



3RD NATIONAL EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT STAKEHOLDERS' CONFERENCE

Theme - Promoting Synergies: Inclusive Approaches to Early Child Development (ECD)

29th - 31st July, 2019

Mombasa Continental Resort, Kenya

CONFERENCE COMMUNIQUE AND CALL TO ACTION

#thirdECDconferencekenya

Preamble

We the **250 delegates** from **30 Counties** and over **70 organizations**, representatives of government agencies - National and County, UN agencies, philanthropists, donor communities, academia and the media, congregated at Mombasa Continental Resort in Kenya on 29 -31st July 2019 for the 3rd National Early Childhood Development (ECD) Stakeholders' Conference.

The theme of the conference was, '*Promoting Synergies: Inclusive Approaches to Early Child Development (ECD)*'. The conference deliberated on the following objectives:

- i. To create awareness on the need for integration of nurturing care practices in ECD delivery;
- ii. To advocate for strengthened structures and synergies for quality and integrated ECD service delivery at National and County levels;
- iii. To share insights on innovations and models that promote inclusivity and the wellbeing of children in the early years (including children with disabilities and OVCs);
- iv. To create awareness on the need for child-friendly spaces.

Early Childhood Development: The Kenya We Want

Article 53 of the Constitution of Kenya (2010) guarantees a child's best interests as paramount for national development - a shared responsibility by all stakeholders.

Investing in early childhood development therefore, is good for everyone – governments, businesses, communities, parents and caregivers, and most of all, babies and young children. We are cognisant of the fact that Nurturing Care for ECD (NCfECD) not only ensures the survival of the voiceless children but also goes further: ensuring that *those who survive also thrive, and transform health and human potential*. This is how we will change the story of ECD. This is aptly reflected in the Vision of ECD Network for Kenya, "A society where all children aged 0-8 years realise holistic ECD for lifelong success." The new Nurturing Care Framework (NCF) draws on state-of-the-art evidence on how early childhood development unfolds to set out the most effective policies and services that will help parents and caregivers provide nurturing care for young children. It is designed to serve as a roadmap for action, helping mobilize a coalition of parents and caregivers, national governments, civil society groups, academia, the United Nations, the private sector, educational institutions and service providers, to ensure that every baby gets the best start in life.

A Call to Action

This communiqué provides lobbying opportunities for stakeholders to prioritize ECD interventions in the highest political and decision-making platforms. *The communiqué is an addition to the 2018 Nairobi Call to Action: we call*

for the profiling and recognition of Counties that are improving investment in ECD services, aimed at showcasing best practices, for national adaptation. We the 250 delegates therefore:

1. Call on all players, actors and sectors of government concerned with providing support and services for children aged 0-8 years, to accelerate sustainable and blended financing in the early years, as early interventions have life-long impact;
2. Embrace the Nurturing Care Framework (NCF) as it articulates the important role all sectors must play to support the optimal development of young children and reap maximum benefit from pre-school and formal education;
3. Acknowledge that many parents of young children want the best for their children but face many barriers to providing adequate care;
4. Call upon National and County governments, employers, service providers and policy makers in Kenya to collaborate in providing targeted support for parents to nurture their children;
5. Call for adequate, child-friendly and inclusive spaces for children to play;
6. Recognise that ECD especially, pre-primary education, child care facilities and health care are devolved functions in Kenya; therefore, great expectation is placed on County governments to invest in and drive the children's agenda as well as seek political leadership and championing of ECD at the highest political levels;
7. Recognise the commitment of County First Ladies Association (CFLA) to patronize and foster the championing of ECD at the highest political levels;
8. Call for the ECD Network for Kenya to be the national platform for sharing and documenting ECD stories;
9. Recognise the critical role that the media in Kenya can play in highlighting the ECD agenda and call for targeted engagement and partnership with media houses;
10. Resolve that each actor in the ECD space shall endeavour to mentor young scholars and professionals pursuing a career in early childhood.
11. Advocate for research agenda focused on:
 - equitable childcare services for under 5's especially the hard-to-reach;
 - multi-sectoral and coordinated programming in the early years;
 - scalable and cost-effective ECD models;
12. Resolve that the National ECD stakeholders' conference shall be held biennially, and on a rotational basis, in all the 47 Counties and that the 4th National ECD Stakeholders' Conference will be held in Siaya County.

Call to Action Themes: Investments, childcare, parent empowerment, coordination, research and documentation.

*Endorsed on 31st July, at the 3rd National ECD Stakeholders' Conference,
held at Mombasa Continental Resort,
Mombasa County, Kenya.*