

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

15th CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 3507

**Introduced by Reps. SALVADOR H. ESCUDERO III, JUAN EDGARDO M. ANGARA
and THELMA Z. ALMARIO**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

It is a commitment of the Government of the Philippines to achieve the universal aspirations of all 192 United Nations member states for Education for All (EFA) and the Millenium Development Goals by Year 2015. The six (6) internationally agreed EFA goals aimed at meeting the learning needs of all children, youth and adults include the following: (1) *Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children* and (2) *ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those who belong to ethnic minorities, have access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality.*

The Department of Education (DepEd) National EFA Committee identified the following as one of six most critical tasks that will yield the desired educational outcomes by Year 2015: *To make expansion of Early Child Care and Development (ECCD) coverage yield more EFA benefits.*

In 2004, the UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines Education Committee suggested a model learning system consisting of the following five (5) cycles of educational development:

- No. 1 – Ages 0 to 6 : Foundation cycle
- No. 2 – Ages 6 to 12 : Elementary education cycle
- No. 3 – Ages 12 to 18 : Secondary education cycle
- No. 4 – Ages 18 to 24 : Higher education cycle
- No. 5 – Ages 24 and above : Continuing education cycle

The Early Childhood Care and Development Council has been implementing a National System for Early Childhood Care and Development that consists of a “full range of health, nutrition, early education and social services programs that provide for the basic holistic needs of young children from conception (0) to age six (6), and to promote their optimum growth and development”. The “Early Childhood Care and Development Act of 2000” or R.A. 8980 must be revisited and certain provisions amended for the purpose of strengthening the strategic role of the ECCD Council in fostering a comprehensive, integrative and sustainable multi-sectoral and inter-agency collaboration for early childhood care and development of the 0 to 6 years old among national government agencies, local government units, non-governmental organizations, families and communities; and among the private sectors, professional associations and academic institutions.

The National Statistical Coordination Board projected a population of about 13 M for the 0 to 6 years old age group --- approximately 14% of the total country’s population of 95 M. But

in 2009, only 1 of every 4 or approximately 3,234,399 of this age group were provided early childhood care and development in the country's day care centers and in DepEd pre-schools.

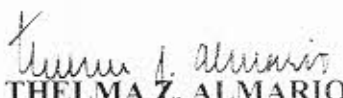
It is during the early years from 0 to 6 when the learning pathways to the brain (which is the core on which all future learning is based) are formed. Yet nearly every country in the world spends well under 10 percent of its education budget on the years when 50 percent of educational development takes place.

This bill is introduced for the State to adopt a policy recognizing the early years from conception (0) to age six (6) as the First Cycle of Educational Development and amend certain provisions of R.A. 8980 on the basis of the experiences of its implementation since Year 2000.

In view of the foregoing, passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


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AN ACT
RECOGNIZING THE EARLY YEARS FROM 0 TO 6 YEARS OLD AS THE FIRST
CYCLE OF EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND FOR THIS PURPOSE
AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8980, STRENGTHENING THE EARLY
CHILDHOOD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES

Be it enacted by 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 of 2010.”

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy – It is hereby declared a 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 its special needs; and to support parents in their roles as primary caregivers and as their children’s first teachers. The State shall institutionalize a National System for Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) that is comprehensive, integrative and sustainable, that involves multi-sectoral and inter-agency collaboration at the national and local levels among government, service providers, families and communities; and among the public and private sectors, non-government organizations; professional associations, and academic institutions. This System shall promote the inclusion of children with special needs and advocate respect for cultural diversity. It shall be anchored on complementary strategies for ECCD that include service delivery for children from conception to age six (6), 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. It is also the policy of the State to recognize the early years from conception (0) to age six (6) as the first cycle of educational development during which fifty percent (50%) of the child’s ability to learn is developed from which shall be formed the main learning pathways in the brain that shall be the basis for future learning.

