Developing Quality Standards for Early Childhood Care and Education in Seychelles

ELP Virtual Event

9th March, 2016
Outline

1. Background
2. Developing national ECCE standards
3. Overview of core standards
4. Implementing the standards
5. Lessons Learned
6. Q&A
Seychelles and ECCE

Seychelles is an upper-middle income island state off the east coast of Africa, consisting of 115 islands, with a population of ~90,000 people.

Early childhood in Seychelles:
- **Day care** (center-based) and **childminding** services (home-based) are available from 3 months-4 years old- privately provided
- 2 years of **crèche** are offered for free for 3 ½ - 5 ½ year olds- publically provided
- **Primary 1 and 2** for 5 ½- 7 ½ - publically provided
Institute for Early Childhood Development (IECD)

• Legal institution endorsed by cabinet through IECD Act (2014)

• Institutional anchor, under parent ministry – Ministry of Education— with mandate is to provide coordination, leadership and strategic direction for ECD at national level, and advice government on policy issues and programmes relating to ECD.

• Mission: to provide leadership in ECCE and to ensure, through collaboration with all other partners, the coordinated implementation of policies and programmes in order to improve the quality and the accessibility of early childhood care and education so that every child develops holistically, has positive learning experiences, and builds a strong foundation for success in school and everyday life.

• Functions:
  • Regulatory
  • Coordination, Research & Advisory
  • Advocacy & Promotion
National ECCE Structures

- High Level Policy Committee
  - Minister of Education
  - Minister of Finance
  - National ECCE Trust Fund
  - ECCE Sectors & Technical Teams
    - Com. Development
    - Social Affairs
    - Education
    - Health
    - Finance & Others

- National Coordinating Committee (Chaired by CEO-IECD)
- Institute of Early Childhood Development
- Board
- Advisory Council

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  - Health
  - Finance & Others
Rationale for Childminding Standards

2013: Government of Seychelles and World Bank conducted the *Systems Approach for Better Education Results-Early Childhood Development* (SABER-ECD)
- Identified several gaps in the existing Seychellois ECD system, including the need for standards for home-based services for 0-3.

2014: IECD conducted the national Childminding Study to capture the status of childminders in Seychelles.
- Identified need to attend to health and safety aspects of childminding, establish minimum level of provision, and train and support childminders
Why did we need quality standards?

- Until now, services have been unregulated
- Without standards, there is no way to ensure minimum level of quality

International evidence demonstrates that the quality of a child’s early experience has a significant impact on outcomes in school and later in life

- Streamlined standards will ensure that early childhood services are holistic, comprehensive, and of high quality

Establish expectations and norms for all relevant stakeholders including parents, children, and the Government

National Standards
Promote basic level of quality service provision

~150 childminders
More than 6,000 children 0-3
How were standards developed?

1. **Childminding Study**
   - Study conducted by IECD in 2014 provided baseline on current status of childminding services for health and safety, financing, early learning program, training, and parental needs

2. **Review of international best practices**
   - Case studies from Australia, Jamaica, New Zealand, and UK were reviewed to understand how other countries regulate and monitor ECCE services
   - Relevance, feasibility, and associated risks of varying models were considered for Seychellois context

3. **Sectoral consultations**
   - Sector-specific consultations with Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Affairs, Social Services Department, Department of Community Development & Sports, Seychelles Fire and Rescue Services Agency, IECD were conducted (November 2014)
   - Sector context, recent progress to support/monitor childminders, current situation of childminding was reviewed

4. **Draft standards and operational guidelines**
   - Standards framework and associated requirements were developed to promote ten core areas of quality ECCE
   - Complementary operational guidelines, which provide practical recommendations for childminders in the daily operation of services, were developed by each sector

5. **Validation**
   - Operational Guidelines validated by approximately 50 participants (February 2015)
   - Three National Validation Workshops with national ECD stakeholders and childminders from La Digue, Praslin, and Mahe to discuss and deliberate on specific requirements and guidelines in draft national standards (May 2015)
Core Areas of Quality ECCE in Seychelles

High Quality Childminding

- Physical Environment
- Staffing
- Rights & protection
- Safety
- Nutrition
- Health
- Interaction
- Early Learning
- Administration
- Community & Family Engagement

10 Standards with 26 associated guidelines with specific requirements that set expectations for quality childminding
Ten Key Quality Standards for ECCE in Seychelles

Childminding establishments provide space that ensures that children can safely and securely play and learn.

