

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

15th CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL No. 6197



Introduced by Representatives SALVDOR H. ESCUDERO III, JUAN EDGARDO M. ANGARA,
ROSENDA ANN OCAMPO and THELMA Z. ALMARIO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The highest drop out rates in our basic education system are due to the lack of support from 0 to 6 years old, cited by experts as the most critical years of learning. Experts suggest that 50 percent of a person's ability to learn is developed at age 4, while learning pathways in the brain are formed from 0 to 6 years. And yet, during this stage, our Filipino children are not reared and made ready to enter Grade 1. Instead, 1.2 million are in play centers not fit to prepare them for school while 2.5 million children of school age are not enrolled.

Any efforts in improving the higher years of education is bound to fail if we do not build a strong foundation for the development and learning of our children.

While children of middle and upper class families enjoy at least 1 or 2 years of education before entering primary school, the ordinary Filipino who could not afford to pay for pre-school begin schooling by Grade 1 when they are not school ready. On the other hand, the better-off send their young to private pre-schools.

The Early Years Act seeks to remedy this flaw in our education system, making it a national responsibility to equalize opportunities available to Filipino children by refocusing the 49,712 day care centers in 47,000 barangays all over the country from a playroom to a learning center by rationalizing and restructuring the day care into an early childhood education center.

In his veto message of Senate Bill 2802 or The Early Years Act, President Aquino cited efforts to streamline bureaucracy, possible overlap in agency accountability, budgetary constraints, and fears of displacement of barangay health workers under the new bill.

Responding to these concerns, this amended bill contains the following changes:

1. Recognizing the Early Years as the foundation of the learning continuum, it places the ECCD Council under the Department of Education as an attached agency, instead of the Office of the President or the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

2. On the possible overlap among agencies, the original arrangement provided by R.A. 8980 since 2000 with the DepEd, DSWD, DOH and NNC will remain similar under the new bill. Said agencies will annually meet to prepare the ECCD's work and financial plan to detail extent and scope of participation.

3. As a state policy, the National Government will contribute P500 Million for every year for five years to ensure achievement of universal coverage of ECCD benefits to all children from zero (0) to age four (4), supported by Local Government Units (LGU) through their Special Education Funds. In line with the budgetary constraints, the bill in fact proposes to make use of existing infrastructures to save on government expense. Further, said amount is a small price to pay in ensuring the readiness of the Filipino youth and lessening the drop out rates currently plaguing our students and achieving universal coverage of children from zero (0) to six (6) years.

4. Further, there will be no displacement of existing daycare workers, but in fact a professionalization of those currently employed through professional development programs in line with the National ECCD System.

For the following reasons, the swift approval of this bill is earnestly sought.

SALVADOR H. ESCUDERO III

Representative

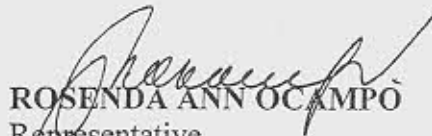
1st District, Sorsogon



JUAN EDGARDO M. ANGARA

Representative

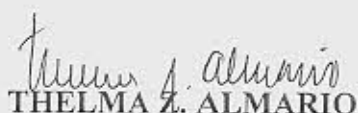
Lone District, Aurora Province



ROSENDA ANN OCAMPO

Representative

6th District, Manila



THELMA Z. ALMARIO

Representative

2nd District, Davao Oriental

Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 6197

Introduced by Representatives SALVADOR H. ESCUDERO III, JUAN EDGARDO M.
ANGARA, ROSENDA ANN OCAMPO and THELMA Z. ALMARIO

AN ACT

**RECOGNIZING THE EARLY YEARS FROM ZERO (0) TO AGE FOUR (4) AS THE
FIRST CRUCIAL STAGE OF EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT,
STRENGTHENING THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT
COUNCIL, AND RENAMING THE DAY CARE CENTER AS CHILD
DEVELOPMENT CENTER AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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

1 *SECTION 1. Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "Early Years Act (EYA) of
2 2012".

