



REPUBLIC OF GHANA

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY



Ministry of Women and
Children's Affairs

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Children constitute the future leadership and workforce of each nation and therefore require serious commitment from the adult population, particularly state institutions to ensure their proper growth and development into adulthood. This is given credence and is manifested in the various Constitutional provisions and Parliamentary Acts and Legislative Instruments by the Government and people of Ghana.

Their future lies in the provision of measures and actions that will provide appropriate levels of protection, survival and development policy aimed at achieving the above by providing the necessary framework and direction for guiding various policy actions as defined.

This policy document replaces various uncoordinated, sector-biased programmes developed and implemented by the Ministry of Education Youth and Sports, Ministry for Employment and Manpower Development, the Ministry of Health and, the Ghana National Commission on children and other Stakeholders.

A critical review of these programmes revealed that these programming and implementing organisations rather concentrated more on the cognitive development of the children instead of approaching the Early Childhood Care and Development of our children from a comprehensive position.

The NPP government recognized this weakness in the ECCD focus when it came to power in the 2001.

With the creation of the Ministry for Women and Children Affairs and subsequent development of its structures, the onus for formulating a comprehensive ECCD policy and appropriate programmes for children from birth to age eight, their parents and caregivers became a big challenge and an imperative.

Under the leadership of the Ministry for Women and Children Affairs (MOWAC), various Stakeholders have been brought together to formulate series of drafts culminating in this final document.

This policy document is set out with presentations on the Rationale for the policy Goal, Objectives and Targets, Institutional Arrangements, Implementation Strategies, Cost and Financial Implications and the conclusions drawn from the above presentations.

The Rational Of the Policy

The policy provides a framework for the guidance of Government and all stakeholders specifically Sector Ministries, District Assemblies and its Structures, communities, families, Civil Society including Non-

Government Organisations and the Donor Community in their effort to support the survival, protection and development of the children of Ghana in their early years.

The basis for this policy framework is defined under this chapter while detailed consideration is given to the conglomerate of policies and strategies formulated over years.

Policy Goal, Objectives And Targets

The document provides the broad policy goal which is to promote the survival, growth and development of all children (0-8 years) in Ghana. Key to this is the efforts of Government to ensure improved standard of living and enhanced quality of life for families in Ghana.

Derived from this are the numerous policy objectives spelt-out under chapter 3 of this document. Achievable targets with appropriate benchmark periods are provided to serve as a measuring guide, basis for monitoring progress and evaluating impact of the outcome of policy implementation.

Institutional Arrangements

The Institutional framework required for managing and implementing the policy measures have been defined under chapter 4 of this document. Roles to be played at the national, regional, district and community levels have been defined and structured.

The overall responsibility for ensuring appropriate and successful policy implementation lies with the Ministry for Women and Children Affairs.

A national Committee for coordinating the activities of the numerous stakeholders with responsibilities allocated to them by the national Constitution, institutional mandate and corporate directives is to be set up and empowered to perform various functions.

Each region shall have a Regional ECCD Committee membership of which shall be appointed by the Regional Coordinating Council, Roles and Responsibilities of MDAs, National ECCD Coordinating Committee, Regional Coordinating Council, District Assemblies, Communities, Families, Religious Bodies and NGOs and the Private Sector are all defined under this chapter.

Implementing Strategies

Critical Strategic direction for implementing the policy goal and objectives include:

- Creation of appropriate/conducive environment for developing and implementing ECCD programmes.

- Promoting Integrated Services.
- Encouraging establishment of Conventional and Non-Conventional ECCD systems for all children.
- Building capacity for ECCD practitioners and institutions.
- Broadening Parental participation in the Implementation process.
- Providing quality ECCD programmes and services.
- Organizing regular research, monitoring and evaluation programmes to enhance all aspects of ECCD systems.
- Mobilizing resources for implementing ECCD programmes.

Costs and Financial Implications

The implementation of the ECCD policy and programmes will require financial outlays. Cost implications shall however differ from locality to locality while funding shall be sourced from diverse sources including:

- Parents
- Communities
- Private proprietors/investors
- NGOs
- Development Partners
- Philanthropic organisations/personalities and,
- Government of Ghana

The cost centres are defined to include National, Regional, District and Community levels. This chapter (5) also defines the financial roles of the Government, Regional Coordinating Council, District Assemblies, Communities, Families and Parents, Proprietors of Service Providers, and Development Partners, NGOs and Philanthropists of all kinds.

