

H. No. 6694
S. No. 3206

Republic of the Philippines
Congress of the Philippines
Metro Manila
Fifteenth Congress
Third Regular Session

Begun and held in Metro Manila, on Monday, the twenty-third day of July, two thousand twelve.

[REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10410]

AN ACT RECOGNIZING THE AGE FROM ZERO (0) TO EIGHT (8) YEARS AS THE FIRST CRUCIAL STAGE OF EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND STRENGTHENING THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* — This Act shall be known as the "Early Years Act (EYA) of 2013".

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* — It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote the rights of children to survival, development and special protection with full recognition of the nature of childhood and as well as the need to provide developmentally appropriate experiences to address their needs; and to support parents in their roles as primary caregivers and as their children's first teachers. Further, the State hereby recognizes the age from zero (0) to eight (8) years as the first crucial stage of educational development of which the age from

zero (0) to four (4) years shall be the responsibility of the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Council. Therefore, the responsibility to help develop children in the formative years between age five (5) to eight (8) years shall be with the Department of Education (DepED).

The State shall institutionalize a National System for Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) that is comprehensive, integrative and sustainable, that involves multisectoral and interagency collaboration at the national and local levels among government; among service providers, families and communities, and among the public and private sectors, nongovernment organizations; professional associations and academic institutions.

The System shall promote the inclusion of children with special needs, provide for reasonable accommodation and accessible environments for children with disabilities and advocate respect for cultural and linguistic diversity, including the use of Filipino Sign Language as the visual language of the deaf community. It shall be anchored on complementary strategies for ECCD that include service delivery for children from age zero (0) to four (4) years, educating parents and caregivers, encouraging the active involvement of parents and communities in ECCD programs, raising awareness about the important efforts that improve the quality of life for young children and families.

SEC. 3. Objectives. – The National ECCD System shall pursue the following objectives:

(a) To achieve improved infant and child survival rates by ensuring that adequate health and nutrition programs are accessible to young children and their parents, from the prenatal period throughout the early childhood years;

(b) To enhance the physical-motor, socio-emotional, cognitive, language, psychological and spiritual development of young children;

(c) To facilitate a smooth transition from care and education provided at home to community or school-based setting and to kindergarten;

(d) To ensure that young children are adequately prepared for the formal learning system that begins at kindergarten;

(e) To establish an efficient system for early identification, prevention, referral and intervention for the wide range of children with special needs from age zero (0) to four (4) years;

(f) To upgrade and update the capabilities of service providers and their supervisors to comply with quality standards for various ECCD programs;

(g) To reinforce the role of parents and other caregivers as the primary caregivers and educators of their children especially from age zero (0) to four (4) years;

(h) To enhance and sustain the efforts of communities to promote ECCD programs and ensure that special support is provided for poor, disadvantaged and linguistic minority communities;

(i) To improve the quality standards of public and private ECCD programs through, but not limited to, a registration and credential system for ECCD service providers and facilities;

(j) To ensure that the education of persons, and in particular children, who are blind, deaf or deafblind, are conducted in the most appropriate languages, modes and means of communication for the individual, and in environments which maximize academic and social development; and

(k) To employ teachers, including teachers with disabilities, who are qualified in sign language and/or braille, and to train professionals and staff who work at all levels of education.

SEC. 4. Definitions. – The following terms are defined as follows:

(a) *Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) System* shall refer to the full range of health, nutrition, early education and social services development programs that provide for the basic holistic needs of young children from age zero (0) to four (4) years; and to promote their optimum growth and development.

These programs shall include:

(1) Center-based programs, such as the day care service established under Republic Act No. 6972, otherwise known as the "Barangay – Level Total Development and Protection of Children Act", and hereinafter referred to as the child development service, community or church-based early childhood education programs initiated by nongovernment organizations or people's organizations, workplace-related child care and education programs, child-minding centers, health centers and stations; and

(2) Home-based programs, such as the neighborhood-based play groups, family child care programs, parent education and home visiting programs.

(b) *ECCD Service Providers* shall include the various professionals, paraprofessionals and volunteer caregivers who are directly responsible for the care and education of young children from age zero (0) to four (4) years through the various centers and home-based programs. They shall include, but shall not be limited to, day care workers hereinafter referred to as child development workers, child development teachers, teacher-aides, rural health midwives, social workers, community health workers, barangay nutrition scholars, parent effectiveness service volunteers, and family day care providers.

(c) *ECCD Curriculum* shall refer to the developmentally-appropriate educational objectives and practices, programs of activities, organized learning experiences, recommended learning materials and appropriate assessment for children from age zero (0) to four (4) years that are implemented by service providers through center and home-based programs. It shall consist of national program goals and guidelines, instructional objectives, and content outlines that are age-appropriate, individually appropriate and culturally relevant.

