

**REPUBLIC OF RWANDA**



**MINISTRY OF GENDER AND FAMILY PROMOTION**

**NATIONAL EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT POLICY STRATEGIC  
PLAN 2016-2021**

**2016**

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Description</b>
CBOs	Community-Bases Organisations
CoE	College of Education
CSOs	Civil Society Organisation
DPs	Development Partners
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EDPRS II	Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy
KAP	Knowledge Attitude and Practice
LGs	Local Governments
LODA	Local Administrative Entities Agency
MIGEPROF	Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion
MINALOC	Ministry of Local Government
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education
MINIJUST	Ministry of Justice
MININTER	Ministry of Internal Security
MINISANTE	Ministère de la Santé
MoH	Ministry of Health
NCC	National Children's Commission
NCPD	National Council of People With Disabilities
NGOs	Non-Government Organisations
OECD	Organisation of Export Credit Countries
Pre-School	Pre-Primary School
PS	Private Sector
REB	Rwanda Education Board
RNP	Rwanda National Police
SACCOs	Savings And Credit Cooperatives
TWG	Technical Working Group
UR	University of Rwanda
VUP	Vision 2020 Umurenge

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**Table 1: Definition of Key Terminologies**

<b>Terminology</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Adult Literacy</b>	The capacity of adult to read and write a short and simple statement <sup>1</sup>
<b>Care</b>	The attention to body, health, nutrition, emotional, social, language and intellectual development of a child throughout their childhood
<b>Caregivers</b>	Persons charged with attending to the body, health, nutrition, emotional, social, language and intellectual development needs of a child, including parents, family members and other persons accorded with such duties.
<b>Centre-Based ECD</b>	An early learning and development centre where children from 3 to 6 years are sent to undergo sensory-motor, social-emotional, and cognitive-language development support as well as training on school readiness by experienced caregivers.
<b>Child Development</b>	A process of change in which a child comes to master more and more complex levels of moving, thinking, feeling and interacting with people and objects in the environment
<b>Cognitive Potential</b>	The psychological ability of knowing, information processing, conceptual skills, language learning, perception, reasoning and judgment and other aspects of brain development.
<b>Community-Based Centre</b>	An “improvised centre” normally arranged by members of the community where temporally structures are turned into learning areas for young children from 3 to 6 years.
<b>Comprehensive Strategy</b>	A strategy which ensures children receive all the inputs they require from a range of service providers who do not necessarily need to operate as one programme.
<b>Crèches</b>	A nursery where babies and young children are cared for during the working day.
<b>Disability</b>	Refers to physical, sensory or psychological impairment that can create hindrance for children from taking part in everyday activities
<b>Early Childhood</b>	The period between birth and 6 years of age for purposes of this policy strategic plan
<b>Early Childhood</b>	This refers to the sensory-motor, social-emotional, and cognitive-language Development changes through which a child undergoes during their early years of life from conception to 6 years, as well as support that caregivers need to provide

<sup>1</sup> Source: UNICEF (<http://www.unicef.org>)

<b>Development</b>	childcare.
<b>Early Stimulation</b>	The responsive and nurturing interaction with caregivers, where children are exposed to rich learning opportunities(Landry et al., 2006; NSCDC, 2007) <sup>2</sup>
<b>Family</b>	The basic social unit consisting of parents and their children, sometimes including; grandparents, uncles, aunties, cousins-considered as a group, whether dwelling together or not.
<b>Fertility Rate</b>	Refers to the number of children that would be born to a woman if she were to live to the end of her childbearing years and bear children in accordance with current age-specific <i>fertility rates</i> .
<b>Gross Enrolment Ratio</b>	Total number of students enrolled in a specific level of education, regardless of age, as a percentage of the official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education in a given school-year.
<b>Home-Based ECD</b>	An informal arrangement where a group of neighboring households designate one home to host children aged between 3 and 6 years, to benefit from ECD services. Parents take turns to care for the children which allow them to do their daily work.
<b>Net Enrolment Ratio</b>	The total number of children enrolled in a specific level of education as a percentage of the total population of the same age group.
<b>Pre-Primary</b>	An initial stage of organized instruction, designed primarily to introduce very young children up to 6 years of age to a school-type environment, providing a bridge between home and a school-based atmosphere (OECD, 2008). <sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Landry, S.H.. (2008). *The role of parents in early childhood learning*. University of Texas Health Science Center. USA.

<sup>3</sup> OECD. (2008). *Glossary of statistical terms*.



## FOREWORD

The long term vision for the Government of Rwanda is to transform the economy from an agrarian to a knowledge-based economy with its population as a formidable force behind this transformation. In order to realise this vision, we have an obligation to enhance human skills and knowledge development especially for the young generation through Early Childhood Development (ECD) interventions. Early Childhood Development interventions develop sensory-motor, social-emotional, cognitive-language skills in for young children, while building the capacity of parents and other caregivers to fulfill their parenting obligations.