In effect, this policy defines the Vision and Mission of the ECCD while structures and measures for achieving the goal/objectives are set out to guide the implementation of the programmes emanating there from.

Critical areas of Strategic interest are also specified with the financial (cost) implications and fund sourcing.

To achieve the targets set all stakeholders (implementers and service providers) are required to put in their maximum effort and provide appropriate supporting inputs.

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) is the timely provision of a range of services that promote the survival, growth, development and protection of the young child. This is not new, since traditionally, Ghanaians have always demonstrated devoted attention to child up-bringing.

Institutionally, however, various Ministries, Departments and Agencies have been responsible for various aspects of early childhood care and development.

Before 2001, the focus of ECCD had been on the cognitive development of the child. This is seen in the establishment of Creches, Day Care Centres, Nurseries and Kindergartens by the Government and private operators to take care of children whilst their parents go out to work. The Ministries of Education and Employment and Social Welfare have had joint responsibilities for these early childhood facilities because of the welfare/care and educational needs of children. Furthermore, the mandate of the Ghana National Commission on Children (GNCC) made the commission responsible for the welfare of all children in Ghana. The responsibility for policy making in respect to children has shifted from the GNCC to the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MOWAC) with the establishment of the Ministry in 2001.

The new approach to ECCD is to formulate comprehensive policies and programmes for children from birth to age eight, their parents and care givers. This is with the aim of protecting the child's rights to develop his or her full cognitive, emotional, social and physical potential. This relatively new approach promotes and protects the rights of the young child to survival, growth and development.

To manifest the above, roles assigned by the constitution and other instruments to ECD-related MDAs had to be considered to ensure provisions for promoting holistic development of the child. Furthermore, the thrust of national development policy directives to key departments operating under the District Assembly system, such as the Ghana Health Service, Ghana Education Service, Social Welfare Department and Community Development had to be considered in relation to early childhood development.

Chapters 28, 34(2) and 35(3) of the Constitution of Ghana provide for the realization of basic human rights, healthy economy, the right to work, the right to good health care and the right to education as well as reasonable access by all citizens to public facilities and services in accordance with the law.

The Children's Act 1998 (Act 560) enjoins the District Assemblies and other Decentralised Departments to facilitate the establishment of Day Care Centres and other ECCD institutions.

This policy document seeks to develop policy guidelines, institutional framework to guide stakeholders and to assign responsibilities, and put in place co-ordinating and monitoring mechanisms for promoting early childhood development in Ghana.

There is no doubt that the ECCD programmes, when implemented in an integrated and co-ordinated manner will ensure the holistic development of the child and provide a strong foundation for Ghana's human resource development.

2.0 **RATIONALE**

The rationale of the policy is to provide a framework for the guidance of Government, as well as other relevant Sector Ministries, District Assemblies, communities, families, the private sector, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and the Donor Community for investment in, and effective implementation of, ECCD programmes.

Ghana as a sovereign nation is obliged to ensure the survival and development of the child through the provision of ECCD services leading to the realization of a healthy nation.

There is an obligation arising from the Constitution and existing national laws, which include:-

- article 28 of the 1992 Constitution, which mandates Government to ensure the rights of the child;
- the Children's Act (Act 560) in 1998, which demonstrated Ghana's commitment to the promotion of the physical, mental and social well-being of the Ghanaian child;
- bye-laws of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies to address specific child-related problems in their areas;

The Government of Ghana has initiated a number of policies and programmes that directly or indirectly impact on the issue of children's welfare. These include the following policies and strategies:

- promotion and extension of pre-school education
- policy and strategies for improving the health of children under 5 years
- national AIDS policy
- street children policy
- gender and children policy
- disability policy
- child protection and promotion policy
- population policy
- poverty reduction strategy framework

The formulation of the policy was also motivated by a number of child-related initiatives, including the institution of the 10-year National Programme of Action (NPA) (1993-2002), which was a follow-up to the World Summit for Children held in September, 1990. This was further strengthened by the commitments made by Ghana at the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children in 2002, to adopt and implement a comprehensive early childhood development policy, towards the realization of the global goal of creating a World Fit for Children by the end of the decade. Other initiatives include country programmes by UNICEF and other child-related agencies, as well as programmes aimed at the empowerment of women. It is expected that the policy will work directly in a continued translation of the rights of children (0- 8 years) to guidelines that will promote their welfare, health and development.