(d) *Parent Education* shall refer to the various formal and alternative means of providing parents with information, skills, and support systems to assist them in their roles as their children's primary caregivers and educators. These include public and private parent education programs linked to center, home and media-based child care and education programs.

SEC. 5. *System Framework and Components.* – The ECCD System shall ensure that the National ECCD Program is implemented in accordance with quality standards for accreditation and for this purpose there shall be established a National ECCD Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. The ECCD System shall include the following components:

(a) *ECCD Curriculum.* – The curriculum shall focus on children's total development and take into account age, individual and socio-cultural appropriateness. It shall promote the delivery of complementary and integrative services for health, nutrition, early childhood education, sanitation and cultural activities. It shall use the child's first language as the medium of instruction;

(b) *Parent Education and Involvement, Advocacy and Mobilization of Communities.* – This component shall harness and develop parents' strengths as providers of ECCD programs at home, as active partners of other stakeholders, as advocates for community concerns that affect children, and as pillars of support for local and national ECCD programs through community organization efforts;

(c) *Human Resource Development Program.* – The program shall establish mechanisms for the systematic professionalization of ECCD service providers through enrolment in educational program in site-based or distance education modes, through pre-service or in-service training including continuing education programs, whereby a registration and credential system shall be developed in the ECCD System; and

(d) *ECCD Management.* – This component shall consist of a continuing process of planning, implementation, supervision, financial management, monitoring, evaluation and reporting to persons concerned and shall encourage the active involvement of and build the capabilities of service providers, parents and local government officials to sustain the program.

SEC. 6. *Expanding the ECCD System.* – The National ECCD System shall henceforth apply to all provinces, cities, municipalities and barangays as may be determined by the ECCD Council to achieve universal ECCD coverage for all children from age zero (0) to four (4) years.

SEC. 7. *Implementing Arrangements and Operational Structures.* – The implementation of the National ECCD System shall be the responsibility of the ECCD Council.

(a) *Responsibilities of the ECCD Council.* – The ECCD Council shall be responsible for establishing national standards, developing policies and programs, ensuring compliance thereof, providing technical assistance and support to the ECCD service providers in consultation with coordinating committees at the provincial, city, municipal and barangay levels.

The Department of Education (DepED), the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the Department of Health (DOH), the National Nutrition Council (NNC) and the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP) shall meet in an annual workshop to prepare work and financial plans that will coordinate their technical assistance and support for the National ECCD Program. They shall observe existing implementing guidelines that ensure consistency in integrated service delivery within the National ECCD System, as follows:

(1) The DepED shall recognize the National ECCD Program as the foundation of the learning continuum and shall promote it for all children from age zero (0) to four (4) years; and

(2) The DepED, the DSWD, the DOH and the NNC shall provide continuing professional development program support, supplementary learning materials, reference materials, supplemental nutrition and health care services.

(b) *Responsibilities of Local Government Units.* – Local government units (LGUs) shall include allocations from their Special Education Fund (SEF) and Gender and Development (GAD) Fund in addition to other local funds to be utilized for the following purposes:

(1) Support the implementation of their ECCD Program;

(2) Organize and support parent cooperatives to establish community-based ECCD programs;

(3) Provide counterpart funds for the continuing professional development of their ECCD public service providers; and

(4) Provide the facilities for the conduct of their ECCD Program.

(c) *Responsibilities of Families and Communities.* – Families and communities shall support the local ECCD programs by participating in various community-based projects such as, but not limited to, health, nutrition, social development and early childhood education projects for the overall development of their children from age zero (0) to four (4) years.

SEC. 8. *Strengthening the ECCD Council.* – The ECCD Council shall be strengthened to ensure the State's focus on building a strong foundation for the development and learning of children during the early years from age zero (0) to four (4) years, to support the full range of health, nutrition, early education and social development programs for the child's holistic development and ensure sustained interagency and multisectoral collaboration. The Council shall be attached to the DepED.

SEC. 9. *Organization of the ECCD Council.* – The ECCD Council shall be composed of the following:

(a) *ECCD Governing Board.* – The ECCD Governing Board shall be composed of:

(1) Secretary of the DepED, as *ex officio* Chairperson;

(2) Executive Director of the ECCD Council, as Vice Chairperson;

(3) Secretary of the DSWD, as member;

(4) Secretary of the DOH, as member;

(5) Executive Director of the NNC, as member;

(6) President of the ULAP, as member; and

(7) One (1) private individual who is an ECCD practitioner and expert shall be appointed by the President upon the recommendation of the Board, as member.

The Board shall meet once a month or upon the call of the Chairperson or three (3) members of the Board.

(b) Council Secretariat. – There shall be established an ECCD Council Secretariat to be headed by an Executive Director. The Secretariat shall provide support services for the coordination and monitoring of the implementation of policies and plans formulated by the Council subject to the Compensation and Position Classification System and other existing civil service rules and regulations.

