

Press Release

Review of National Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Policy

The State Development Policy Council organised a Review of the policy on “Early Childhood Care and Education” on 20.11.2020 under the chairmanship of Hon’ble Vice Chairman, SDPC. In the meeting, the ICDS which is responsible for the implementation of ECCE in the State, experts on education and child welfare and senior officials from the departments participated and offered their suggestions.

Thiru Anil Meshram I.A.S., Member Secretary of the State Development Policy Council welcomed the participants and briefly explained the objectives of the meeting.

Following the National Policy on Early Childhood Care and Education, 2013 the State is also implementing this. The ECCE services are provided through public, private and non-governmental service providers. The public channel is the largest provider of ECCE services, through Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) which is the world’s largest programme mandated to provide ECCE.

The implementation of the Policy was explained in detail by the ICDS Department. Dr. Jaya Sastri, Founder-SEED, an expert in Early Childhood Care and Education spoke on the relevance and content for early childhood education. Prof. Ramanujam, from the Institute of Mathematical Sciences, who works for inclusive education and taking science to children through play-way method stressed on the inclusiveness of ECCE and the content. Tmt. Andal Damodharan, President, Indian Council of Child Welfare, Tamil Nadu spoke on the emotional and psychological development of children and its relevance to ECCE. Ms. Sunisha Ahuja, ECE Specialist, UNICEF Delhi spoke on the impact of Early childhood education and school preparedness on school enrollment and better learning outcomes.

Tmt. S. Madumathi, I.A.S., Secretary to Government Social Welfare and Nutritious Noon Meal Programme in her special address informed that the State has been performing exceptionally well in the implementation of ECCE. She informed that unlike other States, Anganwadi workers in Tamil Nadu are employed on regular basis and are paid on special time scale. They are paid adequately and awards with citation and cash prize are given to best performing Anganwadi workers. She informed that introduction of LKG/UKG classes on pilot basis in AWCs co-located within the Government middle school premises has good response and enrolment especially during the COVID period has increased. She highlighted the enthusiasm of the children attending the programme and participation in the education programme. She informed weaning food given through Supplementary Nutrition Programme include millets. She informed that with funding support from State Balanced Growth Fund, millet based snacks in Salem and Namakkal districts and Greens/Soups in Trichirapalli and Tiruvannmalai Districts would be provided as a pilot from January 2021.

Thiru C. Ponnaiyan, Hon'ble Vice Chairman, State Development Policy Council in his concluding remarks stated that the State has been a pioneer in implementing child welfare programmes, well ahead of many Indian States and is doing very well in the implementation of ECCE. He reiterated the importance of reaching the benefits to people from poorer sections and SC/ ST communities and removal of gender bias and pervasive patriarchal values to realise the need for providing creches and day care, especially for children of poor rural and urban working women. The State would continuously engage with academicians and experts to update the content and to ensure inclusiveness of ECCE. He recommended for imparting training to the parents of toddlers through media about childcare and education. He assured that the suggestions and the essence of deliberation would be sent to Government for its consideration.

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