Ghana is also obliged to meet the tenets of international Conventions and Treaties it has ratified. These include the under mentioned:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Ghana was the first country to ratify.
- International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 182.
- Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discriminations Against Women (CEDAW)
- Expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantage children (Education For All).
- Declaration and Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children.

ECCD is also seen as a strategy for poverty reduction. Considering the high levels of poverty in Ghana, and the several attempts being made to reduce it, this policy initiative is considered an opportunity to invest in young children as a means of addressing the problem. This will, in the long run, result in an improvement in the standard of living of Ghanaians.

3.0 **GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS**

3.1 **Policy Goal**

The broad goal of this policy is to promote the survival, growth and development of all children (0-8 years) in Ghana.

In furtherance of this goal, the Government will continue to take measures to improve the standard of living and quality of life of families. To this end, Government will continue to pursue policies and programmes to reduce poverty in the country in order to enhance, among other things, the welfare of children.

3.2 **Policy Objectives**

The objectives of the policy are to:

- promote widespread acceptance and observance of the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- promote the observance and enforcement of the Children's Act 1998, Act 560;
- integrate ECCD issues into Development Planning schemes at the community, district, regional and national levels;
- provide pre-school education in collaboration with District Assemblies, the private Sector, Community Based Organisations (CBO), NGOs and Religious Organisations;
- provide fee-free tuition in pre-schools;
- provide for the preparation (training) and upgrading of pre-school teachers and caregivers;
- promote nutrition and household food security
- reduce the high Infant and Under-Five Mortality Rates;
- provide information and skills to parents and primary care-givers;
- improve income earning capacity of parents;
- enforce existing laws to reduce all forms of child abuse and socio-cultural practices which are detrimental to the well being of children;
- strengthen the institutional capabilities of those delivering ECCD services at the national, regional and district levels;
- establish mechanisms for collaboration and for co-ordination of services for children in the country;
- clarify the roles and responsibilities of Government, donors and other ECCD service providers in the country;
- mobilize and allocate resources for ECCD programmes;
- provide guidelines and standards for service providers to ensure quality ECCD service delivery;

- Provide accessible and affordable ECCD services;
- Establish relevant and reliable data base on children;
- Conduct regular and operational research into ECCD issues in the country.

3.3 **Policy Targets**

The implementation of the ECCD policy will contribute to the achievements of the following major targets:

- achievement of full immunization against vaccine-preventable diseases for, at least 80% of infants in Ghana (0-11 months) by 2005;
- reduction in the Infant Mortality Rate from 57 infant deaths per 1000 live births to 50 and the Child Mortality Rate from 108 to 50 per 1000 births by 2006;
- reduction in the Maternal Mortality Rate from 214 to 150 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births;
- provision of ante-natal care to all pregnant women by 2006;
- decrease in the incidence and rates of low birth weight babies from 8 per cent to 5 per cent by 2003;
- eradication of severe childhood malnutrition;
- achievement of exclusive breast-feeding of infants aged 0-6 months by 50 percent of mothers by 2006;
- expansion of primary school enrolment to 95 per cent by 2020;
- provide 60 percent of public primary schools with two KG classrooms by 2015;
- increase gross enrolments ratio (GER) at preschool level to 75 percent by 2015;
- fee-free tuition defined and disseminated by December 2003;
- development and publication of national policy on preschool;
- development of curriculum for teacher training (including training in preschool education) by 2005;
- increase enrolments in Teacher Training Colleges (TTC) by 43 percent by 2005;
- expansion of ECCD programmes for survival, growth and development to 80 per cent of children aged 0-8 especially in rural and urban poor communities by 2020;
- elimination of gender disparities in Primary School enrolment by 2010;
- strengthening of the information base by improving the availability of quality data on children and their families; and
- achievement of universal birth registration by the year 2005.

4.0 INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Institutional Framework

The implementation of the ECCD policy requires a well-defined institutional framework in order to translate the goals and objectives into actual programmes at the national, regional, district and community levels. While there will be co-ordination at all levels, the implementation will be carried out largely by communities and districts, in line with Government's decentralization programme. Accordingly, the following shall be the Institutional arrangements:-

The national machinery for ensuring the successful implementation of this policy and its programmes shall be the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs through monitoring and evaluation responsibilities. At the National Level, there will be a National ECCD Co-ordinating Committee with the following membership:-

- Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWAC);
- Ministry of Education (MOE);
- Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment (MMDE);
- Ministry of Health (MOH);
- Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD);
- Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT);
- Recognised Association of ECCD Practitioners; and
- Any other body co-opted by the Committee.