SEC. 3. Objectives. – The objectives of the National ECCD System are:

- 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, social, emotional, cognitive, psychological, spiritual and language development of young children;

- c) To enhance the role of parents as the primary caregivers and educators of their children especially from conception (0) to six (6) years;
- d) To facilitate a smooth transition from care and education provided at home to community or school-based setting and to primary school;
- e) To enhance the capabilities of service providers and their supervisors to comply with quality standards for various ECCD programs;
- f) To enhance and sustain the efforts of communities to promote ECCD programs and ensure that special support is provided for poor and disadvantaged communities;
- g) To ensure that young children are adequately prepared for the formal learning system and that both public and private schools are responsive to the development needs of these children;
- h) To establish an efficient system for early identification, prevention, referral and intervention for giftedness and development disorders and disabilities in children from conception (0) to six (6) years; and
- 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.

SEC. 4. Definitions. – For purposes of this Act:

- a) “Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) System” refers to the full range of health, nutrition, early education and social services programs that provide for the basic holistic needs of young children from conception (0) to age six (6), and to promote their optimum growth and development. These include:
 - 1) Center-based programs, such as the day care service established under R.A. 6972, public and private pre-schools, kindergartens or school-based programs, community or church-based early childhood education programs initiated by non-government organizations or people’s 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 day care programs, parent education and home visiting programs.
- b) “ECCD Service Providers” include the various professionals, paraprofessionals, and volunteer caregivers who are directly responsible for the care and education of children from conception (0) to six (6) years through the various center and home-based programs. They include but are not limited to, day care workers, teachers, teacher-aiders, rural health midwives, social workers, community health workers, barangay nutrition scholars, parent effectiveness service-volunteers, child development workers, and family day care providers.
- c) “ECCD Curriculum” refers to the age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate educational objectives, programs of activities, organized learning experiences and recommended learning materials for children 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 integrating local learning experiences and indigenous learning materials.

- d) "Parent Education" refers 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 include the following components:

- a) ECCD Curriculum --- which focuses on children's total development according to their individual needs and socio-cultural background. It shall promote the delivery of complementary and integrative services for health care, 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 --- which harness and develop parents' strengths as providers of ECCD programs at home, active partners of other stakeholders, advocates for community concerns that affect children, and pillars of support for local and national ECCD programs through community organization efforts.
- c) Human Resource Development Program --- which established mechanisms for the systematic professionalization of ECCD service providers, through enrollment in educational programs in site-based or distance education modes, through pre-service or in-services training including continuing education program, whereby a registration and credential system shall be developed in the ECCD System.
- d) ECCD Management --- which focuses on a continuing process of planning, implementation, supervision, financial management, monitoring, evaluation and reporting. It shall encourage the active involvement and build the capabilities of service providers, parents and local government officials to sustain the program, and it shall be guided by the principles of devolution as stipulated in the Local Government Code of 1991 and the principle of shared governance in the Governance of Basic Education Act (R.A. 9155) of 2001.
- e) Quality Standards and Accreditation --- which ensures that each component in the ECCD System complies with national quality standards established by the ECCD Council linked to an accreditation process.

SEC. 6. Expanding the ECCD System. --- The National ECCD System shall be expanded to all provinces, cities/municipalities and barangays as may be determined by the ECCD Council in order to achieve universal coverage of all children from conception (0) to six (6) years over a five-year period.

SEC. 7. Implementing Arrangements and Operational Structures. --- The implementation of the National ECCD System shall be the joint responsibility of the ECCD Council and the local government units, non-government organizations, and private organizations that are accredited to deliver the services or to provide training and technical assistance.

- a) Responsibilities of the ECCD Council – The ECCD Council shall be responsible for developing policies and programs, providing technical

assistance and support to the ECDD service providers in consultation with coordinating committees at the provincial, city/municipal and barangay levels and monitoring of ECCD service benefits and outcomes. 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 jointly prepare annual ECCD work plans that will coordinate their respective technical assistance and support for the National ECCD Program. They shall consolidate existing program implementing guidelines that ensure consistency in integrated service delivery within the National ECCD System.

