

# MONTSERRAT

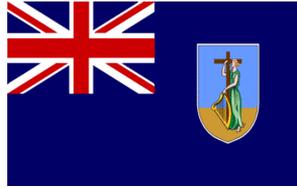


## **NATIONAL POLICY**

## **FRAMEWORK**

## **ON**

## **EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**



### **Foreword by the Hon Minister of Education**

The sustainability of our island rests on the quality of the care and education we make available to the youngest most vulnerable citizens of our beloved island of Montserrat. It has been documented that the consequence of Early Childhood Education does not end upon transfer to Primary School. In fact, it lasts for a lifetime. Jamaican pediatrician and early childhood advocate, Dr Maureen Samms-Vaughan concluded after a longitudinal study that tracked several children from Nursery to Fifth Form in Jamaica that children's performance in CXC Examinations was more strongly determined by events that occurred in their lives long before they started high school.

As a government we are committed to achieving and enforcing the Convention on the Rights of the child: children have a right to good quality education, a right to play and a right to good health care. In an effort to achieve Millennium Development Goal #2: Achieving Universal Primary Education, through this policy and its associated regulations and standards we will ensure that all infants on Montserrat have the necessary readiness skills to access primary education.

On behalf of the Government and people of Montserrat, especially children from birth to eight years, we say thanks to UNICEF for the financial and technical support and also to the consultant, Mrs Fortuna Anthony, who facilitated the process.

In educating our nation, the early years will remain a priority.

**Hon. Colin Riley**  
**September 2011**

*The most important period of life is not the age of university studies, but the first one, the period from birth to the age of six.*

*Maria Montessori*

## CONTENTS

Foreword	i
Contents	ii
<b>The Policy Context</b>	<b>1-2</b>
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Why is a Policy for Early Childhood Important	1-2
<b>Situational Analysis</b>	<b>2-3</b>
2.1 How Can early Childhood Development Be Defined	2
2.2 History of ECD Programming In Montserrat	2-3
2.3 Priorities Arising from consultation on the Development of the Policy	3
<b>Profile of the Sector</b>	<b>4-5</b>
<b>Policy Statement</b>	<b>5-6</b>
4.1 The Vision Statement	5
4.2 Goals and Objectives	5-6
4.3 Key Strategies	6
<b>Specific Actions and targets For Implementing the Policy Framework</b>	<b>6-12</b>
Application	12
Management, Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism	12
Implementation Plan	12
One Year Priority Action Plan	12-13
References and Sources	14
Annexes	15-37
Annex 1 Policy Process	15-16
Annex 11 Implementation Plan	17-29
• One Year Implementation Plan	18-24
• Three Year Implementation Plan	25-29
Annex 111 First Year Action Plan	30-37

## 1. The Policy Context

### 1.1. Introduction

The Government of Montserrat recognizes that it is universally accepted that the first five years of a child's life offers the greatest potential for laying foundations of conceptual learning and of developing the essential life skills, habits and attitudes which are essential for building a positive disposition towards learning. Government is fully committed to providing the building blocks for access to quality early stimulation, education and care for all the children in Montserrat.

The Government's present thrust is on the creation of a cohesive and integrated service through Policy and Standards which link this sector to the Government's Education Policy as well as to the provisions for children under the National Child Protection Act 2007. This 'living' document as it is referred to outlines the territory's Child Protection strategy and is intended to inform policy and action well into the future thereby safeguarding the interests of children and strengthening the quality of service at all levels of this sector. Both documents reinforce the important roles played by social and education sectors in improving early childhood services.

Montserrat is a signatory to a number of Conventions relating to the child; of particular note, is Article 44 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Montserrat is unique in that it is a British Overseas Territory and also a member of CARICOM. There are a number of conventions which CARICOM States have been signatory to including the Caribbean Plan of Action for Early Childhood Care, Education and Development 1997 and the Regional Framework of Action for Children 2002-2015.

### 1.2. Why Is a Policy For Early Childhood Important?

"Children's early development is a strong predictor of a variety of later outcomes, including education, earnings, benefits receipt, early motherhood and even crime."<sup>1</sup> It is well understood that the early years of child's life before the age of 8 are critical to his/her future well being. This time period is widely considered the most vulnerable and crucial stage of a person's life with 75% of brain development taking place by the age of 3 years. The home is where it begins and it is indeed clear that if the home is dysfunctional and does not impact positively on the child, it can result in damage which is difficult, sometimes impossible, to undo through education at later stages in the child's life.

Research validates that Early Childhood Development (ECD) has been found to help alleviate future impoverishment for the child if the service provided is of a high quality. A 2002 World Bank report showed returns on investment in ECD programme to be between 7-16% and in some instances even more. According to Schweinhart (2003) "the total benefit-cost ratio is now estimated at \$17 for every dollar invested."<sup>2</sup> International research has demonstrated that the quality of the programme is critical to the outcomes.

The International research also demonstrates that the curriculum to which children are exposed can be of immense assistance to their development. It was shown by Michigan Head Start Study, 2005 that children regardless of their socio-economic background once exposed to quality ECD programmes were able to successfully achieve the opportunities afforded by society later in life. The quality and diversity of the curriculum offered is of immense importance in the development of the child. Therefore close attention must be paid

to the content, relevance and appropriateness as well as to the methodology. It is also important that support material be made available to stimulate and expedite the learning/teaching process. Education For All Global Monitoring Report 2007 identified the quality of interaction between teacher or caregiver and child as the single most important determinant of programme success in early childhood.

Montserrat recognizes that ECD programmes prepare young children for primary school, but also contributes to the government national vision, consequently, an Early Childhood Policy is an essential national strategy in creating the much needed synergy in its education development plans.

## **2. Situational Analysis**

### **2.1 How Can Early Childhood Development Be Defined**

Early Childhood Development (ECD) in the Montserratian context refers to care, education and development programmes and strategies geared toward children from *birth to the age of eight*. Early Childhood programmes integrate the cognitive, emotional, social, physical, spiritual, cultural, economic and creative environments and experiences of the child in a safe and caring environment thereby resulting in an individual who is well rounded, confident productive and able to make a meaningful contribution to the society in their adult years.