SEC. 10. *Functions of the ECCD Council.* – The ECCD Council shall carry out the objectives of the National ECCD System by performing the following functions:

(a) Promulgate policies and implement guidelines for ECCD programs in consultation with stakeholders, including the regional level when appropriate, consistent with the national policy and program frameworks as defined in this Act;

(b) Establish ECCD program standards that reflect developmentally appropriate practices for ECCD programs, which shall interface with the kindergarten curriculum of the DepED;

(c) Develop a national system for the recruitment, registration, accreditation, continuing education and equivalency, and credential system of ECCD service providers, supervisors and administrators to improve and professionalize the ECCD sector and upgrade quality standards of public and private ECCD programs;

(d) Develop a national system of awards and recognition to deserving ECCD program implementers and service providers;

(e) Promote, encourage and coordinate the various ECCD programs of the DepED, the DSWD, the DOH and the NNC, and monitor the delivery of services to the ECCD program beneficiaries nationwide;

(f) Evaluate and assess the impact and outcome of various ECCD programs nationwide through an effective information system;

(g) Develop a national system for early identification, screening and surveillance of young children from age zero (0) to four (4) years;

(h) Develop various support mechanisms that maximize public and private resources for implementing ECCD programs, giving priority to the needy and high risk children from poor communities;

(i) Provide funds to poor and disadvantaged communities for the establishment and expansion of public ECCD programs, improvement of physical facilities and for hiring of ECCD service providers;

(j) Promote and encourage private sector initiatives for the establishment of ECCD programs;

(k) Provide guidelines for the conduct of solicitations from local and international civic organizations, and request private foundations to supplement available resources; and

(l) Perform such other functions as the ECCD Council may deem necessary.

SEC. 11. *Appropriations.* – The amount needed for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations of the DepED, the DSWD, the DOH and the NNC for the purpose. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA).

In addition, the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation shall contribute an amount of Five hundred million pesos (P500,000,000.00) per year for five (5) years from its gross income to fund the establishment of National Child Development Centers and the conversion of existing Day Care Centers into Child Development Centers in various LGUs upon approval of this Act. Said amount shall be directly remitted in four (4) quarterly installments to a special account of the ECCD Council.

SEC. 12. *Financing ECCD Programs.* – ECCD programs shall be financed through a combination of public and private funds. All public ECCD program providers shall prioritize children from age zero (0) to four (4) years from families who are in greatest need and who can least afford private ECCD programs.

(a) Financial and Technical Support. – The DepED, the DSWD and the DOH shall support the implementation of the National ECCD System by providing financial and technical support packages to ECCD programs.

(b) Other Forms of Support for ECCD Programs. – LGUs shall be encouraged to support public ECCD programs in their respective localities. Additional funds may be generated from intergovernmental donors and government financial institutions to support the public programs including the urban poor.

There shall be established a fund for an ECCD Program Contracting Scheme with accredited private providers at the community levels.

(c) Fees and Contributions. – Fees and contributions collected for both public and private ECCD programs shall be monitored by the ECCD Council to ensure that these are affordable and within reasonable limits. Families are encouraged to contribute their time and services to support the ECCD programs.

SEC. 13. *Annual Report.* – The ECCD Council shall, at the close of each calendar year, submit annual physical and financial reports to Congress, giving a detailed account of its proceedings and accomplishments during the year, making recommendations for the adoption of measures that will improve the National ECCD System and ensuring achievement of universal coverage of ECCD benefits to all children from age zero (0) to four (4) years, within a period of five (5) years.

SEC. 14. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The ECCD Council, in consultation with appropriate government agencies and nongovernment organizations, shall formulate and issue the necessary rules and regulations within sixty (60) days after the effectivity of this Act.

SEC. 15. *Repealing Clause.* – Republic Act No. 8980, otherwise known as "An Act Promulgating A Comprehensive Policy And A National System For Early Childhood Care And Development (ECCD), Providing Funds Therefor And For Other Purposes", is hereby repealed.


All laws, decrees, executive orders, presidential proclamations, rules and regulations or parts thereof contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 16. *Separability Clause.* – If, for any reason, any portion of this Act shall be declared unconstitutional, other parts or provisions hereof which are not affected shall continue to be in full force and effect.


SEC. 17. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.


Approved,


JUAN PONCE ENRILE
President of the Senate


FELICIANO BELMONTE JR.
Speaker of the House
of Representatives

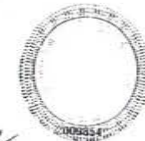
This Act which is a consolidation of House Bill No. 6694 and Senate Bill No. 3206 was finally passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate on November 28, 2012 and January 23, 2013, respectively.


EMMA MIRQ-REYES
Secretary of the Senate


MARILYN B. BARJA-YAP
Secretary General
House of Representatives

Approved: MAR 26 2013


BENIGNO S. AQUINO III
President of the Philippines



CERTIFIED COPY:

MARIANITU M. DIMA
DIRECTOR IV
MALACANANG RECORDS

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