- 1) The DepEd shall promote the National ECCD Program in schools. ECCD programs in public schools shall be under the joint responsibility of their respective school principal/school-head and parent-teachers associations (PTAs) within the standards set forth in the National ECCD System and under the guidance of the city/municipal ECCD Coordinating Committees for the effective and equitable delivery of ECCD services. It shall also make available existing facilities of public elementary schools for ECCD classes.
 - 2) Private pre-schools shall be registered by the Council upon the recommendation of the city/municipal ECCD Coordinating Committees. NGO-initiated community, church, home, and workplace-based service providers shall be registered by the Council upon the recommendation of the city/municipal ECCD Coordinating Committees. These public and private ECCD service providers shall operate within the standards set forth in the National ECCD System and under the guidance of the city/municipal Coordinating Communities for the effective delivery of ECCD services.
- b) Responsibilities of Local Government Units – Local government units (LGUs) shall be primarily responsible for:
- 1) Implementing the National ECCD Program by providing basic public ECCD services;
 - 2) Supporting the organization of parent cooperatives to initiate the establishment of ECCD programs;
 - 3) Ensuring that service providers of public ECCD programs under their supervision shall be justly compensated, that adequate funds are available, and their working conditions are conducive to fulfill national quality standards; and,
 - 4) Providing counterpart funds for the training and continuing education of ECCD public service providers, and supporting the operations of provincial, city/municipal and barangay ECCD Coordinating Committees.
- c) Responsibilities of Families and Communities – The families and communities shall support the local ECCD programs by participating in various projects for the overall development of their children from conception (0) to six (6) years.

SEC. 8. Strengthening the Early Childhood Care and Development Council. – To ensure the State's focus on building a strong foundation for the learning and development of children during the early years from conception (0) to six (6) years; support the full range of health,

nutrition, early education and social services programs for the child's holistic development; and ensure sustained inter-agency and multi-sectoral collaboration among the provincial, city/municipal and barangay ECCD Coordinating Committees, the Early Childhood Care and Development Council is hereby strengthened.

- a) Organization --- The Early Childhood Care and Development Council shall be composed of a Governing Board and a Secretariat. The ECCD Governing Board shall be headed by a Chairman with the salary grade and emoluments of a cabinet secretary to be appointed by the President.
- b) Composition of the Governing Board --- The following shall be members of the ECCD Governing Board:
 - 1) Department of Education (DepEd)
 - 2) Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)
 - 3) Department of Health (DOH)
 - 4) National Nutrition Council (NNC)
 - 5) Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP)

In addition, one (1) private individual who is an ECCD practitioner and expert shall be appointed by the President upon recommendation of the Board who shall serve for a term of two (2) years subject to one (1) reappointment.

The heads of the concerned departments, agencies and institutions shall as much as possible attend the meetings of the Board. In their absence they must designate a permanent representative with a rank not lower than an undersecretary or its equivalent who may attend and participate at meetings of the Board. The Board shall meet once a month or as often as necessary.

- c) ECCD Secretariat – There shall be established an ECCD Secretariat headed by an Executive Director who shall be appointed by the President upon recommendation of the Board. He/she shall have the rank, privileges, and emoluments of a Career Executive Service Officer I. There shall be created two (2) permanent positions of Deputy Executive Director to be appointed by the Board, one of whom shall be concerned with ECCD programs and activities and the other with general administrative services of the ECCD Council. The Executive Director and the Deputy Executive Directors shall be assisted by senior technical staff to be seconded from the DepEd, DSWD, DOH, NNC and ULAP who shall serve for a period of at least two (2) years, subject to renewal and shall be entitled to whatever additional remuneration the law allows for such secondment.
- d) Functions --- The ECCD Council shall implement the National Early Childhood Care and Development System and perform the following functions:
 - 1) Promulgate policies and implementing guidelines for ECCD programs in consultation with stakeholders at various levels, including the regional level when appropriate, consistent with the national policy and program frameworks;
 - 2) Establish ECCD program standards that reflect developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant practices for ECCD programs, which shall interface with the primary school curriculum of the DepEd;

