

Module for B.Ed Early Childhood Education Programme

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**IoE/MoF/TUC/GHANA CARES TRAINING AND RETRAINING
PROGRAMME FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL TEACHERS**



Ministry of Finance



Trade Union Congress



Institute of Education, UCC



**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND
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**EBS 404SW Contemporary Issues in Early
Childhood Education**

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Course Description

Early childhood is critically important to children's overall development. These years are impacted through a range of complex issues, such as policy development, practice-related issues and the workforce. This course aims at critically investigating these issues within the framework of equipping student teachers in providing quality early childhood education in Ghana. Student teachers will be equipped with knowledge and insights needed to develop a good grasp of key issues in the field and how these can enhance their practice in supporting children within the early years

(NTECF; NTS 1a,1b, 1e, 1f, 1g, 2a, 2e, 3c, 3k, 3l, 3m).

Course Content

UNIT 1: Policy and research

UNIT 2: Practice

UNIT 3: Workforce

UNIT 1: Policy and Research

- Policy agenda for ECE in Ghana: A brief overview
- Quality in ECE: what does it involve, and does it matter?

What is an educational policy?

- Government guidelines aimed at improving the quality of education and the performance of teachers
- Assumptions that govern education decision making and practices
- A specification of actions related to education which should be followed in order to get desired educational outcomes

Importance of an educational policy

- It helps to maintain and ensure compliance
- It helps to create standards of quality
- It sets out expectations of parties or institutions (e.g. government, teachers and parents) involved
- It facilitates easy monitoring of policy adherence

The Ghanaian ECE Policy

- The government adopted an ECE policy in 2020/2021
- This is in response to achieving the Education Strategic Plan (ESP 2018-2030)
- The ECE policy aims to provide holistic education for children
- The ECE policy focuses on two-years free and compulsory basic education
- ECE is a poverty reduction strategy and has economic benefits

ECE Policy theory of change

- Establishing structures for effective planning and management +
- Enforcing KG curriculum +
- Preparing KG teachers +
- Families and communities +
- Child-friendly safe spaces +
- Monitoring and evaluation to inform decisions = **Achieved ECE Policy**

Philosophy of ECE Policy

- Support and promote holistic ECE education
 - Cognitive
 - Language
 - Socio-emotional
 - Physical

Key Aims of ECE Policy

- Strengthen the sub-sector to advance the developmental growth of KG children:
 - Engagement of families and communities to provide at-home learning support
 - Effective implementation of KG curriculum for improvise play-based learning
 - Encouraging socio-emotional skills and physical development
 - Provision of child-friendly safe spaces
 - Reducing inequality and social disadvantage
 - Supporting positive development of remedial action to safeguard children

Key Principles of ECE Policy

- Draws on United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Ghana's Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2018-2030
- Other legal and institutional frameworks
- **Refer to page 7 of the ECE policy and discuss the key principles**

ECE Policy Implementation partners

- Service providers and primary caregivers
- Parents, family members and other caregivers
- Communities that support families and alternative caregivers
- KG practitioners, teachers, resource persons and assistance
- Key stakeholders (e.g. NGOs, private sector)
- Ministries, departments and agencies

ECE Policy Framework: Action areas

1. Planning and management
2. Curriculum development and implementation
3. Pre-service and in-service teacher education and training
4. Family and community engagement
5. Developing child-friendly safe space
6. Monitoring, regulation and quality assurance

Institutional Framework

- Multi-level institutional framework is required to implement ECE policy:
 - National: Ministry of Education and its agencies
 - Regional: Regional Directorate of Education/
Regional Coordination Council
 - District and community: District Directorate of Education
 - Local: School heads, PTA, SMC

Key issues in ECE in Ghana: Causes of late enrolment

- Incorrect birth dates, and lack of birth certificates
- Parental beliefs about school readiness
- Inadequate KG infrastructure
- Poverty
- Data on children to access pre-school
- Lack of supply of good quality KG schools and facilities

Key issues in ECE in Ghana: Demand Barriers

- Socio-cultural
- Gender
- Disability
- Nomadic people
- Other marginalized groups
- Family income and poverty

Key issues in ECE in Ghana: Supply Barriers

- Inadequate and inappropriate KG schools
- Minimal provision for children with special needs
- Over-crowding and sub-standard conditions
- Lack of potable water and toilet facilities
- Inadequate teaching and learning resources
- Insufficient number of trained teachers

Key issues in ECE in Ghana: Quality Barriers

- Large class size
- Lack of qualified teachers
- Poor teacher and learners attendance
- Insufficient teaching and learning resources

Key issues in ECE in Ghana: System Barriers

- Political barriers
 - Unclear school regulation policies
 - Uncoordinated systems among MDAs
- Governance and capacity
 - Education decentralisation
 - Lack of capacity in collecting and management of data
 - monitoring and evaluation of KG schools in some districts
 - Inadequate information flow among relevant sectors
 - Keeping and managing school records
 - Inadequate trained personnel
 - Lack of institutionalisation of capacity building programmes
 - Inadequate financing

Quality in ECE

- Quality is the degree to which a set of inherent characteristics fulfils requirements.
- **Element of quality in ECE**
 - **Structural quality** refers to resources and facilities that can be regulated, including teacher-child ration, teacher qualification, and teacher salary.
 - **Process quality:** refers to the nature of social, emotional and physical interactions the child has with teacher, peers and materials on a daily basis.
- **Differentiate between Structural Quality and Process Quality**
 - **How does structural and process quality interact to improve ECE?**

Instruments used to Measure Quality

- The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale –Revised (ECERS-R)
- Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised edition (ITERS-R)
- The Observational Record of Caregiving Environments (ORCE)
- Classroom Practices Inventory (CPI)
- Individualized Classroom Assessment Scoring System (In CLASS)
- Caregiver Interaction Scale (CIS)
- Early Childhood Classroom Observation Measure or ECCOM
- The PQA or Preschool Program Quality Assessment -2nd Edition

The Building Blocks of Quality

- Appropriate child assessments
- Professional knowledge and skill
- Ongoing support for teachers
- Support for Diverse Learners
- Meaningful family engagement
- Sufficient time
- Appropriate class size and teacher-student ratio
- Comprehensive program assessments
- Quality rating and improvement systems

Factors to be considered when evaluating the quality of ECE provision

- Physical environment
- Staff qualification
- Leadership
- Ratio and group sizes
- Teacher-child interaction
- Stability of care
- Duration of provision
- Parental and community participation
- Curriculum/teaching and learning processes
- Appropriate child assessment
- Ongoing teacher support
- Inclusive education

Key Policy Levers to be effective in encouraging Quality in ECE

- Setting out quality goals and regulations
- Designing and implementing curriculum and standards
- Improving qualifications, training, and working conditions
- Engaging families and communities
- Providing in facilities and resources
- Providing incentives for early childhood teachers
- Advancing data collection, research, and monitoring

Practice Questions

1. What challenges do you consider there are in ECE policy in Ghana and implementation?
2. Consider the implications of the Ghana ECE policy. What role(s) do teachers, government and parent need to play in ensuring its implementation?
3. Based on your understanding of the two main elements of quality, what do you think about the quality of current ECE practices in Ghana? What do you think should be done?
4. How different is structural quality from process quality? How do these interact to improve quality in ECE?

THANK YOU