



SUBMISSION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
ON THE DRAFT CHILDREN'S AMENDMENT BILL
(Draft dated 7 April 2006)

Written by Eric Atmore and Jaclyn Murray

13 June 2006

CONTACT DETAILS:

Jaclyn Murray

National Early Childhood Development Alliance
P O Box 2248
Clareinch
7740
Tel: 021 683 2420
Fax: 021 683 5838
Email: cecd@iafrica.com

CHAPTER 5: PARTIAL CARE

NATIONAL EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE		
CLAUSE	PROPOSED AMENDMENT	DISCUSSION
81 (c)(iii)	Delete third sub- clause in 81 (c).	Having a fee requirement would limit vulnerable communities and groups from applying for registration. This is an unnecessary barrier to access for most vulnerable children.
90 (a)	Remove the phrase “and the fees to be paid”.	Having a fee requirement would limit vulnerable communities and groups from applying for registration. This is an unnecessary barrier to access for most vulnerable children.
Possible Additions	Add a paragraph on disabilities. Partial care facilities are to be adapted to meet the needs of children with disabilities and chronic illness.	<p>A paragraph on children with disabilities must be added.</p> <p>Opportunities for young children with disabilities and chronic illness are critical.</p>

CHAPTER 6: EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

CLAUSE	PROPOSED AMENDMENT	DISCUSSION
91	"from birth to school-going age" is suitable here.	School- going age cannot be lowered to 4 as that would not account for the many 5/6 year olds in early childhood development programmes that do not fall under the Department of Education and therefore still need to be recognised, funded and regulated by the DSD.
91 (1)	"mental" must change to "cognitive"	The learning aspect of an ECD programme must be recognised. This is emphasised by using the word "cognitive".
92	Add the words "The Minister of Health" as follows: ..."the Minister, after consultation with the Minister of Education and the Minister of Health, must"	It is important to include the Minister of Health especially when one looks at nutrition. Also if we talk about Integrated Early Childhood Development then the Health Ministry must be involved.
93	Delete the words "...designated child protection organisation" add words "or a non-profit organisation". To now read "...by an organ of the state, or a non-profit organisation"	We think that "designated child protection organisation" is an error (It is not in the Partial Care chapter) and needs to be removed. We must add "non-profit organisations" since most early childhood development provision is provided by the non-profit sector. It is essential that non-profit organisations be included here. We think that this was omitted in error.
93	Insert a clear obligation on MEC to provide and fund ECD programmes: 93 (1) The MEC must ensure the provision of quality ECD programmes for children. (1) (2) (2) (3)....	ECD is essential for children to reach their full potential in life. Children must have access to ECD quality programmes in a safe, caring, nurturing environment.

93	Add after 93 (1): “Despite sub-section (1) above, programmes that do not comply with the norms and standards may qualify for conditional registration and conditional funding in order to assist them to comply with the national norms and standards.”	Many vulnerable communities need assistance to meet the minimum norms and standards in order to qualify for registration.
94	NORMS and standards must be the title here.	It is imperative that the head of social development ensure that there are norms and standards for early childhood development services.
94	Add a new clause (4) to read: “Any early childhood development services must provide a learning programme appropriate to the needs of the children to whom the services are provided”	A clause that emphasises that in early childhood development facilities there must be an education/learning programme that provides learning opportunities for children attending that facility.
95 (2) c (ii)	Remove clause (2) (c) (ii)	Having a fee requirement would limit vulnerable communities and groups from applying for registration. This is an unnecessary barrier to access for the most vulnerable children.
97	Insert a clause providing for financial assistance upon conditional assistance.	Many vulnerable communities need assistance to meet the minimum norms and standards in order to qualify for registration.
100	Insert words “financial assistance and” before the word “advice”: To now read “ may give financial assistance and advice to a partial care facility... ”	Financial assistance must be provided to enable early childhood development providers to meet the registration standards.
101 (1)	“ suitably qualified person ” must be inserted, to read: “A provincial head of social development may authorise a suitably qualified person to assess...”	This ensures that the person appointed by the head of social development to assess the provision of ECD services/programmes is qualified to do so.
103	Remove from clause (b) the words “...and the fees to be paid”. To now read “ ...the procedure to be followed in connection with ... ”	Having a fee requirement would limit vulnerable communities and groups from applying for registration. This is an unnecessary barrier to access for the most vulnerable children.

NOTE:

The Minister **MUST** (not may) provide early childhood development services (this must be obligatory).