### **2.2 History of ECD Programming in Montserrat**

In the early 1970s a group of concerned citizens saw the need for an organized approach to childcare and formed the Montserrat Nursery School Association. They solicited funding from Government, various donor agencies and the community for financing the school and training staff. By 1976 the association had established nine Nursery Schools in different villages throughout the island.

In 1976 the Government appointed an Early Childhood Coordinator to direct and supervise the services for children between ages three years and five years in the nine nursery schools. After that the Montserrat Nursery School Association gradually phased out.

During that same year (1976) the British Save the Children Fund with the permission of the Government of Montserrat established two Day Care Centres on the island which they operated until 1980. In 1980 the Government assumed full responsibilities for these centres and extended the responsibilities of the Coordinator Early Childhood Education to include supervision of the Day Care Centres. The Roman Catholic Church also played its part during the period 1970-1977 when it operated a Nursery Centre for children 2-5years. In the 1980s three private nurseries were organized by community individuals to cater for children between 2-5 years of age. Two of these centres continued to operate until the mid 1990s when volcanic activity forced many persons to re-locate overseas and reduced the number of buildings available.

The volcanic crisis caused a disruption in the provision of Early Childhood Education between 1996-97. However, by 1998 two government operated nursery centres and a day care centre re-opened.

Presently this sector comprises the day cares catering for children under two years, nursery or preschool setting for children five years and younger and early primary grades which accommodates children between five and eight years old in the Primary Schools. This delineation fits in with the universally accepted definition of ECD 0-8 years and provides for a

smooth transition and monitoring of the curriculum offered at kindergarten to Grade 2. Further, the Five Year Education Plan 2002-2007 cited the provision of rich and stimulating experiences in well organized learning environment for children less than six years as one of its goals for this sector. In order to achieve this goal, government has since built one new centre at Salem and expanded Lookout to cater for approximately 70 additional children. Funding to assist with this development came from the Caribbean Development Bank (CBD) and the Basic Needs Trust Funds (BNTF). Additionally, as early as 2006 the Government saw the need for the re-appointment an Education Officer with responsibility for ECD. To date, 88% of Early Childhood Development Centres are Government owned. Attendance is non-compulsory.

Early Childhood Training in Montserrat has been ongoing over the years. 100% of practitioners have been exposed to training or are currently in training to the certificate level from regional institutions. One practitioner who serves as Head of Centre has been trained to a degree level in the field. Currently twenty (20) individuals including Government and privately employed practitioners are pursuing a Certificate Course in Early Childhood Care and Development through the Open Campus of the University of the West Indies (UWI)

### **2.3 Priorities Arising from Consultation on the development of the Policy**

The Early Childhood Policy was developed through a consultative approach in 2009-2010, the details of which are set out in Annex 1. During the consultation process there was a strong call for the policy to focus on:

- **The areas of training, certification and qualification of early childhood practitioners**
- **The indicators of the type of person who should be allowed to work in this sector**
- **Safe and healthy stimulating environments for children**
- **Development of the child through the establishment of safe play areas in schools and communities**
- **Provision for children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities.**
- **Support for vulnerable children as well as children who at risk through poverty, and being affected by HIV/AIDS.**
- **Support and Training for parents in the areas of child development.**

## **3 Profile of the Sector**

The table below illustrates the composition of the Government centres as well as the one registered private centre. This is based on the most recent survey carried out in 2010 following the post volcanic eruption and migration.

**Table I - Early Childhood Development Centres**

Name of centre	Location	Age ranges	Nos. of children	Nos. of Practitioners	Staff child Ratio
Look Out Day Care **	Look Out	1-2	15	3	1:5
St. John Day Care	Sweeney	1-3	31	4	1:8
Salem Day Care**	Salem	1-3	12	2	1:6
Brades Nursery	Brades	2+ - 5	44	5	1:8
Salem Nursery **	Salem	2+- 5	15	3	1:5
Look Out Nursery**	Look Out	2+ - 5	65	6	1:11
Aunt Madge **	Woodlands	1 year	3	1	1:2
		1-2	13	2	1:6
		3-5	14	2	1:6
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>7</b>		<b>212</b>	<b>28</b>	

\*\* single structures comprising daycare and nursery services

The Statistics Department, Ministry of Finance, Economics Development and Trade of Montserrat, noted that as of 2008 there were 4,875 persons on island. Of this number there were approximately 315 children between the ages of 0-4 years. There are presently, two hundred and twelve (212) children accessing the Government operated Day Care Centres and Nurseries and the one registered private Day Care and Nursery centre. Therefore, approximately 103 children are not participating in the formal ECD services; these children are therefore being cared for at home or in non-parental care arrangements with neighbours, relatives or in centres not as yet registered by the government

To date, Montserrat has not been able to document the persons within the private sector who provide services either from their homes or in smaller centres.

A survey of centres carried out in 2009 found that there were no children with disabilities in attendance. This finding raises the question as to why children with disabilities were not observed in the centres. Some centres may not feel able to admit children and it would be important to find out whether children are being turned away or referred elsewhere. Centres may not feel able to meet children's needs and may regard children with disabilities as a challenge that cannot be met rather than as an opportunity to tailor programmes to meet the special needs of all the children and not solely those of the child with identified disabilities. Research has shown that many parents exclude their children with special needs from public activities for fear of rejection and stigma and discrimination. It may be that amongst those children not attending early childhood centres that vulnerable children and those with special needs are being kept at home.

Presently this sector lacks a cohesive structure and does not always provide quality settings for those whom they serve. A survey carried out in 2009, on the Quality of Learning Environments in Early Childhood centres revealed "that in general children are attending centres that are operating at minimal standards or just below. Only one centre is providing a good standard."<sup>4</sup> The report set out areas of weakness in the quality of service and listed areas for immediate action by the Ministry of Education. These have been summarized as (1) safe access to outdoor space (2) safety of children (3) supervision, discipline and interaction between staff and children, children and children (4) personal conditions in which staff work, staff cooperation and team working (4) balanced meals for children and (5) healthy toileting and hand washing practices, noting that these require immediate attention from the Government.

