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ILO Policy Guidelines on the promotion of decent work for early childhood education personnel

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ILO Policy Guidelines on the promotion of decent work for early childhood education personnel [1]

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Contents

Abbreviations and acronyms

CPD	continual professional development
ECE	early childhood education
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	education management information system
GDP	gross domestic product
ICT	information and communication technology
IGO	intergovernmental organization
ILO	International Labour Organization/International Labour Office
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
NGO	non-governmental organization
TMIS	teacher management information system
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WHO	World Health Organization

1. Scope

1.1. Objectives

1. These Guidelines set out principles for the promotion of decent work for early childhood education (ECE) personnel as a means of ensuring universal access to high-quality ECE services. In this respect they cover conditions of work and employment of ECE personnel and related issues, including ECE financing, curricula and learning practices, social security, professional ethics and ECE governance systems.

2. The Guidelines are meant to serve as a reference tool on principles that should be reflected in the design and implementation of ECE measures such as policies, strategies, legislation, administrative measures and social dialogue mechanisms, including collective bargaining agreements. The Guidelines can be implemented progressively to achieve their objectives so as to take account of different national settings, cultures, and social, economic and political contexts.

3. These Guidelines incorporate, as far as possible:

    (a) basic principles of international labour law set out in international labour standards adopted by the ILO;

    (b) basic principles as set out in the 2008 ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization;

    (c) principles enumerated in the ILO–UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers, 1966, which includes in its scope teachers at the nursery and kindergarten level;

    (d) principles and good practices outlined in relevant instruments and policy documents specifically applicable to ECE, as listed in the bibliography;

    (e) legislative, administrative and workplace good practices from ILO member States.

4. Where ECE personnel enjoy conditions more favourable than those set out in the Guidelines, the terms of the Guidelines should not be invoked to lower already established conditions.

1.2. Use

5. These Guidelines are intended for use by those engaged in devising international, national, regional, local, sectoral, workplace (private and public) and home-based ECE policy and practice and organization of ECE services:

    (a) government authorities at all levels, whether as regulatory authorities or as public ECE providers, at the national, regional or local level;

    (b) employers and managers of private ECE providers and organizations representing them;

    (c) ECE personnel, trade unions and other organizations representing ECE personnel;

(d)   education and training institutions for ECE personnel;

(e)   parent–teacher associations and other representatives of parents;

(f)   policy-makers and education and community leaders; [1]

(g)   IGOs and NGOs.

1.3.   Field of application

6. ECE is part of an educational continuum that begins at birth, when there is a primary emphasis on early childhood development, through pre-primary education and the transition to primary school, which can include more formal learning. These Guidelines apply to all settings that provide ECE as defined in section 1.4. The Guidelines may be considered applicable to predominately "care"-oriented settings where the education component of the institution's mission meets or exceeds the minimum intentional education component of its overall work as defined in section 1.4.

7. These Guidelines are intended to apply to all ECE settings as defined by paragraph 6 and section 1.4, whether they are publicly or privately operated, including private non-profit settings; whether relevant regulation and governance is based at the national, regional, local or institutional level; whether they are subject to regulation by one governance authority uniting various children's services on an integrated basis or divided among several; and whatever the source of their financing.

8. Recognizing that important cognitive, emotional, linguistic, physical and social learning takes place already from birth, and acknowledging the interest of ensuring qualified early childhood care personnel, consideration can be given to applying elements of these Guidelines, as appropriate, to organized early childhood care settings, including home-based arrangements.

1.4.   Definitions

9. *Early childhood education:* as defined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) level 0, refers to early childhood programmes that have an intentional education component (recommended to be at least equivalent to two hours per day and 100 days a year of educational activities) and are aimed at developing socio-emotional skills necessary for participation in school and society, developing some of the foundational skills for academic learning, and preparing children for entry into primary education (ISCED level 1). For purposes of these Guidelines, such programmes:

(a)   are not necessarily highly structured but are designed to provide an organized and purposeful set of learning activities in a safe and healthy environment, allowing children to learn through interaction with other children under the guidance of qualified ECE personnel, typically through creative and play-based activities;

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[1] For purposes of these Guidelines, community leaders means a person or persons who are recognized to represent a local community that has a common interest in ECE services.

