

National Framework and Strategic Expectations
Vanuatu Early Childhood Care and Education
Ministry of Education, Republic of Vanuatu

Introduction

This document is an overview of the key principles that will guide the National Framework on Early Childhood Education in Vanuatu. It outlines key expectations for planning, assessment, and instruction and also for future curriculum and writing of any materials for the classroom.

This framework will lead and assist the Ministry of Education personnel to align all documents that currently exist and or are to be developed in the future. The framework provides the context for early childhood education and care from 0 to 8 years of age.

This framework draws on international experiences that demonstrate that early learning is a vital period in a child's life. Children know how to construct their own learning and therefore we must view them as active participants and enable them to have healthy, caring and safe learning environments.

In order to ensure that a nation will be "healthy, happy, and wealthy" an adequate investment in early childhood education and care is needed. Brain growth is usually at its maximum potential during the first years of a child's life and therefore public spending should focus on children 0 to 8 years old to ensure that literacy and numeracy skills have a strong foundation. Parental education during these years is essential to improve child survival rates and healthy child development.

The government of Vanuatu's vision is:

"that all children will have access to quality early childhood care and education and they will achieve their full developmental potential, will be healthy, well-nourished and safe and be prepared for achieving success in school and life." (Government of Vanuatu, Ministry of Education, Vanuatu Early Childhood Care and Education Policy, August 2010.)

The Ministry of Education outlines the four fundamental principles of the Government of Vanuatu in this framework.

1. All children (including children with special needs) have the right to education and it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that they succeed and achieve their full potential.
2. Parents and communities are a vital part of education and it is our shared responsibility to ensure that we involve everyone in the education of our children
3. Everything we do in education is aligned to ensure that we focus on continuous improvement of all children

4. All curriculum documents and resources will promote a holistic approach to learning and development and recognize that the physical, spiritual, personal, cognitive, linguistic and creative aspects of learning are interwoven and form an essential part of each child

The National Framework will outline various components that will ensure an equitable and quality ECCE service to all children, parents and communities in Vanuatu. This framework will quilt the entire fragile stand alone components of ECCE to ensure a strong, integrated and well balanced program. The framework is a “roadmap” to support effective ECCE implementation and will support government, donors, and other stakeholders to collaborate in establishing joint partnerships, efforts, and focus on ECCE. This framework is seen as a holistic approach to early childhood care and education and will provide an aligned and accountable process for decision making.

The following chart outlines the components that will form the architecture of the framework.

Component	Content
Ministry of Education Curriculum and Learning Standards	The Vanuatu Curriculum and Learning Standards will set a core of learning expectations for children ages 0-8 and will specifically outline what children need to know and be able to accomplish in each grade level
Roles and Responsibilities	The Ministry of Education, other governments, communities, teachers, parents, students and school committees have a vital role in planning for student success and implementation of curriculum expectations.
Planning for success	The Ministry of Education will use both structured and unstructured play as a tool for learning and will put a strong focus on literacy and numeracy in the early years
Program Planning	Each early childcare centres and school will be supported to focus on student engagement, parental support and community input. Each Kindy will have a curriculum, instruction and assessment handbook to ensure quality program implementation and results
Assessment and Evaluation	Assessment and evaluation will be used in a variety of ways to ensure continuous learning and an early identification document will be implemented to support children with special needs. A school readiness tool will be available for teachers and parents to discuss.
Teaching and Learning	Instructional practices will focus on the principles of a holistic approach to learning,

	self-reliance, human rights, cultural knowledge, health promotion, spiritual development, support for special needs and community engagement in the classroom
Creating Learning Communities	The Ministry of Education will focus on creating communities of professional learning for ministry staff, teachers, parents and communities.

Roles and responsibilities

In order to successfully implement ECCE it is important for everyone to understand their roles and responsibilities. Clear roles and responsibilities will support accountability and provide a leadership structure for everyone who is involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of ECCE.

In particular, people who work with young children most have very high standards and professional ethics that guide their daily interaction with children. People in positions of responsibility who manage ECCE in should be proven leaders and have strong technical expertise.

ECCE teachers should have a minimum standard of qualifications and engage in yearly professional development to upgrade their skills for continuous improvement. Parents and community members should engage in a shared and responsible partnership to advocate for ECCE.

Service providers, NGO's, donors and other stakeholders can build consensus and ensure that ECCE resources, funds, and programs are maximized and structured in a way that benefit all children.

The following chart outlines the roles and responsibilities of people engaged in ECCE.

