



ZINECDA BOARD COMMUNIQUE

BASED ON 26 AUG 2020 BOARD MEETING

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Board Chair

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INTRODUCTION

The ZINECDA Board met on the 26 th of August 2020 and agreed on the following communique

We **Acknowledge** the effort made by the Government of Zimbabwe to safeguard lives through various containment measures against COVID19 such as the restriction on movement, restraining large gatherings, use of masks and good hygiene promotion.

We **Affirm** that digital and non digital means to distance learning have been provided for learners, these options do little to support early childhood play based learning. ECD learning needs requires interactive activities facilitated by a well-qualified professional.

We **Appreciate** that the government through the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education consulted various stakeholders in the reopening plans for schools and has proffered three different reopening models; total, blended and phased reopening options.



We remain **Concerned** that the needs of ECD learners and their developmental needs continue to be overlooked in the designing of intervention strategies to COVID19. Caregiver support for distance learning for ECD lacks the required expertise that supports early stimulation and more-so the time to facilitate this process as they have competing commitments.



We are increasingly **Unsettled** by instability within the family characterized by factors such as loss of income and violence in the home and its adverse effect on ECD in these formative years. Additionally, child labour trends are on the increase in a bid for surviving under the challenging national COVID19 strict regulations



Furthermore, we have **Observed** the diminishing access to quality ECD services like health services that offer prenatal and postnatal services for expectant mothers that make possible early interventions.

We are **Dismayed** that the Registrar's office remains closed since March 2020, impeding on the fundamental right to birth registration that opens the door to all other human rights. With a 45% under five registration statistics (MICS: 2019) with inequalities more skewed towards the less privileged and those living in rural areas, the situation may deteriorate if remedial action is not robust and intentional.



RECOMMENDATIONS

We Concur with the decision to reopen schools with the dates set for the 14 th and 28 th of September for private and public schools respectively starting with exam classes if health and safety standards are met as required by WHO and UNICEF guidelines. As a Network of members within the education, we make the following recommendations as regards ECD:

- a) To reconsider and prioritize ECD classes for reopening schools, as schools are more than just formal learning for this age group but encompass a wide spectrum of early childhood developmental needs in health, psychosocial support and cognitive development.
- b) The MoPSE to assess or audit the skills attained during the period that has lapsed during the school closure in order to map out catch up strategies that are evidence based (not textbook based but skills based).
- c) The Government to set up an emergency fund that will support the re-opening of schools that is not tuition based but encompassed in the national budget allocation to education sector and ECD specifically.
- d) Advocating for the scaling up of social assistance programs by the Government and other non-governmental bodies.
- e) The Registrar's Office be opened to birth registration as it is a fundamental right.

We commit to supporting the Government's efforts to improve access to quality Early Childhood Development, Care and Pre-Primary Education so that every boy and girl is ready for primary education (SDG 4.2).



ZINECDA continues to advocate for ECD sensitive and friendly policies that ensure that every boy and girl survives and thrives in their environment to realize their fullest potential.

Board Chair.

 Zimbabwe Network of Early Childhood Development Actors

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