(b) are broadly divided into two categories: ECE, designed for younger children (in the age range of 0–2 years) and pre-primary education, designed for children from the age of 3 years to the start of primary education;

(c) may be referred to as ECE, play school, nursery school, reception, pre-primary, pre-school, kindergarten, initial education, head start or another appropriate term according to national or international terminology;

(d) are usually school-based or otherwise institutionalized for a group of children (for example, centre-, community- or home-based), excluding purely private family-based arrangements that may be purposeful but are not organized in a programme (for example, care and informal learning provided by parents, relatives, friends or domestic workers);

(e) are organized and managed in accordance with a reference or regulatory framework (including guidelines, standards or instructions) issued or recognized by relevant authorities that describe the learning opportunities provided to young children.

10. *ECE personnel and their organizations:* for purposes of these Guidelines refer to ECE practitioners and trade unions or organizations representing personnel in ECE settings as defined above, directly engaged by the ECE system or institutional employer, including:

(a) all teachers and educators with pedagogical qualifications, as set by the relevant education authority for their particular job category, and who are responsible for learning, education and care activities of young children;

(b) managers or leaders – personnel who manage or lead an ECE workplace on their own behalf, or on behalf of an employer; they may or may not be employed to also teach or engage in learning support activities;

(c) professional specialists, care workers, nurses and other auxiliary staff with professional qualifications according to national or subnational authority licensing provisions;

(d) teaching assistants and similar personnel providing pedagogical support to qualified staff;

(e) apprentices and equivalent trainee staff who may be considered to have an employment relationship with the ECE employer.

11. *Employers and employers' organizations:* except as otherwise indicated by reference to "public employers", for purposes of these Guidelines refer, respectively, to: (a) private employers that are independent of the public authorities, whether natural or legal persons or enterprises, that hire ECE personnel through an employment relationship as defined by the ILO; and (b) organizations that represent employers.

12. *Non-profit providers:* for purposes of these Guidelines refers to non-governmental secular or faith-based non-profit providers of ECE services.

13. *ECE stakeholders:* for purposes of these Guidelines, refers to public and private providers, organizations of employers and ECE personnel, ECE policy and administration bodies, professional bodies, parent, civil society and community representatives, and education and training institutions for ECE personnel.

2. General roles, rights and responsibilities

2.1. Governments

14. Governments have the principal responsibility for providing quality ECE services, either through public services or by ensuring access to affordable and quality private services. Governments at the various levels with responsibility for ECE provision should:

(a) in close cooperation with ECE stakeholders, establish explicit goals for the achievement of universal access of the eligible age groups within their jurisdictions, and define time frames to realize these goals. The goals may be set out in a comprehensive policy framework document, strategy, guidelines or other initiatives, which also describe how the established goals will be achieved. In the interests of universal access, equity and quality, a national policy framework should be defined to ensure that ECE provision reaches all children, including disadvantaged, marginalized and vulnerable populations; [2]

(b) ensure that policies are underpinned by the necessary legislation and regulations to prescribe rights, responsibilities and means of enforcement or application for all concerned parties, public or private;

(c) ensure mechanisms that properly coordinate policies and practices between different ministries and departments, levels of government, public agencies and institutions, and private providers;

(d) establish development goals for young children in ECE provisions, and periodically evaluate such goals through a quality control process, revising them in light of trends in the sector, in education and in relation to other needs of society;

(e) ensure that policies and standards apply to the major areas of ECE, such as: learning objectives, curricula and pedagogical directions; governance and management of institutions and systems; financing of ECE; qualification, training, professional development status and working conditions of ECE personnel; infrastructure and equipment; monitoring and evaluation; and social dialogue;

(f) ensure that ECE policies and standards apply to all providers, public or private, institution- or home-based; and that they address the needs of disadvantaged, marginalized and vulnerable populations, and children with special needs;

(g) ensure that ECE policies and standards address the needs of workers with family responsibilities;

(h) guarantee an adequate level of national resources to ensure delivery of universally accessible and quality ECE; and, where necessary, work with ECE partners to mobilize additional resources from non-government sources and commit to maintaining and improving ECE funding to meet evolving access and quality objectives;

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[2] For the purposes of these Guidelines, the term "disadvantaged, marginalized and vulnerable populations" refers to populations that experience a higher risk of poverty and social exclusion than the general population. These populations can include, but are not restricted to, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, migrants, indigenous and tribal peoples, people living with HIV and AIDS and other illnesses, disabled people, and people living in emergency or conflict situations.