Roles	Responsibilities
Ministry of Education develops policy, regulations, and curriculum for early childhood education and care. The Ministry establishes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Expectations • Assessment and Reporting • Early identification • School Readiness • Supervision of ECCE centres • Links to Kiddy and Grade One 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train teachers in the use of the existing curriculum and outline all learning expectations. • Ensure registration and safety of all ECCE centres • Plan for the use of early identification and school readiness tools • Ensure continuous assessment of learning • Monitor and supervise on a yearly basis
Early Childhood Centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply for registration 	The early child care centres provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A safe and rich learning environment

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement Ministry of Education policies and curriculum • Support teachers and engage parents and communities in schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify all curriculum materials and resources needed for teaching and learning. • Ensure registration is up to date and all children have access to health care and immunization
School Committees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice and support ECCE managers • Assist Parents and communities in understanding the need and value of education • Involve parents and communities in schools 	The school committees : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage parents and communities in children’s learning • Provide opportunities to inform parents and communities of the children’s work • Engage parents and communities in supporting the use of the vernacular language and knowledge of cultural traditions
ECCE Managers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that planning is in place to cover all MOE learning Expectations • Promote Student learning • Support Teachers in their daily practice • Engage parents and communities in schools • Ensure all student needs are met • Collect required data • Manage financial requirements 	The managers work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and parents to develop a learning plan • Ensure all teachers have a learning professional development plan in place • Ensure that adequate materials are available for the classroom • Gather and collect data and support teachers to understand where children are in their learning • Mentor and coach teachers on a continual basis • Manage financial records with transparency
Teachers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan lessons according to curriculum documents and learning standards • Engage in continuous professional Development • Upgrade teaching standards • Create a caring and engaging environment for all children 	Teachers implement” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry of Education Curriculum • Select materials and resources to implement the curriculum • Address and adapt materials for children who have special needs • Address any gender gaps in learning • Develop a professional learning plan • Create a motivating, caring, and safe learning environment
Other Government Representatives, NGO’s, unions, universities, Communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide integrated support • Engage in developing school plans • Support ECCE centres to access learning materials • Visit and engage in children’s learning • Provide playgrounds for all children 	The role of governments and communities is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a safe, clean, and good structure is available to set up an ECCE centre • Provide comprehensive services are provided for children including: health, nutrition, sanitation and that they are protected against abuse and neglect. • Provide services for children who have

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer parenting classes for 0 to 3 year olds in the area of nutrition, prenatal care, infant stimulation, and other important aspects of parenting 	<p>special needs, orphans, and others</p>
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It is important to stress that parents must have regular contact with their children’s learning and that the ECCE centres must find ways to accommodate parents so that they can visit the school, be part of the observation and reporting process and engage in their children’s learning at home also. Teachers can use a variety of strategies to involve parents and communities in the schools. A handbook for parental engagement has been prepared by the ECCE department and will assist to promote parental integration in the schools.

Planning For Early Childhood Success: Program Planning

The following priorities are essential in order to ensure that young children can learn in a nurturing and positive climate. These priorities reflect current research and theories concerning early learning.

1. Create a **Learning Environment** that is caring and supportive of all children. It is recommended that all early learning childhood care and education centres provide an environment that respects diversity. This environment encourages the continuous sharing of tradition, vernacular language, customs and history that provide opportunities for children to value differences and learn how to live respectfully with one another. Respect for diversity encourages a strong sense of self identity and belonging in children. Children’s varied capabilities and learning styles will be respected and supported. If possible learning outdoor playgrounds will be available as spaces for children to learn, mothers and fathers to gather together and spaces for joy and good health.
2. Establishing **clear learning expectations** will prepare young children for transition into Kindergarten. Learning outcomes will need to be documented and communicated to all parents and educators so that parents can see their children’s progress and or need to reinforce certain learning concepts before they are lost in school. A strong and broad based approach will be used to document children’s progress in the early years. Such broad ranges of assessments will include: portfolios of children’s work, videotaping of children’s interactions, and observation tools. A separate document containing observation tools has been prepared by the Ministry of Education. It is important to note that even though

learning expectations are set children should have the freedom to engage in their own creative learning process and motivated to engage in activities that support their prior knowledge. Teaching young children is both a teacher and child directed process.

3. **Learning partnerships** with families, other teachers, communities and others will form a vital part of an ECCE centre. A framework for shared responsibility for each school will be its trademark so that everyone is engaged in the future education of young children.
4. A **holistic approach** to learning will take place setting up **learning centres** in the classroom that use both **structured and unstructured play** as a tool for learning outcomes. Play will provide diverse learning opportunities for children to engage in team work, solve problems, use creativity and imagination, and enjoy learning. When children play they are actively learning, exploring and observing. A sample outline of a learning centre can be found in the appendix.
5. Effective **instructional practise** based on research will form part of the daily teaching. These practices will actively promote children's engagement in the learning process and will draw on teacher action research to update current skills. All instruction will be focused, reflective, and sequenced so that young children can learn in a space of high expectations and respect.
6. **Planning** will be a part of a teacher's daily life so that there is alignment to the Ministry Curriculum, community expectations are clear, and learning is based on children's prior knowledge and skills and sequenced to enable all children to grasp the educational content. When planning effectively one must "think what the end result is" in other words one must engage in designing "with the end in mind". This will allow teachers to know if the children have attained the desired learning expectations and understandings. It is important to keep in mind that that good instruction is created by integrating the learning expectations and the assessment tools.
7. **Assessments** for learning will be part of the planning process to document and share children's learning and or support families to understand what might be interfering with a child's progress in school. Both an early identification and school readiness tool will be made available to ensure that children with special needs are supported during their time in ECCE and to engage parents in their child's learning by using the school readiness tool. All assessments will be culturally and linguistically respectful of the child and the community and will build on children's strengths.
8. **Team work** will be the sign post of ECCE ensuring that the Ministry of Education, Regional Coordinators, Managers, Key Teachers, Communities and Parents develop collaborative approaches that support, recognize and encourage children's learning and their future. Transitions from home to the ECCE centre will include support for children

