



MINISTRY OF GENERAL EDUCATION

Chapter I

ECE in Zambia

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CONTENTS

I	ECE IN ZAMBIA.....	I
I.1	STRUCTURE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION.....	I
I.2	SUPPORTIVE TEACHING MATERIALS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE) I	I
I.3	VISION ON ECE.....	I
I.4	METHODS TO BE USED IN ECE.....	2
I.5	ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES AND PLAY	2
2	TIME ALLOCATION AND THE CURRICULUM	4
2.1	TIME ALLOCATION	4
2.2	CURRICULUM.....	4
2.2.1	Language and Literacy	4
2.2.2	Social Studies.....	4
2.2.3	Environmental Science	4
2.2.4	Pre-Mathematics.....	4
2.2.5	Expressive Arts.....	4

In the first chapter of the Emergent Literacy Manual for ECE, we aim to outline the broader context of Early Childhood Education (ECE) in Zambia.

- Content: general background information on ECE in Zambia
- Outcome: providing information on the context, ideas and main concepts of ECE in Zambia
- Target group: ECE teachers, school leaders, MoGE officials concerned with ECE

I | ECE IN ZAMBIA

1.1 STRUCTURE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Early Childhood Education in Zambia is designed at two levels. Initially, children start Nursery School at the age of 3 to 4. They then move into Reception level at the age of 5 to 6.

It is recognised that at present many children will not have the opportunity to enjoy Nursery or Pre-School education. Therefore, it is important that there is a close relationship between what is covered in Pre-School and in the Primary School curriculum. In order to minimise the disadvantages of those who go directly to Primary School, there will be an overlap between what is covered in Pre-School and what is covered in Grade 1 term 1.

1.2 SUPPORTIVE TEACHING MATERIALS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE)

The Let's Read pre-reading package is a teacher's manual for emergent literacy in ECE in Zambia. It is built on ideas from already existing Zambian and international documents on pre-literacy:

- Early Learning and Development Standards of Zambia (ELDS)
- National Literacy Framework (NLF)
- ECE syllabus
- ECE Language and Literacy Teacher's Guide

The key role of early childhood education from the perspective of the National Literacy Framework is to ensure that children, during the pre-primary years, develop the key pre-literacy skills necessary.

1.3 VISION ON ECE

The Emergent Literacy Package for ECE is developed in line with the vision on ECE of the Ministry of General Education of Zambia. The main aim for ECE (according to the ECE syllabus, pg. XII) is to provide services that are respectful of families and societies and their ability to transfer knowledge, skills, positive attitudes and values that will allow children to live and grow into resourceful and useful members of their communities. The other aims are:

1. Acquire social knowledge and develop skills, values and positive attitudes
2. Develop children's intellectual and cognitive skills
3. Develop children's language and communicative skills
4. Develop children's emotional intelligence and self –regulation
5. Develop children's physical expressive arts and creative skills
6. Provide early intervention to children with special education needs

The Emergent Literacy Package for ECE supports teachers in this holistic approach, in order to develop the above-mentioned skills and attitudes in children.

1.4 METHODS TO BE USED IN ECE

According to the ECE syllabus (ECE syllabus, p. XIV) “a child-centred approach should always be adopted during the teaching and learning process at this level. Teachers should provide stimulating environments that build on the child's existing knowledge, skills, values and experiences. These experiences should be enjoyable for effective learning. The activities at this level should lay a foundation for life-long learning”.

Some of the suggested methods are:

Group work	Experimentation
Imitation	Discussion
Role plays	Drama
Games/quizzes	Field trips
Exploration	Problem solving
Demonstration	

Activities of the Emergent Literacy Package are defined within this line of playful learning and will be clearly linked to the suggested methods mentioned above.

1.5 ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES AND PLAY

In ECE centres all over the world, the curricula are evolving towards play-based learning. A play-based curriculum allows children to learn the skills they need in a structured environment with the help and supervision of an experienced teacher who knows how to take interests and experiences and turn them into learning moments.

For children, play is serious business. They can make significant cognitive leaps and transformations. They can think in quite sophisticated and abstract ways while playing. Questions they ask themselves constantly are: “what if...” or “as if...”. Having those questions in their minds, they do not just play with materials and objects. They also play with emotions, concepts and meanings, ideas, roles, rules, relationships, stories, identities, games, ideas, emotions, materials, possibilities, knowledge and language.