Representation of above institutions shall be a Director or her/his representative. There shall be established within MOWAC a Unit which shall provide the Secretariat for the National ECCD Co-ordinating Committee.

At the Regional level, the membership of the Regional ECCD Committees shall be appointed from among the Regional Co-ordinating Council, and any other relevant stakeholders of ECCD according to guidelines provided by the National ECCD Co-ordinating Committee.

At the District Level, District Committees on Children, a technical Committee of the District Assembly responsible for advocacy and planning for children, will be charged with the handling of ECCD issues. The following will therefore provide the needed technical inputs during deliberations and preparation of District Action Plans for Children:-

- District Directors of Health, Education, Social Welfare and Community Development, and Water and Sanitation;
- 1 representative of NGOs working for children at the District level;

- 1 representative of early childhood service providers;
- Traditional Authorities; and
- District Co-ordinating Director or Planning Officer.

At the district sub-structure level; Zonal, Urban, Town, and Area (ZUTA) Committees, whose membership shall be made up of government officials, representatives of NGOs and Traditional Authorities of the area shall be formed.

At the Community/Unit Level, communities shall be encouraged to form ECCD Committees, the composition of which shall be made of such persons as the Unit Committee Member, Assembly Member, Chairman of Town/Village Development Committees, Religious Groups, Teachers, Community Health Staff.

4.2 Roles and Responsibilities

4.2.1 Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs)

The Government, through its relevant Ministries, Regional Co-ordinating Councils, District Assemblies, Departments and Agencies, shall continue to support ECCD Programmes at all levels. The relevant Ministries shall perform the underlisted functions and any others that shall be assigned to them by the National Co-ordinating Committee.

The roles and responsibilities of the various Ministries, Departments and Agencies that will be charged with the implementation of the policy at all levels are as indicated in the ensuing sub-paragraphs.

4.2.1.1 Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs

The Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs shall have the sole responsibility for ensuring the successful implementation of this policy and its programmes through monitoring and evaluation responsibilities.

- Develop a Communications and Advocacy Strategy to create a nation-wide awareness on the Policy and ECCD issues;
- establish a Unit within its offices which shall serve as the Secretariat for National ECCD Co-ordinating Committee;
- recommend, in consultation with relevant MDAs and other stakeholders, minimum standards for the operation of ECCD Centres;
- establish and operationalize a national programme for research, monitoring and evaluation of ECCD issues;
- convene meetings of the National Co-ordinating Committee and set its agenda;

- ensure that the provisions of the policy are adhered to and decisions of the National Co-ordinating Committee are carried out;
- mobilise resources for purposes such as research, advocacy, co-ordination, monitoring and evaluation of ECCD programmes;
- encourage the formation of a National ECCD Consultative Group of NGOs working with children within the relevant age group; and
- initiate necessary actions for the implementation of the policy upon its adoption;
- submit annually to relevant Statutory bodies a comprehensive report on the status of implementation of the policy.

4.2.1.2 **Ministry of Education/Ghana Education Service (MOE/GES)**

The Ministry of Education shall have the following responsibilities:-

- a) Take a lead role to regulate the establishment and registration of pre-school (Kindergarten);
- b) Take a lead role in providing technical input in early intellectual stimulation and development issues in ECCD programmes, both centre-based and non-centre based. These would include, but not be limited to, the development of curriculum, setting of educational standards and monitoring of same;
- c) Make a provision for ECCD programmes within its budget;
- d) Expand and maximise the use of existing ECCD training facilities and establish new ones, existing training institutions could, in the mean time, offer their facilities for use in conducting courses for care givers during vacation;
- e) Offer qualitative training to ECCD attendants and care-givers and support all Nursery Training Centres both financially and materially;
- f) Ensure a smooth transition from preschool programmes to formal schooling.

4.2.1.3 **Ministry of Health/Ghana Health Service (MOE/GHS)**

The Ministry of Health shall take a lead role and provide technical inputs in the health and nutrition aspects of all ECCD programmes, including but not limited to the following:

- a) Safe motherhood and HIV/AIDS issues;
- b) Immunization and growth promotion services;
- c) Prevention and management of common childhood illness;
- d) Intensify programmes on infant and young child feeding;
- e) Develop health and nutritional (including breast-feeding) content of ECCD curriculum;
- f) Set nutritional and health standards and monitor same;

- g) Make provision for ECCD programmes within its budget;
- h) Provide facilities for early detection and management of abnormalities and disabilities in children (0-8 years);
- i) Develop and implement parent education programmes.