The survey report emphasized that to address the interaction issues effectively (supervision, discipline and interactions between staff and children, children and children) it is necessary to address programme structure and pedagogy, that is, how children learn and how staff support children's learning. If these areas are not addressed over the medium to long term, the problems associated with inadequate interaction will persist and the opportunity for children to learn and develop to their potential in their early childhood centres will be lost.

Areas requiring priority attention in the Government Centres were cited as space and furnishing, personal care routines, language- reasoning/listening and talk, which points to the need for curriculum,/programme structure, teacher training, parental understanding of the development stages of the child. There is also the need to improve working conditions of staff, as well as staff having sufficient time to engage parents and provide them with information. Generally, there is the need to strengthen the learning environment for the child.

The report further recommended that Montserrat establish access for teachers and caregivers to qualification training. Programmes are in development in neighbouring OECS countries. CARICOM has a qualifications framework which includes early childhood qualifications at Levels I, II and III and teacher qualifications at Associate and Bachelor degree levels. Therefore Montserrat has access to regional experience, materials and pedagogical approaches together with a qualifications framework on which to draw to establish national systems for training and qualification.

## **4 Policy Statement**

### **4.1 The Vision Statement**

**The vision for Montserrat has been proposed as:**

*"The provision of high quality preschool education for all children living in Montserrat by practitioners who are trained and qualified and understand the needs of all children with no exception, in a safe and caring environment."*

### **4.2 Goals and Objectives**

The strategic objectives of the Policy are to ensure that **all** children in Montserrat have the opportunity to access **quality** age-appropriate and developmentally sound early care, education and development.

The specific goals that would be pursued to enable this are:

1. To provide opportunities for all children between the ages of zero to eight years of age in Montserrat to participate in high quality early childhood programming;
2. To provide and support training and ongoing professional development for all practitioners, and establish the level of certification needed for entry into this sector;
3. To encourage and espouse partnership through effective parental and community involvement in the development of their children;

4. To promote and support the establishment of appropriate safe and healthy environments which meet the developmental needs of all children.

### **4.3 Key Strategies**

The above goals and objectives will be achieved through the following strategies:

- 1 Ensuring that all children living in Montserrat from birth to eight years have access to quality early childhood education, care and development.
2. Developing and introducing statutory regulations and guidelines, based on minimum standards to support the effective delivery of the service.
- 3 Providing training and certification at various levels at recognized institutions for all providers of early childhood services.
- 4 Developing a common age-appropriate curriculum which supports the holistic development of the child, with a strong emphasis on methodologies which foster an integrated, interactive and explorative learning process.
- 5 Providing opportunities for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disabilities as well as all children who are generally seen as living in at risk situations such as poverty, abuse and HIV/AIDS.
- 6 Strengthening and creating healthy, safe and secure learning environments for all children.
- 7 Fostering sustainable linkages between the ministries and organizations in the management of this sector.
- 8 Preparing key policy documents to provide guidance in areas such as nutrition, confidentiality and privacy, discipline and non-discrimination with the aim of strengthening the delivery of this sector.
9. Providing support and educational opportunities for parents in an effort to assist them to understand and value the tremendous benefits associated with early childhood development.

### **5.0. SPECIFIC ACTIONS AND TARGETS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY FRAMEWORK**

This section sets out the specific actions to implement the identified strategies

#### **5.1.Ensuring that all children living in Montserrat from birth to eight years have access to quality early childhood education, care and development**

**Specific actions to be undertaken are:**

- Amendment to the Education Act # 1 of 2004 Chapter 1V Part 2 section 73 (1) page 62 to include children of ages 0-8 instead of one year of age or older but under six years of age.
- Establishment of a Register of all children born and residing on the island as well as births to Montserratian citizens recorded overseas to be maintained by the

Government for use by the Ministry of Education. This will assist to provide data for projecting requirements for the future establishment of early childhood services

- Promotion of inter-ministerial and agency collaboration to provide services for children in the early years - health, education, family services, social transformation, community services, and private sector.
- Identification of the incidence of home based 'child minding' services and the establishment of registration and support mechanisms for child minders in order to ensure safe, quality services

## **5.2. Developing and introducing statutory regulations and guidelines, based on minimum standards to support the effective delivery of the service**

### **Specific actions to be undertaken are**

- Adoption of Regulations and Standard for early childhood services together with establishment of mandatory registration and licensing of all service providers using the CARICOM Regional Guidelines.
- Establishment of in-service and qualification training standards for of all providers of early childhood services to meet the requirements of the Regulation and Standards in the delivery of the service.
- Establishment of a register of child minders providing early childhood care and development in their homes. This will assist the Government to provide the necessary support and training in order to assist them to meet minimum standards in the delivery of quality services.
- Review of the job descriptions of all Heads and other persons employed by Government in the delivery of Early Childhood Services to ensure compliance and harmonization with the standards.

## **5.3. Providing training and certification at various levels at recognized institutions for all providers of early childhood services.**

Specific actions to encourage the professional development of practitioners will establish clear guidelines and requirements for entry of persons into this sector. It will also stipulate the requirement for leadership level at management level of early childhood development centres, as well as provide guidance as to the profile of suitable persons working with children in accordance with CARICOM and assess the demand and human resources required to meet the demands of training for practitioners.