Childminders and assistants have adequate experience, knowledge, and skills to support children’s healthy development.

Childminders take necessary steps to ensure that all children in their care are safe and well.

Childminders take necessary precautions to protect the safety of children and staff on the premises.

Childminders provide appropriate nutritious snacks and meals to children.

Childminders will provide a learning program aligned with the Seychelles Early Learning Framework (SELF) to ensure activities enhance children’s learning and development.

Childminders have positive relationships with all children by encouraging and praising positive behaviours and appropriately managing challenging behaviours.

Childminders have positive, warm, and responsive relationships with the child’s family and overall community.

Childminder establishments practice sound administrative practices, including maintenance and communication of proper information and records and basic bookkeeping.

Childminders provide facilities and demonstrate practices to promote children’s health and protect them from illness.

Childminders have positive relationships with the child’s family and overall community.
Operational Guidelines

- Kids Gathering Guidelines
- Social Service Guidelines
- Public Health Guidelines
- Diapering Guidelines
- Hand Washing Guidelines
- Dental Care and Hygiene Guidelines
- Infant and Young Child Feeding Guidelines
- Fire Safety Policy for Childminding Services
- Seychelles Early Learning Framework
- Multi-sector Inspection Guidelines
Implementation

Legal framework and regulatory process defined

- Under IECD Act (2014) framework for regulations on the registration, operation, administration, and management of childminding institutions
- Regulatory Affairs Section at IECD established; Director, 3 M&E Officers hired

Childminder Sensitization on Quality ECCE

- ~50 hour training program on 10 core areas of quality developed and piloted
- Adopted an experience-based, hands-on modality based on adult learning principles
- Facilitator from health, education, fire safety, community development, social services conducted working sessions
- Approximately 100 participants (70% retention)

Registration

- In June 2016, first cohort of childminders will register with certificate of pre-registration training, medical certificate of fitness, criminal record

Next Steps

- Planned pre-registration training for next cohort
- Public sensitization: media spots, posters, parents guides, meetings with parents
- Planned ongoing in-service training and support for childminders
- Exploring childminding financial support package
What contributed to the project’s success?

- Standards development was part of larger National Action Plan for ECCE.
- Multi-sector stakeholders were actively engaged and contributed throughout process.
- Validation of operational guidelines and standards was an iterative process that provided an opportunity for variety of stakeholders, including childminders themselves, to contribute to the standards.
- Leadership from IECD and National Core Team was essential; team provided guidance throughout process and facilitated striking a balance between promoting optimal quality and acknowledging the reality of current childminders’ context.
What were some challenges, and how were they addressed?

- Designing standards to promote holistic development, while also placing special priority on children’s safety and welfare.
  - Eight mandatory requirements are considered legally binding minimum standards that childminders must meet in order to operate.

- Clearly defining process and roles for training, inspection, and regulatory process
  - Formation of a Regulatory Affairs section at IECD
  - Development of multi-sectoral inspection guidelines

- Improving quality of childminding establishments, while taking a practical approach
  - Phased approach to implement standards, starting with childminder sensitization
  - Identification of strategies to support childminders who are not currently complying with mandatory requirements
  - Plans for continued support and training of childminders
Looking forward:
What will national standards achieve?