4.2.1.4 Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment (MMDE)

The Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment shall have the following responsibilities:

- a) Take a lead role to regulate the establishment and registration of Day Care centres and the provision of technical input in the implementation of social welfare aspects of ECCD programmes;
- b) Make provision for ECCD programmes within its budget;
- c) Identify and assist families and communities in matters relating to child care and protection;
- d) Ensure that children are not abused or used in any way that contravenes the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Children's Act of 1998; and
- e) Provide protection and care for children, especially disadvantaged children, including the disabled and those affected by HIV/AIDS and other related diseases.

4.2.1.5 Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD)

The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development shall,

- a) Ensure that District Committees on Children, with responsibility for ECCD issues, are set up in all Districts;
- b) Encourage the District Assemblies and communities to plan and implement ECCD programmes; and
- c) Ensure that Regional Co-ordinating Councils (RCC) monitor and evaluate ECCD plans and programmes in the Districts;
- d) Ensure that District Assemblies allocate a percentage of their development budget for ECCD programmes.

4.2.2 National ECCD Co-ordinating Committee

National ECCD Co-ordinating Committee shall have the following responsibilities:

- a) Advise the MOWAC on ECCD issues;
- b) Propose amendments to the policy as and when necessary;
- c) Examine current laws as they affect parents and young children and make recommendations for amendment, where necessary;
- d) Monitor and ensure implementation of the ECCD policy;

- e) Ensure co-ordination of efforts among those providing ECCD services, especially in the training of care-givers;
- f) Facilitate the incorporation of relevant aspects of this policy into existing sector policies and programmes upon its adoption.

4.2.3 Regional ECCD Committees

Regional ECCD Committees shall have the following responsibilities:

- a) Advise the Regional Co-ordinating Council on ECCD issues;
- b) Advocate for ECCD;
- c) Use existing Regional institutions, like relevant Ministries, Departments, NGOs, child-related Associations, private service providers, among others, to plan, implement and monitor ECCD programmes; and
- d) Designate a Co-ordinator for ECCD to co-ordinate ECCD activities in the Regions.

4.2.4 Regional Co-ordinating Councils (RCC)

Regional Co-ordinating Councils shall ensure that District Assemblies develop ECCD programmes and see to their implementation.

4.2.5 District Assemblies

The District Assemblies shall

- a) Initiate, plan and implement ECCD programmes;
- b) Ensure that District Committees on Children address ECCD issues in close collaboration with organizations working with/for children (0-8 years);
- c) Allocate percentage of their budgets for ECCD programmes;
- d) Encourage the formation of community ECCD Committees;
- e) Mobilize the community committees for ECCD programmes;
- f) Link the communities and the Regional ECCD Committees;
- g) Empower needy families to enable them cope with their responsibility for the survival, care and development of their children.

4.2.6 Communities

Communities shall;

- a) Play an active role in ECCD programmes;
- b) Continue to help put up ECCD centers; and
- c) Contribute to services of care-givers.

4.2.7 **Families**

Families shall bear the primary responsibility for the survival, care and development of their children

4.2.8 **Religious Bodies and NGOs**

Religious bodies and NGOs should be encouraged to,

- a) Advocate for early childhood care and development; and
- b) Provide financial and technical support for the development of children (0-8 years).

4.2.9 **Private Proprietors**

Private ECCD Service providers shall be encouraged to provide quality ECCD services according to guidelines set up by the National ECCD Co-ordinating Committee.

4.2.10 **Other Departments**

Other Government Departments, whose work impact on ECCD shall incorporate ECCD programmes into their activities at all levels.

5.0 **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

A variety of strategies shall be adopted to implement the ECCD policy in order to expand the coverage and quality of ECCD programmes. To achieve the objectives of the policy, overlaps and constraints in ECCD programme implementation will be identified and programmes harmonized to achieve efficiency. Complementary ECCD programming strategies will also be adopted for efficiency. The strategies to be adopted include the following:

5.1 **Create a conducive Environment for Developing and Implementing ECCD Programmes**

The objective is to create a conducive environment for the development and implementation of ECCD programmes. To achieve this, overlaps and constraints will be identified and programmes harmonized to achieve efficiency in the promotion of ECCD. There will be a programme to sensitize key decision makers, communities, parents and other stakeholders in ECCD, through symposia, drama, the print and electronic media, among others. Avenues for networking will also be promoted.