### **Specific actions to achieve this include:**

- Drafting of a minimum entry level document for persons wishing to enter the early childhood sector.
- Drafting of document on criteria and qualification level for managers/ leaders of centres.
- Creating links with regional training programmes in early childhood programmes - such as the Antigua and Barbuda State College – to create access for

Montserratians e.g. through accessing Montserratian students to the Antigua Barbuda State College or through summer courses held in Montserrat supported by tutors from Antigua Barbuda State College

- Assessment of the human resources on island available to conduct training of practitioners along with the cost implications of training.
- Creation of a register of institutions in the region offering programmes of study in Early Childhood Care and Development which meet the specific needs in Montserrat.
- Development of a “career path” to link practitioners in this sector to teacher training
- Setting of a time frame for all early childhood practitioners to receive training and to obtain a minimum qualification
- Establishment of mandatory training for all practitioners and managers of centres in understanding Special Educational Needs, First Aid and Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Management and Leadership training among others
- Reorientation and retraining of practitioners to work with children at different developmental levels in order to equip practitioners with the skills to promote and engage children in self directed learning activities.
- Exposing practitioners to short regional or international workshops as well programme of long term on-site training which will expose them to modern and effective curriculum practices as well as motivate them to carry out research on the curriculum and to work towards solutions which would further enhance this sector.

#### **5.4 Developing a common age-appropriate curriculum which supports the holistic development of the child, with a strong emphasis on methodologies which foster an integrated, interactive and explorative learning process**

There will be specific consultation and discussion on the development of a harmonized interactive curriculum for all early childhood providers. Training manuals and audiovisual resources will be created to guide practitioners. Supporting parents will be a strong component, and parents will be offered orientation in the curriculum in order to encourage strong school-parent collaboration

##### **Specific actions will include:**

- Regional and international curricula to be selected for review in the context of the policy and vision for early childhood adopted in Montserrat.
- Curriculum to be developed, drawing on international/regional examples if applicable, in consultation with practitioners and in accordance with the Caribbean Learning Goals and Outcomes
- Curriculum developed to include attention to transition from home to early childhood setting and from early childhood setting into the kindergarten setting.
- Implementation of the recommendations of the survey of the Quality of Learning Environments 2009 with particular respect to the provision of learning activities, support for language and reasoning, and programme structure amongst others.

- Curriculum to be grounded in the understanding of outcomes, defining quality and measuring of quality in a continuous process to make a measurable difference to the lives of the children impacted on.

### **5.5 Providing opportunities for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disabilities as well as all children who are vulnerable.**

The Policy envisions this provision as being achieved through a multi –prong approach including:

- Early identification systems established
- Early intervention processes put in place
- Rapid assessment and diagnosis procedures
- Development of a time effective and workable referral system
- Establishment of a Multi-disciplinary Support Team (MDST) to support the processes
- Inclusion of children with SEN in the regular programme of early childhood centres as far as possible
- Provision of appropriate staff child ratios appropriate for the needs of children
- Provision of additional resources such as transportation and learning and care aides
- Establishment of a home based early stimulation programme to reach the “unreached” within their communities
- Creation of a data base of children through linkages with the health department, NGOs and agencies which impact on children

These services will be the responsibility of the state working in partnership with NGOs and private sector to meet the needs of all children of the state.

#### **Specific actions include:**

- Establishment within the Ministry of Health of a system for screening, referral and early intervention services for children with SEN
- Establishment of a Multi-disciplinary Special Education Team.
- Assessment of the need for clinic base and home based services for children with SEN, and resource requirements for establishing the services
- Assessment of need for learning aids and transportation of children to early childhood services and of the cost of providing them
- Establishment of a data base which will identify the geographical areas where children are living in situations of high risk.
- Development of protocols by Government for the inclusion of children with SEN, disabilities and those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS into mainstream programmes.
- Encouragement and support of inter-ministerial collaboration on programmes targeted at children at risk.
- Continuous education of the general public by the Government, through the Ministry of Education as to the benefit of early childhood development for all children, and to discourage stigma and discrimination against children at risk.

- Operators to receive continuous training in the area of inclusive service provision, which would help improve the service which they deliver in this area.
- A mapping exercise to be conducted to collect data on the number of children in Montserrat who are not accessing early childhood services

## **5.6 Strengthening and creating healthy, safe and secure learning environments for all children**

Healthy, safe and secure learning environments will be guided by the standard adopted for the early childhood sector and Government policy on the creation of mini-parks in communities and preschool.

### **Specific actions include:**

- Implementation of the recommendations of the survey on Quality of Learning Environments 2009 with respect to the health, safety and security requirements in early childhood settings.
- Establishment of well furnished age appropriate mini-play parks in communities to meet the needs all children.
- Education of parents and community, as to the benefits of these play areas as important to the development of the child.
- Education of the public as it relates to their civic duty in the preservation of these play areas.
- Education of the children in the safe usage of the equipment which will be placed within the centres and the community mini-parks.

## **5.7 Fostering sustainable linkages between the ministries and organizations in the management of this sector**

It has been established that to meet the need of the child in a holistic manner close collaboration among all ministers, agencies and NGOs is needed. The Government will promote inter-sectoral collaboration and management where appropriate.

### **Specific actions include:**

- Establishment of the National Council of Early Childhood Development (NCECD) provided for in Part 1V Division 1 Section 108 (1) and (2). This Council will be represented by all sectors working on matters relevant to children and will serve as the Advisory body to the Minister of Education.
- A collaborative approach within the Ministry of Education to plan and implement the selected curriculum in early childhood centres and in the first three years of primary school.
- A follow up sensitization process which will educate the public on the Government's approved early childhood policy.
- Collaboration through MOU among ministries and other agencies, such as the private sector to be the advocates for issues as they relate to children.

- Formation of Parent Teachers Association to support the work of early childhood centres.