Scientific evidence affirms that the first 3 years are the most important in the life of a child. 80% of the child's brain grows within the first 3 years, making it a period of greatest sensitivity to environmental influences. Any deficiencies, therefore, during this course of life affect subsequent development stages across a child's growth continuum. The government adopted the first ECD Policy in September 2011 setting pace for an organised approach to the development of young children. The ECD policy has been revised to address incumbent and anticipated programme constraints whilst aligning the policy objectives to emerging national priorities, through holistic, successive and uninterrupted interventions to make our children healthy, physically developed, socially adaptable, emotionally balanced and productive citizens.

It should be noted that providing ECD services requires multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral collaboration. We will ensure a coordinated planning and implementation process to ensure full stakeholder participation that is without duplication and overlaps. During this journey, Parents and caregivers are specifically called upon and empowered to take lead on child development support through parenting education sessions. The revised ECD Policy provides a framework within which interventions from government and its stakeholders are defined and government commits to provide a framework for continuous stakeholder engagement.

### Signature

  
Dr GASHUMBA Diane

Minister of Gender and Family Promotion



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ECD is thus an important element for Rwanda to achieve its vision of becoming a middle-income country by 2020 through its contribution to the development of a strong human capital base of innovative and industrious people who can work efficiently in different spheres of the economy.

The Strategic Plan is divided into five parts. Part I is the introduction and background, Part II is the strategic plan, Part III is the strategic policy focus area, Part IV is linking the policy to other strategic documents, and Part V which shows the implementation arrangements.

The process of developing the Strategic Plan was participatory. Workshops, retreats, and interviews conducted with key informants, and observation of practices in selected ECD centres. This involved initial meetings with various stakeholders, including Ministries NGOs, Community Based Organizations, Faith Based Organizations, Academicians and Development Partners. These consultations identified important issues which need to be addressed to improve ECD service provision. The draft Strategic Plan was presented to key stakeholders for validation before it was finalized.

Interventions in the early years have the potential to offset these negative trends and to provide young children with more opportunities and better outcomes in terms of access to education, quality of learning, physical growth and health, and, eventually, productivity. This early investment is critical as delays in the early years are difficult and costly to reverse later in life.

There are numerous partners working together for the provision of early childhood development services who are expected to be guided by and use the comprehensive ECD policy framework as a foundation for improved service delivery for infants and children. Management of early childhood development services and programs through various Government Ministries will do in an integrated approach. While the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion has been tasked with providing leadership for ECD, all concerned Ministries will contribute to ensure that services and programmes for children between the ages of 0 and 6 are fully harmonised, integrated and provide a holistic approach to the development of the child.

It is expected that in the short, medium and long term, the ECD Policy and its Strategic Plan will yield high levels of economic and social returns on investment. This integrated approach to ECD will help Rwanda achieve the objectives and targets of Vision 2020 and the EDPRS for overcoming poverty, expanding economic and social development, and achieving a durable peace and prosperity.



## 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion undertook to review and update the National Early Childhood Development (ECD) Policy to further Rwanda's efforts to support holistic development of its children whilst aligning the policy to emerging national priorities. In consultation with stakeholders, the ECD Policy was successfully updated to address incumbent and emerging challenges around early childhood development in Rwanda. Just like the policy review process, the elaboration of the ECD policy strategic plan undertook a consultative process from the beginning to the end of the exercise.

A multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary team constituting of key government and non government stakeholders spearheaded this exercise. This ECD Policy Strategic Plan represents a set of priority focus areas within which parties involved in ECD interventions in Rwanda will operate during the implementation of the revised national ECD Policy. The plan highlights a set of activities to be undertaken by the government and its stakeholders and respective timelines as well as an outlay of the cost implications. Proposed strategic intervention areas are carefully selected to support realisation of the Program Mission, vision, goals and objectives, summarised below;

**Mission:** To establish and implement interventions which support effective Early Childhood Development for children from conception to 6 years

**Vision:** A population of young children with integrated early learning and development opportunities in an informed, empowered and responsive community

**Goal:** To develop a healthy, safe and knowledge rich infant population guaranteed to become successful as well as responsible citizens

**Overall Objective:** To ensure quality and equal access to Early Childhood Development Services by all the intended beneficiaries in a clear, coordinated and sustainable manner

**Specific Objectives:** Specific Objectives of the ECD Program include the following;

- ⊙ To enhance positive parenting and community participation in child protection
- ⊙ To increase children's preparedness to cope with formal school environment
- ⊙ To reduce malnutrition and stunted growth among young children
- ⊙ To reduce under 5 and maternal mortality rates
- ⊙ To develop children's self-awareness, self-esteem and self-confidence
- ⊙ To eliminate physical, moral and psychological abuse of young children
- ⊙ To enhance equal access by children with special needs to services offered under ECD Program



## 2. STRATEGIC PLAN-ELABORATION PROCESS

The process to elaborate this strategic plan took a protracted consultative process involving key informant interviews as well as technical working meetings. Multiple stakeholders were interviewed to gather their views on what should be the areas of concentration in the implementation of the National ECD Policy. To ensure ownership and fair participation of all stakeholders in this exercise, a Technical Working Group (TWG) was constituted comprising of technical persons from government Ministries and affiliated agencies, Development Partners, and Civil Society Organizations to undertake the strategic elaboration process.