5.2 **Promote Integrated Services**

To make ECCD service delivery holistic and to ensure efficient use of resources, ECCD programmes shall be presented as packages that will take care of the physical, mental, social, moral and spiritual needs of the child. Agencies which provide these services will, therefore, be encouraged to collaborate and complement each other's efforts.

5.3 Encourage the Establishment of Conventional and Non-Conventional ECCD Systems for all Children

All children have a basic right to quality ECCD Services. There is, therefore, the need to design and establish programmes that will cater for children from poor homes, those in need of special attention, as well as girls. In addition to the above, both Centre-based and non-Centre based care will be encouraged so that children who cannot benefit from one can do so from the

5.4 Build Capacity of ECCD Practitioners and Institutions

Ensure the training of ECCD Practitioners, including parents, and build the capacity of institutions. To achieve this, a national integrated ECCD capacity building programme would be established to provide a framework for the development of training packages, certification for trainees, accreditation of training institutions, decentralization of resource centres, and mechanisms for managing, monitoring and evaluating of training programmes. Appropriate educational packages would be developed to improve the parenting abilities of parents and other care-givers.

5.5 Broaden Parent Participation

The concept of parent involvement will be broadened to embrace parent participation, which respects and strengthens the parent's role in the child's development and establishes linkages between the home, early childhood programmes and children's transition into the primary school.

5.6 Provide Quality ECCD

There are inadequate educational and on-the-job training for child-care givers. Minimal regulation of staff and programme quality relegates child-care to a low status and low paying occupation. Most pre-schools, especially those in the rural areas, lack proper health care surveillance, recreational facilities and play things and good physical infrastructure. It is important that these issues are adequately addressed in order to improve not only access to, but the quality of, ECCD services to children. Appropriate guidelines will therefore be set to regulate the establishment and performance of these programmes.

5.7 Organise Regular Research, Monitoring and Evaluation to Improve all Aspects of ECCD Systems

Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms shall be built into programmes from onset to ensure programme quality at all levels. Research will be conducted and the findings used for the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of ECCD programmes.

5.8 Mobilise Resources for Implementation of ECCD Programmes

The implementation of a comprehensive ECCD programme calls for the provision of adequate resources for programmes. There shall be cost-sharing and, therefore, resources must be pooled from all stakeholders.

The use of local resources, indigenous knowledge, skills and experiences shall be encouraged to maximise results in ECCD service delivery. This will improve quality, access and patronage at minimum cost. It will further allow for programmes to be adapted to suit local needs.

6.0 COSTS AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Costs

All types of ECCD programmes entail some financial and/or resource cost. These costs, however, differ from locality to locality, and will depend also on the type of programme, whether it is centre-based, home-based, home visiting, or parent education. Whatever the cost, it is expected that it will be borne by one, or a combination of the following: parents, communities, private proprietors, NGOs, development partners, philanthropic personalities and organisation and the Government.

ECCD costs will be incurred at five main levels; national, regional, district, sub district and community levels. The main costs to be incurred in the implementation of this policy shall include, but not be limited to, the following areas: research, policy formulation/review, advocacy, capacity building, empowerment of parents, implementation of projects, co-ordination, monitoring and evaluation.

6.1.2 National Level Costs

- Support to relevant MDAs to perform their ECCD functions.
- Support to Nursery Training Centres to enable them train care-givers.
- Development of sector capacity in their new roles.
- Development of training modules/packages for comprehensive ECCD programmes.

6.1.3 Regional Level Costs

Some specific costs to be incurred at the regional level are the following

- Support for Regional ECCD Committees.
- Support for advocacy workshops.
- Training for ECCD Committee members.
- Monitoring and evaluation.

6.1.4 **District Level Costs**

The main costs at this level will be:

- Start-up costs (including the cost of infrastructure, equipment, supplies, etc.)
- Staff training.
- On-going costs, including maintenance of facilities, replacement of worn-out equipment, caregivers salaries, transportation, etc.
- Support to District Committees on Children for ECCD programmes.
- Advocacy.