### **5.8 Preparing key policy documents to provide guidance in areas such as nutrition, confidentiality and privacy, discipline and non-discrimination with the aim of strengthening the delivery of this sector**

Specific actions will embrace:

- The use of the Food and Nutrition Policy and Plan of Action for Montserrat, 2008 as a guide to providing balanced and nutritional snacks and meals for children within the centres as well as education for parents on the preparation of balanced nutritional meals using locally available foods
- Developing guides to confidentiality and privacy for both children and staff for use within the centres
- Developing guidelines as to the forms of positive discipline which are most effective for encouraging self-regulating behaviour in children and non-discriminatory practice for use at the centres
- Training practitioners and parents as to the best techniques which can be used as alternative forms of discipline at the various age levels

### **5.9 Providing support and educational opportunities for parents in an effort to assist them in understanding and valuing the tremendous benefits associated with early childhood development.**

- Sensitising and informing parents through workshops on the developmental stages of children
- Parenting workshop for stakeholders to develop a parenting booklet
- Holding regular Parenting Staff Conferences, where staff and parents share pertinent information on the child
- Establishing family day activities, which will assist in bringing parents, staff and children together
- Developing a radio programme, which can act as the catalyst for educating the nation on issues such as the importance of early childhood development
- Publishing weekly articles in the print media on the importance of early childhood development, the role of families in the early stimulation and education of children.

## **6. Application**

The Policy applies to all Government and Private owned centres, as well as to all stakeholders of Early Childhood Care and Development which will include owners, administrators, caregivers, parents, practitioners, teachers of primary grades (Kindergarten – Grade 2), NGOs, persons appointed by Government or any authorized agency to interact with the early childhood service providers.

## **7. Management, Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms**

The Ministry of Education through the Education Officer with responsibility for Early Childhood Development will manage the day to day activities of the sector. There will be close networking with the Curriculum Officer as well as the Education Officer of Primary schools. The EO ECD will report to the Director of Education (DOE)

Upon establishment of the National Council of Early Childhood Development (NCECD), it will work in close collaboration with the Montserrat Early Childhood Association (MECA) and the EO ECD. The Council will act as the main advisory body to the Minister who in his capacity can delegate specific tasks to them as it relates to the sector

The Education Officer, will have the responsibility for the development of the monitoring and inspection process working in conjunction with the NCECD, and MECA. The Officer will also conduct inspection for awarding licenses to the centres, assess the progress of the children within the centres at least twice a year and produce an annual report to the Minister and the NCECD on the state of the sector.

The EO ECD will have the responsibility of advising the Minister of Education on the need for reviews and amendments to the sector whenever the landscape of ECD in Montserrat so requires.

The sector will continue to operate under the various sections of the Act and any other protocols of the Government of Montserrat which so refer to the sector.

## **8. Implementation Plan**

Annex II contains an indicative schedule for implementing the Policy. The schedule indicates that work on all of the proposed strategies could be initiated within a three year period. There is also referencing that collaboration will be needed between various Government Department for example the Attorney General's Office.

Successful implementation will also require technical and financial assistance. The Policy will be implemented through the development of Annual Action Plans which will identify the activities of priorities to be undertaken during the applicable financial year, or as funding is sourced. The priority Action Plan for the first year of implementation is detailed in Annex III. It focuses on the necessary legislative changes which would be required to enable a cohesive and functional early childhood service as well as the collection of data on all existing providers along with the education of the general public.

## **9. Year One Priority Action Plan.**

The priority actions to be implemented during the first year are:

1. Amendment to the Education Act
2. Approval and dissemination of Policy
3. Establishment of a Register of all children born and residing on the island as well as births to Montserratian citizens residing overseas
4. Orientation of practitioners to Policy implementation and development of the Minimum Standards
5. Assessing the number of home based early childhood services and the need for registration and training

6. Registration System established and schedule drawn up for registration of all service providers, including home based providers
7. Education Awareness for all stakeholders
8. Providing CPR and First Aid Training for all practitioners and other relevant persons who work at the Centres e.g. cook bus drivers etc.
9. Appointment of persons to sit on the Council of Early Childhood Education ( CECE) as provided under the Act
10. Centres moves towards meeting Standards
11. Involvement of Partners
12. Volunteerism- Support for Early Childhood Development.

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## ANNEX I

### Policy Process

Montserrat is in the stage of re-development following the eruption of Soufriere Hills volcano which began in 1995, and has left the country in a constant state of alert. The capital Plymouth has been abandoned and Brades, a rural village on the northern coast of the island is being developed as the new capital. The daily challenges of ash have not hampered the motivation and the zeal of the people who continue to live on the island. There is a renewed thrust towards strengthening and improving the quality and standards of education for all the people.

Presently, there is a focus on Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) and in 2008 the present Education Officer responsible for ECD submitted a proposal to UNICEF for assistance to develop Policy, Regulation and Standards and an Implementation Plan for the Early Childhood sector. This proposal was accepted and in late 2009 the process began.

The development of the Policy Framework has followed the recommended phases as set out in the CARICOM Regional Guidelines for Developing Policy, Regulation and Standards in Early Childhood Development Services 2008: The Preparation steps were carried out followed by the ECD Situation Analysis conducted by UNICEF in June 2009.

The consultative process included:

- Meetings with the Management Team of the MOE.
- Several consultation meetings with other governmental agencies, the private sector, NGOs and the general public. Annex 1
- Media coverage to provide a high level of sensitization to the Diaspora of Montserrat
- Referencing the guidelines set out by CARICOM "*Guidelines for Developing Policy, Regulation and Standards in Early Childhood Development Services, 2008* " at all consultations in order to educate the public on this document
- Meetings with various personnel in Ministries e.g. Education, Health, Economic Development and Trade and Legal Department.
- Meeting with civil society and persons from various professional bodies

- Referencing research on regional and international work as they pertain to Early Childhood Care and Development.

The aims of such wide spread consultations were to:

1. Garner the thoughts of the MOE as to its vision and goals for the development of the ECD sector
2. Arrive at a common consensus as to terminology which would be used in the document.
3. Sensitize the general public to the importance and relevance of ECD as well as to give individuals and groups a voice in the development of such a critical document
4. Illicit the opinion of these stakeholders and to hear how they see themselves in the development of Early Childhood and Development (ECD) in Montserrat and how they could work along with the Ministry of Education (MOE) to create and support this sub-sector
5. Commence the process of ownership of the final document.

It can be reported that the process was a participatory and collaborative one, which brought together as far as possible the major stakeholders of this sector; and provided an opportunity for persons to voice their concerns or make recommendations for the sector.

