



## 2<sup>nd</sup> National Early Childhood Development Stakeholders' Conference

### CONFERENCE COMMUNIQUE

#ECDAgenda

#### Accelerating Early Childhood Development through partnerships:

##### *Preamble*

We the two hundred and sixty delegates from 26 counties and over 50 organizations, government agencies at National and County government, UN agencies, private sector, Philanthropists, donor communities and academia congregated at Kenyatta University, Nairobi-Kenya, for the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Early Childhood Development Stakeholders' Conference on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of July 2018 on the theme “**Accelerating Early Childhood Development through partnerships**”.

Noting that Early Childhood (0-8) years is the most rapid period of brain development in human life, it serves as the most important preparation period for life-long learning, economic and social engagement. It is within these years that a child develops the building blocks for cognitive, language, social, moral, physical and emotional development. Further, in this phase, a child is most vulnerable to risks of malnutrition, toxic stress and lack of stimulation, which negatively affect brain architecture and compromise learning and performance in later years.

Article 53 of the Constitution of Kenya (2010) guarantees a child's best interest as paramount for the country – a shared responsibility between national and county government, private sector, academia, CSO's and all others working with children at ECD level. Further, the Nurturing Care Framework that was launched in May 2018 at the World Health Assembly serves as a roadmap for action in helping children survive, thrive and transform. **Therefore, out of the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Early Childhood Stakeholders' Conference held at the Kenyatta University, we are making a call to action as follows:**

##### **A Call to Action**

This joint communique provides opportunities to lobby all state and non-state actors and decision makers in Kenya to prioritize ECD as a critical sector and of national importance. We call for **profiling and recognition of counties that are constantly improving investment in ECD services with an aim of showcasing best practices for national adaptation**. Substantive policy and action-oriented acknowledgements and recommendations are made as follows:

- I. Recognizing that the first 1,000 days of a child's life are critical in brain development;
- II. Ensuring that the hardest to reach young children develop into successful adults;
- III. Embracing the fact that ECD concerns all children aged 0-8 and therefore holistic programming is essential;
- IV. Recognizing that children 0-3 years who are yet to transition to school, should be prioritized in policy and practice, including family support to parents (the home) and baby care settings;
- V. Acknowledging that the future of Kenyan children ought to be championed by government in partnership with all key stakeholders and therefore, there is need for an Integrated ECD policy, to

enhance coordination and collaboration by all actors (a multi-sectoral approach to all issues concerning children);

- VI. Calling upon all 47 counties to work in partnership with potential private partners in early childhood to enhance scalable and cost-effective models of ECD programming;
- VII. Recognizing that the success of Kenya in attaining the SDG's and the big four agenda can only succeed when ECD is viewed as a means for a strong workforce for human capital that will propel our growth;
- VIII. Recognizing the use of existing government systems as key in reaching every child aged 0-8 years – a key to this is capacity building and incentives for the workforce and creating Care for Child Development (CCD) champions such as Community Health Workers (CHWs) and ECD caregivers;
- IX. Accelerating and financing sustainable ECD impacts is a responsibility for all players, actors and sectors of government concerned with issues of children aged 0-8 years;
- X. Resolving that the annual National ECD stakeholder's conference shall be held on a rotational basis, in all the 47 counties in Kenya.

*Endorsed on 26<sup>th</sup> of July 2018, at the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Early Childhood Development Stakeholders' Conference at Kenyatta University Business and Students Service Centre (BSSC), Nairobi Kenya.*