Following the stakeholder views and the provisions of the ECD policy, the TWG proposed 5 Strategic Focus Areas including; i) Parenting Education and Support, ii) School readiness and transition, iii) Child protection and family support and iv) Coordination, governance, resourcing and Monitoring & Evaluation to be the priority areas of interventions by all parties involved in undertaking ECD related interventions in Rwanda.

It should be noted that ECD services provision is not a new phenomenon in Rwanda, for the program has been under implementation since the year 2011 when the first policy was approved by cabinet. Most of the essential services in the context of ECD are therefore already being provided by various parties both government and its stakeholders. The thematic areas were carefully selected following a mini-impact assessment of the impacts of the interventions undertaken over the last 4 years (2011/2015) under the previous ECD policy strategic plan. The 5 thematic areas being proposed under this plan are therefore meant to provide an orientation into proposed new interventions to ensure holistic development of Rwandan children, minding about quality and sustainability as well as strengthen the existing efforts to cover incumbent loopholes in the implementation of the ECD program over the next 5 years (2016/2021). The elaboration of the ECD policy strategic plan was guided by the revised ECD policy, the 7 Year Government Program as well as the EDPRS II which provide a national perspective into the desired destiny for the development of Rwandan children.

Further to the elaboration of the umbrella Strategic Focus Areas within which all ECD related interventions are to be conducted, subsequently, the prescribed intervention areas were costed (Cost effectiveness approach) to ascertain the budget implication of undertaking each of the focus areas. A consolidated set of prescribed activities under each strategic focus areas are herein annexed to this document along with their respective cost outlays for planning and resource mobilization purposes. The final document was then shared with stakeholders for further inputs and finally subjected to stakeholder validation sessions before submission to cabinet along with the policy for final approval.



### 3. STRATEGIC POLICY FOCUS AREAS

A set of 4 Strategic Focus Areas are proposed to guide future interventions in Early Childhood Development in Rwanda, covering the existing gaps as well as introducing new activities to bolster all-round children growth and development. These are perceived as game changers for the future Early Childhood development interventions in Rwanda, expected to add value to existing interventions with a multiplier effect on the lives and productivity of an average Rwandan child.

The 4 key pillars express the window of opportunity for current and prospective players and investors into the ECD program to support realization of the ECD policy objectives. All interventions enshrined within the 4 umbrella focus areas herein detailed below must follow the revised policy principles of: Inclusiveness of children with disabilities and special needs, Integrated approach to service provision, Non-discrimination, Parents-centered care and gender equality (Revised ECD Policy, 2015). This section highlights the key Strategic Focus Areas hereby proposed to be entry points in efforts to spearhead holistic development of a Rwandan Child.

#### **1.1 Parenting Education and Support**

Parenting education and support programmes are prioritized on the conviction that the family is the primary institution through which quality optimal care and early stimulation can be provided to children. However, this conviction comes with the realization that parents may lack some requisite skills and knowledge to provide professional optimal care and support for their children.

Parents need guidance on how to support children's Physical, emotional, social and cognitive development. Cognitive development begins at birth and emergent literacy is one of the most important foundations for later school and life achievements. All parents, literate or illiterate, can support children's literacy development through simple home activities. Rwanda needs a holistic parenting education programme that helps parents learn about positive parenting & how to develop emergent literacy skills in the home environment<sup>4</sup>.

This program therefore is intended to guide through means and measures to support positive parenting and education, elaborating a holistic parenting education curriculum for parents and their children (from birth to 3 years and 3 to 6 years) as well as supporting their transition from childhood to adulthood. Parents will be acquainted with skills to support their children's emergent literacy and as well as early stimulation and socialization. Parents will also be supported to understand the nature and the means to

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<sup>4</sup> Promoting child development through holistic parenting education (Save the Children Position Paper, 2014)



prevent and report all forms of child abuse being their primary responsibility as parents. Details of the prescribed activities and interventions to ensure positive parenting and support in Rwanda are summarized in **table 3** herein this document.

## **1.2 School Readiness and Transition**

A large number of children enter primary school, with varying levels of preparedness to actually cope with the new school environment. Usually, school readiness is understood, to mean equipping children with a specific set of academic skills and abilities, for example to; follow directions, demonstrate reading, counting and reasoning skills, and carry out independent work by the time they enter school. Further to this however, interventions to promote school readiness and transition shall encompass additional six major dimensions including; children's physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development, cognitive/language development, self-help skills and general knowledge.

To support this program, the government will continue to roll-out the one year school readiness programme for 5 and 6 year olds across all districts following the commitment to establish at least one model ECD centre per cell of each sector by end of the year 2017<sup>5</sup>, targeting the entire scope of 0-6 year age groups. Further, to enhance school readiness among young children, a competency-based curriculum for 3-6 year olds has been developed and will be implemented starting January 2016. ECD services are offered through center-based ECD, community based home-based, kindergartens, crèches, and other centers. The scale up of ECD services will be predominantly done by implementing agencies and through delivery of integrated health, nutrition, cognitive development, social protection, and hygiene and sanitation services. The implementing agencies will update the services they deliver to meet the minimum standards prescribed by the ECD Policy.