6.1.5 **Community Level Costs**

Community level costs include the following:

- Infrastructure provision and maintenance.
- Sponsoring training of care-givers.
- Contribute of equipments, toys, etc.
- Provision of food for children.
- Training of Community ECCD Committee members.
- Transportation.
- Salaries of care-givers.
- Other on-going costs.

6.2 **Financing**

The financing of ECCD programmes will be spread in various forms among the key participants, namely; the Government, participating families, local communities, the private sector, NGOs and other international organisations.

The Government will ensure accessibility, equity, and equality so that children in need of special attention, including those from low income families and the disabled, can benefit.

To this end, Government will seek international co-operation, where necessary, towards the provision of basic ECCD services. In addition to the above, participating families, the private sector, NGOs, philanthropists and religious organisations will be encouraged to complement and supplement the Government's effort.

For purposes of the above, the broad financial roles of the key players shall be the following:-

6.2.1 **The Government**

The Government, realizing that Early Childhood Care and Development forms an integral part of national development priorities shall, upon coming into force of this Policy, direct the Ministry of Finance, in its budgetary guidelines to the relevant sector Ministries, request for the retention of a certain proportion of their regular budgets for ECCD programmes.

In addition to the above, the Government will,

- Waive taxes on equipment and materials meant for ECCD programmes.
- Provide incentives to private sector establishments contributing above a certain minimum level of funds or in-kind support to ECCD programmes.
- Direct the Ghana Education Trust Fund to contribute to early childhood education.

6.2.2 **Regional Co-ordinating Councils**

The RCCs shall fund the activities of Regional ECCD Committees and any regional structures that will be set up.

6.2.3 **District Assemblies**

District Assemblies shall allocate a percentage of their total budget expenditure to ECCD programmes, including provision of incentives to district ECCD committees. Where appropriate, the District Assemblies shall also be responsible for the payment of salaries of care-givers under their jurisdiction.

6.2.4 **Communities, Families and Parents**

Communities, Families and Parents shall provide support to ECCD programmes through:

- The contribution of labour to build facilities,
- Provision of equipment and play things,
- Provision of food for children,
- Contribution towards the payment of salaries of caregivers (they may be allowed to pay in kind) and any other cost that may be necessary.

6.2.5 **Proprietors**

Private proprietors shall

- Be encouraged to provide quality ECCD services.
- Where necessary, the proprietors should provide services to children with disabilities.

- Support the training of their staff.
- Take full responsibility of salaries of staff under their jurisdiction.

6.2.6 **Development Partners, NGOs and Philanthropists**

The above will be encouraged to,

- Continue to provide technical as well as financial assistance. Technical assistance could be in the form of research, dissemination of research findings and best practices from other countries, networking, developing appropriate curriculum, capacity building and professional training.
- Support programmes to train trainers.
- Support the initial start-up cost of programmes including providing relevant infrastructure.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

This policy sets out the Vision and Mission of Early Childhood Care and Development as the foundation of Ghana's human resource development for the near future. The rationale, framework, goals, objectives and targets, as well as the implementation strategies, have been outlined. Similarly, its institutional pattern, roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders, and the financial implications have been stated. Through the policy, the Government is putting into practice its constitutional obligation of enhancing the fundamental human rights and freedoms of her young citizens, and promoting national legislation, as well as confirming international Conventions and Agreements concerning children.

The main goal of the policy is the survival, growth, development and protection of all Ghanaian children. Government shall therefore take measures to expand access and improve the quality of ECCD programmes in that direction to 100 per cent of children aged 0-8 by the year 2015. Quality, equity in delivery, cost sharing, holistic approach, community and parent participation will be the guiding principles.

The implementation strategy for the policy shall involve the creation of a conducive environment for developing ECCD programmes, promotion of integrated services, establishment of conventional and non-conventional ECCD systems, training of care-givers, capacity-building for individuals and institutions towards the growth and sustenance of the systems and mobilization of resources.

The institutional framework is modeled on the existing of decentralisation. Provision is therefore made for committees at the community, district and its sub-structures, regional and national levels. Parents, Community members, District Assemblies, Regional Co-ordinating Councils, NGOs, Development Partners and the Government will be actively involved.

The policy should be seen as both a challenge and an opportunity to continue to develop the country's human resource base for the present and the future. Its successful implementation, thus, depends on the several and collective responsibilities of all stakeholders who share the clear view that early childhood care and development is a strong foundation for the development of individuals, society and the nation as a whole.