs must then be provided with requisite facilities, equipment, and staffing to carry out their role in supporting the development of the country's ECCE centres—both public and private.

Based on the many needs and goals identified in earlier sections of this report, we recommend that GOTT organize an ECCE hub system—A Hub Model—consisting of a central hub, located in an area chosen by the Ministry, and at least 7 other district hubs. While the functions of the hubs may vary, the system, as a whole, will support the greater Trinidad & Tobago ECCE community by:

- providing professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators of both private and government-assisted ECCE programs;

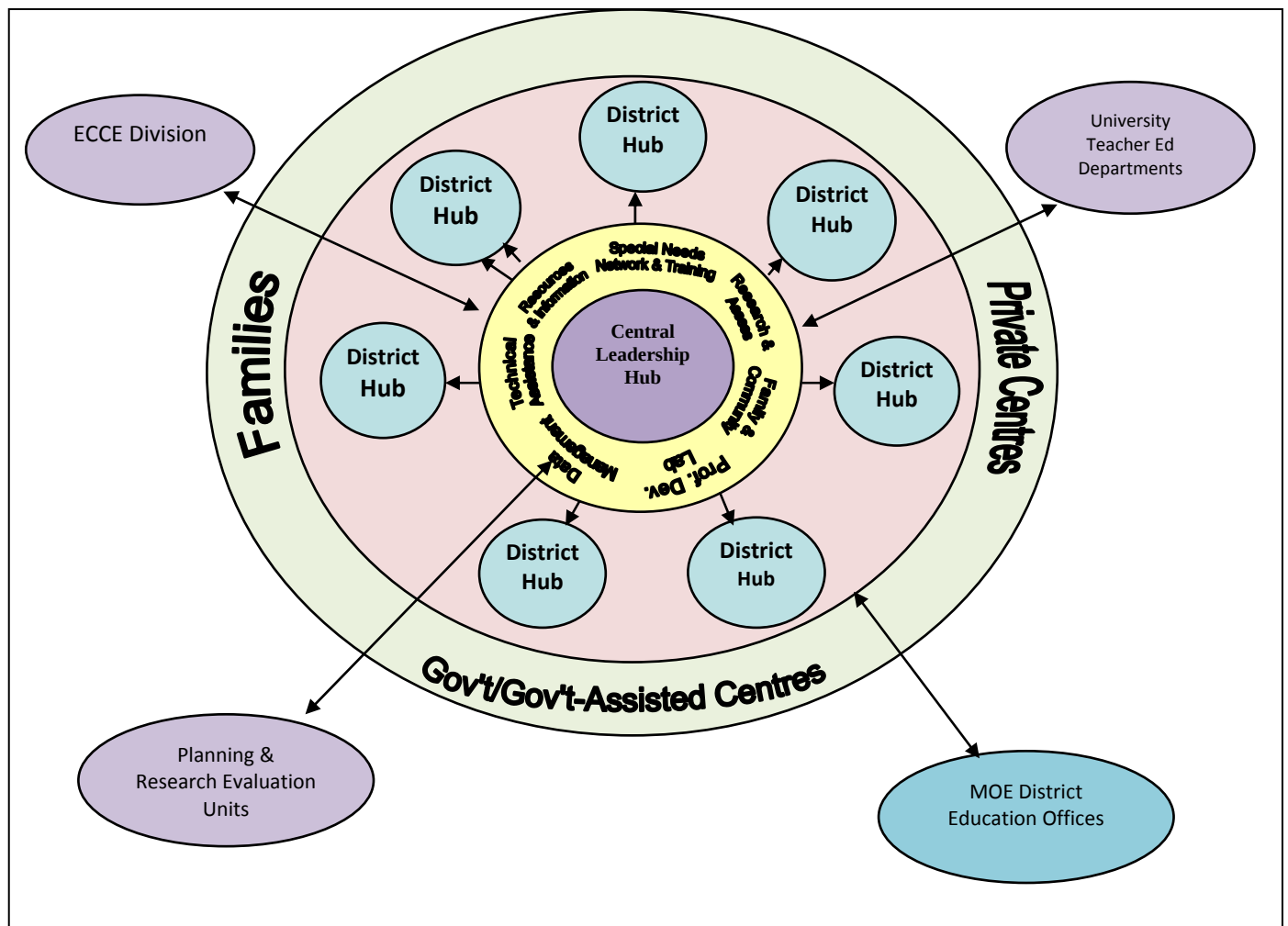
- building the capacity of other ECCE centres to serve young children with special needs;
- establishing and maintaining a website at the central hub to support ECCE quality, access, and equity;
- building capacity of ECCE centres to engage parents and community partners in supporting children’s development and achievement; and
- participating in the collection, analysis, and dissemination of data to advance ECCE efforts.

We describe each of these activities in sub-recommendations A through D, and in Recommendation 2.

We recommend that the GOTT first establish a central hub staffed by a select group of ECCE Division facilitators, community liaisons, and quality assurance officers with a deep understanding of quality early childhood programming and a passion for excellence. Although the exact location of the central hub is best determined by GOTT, the central hub facility should include space for at least one observable model classroom, adult training and meeting space, and offices for staff to meet with parents and community members. We also recommend that staff use the initial period of operation—1 year to 18 months—to develop and pilot innovative approaches to professional development, serving children with special needs, and working with families and communities. Once perfected, these approaches will be ready for replication in the *district* hubs by their teachers, trainers, and community liaisons who will be trained by central hub staff. The government should also use this pilot period to design a website, maintained at the central hub, that will provide electronic resources, tools, and data collection systems to support the work of the district hubs and the ECCE centres they will engage.

After the pilot period, the Ministry will expand the Hub Model, designating hubs in each of the districts. Like the central hub, each district hub must be adequately staffed and be an exemplar of ECCE operations and services. To be viewed as the district’s “go-to” place for information, resources, and support, district hubs must effectively implement the government’s ECCE standards and principles outlined in the Curriculum Guide. (See Figure 8.1).

Figure 8.1: Hub Model



In addition to delivering training and resources to local ECCE centres, district hubs will play a critical role in informing the central hub about the needs of local centres and the effectiveness of hub-sponsored programming in addressing those needs. District hubs will also assist the ECCE centres in linking to community resources and other supports and in recruiting potential teachers, liaisons, and administrators to the ECCE field. To promote collaboration and the alignment of practice among the ECCE centres and primary schools, the hubs will convene meetings of primary and ECCE staffs to share information, learn together, and create effective ECCE/primary transition plans. Facilitated discussions and study groups of early primary and ECCE staffs will serve to ensure teaching strategies in both ECCE and early primary grades reflect best practice based on research and that goals for children are aligned. Hubs will also

guide ECCE administrators in their work with their centre’s support teams and the greater community.

Like the central hub, district hubs will need specialized classroom, training, meeting and office space to fulfill their core functions. If the Ministry chooses to house the hubs in its newly constructed centres of excellence, it will need to plan and create supplemental space for training and meetings that does not exist in the new government sites. In densely populated districts, the government may consider creating an additional hub or two, depending on the number of ECCE centres and number of staff the district hub will serve. Care should be taken to ensure that each hub has a reasonable number of ECCE centres to serve.

The creation of a system of ECCE leadership hubs will not be accomplished overnight. Therefore, we recommend that GOTT’s ECCE leaders work with internal and external consultants to first develop a realistic and thoughtful plan for the system’s development and implementation. The plan must provide significant detail about each step, measurable benchmarks, realistic timelines, and the staff responsible. Specifying the role of the Ministry staff and hub staff is essential to this plan. Consultants can also assist the Ministry in striking the right balance between decentralisation and central control. While decentralisation is needed, the GOTT—the ECCE funder and standard bearer—must ensure government policies are being met and that children, especially those most in need, are being served in high quality ECCE centres. The Hub Model brings the government closer to this vision.

Recommendation 1A: Provide On-Going Professional Development and Support to the Hubs, ECCE Centre Staff, and ECCE Teacher Educators

Our research uncovered an unmet need for a uniform, field-based professional support system that is aligned with standards, as well as reflective of best adult learning practices. The initiatives and action steps we suggest address on-going professional development needs at the hub level through:

- A series of credit-bearing courses offered to key cohorts of teachers and teacher educators employing a hands-on methodology
- Technical assistance that supports key educators and centres as they implement and assess standard-aligned practice
- A resource clearinghouse with tools and materials accessible to teachers, teacher educators, and supervisors

By bundling these strategies into a coordinated program, the recommended course of action we present below reflects characteristics of research-based effective professional development. That is, professional development has a positive impact if it:

- is sustained over time;
- focuses on specific content areas or instructional strategies;
- supports collective learning for most, if not all teachers in a school;
- aligns with school and teacher goals; and ,
- provides opportunities for teachers to practice and apply new knowledge.

Below, we describe in detail our recommendations for professional development activities to be delivered through the Hub Model. While UTT and UWI play major roles in preparing and training ECCE teachers, we see the proposed plan as complementary, extending the reach of these institutional efforts. The implementation of a Hub Model will engage tertiary institutions as partners, supporting already qualified teachers' continued learning, promoting the advancement of practicing teachers with limited credentials, and building the capacity of ECCE centres in a range of operational areas.

Field-based credit-bearing courses and workshops. Our study concludes that well-designed, articulated courses are needed to help centre teachers translate concepts into classroom practice. While evidence-based, rigorous, credit-bearing professional development can build teachers' capacity to assure that children are ready to succeed in school, certain design features help ensure that it has maximal effect. Our study found that these are lacking in many of the nation's professional development programs. First, to change practice, professional development must connect to teachers' day-to-day classroom realities. It must be cumulative in its intentions, reflective in its methods, and evidence-based. Most importantly, assistant teachers must participate in the same rigorous coursework as teachers. A professional development programme model that incorporates these features is detailed below.

Description of course format. A nested programme of courses that covers four essential professional development areas identified by the findings would greatly benefit the building of capacity of a core group at the hub level. Taught through a participatory, reflective methodology, courses designed for the central hub should provide teachers an opportunity to experience the new teaching and learning methodology first hand.

Field-based courses for teachers could take place across a semestre in intensive full-day sessions so as to not interfere with the daily work of teachers. This format allows cohorts to develop relationships and collaborate on strategies to try out in their classrooms. Courses and workshops should align with the hours and course requirements of the teacher colleges, and partnership agreements should enable teachers and assistant teachers to receive credit towards their degrees.

We recommend each course or workshop be taught by a team of two teacher educators—an outside consultant and an inside expert in the new pedagogical practices outlined in the Curriculum Guide. The lead educator could be engaged through an outside consulting firm and a co-instructor recruited from the faculty of one of the teacher colleges. The purpose of this team approach is to ensure sustainability and scale-up to the hubs after the first series of courses conclude. The use of outside experts would also bridge the human resource challenge now being experienced in the Ministry.

Participants. Research indicates that thoughtfully conceived and artfully delivered training in which colleagues collaboratively learn and work together is useful in assisting individuals to gain knowledge, acquire skills, and learn about and draw on appropriate resources for high-quality work.

In order to incorporate this knowledge and build capacity in an efficient way, we suggest the professional development programme be offered to cohorts of key ECCE and hub staff. The cohort model serves a dual purpose. First, a critical mass of ECCE educators will be able to share and discuss direct experiences together, building a self-sustaining discipline of reflection and analysis that can be supported through technical assistance. Second, a progressive and linked set of courses will build a shared vocabulary among the key cohorts, enabling a change in culture and language to reach the district hubs or centres where members of these cohorts work.

We suggest recruiting three cohorts of promising educators based in different districts that are comprised of practicing ECCE teachers and teacher assistants. The addition of supervisors and curriculum facilitators to the cohorts will strengthen the impact of the courses.