(i) ensure the provision and organization of a safe, healthy, and developmentally appropriate ECE teaching and learning environment, free from all forms of discrimination, and with good human resource policies;

(j) organize initial education/training of ECE personnel;

(k) support the active participation of ECE personnel in continual professional development (CPD) opportunities;

(l) monitor and enforce, where applicable, ECE policies and standards, including minimum wages and conditions of employment, qualification standards and collective bargaining agreements;

(m) provide dispute prevention and resolution mechanisms;

(n) cooperate closely with ECE stakeholders in management and operational decisions;

(o) in consultation with relevant research institutions, organize or provide the means (research council, association or equivalent) by which comprehensive research and data on ECE services, progress and gaps in delivery can be collected and used to more effectively develop, apply, evaluate and reform ECE provision.

2.2. Employers and employers' organizations

15. Employers and their organizations play an important role in ECE policy development and its application, in resource mobilization to complement public funding, and in the direct provision of private education. The rights, roles and responsibilities of employers include:

(a) as appropriate, directly contributing to ECE funding on a voluntary basis. Employers can also collaborate with other ECE stakeholders to mobilize the necessary resources for the realization of agreed policies;

(b) where they are direct ECE providers, ensuring the provision of quality ECE and decent work for ECE personnel in respect of policies and standards set by relevant authorities and national laws and regulations and the principles set out in these Guidelines;

(c) enjoying the rights to autonomy and self-governance necessary for effective decision-making of employer-owned ECE centres regarding management, operations and learning orientations in accordance with ECE regulations, policies, standards set by governments and professional ethics;

(d) subject to subparagraph 15(c), cooperating closely with ECE stakeholders in management and operational decisions;

(e) in accordance with national law and practice: (a) participating in dialogue on education policy and objectives; and (b) establishing and maintaining mechanisms of social dialogue with ECE personnel and their representative organizations to determine terms and conditions of employment and professional development within employer-owned and operated ECE institutions.

16. To assist in the exercise of employer rights, roles and responsibilities, employers' organizations can:

(a) develop and promote employers' organization policies in support of affordable, universally accessible and high-quality ECE services;

(b) subject to subparagraph 15(c), facilitate close cooperation with ECE personnel organizations, parents' and community representatives, and education authorities in management and operational decisions;

(c) assist employer members in the exercise of their rights, roles and responsibilities on ECE matters through the coordination of information exchange, policy advice, advocacy and representation on general and workplace issues affecting them;

(d) contribute to the development, design, evaluation and revision of learning practices, objectives and curricula.

2.3. ECE personnel, trade unions and organizations

17. Evidence increasingly demonstrates that ECE personnel are central to realizing universally accessible, high-quality ECE provision. The rights, roles and responsibilities of ECE personnel that are essential to their fullest contribution to these objectives include:

(a) concern for the education and welfare interests of all children in their charge without discrimination. To this end, in consultation with public and private employers, they can define and observe the highest possible professional and ethical standards in carrying out their work in the interests of early childhood learners and their parents, including by means of codes of ethics or conduct;

(b) access to and active participation in lifelong professional development opportunities, including membership of professional associations;

(c) enjoyment of academic freedom in carrying out their professional responsibilities – choice and adaptation of teaching materials, methods, assessment of children's progress – within the framework of approved goals and standards established by ECE authorities;

(d) freedom to exercise all civic, political, cultural and social rights enjoyed by other citizens;

(e) in accordance with national law, ratified international labour standards, and practice: (a) participation in dialogue on education policy and objectives; and (b) establishment and maintenance of mechanisms of social dialogue with public and private ECE employers and their representative organizations to determine professional terms and conditions of employment and professional development of ECE personnel.