In principle, it should be noted with consensus that effective school readiness program interventions call for; *“ready children for ready schools from ready homes”*. This means that preparation of children for schooling and transitioning should have equal and reciprocal emphasis by preparing schools to receive them. School preparations entails managing transitions effectively through use of appropriate teaching and learning methodologies, materials and sensitivity to individual learning needs of children. *Ready and supportive homes* means a supportive family environment that responds proactively to children learning needs, including promoting early literacy at home and stimulating children to acquire higher cognition abilities through provision of requisite age-appropriate play and learning materials administered right from parenting sessions.

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<sup>5</sup> Government of Rwanda. (2010). *7 Year Government Programme. 2010-2017.*



It should also be noted that expanding access to appropriate pre-primary school services (for 3- to 6-year-olds) is a key policy priority to enhance children's readiness to join and cope with primary school environment. A well-conceived preschool education programme can significantly improve primary school readiness and school performance and enhance overall child development. According to research on the subject, it is clear that children who participate in preschool programmes are more likely to have better language, verbal and arithmetic skills, and consistently higher reading and cognitive achievement scores. Such children often get more interested in formal schools upon enrollment into primary school; are more motivated to learn and, to complete assignments and are more likely to have long term academic success. Activities to support children school readiness and transition to primary schools are summarized in **table 4** herein.

### **1.3 Child Protection and Family Support**

The government of Rwandan is committed to placing the family at the center of development, and as a prerequisite to achieve equitable and sustainable development for country at large. This is manifested by the inclusion of family promotion and support commitments as a cross-cutting theme in EDPRS II as well as the 2003 constitution of the Republic of Rwanda as amended to date that conceives the family as the natural foundation of Rwandan society<sup>6</sup>.

The rationale for this Strategic Focus area is to ensure a safe and protective environment free from all forms of abuse for **ALL** children to enable them realize their full development potential. Further, the program intends to increase community awareness of and participation in protecting and promoting children's rights, obligations and responsibilities and to establish and implement mechanisms for early identification and mitigation of all forms of abuse and violence against children, particularly those with disabilities and other forms of physical, psycho-social impairments. Child protection thematic area as well calls to establish and implement a transparent and coherent referral systems for families to easily access equitable and cost-effective child support services. (Refer to **table 5** herein this plan).

### **1.4 Co-ordination, Governance, Resourcing, Monitoring and Evaluation**

ECD interventions are implemented by multiple stakeholders, given their multi-disciplinary nature. The obligation to ensure effective implementing of ECD policy provisions therefore lies in the hands of more than one party. It goes beyond government to other stakeholders including; Non-government actors, parents and the entire community. Without a framework to track progress of interventions, demand accountability and provide requisite policy support by government will result into

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<sup>6</sup> The Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda. Article 27.



duplication of efforts and misallocation of resources. There is need for a transparent and coherent planning, implementation, coordination and report framework within which all party's interventions are governed.

**3.4.1 National ECD Coordination and Governance:** A strong coordination and monitoring mechanism ensures harmonious and or complementary stakeholder interventions so that ECD related assignments can be jointly executed and desired objectives collectively achieved without duplication of each others' effort. Structurally, coordination of the National ECD policy implementation will be ensured by the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion. There will be as well a National Coordination Committee and the National ECD Technical Committee, replicated to the local levels.

- ⊙ **National Coordination Committee:** The National Coordination Committee is an inter-Ministerial committee, comprising of senior representatives from each line institution chaired by MIGEPROF to facilitate harmony and complementarity of activities of stakeholders, alerting partners on potential deviations, advising on rooms for improvement, and ensuring conformity to respective obligations stated in the ECD policy. Those line Ministries are MIGEPROF (Chair), MINISANTE, MINEDUC, MINALOC, and MININFRA. Some other institutions can be involved according to their role in ECD area.
- ⊙ **ECD Technical Committee:** The Technical Committee is an inter-sectoral committee from above mentioned institutions comprising of ECD related subject matter experts, charged with among others; reviewing and approving the Joint ECD action Plan, elaborating ECD related monitoring indicators to be approved by the coordination committee, producing and disseminating reports to all other stakeholders, supervising local level coordination structures and advising on performance improvements, participating in the elaboration of the national ECD standards and curriculum as well as the elaboration of ECD regulatory and quality assurance procedures.

**3.4.2 Local level coordination:** The national coordination structures will be replicated to the local levels forming; district, sector and cell level committees to oversee grass root implementation and feedback (See Annex 1 of the ECD policy for structural details).

- ⊙ **District ECD Committee:** Each district will have an ECD Technical Committee that provides guidance on program implementation to the sector authorities and reports on progress to the National Technical Committee.
- ⊙ **Sector ECD Committee:** Similarly, at each sector, there shall be an ECD committee made up of members of existing sector administration, to oversee the



implementation of ECD at the grassroots level. The committee will be composed of representatives from each constituent cell, following a clear selection criterion to be laid out in the strategic plan. In summary, the committee will give opinion leadership in translating policy objectives into day-to-day activities benefiting the communities.