## ANNEX 11

### **Implementation Plan**

Creation of an Implementation Plan is a critical component to the National Policy on Early Childhood Development (ECD) and should be a collaborative effort between the consultant and the relevant Ministry of the recipient Government through its various experts. This draft Implementation Plan will serve as a guide, as to the areas which have been identified as priorities if the Policy is to be functional.

The areas identified were recurring themes of discussion during the consultations. The activities have been identified and placed under various headings such as

1. The legislative changes needed to amend the Education Act
2. Initiating the Institutional Framework through strengthening support for Early Childhood Services (ECS)
3. Improving the Quality of Service Providers
4. Training of Practitioners
5. Stimulating, safe and healthy environments
6. Creation of safe Play areas at the centers and communities.

The areas of the One Year Implementation Plan has been outline on pages 12-13, this illustrates the areas for immediate action. This is followed by the three year plan.

The Three Year Implementation Plan has been further subdivided to illustrate the time frame in months and colour coded. Orange represent the long term activities / areas which will require further technical and financial assistance from funding agencies such as UNICEF, green those that can be achieved in the medium term with further available and allocated government budget and blue activities that can be achieved with ECD allocated budget and expertise.

Areas of the Implementation Plan which can be commenced immediately, since they require very little funding has been extracted and further developed as the year one work plan.

### **Colour Codes**

-  Requires technical and financial support
-  Requires government allocated input and budgeting
-  Requires use of ECE budget and expertise

## MONTSERRAT EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION – 1 YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

ACTIONS	YEAR 1 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN - MONTSERRAT											
	2010						2011					
	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
<b>1. Amendment to Education act to include 0-8 year olds</b>												
Minister to prepare paper on the sections of the Act to be amended												
Minister to prepare paper on the sections of the Act to be amended												
Attorney General's Office draft amendments												
Amendment sent to Cabinet												
Cabinet sanctions amendments for legislature												
Cabinet may wish for amendments to the Act to be gazetted												
<b>2. Policy, Regulations and Standards</b>												
Submission of draft Regulations and Policy for Cabinet approval												
Legal review of draft policy and Standards by Draft Legal Counsel in the AG 's Office												
Gazetting of early Childhood Policy and Standards.												

ACTIONS	YEAR 1 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN - MONTSERRAT											
	2010						2011					
	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
<b>3. Creation of a Register of All children born and residing on the island as well as births to Montserratian citizens residing overseas.</b>												
Collation of information on island from relevant ministries with regard to births												
Collection of information on arrivals of citizens returning from overseas with young children												
Collection of information on prenatal attendance, birth, immunization of children from all Health Centres												
Collection of information on registration of children at day care and Preschool												
Creation of data base at the relevant Ministry to cross check information.												
<b>4. Orientation of Practitioners</b>												
Copies of document sent to all centres and made available to registered operators.												
Group sessions with practitioners												
<b>5. Assessment of the number of "home-based" early childhood service providers</b>												
Design Survey Tool for recording information on each "child-minder"												
Make contact with persons to inform them on the intention of the registration/survey												
Carry out survey												
Data entered into the MOE ECD information system												
Analyze information garnered and plan type of assistance which will be provided												

ACTIONS	YEAR 1 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN - MONTSERRAT											
	2010						2011					
	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
<b>6 Registration of all service providers of ECD</b>												
EO ECE to design Tool to capture all relevant information needed												
Tool piloted using at least one ( 1) registered and three ( 3) government centres												
Changes made if necessary												
Use of Government PR as well as radio stations to share information as to intent and reason For the exercise, announcing venue for collection of forms and time frame for returning												
Data collated and entered in the MOE ECD data base.						→						
<b>7 Education Awareness</b>												
Town hall meetings to share the Policy , Regulation and Standard with the public												
Use of media house for continuation of education awareness												
Publication of sections of the Policy Regulations and Standard documents												→

ACTIONS	YEAR 1 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN - MONTSERRAT											
	2010						2011					
	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
<b>8. CPR and First Aid Training for all practitioners.</b>												
Sourcing of organization e.g. Red Cross to fashion curriculum specific to the ECE age group for First Aid and CPR training.												
Agreement on cost implication.												
EO ECE refers cost to P.S. MOE.												
Agreement as to how cost is to be met agreed on .												
Funding Proposal for training written and set to UNICEF / other funders												
Set date for commencement of training agreed on.												
Selection of practitioners for first phase training agreed on.												

ACTIONS	YEAR 1 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN - MONTSERRAT											
	2010						2011					
	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
<b>9. Support for Early Childhood Policy</b>												
Agreement on the composition of members for the Council on Early Childhood Education ( CECE)							■	■				
Preparation of profile of individuals for submission to Cabinet.								■				
.Adoption of submission by Cabinet .									■			
Cabinet conclusion issued.									■			
Names of members of CECE gazetted.										■		
Governor-in-Council appointed										■		
Convening initial meeting of CECE											■	
<b>10. Centres move towards meeting Standards</b>												
Cabinet approval of Standards.	■	■										
EO ECE working along with Lead Practitioners and Representative of CECE and MECA to develop monitoring procedures											■	■
Procedures shared and discussed with all practitioners												■
Revision and feedback taken into account												→
Publication of procedures Manual, dissemination to all stakeholders												→
ACTIONS	YEAR 1 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN - MONTSERRAT											

	2010						2011					
	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
<b>11. Involvement of Partners</b>												
EO ECE to prepare position Paper on a case for offering an elective at the Montserrat Community College .												
EO ECE to have initial meeting with Minister of Education and other members of the Administrative Team position paper to be shared												
Meeting with Principal of MCC set up , invited to this meeting to share and brainstorm Position paper would be DOE, Director Open Campus, Rep CECE, and any other delegated individual												
Committee set up to carry feasibility study /survey												
Findings presented												
Committee to commence looking at models/curriculum/human resources available / needed for such a programme												
Draft documents prepared in terms of what is available/ costing / interest.												→
Findings presented to Minister of Education												→
Minister appraise Cabinet												→
Cabinet approval and time frame set for pilot programme												→

