



THE ECD NETWORK FOR KENYA'S POSITION ON THE SRC ANNOUNCEMENT ON GROSS REMUNERATION STRUCTURE FOR ECDE TEACHERS

Background

The Early Childhood Development Network for Kenya comprising of Professionals, Practitioners and Organizations providing services in ECD upholds the position that Early Childhood Education teachers (ECE) play a critical role in the teaching and learning of children in their formative years of learning. The teachers have gone through rigorous training and acquired the necessary knowledge and skills that enable them discharge their mandate effectively. The Teachers Service Commission certifies all teachers trained and examined by chartered institutions both public and private. This is proof that preschool teachers have met all the requirements for a teacher in Kenya.

As a network we are cognizant that some teachers have trained at certificate level, others in diploma, while others have university degrees both bachelors and masters in early childhood education. With these qualifications, the early childhood teachers are equivalent to their counterparts teaching in primary and secondary levels. Their remuneration therefore, should be consistent with that of their counterparts.

Article 38 of the Early Childhood Education Act 2021 provides for the county government to recruit, maintain a register and pay early childhood education teachers employed in public education centres (Republic of Kenya 2021). In fulfilling this requirement, the Council of Governors in collaboration with the County Governments and other stakeholders in 2021 came up with a Scheme of Service for early childhood teachers.

One of the aims of the scheme of service was to provide for a well-defined career structure that will attract and retain suitably qualified and competent ECE teachers. However, the recent announcement by SRC on ECE teachers' remuneration of Kenya Shillings 14000 for a teacher working in Nairobi will not attract and retain suitably qualified teachers. A teacher in Nairobi who has to pay rent, transport to and from work, pay fees for their children and buy food for the family with a gross earning of Ksh.14000 is an insult for a teacher who will spend their entire day, week, month in school nurturing children.

Why Invest in ECD

Early experiences have profound impact on children's development. The potential benefits derived from supporting early childhood development range from improved growth and development to better schooling outcomes to increased productivity in life. Having qualified and well remunerated teachers is central to this. Investing in this period is one of the most efficient and cost-effective ways to help eliminate extreme poverty and inequality, boost shared prosperity, and create the human capital needed for economies to diversify and grow.

For every \$1 spent on early childhood development interventions, the return on investment can be as high as \$13; and the cost of inaction is high. Children who do not have the benefit of



nurturing care in their earliest years are more likely to encounter learning difficulties in school, in turn reducing their future earnings and affecting the wellbeing and prosperity of their families and societies.

If we are to have a strong, healthy, competitive and productive society, we have to invest more in ECD. A recent study showed that priorities in investment are upside down across the education sector. Secondary and higher education receive far more resources than primary and pre-primary education. This creates greater inequalities as the most disadvantaged who are more likely to drop-out of school during primary education leaving the bulk of resources for the advantaged.

Investing in ECD is good for everyone - governments, businesses, communities, parents and caregivers, and most importantly for children. For children to get quality education, they must be under the care of qualified and well-remunerated teachers. With poor remuneration the country risk losing good teachers through attrition, and attracting unqualified teachers who are not knowledgeable to teach hence compromising children's foundation.

In view of this, as a network:

- We are cognisant of the fact the Council of Governors in its coordination role did a commendable job to come up with the schemes of service for Early Childhood Education teachers is in place. We are therefore calling all County Governments to implement the COG schemes of service in order to attract and retain qualified ECE teachers.
- We are calling the national government through the Ministry of Education to allocate 10% of the education funding to early childhood education enable proper implementation of pre-primary education by recruiting qualified teachers and remunerating them well.
- We are calling the SRC to harmonize salaries for preschool teachers with those of teachers in primary and secondary.

Signed for and on behalf of the ECD Network for Kenya
by

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