

TAKING LEGISLATURE TO THE PEOPLE (TLP) OVERSIGHT VISITS REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT CONDUCTED AT ARISE AND SHINE EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTRE (ECD) CENTRE ON 14 MARCH 2017 - DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

The Legislature conducted its Taking Legislature to the People (TLP) at Steve Tshwete Local Municipality from 13-17 March 2017. The Portfolio Committee on Health and Social Development (the Committee) visited Arise and Shine Early Childhood Development Centre during the TLP programme on 14 March 2017.

2. PURPOSE OF THE TLP OVERSIGHT VISIT

The purpose of the TLP was to assess the infrastructure and adherence to the Early Childhood Development norms and standards.

3. METHOD OF WORK

The Legislature notified all Departments accordingly about the TLP oversight visits to be conducted and the purpose thereof. Invitations were then sent to the respective departments including the Department of Social Development, management of the centre and the Municipality requesting them to be part of the programme.

- On 14 March 2017, the Portfolio Committee on Health and Social Development conducted the oversight visit to Arise and Shine Early Childhood Development Centre.

- On 16 March 2017, the Social Transformation Cluster jointly with the Economic Cluster conducted a public hearing at Themba Senamela Stadium.

4. OBSERVATIONS

The Committee observed the following:

- The Centre is operating in an asbestos structure located within Maziya School in Kwazamokuhle;
- The structure is very small, however clean and well kept.
- DSD confirmed that programme that is followed by the Centre meets the norms and standards and positively contributing to the development of the children.
- DSD confirmed that the 2017/18 budget would be increased to benefit 50 beneficiaries.

5. INTERACTION WITH THE MANAGEMENT OF THE CENTRE AND THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

5.1. Presentation on the infrastructure and adherence to the ECD norms and standards

Overview by the MEC: Ms. BP Shiba

The MEC appreciated the oversight visit and the recommendations to follow. She went on to indicate that though the Centre may be operating in an asbestos structure, it is well kept and very clean.

MEC Shiba also reported that the committee is very efficient and supportive to the Centre management.

Presentation by the HOD: Ms NL Mlangeni

Ms. NL Mlangeni, the Head of Department, delegated the Centre Manager, Ms S Mnisi to present on behalf of the Department.

She outlined the following on her presentation:

- The Centre was established in 2012 by local community members with only 18 children in an RDP house;
- The Centre approached the Department for assistance, it was registered on 30 November 2015;
- The Centre recently moved to the asbestos structure within the school, the management of the ECD and the school have a lease agreement for five years (2017-2021), the lease agreement is rent free;
- The Centre has a management committee of six members, the committee is very effective and efficient;
- The Centre manager who was managing the Centre since 2014 has since resigned (February 2017) due to dissatisfaction with the stipend (R2000-00). A new Centre manager recruited by the committee resumed work on 06 March 2017 and still being orientated ;
- The Centre was approved for funding for only 15 children, however it serves 54 beneficiaries, with the annual funding amounting to R59 400-00. Since the recent relocation, a recommendation has been made for the funding to be extended to 50 children for the 2017/18 financial year;
- The Centre has also received the following items worth R20 000-00 from the department: three piece kitchen unit, four-stove Defy stove, KIC fridge, and a laptop with software;

- The Centre also received a donation of R25 000-00 from Glencore mine through the local municipality in December 2016;
- The Centre does not have enough learning material, no office furniture and there is no play area for the children;
- The toilets used are not suitable for children.

5.2 COMMENTS BY THE COMMITTEE

Staff Complement

The Committee enquired on the required staff complement as per the available children, noting the challenge of staff shortage. The department reported that the Centre has one (1) principal (who is also taking responsibility for a class) and two educators, taking care of 54 children between the ages of 18 months and five (5) years. According to the National Norms and Standards the ratio for babies is 1: 6 and for children 18 months and above, one educator for every 20 children.

Educators' Qualifications

It was noted that the educators do not have the necessary qualifications. The Committee asked if this is not hampering the implementation of the curriculum and impacting negatively on the development of the children. The Department reported that one of the educators does have the necessary qualifications. The Department will assist the Centre to link the other two educators (without the necessary qualifications), with the Early Childhood Development Institute (ECDI), through the Department of Education for the 2017/2018 financial year. The ECDI is providing accredited training to ECD practitioners.

The programme that is followed by the Centre was assessed and registered by the Department of Social Development.

The programme is meeting the norms and standards and is thus positively contributing to the development of the children.

Funding

The Committee asked what informed the funding of 15 children while the Centre is benefiting 54 children. The Department reported that the Centre was previously operating from a RDP-house. The Health Inspector recommended that the Centre should only accommodate 15 children due to the limited space. The Centre has since moved to the current structure where it is able to accommodate more children due to the additional space.

The Centre has applied again for funding from the Department for the 2017/2018 financial year. During the assessment of the business plan it was recommended that the funding for the Centre be increased from 15 children to 50 children from 1 April 2017. There would thus be no need for deviation. The funding of the Department will cover all the children and provide the necessary financial relief for the Centre.

Need for a new site

Aware that the Centre is operating within the premises of Maziya School, the Committee asked what plans were in place to assist the Centre to have its own site and building compliant with the ECD norms and standards. The Department reported that a site was sought but later sold to another individual. The local municipality had indicated that when applying for the site, proper procedures were not followed; hence the site was sold to another buyer. The municipality advised the Centre to resubmit its application by Monday 20 March 2017 and committed to fast track the site allocation.

5.3 FINDINGS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE

After the interaction with the Department and Centre management, the Committee found that:

- a. The Centre is operating in an asbestos structure situated within Maziya School in Kwazamokuhle, the space is small and there is no play area for the children. Steve Tshwete Local Municipality committed to fast track the Centre's application for the site which was sold;
- b. The center has two unqualified educators. The department promised to register them with the Early Childhood Development Institute (ECD), through the Department of Education for the 2017/2018 financial year;
- c. Toilets used are not suitable for children;

5.4. RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE

After the deliberations, the Committee recommended that the Department must:

- a. Urgently find an alternative accommodation for the Centre whilst fast tracking the application of a new site with continuous follow ups with the municipality. Provide progress report by 31 May 2017;
- b. Register the educators in the ECD. A progress report to be submitted by 31 May 2017.
- c. Urgently ensure that the toilets used are safe and suitable for children;. Provide progress report by 31 May 2017;

The Chairperson requests the House to adopt the report with its findings and recommendations and that a progress report on the implementation of House resolutions be provided on or before 12 June 2017.

6. CONCLUSION

The Chairperson would like to express her heartfelt gratitude to all the Honourable Members of the Portfolio Committee on Health and Social Development for their attendance and active participation during the TLP. She further wishes to thank the Department, the municipality, and the management of the Centre for the services rendered. She expressed her appreciation to the Auditor-General's office, SALGA and the Legislature staff for the provided to the Committee.



HON. P NGOBENI

**CHAIRPERSON: PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

09-05-2017

DATE