18. To assist in the exercise of the rights, roles and responsibilities of ECE personnel, trade unions and professional organizations representing staff should:

(a) develop and promote trade union and other ECE personnel organization policies in support of affordable, universally accessible and high-quality ECE services;

(b) as appropriate, collaborate with other ECE stakeholders to mobilize the necessary resources for the implementation of agreed policies;

(c) collaborate in the elaboration of professional standards;

(d) promote the training accreditation, regularization, professionalization and organization of informal ECE personnel;

(e) assist ECE personnel in the exercise of their rights, roles and responsibilities on ECE matters and the realization of decent work;

(f) contribute to the development, design, evaluation and revision of learning practices, objectives and curricula.

2.4. Non-profit providers

19. Non-profit ECE providers may offer important services that assist access, particularly for disadvantaged, marginalized or vulnerable populations, but their existence should not be invoked as a reason to reduce government responsibilities for ECE. Whatever the source of funding or regulatory authority, non-profit ECE providers should adhere to the same objectives, goals and standards that are established by the relevant education or child service authorities for other public and private providers. To this end, funding and regulatory authorities should, where possible, finance non-profit ECE advocacy and support organizations to develop training and support materials for ECE centres and personnel.

2.5. Other ECE stakeholders

20. Parent representatives should be consulted regarding the establishment of conditions for ECE personnel and minimum quality standards so as to ensure transparency, equity and political support for ECE objectives, informed choices and better coordination between home-based and ECE centre learning approaches. Parent representatives should be consulted in the design and organization of ECE services in order to ensure that the needs of workers with family responsibilities are also met. Particular efforts are needed to foster engagement of parents of disadvantaged, marginalized and vulnerable populations and children with special needs.

21. Community leaders should be consulted regarding the definition of goals, minimum quality standards and the operations of ECE settings. Special efforts (channels of information, steering committees) are needed by education authorities, ECE providers and personnel to engage with communities, especially in conflict or emergency settings, so as to ensure continuity of ECE services. Where ECE is decentralized and organized mainly at the local level, community leaders play an important role in scaling up such efforts to wider levels.

3. ECE objectives and policies

3.1. ECE as a public good and fundamental right

22. Because of its importance in supporting every child's right to quality education without discrimination, and because of its proven benefits for children and society, ECE should be considered as a part of the fundamental human right to education and as a public good and service of general interest. In economic and social terms, ECE should be considered as a basic investment in the wealth and sustainable development of every nation. A priority should therefore be the establishment of universally accessible and, where possible, free ECE services of the highest possible quality. With regard to pre-primary education (as defined by ISCED), where possible, policy should be aimed at making it free.

23. This fundamental guiding principle should not be interpreted or applied in a manner that interferes with or denies the liberty of parents or legal guardians to choose for their children ECE provisions other than those established by the State or other public authority, nor that of individuals and organizations to establish and operate private ECE institutions, so long as they conform to those minimum quality educational and operational standards set out in law, regulation or policy.

24. In the application of these fundamental guiding principles, ECE provision should be available to every child of eligible age, without any discrimination.

3.2. ECE content: Curricula and teaching methods

25. It is increasingly accepted that ECE should provide a holistic, child-centred and child-initiated educational approach in the interests of healthy and well-adjusted children, with a special focus on children aged 0–2 years, who currently receive much less attention than those aged 3–6 years. ECE authorities may consider setting out a quality framework for ECE that emphasizes the importance of play, creativity, exploration, open curriculum, and development of social interaction and communication skills, as well as physical, emotional and language development. Such a framework should include all domains of development. ECE personnel and institutions should enjoy autonomy to choose and organize learning practices that will strengthen children's experience, communicative capacities and cognition in line with a holistic approach. A learning framework should be flexible enough to allow for different approaches to achieving learning objectives, so as to allow for practices adapted to different circumstances and experimentation in learning methods.