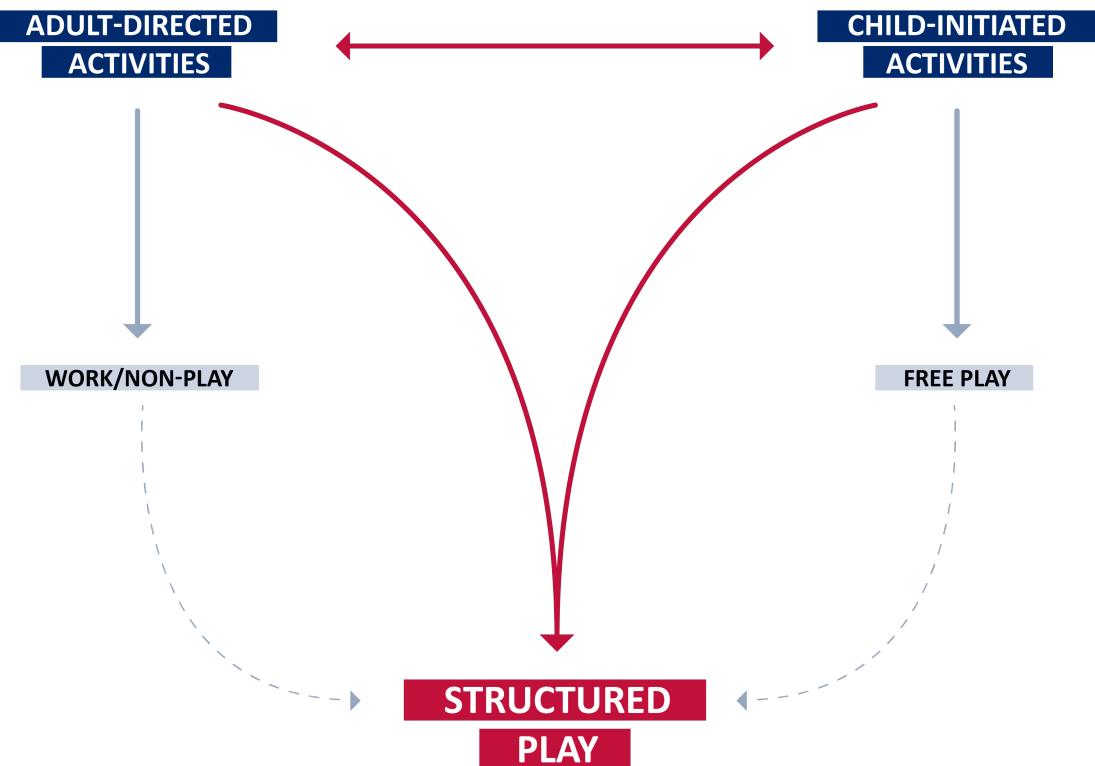
In the Zambia Education Curriculum Framework, the teaching approach in ECE is defined as follows:

1. **Nursery:** The Nursery level will cater for learners aged 3 to 4 to develop socially, physically, mentally and emotionally by providing them with playmates and play resources. The focus of Nursery centres is promotion of social interaction of young children from different social backgrounds through play.
2. **Reception:** The Reception level will cater for learners aged 5 to 6. This is a preparatory stage for entry into Grade 1. Therefore, the teaching and learning at this level is largely informal through guided and unguided play with formal teaching (pre-academic) accounting for about 40 percent of the programme. The academic component prepares them for smooth transition to formal education in Grade 1.

In the ECE Emergent Literacy Package, most activities are guided play or structured play¹, either in full class, in small groups or individual. Teachers facilitate the activities but leave room for children to take initiative and lead their own learning processes. Free play is advised to be conducted during break time (or, if this is integrated in the lesson plan, also in corner work). We also recommend conducting less adult-directed, teacher-led activities that do not include elements of play.

¹ In the curriculum, structured play is described as activities containing 40% academic (referring to the learning process and the outcomes of the activity) and 60% play (referring to the teaching method).

STRUCTURED PLAY GRAPH



2 TIME ALLOCATION AND THE CURRICULUM

2.1 TIME ALLOCATION

According to the Zambia Education Curriculum Framework 2013 (p. 29) time allocation at early education should be as indicated in the table. The suggested time allocation is 30 minutes per lesson. The role of a teacher is that of a facilitator. Therefore, lesson plans are developed and integrated into a daily programme.

	Learning area	Time allocation per week
1	Social studies	2 hours
2	Environmental science	2 ½ hours
3	Language and Literacy	3 ½ hours
4	Pre-mathematics	3 ½ hours
5	Expressive arts	3 ½ hours
	Total	15 hours

The Emergent Literacy Package supports teachers in this time allocation, by providing a guiding exemplary weekly lesson plan, to be used as inspiration.

2.2 CURRICULUM

2.2.1 Language and Literacy

1. Listening and Speaking
2. Pre-reading
3. Pre-writing

2.2.2 Social Studies

1. Family
2. Religion
3. Home
4. Community
5. School / ECE centre
6. Celebrations
7. Transport
8. Communication

2.2.3 Environmental Science

1. Human Body
2. Plants
3. Animals
4. Nutrition and Health
5. Hygiene and Safety
6. Environment
7. Living and non-living things (only for 5-to-6-year-olds)

2.2.4 Pre-Mathematics

1. Classification
2. Numbers and Notation
3. Plane Shapes
4. Measurement
5. Commercial Arithmetic
6. Addition (only for 5-to-6-year-olds)
7. Subtraction (only for 5-to-6-year-olds)

2.2.5 Expressive Arts

1. Motor Development
2. Music, Games and Dances
3. Arts and Craft

When activities of the Emergent Literacy Package for ECE are linked to other learning areas in the curriculum. This will be clearly stated in the section “integration” within every activity chart. (See Chapter 3).



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