

THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

FOR CHILDREN FROM BIRTH TO FOUR

COMPREHENSIVE VERSION



basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

unicef 
unite for children

The South African National Curriculum Framework for children from Birth to Four
February 2015

© Department of Basic Education

All care has been taken to ensure that the information is correct and original sources have been indicated for reference and verification. With an identification of the Department of Basic Education as source, the document may be freely quoted, reviewed, abstracted, reproduced and translated, in part or in whole, but not for sale nor for use in conjunction with commercial purposes. Original sources should be acknowledged where indicated in the publication.

ISBN: 978-1-4315-2008-4

Suggested citation:

Department of Basic Education. 2015. *The South African National Curriculum Framework for children from Birth to Four*. Pretoria: Department of Basic Education

Obtainable free of charge from:

Department of Basic Education
222 Struben Street
Private Bag X895, Pretoria, 0001
Telephone: 0123573000
Fax: 0123230601
Website: www.education.gov.za
Email: ecd@dbe.gov.za

Cover illustration: © UNICEF/itldesign

Layout: CTP Pretoria | Tel: 010 597 7861

CONTENTS

Terminology.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	ii
Foreword- by the Minister of Basic Education, Mrs AM Motshekga, MP	iii
Introduction	1
The vision for children in the early years	2
Key ideas that shaped the NCF	5
Principles informing the three themes which underpin the NCF	7
The Early Learning and Development Areas	8
Early Learning and Development Area One: Well-being.....	16
Early Learning and Development Area Two: Identity and belonging	31
Early Learning and Development Area Three: Communication	40
Early Learning and Development Area Four: Exploring mathematics	50
Early Learning and Development Area Five: Creativity	57
Early Learning and Development Area Six: Knowledge and understanding of the world.....	65
Assessment of each child's developmental needs and learning interests	71
References	81



TERMINOLOGY

Terms used in the National Curriculum Framework for children from birth to four (NCF)

Child / children	refers to all babies, toddlers and young children whatever their abilities, gender, background, language or culture
Parents	refers to the main caregiver of the child
Families	refers to the people with whom the child lives
Early Learning and Development Area (ELDA)	refers to six organisers relevant to children: Well-being; Identity and Belonging; Communication; Exploring Mathematics; Creativity; Knowledge and Understanding of the world

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Department of Basic Education is most grateful to a range of stakeholders and individuals for their participation and involvement in the development of the National Curriculum Framework for children from birth to four (NCF). We would like to thank UNICEF for funding the development process of the document. Special thanks to Professor Hasina Ebrahim from the University of Free State and Margaret Irvine for the initial draft, as well as Dr Snoeks Desmond for the final edit of the comprehensive document and the development of the abridged version.



FOREWORD

BY THE MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION, MRS AM MOTSHEKGA, MP



"Delays in cognitive and overall development before schooling can often have long lasting and costly consequences for children, families and society. The most effective and cost-efficient time to intervene is before birth and the early years of life. Investment in Early Childhood Development should be a key priority." National Development Plan: Vision for 2030 (2011) Research shows that the first 1000 days (pre-birth, early and late infancy) of life are highly sensitive to environmental effects.

The National Curriculum Framework for children birth to four years (NCF) is a response to challenges that the Early Childhood Development (ECD) sector is facing. The first step towards the development of the NCF was the development of the National Early Learning Standards (NELDS) in 2009. The finalisation of the NCF was informed by consultative processes which included comments from the public. These processes were used to shape and finalise the NCF.

The NCF comes as we are celebrating 20 years of democracy in our country and it is one of the activities aimed at improving the quality of basic education by laying a solid foundation in the early years. The development of the NCF is a great achievement for our country as it is the first document of its kind. This will ensure that children from different backgrounds in different settings have access to quality ECD services.

The NCF will be used in a variety of settings and purposes to improve children's learning experiences. It will also be used by training organisations, universities, practitioners, parents and other care-givers to enhance children's learning and development.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Motshekga'.

Mrs AM Motshekga, MP

Minister of Basic Education