- 3) Develop a national system for the recruitment, registration, 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;
- 4) Develop and implement a system of awards and recognition to deserving ECCD program implementers and service providers;
- 5) Promote, encourage and coordinate the conduct of ECCD programs in national government agencies and monitor the delivery of services to the ECCD program beneficiaries;
- 6) Evaluate and assess the impact and outcome of various ECCD programs nationwide through an effective information system;
- 7) Develop and establish a national system for early identification, screening, surveillance of early childhood disabilities, developmental problems, and giftedness;
- 8) Develop and implement various support mechanisms that maximize the public and private resources for implementing ECCD programs, giving priority to the needy and high-risk children from poor communities;
- 9) Provide counterpart funds to poor and disadvantaged communities for the establishment and expansion of public ECCD programs, improvement of physical facilities and for hiring of ECCD providers;
- 10) Promote and encourage private sector initiatives for the establishment of ECCD programs;
- 11) Provide guidelines for ECCD Coordinating Committees at the provincial, city/municipal and barangay levels for the conduct of solicitations and requests for assistance from local and international civic organizations, private philanthropic foundations to supplement available resources.

SEC. 9. Reconstituting the ECCD Coordinating Committees. – The ECCD coordinating committees established at the provincial, city/municipal and barangay levels shall be reconstituted and perform the following functions:

- a) The Provincial ECCD Coordinating Committee shall be composed of the provincial governor as chairperson and members representing the DepEd, DSWD, DOH, NNC and ULAP. The Provincial ECCD Coordinating Committee shall be under the Provincial Development Council and shall perform functions similar to the ECCD Council as appropriate including other functions that may be provided in the Implementing Rules and Regulations of this Act. There shall be organized a secretariat to coordinate and monitor the effective implementation of ECCD programs in the province. It shall be headed by a provincial ECCD Officer, who shall be appointed by the Governor, upon the recommendation of the Provincial ECCD Coordinating Committee. He/she shall have a rank, privilege and emolument of a Department Head. Such sums as may be necessary for the salaries, allowances and other benefits of the Provincial ECCD Officer shall be provided by the province.

- b) The City/Municipal ECCD Coordinating Committees shall be composed of the city/municipal mayor as chairperson and members representing the DepEd, DSWD, DOH, NNC and ULAP. The city/municipal ECCD Coordinating Committee shall be under the city/municipal development council and shall perform functions similar to the ECCD Council as appropriate including other functions that may be provided in the Implementing Rules and Regulations of this Act. There shall be organized a secretariat to coordinate and monitor the effective implementation of ECCD programs in the city/municipality. It shall be headed by the city/municipal ECCD officer, who shall be appointed by the city/municipal mayor, upon recommendation of the City/Municipal ECCD Coordinating Committee.
- c) The Barangay ECCD Coordinating Committees shall be composed of the Barangay Captain as chairperson and members representing the DepEd, DSWD, DOH, NNC and ULAP. The barangay ECCD Coordinating Committee shall be under the barangay development council and shall be responsible for the proper and effective implementation of public ECCD programs and maintenance of database system at the barangay level. There shall be organized a secretariat to coordinate and monitor the effective implementation of ECCD programs in the barangay. It shall be headed by a Barangay Councilor, who shall be appointed by the Barangay Captain, upon recommendation of the Barangay ECCD Coordinating Committee.

SEC. 10. Financing ECCD Programs. – ECCD programs shall be financed through a combination of public and private funds. All public ECCD providers shall prioritize children from conception (0) to six (6) years from families who are in greatest need and who can least afford private sector ECCD programs.

- a) Public support for ECCD programs. – The government shall support public ECCD programs through cost-sharing arrangements that shall involve the LGUs, and counterpart funds from the national government agencies for technical assistance and support. Additional funds may be generated from intergovernmental donors and financial institutions by the appropriate government agencies through the NEDA to support the public programs in all municipalities including the urban poor. Funds shall be accessible to qualified LGUs through the Municipal Development Fund or other financing mechanisms as prescribed by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM). The ECCD Council may establish a trust fund to assist LGUs in the expansion and upgrading of ECCD programs.

