

Early Childhood Care, Development and Education in Zambia

PREPARED BY DECEMBER 2017



INFOGRAPHIC

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INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Care, Development and Education (ECCDE) is one of the major factors that determines a **child's school performance and progress at a later stage in life**. In January 2014, Zambia commenced with the provision of early childhood education in Government schools following its integration into the education curriculum during the year 2011.

DEFINITION

ECCDE is the level of education, both **informal and formal**, which a child from birth to **age six undergoes prior to reaching the compulsory age** (seven years) of **entry to a primary or basic school**.

CURRICULUM

ECCDE caters for two broad levels and these are Day Care which caters for children aged 0-2 years and Early Childhood Education for age range of 3-4 and 5-6 years. These are nursery and reception.

NURSERY

The nursery level caters for learners aged 3 to 4 years 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.

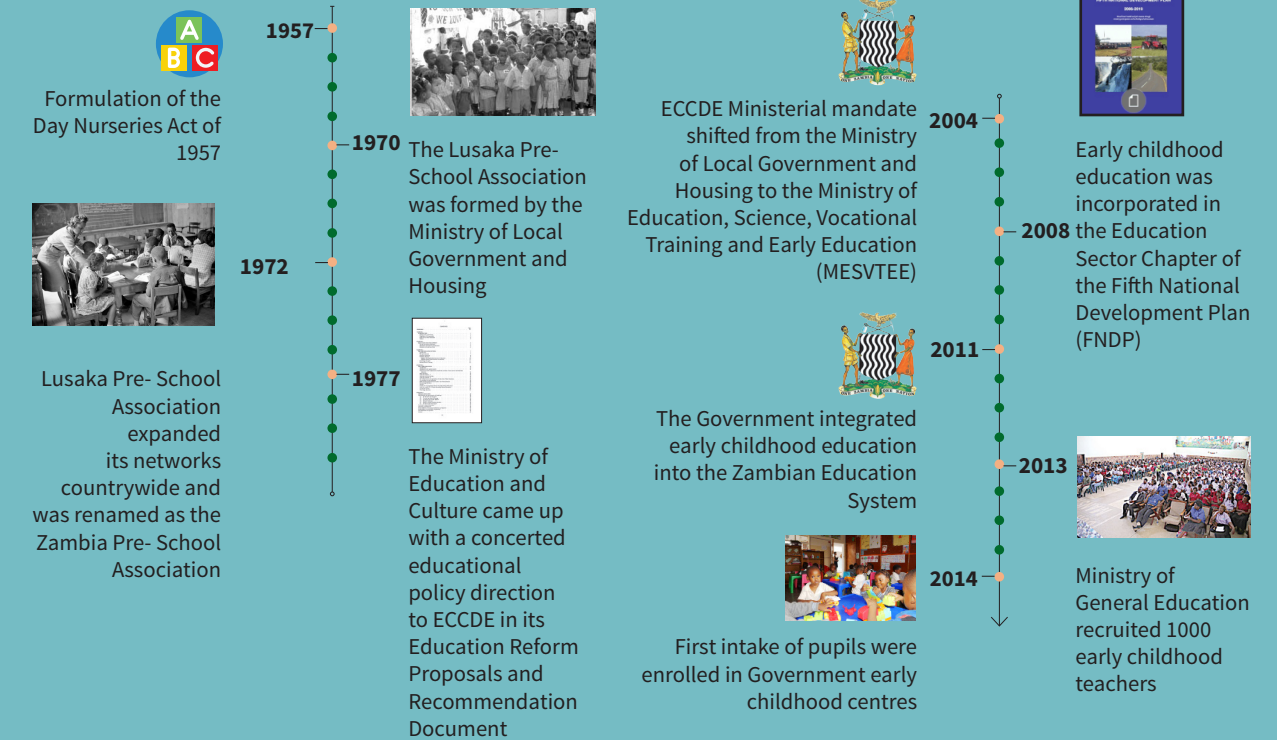
RECEPTION

The Reception level caters for learners aged 5 to 6 years. 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) taking about 40 percent of the programme.

The early education curriculum is dominated by play and pre-learning activities based on the following learning areas as well as time allocation.

NO.	LEARNING AREAS	TIME ALLOCATED PER WEEK
1	Social Studies	2 hours
2	Environmental Science	2 ½ hours
3	Pre- Literacy and Language	3 ½ hours
4	Pre- Mathematics	3 ½ hours
5	Expressive Arts	3 ½ hours
TOTAL		15 HOURS

HISTORY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE, DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION



GOVERNMENTS EFFORTS

- The Ministry of Education through the Curriculum Development Centre has standardized the early childhood curriculum which has been linked to Grade 1. Previously, centers used different curricula of which some learning activities did not provide a smooth transition to Grade 1. The new curriculum is compulsory to all early childhood centers be it government or private owned.
- The Government has restricted the minimum qualification of early childhood teachers from certificate to diploma level. The government has also come up with a curriculum for early childhood teacher course which prepares teachers to qualify for a Diploma or Degree. The Ministry has also developed a curriculum for early childhood teachers which prepares them to teach children that are aged between 3 to 6 years old.
- The Zambian Government has introduced, Degree, Masters and PhD programs in early childhood education which are offered at Chalimbana University and Zambia Open University.
- The Ministry of General Education has come up with a policy on ECCDE which will govern the implementation of ECCDE in Zambia.