ACTIONS	YEAR 1 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN - MONTERRAT											
	2010						2011					
	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
<b>12. Volunteerism - Support for ECE</b>												
EO ECE prepares concept paper and meets with Lead Practitioners												
Lead Practitioners and EO ECE develop Expectations for Student Volunteers (ESV)												
EO ECE meets with MOE Admin Team and shares concept paper and ESV												
EO ECE meets with Principal of MCC												
EO ECE invited to address MCC students on the subject of voluntarism in ECE												
Students who have an interest will sign up with MCC on the assigned Form												
Parental Consent Forms are sent out												
Orientation follows after Parental consent forms have been returned												
Schedule of placement/time and supervisor is prepared												
Commencement of Pilot on Volunteerism at ECE Centres.												



NB: Arrows indicate activity falling into subsequent period.

## MONTSERRAT EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION – 3 YEAR PLAN

ACTIONS	YEAR 1						YEAR 2						YEAR 3												
	2010			2011			2012			2013															
	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	
<b>1. Amendment to Education Act to include 0-8 year olds</b>																									
Minister to prepare paper on the sections of the Act to be amended																									
Minister to prepare paper on the sections of the Act to be amended																									
Attorney General's Office draft amendments																									
Amendment sent to Cabinet																									
Cabinet sanctions amendments for legislature																									
Cabinet may wish for amendments to the Act to be gazetted																									
<b>2. Policy, Regulations and Standards</b>																									
Submission of draft Regulations and Policy for Cabinet approval																									
Legal review of draft policy and Standards by Draft Legal Counsel in the AG 's Office																									
Gazetting of early Childhood Policy and Standards.																									
<b>3. Registration of All service providers of early Childhood</b>																									
EO ECE to design a form to capture all relevant information needed.																									
Form piloted using at least the one registered private operator and at least five Government centres																									
Relevant changes made to form																									
Use of Government PR as well as radio stations to announce intention and reasons for the exercise																									
Venue time and collection of Forms, time frame for returning forms established and disseminated .																									
<b>4. Orientation of Practitioners</b>																									
Copies of document sent to all centres and made available to registered operators.																									
Group sessions with practitioners																									
<b>5. Providing support and educational opportunities for parents in an effort to assist them in understanding and valuing the tremendous benefits associated with early childhood.</b>																									
Workshops on the development stages of children held for parents																									
Selection of representative parents and practitioners to meet and prepare Booklet .																									









**ANNEX 111**  
**Year 1 Work Plan for Implementing the Montserrat ECD Policy**

Nos.	Actions	Agency/Person Responsible	Output	Activities	Time Line	Cost
1.	Amendment to the Education Act to include (0-8 year olds ) pre-primary since Act already includes 5 -8 year	Minister of Education  Draft Counsel Officer in the Attorney General's Office  Cabinet of Ministers PS/DOE ECE Officer	Education Act 2004 amended to cover (children 0-8 years) pre-primary children from birth to five.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minister to prepare paper on the sections of the Act to be amendment.</li> <li>• Minister of Education tables paper for discussion at Cabinet</li> <li>• Attorney General 's Office draft amendment</li> <li>• Amendment sent to Cabinet</li> <li>• Cabinet sanctions amendment for legislature.</li> <li>• Cabinet may wish for Amendment to Act to be gazetted</li> </ul>	Year 1  July – Oct 2010	-
2	<b>Approval, dissemination of Policy, and Minimum Standard.</b>	Minister of Education  Draft Counsel Officer in the Attorney General's Office  Cabinet of Ministers  PS/DOE ECE Officer	Policy and Minimum Standard dated and approved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submission of draft Policy and Minimum Standard for Cabinet Approval following all required changes/amendments.</li> <li>• Cabinet conclusion and</li> <li>• Date of approval added to documents.</li> <li>• Final copy published</li> <li>• Gazetting of Early Childhood Policy and Minimum Standard.</li> <li>• Copies made for dissemination</li> <li>• Formal Announcement of country's Policy, and Minimum Standard.</li> </ul>	Nov 2010- Jan 2011	ECD 5000.00 associated cost with printing

Nos.	Actions	Agency/Person Responsible	Output	Activities	Time Line	Cost
3	Establishment of a Register of all children born and residing on island as well as births to Montserratians citizens residing overseas.	Statistic Department, Ministry of Finance, Economics development and Trade,  Ministry of Health  Immigration Dept.  MOE  EO-ECE	Register of births on island as well as overseas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collation of information available on island from the relevant Ministries with regards to births</li> <li>• Collection of information on arrivals of citizens returning with young children</li> <li>• Collection of births from health personnel</li> <li>• Collection of information with regards to registration at day care and preschools</li> <li>• Creation of a data base to cross check information collected .</li> </ul>	September 2010 ongoing	
4	Orientation of Practitioners on Policy, Regulation and Standard.	EO ECE	Familiarization of practitioners and staff with Regulation and Standard Practitioners and staff familiar with regulations & standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copies of documents sent to all centers and made available to including private registered operators</li> <li>• Group sessions with practitioners</li> </ul>	July-Sept. 2010	Cost of production of documents. This would require costing on island.

Nos.	Actions	Agency/Person Responsible	Output	Activities	Time Line	Cost
5	Assessment of the number of “home-based” early childhood service providers	EO ECE	Data on the number of home based ECD service providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design Survey Tool for recording information on each “child minder” in terms of location , ages of children, number of children, condition of environment of care both physical and outdoor, qualification of caregivers, numbers, fees charged, number of years of providing the service etc.</li> <li>• Make contact with persons to inform them of the intentions of registration</li> <li>• Carry out survey</li> <li>• Data entered into the MOE , ECD bank</li> <li>• Analyze information garnered and plan for the type of assistance which will be provided i.e. training etc to meet the minimum standards.</li> </ul>	Feb 2010 to May 2011	US300.00  Production of Forms for survey and assistance.