**3.4.3 Integrated Planning:** Integrated ECD Planning and resourcing is essential for Program sustainability and meaningful impacts. Rwanda is committed to ensure an integrated approach to ECD planning, budgeting and performance management together with its stakeholders. This will entail elaboration and implementation of an annual joint work plan of all ECD related developed together to define respective stakeholder intervention areas.

**3.4.4 Resource mobilization:** To ensure program sustainability, integrated program interventions must be supported by sustainable financing modalities beyond the current fragmented finance approaches. MIGEPROF through the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning shall mobilize resources from government, Development Partners, Private sector, Civil Society and other potential financiers to support program scale-up.

Early Childhood Development Program requires sustainable financing to ensure continuity and meaningful results. There is currently limited government financing with the program attracting less than 1% of the total education sector budget for an average fiscal year, with majority of the centres currently financed by either Development Partners or CBOs. Options for financing to be elaborated are shown in the table below;

**Table 2: ECD Program financing Options**

Financing option	Description
<b>Scale-Up Central Government Financing</b>	Government is already committing some resources for ECD program though in an inadequate and fragmented manner. On average, less than 1% has been allocated to ECD through different implementing agencies. Over the previous last 3 fiscal years (2012/13 to 2014/15) <sup>7</sup> . There is need to undertake an assessment of the potential annual increment in government budget allocation to ECD program, to support proposed program scale-up. Modalities of affecting this increment are discussed in detail in the policy strategic plan.

<sup>7</sup> National Government Budget, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning



<b>Financing option</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Cost Sharing</b>	The cost of implementing ECD interventions could be shared between central government and the local governments through their own generated revenues, on an appropriate formula agreed upon. In Kenya for example, central government funds the training of caregivers, while local authorities provide and maintain pre-school program sites. In India, the national government pays for everything but supplementary feeding, which is financed by the states (Myers, 2005) <sup>8</sup> . We assess the feasibility of this approach to supplement government financing.
<b>Beneficiary Contributions</b>	Another potential option to finance ECD interventions is through seeking user contribution to supplement other program financing arrangements. User fees can be instituted as a supplement to existing financing sources. Parents may either be required to; i) Make a given amount of contribution on a sliding scale in line with their level of income (The case in Colombia) ii) pay a flat fee for ECD per child enrolled (Case in Bolivia). iii) Parents especially from poor families could also be allowed to contribute in kind towards the program needs such as construction and rehabilitation of ECD centres, provision of food and other forms of material contribution agreed upon.
<b>Corporate Social Financing</b>	Corporate organizations such as telecom companies, manufacturing companies, CBOs, FBOs, will be mobilized to increase support to ECD program as part of their corporate social responsibility. A more pro-active effort will be required on the side of government to mobilize local and regional corporate bodies to step-in and boost early childhood development program.
<b>Private Sector</b>	The Private sector will be motivated to invest in ECD physical and soft infrastructure, capacity building, research and innovations for program improvement such as development of locally produced learning materials. Government will create an enabling platform for private sector dialogue whilst assessing potential incentives to attract more private players into the program.
<b>Development Partner Support</b>	Development Partners are already taking a leading role in program financing both direct and indirect support to ECD centres. Government will undertake a more pro-active stakeholder mapping and engagement effort to maintain existing stakeholders but also attract prospective financiers to boost program scale-up. Modalities of Donor Support to the sector will be discussed and highlighted in the strategic plan.
<b>Bank Financing</b>	Existing local and international lending institutions can be mobilized to finance ECD program interventions. Local financing institutions such as Bank Populaire, <i>Umurenge</i> SACCOs, <i>Umwalimu</i> SACCOs and others will be approached to see how they can finance ECD interventions where practically possible. The task ahead of this will be to prepare bankable ECD projects that may seem feasible in the eyes of these lenders.
<b>Employee Support</b>	Big institutional employers employing a large number of people especially on permanent basis will be mobilized to establishment of ECD centres around their

<sup>8</sup> Myers (1995). *Benefits of Early Child Development Programs*. World Bank.



Financing option	Description
	premises for the benefit of their employees' children. For example, employers could support and boost establishment of a social support fund to cater for the education needs for their employees' children. Private sector would be motivated with operating grants to start-up ECD centres around the workplaces on a condition that they subsidize preschool fees for the children of their employees.
<b>ECD Support Fund</b>	Financing for the ECD interventions in Rwanda is currently fragmented and each financier funds their own areas of choice without any guide on prioritization. To ensure a structured program financing leading to sustainability, we propose to create an Earmarked ECD support fund from ordinary and development budget to finance specific interventions agreed upon between government and its stakeholders. This will be a pool of resources from interested financiers with a government counterpart fund to ensure ownership and continuity.

**3.4.5 Monitoring and Evaluation:** measuring of progress, keeping track of milestones set and assessment of the impact of program interventions on children's wellbeing will be the centre stage of the ECD policy strategic plan. MIGEPROF and its stakeholders will develop a Joint ECD M&E framework with clear measurable indicators and reporting mechanisms.