RECOMMENDATION

In view of improving ECCDE in Zambia, PMRC recommends that there is need to shift from the split system of three ministries to an integrated system of one ministry mandated to provide ECCDE, for better coordination and goal oriented service delivery.

PMRC further recommends that Government should;

- Increase budgetary allocation to ECCDE, to improve service delivery and ensure that all children under the age of 6 have access to ECCDE facilities.
- Increase sensitization on the importance of ECE in rural areas which will improve enrolment of pupils in Early Childhood Centres (ECCs).
- Invest in community based ECCs and provide adequate training for community personnel based on the required teaching standards.

STATISTICS ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN ZAMBIA

NO. OF EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTERS

TOTAL NO. OF PUPILS

NORTH - WESTERN

78 3,818

WESTERN

206 8,912

SOUTHERN

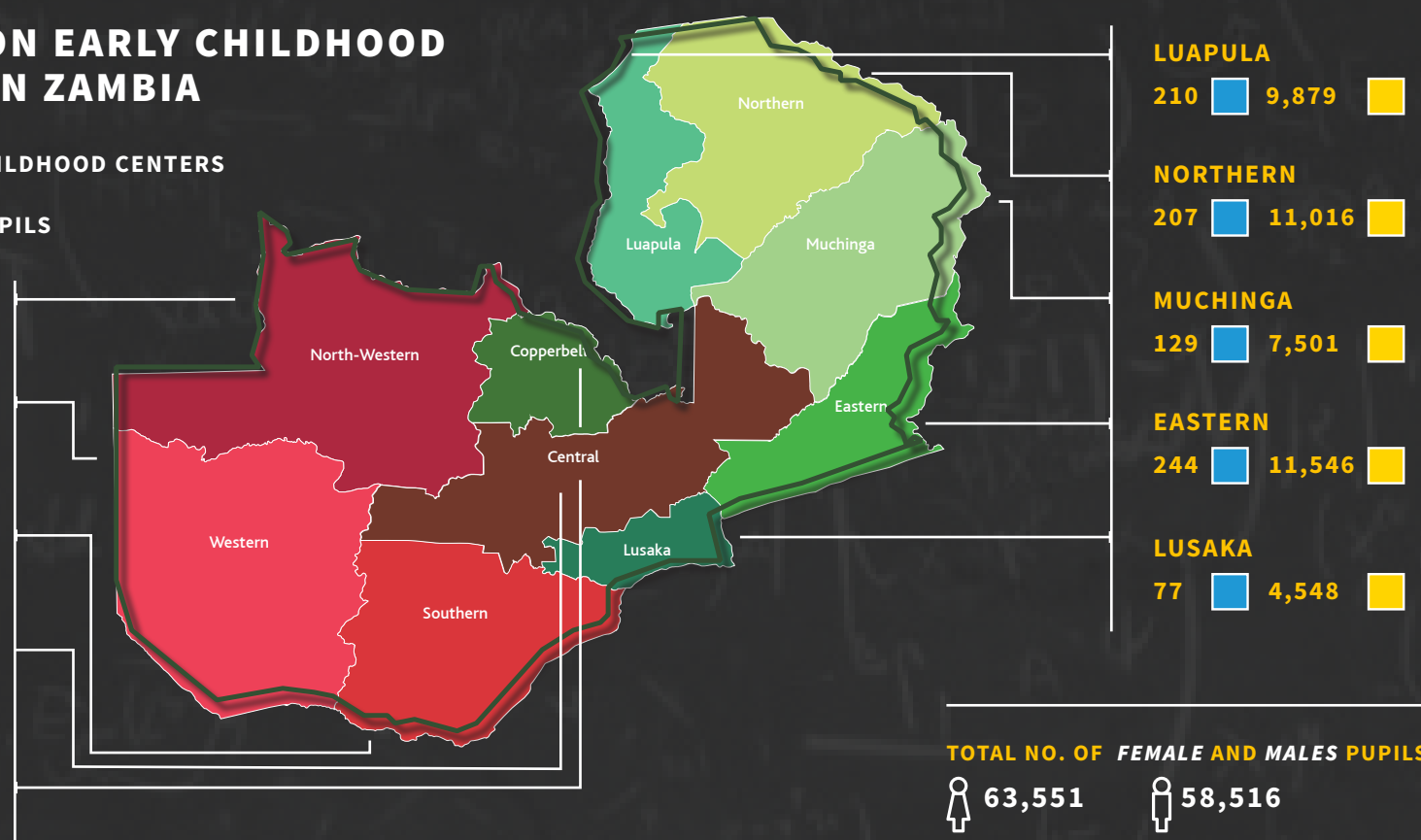
635 27,916

CENTRAL

380 15,479

COPPERBELT

220 21,452



TOTAL NO. OF FEMALE AND MALES PUPILS

63,551 58,516