3
4 *SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.* - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to
5 promote the rights of children to survival, development and special protection with
6 full recognition of the nature of childhood and as well as the need to provide
7 developmentally appropriate experiences to address their needs; and to support
8 parents in their roles as primary caregivers and as their children's first teachers.

9
10 The State shall institutionalize a National System for Early Childhood Care and
11 Development (ECCD) that is comprehensive, integrative and sustainable, that
12 involves multi-sectoral and inter-agency collaboration at the national and local levels
13 among government; among service providers, families and communities, and among
14 the public and private sectors, nongovernment organizations; professional
15 associations, and academic institutions.

16
17 This System shall promote the inclusion of children with special needs, and advocate
18 respect for cultural and linguistic diversity. It shall be anchored on complementary
19 strategies for ECCD that include service delivery for children from zero (0) to age
20 four (4), educating parents and caregivers, encouraging the active involvement of
21 parents and communities in ECCD programs, raising awareness about the important
22 efforts that improve the quality of life for young children and families.

23

1 It shall also be the policy of the State to recognize the years from zero (0) to age four
2 (4) as the first crucial stage of educational development.

3
4 *SEC. 3. Objectives.* - The objectives of the National ECCD System are:

- 5
6 a) To achieve improved infant and child survival rates by ensuring that
7 adequate health and nutrition programs are accessible to young children and
8 their parents, from the prenatal period throughout the early childhood years;
9
10 b) To enhance the physical-motor, socio-emotional, cognitive, language,
11 psychological and spiritual development of young children;
12
13 c) To facilitate a smooth transition from care and education provided at home
14 to community or school-based setting and to Kindergarten;
15
16 d) To ensure that young children are adequately prepared for the formal
17 learning system that begins at Kindergarten;
18
19 e) To establish an efficient system for early identification, prevention, referral
20 and intervention for the wide range of children with special needs from zero
21 (0) to age four (4);
22
23 f) To upgrade and update the capabilities of service providers and their
24 supervisors to comply with quality standards for various ECCD programs;
25
26 g) To reinforce the role of parents and other caregivers as the primary
27 caregivers and educators of their children especially from zero (0) to age four
28 (4);
29
30 h) To enhance and sustain the efforts of communities to promote ECCD
31 programs and ensure that special support is provided for poor, disadvantaged
32 and linguistic minority communities; and
33
34 i) To improve the quality standards of public and private ECCD programs
35 through, but not limited to, a registration and credential system for ECCD
36 service providers and facilities.

37
38 *SEC. 4. Definitions.* - For purposes of this Act:

- 39
40 a) Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) System shall refer to the full
41 range of health, nutrition, early education and social services development programs
42 that provide for the basic holistic needs of young children from zero (0) to age four
43 (4), and to promote their optimum growth and development.
44

1 These programs shall include:

2
3 1) Center-based programs, such as the day care service established under
4 Republic Act No. 6972, hereinafter referred to as the child development
5 service, community or church-based early childhood education programs
6 initiated by nongovernment organizations or people's organizations,
7 workplace-related child care and education programs, child-minding centers,
8 health centers and stations; and;

9
10 2) Home-based programs, such as the neighborhood-based play groups, family
11 child care programs, parent education and home visiting programs.

12
13 b) ECCD Service Providers shall include the various professionals, paraprofessionals
14 and volunteer caregivers who are directly responsible for the care and education of
15 young children from zero (0) to age four (4) through the various center and home-
16 based programs. They include, but are not limited to, day care workers hereinafter
17 referred to as child development workers, child development teachers, teacher-aides,
18 rural health midwives, social workers, community health workers, barangay nutrition
19 scholars, parent effectiveness service volunteers, and family day care providers.

20
21 c) ECCD Curriculum shall refer to the developmentally appropriate educational
22 objectives and practices, programs of activities, organized learning experiences,
23 recommended learning materials and appropriate assessment for children from zero
24 (0) to age four (4) that are implemented by service providers through center and
25 home-based programs. It shall consist of national program goals and guidelines,
26 instructional objectives, and content outlines that are age-appropriate, individually
27 appropriate and culturally-relevant.