to feel secure and confident and transition to Kindi will demand working with other teachers and parents so that the learning is continuous and aligned.

9. A strong emphasis in literacy and numeracy will be part of the Early Childhood Care and Education Curriculum. Communication is vital in our daily lives and therefore children must have a strong foundation in communicating with others. Children's use of their home language provides a sense of identification and belonging. Literacy and numeracy will be a strong component of this communication strategy. Literacy can include the use of Big Books, Music, Dance, Story Telling, as well as listening, repeating, viewing and recognizing symbols and patterns.
10. Learning communities will be established in all areas of Vanuatu. This will ensure a collaborative approach to forming communities that support each other to learn and grow. A learning society has to engage in sharing ideas, in reflecting on change, solving problems.

Learning Expectations and Outcomes

The learning expectations and outcomes are a summary of previous Ministry of Education documents including policies, curriculum and other resource materials. The expectations and outcomes capture a complex set of core learning for all children.

The Learning expectations and or Core Understandings focus on: Personal and Social Development, Language, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Physical Activity and Health and the Arts.

Vernacular language skills will form an important component of the expectations since all evidence point to the fact that a strong foundation in one's own language will support the skills and knowledge needed to learn other languages. Children also need to be able to communicate with parents and feel proud of their culture, traditions and language.

The environment in which young children learn impacts the conditions for learning. It is important to have a positive school climate, where children are protected, cared for and loved. It is also essential to involve parents in sharing the responsibility for creating a healthy environment for their children.

Children have diverse needs and therefore instruction has to be differentiated to support all learning needs. Using Play children will have many different opportunities to engage in healthy learning and in building a strong foundation in literacy and numeracy. All

programs should offer students individual and group activities so that children can learn from each other and also learn to share and respect their classmates.

Teachers are encouraged to reflect daily on children’s learning: are they motivated, are they engaged, are they progressing, are there challenges to manage and opportunities to build on?

Teachers need to understand the responsibility and influence they have in a child’s life. It is the teacher’s responsibility to focus on age appropriate activities and to facilitate children’s rich experiences and prior knowledge.

Children’s earliest relationships are critical to their wellbeing and their capacity to relate to others and the world.

Through teacher’s efforts and parents engagement children will get best opportunity to experience success as future citizens of Vanuatu.

LEARNING EXPECTATIONS	OUTCOMES
The personal and social development of young children begins with children’s understanding of themselves, their culture, their language, customs, and their ability to interact with others	
Language is the foundation for literacy and therefore children need to develop an awareness of language structure by listening, by observing, by interacting and by using oral language	
Mathematical vocabulary needs to be introduced to children to support them to solve problems, to reason and reflect and to connect ideas to everyday living	
Children require opportunities to learn science and technology. In rural areas access to technology may not be available but if children move to urban areas they may need to have the skills to engage and understand technology. The science program will build on children’s natural curiosity of the world around them.	
Physical activity and health are essentials elements of learning. Teachers need to	

<p>ensure children have a positive opportunities to explore physical activity, healthy eating, and care for themselves. Safety will be integrated into all learning activities.</p>	
<p>Arts encompass music, culture, drama, art, traditions and customs of communities. Children will need to have access to a variety of materials to engage them in music, storytelling, drama, celebrations and the whole artistic process.</p>	

These learning expectations and outcomes will ensure that children have a sense of Belonging, a sense of Connection, and a sense of Respect for others and the environment.

Belonging:

Children belong and are part of a family and community. They need a sense of belonging to feel safe and protected. Children are innocent human beings who come into the world with open minds and the ability to learn and grow into productive and healthy human beings.

It is the responsibility of everyone to ensure that all children have access to education but also feel motivated and happy to learn.

Connection:

Children move from a stage of egocentrism to a stage of collaboration and engagement. This happens in the early years. As children learn about themselves and others the concepts of fairness and diversity begin to develop. The early learning environments must therefore nurture children and their connection to others and the world at large.

Respect

Social development includes children’s ability to empathize and regulate their emotions and feelings. It is vital to bring out the best in children’s behavior and show them how it impacts on others and the world at large. Respect for their siblings, friends, plants, animals, elders and all community members is essential for human being to create a future of possibilities. Social capital is built at childbirth and children deserve every opportunity to survive and thrive.

Monitoring and Assessment