Programme content. The content of the programme is directly derived from our findings. Specifically, our research identified two content areas of great need in order to address inequities and achievement gaps: language development and understanding science and math. Our findings

also reveal that the design and use of classroom space are essential elements that must be addressed before the series of courses are offered.

Use of activity centres and environment. While overall many centres rated higher on the environment category than other categories, we observed how the use of space and materials significantly limited activities and choices available to children, critical aspects of high quality early education. Equipment and materials were often placed against the wall, or relegated for use on tables in teacher-controlled ways. Activity centers were poorly defined or not present at all. Book centers were poorly equipped and often books were not accessible to children. Books in more than half of the centres were of limited quality and quantity. As a result, teachers engaged in didactic practices, limiting children's choices, conversation, and exploration. Therefore, we recommend a course or workshop that could provide a solid foundation in the design and use of activity centres and the environment for all teachers. This foundation should precede any further professional development. We heard about plans to use the *Curriculum Guide* as a curriculum planning tool, and know of curriculum courses and supports provided by the local colleges and SERVOL. However, we recommend a renewed and aligned look at curriculum and its use be integrated into the technical assistance programme outlined in this chapter. This will include a specific focus on preparing teachers to understand and implement classroom design practices with the new *Curriculum Guide*.

Well-designed classrooms, such as some of the government's new centres, use equipment to define classroom activity centres, an essential step to providing choice and purpose in learning activities. The lay out of activity centres and the accessibility and quality of materials could be explored in an extended workshop provided in the hub laboratory classroom. Teachers will learn how children experience space; how to best arrange the room and guide children's behavior and learning; and how to facilitate children's learning in activity centres through observing, listening to, and engaging children in inquiry-base learning. Professional development strategies and technical assistance could engage teachers in viewing and discussing video clips of a variety of child-centered teaching practices, in the indoor as well as outdoor space.

Emergent literacy. We learned that few centres employed reading and language strategies that specifically target emergent language development. Instead of encouraging peer conversation, extending children's conversation, and stressing language sounds while reading and talking, we saw most teachers focused on rote learning, board work, and phonics. An intensive, inquiry-

based course on language development/emergent literacy, that is developmentally appropriate, would provide quality experiences and vivid examples of best practice for teachers, trainers, supervisors, facilitators, and parents. Topics in the course should present latest theories in a focused way and emphasize emergent literacy target areas through field-based assignments. Course topics that could help teachers integrate key concepts into their practice include: oral language and extended discourse skills; sense of storybook language and vocabulary; knowledge about print and awareness of environmental print; emergent writing; and phonological awareness, including rhyming, alliteration, and segmentation. The use of a range of methods (e.g., case studies, video clips of effective practice, PowerPoint presentations, role-play, practice assessments, and planning) that respond to different learning styles and levels of teacher education is crucial.

Science and math explorations. According to our findings, this is the area in most need of improvement in terms of classroom practice. When grouped together, the items and indicators relevant to science, math, and technology teaching received the lowest scores: a mean score of 1 on the quality items, and only 9.1% of the observable indicators for these content areas.

Technological advances require that children today have a solid foundation in science and math to succeed in an increasingly complex world, but children in Trinidad and Tobago are performing poorly compared to those from other countries. In addition, low-income children continue to demonstrate lower levels of science and math proficiency than their peers. As our research shows, most early childhood teachers are not providing the kinds of quality experiences that will prepare children for later school success in these domains. While a main priority is reducing achievement gaps in literacy outcomes, paying close attention to science and math in preschool classrooms is essential. Science and math exploration also contribute to children's language and literacy development.

Building upon empirically-tested interventions, a hub-based course on science could reflect an integrated approach to math-science-literacy learning. We argue that it is possible to provide high-quality experiences for young children and that the fundamental domains of science and mathematics provide rich content on which to build these experiences.

Language connections with families. Parent involvement needs to take on a more expanded definition in the SESP. A concern echoed throughout our research is the lack of parents' support for developmentally appropriate teaching for their young children. Research on successful family

involvement programs suggests that teachers need to enhance their teaching and their program's capacity to support the development of children's literacy through shared literacy experiences with families. A course or extended workshops for teachers that draws in the family in a proactive way is called for. Such a course could reinforce collaboration with families and raise awareness of effective approaches for involving families in standards-based, emergent literacy activities that recognize and use cultural knowledge, skills, and experiences of families. Hub resources and quality children's books could be used to engage teachers in planning and collaborating with families to produce illustrated books, calendars, and other artifacts that portray the daily lives and values of the families. The emphasis on meaningful content will provide families with rich examples of how emergent literacy generates interest and language skills in their children, as well as build an understanding about how to support literacy at home.

Technical assistance programme. Monitoring, evaluating, and extending communication channels between central and decentralized locations require a synchronized approach. When monitors, evaluators, or committee members inform decision-makers, they should share foundational knowledge as well as be expert in the participatory methods of teaching. As pointed out in the SESP August presentations, the great need across all levels is to shift from transmission to transformational paradigms of teaching. This transformation needs to occur at the teacher, educator, and supervisory levels. Hence, the first step is to ensure that all who support and monitor teachers receive training in the proposed field-based professional education programme proposed. Secondly, technical assistance provided in the field will help centres adopt management practices that include systematic observations of teachers, goal setting, feedback, and other support systems that foster teachers' development.

Finally, formative research is a third piece that goes hand in hand with teacher development and improved practice. Both experienced teachers and new teachers need to be decision-makers who take control of their own continuous development. Teachers engaged in inquiry and action research will keep a close look on their own development and its effect on the children they teach. Action steps towards this goal would enhance existing assessment models that examine curriculum, programme, and child development. Technical assistance provided in the central hub of our model can guide, schedule, and manage teacher dialogue, critical analysis, and revisions to protocols currently in use such as the *Omnibus* and the *SPICES Evaluating for Success*.

However, these actions need to be linked with national assessment efforts that continuously monitor ECCE reform efforts and the development of the preschool child.

A resource clearinghouse. To complement and aide in the application of the learning principles of the *ECCE Curriculum Guide*, adequate and multiple tools should be available and used in a variety of ways. We heard stakeholders emphasize that prescriptive application of texts will not suffice, as the cultural change being promoted in teachers requires teachers to be decision-makers and inquirers. In addition, alignment with primary schools in developmentally and culturally responsive ways will be enhanced by the use and adaptation of quality curricula that address school readiness without a “barking at the print” approach. Thus, we recommend the central hub as a resource centre and a venue for critically examining the application of various curriculum products. In addition, mentoring/coaching models, tools, and texts need to be available and used through the central hub in order to develop and implement the technical assistance plan.

Recommendation 1B: Build ECCE Capacity to Serve Young Children with Special Needs

Across Trinidad and Tobago, ECCE must make a more concerted effort to identify and effectively serve children with disabilities. While some child identification efforts are in place, identification and screening efforts and the services delivered, need improvement and greater ECCE centre involvement. Chapter 7 on findings reveals that children with special needs are largely invisible in ECCE, parents are reluctant or uninformed of their rights and resources, and teachers are unaware of how to identify or accommodate children with special needs. And, if there are children with special needs in their classroom, most ECCE staff do not know how to tailor curriculum activities, environment, or their teaching strategies to accommodate and integrate these children. We recommend that to effectively serve young children with special needs, identification and service efforts must become a national priority.

Systems, promoted by the government, must be solidly in place and coordinated to locate, identify, and serve children with disabilities as young as possible. Coordination efforts must engage all key players—health and family services providers, as well as ECCE staff. To ensure systematic recruitment and screening of such children, and ECCE staff’s knowledge of children’s needs and service plans, ECCE staff must be more engaged in recruitment and screening processes, and in service planning and delivery. Therefore, we recommend that

appropriate Ministry officials, in collaboration with key players already involved in recruitment and screening efforts, along with central hub staff, develop a comprehensive, concerted plan to more effectively engage ECCE centres in these efforts. Consultants who bring both ECCE and special needs knowledge should facilitate this process and support the plan's development.

The Hub Model will ensure that the plan is carried out by building the ECCE centres' capacity to screen children and be engaged in the development of the service plan in collaboration with health, social worker, and/or diagnostic specialists. Such involvement will also serve to build ECCE staff's understanding of the needs and approach to working with children with special needs. Hubs will also support centres' practices by linking them to community, national, and international resources, and by assisting teachers in implementing educational recommendations in the child's service plan. In addition, hubs will provide ECCE centres with teacher training on integration strategies, including curricula modifications, and supporting the transition of children with special needs from ECCE to primary.

Hubs will also offer training and provide consultation to: (1) ensure centres support the child's family, linking them to resources and providing them with information to ensure the child's comprehensive needs are addressed; and (2) foster service coordination with community health, family service, and other professionals working with the child and family.

We also recommend the creation of an area on the ECCE website (described in Recommendation 1C) to address special needs and provide the ECCE stakeholders with vital information to enhance their ability to serve these children and their families more effectively. For example, the site may provide an annotated list of service agencies that can support children with special needs and their families, and a list of diagnosticians, service specialists, psychologists, medical specialists, etc. and other resources related to addressing the needs of young children with disabilities. The site will serve as a clearinghouse for information on training relevant to the ECCE special needs, providing timely information about conferences, and offering the PowerPoint presentations or written materials presented after the event's conclusion.

Eventually, the site will offer well-designed, user-friendly training modules adapted to web use from face-to-face training workshops offered by the hubs or available on other websites. These will include video clips of practice related to inclusion and teacher practice. These

modules will deepen teachers' knowledge of working with children with special needs and their families, and support them as they implement more effective strategies.

Recommendation 1C: Build a Website at the Central Hub to Support ECCE Quality, Access, and Equity across Hubs and ECCE Centres, and with Other ECCE Stakeholders

At present MOE has developed and maintains a website on which various ECCE documents are posted. These documents range from the ceremonial addresses given by the Minister of Education to resources in the website's Teacher and Student Portals that serve to guide the curriculum use and lesson planning at different levels of the primary and secondary system. We recommend that the creation and maintenance of a supplementary website be outsourced, housed and maintained by the central hub, with the Ministry and central and district hubs contributing to its continued development. Naturally the ECCE website and Ministry website will link to one another for information pertinent to ECCE.

The central hub's ECCE website will promote a virtual community of learners. Organized into distinct areas, it will provide stakeholders' with easy-access to materials and information. The site will ensure a unified standard for excellence, and be used by hubs to complement their services. Hubs will contribute to the site, identifying articles and resources based on their knowledge of what ECCE centres need.

One exciting possibility for the website is that it can become a repository of well-organized video clips of ECCE classroom teachers in action. This responds to the pressing need uncovered by our study: teachers need to see good practice. These three to five minute clips could be collected by hub staff, capturing examples of best practice in both their own hubs and at other centres. Before uploading clips, a review committee will assess the clips and agree on the questions to accompany each clip. The questions will promote reflective practice by engaging viewers in analyzing the clips. The clips will also link to appropriate sections of the Curriculum Guide, helping staff link practice to principles in the guide.

Beyond making the ECCE principles and child-centered best practices visible, the central hub's website should provide ECCE educators—consultants, workshop presenters, higher education staff, curriculum facilitators—with tools and other multimedia resources. Downloadable activities, materials, and links to resources keyed to the practices will serve to support their activities. Most importantly, the website will be accessible, promote consistency of practice, and provide alignment of pedagogy.

Naturally, the creation of a content-rich website needs to be systematically thought through and planned in stages. We recommend that a committee, consisting of Ministry ECCE staff, hub staff, higher education ECCE instructors, and consultants, including website developers, determine the website's areas, content, and stages of development.