- Harmonize expectations across sectors on minimum quality service provision for parents, childminders, and government
- Provide basis for government to assess whether childminders deliver on established policies
- Establish the boundaries within which all service providers are expected to operate
- Identify areas to support childminders to ensure quality early childhood care and education is available for all children in Seychelles
Thank you

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Q&A
Annex:

OVERVIEW OF NATIONAL STANDARDS
1. Early Learning

- High quality learning in early childhood is linked to school readiness and linguistic, physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional development.
- Providing developmentally appropriate learning activities and resources will promote optimal child development.
- Monitoring child’s development allows childminders to tailor their activities to individual child’s strengths and needs. Periodically reporting to parents will help them be informed about their child's developmental milestones.

1.1 Learning Program

1.1.1 Early Learning Activities

1.1.2 Early Learning Resources

1.2 Monitoring Child Development

1.2.1 Ongoing monitoring of development

1.2.2 Communication and reporting
2. Interaction

• Social-emotional development is a key part of development during the early years, as children learn about interacting with others and regulating their own emotions and behaviours.
• It is important that childminders promote positive interactions as well as manage inappropriate behaviours.
• Sensitive and responsive interactions help children feel comfortable and develop a positive sense of self. Children who feel comfortable and valued are more likely to thrive and learn.

2.1 Positive relationships

2.1.1 Warm and responsive interactions

2.2 Appropriate supervision and guiding behavior

2.2.1 Behavioral guidance and discipline
3. Health

- For optimal learning and development, children should be healthy and free from illness.
- In childminding establishments, sanitary and hygienic practices are crucial to reduce the spread of germs. Childminders should also be equipped with basic skills and materials in case of medical emergency.
- During the early years, children rely on adults to learn about making healthy choices. Thus, childminders should exhibit and teach healthy practices so that children can learn how to practice healthy lifestyles.
4. Nutrition

- Proper nutrition during the early years affects children’s growth and brain development.
- Childminders play an important role to promote adequate consumption of energy and nutrients. Childminders can help children develop healthy eating habits for later life.
5. Safety

- Children should have the opportunity to learn and play in safe environments free from hazards.
- Childminders should take preventative measures to minimize the risk of accidents caused by unsafe environments.
6. Child Rights & Protection

- Children learn best when they are safe and secure. At a young age, children’s rights are especially important given their inability to advocate for and protect themselves.
- Childminders should ensure that children are safeguarded against abuse and neglect inside and outside childminding establishments.
- Childminders should ensure their services are inclusive for children with special needs.

### 6.1 Safeguarding against abuse and neglect

- **6.1.1 Protection inside establishment**
- **6.1.2 Protection outside establishment**

### 6.2 Inclusive early childhood care and education

- **6.2.1 Inclusion**
- **6.2.2 Children with special needs**
7. Staffing

- Service provider quality has a major influence on how ECCE service impact children’s development. Children benefit the most when providers have knowledge, skills, and practices in child development.
- Childminders and assistants should have an adequate background to provide quality learning and play activities to young children.
8. Physical Environment

- Given that the majority of childminding services operate out of personal homes, it is important that the physical environment meets a minimum standard for basic quality service provision.
- Infrastructure and indoor space should be safe in order to reduce the risk of fires and other physical hazards.
- Adequate infrastructure, space, and furnishings will allow childminders to conduct activities so that children can engage in physical activities, explore their surroundings, use their senses and foster gross and fine motor development.
9. Family & Community Engagement

• Parents, family, and community play an integral role in a child’s overall development. Ongoing communication and engagement between childminders and families will foster an optimal environment for children to grow and develop.

• Promoting reciprocal relationships between childminder establishments and community representatives will help ensure that children have access to the necessary services.
10. Administration

- Basic record-keeping will ensure childminders have adequate information on each child in order to support him/her on a day-to-day basis as well as in case of emergency.
- Keeping accurate financial records will help childminders track profits and expenses from their small businesses.
- Effective administrative procedures will require that childminders comply with relevant standards and guidelines to ensure that all children receive safe and quality ECCE services.