

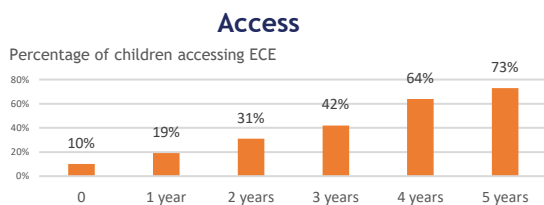


The [Early Childhood Education Policy Academy](#)¹ is a multi-year effort by the World Bank designed to help countries identify needs and generate options to improve early childhood education (ECE) at the country level. It offers a unique opportunity for country teams to strengthen policymaker capacity, problem-solve within a global network of peers, and engage in South-to-South learning along some of the world's leading early childhood practitioners and academic experts. The program's first cohort supported 12 countries² from April 2021 to November 2022. This case study showcases how the program specifically supported the South Africa country team.

CONTEXT

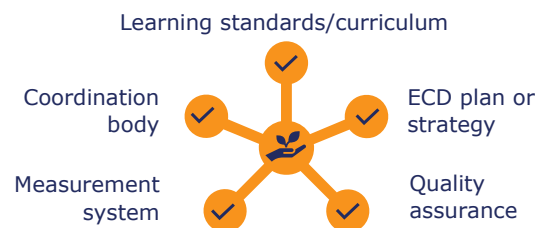
South Africa has made significant strides in advancing quality early learning. The country is implementing a National Development Plan (NDP), with improvement in the provision of quality Early Childhood Development (ECD) services as one of its major outcomes. Efforts in creating an enabling ECD environment are evidenced in several ways, in particular the establishment of the National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy in 2015, the South African National Curriculum Framework (NCF) and the transition of ECD provision for ages 0-4 years from the Department of Social Development (DSD) to the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in April 2022. The country has also developed a quality standards framework, a [Thrive by Five](#) tracking system of child development and completed a Public Expenditure and Institutional Review of ECD. Looking forward, South Africa aims to strengthen the system's effectiveness, improve teacher qualifications and institutionalize the measurement of ECD outcomes. The ways in which the program has supported these efforts are detailed below.

ECE SNAPSHOT



(Statistics South Africa, General Household Survey, 2021)
 Note: Access for children ages 0 to 2 years includes flexible opportunities such as family programmes, care by a daymother or playgroups. Access for children ages 3 to 5 years include access to early learning.

Enabling environment



PROGRAM CONTRIBUTION

GOAL 1

BUILD EFFECTIVE EARLY LEARNING SYSTEMS



- **Contribution:** The program has been timely with regards to the transfer of early childhood to the DBE, enabling the country team to learn from experts and other country experiences on building early learning systems as they adopted this new function.
- **Next steps:** The DBE is creating a management information system (MIS) that will, on an annual basis, collate information on enrollment, staffing, registration, and other components.

GOAL 2

STRENGTHEN THE ECE WORKFORCE



- **Contribution:** The program has supported the country team with Technical Assistance (TA) aimed to review skills training and qualifications systems as well as career progression and articulation for ECE teachers in South Africa.
- **Next steps:** Develop Human Resource Development Plan which will include details of a qualifications framework, ECE teacher professionalization, career articulation and conditions of service.

GOAL 3

MEASURE ECD OUTCOMES



- **Contribution:** The program has provided a valuable platform for the country team to share its recent experience with the newly established system of quality measurement. In this [blog](#) published on the World Bank website, the delegation shares its journey in establishing the Thrive by Five Index.
- **Next steps:** The DBE is institutionalizing the Thrive by Five Index as a recurring activity to measure quality outcomes and service delivery every three years.

¹ The Early Childhood Education Policy Academy is managed by the World Bank's Early Learning Partnership (ELP), a multi-donor trust fund that provides resources and technical assistance to support early childhood development and early learning around the world.

² Participating countries included: Cambodia, Central African Republic, El Salvador, Liberia, Morocco, North Macedonia, Paraguay, Senegal, South Africa, Türkiye, West Bank and Gaza, and Uganda.