Recommendation 1D: Build Capacity of ECCE Centres to Engage Parents and Community Partners in Supporting Children's Development and Achievement

One of the biggest challenges to implementing the principles in the National ECCE Curriculum Guide is building parents' and community awareness and acceptance of the benefits of child-center teaching and the value of play. Without the support of parents and the community, true system reform will be thwarted. In some centres, parents are already on-board. During parent interviews in one newly-built centre, one father related that his 2.5 year-old son was "more upbeat-he sings, talks more and socializes more" since leaving another center that "pushed book learning." But, parent views vary widely. Interviews with centre administrators and teachers revealed that many parents expect children to "sit, listen, and learn." Play is not valued. They expect ECCE centres to offer rigorous academics to prepare children for high-stakes national tests.

While our findings show that some ECCE centres are engaging the support of families through various family activities—home visits, parent workshops, meetings—most centres can do much more. Research on garnering parent and community support for education reform indicates that successful programs involve parents and community members in centre activities and provide them with evidenced-based, easy-to-read information about how children learn. They also provide families with clear ideas of what they should expect of their children and what parents can do at home to help children develop and learn. Finally, those centres will help parents to see the value of play, and child-centered approaches to teaching.

Helping parents, community members, and in some cases, ECCE staff to change long-held beliefs about the best ways to support children's learning is not an easy task. Therefore we recommended that the hubs serve as a vehicle for stimulating concerted, meaningful parent and community engagement and educational activities. In addition to conducting workshops and providing guiding materials for centre staff and administrators, hub staff can use onsite technical assistance to introduce centres to new approaches for parent and community engagement. For example, to address the lack of welcoming and informative displays evident from our centre

observations, hub staff can provide centres with ideas and materials for creating welcoming, informative, and educational displays that echo curriculum goals and make parents aware of how children learn complex concepts through play, peer talk, and art.

We recommend a cascading series of strategies to accomplish this goal. First, hub staff at both the central and district level must be trained on and be confident in using a variety of engagement strategies for parents and community members, such as creating a welcoming centre atmosphere, conducting workshops for parents on child development and effective parent-child home activities, and using parent-teacher conferences to introduce parents to new ways of thinking about their children's learning. One of the courses described in recommendation 1A. could be used for this purpose. Next, hub staff use training and TA to support centre teachers and administrators in adopting these new practices. Part of the training might draw on effective engagement practices already used in the community such as the parent communication vehicle, the *SERVOL News*, that shares information about programmes and their impact on the community, often including parents' voices. Finally, centre staff must develop and launch a plan to engage parents and community members through regular parent interactions and creative parent-child activities e.g., like creating a simple family book or calendar that demonstrates the value of new types of instruction.

RECOMMENDATION 2: REFINE THE PLANNING AND EXECUTION OF AN ECCE DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN COLLABORATION WITH THE HUBS

With the GOTT's growing investment in ECCE, now is the time to develop and implement an efficient, computerized ECCE data management system. While various concerted efforts are underway in the government to collect accurate data and manage it, ECCE warrants special attention and a unified approach. A robust, streamlined, and accurate ECCE data management system will provide the Ministry ECCE leaders with essential ECCE information about both public and private centres, teachers, children, and communities, and will track progress on SESP ECCE goals. It will also enable ECCE hub and local level administrators to access accurate data for decision making and continuous improvement efforts.

To begin, we recommend that cross-unit and systems meetings take place. These planning and problem solving data management meetings should include staff from key units in the Ministry, including the Research and Planning units, that are involved in data collection and

management, as well as those who need access to the data to guide their work. The purpose of the meetings will be to streamline, merge, improve, and link relevant ECCE data by examining: current ECCE data intake and reporting systems and their purposes; process/tools used; data analysis procedures; data availability and access; data accuracy; and data dissemination. Officials should determine the system's gaps, strengths, and points of convergence and/or linkages with other systems such as higher education. We recommend that database management consultants facilitate the meetings.

Such a system would be invaluable both as new efforts get underway and in the long term. For example, children, teachers, centres, and service programs might be assigned an ID number which will be used to track all information available at the ECCE level, including whether a child received screenings and intervention services, the number of type of credits and examinations achieved by each teacher, etc.

Furthermore, we recommend that the ECCE Division be equipped with central computers and high-speed DSL connections, enabling its staff to access data and make informed decisions. We recognize that alone, the Ministry does not have the capacity to collect data from all ECCE centres. Hubs must assume responsibility for assisting with data collection in each of their designated districts. Most importantly, data should be used to assist ECCE leaders and administrators at all levels in determining the state of ECCE and in making decisions about national and district improvements for all ECCE stakeholders.

CONCLUSION

Beyond building capacity, this seamless reform calls for building leadership. In a country with a limited pool of educators, regenerating and inspiring a radical change in the manner of teaching involves initiative and leadership in new places. Building leadership involves educators as decision-makers with the tools and supports to reach all children and elevate teaching.

An approach to teacher development needs to build capacity and commitment at the centre, community, and national levels. Teachers, support team members, facilitators, co-ordinators, quality assurance officers, parent/community co-ordinators, and training institutions all have to be on the same page.

Teacher development and capacity-building are a top priority in the SESP. As discussed in Chapters 3 and 5, mechanisms and mandates are in place to shape the tertiary system's

responsiveness to the needs of the ECCE workforce. Our research suggests some further coordination among institutions of higher education and post-secondary education would benefit the development of the existing population of teachers.

The proposed Hub Model and field-based professional development programme complement the existing education and career ladder in early childhood care and education currently available through the training institutions. Our recommendations will provide immediate support by teams of outside consultants working with newly hired ECCE staff in GOTT as well as customized tools, procedures, and resources to manage the programme delivery and evaluation.

Systems need to be in place to support change in teacher practice effectively, especially for practicing teachers. Administrators and other instructional leaders, such as the proposed ECCE Division's curriculum programme facilitators and their co-ordinator, will also need support and systems to manage their work with centres and families.

Bodies such as the NCECCE, the Accreditation Unit, or the higher education consortium discussed in Chapter 5 need to continue considering alternative pathways to credentialing teachers and providing credit for prior training and experience.

Most importantly, educators, in particular, practicing teachers, administrators and other instructional leaders such as the curriculum programme facilitators and their coordinators need continuous support and systems to manage their work with centres and families. Hence, we include a section on *Technical Assistance Programme* and *Tools for Educators* within this recommendation section.

What we saw throughout our study was that for change to really happen all stakeholders—at all levels—need support at each developmental stage, from design, to enactment, and through on-going evaluation. In Trinidad and Tobago at this time, few ECCE professionals have the opportunity to engage in these practices together at the field level and at the teacher educator level. In this chapter, we have suggested an approach that addresses this need in a coordinated, targeted way that will serve as a template for the future. The central hub will be the generating centre for all ECCE innovation in a decentralized way, in a space that is inclusive and open, and which draws on the main sources of expertise, from international partners, to university faculty and researchers.

PHASE I AND PHASE II ACTIVITIES

PHASE I: GATHERING AND ANALYSING CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION FROM KEY STAKEHOLDERS

In the first phase of our study, the Ministry's leadership was instrumental in enabling us to access existing research data and other essential documents. Immediately after signing the contract and prior to the first visit, the EDC research team identified, analysed, and coded key documents and research reports. Through this analysis we gained an understanding of the state of ECCE in Trinidad and Tobago and the significant plans underway to implement a national universal early childhood care and education system. Policy and regulatory documents gave us a perspective on critical issues and helped us identify and refine our research plan.

Phase I entailed examining documents produced over the past seven years, including:

- The National ECCE Curriculum Guide
- Strategic Facilities Plan for Early Childhood Care and Education Centres in Trinidad (Final Report)
- National Model for Education in Trinidad and Tobago: Early Childhood, Primary, and Secondary (Draft Report)

In addition, the following documents were collected and reviewed:

- Proposal for the Formation of ECCE centre support teams (10/10/06)
- Draft Proposal for Sensitisation of ECCE Communities
- Regulations governing School Boards: Education Act, chapters 39-01, Legal Supplement Part B, 40, No.123 & Part B, 44, No. 79
- Cabinet Minutes No. 105 (1/11/2007) on the Restructuring & Reorganisation of the ECCE Unit of the MOE
- Report on National Testing (2004 & 2005)
- Sample of signed Memos of Understanding
- Five Management Models
- ECCE job descriptions in the *Guardian* newspaper

- Interdisciplinary ECCE centre information sheet
- Transition Timeline
- GOTT Proposed Standards for Regulating Early Childhood Services (Green paper for Public Comment 1/2004)
- GOTT Ministry of Planning and Development Central Statistical Office (1990/1991 – 1999/2000)

These background materials provided geographic, economic, educational, cultural, and historic details that grounded us in the context and enabled us to identify focal areas for further examination. Below we describe some of our activities on our first and second visits to the country.

First Visit

EDC's first visit to the country involved the study's principal investigator from July 1 to 7. During this visit, Dr. Costanza Eggers-Piérola interviewed stakeholders and government leaders and visited three centres to interview administrators, view the facilities, and observe the graduation activities of a government-assisted centre. During the week, EDC interviewed individually, and in focus groups, 45 stakeholders representing different constituencies. Mrs. Ann Thornhill, in charge of the ECCE Unit, coordinated all interviews and focus groups and organised site visits. This first visit also provided us with an opportunity to develop a close working relationship with Ministry leaders and other SESP consultants whose studies center on curriculum and teacher development in primary and secondary school, thereby enhancing our understanding of points of convergence across educational levels. Table 1 outlines the schedule of interviews, visits, and focus groups undertaken in July by the EDC researcher.

Interviews with Government and NGO Staff. The interviews conducted with leaders in the ECCE division and other government departments and units (such as research and evaluation, decentralisation units, and planning division) deepened our appreciation and understanding of major reform, including decentralisation and transition efforts and the country's intent to improve ECCE management. During these interviews, we asked questions about coordinating reform efforts, ECCE new standards and government goals for improving ECCE articulation in primary schools, current MOE systems, and the quality and equity issues in our Terms of Reference. The interviews with leaders in district offices and centres—including administrators, teachers, curriculum facilitators, and the local School Board Unit—highlighted ECCE's

importance for leading the way to seamless reform, including plans to promote school linkages and build capacity at the community level. To gain the perspective of others in NGO sectors, we spoke with other ECCE stakeholders, including private centre staff, higher education faculty, and members of the National Association for Early Childhood Care and Development. The interviews addressed stakeholders' understanding of and involvement with the Seamless Education reform effort.

Focus Groups. Two focus groups informed our study on the first visit. These groups included stakeholders such as administrators, ECCE facilitators, early childhood association leaders, school staff and board members, and representatives of other government ministries and agencies. With each group, the researcher posed questions related to decision-making, ECCE reform, coordination and partnerships, and resources. Issues that surfaced during these hour and half long discussions helped us begin to understand what is needed to advance ECCE system reform. During all interviews and focus groups, we recorded responses and later coded and analysed the notes to meet the requirements of our Terms of Reference.

Site Visits. One of the three sites our principal investigator visited was one of the Ministry's new ECCE facilities. While the other two centres we visited were actively engaged in end-of-the year activities, or were otherwise winding down for the year, they nonetheless gave us an opportunity to view classroom environments, gather data on parent involvement, and interview teachers and a primary principal. The interview and visit to the primary school attached to the government-assisted centre revealed important considerations for transition plans and ensuring a seamless education that aligns with the new standards. At this site, our researcher also gathered information on continuous assessment training, procedures, and tools, as well as expectations for Infant I and II levels and testing for Standards I and III.