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

Primary health care programs, pre-natal and post-natal care, growth monitoring and promotion, and supplementary nutrition programs shall continue to be funded through the LGUs with technical support and additional resources from the DOH.

The DSWD shall provide technical assistance for the Day Care Program, Parent Effectiveness Service, Child-Minding Centers, Family Day Care and Parent-Child Development Programs that shall continue to be supported by the LGUs in the form of construction of basic infrastructure, provision of facilities, materials and equipment, compensation for service providers.

The kindergarten program in public and private schools and in day care centers shall continue to be supported by the DepEd in cooperation with the PTAs, where applicable, by providing teacher training, supplementary

learning materials and reference materials including for the early education component of the ECCD programs.

The DepEd, DSWD, DOH, NNC and ULAP shall support the implementation of the National ECCD Program and shall include in their respective annual general appropriations beginning the fiscal year following the approval of this Act, the necessary funding to achieve the goal of universal coverage for all children from conception (0) to six (6) years within a five-year period and sustain the Program from thereon. The work and financial plans of the DepEd, DSWD, DOH, NNC and ULAP shall be coordinated with the ECCD Council.

- b) Support for ECCD Programs. – Support for ECCD programs can be solicited from local and international civic organizations, and private philanthropic foundations to supplement available resources.

Workplace-based or related ECCD programs shall be supported by corporations and employees in the form of physical facilities and recurrent operating costs. The operating costs incurred for employer or corporate-sponsored ECCD programs can be deducted from taxable income and/or avail of the tax benefits under the “Adopt-A-School” Law; provided that the employer or corporation will not charge user fees.

- c) Costs to be shouldered by Families. – The Council shall monitor user fees and contributions allowed for both public and private programs to ensure that these are affordable and within reasonable limits.

User fees for public programs should be limited to monthly contributions intended to subsidize recurrent costs. Parents are encouraged to contribute their time and services especially in cases where they are unable to afford the regular contributions.

SEC. 11. Appropriations. -- For the implementation of this Act the amount of Five Hundred Million Pesos (Php500,000,000.00) per year for five (5) years is hereby appropriated for the National ECCD Program of the ECCD Council effective upon approval of this Act that shall be utilized to support the goal of achieving universal ECCD coverage for all children from conception (0) to six (6) years. Said amount shall be funded from the gross income of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation and shall be directly remitted in four (4) quarterly installments to a special account of the ECCD Council. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the operations of the Council shall be included in the General Appropriations Act.

An initial annual appropriation in the amount of One Hundred Million Pesos (Php100,000,000.00) shall be provided to support the operations of the ECCD Council upon approval of this Act.

Expenses for ECCD programs and technical support packages provided by the DepEd, DSWD, DOH and NNC shall be specified as separate line items in their respective annual budgets in the General Appropriations Act. Their annual ECCD workplans shall be the basis for these budgets and shall be released directly to their regional or provincial offices whenever applicable.

SEC. 12. Annual Report. – The Council shall, at the close of each calendar year, submit an annual report to Congress, giving a detailed account of its proceedings and accomplishments during the year and making recommendations for the adoption of measures that will improve the National ECCD System and ensure achievements of universal ECCD coverage for all children from conception (0) to six (6) years within a five-year period.

SEC. 13. Separability Clause. – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional the same shall not affect the validity and effectivity of other provisions thereof.

SEC. 14. Repealing Clause. – Pertinent provisions of all laws, decrees, executive orders, presidential proclamations, rules and regulations or parts thereof contrary or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 15. Implementing Rules and Regulations. - The Council in consultation with appropriate government agencies and nongovernment organizations shall formulate and issue the necessary rules and regulations for the implementation of this Act within ninety (90) days after the effectivity of this Act.

SEC. 16. 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,