MIGEPROF in consultation with its stakeholders will formulate and validate a set of key indicators to measure access, quality, equity and inclusiveness of ECD services and will develop and test a system for collecting, storing and reporting ECD program progress and impact on intended beneficiaries.

A detailed account of the proposed Early Childhood Development interventions for each Strategic Focus Areas are highlighted in the following tables(table 3 to table 6) below;

**Table 3: Parenting Education and Support**

Output	Output and activities	Process Indicator	Lead Institution	Other Partners	Budget (RWF)
<b>Output 1</b>	<b>Increased awareness and participation in quality parenting programmes by parents</b>				
Activity 1.1.	1.1.1. Develop and disseminate a positive parenting manual	Availability of approved Positive parenting manual	MIGEPROF	DPs, CBOs, local government NCC, MINISANTE, MINALOC, MINEDUC, NCPD	<b>30,000,000</b>
Activity 1.2.	1.2.1. Design and implement national advocacy and communication messages	Numbers of approved communication and advocacy messages	MIGEPROF	NCC, MINEDUC, MINISANTE, MINALOC, NCPD DPs, CBOs	<b>40,000,000</b>
<b>Output 2</b>	<b>Develop an M&amp;E framework on parenting education and family promotion as part of overall ECD M&amp;E framework.</b>				
Activity 2.1.	2.1.1. Develop a compendium of measurable indicators on parenting education and family promotion	Number of approved indicators to monitor and evaluate parenting education and family promotion	MIGEPROF	DPs, CBOs, NCC, MINISANTE, MINALOC, NCPD	<b>10,000,000</b>
Activity 2.2.	2.2.1. Hold annual meetings to review progress and propose improvements on the implementation of parenting education and family promotion programmes.	Annual meeting reports	MIGEPROF	NCC, MINEDUC, MINALOC, DPs, CBOs	<b>6,000,000</b>
<b>Total</b>					<b>86,000,000</b>



**Table 4: School Readiness and Transition**

Output 1	Output and activities	Process Indicator	Lead Institution	Other Partners	Budget (RWF)
<b>Revise pre-primary curriculum aligned to the revised ECD Policy</b>					
Activity 1.1.	1.1.1. Review the current pre-primary curriculum to ensure it is aligned with approaches to early learning and general ECD policy principles	Availability of revised Preprimary curriculum	REB	MINEDUC	3,609,058
Activity 1.2.	1.2.1. Review pre-primary teaching and learning materials, aligning them with the revised curriculum.	Number of Teaching and Learning Materials reviewed aligning to the revised curriculum	REB	MINEDUC	3,609,058
Activity 1.3.	1.3.1. Develop a guide to facilitate promotion of Inclusion of vulnerable children (including Children with Disabilities) in pre schools	Availability of approved pre Primary Guide on Inclusion	REB	REB, MIGEPROF, NCPD	3,609,058
<b>Output 2</b>					
<b>Roll out the implementation of the revised pre-primary curriculum</b>					
Activity 2.1.	2.1.1. Develop and adopt a plan for the implementation of the revised curriculum	Availability of validated implementation Plan	REB	MINEDUC	656,055
Activity 2.2.	2.2.1. Hold a national, high-impact event to introduce the revised pre-primary curriculum including ECD	Number of participants to the event Availability of event Report	MINEDUC	MINEDUC, REB	16,831,707
Activity 2.3.	2.3.1. Conduct training of teachers in all districts, pre primary schools, and ECD centers on revised pre-primary curriculum	Number of teachers/caregivers trained on revised pre primary curriculum Number of ECD implementing the new curriculum	REB	MINEDUC	168,339,979
<b>Output 3</b>					
<b>An in-service capacity building and mentorship for early childhood development professionals conducted</b>					
Activity 3.1.	3.1.1. Identify and train mentors for centre/ Community ECD programmes	Number of identified and trained mentors	MINEDUC/REB, MIGEPROF	DP'S, UR/CoE, MIGEPROF	3,517,478



Activity 3.2.	3.2.1. Roll out of ECD training of mentors to the cell level (ToT)	Number of ToT trained	MIGEPROF	32,400,000
<b>Total</b>				<b>232,572,393</b>

**Table 5: Child Protection and Family Support**

Output and activities		Process Indicator	Lead Institution	Other Partners	Budget (RWF)
<b>Output 1</b>	<b>Strategic needs in relation to child protection and support defined</b>				
Activity 1.1.	1.1.1. Develop National Plan of Action to address findings from various surveys on VAC and determine a way forward for stakeholders	Availability of approved national action plan	NCPD,NCC, MIGEPROF, MINALOC, DPs		661,882
Activity 1.2.	1.2.1. Implement recommendations of VAC related surveys	Number of VAC recommendations implemented	NCC, MIGEPROF	NCPD, MINISANTE, National Police, MINEDUC, DPs	50,000,000
<b>Output 2</b>	<b>Increased community awareness and participation in child protection issues</b>				
Activity 2.1.	2.1.1. Design and implement a multi-stakeholder campaign on protection, promotion and support of children's rights and obligations.	Number of districts covered with the campaign Availability of campaign reports	NCC	MINALOC, MIGEPROF, DPs, NCPD, MINEDUC,	150,000,000
Activity 2.2.	2.2.1. Review and document best practices and lessons learnt on child protection and family promotion as reference point for continuous community mobilisation and advocacy on children's rights.	Availability of approved record of best practices on children's rights and family promotion	NCC	MINALOC, NWC, DPs, MINEDUC, NCPD	20,000,000
<b>Output 3</b>	<b>Effective mechanisms to prevent and protect children against Violence</b>				