Table 1: Visit #1: July 1-7, 2007

DATE	ACTIVITY
Sunday, July 1 & Monday, July 2	• Meeting with Don Northey, SESP consultant, Testing, and Spanish as a First Foreign Language
Monday, July 2	• Meeting with Head of Unit, Mrs. Ann Thornhill • Interview with members of the SESP ECCE team, Mr. James Solomon, School Supervisor • Interview with Curriculum Facilitator/ECCE Programme coordinator, Mrs. Anastasia Coward-Rose • Interview with Local School Board Unit, Mrs. Jennifer Andall
Tuesday, July 3	• Focus group with NGO representatives: National Association for Early Childhood Care and Development, Nursery Association, Child Welfare League, Coterie of Social Workers, SERVOL • Interview with members of the Decentralisation unit, Dr. Janet Stanley-Marcano, Director and Ms. Brenda Moore, Assistant Director, General Research, and Evaluation • Meeting with Mr. Jorge Torres, IADB
Wednesday, July 4	• Interview with Planning Division Ministry, Mrs. Jennifer Hussain and Lisa Valedere • Interview with Dr. Carol Logie, Family Development and Children Research Centre/UWI School of Continuing Studies and chair of the National Commission on ECCE • Visit to St. George district office • Visits to two centres in East West corridor, St. George district, one recently constructed government facility (El Socorro), one existing government-assisted centre attached to a Tunapuna primary school • Discussion with curriculum facilitators at regional district • Interview with Tunapuna teachers, primary school principal, and Infant I teachers
Thursday, July 5	• Interviews with top executives at Head Office: Mr. Chin Aleong and Mr. Peter O'Neill, CEO • Interview with Department of Educational Research and Evaluation, Mrs. Yvonne Lewis and Andra Salandy • Visit to a denominational, government-assisted centre receiving a new centre facility (St. Sylvan's Anglican)
Friday, July 6	• Focus Group with ECCE Facilitators/Programme Coordinator candidates • Individual interview with past curriculum facilitator, ECCE Unit • Interview with Mrs. Zita Wright, ECCE Specialist and Coordinator of ECCE programmes in UTT and developer of the curriculum guides

Second Visit

EDC's second visit to Trinidad took place during the first week of August. Two EDC research staff members took this trip—Principal Investigator Costanza Eggers-Piérولا and Senior ECCE Advisor Sheila Skiffington. The visit's main purpose was to attend and present information at the August Workshop organised by the Ministry and to conduct additional interviews, including those to select country researchers to supplement the EDC team.

August Workshop. While most SESP consultant groups presented their mid-term findings at the Workshop, EDC had just begun its study and was thus asked to present only initial findings. We therefore developed a PowerPoint presentation of our preliminary findings and recommendations, organised in seven categories: (1) teacher development, (2) curriculum, (3) assessment and evaluation, (4) centre decision making, (5) family and community outreach, (6) infants and toddlers, and (7) strategic partnerships. These categories emerged from our document review, telephone interviews, focus groups, and limited site visits. Following the presentation, we responded to questions from Workshop participants. We also developed a one-page briefing paper on each category that we distributed to stakeholders.

The August workshop also provided an opportunity for EDC to meet with the ECCE stakeholder group and develop a log frame to contribute to the ECCE reform effort. EDC researchers participated in each session, supporting the group's efforts and sharing information related to particular topics in the log frame.

Coordination with SESP Consultants. In addition to participating in the workshop, we also took advantage of this second visit to meet with other SESP consultants, developing relationships to coordinate our efforts and share findings. In fact, as a result of those meetings, we added questions about inclusion to our instruments. Furthermore, we found the information shared by another SESP consulting group helpful in determining centres to visit.

Interviews. On the second visit, we conducted interviews with three additional MOE staff members and an early childhood department head at the University of the West Indies. Meeting with these key personnel yielded additional information on ECCE reform efforts and suggested several areas that we might examine in our study. Our interviews included sessions with Mrs. Ann Thornhill, the head of the ECCE Unit, the Human Resources Director, Ms. Nirmala

Majaral, senior legal office at the MOE, and Mrs. Vilma Cropper of the University of the West Indies' (UWI) School of Continuing Education.

These interviews were instrumental for our understanding of the status of staffing efforts and legal procedures to enable public/private partnerships. In addition, our interview with the head of UWI's School of Continuing Education provided us with a profile of teacher education during the past twenty years.

In-Country Researchers. One significant decision EDC made was to hire country researchers. By strategically selecting two researchers, we were able to capitalize on the ECCE research expertise present in the country and build our researchers' skills. We implemented several steps to secure highly skilled people for these positions. Before the August visit, we developed a detailed position description that we sent to several ECCE leaders and leading educational and ECCE institutions. We distributed the position posting to the University of the West Indies websites, two listserves, and key ECCE private and public centre leaders. During our August visit, we conducted six hour-long face-to-face interviews with qualified candidates. We also responded to numerous e-mail inquiries about the posting. By the middle of September, we selected two people to fill the research positions and developed and negotiated a detailed scope of work for each. The researchers that we selected bring both deep experience and a sound knowledge of ECCE. They began in the second week of October, accompanying both the study's principal investigator and the ECCE specialist on initial site visits to pilot the study's research tools, and began Phase II of the study.

Our August visit also allowed us to gather more data and documents to analyse at our home base and provided many contacts whom we subsequently called for further information and clarification. Meetings with our Inter-American Bank colleagues were also invaluable in directing out work and facilitating our data gathering.

PHASE II: CONDUCTING SYSTEMATIC INVESTIGATION WITH DIRECT OBSERVATION

In August the research team began collecting data from the field, drawing on the suite of instruments developed earlier in the study. Centres were selected as described in Chapter 2, seeking a representation from all of the districts in Trinidad and Tobago, as well as a balance of types of centre (public, publicly-assisted, and private). While geographic information system (GIS) data were not available to empirically determine areas of high poverty, we relied on the

ECCE Division's recommendations and on the level of need as identified in the Global Competitive Strategists' report. (See Endnotes.)

The ECCE Division drafted introductory letters that the research team presented to the sites visited. Observations were conducted for a minimum of 45 minutes using the *Classroom Observation Instrument*, and each site director was asked to complete an *Administrator's Survey*. In addition, wherever possible, parents and teachers were interviewed drawing on the *Community and Teacher Focus Group Protocol*.

The research team created a database to record responses to the *Classroom Observation Instrument* and all *Surveys* using Microsoft ACCESS application. This database was made available to in-country researchers through a shared internet site. Due to technical and other impediments, in-country researchers were unable to input the data as planned. Completed instruments were therefore processed in our EDC offices in Newton, Massachusetts.

Coding schemes were applied to these quantitative data to match responses with the research questions, and relationship analyses were run to create charts and reports relevant to our study. Qualitative analysis was performed on narratives collected in each instrument, using both etic and emic codes that were relevant to our research questions. Our discussion on findings draws on these narratives to deepen our understanding of the quality, practices, policies, and system that characterize the current state of ECCE in Trinidad and Tobago.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

- 1. CLASSROOM OBSERVATION INSTRUMENT**
- 2. ADMINISTRATOR QUESTIONNAIRE**
- 3. PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE**
- 4. COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE**
- 5. TEACHER FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE**

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION INSTRUMENT

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION STUDY

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION INSTRUMENT

Fall 2007

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION STUDY

EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT CENTER, INC.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESEARCHER

Classroom observation should be conducted when there is the best opportunity for observing children and teachers actively engaged in the learning process. For many classrooms this is the beginning of the day from arrival to preparations for lunch. However, observers should check with the program administrator or teacher in order to schedule a visit for the optimal time. Plan for a 2-3 hour observation for a classroom in each centre.

Find an unobtrusive place in the classroom where you can observe activities. Remember that you are rating the indicators based on the actions in the classroom, not matter who—teacher, teacher assistant, or volunteer—initiates them. The indicators are numbered; a three point rating scale is provided beside each indicator. The sample actions under each indicator will help you focus in on the specific actions that relate to each indicator. Use the space before each action to check off when you observe this activity. Some actions may have multiple checks, while other actions may have no checks at all. The checks, and the notes that you record in the Notes space provided at the end of each indicator section, will help you determine each indicator's rating—minimal, basic, or good. If no actions are observed for a particular items or the indicator is not applicable, check Not Observed/Not Applicable.

At the end of the tool there are several questions that you will want to ask of the teacher. Please find a time that is convenient to ask these questions of the teacher and to record her answers in the space provided. You will want to spend a half hour or less on this part of the tool. If the teacher is unavailable to answer these questions during your visit, ask her if you can interview her by phone later in the day. It is important to do this within a day of the classroom observation.

Please be assured that neither your name nor your centre's name will be identified with any of your responses. All responses will be anonymous.

Name of Researcher: _____

Date of Observation: _____

CLASSROOM INFORMATION

The following information should be based on the actual observation of classroom and any discrepancies between what was observed and the teacher's information of what is typical should be noted in the Comment section below.

Beginning time of observation: _____ **End time of observation:** _____

Teacher/s name/s: _____

of children in the classroom (at time of observation): _____

of adults in classroom and roles:

_____ Administrator/teacher
_____ Teacher
_____ Assistant teacher
_____ Auxiliary teacher
_____ Parent
_____ Volunteer
_____ Others Please specify (e.g. social worker, nurse, etc.): _____

Ages of children observed:

_____ # of 3 & 4 years old
_____ # of other children, please explain: _____

Languages spoken by teacher: _____

Languages spoken by children: _____

COMMENTS

Please record any comments that you believe should be noted that would affect the conduct of the observation. For example, record if there are fewer children in the classroom than normal or if the regular teacher assistant is absent from the classroom on the day of the observation.

INTERACTIONS

Check all indicators that apply and then assign an overall rating to the item.

	Minimal	Basic	Good	N/O or N/A
1. Teachers interact frequently with children showing affection, interest, and respect. _____ Teachers show affection and care (e.g. smiling, listening attentively, using a pleasant tone of voice). _____ Teachers interact with children at eye level _____ Teachers use children's names and verbally recognize accomplishments. Notes: _____ _____ _____	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Teachers are available and responsive to children. _____ Teachers respond to children's questions and requests. _____ Teachers maintain awareness of the activities of the entire group. _____ Teachers spend time observing each child without inappropriately interrupting an actively involved child. Notes: _____ _____ _____	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Teachers' interactions create a climate for positive personal, social, and emotional development. _____ Teachers encourage children to show respect for self, others, and the environment. _____ Teachers encourage children to cooperate and share with peers. _____ Teachers encourage children to problem-solve and negotiate choices. _____ Teachers promote respect for differences (i.e. differences in culture, ability, gender, ethnicity, etc.). _____ Teachers manage behavior in positive, constructive ways, helping children learn to appropriately negotiate differences/disagreements. Notes: _____ _____ _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Minimal	Basic	Good	N/O or N/A
4. Teachers provide opportunities and activities for children to develop social skills. _____ Teachers encourage children to express and explore their own and each other's emotions through available materials and activities (e.g. pretend play, use of puppets, books that address feelings). _____ Teachers promote cooperative play through group projects (e.g., block play, group art painting, games, etc.). _____ Teachers encourage children to respect the rights of others and well-being of the group. Notes: _____ _____ _____ _____	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Teachers' interactions encourage gender equity and provide all children with equal opportunities to take part in all activities. _____ Teachers provide models, props, and visual images of non-stereotypical gender roles (e.g. female fire fighter, male nurse). _____ Teachers do not divide children into activities or areas by gender. _____ Teachers encourage girls and boys to play with all toys (e.g., blocks, housekeeping) and join in activities equally. Notes: _____ _____ _____ _____	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Teachers interact positively and equitably with all children, regardless of race, ethnicity, ability, or language and encourage each child to take part in all classroom activities. _____ Teachers provide models, materials (books and games, and visual images (e.g., posters and pictures around the room) that portray diverse individuals in positive roles. _____ Children are not divided into activities or areas by characteristics such as race, ability, language. _____ Teachers encourage children to play with all toys (e.g., blocks, housekeeping) and join in all activities equally. Notes: _____ _____ _____ _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Minimal	Basic	Good	N/O or N/A
7. Teachers' interactions model respect, collaboration, and effective communication.	☐	☐	☐	☐
_____ Teachers and other adults present communicate with one another often and respectfully.				
_____ Teachers work together to manage the schedule and activities efficiently.				
_____ Teachers appear to work together collaboratively as a team.				