26. The design of curriculum and selection of teaching and learning methods as part of establishing standards are an important contribution to supporting equity. It is highly recommended that ECE curricula and methods should:

(a) pay special attention to avoiding or overcoming gender discrimination and eliminating stereotypes or favouritism in materials and teaching methods;

(b) value cultural and linguistic diversity, especially for indigenous and minority languages, using mother tongue or local languages as the teaching and learning medium and, where relevant, a bilingual learning approach;

(c) provide for the special needs of disadvantaged, marginalized and vulnerable population groups, particularly those in poverty, conflict or emergency situations.

27. Design of curricula and selection of learning methods are equally important for the initial education/training, continual professional development, and job satisfaction, motivation and quality of ECE personnel. Curricula and learning orientations established by policy and standards should provide clear guidance on appropriate methods and learning objectives, while providing for ECE professional and institutional autonomy.

28. Curricula and learning methods should be periodically reviewed and updated. This should take place in consultation with organizations of ECE employers and personnel, and other ECE stakeholders.

3.3. ECE financing as an investment to ensure quality, equity and sustainability

29. Evidence from good practices in ECE systems shows that sustained public funding, combined with standard setting and regulation, are essential factors to achieve quality goals, especially ensuring the recruitment of highly qualified ECE personnel. Governments have the principal responsibility to guarantee the level of national resources so as to realize the main objectives of universally accessible and highest-quality ECE. Governments should therefore:

    (a) establish a goal for ECE investment that implicates all relevant government ministries, departments, agencies and levels of authority – national, regional, local – to contribute towards a national benchmark set out as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) and as a percentage of public education spending. To ensure quality and accessibility of ECE on a parity with primary education, benchmarks of at least 1 per cent of GDP and 10 per cent of public education funding devoted to ECE could be considered, either immediately or as a progressive goal within fixed time frames. Financing benchmarks can also include specific provisions for initial education, professional development, and developing the terms and conditions for ECE personnel consistent with decent work principles. Such funding should not come at the expense of funding other education and child services;

    (b) develop and consistently apply, through system-wide coordination, a strategic plan for efficiently allocating resources within ECE according to the highest priorities and equity considerations (equitable funding mechanisms are especially important in federal or decentralized systems), with special attention to quality goals for all children, early years education (0–2 years), rural and remote areas, and the needs of disadvantaged, marginalized and vulnerable populations;

    (c) devise and apply funding policies or mechanisms targeted at disadvantaged, marginalized and vulnerable populations, such as conditional income transfer programmes and subsidies for low-income families in both rural and urban areas;

    (d) create a coordination mechanism that includes social partners and stakeholders to promote, monitor and propose revisions in legislation and other means that help to ensure realization of the national ECE financing standard;

    (e) devise a system of programme evaluation and regularly report on the use of resources devoted to ECE, so as to provide transparency and accountability to citizens and users.

30. While public funding is essential for sustainability of, and equity in, access to ECE, private investment in ECE can serve as an important complement to public investment, and alternative funding and delivery models could be supported within the ECE regulatory framework. Governments may assist complementary private financing of ECE by developing innovative mechanisms through consultation and in cooperation with ECE partners to mobilize additional resources from diverse non-government sources that will help realize national ECE goals. These might include direct enterprise contributions to ECE infrastructure; levies or subsidies for employees' children; tax concessions or credits to enterprises or individuals; excise taxes on non-essential consumption goods (alcohol and tobacco, for example); receipts from lotteries and other special revenue-raising activities; parent cost-sharing, in accordance with parents' ability to pay; financial transaction taxes; and informal sector contributions in developing countries.

31. Where private providers of ECE are significant, governments should take measures to ensure access by all, especially disadvantaged, marginalized and vulnerable populations.

Measures may include subsidies for ECE fees, tax concessions for lower-income groups, regulated fee structures indexed to families' income and support programmes for families who are in need, in the interests of ensuring equity and quality.

32. As a complement to national-level financing actions, national and international aid agencies and international development banks should accord higher priority to ECE in their sectoral funding policies and decisions in support of developing countries, especially those furthest from reaching Education for All (EFA) Goal 1, by means such as earmarking more funding for ECE, direct support for national and local public ECE institutions, direct loan arrangements, and debt relief linked to the realization of ECE access and quality goals. In line with the principles of aid effectiveness and sustainability, partner country governments, social partners and other ECE stakeholders should be closely involved in determining use of official development assistance directed at ECE services.