Activity 3.1.	3.1.1. Review and improve the existing case management and reporting systems of child abuse, violence, neglect, and exploitation.	Availability of improved case management and reporting system	NCC	MIGEPROF, MINISANTE, DPs, RNP, Other Service Providers	20,000,000
<b>Output 4</b>	<b>Increased knowledge of families on the availability and accessibility of family support services</b>				
Activity 4.1.	4.1.1. Integrate birth registration campaign in all programs of MINALOC.	Number of social programs with integrated birth registration	MINALOC	NCC, NISR, NIDA, MIGEPROF, DP's	10,000,000
Activity 4.2.	4.2.1. Scale up home-based ECD models in every village	Number of home based ECD models	MINALOC, NCC	MIGEPROF, CBOs, FBOs	500,000,000
<b>Total</b>					<b>750,661,882</b>

**Table 6: Co-ordination, Governance, and Resourcing**

	Output and activities	Process Indicator	Lead Institution	Other Partners	Budget (RWF)
<b>Output 1</b>	<b>Improved coordination of ECD interventions</b>				
Activity 1.1.	1.1.1. Integrate ECD into Child Protection Steering subcommittee	i) ToR's for the ECD steering subcommittee ii) Approved Composition & Structure of the Committee	MIGEPROF	MINEDUC, MINISANTE, MINALOC	1,000,000
Activity 1.2.	1.2.1. Develop and disseminate ECD minimum standard guidelines for all ranges of ECD services	Availability of ECD minimum standards	MIGEPROF	MINEDUC, MINISANTE, MINALOC, DPs, CBOs, FBOs	16,000,000
Activity 1.3.	1.3.1. Map and assess existing ECD services against ECD minimum standards	Availability of Mapping report	MIGEPROF	NCC, MINALOC	38,000,0000
Activity 1.4.	1.4.1. Sensitize stakeholders to upgrade ECD services to meet ECD minimum standards at cell level	Number of sensitization events on ECD minimum standards	MIGEPROF	NCC, MINALOC, CBOs, FBOs, DPs	5,000,000



Activity 1.5.	1.5.1. Develop, disseminate and enforce accreditation system for all ECD service providers	Availability of national accreditation system	MIGEPROF	MININFRA, MINEDUC, MINISANTE, MINALOC, DPs, CBOS, FBOS	34,000,000
Activity 1.6.	1.6.1. Develop, disseminate and implement a multi-stakeholders resource mobilisation and allocation plan	Number of ECD service providers with accreditation certificates Availability of ECD resource mobilisation plan	MIGEPROF	MINECOFIN, MINEDUC, MINISANTE, MINALOC, DPs, CBOS	5,000,000
<b>Total</b>					<b>99,000,000</b>

**Table 7: ECD Program Implementation Cost Summary**

<b>Sub-Program Cost Summary (RWF)</b>	<b>2016-2021</b>
Parenting Education and Support	RWF 86,000,000
School Readiness and Transition	RWF 232,572,393
Child Protection and Family Support	RWF 750,661,882
Co-ordination, Governance, and Resourcing	RWF 99,000,000
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>RWF 1,168,234,275</b>

## 2. LINKING THE POLICY STRATEGIC PLAN WITH OTHER STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS

This ECD Policy Strategic Plan is informed by and aligned to the following key national guiding documents that set out broad goals and strategies aimed at ensuring holistic ECD services provision and sustainable early childhood development in Rwanda;

- ⊙ **Vision 2020:** The implementation of Vision 2020 strongly holds onto the philosophy that its necessity to achieve the aspirations of the Rwandan people, by markedly transforming the economy, turning the country into a middle-income country and parting away with extreme poverty. Amidst this aspiration is the recognition to invest into human capital. ECD provides a solid bedrock through which investments has direct correlation with sustainable human development and poverty reduction, after all, A child's ability to think, form relationships, and live up to his or her full potential is directly related to the synergistic effect of good health, good nutrition, and appropriate stimulation and interaction with others<sup>9</sup>.
- ⊙ **EDPRS II:** The EDPRS II (2013/2018) defines ECD as a “foundational issue” for sustainable development, and reaffirms the Government’s commitment to keep ECD as a high priority on the national agenda.
- ⊙ **Revised Family Policy:** The Revised Family Policy offers a further testament to the critical importance that the government places on the family and the centrality of parenting and early childhood interventions to the future welfare and development of the country. The policy aims to enable families to thrive, live in harmony and form a stable basis for nation-building by protecting the family and promoting its functionality, specifically with respect to the care, early learning and stimulation, nurturing and socialisation of children.
- ⊙ **National Gender Policy:** The National Gender Policy highlights principal guidelines on which sectoral policies and programs will be based to integrate gender issues in their respective social planning and programming. The Policy calls on all sectors to mainstream equality of men and women in their respective priority interventions, providing overarching principles to guide this cause. Likewise, one of the core principles for the revised ECD policy principles is “minding” gender equality in child care which is in principle the hallmark of the National Gender Policy.
- ⊙ **The National Integrated Child Rights policy (ICRP):** The ICRP helps to reflect the commitment and vision of the GoR towards embracing children’s multiple rights.