Notes: _____

LEARNING ACTIVITIES/CURRICULUM

8. Teachers provide a balance of teacher initiated and children directed activities.	☐	☐	☐	☐
_____ Choice time is evident in the classroom schedule.				
_____ Teachers encourage children to select from a variety of activities.				
_____ Teacher-directed activities are age appropriate and engaging for children.				

Notes: _____

9. Teachers offer children a balance of activities from which to choose.	☐	☐	☐	☐
_____ Teachers balance individual, small group, and large group activities.				
_____ Teachers encourage hands-on exploration and play.				
_____ Children are occupied in activities without waiting for teacher direction.				

Notes: _____

	Minimal	Basic	Good	N/O or N/A
10. Teachers recognize and extend child-initiated activities.	☐	☐	☐	☐
_____ Teachers encourage further exploration and explanation from the child (e.g., comparing textures of objects; observing and describing changes to color, shape, etc.).				
_____ Teachers foster child to child talk about shared activity.				
_____ Teachers introduce new materials to extend children's exploration.				

Notes: _____

11. Teachers encourage language and literacy development through reading and talking about books.	☐	☐	☐	☐
_____ Teachers read aloud to whole group.				
_____ Teachers read aloud to small groups.				
_____ Teachers ask children open-ended questions that promote discussion of the characters and ideas presented in books.				
_____ Teachers encourage children to use books independently.				
_____ Teachers' selection of books reflects children's culture, home experience, and interests.				

Notes: _____

12. Teachers encourage language development/effective communication through multiple activities.	☐	☐	☐	☐
_____ Teachers facilitate discussions that draw on imagination and creativity.				
_____ Teachers foster conversations among children.				
_____ Teachers encourage children's listening behavior.				
_____ Teachers use movement and music to encourage children's expression of ideas and feelings.				
_____ Teachers offer a range of experiences in art, crafts, music, and imaginative play.				

Notes: _____

	Minimal	Basic	Good	N/O or N/A
13. Teachers provide age-appropriate support for language and literacy development in all language areas (spoken, written, read, and viewed).	☐	☐	☐	☐
_____ Teachers call attention to sounds during storytelling or language-based games and songs (beginning sounds, rhyming, etc.).				
_____ Teachers write down what children dictate (children's names, details about their art work, etc.).				
_____ Teachers encourage children to write/scribble.				
_____ Teachers use new and challenging vocabulary and revisit new words in discussions, etc.				
_____ Teachers encourage children encouraged to listen for and use the sounds of language.				

Notes: _____

14. Teachers promote development of science concepts.	☐	☐	☐	☐
_____ Teachers encourage children to pose questions and explore solutions.				
_____ Teachers encourage children to predict and explain their ideas.				
_____ Teachers offer activities that nurture discovery and observation.				
_____ Teachers encourage children to represent what they observe in nature, in investigations or construction (water, sand, blocks, plants, animals, movement, patterns, etc.).				

Notes: _____

15. Teachers promote development of math concepts.	☐	☐	☐	☐
_____ Teachers stimulate children's awareness of numbers, patterns, shapes, space and positions, etc.				
_____ Teachers encourage children to use mathematics in problem-solving (numbers, special relationships, size, etc.).				
_____ Teachers offer children opportunities for counting, labeling, measuring, and ordering.				
_____ Teachers support children in their use of a variety of manipulatives.				

Notes: _____

	Minimal	Basic	Good	N/O or N/A
16. Teachers use technology (computer, video, television) appropriately to foster active learning.	☐	☐	☐	☐
_____ Teachers use computers, tape recorders, videos, etc. to support and extend children's learning.				
_____ Teachers interact with children during or after children's use (e.g., discussion of book on tape after listening).				
_____ Teachers help children understand the appropriate use of available equipment.				

Notes: _____

17. Teachers promote children's overall wellness.	☐	☐	☐	☐
_____ Teachers provide opportunities and encouragement for large motor activity (playing with large balls, balancing, climbing, swinging, etc.).				
_____ Teachers provide opportunity for outdoor play/field trips.				
_____ Teachers provide nutritious meals and snacks, minimizing sugar and salt intake.				
_____ Teachers talk with children about healthy choices (e.g., food, personal cleanliness).				

Notes: _____

18. Teachers integrate children with special needs.	☐	☐	☐	☐
_____ Teachers ensure children with special needs are integrated into activities.				
_____ Teachers provide additional support as appropriate for children with special needs.				
_____ When children with special needs are in the classroom ratios are appropriate.				

Notes: _____

	Minimal	Basic	Good	N/O or N/A
19. Teachers appropriately handle children's behavioral issues.	☐	☐	☐	☐
_____ Teachers redirect children who exhibit inappropriate behavior.				
_____ Teachers explain to children what to do (rather than what not to do).				
_____ Teachers encourage appropriate behavioral choices.				
_____ Teachers talk with children using calm voices.				
_____ Teachers use a positive approach to discipline.				

Notes: _____

ENVIRONMENT

20. The classroom space is organized to easily accommodate individual, small group, and large group activity.	☐	☐	☐	☐
_____ Activity centers are well-defined and attractive.				
_____ Spaces are provided for 1 or 2 children to be quiet and alone.				
_____ Space is adequate to allow children to move freely from activity centre to activity centre.				
_____ Space is adequate to accommodate children with physical disabilities or behavioral needs.				

Notes: _____

21. The classroom space provides children with visual cues regarding how to use the space.	☐	☐	☐	☐
_____ Blocks and block props are organized in an established area/centre.				
_____ Materials for pretend play (dress-up clothes, puppets, dolls, etc.) are available in established activity centre/s.				
_____ The book centre displays books at eye level and provides comfortable spaces for children to read.				
_____ Children have designated spaces to store their items.				
_____ Children's individual spaces are labeled with child's name.				
_____ Classroom materials are stored in bins/containers with cues to help keep them organized (e.g., photos, labels).				

Notes: _____

	Minimal	Basic	Good	N/O or N/A
22. The centre/classroom has space and equipment to encourage a balance of learning and development.	☐	☐	☐	☐
_____ Materials are available to support large muscle development (balls, wheel toys, climbing and balancing apparatus, etc.).				
_____ Materials are available to support small muscle development (writing instruments, small manipulatives, play dough/clay, craft materials, etc.).				
_____ Materials are available to support children's development of the visual arts (paints, markers, easels, paper).				
_____ Materials are available to support musical development and appreciation (musical instruments, music tapes for listening, etc.).				
_____ Materials are available to support children's cognitive development (puzzles, books, math materials, science materials, etc.).				

Notes: _____

23. The facility is safe, healthy, and comfortable for children and their families.	☐	☐	☐	☐
_____ Classroom furniture is child-size.				
_____ Equipment and furniture are in good repair.				
_____ The classroom and outdoor play areas are clean and free of debris.				
_____ Hazardous materials (cleaning supplies, etc.) and equipment (knives, unprotected electrical outlets, etc.) are kept out of reach.				
_____ Food is properly stored and tables are sanitized after children eat.				
_____ Children's bathrooms are clean and supplied.				

Notes: _____

	Minimal	Basic	Good	N/O or N/A
24. Materials are organized to encourage a variety of uses and to promote active, age-appropriate learning.	☐	☐	☐	☐
_____ Children can easily access materials.				
_____ Materials are organized to encourage children's creativity and independence.				
_____ Learning centers are well-organized and equipped with age-appropriate materials.				
_____ Signs and labels for objects, activity areas, children's names, are posted at eye level.				

Notes: _____

25. Classroom displays and materials promote children's self-concept and community and ethnic pride.	☐	☐	☐	☐
_____ Photos, displays, and books reflect children's cultures and heritage.				
_____ Pictures and photos reflect children, families, and community life are displayed.				
_____ Children's creative work is displayed.				

Notes: _____

26. Literacy materials are varied and of good quality.	☐	☐	☐	☐
_____ Books and writing materials are in ample supply and in a good condition.				
_____ Literacy materials are well-organized, attractively displayed, and accessible to children.				
_____ Books are offered in a variety of topics.				
_____ Books, photos, and illustrations portray different ethnicities, customs, and folklore.				

Notes: _____

	Minimal	Basic	Good	N/O or N/A
27. The centre/classroom has materials posted/available for parents, visitors, and volunteers.	☐	☐	☐	☐
_____The curriculum schedule is posted.				
_____Notices are posted for all to read.				
_____Children's creative work is attractively displayed.				
_____Materials are offered that explain the importance of play in the lives of children and other learning principles.				

Notes: _____

QUESTIONS FOR TEACHER

1. How did today's activities fit into your overall curriculum plan?
2. Do you have a copy of the *National ECCE Curriculum Guide*? If you do how do you use it?
3. What were your goals for learning in _____ (indicate one of the major activities observed)?
4. How do you document children's growth and needs?
5. How do you plan for children to meet their individual needs?
6. How do you accommodate children with special needs?
7. How do you communicate children's progress with their families?
8. How do you involve families in supporting their children's growth and development?
9. What support and supervision do you receive? How often and from whom?

ADMINISTRATOR QUESTIONNAIRE

**EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE
AND EDUCATION STUDY
ADMINISTRATOR/TEACHER
QUESTIONNAIRE**

**TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION STUDY
EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT CENTER, INC.**

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect information about Early Childhood Care and Education centres across Trinidad and Tobago for the Government. The Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) will use data that we collect from this study to help inform recommendations to the Ministry of Education aimed at improving quality, access, and support to Early Childhood Care and Education centres across Trinidad and Tobago.

This questionnaire presents a series of questions. They focus on three categories: 1) structure and characteristics of your centre—operations, management, decision making, partnerships, and human and financial resources; 2) child and family education and other services; and 3) staff activities and development.

Please try to answer each question. If you are unsure of the answer, give your best estimate. We thank you for your time and responses.

Costanza Eggers-Piérrola, Ed.D.
Education Development Center, Inc.
Newton, Massachusetts, USA

Please be assured that neither your name nor your centre's name will be identified with any of your responses. All responses will be anonymous.

To be Completed by Researcher

Name of Researcher Conducting the Survey: _____

Name of Centre Administrator/Teacher Interviewed: _____

Name of Center: _____

Location of Center: _____

Centre Contact Information: (Telephone/E-mail) _____

Date Completed: _____

I. CENTRE STRUCTURE AND CHARACTERISTICS

1. What are the opening hours of your centre? (i.e., days and hours) _____
2. What is your centre's enrollment of preschoolers?
 - a. _____ 3 year olds
 - b. _____ 4 year olds
 - c. _____ 5 year olds
 - d. _____ birth to three year olds
3. What is your centre's total number of preschool classrooms? _____
4. How many preschool teachers does your centre employ? _____
5. How many preschool teacher assistants does your centre employ? _____
6. How many preschool teaching staff (*teachers and auxiliary teachers*) work in your centre?
 - a. _____ # who work full time
 - b. _____ # who work part time
7. What is the average number of children in each of your preschool classrooms? _____
8. What is the average number of paid preschool teaching staff in a classroom at a given time?