Nos.	Actions	Agency/Person Responsible	Output	Activities	Time Line	Cost
6	Registration of all service providers of early childhood	Education Officer ECE	A registration system established for all providers of ECD on the island	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EO ECE to design a form to capture all relevant information needed.</li> <li>• Form piloted using at least the one registered private operator and at least three Government centers.</li> <li>• Changes made if necessary.</li> <li>• Use of Government PR as well as Radio stations to announce intention and reason for the exercise.</li> <li>• Venue and time for collection of Forms, time frame for returning forms discussed.</li> <li>• Memo to be sent to all known private operators.</li> <li>• Data collated and entered in MOE ECD data base for cross referencing</li> </ul>	July –Dec. 2010	App EC\$300.00 (Paper , photocopying ink )
7.	Education Awareness of all Stakeholders	EO ECE and Lead Practitioners	<p>Sensitization of members of the public on the Policy and Regulation and Standard.</p> <p>Publication of document on Government website</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town hall meeting</li> <li>• Use of the media houses</li> <li>• Publication of sections of the Policy, Regulations and Standard .</li> </ul>	Oct 2010- Nov 2010 and ongoing	

Nos.	Actions	Agency/Person Responsible	Output	Activities	Time Line	Cost
8	CPR and First Aid training for all practitioners and relevant persons who work at the Centres e.g. cook, bus drivers etc.	EO ECE	<p>Organization identified to carry out training.</p> <p>Service contract prepared, costing agreed on.</p> <p>Persons selected to commence training</p> <p>A cadre of practitioners who are First Aid and CPR trained.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sourcing of organization e.g. Red Cross to fashion curriculum specific to the age group for First Aid and CPR.</li> <li>• Agreement on cost implication</li> <li>• EO ECE refers cost to P.S. MOE</li> <li>• Agreement as to how cost is to be met agreed on</li> <li>• Number of persons to commence training agreed on.</li> <li>• Set date for commencement of training agreed on.</li> </ul>	November 2010 to February 2011	Cost per person agreed on multiplied by the number of persons to be trained

Nos.	Actions	Agency/Person Responsible	Output	Activities	Time Line	Cost
9	Appointment of persons to form Council on Early Childhood Education( CECE)	Minister of Education	Nomination of members. Cabinet acceptance of submission Cabinet Conclusion Letters go out to members Names gazetted Council On Early Childhood Education appointed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreement on the composition of Council on Early Childhood Education (C ECE).</li> <li>• Preparation of names for submission to Cabinet.</li> <li>• Adoption of submission by cabinet</li> <li>• Cabinet conclusion issued.</li> <li>• Names of members of Early Childhood Council gazetted</li> <li>• Governor –in-Council appointed</li> <li>• Convening Initial meeting of CECE</li> </ul>	January 2011- May 2011	
10	Centres move towards meeting Standard.	Education Officer ECE  Lead Practitioners  Representative of Council on Early Childhood Education  Representative of Montserrat Early Childhood Association (MECA)	Monitoring procedure Manual developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cabinet approval of Standards</li> <li>• Education Officer working along with Lead Practitioners and representative of the CECE and MECA to develop monitoring procedures.</li> <li>• Procedures shared and discussed with all practitioners.</li> <li>• Revisions and feedback taken into account.</li> <li>• Publication of procedures Manual, disseminated to all stakeholders.</li> </ul>	July 2010 – June 2011 onwards	Cost of mounting workshop / meetings

Nos.	Actions	Agency/Person Responsible	Output	Activities	Time Line	Cost
11	Involvement of Partners.	EO ECE MOE Administrative Team Principal MCC Head Open Campus, UWI	Position paper prepared.  MOE buys into the idea.  Persons identified to sit on Working Committee  First meeting convened.  Committee meets and position paper prepared.  Draft document prepared	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EO ECE to prepare position paper on the benefits of having such an elective offered at the MCC</li> <li>• EO ECE to have initial meeting with Minister Education and other members of the Administrative Team position paper is shared.</li> <li>• Move towards setting up a meeting with the Principal of the MCC, DOE, Head Open Campus Director, and other members of the MOE Administrative team.</li> <li>• Committee to begin looking at Models/curriculum / human resources available.</li> <li>• Draft document prepared in terms of curriculum to be used , staff availability/ interest from students at MCC , costing implication</li> <li>• Follow through meeting as to feasibility /possibility of implementation.</li> <li>• Time frame established.</li> </ul>	Feb 2010- June 2011 and onwards	

Nos.	Actions	Agency/Person Responsible	Output	Activities	Time Line	Cost
12	Volunteerism – Support for ECE	EO ECE Principal Parents of Students, Students	<p>Paper on the Concept of volunteerism in the area of ECE.</p> <p>Forms for capturing data completed. Consent forms done. List of students available. Orientation session Done.</p> <p>Schedule of placement available. A group of students who have been exposed to the ECE, with a possibility of choosing this area as a career choice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EO ECE meets with Lead Practitioners to discuss the concept of student volunteerism</li> <li>Lead Practitioners and EO ECE develop Expectations for Student Volunteers (SV)</li> <li>EO ECE meets with Principal and discusses the need to market ECE to students as a career path through the concept of volunteerism</li> <li>EO ECE gives short sessions to students at MCC.</li> <li>Students who indicate an interest are then invited to submit their names to Principal MCC or delegated individual.</li> <li>EO ECE and Principal/ or delegated representative design Form which would allow them to keep data on students.</li> <li>Parental Consent Forms are also designed.</li> <li>Short orientation is done with students after Parental Consent Forms are returned.</li> <li>Schedule of placements / time and supervisor is prepared.</li> <li>Students commence attachments.</li> </ul>	December 2010 – June 2011 onwards	<p>Cost of orientation workshop.</p> <p>Possibility of assisting with transportation cost.</p> <p>Production of forms.</p> <p>Approximately EC\$ 1000.00</p>