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<sup>9</sup> Myers (1995). *Benefits of Early Child Development Programs*. World Bank.

The policy provisions aid the design and implementation of a multi-stakeholder campaign on protection, promotion and support of children's rights and obligations, which is one of the Strategic Focus Areas of the ECD policy strategic plan.



## ARRANGEMENTS

Interventions are undertaken by a host of institutions both government and Non-Government. ECD interventions are shared amongst the; Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (Lead), Health, nutrition and Sanitation), Ministry of Education (Pre-school program and curriculum of Local Government (Family Support and decentralised service provision), working hand-in-hand agencies as well as other non-government stakeholders such as Development Partners, Civil Society based Organizations as well as the Private Sector. A mapping of stakeholder responsibilities is below and detailed roles and responsibilities for each party are presented in details under chapter 4 of

### Child Development, Age Specific Interventions

	Child Development Continuum						Lead Institution
	Pre-conception Birth	Birth 2 years	2 4 years	4 6 years	6 Above		
	0						MINISANTE
	0	0					MINISANTE
	0	0	0	0	0		MINISANTE
Children with disabilities		0	0				MIGEPROF
Implementation		0	0				MINISANTE







**Table 9: Mapping Children Growth Characteristics and Needs**

<b>Age Range</b>	<b>What Children do</b>	<b>What Children Need</b>
<b>Birth to 3 months</b>	At this age, children begin to smile, track people and objects with eyes, prefer faces and bright colors, reach, discover hands and feet, lift head and turn toward sound, and cry, but are often soothed when held.	Protection from physical danger, adequate nutrition, adequate health care, (immunization, oral rehydration therapy, hygiene), motor and sensory stimulation, appropriate language stimulation, responsive, sensitive parenting.
<b>4 to 6 months</b>	At this age, children smile often, prefer parents and older siblings, repeat actions with interesting results, listen intently, respond when spoken to, laugh, gurgle, imitate sounds, explore hands and feet, put objects in mouth, sit when propped, roll over, scoot, bounce, grasp objects without using thumb.	Protection from physical danger, adequate nutrition, adequate health care, (immunization, oral rehydration therapy, hygiene), motor and sensory stimulation, appropriate language stimulation, responsive, sensitive parenting.
<b>7 to 12 months</b>	At this age, children remember simple events, identify themselves, body parts, familiar voices, understand own name, other common words, say first meaningful words, explore, bang, shake objects, find hidden objects, put objects in containers, sit alone, creep, pull themselves up to stand, walk, may seem shy or upset with strangers.	Protection from physical danger, adequate nutrition, adequate health care, (immunization, oral rehydration therapy, hygiene), motor and sensory stimulation, appropriate language stimulation, responsive, sensitive parenting.
<b>1 to 2 years</b>	At this age, children imitate adult actions, speak and understand words and ideas, enjoy stories and experimenting with objects, walk steadily, climb stairs, run, assert independence, but prefer familiar people, recognize ownership of objects, develop friendships, solve problems, show pride in accomplishments, like to help with tasks, begin pretend play.	In addition to needs from previous years, children at this age require support in the following: acquiring motor, language, and thinking skills, developing independence, learning self-control, opportunities for play and exploration, play with other children. Health care must also include deworming.
<b>2 to 3 1/2 years</b>	At this age, children enjoy learning new skills, learn language rapidly, are always on the go, gain control of hands and fingers, are easily frustrated, act more independent, but still dependent, act out familiar scenes.	In addition to needs from previous years, children at this age require opportunities to do the following: make choices, engage in dramatic play, read increasingly complex books, sing favorite songs, work simple puzzles.



<b>3 1/2 to 5 years</b>	At this age, children have a longer attention span, act silly & boisterous, may use shocking language, talk a lot, ask many questions, want real adult things, keep art projects, test physical skills and courage with caution, reveal feeling in dramatic play, like to play with friends, do not like to lose, share and take turns sometimes.	In addition to needs from previous years, children at this age require opportunities to do the following: develop fine motor skills, continue expanding language skills by talking, reading, and singing, learn cooperation by helping and sharing, experiment with pre-writing and pre-reading skills.
<b>5 to 6 years</b>	At this age, children grow curious about people and how the world works, show an increasing interest in numbers, letters, reading and writing, become more and more interested in final products, gain more confidence in physical skills, use words to express feeling and to cope, like grown-up activities, become more outgoing, play cooperatively.	In addition to needs from previous years, children at this age require opportunities to do the following: develop numeracy and reading skills, engage in problem-solving, practice teamwork, develop sense of personal competency, practice questioning and observing, acquire basic life skills, and attend basic education.

Source: World Bank ([www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org))