4. Preparation for the profession

4.1. Education and training

33. High-quality ECE provision is dependent on adequate investments in initial ECE personnel education and training that ensure preparation for all ECE personnel comparable to that of primary school teachers with equivalent professional status and responsibilities. Initial education should therefore be based on the highest qualification levels in relation to the established curricula and methods, at a minimum first-level tertiary degree according to national standards (from two years post-secondary to tertiary bachelor's level or equivalent) and, on a progressive basis, at master's degree or higher level. Initial education should prepare ECE personnel with the necessary professional knowledge and skills to respond to the learning needs and challenges of all children. This should include:

(a) extensive knowledge of child development, learning, play, pedagogy and well-being;

(b) extensive knowledge of maternal and infant health and safety, basic first aid, optimal infant and young child feeding and nutrition; [3]

(c) communication and empathy (responsiveness) with children, parents and the community;

(d) creative, innovative and self-reflective capacities to engage in holistic learning practices, and to learn from and adapt practice to improve the learning environment and meet unexpected teaching and learning challenges;

(e) awareness of and skills to impart values, knowledge and skills necessary for peace, gender equality, tolerance and respect for diversity;

(f) where appropriate, the development of competencies and skills needed to work with children who are at risk; who have disabilities or special education needs; who live with HIV/AIDS; who are disadvantaged by poverty, geographical location (remote areas) or social exclusion; or who are from minorities or ethnic groups whose predominant language is indigenous or vernacular;

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[3] In line with international recommendations on breastfeeding and storing breast milk. See the WHO's infant feeding recommendation, 2001.

(g)   observation and assessment of children and working in different ECE settings.

34. Preparation for a career in ECE should respect, and accordingly be organized around, the guiding principle that the best ECE personnel education is a continuum clearly linking initial training, induction and continual professional development (CPD) throughout an ECE practitioner's career.

35. ECE preparation should also include hands-on training through apprenticeships and internships, in a variety of ECE settings if possible, under supervision by qualified ECE personnel. Such practical training should be time-bound and have clear learning objectives, and be supported through mentoring and feedback.

36. Initial education and training should, as far as possible, be financed by public investments, or a mix of public and voluntary private sources, so as to offer education that is free of charge or at minimal cost to enable qualified candidates from poorer backgrounds and minority population groups to become ECE practitioners. Scholarships and low-interest loan schemes for trainees could be considered.

37. It should be the objective of national ECE policy that all ECE personnel are of the highest possible quality and in possession of the full and relevant qualifications for their specific job. Where urgent staffing needs or resource situations require the recruitment of ECE personnel with lower professional qualifications, such measures should be considered as temporary and should be offset by other policies to limit the quality impact and work towards meeting the fully qualified goals, including:

(a)   special measures to upgrade unqualified personnel as quickly as possible, through CPD and on-the-job training;

(b)   supervision of less-qualified personnel by professionally qualified practitioners. Policies should set out ratios of less-qualified staff to be supervised by fully qualified practitioners, and the minimum number of hours of supervision.

In such situations, the establishment of time-bound targets for achieving fully qualified status for all or a substantial majority of ECE personnel could be used to ensure quality.

38. Professional training should be linked to curricula and teaching methods that reflect the principles set out in paragraphs 33 and 39. At the same time, training should promote autonomy and creativity in applying curricula and teaching methods.

4.2. Education and training for leaders, managers and auxiliary support

39. As with any education setting, initial preparation for ECE leaders' and managers' roles should be systematic and of the highest professional standard, validated by a leadership or managerial certificate, or a diploma from a recognized institution. Such preparation should include:

(a)   planning, organizational and leadership skills to help create and maintain a child-friendly, high-quality pedagogic, safe and healthy environment for teaching and learning;

(b)   fulfilment of legal and administrative requirements set by regulatory authorities;

(c) competencies for empathy, communication, dialogue, collaboration, and team building with other ECE personnel in the creation and maintenance of a decent work environment for all staff;

(d) knowledge and application of modern management techniques specific to ECE institutional or systemic settings, including needs assessment, programme evaluation, human resource and financial management, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills;

(e) communication and collaboration skills in relations with parents, community representatives, education and health authorities, and other ECE stakeholders.