9. How would you describe the location of your centre?
☐ Urban ☐ Rural ☐ Other, describe: _____
10. How would you describe your centre type? (Check all that apply)
☐ Public ☐ Denominational ☐ Unregistered
☐ Private (no MOE funds) ☐ Private (receive MOE funds) ☐ Other, describe: _____
11. Does your centre have preschool child enrollment requirements?
☐ No ☐ Yes → If yes, please describe: _____
12. Is your centre unable to serve preschool children who are... (Check all that apply)
☐ In diapers ☐ Of other religions ☐ Behaviorally challenged
☐ Have physical disabilities ☐ Speak languages other than English ☐ Economically deprived
☐ Developmentally delayed ☐ Cognitively delayed ☐ Other, describe: _____
13. How would you describe the socio/economic status (SES) of the preschool children you serve?
☐ Low SES ☐ Middle SES ☐ Higher SES ☐ Not sure
14. Approximately what percentage of preschool children do you serve in these categories?
_____ % low SES _____ % middle SES _____ % higher SES
15. Is your centre formally associated with a primary school?
☐ No ☐ Yes → If yes, please describe: _____

16. What following funding sources does your centre access to provide services to preschoolers and their families at your child care centre?

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| a. Ministry of Education | ☐ No | ☐ Yes |
| b. SERVOL | ☐ No | ☐ Yes |
| c. Parent child care tuition/fees | ☐ No | ☐ Yes |
| | If yes, average amount received per child per month: _____ | |
| | If yes, does you centre have a sliding fee scale? ☐ Yes ☐ No | |
| d. Other community organizations | ☐ No | ☐ Yes |
| | If yes, please specify organization: _____ | |
| e. Religious/denominational organization | ☐ No | ☐ Yes |
| f. Other private funding (business, foundation) | ☐ No | ☐ Yes Please specify: _____ |
| g. Other funding | ☐ No | ☐ Yes Please specify: _____ |

17. Does your center also serve infant and toddlers?

- ☐ No ☐ Yes → If yes, please describe and how many: _____

18. What are the biggest challenges you face in managing your centre? (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Meeting new government regulations/requirements | ☐ Training teachers on centre practices |
| ☐ Maintaining the building/facility | ☐ Meeting parents' expectations |
| ☐ Meeting increased centre operating expenses | ☐ Getting parents to complete paperwork |
| ☐ Hiring qualified preschool teachers | ☐ Other, describe: _____ |
| ☐ Keeping qualified teachers | |

19. What support does the Ministry of Education currently provide to your centre?

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Facility costs/development | ☐ Teacher/staff training sessions |
| ☐ Teacher salaries | ☐ Onsite technical support |
| ☐ Materials/equipment for the centre | ☐ Other, describe: _____ |

20. Since September 2006, has your centre received any of the following from the Ministry of Education or other organizations?

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a. Books | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
| b. Equipment | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
| c. Supplies | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
| d. Training | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
| e. Teacher salaries | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
| f. Family worker salaries | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
| g. A specialist's observations, | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
| h. Feedback and technical support | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
| How often? _____ How helpful? ☐ Very ☐ Somewhat ☐ Not | | |

21. How does your centre receive information from the Ministry of Education? (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ In the mail | ☐ Word of mouth, e.g. from other centre administrators |
| ☐ Organized/planned meeting | ☐ Visit from Ministry staff |
| ☐ Telephone call from Ministry staff | ☐ From an official in my organization |
| ☐ Centre training sessions | ☐ Rarely receive information from the Ministry |
| ☐ Other, describe: _____ | |

22. What steps has your centre taken to address the new standards? (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Made facility improvements | ☐ Organized centre support team |
| ☐ Staff working on meeting new qualifications | ☐ Revised centre policies |
| ☐ Implemented new curriculum | ☐ Established new curriculum planning procedures |
| ☐ Conducted staff training on new standards | ☐ Conducted meeting/s with parents |
| ☐ Established procedures for assessing children | ☐ Have or working on a partnership with MOE |
| ☐ Improved child/staff ratios | ☐ Other, describe: _____ |

23. How is your centre governed and policy decisions made? (Check one)

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Organization board of directors | ☐ Local School Board |
| ☐ Parent decision-making body | ☐ Centre support team |
| ☐ Administrator and/or staff make decisions | ☐ Other, describe: _____ |

24. What partnerships does your Early Childhood Care & Education Centre have? (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Local elementary school | ☐ Other early childhood programs |
| ☐ Community family services | ☐ Community health organizations |
| ☐ Churches | ☐ Other, describe: _____ |

25. Who conducts supervisory/classroom monitoring of your centre? (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Supervisory teacher | ☐ Ministry of Education staff |
| ☐ Centre Administrator/teacher | ☐ Not sure if monitorings are conducted |
| ☐ Organization's official | ☐ No monitoring is conducted |
| ☐ Centre/organization's social service worker | ☐ Other, describe: _____ |
| ☐ Servol staff | |

26. How often are monitoring visits conducted?

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Weekly | ☐ Quarterly |
| ☐ Twice a Month | ☐ Rarely |
| ☐ Monthly | ☐ Other, describe: _____ |

II. CHILD AND FAMILY EDUCATION AND OTHER SERVICES

1. How satisfied are you with the following at your centre?	Very	Somewhat	Not Very	Not at All
a. Materials and classroom equipment	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Quality of the building and physical space	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Overall quality of the centre	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Children's learning progress	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. Do you have the *National Early Childhood Care and Education Curriculum Guide*?

- ☐ No ☐ Yes ☐ Not sure

3. What curriculum does the centre use in the preschool classes?

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Bright Horizons | ☐ Teacher/centre designed curriculum |
| ☐ SPICES (SERVOL's) | ☐ National ECCE Curriculum Guide |
| ☐ Harmonized Curriculum | ☐ Other, please describe: _____ |

4. Do teachers conduct preschool child assessments?

- ☐ No ☐ Yes → If yes, what assessment tool is used?
☐ Teacher or centre designed tool ☐ Formal published tool, please name: _____

5. How is child developmental assessment information used at your centre? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ To determine the services children need
☐ For planning curriculum approaches and activities
☐ Other, please explain: _____

6. Does your centre screen preschool children for developmental issues (i.e., speech/language, motor, health, emotions)?

- ☐ No ☐ Yes → If yes, what assessment tool is used?
If Yes, what tool is used to screen the children? _____

7. Does your program have a system for referring preschool children suspected of having a disability?

- ☐ Yes → If yes, please describe: _____ ☐ No ☐ Not sure

8. How many preschool children enrolled have a documented disability? _____

9. Of the number of preschool children reported above with a disability, please identify the disability. #___Cognitive #___Physical/Motor #___Speech #___Health

#___Vision #___Hearing #___Emotional #___Not sure

10. How many preschool children enrolled have a suspected disability, but have not yet been diagnosed? _____

11. Of the number of children reported in #8 above, how many receive services related to their disability at the centre? _____

12. Please indicate if your centre offers the following services <u>for children</u>. If Yes, approximately how many preschoolers receive that service?	No	Yes	If yes, how many children receive them?
a. Vision examination	☐	☐ →	
b. Hearing examination	☐	☐ →	
c. Speech examination	☐	☐ →	
d. Developmental examination	☐	☐ →	
e. Mental health observation	☐	☐ →	
f. Nutritional examination	☐	☐ →	
g. Medical examinations	☐	☐ →	
h. Dental examinations	☐	☐ →	
i. Lead screening	☐	☐ →	
j. Physical or occupational therapy	☐	☐ →	
k. Speech/language therapy	☐	☐ →	
m. Transportation to the centre	☐	☐ →	

13. Do teachers support preschool children's transition to primary school?

☐ No ☐ Yes → If yes, what is done to support such transitions? _____

14. Do teachers at your centre visit families of preschoolers in their homes?

☐ No ☐ Yes → If yes, what is the purpose of these visits? _____

15. Does your centre provide parent/teacher conferences for the parents of preschool children?

☐ No ☐ Yes → How often? _____

16. Does your centre have an organized group of parents who participate in the centre's activities?

☐ No ☐ Yes → What is it called? _____

17. Does your centre provide opportunities for preschoolers' parents to participate in the school board or a management body of the centre?

☐ No ☐ Yes, all parents ☐ Yes, some parents Please describe: _____

18. Does your centre have a process for working with families to set goals for their preschoolers?

☐ No ☐ Yes, all families ☐ Yes, some families Please describe: _____

19. Does your centre arrange educational support activities, such as workshops or support groups for parents?

☐ No ☐ Yes If yes, then how often? _____ On average, how many attend? _____

III. STAFF ACTIVITIES AND DEVELOPMENT

1. How many of your current preschool teachers have the following as their highest level of education? Please count each teacher only once according to his/her highest level of education.

- | | |
|---|---|
| a. _____ O Level or C.X.C | f. _____ Bachelor's Degree in Another Field |
| b. _____ O Level, C.X.C plus ECCE courses | g. _____ Master's Degree or Higher in Early Childhood |
| c. _____ A Level or C.A.P.E | h. _____ Master's Degree or Higher in Another Field |
| d. _____ A Level, C.A.P.E plus ECCE courses | i. _____ Other: _____ |
| e. _____ Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood | |

2. Approximately what percent of your centre's preschool teaching staff receive training annually? _____%

3. During the past year, did your preschool teachers participate in any of the following professional development opportunities? If so, how many teachers participated?

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|-------------------|
| a. Workshops at your centre | ☐ No ☐ Yes | |
| b. Workshops not at your centre | ☐ No ☐ Yes | |
| c. ECCE or tertiary level courses | ☐ No ☐ Yes | → How many? _____ |
| d. Distance learning | ☐ No ☐ Yes | → How many? _____ |
| e. Other | ☐ No ☐ Yes | → How many? _____ |

4. Did your preschool teachers attend any of the following training opportunities in the past year? If staff attended the training, please indicate if Ministry of Education supported or contributed to the training.

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| a. Training on curriculum use | ☐ No | ☐ Yes | |
| b. Literacy training | ☐ No | ☐ Yes | |
| c. Diversity training | ☐ No | ☐ Yes | |
| d. Parent involvement training | ☐ No | ☐ Yes | |
| f. ECCE or tertiary level courses | ☐ No | ☐ Yes | |
| g. Child assessment | ☐ No | ☐ Yes | |
| h. Other | ☐ No | ☐ Yes | If yes, please describe: _____ |

5. How often do your preschool teachers have access to program materials such as books, photos, etc. that reflect the population of children served?

- ☐ Always ☐ Usually ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never

6. How many preschool teachers left your centre's workforce in 2006? Total number: _____

Of those the total number of teachers who left, please provide numbers and reasons for their leaving:

- _____ Obtained better paying job in early childhood field
- _____ Lacked skills necessary to do job
- _____ Obtained better paying job in another field
- _____ Laid off due to centre budget cuts or drop in enrollment
- _____ Other, describe: _____

7. Does your centre have partnerships with other community organizations?

- ☐ No ☐ Yes → Please describe: _____

8. Does your centre have designated staff to work with the community?

- ☐ No ☐ Yes → Please describe: _____

IV. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE CHILD CARE CENTRE ADMINISTRATOR/TEACHER

1. How long has the current centre administrator/teacher been working in the field of early childhood education? _____ number of years

2. What is the highest level of formal education the child care administrator/teacher has attained?

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ High School Diploma | ☐ Bachelor's Degree in Another Field |
| ☐ Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood | ☐ Master's Degree or Higher in Early Childhood |
| ☐ Certificate in School Management | ☐ Master's Degree or Higher in Another Field |
| ☐ Executive Diploma in School Management | ☐ Other: _____ |

3. Please describe below the biggest challenge your child care centre has faced during the past year. (Continue onto the back of this page, if you need more space.)