28
29 d) Parent Education shall refer to the various formal and alternative means of
30 providing parents with information, skills, and support systems to assist them in their
31 roles as their children's primary caregivers and educators. These include public and
32 private parent education programs linked to center, home and media-based childcare
33 and education programs.

34
35 *SEC. 5. System Framework and Components.* – The ECCD System shall ensure that
36 the National ECCD Program is implemented in accordance with quality standards for
37 accreditation and for this purpose there shall be established a National ECCD
38 Monitoring & Evaluation Framework. The ECCD System shall include the following
39 components:

40
41 a) ECCD Curriculum. - Focuses on children's total development and takes into
42 account age, individual and socio-cultural appropriateness. It shall promote the
43 delivery of complementary and integrative services for health, nutrition, early

1 childhood education, sanitation and cultural activities. It shall use the child's
2 first language as the medium of instruction.

3
4 b) Parent Education and Involvement, Advocacy and Mobilization of
5 Communities. - Harness and develop parents' strengths as providers of ECCD
6 programs at home, as active partners of other stakeholders, as advocates for
7 community concerns that affect children, and as pillars of support for local and
8 national ECCD programs through community organization efforts

9
10 c) Human Resource Development Program. - Establishes mechanisms for the
11 systematic professionalization of ECCD service providers, through enrolment
12 in educational programs in site-based or distance education modes, through
13 pre-service or in-service training including continuing education programs,
14 whereby a registration and credential system shall be developed in the ECCD
15 System.

16
17 d) ECCD Management. - Focuses on a continuing process of planning,
18 implementation, supervision, financial management, monitoring, evaluation
19 and reporting to persons concerned. It shall encourage the active involvement
20 and build the capabilities of service providers, parents and local government
21 officials to sustain the program.

22
23 *SEC. 6. Expanding the ECCD System.* - The National ECCD System shall be
24 expanded to all provinces, cities/municipalities and barangays as may be determined
25 by the ECCD Council to achieve universal ECCD coverage for all children from zero
26 (0) to age four (4).

27
28 *SEC. 7. Implementing Arrangements and Operational Structures.* - the
29 implementation of the National ECCD System shall be the responsibility of the ECCD
30 Council.

31
32 *a) Responsibilities of the ECCD Council.* - The ECCD Council shall be
33 responsible for establishing national standards, developing policies and
34 programs, ensuring compliance thereof, providing technical assistance and
35 support to the ECCD service providers in consultation with coordinating
36 committees at the provincial, city/municipal and barangay levels.

37
38 The ECCD Council, The Department of Education (DepED), the Department
39 of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the Department of Health
40 (DOH), the National Nutrition Council (NNC) and the Union of Local
41 Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP) shall meet in an annual workshop to
42 prepare work and financial plans incorporating the financial and technical
43 support of said entities as referred to under Section 12 hereof. It shall cons

olidate the following existing program implementing guidelines to ensure consistency in integrated service delivery within the National ECCD System.

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

c) Responsibilities of the DSWD, DOH, and NNC. - The DSWD, DOH and NNC shall provide continuing professional development program support, supplementary learning materials, reference materials, supplemental nutrition and health care services.

d) Responsibilities of Local Government Units. - Local government units (LGUs) shall allocate not less than ten percent (10%) of their Special Education Fund in addition to other local funds 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.

e) Responsibilities of Families and Communities. - Families and communities shall initiate establishment of 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 zero (0) to age four (4), with the active assistance and technical support of the DSWD and the LGU concerned.

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 zero (0) to age four (4), to support the full range of health, nutrition, early education and social development programs for the child's holistic development and ensure sustained inter-agency and multi-sectoral collaboration. The Council shall be attached to the DepED.