40. Authorities and public and private employers should also ensure that professional auxiliary and other support staff receive requisite initial training of a high professional standard specific to ECE settings and objectives, including for:

(a) professional specialists (speech therapists, psychotherapists or physiotherapists), care or social workers, nurses and other auxiliary staff engaged in ECE care, health or other support work, in addition to, or within the qualification framework of, their respective professions;

(b) apprentices who serve as assistants involved in ECE support work, especially in situations where they are given or may assume responsibilities for pedagogical activities in the event of absence or shortage of qualified ECE personnel;

(c) home-based ECE personnel, who often work in isolation from other support services.

4.3. Education and training institutions

41. Admission to education and training programmes for ECE should be predicated on careful assessment of established entry criteria, which may include candidates' previous academic records and evidence of their personal and professional aptitudes to work with young children.

42. All ECE personnel training institutions or programmes should conform to relevant quality standards established by the relevant regulatory authority, in consultation with constituents and stakeholders, by means of periodically renewed accreditation, as with other teacher training and higher education institutions.

43. Staff of ECE personnel preparation institutions, whether specific to ECE or combined with primary education preparation programmes, should have the requisite knowledge and capacity to teach future practitioners, leaders, managers and other ECE personnel in the competency and skill areas set out in paragraph 33 of these Guidelines. In general, an ECE personnel preparation faculty should possess higher qualifications than the minimum qualifications set out by standards. ECE personnel preparation staff may also:

(a) have prior experience of teaching, managing or performing support work in ECE institutions, or acquire such experience as part of CPD;

(b) support ECE students under their charge in practicums and mentoring arrangements with ECE workplaces;

(c) be required as part of their professional development obligations to periodically participate in teaching and learning exchanges with ECE institutions or programmes;

(d) be encouraged to engage in research, experimentation and professional exchanges, including through incentives to participate in professional associations and conferences.

44. ECE personnel preparation staff should enjoy the same rights to academic freedom and carry the same responsibilities towards their students as other education personnel, as set out in relevant international standards. They should have the opportunity to participate in the governance and programme directions of their respective institutions.

4.4. Licensing and accreditation

45. In the interests of high-quality teaching and learning, all ECE personnel, including those in informal services, should possess a degree, diploma or certificate (for assistants or related auxiliary staff) from an appropriate ECE personnel preparation institution or an accreditation agency and be certified by the relevant education authorities on the basis of minimum qualification levels. Consideration could be given to schemes through which accreditation needs to be renewed periodically (commonly every three to five years) by virtue of voluntary or mandatory CPD that is accessible and affordable for all ECE personnel.

46. To ensure the necessary accreditation or licensing of qualified personnel, a dedicated ECE accreditation and licensing body (council, authority) or framework could be established, separately or within the existing education qualifications authority, with responsibilities for fixing initial education and training standards for ECE personnel, including home-based practitioners, as well as the accreditation or licensing of ECE personnel. Where licenced home-based, NGO or non-profit ECE services are run by unqualified or less-qualified personnel, they should be overseen by a qualified ECE practitioner, monitored, and follow the appropriate curriculum and learning methods.

47. Accreditation authorities or frameworks should also set the standards by which competencies acquired outside formal initial education or training, for instance through parenting, informal education and care-based activities or previous work experience, may be validated for purposes of admission to ECE training programmes and subsequent work as qualified practitioners, or assistants or auxiliary staff. Such measures can be instrumental in overcoming ECE personnel shortages and addressing gender imbalances by attracting men into ECE work. They can also contribute to promoting the regularization of informal ECE personnel.