4. What is your personal hope for early childhood care and education in Trinidad and Tobago?
(Continue onto the back of this page, if you need more space.)

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

This instrument is based on other instruments developed and used by EDC: *Partnership Impact Project; Investigating Partnerships in Early Childhood Education (I-PIECE); Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes Study; Child Care Staffing Study; and FACES.*

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION STUDY

EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT CENTER, INC.

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Please be assured that neither your name nor your child's nor centre's name will be identified with any of your responses. All responses will be anonymous.

The Ministry of Education in Trinidad & Tobago is engaged in an expanded preschool educational reform effort.

Your views and experiences are vital in helping shape the reform. You may have more than one child enrolled at this centre. These questions refer *only* to the children you have in a preschool classroom at this centre.

1. How old is your preschool child?

3
years old

4
years old

5
years old

Please check which apply. If you have 2 or more children in the centre, place more than 1 check in the appropriate boxes

☐☐☐

2. What is the name of the preschool centre where your child spends most of the day?

3. Is the centre conveniently located to your home or work? ☐ Yes ☐ No

4. My centre is open at hours convenient to my work hours. ☐ Yes ☐ No If No, please explain: _____

5. To what extent are the following statements true?

Always
True

Often
True

At
Times
True

Never
True

Don't
Know

a. The centre provides many opportunities for my child to explore and express himself or herself through the arts.

☐☐☐☐☐

b. My child has a chance to use materials in a variety of ways.

☐☐☐☐☐

c. My child's teacher encourages imagination and curiosity.

☐☐☐☐☐

d. My child is encouraged to express herself or himself in different ways.

☐☐☐☐☐

e. The centre includes community members in activities

☐☐☐☐☐

f. The centre encourages my child to initiate and participate in many hands-on activities and exploration projects.

☐☐☐☐☐

5. To what extent are the following statements true?	Always True	Often True	At Times True	Never True	Don't Know
g. My child's teacher talks with my child about books.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. My child's teacher reads to the children.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. The centre helps my child develop a love of books and reading.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. My child's teacher encourages my child to pose questions and explore solutions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. My child spends time watching television or videos in this classroom.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
l. My child's teacher offers my child choices in activities and play.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
m. My centre encourages pride and respect for different cultures.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
n. My child learns how to get along with all children	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
o. My child has learnt limits and responsibilities for her or his actions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
p. The centre treats all children and their families fairly and respectfully	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
q. My child gets a chance to interact with people of different cultures and ethnicities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
r. My child's teacher and I share information about my child.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
s. My child's teacher visits with me in my home.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
t. My child's teacher gives me ideas on how to support my child's learning at home.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

6. Does your child receive any of the following services at the centre or do you receive referral information from your child's centre?	Yes Services	Yes Referral	No	Don't Know
a. To check my child's eye sight .	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. To check my child's hearing .	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. To check my child's speech .	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. To check my child's teeth .	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. To check my child's nutrition .	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. To check my child's overall development .	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. To check my child's overall health .	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. To check my child's behavioral/emotional development .	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. To provide my child speech therapy .	☐	☐	☐	☐
l. To provide my child transportation to centre.	☐	☐	☐	☐

7. Does the centre give you information about the following?	No	Yes
a. I get information about my child's learning .	☐	☐
b. I get information about how my child learns through play .	☐	☐
c. I get information about ways I can be involved in the centre .	☐	☐
d. I get information about the work of parent councils, support teams, and/or community boards that help the centre's work .	☐	☐
e. I get information on parenting .	☐	☐
f. I get information on health and family life education .	☐	☐
g. I get information about social services .	☐	☐

8. Does another agency such as a community or social service agency provide you with these services?

☐ No ☐ Yes → Please describe: _____

9. What were the main reasons why you chose this centre? (Check up to 3 that are important to you.)

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ The centre is close to my home | ☐ The centre had an opening for my child |
| ☐ The centre is close to my work | ☐ The centre prepares my child for primary school |
| ☐ The centre has good teachers | ☐ The centre provides many services |
| ☐ My other child attends the centre | ☐ The centre reflects my religious/cultural beliefs |
| ☐ The centre is affordable | ☐ The centre is attractive and well equipped |

10. What do you think is needed for children to be prepared for primary school?	Extremely Important	Very Important	Important	Not Very Important	Not at All Important
a. Child can meet and play with children her/his own age	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Child adapts to changes easily	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Child follows teachers' rules and instructions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Child solves his/her own problems	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Child pays attention to teachers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Child communicates needs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Child understands directions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. Child is curious	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. Child likes books and being read to	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. Child recognizes his/her name	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. Child uses pencils and crayons	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
l. Child engages in imaginary play	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

10. What do you think is needed for children to be prepared for primary school?	Extremely Important	Very Important	Important	Not Very Important	Not at All Important
m. Child knows ABC's	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
n. Child knows numbers to 10	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
o. Child understands how to respect and get along with other children	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

11. How often do you visit and volunteer or observe in your child's classroom?

Times per year: _____

12. Do you help with a parent group or participate in the Community Board/Council or Support Team? ☐ No ☐ Yes→ If yes, describe: _____

13. How would you rate the overall quality of your child's centre?

☐ Excellent

☐ Good

☐ Fair

☐ Poor

14. Compared to last year, the quality of care provided at this centre has...

☐ Increased

☐ Decreased

☐ Stayed the same

☐ Not at this centre last year

15. Do you speak a language at home apart from English?

☐ No

☐ Yes→ What is it? _____

16. How do you describe your ethnicity?

☐ Indian

☐ Chinese

☐ Caucasian

☐ African

☐ Syrian/Lebanese

☐ Other _____

17. How many times during a typical week do you engage in the following activities at home?

a. Read to your child?

_____ Times per week

b. Tell stories to your child?

_____ Times per week

c. Listen to your child's stories?

_____ Times per week

d. Sing to or with your child

_____ Times per week

e. Talk with your child about activities, books, and toys she/he enjoys?

_____ Times per week

18. In your own words, please describe your hope for your child's centre.

19. In your own words, please describe your child's centre's biggest challenge.

Thank you very much! Your answers will help shape Trinidad & Tobago's Seamless Education System

COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUP

DISCUSSION GUIDE

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION STUDY

Community Focus Group Discussion Guide

Fall 2007

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION STUDY EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT CENTER, INC.

Purpose: The EDC researcher will present the following questions to a small group of community members involved with the ECCE centre. These can be randomly selected by the centres' directors. The group size can be 3 - 8 community members—parents, board members, community service centres, etc.—from the community who will participate in a group interview for approximately 1 to 1.5 hours. The purpose of the interviews is to obtain different perspectives and to gather additional information from the centres and the perspective of community members. It is important to note that the focus group is not a problem solving or technical assistance session. The researcher remains objective and does not make evaluative comments about the information shared. Community members can hear one another's perspectives and add to the data being collected through other research tools; it is not necessary for the group to agree or reach consensus. The researcher's role is to manage the discussion and to record key points made from the discussion, typing up the notes immediately following the interview and submitting them to the EDC project staff via e-mail.

Questions for the focus group:

1. What do you think is important in supporting children's learning in your ECCE centre?
Probe: What should teacher do? What capacities should your centre have?
2. How you are involved with your ECCE centre?
Probe: What means are made available for you to contribute your ideas? Who makes decisions and how is information shared with you?
3. What do you consider to be your centre's major strengths?
Probe: What about the assets and capabilities mentioned earlier (#1) as being important—how do these play out in your centre?
4. What do you consider to be your centre's major challenges?
Probe: Are their particular financial or educational challenges? Are their challenges in aligning with the primary grades?
5. Are you aware of the GOTT's educational reform initiatives? What are your thoughts?
Probe: Are you aware of the new requirements (white paper)? What do you think will be your centre's involvement with these new initiatives?

6. Is there anything else you think is important for us to know about ECCE and your centre?

TEACHER FOCUS GROUP

DISCUSSION GUIDE

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION STUDY

Teacher Focus Group Discussion Guide

Fall 2007

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION STUDY EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT CENTER, INC.

Purpose: The EDC researcher will present the following questions to a small group of ECCE teaching staff at randomly selected centres. The group size can be 3 - 8 teachers from the site who will participate in a group interview for approximately 1 to 1.5 hours. The purpose of the interviews is to obtain different perspectives and to gather additional information from the centres. It is important to note that the focus group is not a problem solving or technical assistance session. The researcher remains objective and does not make evaluative comments about the information shared. Teachers can hear one another's' perspectives and add to the data being collected through other research tools; it is not necessary for the group to agree or reach consensus. The role of the researcher is to manage the discussion (see tips attached) and to record key points made from the discussion, typing up the notes immediately following the interview and submitting them to the EDC project staff via e-mail.

Questions for the teacher focus group:

1. What do you think is important in supporting children's learning in your ECCE centre?
Probes: What do you do to foster children's learning and what should you know about each child?
2. Can you describe the curriculum you use with children during the day and how activities are planned?
Probe: What different developmental areas do you focus on and how is planning done to meet children's individual needs, including those with special needs?
3. What kind of support and/or training do you receive and how does it happen?
Probe: What kinds of activities happen between you and the centre's supervisors?
4. How do you involve families and/or other community members?
Probe: How do you help parents support their child's learning at home? How do community members, including the elementary schools, work with your centre?
5. Is there anything else you think is important for us to know about ECCE and your centre?

TABLES AND FIGURES

- 1. TABLE C1: GLOBAL QUALITY ITEMS & QUALITY INDICATORS**
- 2. TABLE C2: COMPARISON OF MEAN SCORES ON 27 QUALITY ITEMS**
- 3. TABLE C3A: SUMMARY OF MEANS ACROSS SUBSCALES**
- 4. TABLE C3B: AVERAGE NUMBER OF INDICATORS OBSERVED**
- 5. TABLE C3C: PERCENT OF TOTAL INDICATORS OBSERVED**

Table C1: List of Quality Items and Indicators

SUB SCALES	QUALITY ITEMS		QUALITY INDICATORS
INTERACTIONS	1. Teachers interact frequently with children showing affection, interest & respect.	1a	Affection & care
		1b	Eye level interaction
		1c	Name & recognition
	2. Teachers are available and responsive to children.	2a	Respond to children
		2b	Awareness of whole group
		2c	Observe children individually
	3. Teachers' interactions create a climate for positive personal, social, & emotional development.	3a	Respect for self, others & environs
		3b	Encourage cooperation & sharing
		3c	Encourage problem-solving & negotiating choices
		3d	Respect for differences
		3e	Help children manage their own behavior & disagreements
	4. Teachers provide opportunities and activities for children to develop social skills.	4a	Expressing & exploring emotions through activities/materials
		4b	Cooperation through group projects
		4c	Take responsibility rights and well-being of others
		4d	
	5. Teachers' interactions encourage gender equity and provide & children with equal opportunities to take part in all activities.	5a	Materials to model gender equity
		5b	Groupings not divided by gender
		5c	Engage in activities without regard to gender
	6. Teachers interact positively and equitably with all children, regardless of race, ethnicity, ability, or language and encourage each child to take part in all classroom activities.	6a	Materials to model racial, ability, linguistic equity
		6b	Groupings not divided by race, ability, language, etc.
		6c	Encourage equity in play
	7. Teachers promote development of science concepts.	7a	Teachers communicate frequently
		7b	Teachers work together to manage schedule & activities
		7c	Teachers collaborate and work effectively
LEARNING ACTIVITIES/CURRICULUM	8. Teachers promote development of math concepts.	8a	Choice in schedule
		8b	T encourages choice
		8c	T-directed activities appropriate
	9. Teachers use technology (computer, video, television) appropriately to foster active learning.	9a	Balance of Individual, group, whole group activities
		9b	Hands-on exploration & play
		9c	Children engaged w/o need for T. direction
	10. Teachers promote children's overall wellness.	10a	Extends child exploration & explanation
		10b	Fosters child talk
		10c	Introduce material to extend exploration
	11. Teachers integrate children with special needs.	11a	Reads aloud to whole group
		11b	Reads aloud to small group
		11c	Asks open-ended questions about book
		11d	Encourages independent use of books
		11e	Choice of book reflects children
	12. Teachers appropriately handle children's behavioral issues.	12a	Facilitates conversation that builds imagination & creativity
		12b	Fosters talk among children
		12c	Encourages listening
		12d	Uses movement & music to guide child's expression
		12e	Offers a variety of arts, crafts & imaginative play experiences
	13. Teachers provide age-appropriate support for language and literacy development in all language areas (spoken, written, read, and viewed).	13a	Introduce phonological
		13b	Records child dictation/words
		13c	Encourages emergent writing
		13d	Introduces & reinforces vocabulary
		13e	Promotes phonological awareness
	14. Teachers promote development of science concepts.	14a	Encourages questions & problem-solving
		14b	Encourages predictions & exploration
		14c	Offers activities for discovery & observation
		14d	Encourages representation of science phenomena