SEC. 9. Organization of the ECCD Council. - The ECCD Council shall be composed of:

a) ECCD Governing Board. - The ECCD Governing Board shall be composed of:

- 1) Secretary of the Department of Education (DepEd) as ex-officio chairperson;
- 2) Director-General of the ECCD Council as vice chairperson;
- 3) Secretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD);
- 4) Secretary of the Department of Health (DOH);
- 5) Executive Director National Nutrition Council (NNC);
- 6) President of the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP); 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.

The Board shall meet once a month or upon the call of the chairperson or three members of the Board.

b) Council Secretariat. - There shall be established an ECCD Secretariat headed by the Director-General who shall be its chief executive to be appointed by the President. The Director-General shall have the rank, privileges and emoluments of an Undersecretary.

The Director-General shall be assisted by two (2) permanent positions of Deputy Director-General to be appointed by the Board, one of whom shall be responsible for ECCD programs and activities and the other for general administrative and financial services of the ECCD Council.

SEC. 10. Functions of the ECCD Council. - The ECCD Council shall carry out the objectives of the National Early Childhood Care and Development System by performing the following functions:

- a) Promulgate policies and implementing 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

1 providers, supervisors and administrators to improve and professionalize the
2 ECCD sector and upgrade quality standards of public and private ECCD
3 programs;

4
5 d) Develop a national system of awards and recognition to deserving ECCD
6 program implementers and service providers;

7
8 e) Promote, encourage and coordinate the various ECCD programs of the
9 DepEd, the DSWD, the DOH and the NNC, and monitor the delivery of
10 services to the ECCD program beneficiaries nationwide;

11
12 f) Evaluate and assess the impact and outcome of various ECCD programs
13 nationwide through an effective information system;

14
15 g) Develop a national system for early identification, screening and
16 surveillance of young children from zero (0) to age four (4);

17
18 h) Develop various support mechanisms that maximize the public and private
19 resources for implementing ECCD programs, giving priority to the needy and
20 high-risk children from poor communities;

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

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

26
27 k) Provide guidelines for the conduct of solicitations from local and
28 international civic organizations, and requests and private foundations to
29 supplement available resources; and

30
31 l) Perform such other functions as the ECCD Council may deem necessary.

32
33 *Sec.11. Financing ECCD Programs* - ECCD programs shall be financed through a
34 combination of public and private funds. All public ECCD program providers shall
35 prioritize children from zero (0) to age four (4) from families who are in greatest need
36 and who can least afford private ECCD programs.

37
38 a) The DepEd, DSWD, DOH, NNC and ULAP shall support the
39 implementation of the National ECCD System and shall include in their
40 respective annual general appropriation beginning the fiscal year following the
41 approval of this Act the necessary funding to achieve the goal of universal
42 coverage of ECCD programs to all children from zero (0) to age four (4) and
43 sustain the Program from thereon.

b) *Support for ECCD Programs* - The government shall support public ECCD programs that shall involve the LGUs, and 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.

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 volunteer their time and services to support the ECCD programs.

Sec. 12. Appropriations. - For the implementation of this Act the amount of Five Hundred Million Pesos (Php 500,000,000.00) per year for five (5) years is hereby appropriated for the National ECCD Program, effective upon approval of this Act. 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 instalments to a special account of the ECCD Council.

Funds for the operations of the Council as an attached agency of the DepEd shall be included in the General Appropriations Act.

Financial and technical support packages provided by the DepEd, DSWD, DOH and NNC for ECCD Programs shall be specified as separate line items in their respective annual budgets in the General Appropriations Act.

Sec. 13. Annual Report. - The ECCD 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, 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 zero (0) to age four (4) within a period of five (5) years.

SEC. 14. 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 thirty (30) 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

1 Care And Development (ECCD), Providing Funds Therefore And For Other
2 Purposes" is hereby repealed. Pertinent provisions of all laws, decrees, executive
3 orders, presidential proclamations, rules and regulations or parts thereof contrary to or
4 inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified
5 accordingly.
6
7 *SEC. 16. Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act is declared
8 unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity and effectivity of the other
9 provisions hereof.
10
11 *SEC. 17. Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
12 publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general
13 circulation.
14
15 Approved.