SUB SCALES	QUALITY ITEMS		QUALITY INDICATORS
LEARNING ACTIVITIES/CURRICULUM	15. Teachers promote development of math concepts.	15a	Stimulates numeracy
		15b	Encourages math in problem-solving
		15c	Offers activities to build numeracy
		15d	Supports use of manipulatives
	16. Teachers use technology (computer, video, television) appropriately to foster active learning.	16a	Uses technology to support & extend learning
		16b	Interacts during child's use of technology
		16c	Guides child use of technology
	17. Teachers promote children's overall wellness.	17a	Provides opportunities for large motor activity
		17b	Offers outdoor activities
		17c	Provides healthy food
		17d	Promotes healthy choices
	18. Teachers integrate children with special needs.	18a	Integrates children with special needs
		18b	Provides support to children with special needs
		18c	Ensures appropriate ratios w/special needs children
	19. Teachers appropriately handle children's behavioral issues.	19a	Redirects children's behavior
		19b	Uses positive redirection
		19c	Encourages appropriate behavior choices
		19d	Uses calm voice
		19e	Uses positive discipline
ENVIRONMENT	20. The classroom space is organized to easily accommodate individual, small group, and large group activity.	20a	Attractive & defined activity centres
		20b	Individual & quiet spaces available
		20c	Space allows free movement
		20d	Space accommodates children with physical or other needs
	21. The classroom space provides children with visual cues regarding how to use the space.	21a	Construction toys organized in centres
		21b	Space & materials for pretend play
		21c	Book centre attractive & comfortable
		21d	Children have storage spaces
		21e	Children's spaces have name labels
		21f	Materials organized and labeled
	22. The centre/classroom has space and equipment to encourage a balance of learning and development.	22a	Materials available for large motor activity
		22b	Materials available for small motor activity
		22c	Materials available for visual arts
		22d	Materials available for music
		22e	Materials available for cognitive development
	23. The facility is safe, healthy, and comfortable for children and their families.	23a	Child-size furniture
		23b	Furniture & equipment in good repair
		23c	Clean indoor & outdoor play areas
		23d	Hazardous material stores appropriately
		23e	Sanitary conditions for eating
		23f	Clean bathrooms & well-supplied
	24. Materials are organized to encourage a variety of uses and to promote active, age-appropriate learning.	24a	Materials are child accessible
		24b	Materials encourage creativity & independence
		24c	Learning centres organized & well-equipped
		24d	Signs at eye level label objects, activity areas, names
	25. Classroom displays and materials promote children's self-concept and community and ethnic pride.	25a	Visual displays & books reflect children's culture
		25b	Pictures reflect children, families, community
		25c	Children's creative work is displayed
	26. Literacy materials are varied and of good quality.	26a	Literacy materials are plentiful & appropriate
		26b	Literacy materials are organized & accessible
		26c	Books on variety of topics are available
		26d	Books & visuals in books reflect a variety of cultural differences
	27. The centre/classroom has materials posted/available for parents, visitors, and volunteers.	27a	Schedule is posted
		27b	Notices posted openly
		27c	Children's work is displayed
		27d	Materials display the value of play for learning

Table C2: Comparison of Mean Scores on 27 Quality Items by Program Type

	GROUP	N	MEAN	SD	t	df	p
INTERACTIONS							
1. Teachers interact frequently with children showing affection, interest, and respect.	Gov't. Private Total	16 14 30	2.31 1.86 2.10	.704 .663 .712	1.816	28	.080
2. Teachers are available and responsive to children.	Gov't. Private Total	15 13 28	2.27 1.69 2.00	.799 .751 .816	1.950	26	.062
3. Teachers' interactions create a climate for positive personal, social, and emotional development.	Gov't. Private Total	15 9 24	2.00 2.00 2.00	.756 .866 .780	.000	22	1.000
4. Teachers provide opportunities and activities for children to develop social skills.	Gov't. Private Total	13 13 26	1.85 1.38 1.62	.555 .650 .637	1.947	24	.063
5. Teachers' interactions encourage gender equity and provide all children with equal opportunities to take part in all activities.	Gov't. Private Total	12 11 23	2.25 2.18 2.22	.754 .874 .795	.201	21	.843
6. Teachers interact positively and equitably with all children, regardless of race, ethnicity, ability, or language and encourage each child to take part in all classroom activities.	Gov't. Private Total	14 14 28	2.21 1.79 2.00	.893 .802 .861	1.337	26	.193
7. Teachers' interactions model respect, collaboration, and effective communication.	Gov't. Private Total	15 12 27	2.53 2.42 2.48	.640 .793 .700	.423	25	.676
Total Interactions Score	Gov't. Private Total	16 15 31	2.14 1.81 1.98	.568 .645 .620	1.522	29	.139
LEARNING ACTIVITIES/CURRICULUM							
8. Teachers provide a balance of teacher initiated and children directed activities.	Gov't. Private Total	13 14 27	1.92 1.36 1.63	.641 .633 .688	2.307	25	.030*
9. Teachers offer children a balance of activities from which to choose.	Gov't. Private Total	14 12 26	1.71 1.42 1.58	.611 .515 .578	1.329	24	.196

	GROUP	N	MEAN	SD	t	df	p
10. Teachers recognize and extend child-initiated activities.	Gov't. Private Total	6 8 14	1.50 1.25 1.36	.837 .463 .633	.717	12	.487
11. Teachers encourage language and literacy development through reading and talking about books.	Gov't. Private Total	8 8 16	2.25 1.75 2.00	.707 .707 .730	1.414	14	.179
12. Teachers encourage language development/effective communication through multiple activities.	Gov't. Private Total	9 10 19	2.11 1.90 2.00	.601 .738 .667	.679	17	.506
13. Teachers provide age-appropriate support for language and literacy development in all language areas (spoken, written, read, and viewed).	Gov't. Private Total	10 7 17	2.10 1.71 1.94	.738 .756 .748	1.050	15	.310
14. Teachers promote development of science concepts.	Gov't. Private Total	4 6 10	2.00 1.67 1.80	.816 .816 .789	.632	8	.545
15. Teachers promote development of math concepts.	Gov't. Private Total	6 5 11	1.50 1.40 1.45	.837 .548 .688	.229	9	.824
16. Teachers use technology (computer, video, television) appropriately to foster active learning.	Gov't. Private Total	5 3 8	1.60 1.33 1.50	.894 .577 .756	.455	6	.665
17. Teachers promote children's overall wellness.	Gov't. Private Total	11 10 21	2.27 1.80 2.05	.786 .789 .805	1.374	19	.185
18. Teachers integrate children with special needs.	Gov't. Private Total	3 4 7	1.33 2.00 1.71	.577 .816 .756	- 1.195	5	.286
19. Teachers appropriately handle children's behavioral issues.	Gov't. Private Total	11 12 23	1.82 1.75 1.78	.603 .866 .736	.217	21	.830
Total Learning Activities and Curriculum Score	Gov't. Private Total	16 15 31	1.73 1.59 1.66	.554 .482 .517	.769	29	.448

	GROUP	N	MEAN	SD	t	df	p
ENVIRONMENT							
20. The classroom space is organized to easily accommodate individual, small group, and large group activity.	Gov't. Private Total	14 15 29	1.86 1.33 1.59	.770 .617 .733	2.028	27	.053
21. The classroom space provides children with visual cues regarding how to use the space.	Gov't. Private Total	15 13 28	1.93 1.46 1.71	.799 .776 .810	1.579	26	.126
22. The centre/classroom has space and equipment to encourage a balance of learning and development.	Gov't. Private Total	15 12 27	1.80 1.67 1.74	.775 .778 .764	.443	25	.661
23. The facility is safe, healthy, and comfortable for children and their families.	Gov't. Private Total	14 12 26	2.36 2.25 2.31	.745 .965 .838	.319	24	.752
24. Materials are organized to encourage a variety of uses and to promote active, age-appropriate learning.	Gov't. Private Total	15 14 29	1.80 1.71 1.76	.941 .825 .872	.260	27	.797
25. Classroom displays and materials promote children's self-concept and community and ethnic pride.	Gov't. Private Total	12 12 24	1.50 1.58 1.54	.674 .793 .721	-.277	22	.784
26. Literacy materials are varied and of good quality.	Gov't. Private Total	11 12 23	1.55 1.42 1.48	.688 .515 .593	.511	21	.614
27. The centre/classroom has materials posted/available for parents, visitors, and volunteers.	Gov't. Private Total	12 9 21	1.33 2.00 1.62	.492 .707 .669	- 2.552	19	.019*
Total Environment Score	Gov't. Private Total	16 15 31	1.76 1.59 1.68	.567 .565 .563	.832	29	.412

*T-tests for these three items were statistically significant at $p < .05$

Table C3A. Summary of Means across Subscales

Centre Type		Global Items Scores		
		Interactions Subscale	Learning Activities/ Curriculum Subscale	Environment Subscale
Government (n=16)	Mean	2.14	1.73	1.76
	Std. Dev.	0.568	0.554	0.567
Private (n=15)	Mean	1.81	1.59	1.59
	Std. Dev.	0.645	0.482	0.565
Total (n=31)	Mean	1.98	1.66	1.68
	Std. Dev.	0.620	0.517	0.563

Table C3B. Average Number of Indicators Observed

Centre Type		Observable Indicators		
		Interactions Subscale (n=23)	Learning Activities/ Curriculum Subscale (n=47)	Environment Subscale (n=36)
Government (n=16)	Mean	13.3	11.6	17.6
	Std. Dev.	5.95	7.98	8.73
Private (n=15)	Mean	9.23	6.5	11.4
	Std. Dev.	5.64	4.76	10.11
Total (n=31)	Mean	11.3	9.1	14.6
	Std. Dev.	6.05	7.00	9.78

Table C3C. Percent of Total Indicators Observed

Centre Type		Observable Indicators		
		Interactions Subscale (n=23)	Learning Activities/ Curriculum Subscale (n=47)	Environment Subscale (n=36)
Government (n=16)		57.6%	24.6%	48.8%
Private (n=15)		40.3%	13.9%	24.3%
Total (n=31)		49.2%	19.4%	40.5%

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