5. Recruitment, deployment and retention

48. Excellence in ECE requires a high professional, social and material status for ECE personnel. Successful recruitment and retention of adequate numbers of qualified ECE personnel, women and men, to meet the expanding enrolments and quality demands of ECE require a comprehensive recruitment, development and retention policy or strategy developed at national level. Such an ECE workforce policy or strategy should incorporate several key elements:

(a) quality and relevant initial education and training and CPD as the basis for recruitment and continued employment;

(b) a career structure responding to individual staff needs and motivations, built around an agreed ECE practitioner appraisal system;

(c) respect for professional, managerial and institutional autonomy as an intrinsic factor in job satisfaction, hence influencing individual decisions to become and remain ECE practitioners;

(d) remuneration and other benefits comparable to other occupations with equivalent professional qualifications; higher remuneration signals greater social and material recognition for ECE as a valued profession, and rewards quality and talent;

(e) attractive teaching and working conditions that emphasize low child–staff ratios, a safe, healthy and collaborative working environment, and the necessary infrastructure and equipment that support high learning outcomes and provide job satisfaction.

49. Recruitment, deployment, terms and conditions of employment, professional and career development and retention policies in ECE should be free from any discrimination.

5.1. Recruitment strategies

50. A comprehensive recruitment strategy that ensures fair distribution and recruitment of qualified ECE personnel across a country can be proactively promoted through career guidance and media campaigns to encourage young people to take up ECE jobs and inform them of required qualifications, an approach followed successfully in some countries involving ECE stakeholders as promotional partners.

51. To address workforce imbalances, authorities should make use of planning tools such as an education management information system (EMIS) or a teacher management information system (TMIS) integrated within a wider EMIS, including data on ECE personnel disaggregated by sex, ethnicity, age, urban–rural deployment and other relevant criteria essential to human resource management, as a basis for monitoring of desired goals.

52. Recruitment strategies should adopt professional development (mentoring, coaching), career (leave provisions, protection of career track measures) or workplace (such as part-time work) incentives that encourage recruitment or retention from certain pools of potential ECE personnel:

(a) teaching assistants or paraprofessionals without the requisite formal qualifications but with experience in ECE;

(b) practitioners with family responsibilities, and former ECE personnel who have left their jobs prior to retirement age and who could be encouraged to return;

(c) retired ECE personnel recalled to assist in part-time teaching, mentoring or other roles to address acute shortages;

(d) primary or secondary teachers, where there is an adequate supply of these categories, who would be provided with appropriate education and training in ECE.

53. Recruitment and deployment should especially target urban–rural imbalances by building in sufficient incentives to work in rural, remote or disadvantaged urban areas. Incentives may include:

(a) additional remuneration above the basic salary in the form of extra steps on the salary scale, hardship allowances or targeted bonuses;

(b) decent housing, transport facilities to and from work and the place of origin (home), and health-care provisions, free or subsidized;

(c)   social and care services for children, elderly and people with disabilities, which can help ECE personnel meet their family responsibilities;

(d)   physical security provisions where warranted for both women and men staff;

(e)   guaranteed professional development opportunities in rural, remote or disadvantaged areas and additional leave and transport provisions for personnel to and from urban areas;

(f)   fast-track career incentives, including accelerated promotion and rotation or transfer provisions.

54. Efforts to serve rural and remote areas can also focus on training and recruiting qualified staff from such areas. In such cases, measures need to be taken to support training in urban locations (transport, housing, training fees) and provide guidance for redeployment in rural areas, along with some or all of the possible incentives outlined in paragraph 53. Authorities and employers may also consider training and engagement of locally recruited staff who might not meet the established recruitment criteria. Means to do so include regionally or locally based training centres [4] that admit local ECE practitioner candidates who agree to work in their locality or the area served by the centre, or relaxed admission standards for national training programmes and bursaries to support poor candidates from rural villages who will return to their homes. Guarantees for initial education and training and professional development to maintain professional standards are key to the success of such strategies.

55. Decent working and learning conditions in rural, remote or disadvantaged areas often depend on community support to provide appropriate infrastructure, housing and access to power and water. Authorities may consider initiatives that support community efforts to recruit ECE personnel.

5.2. Ensuring diversity

56. Sound ECE personnel recruitment strategies need to address gender disparities in an education sector that has been predominantly female. Meeting this goal requires a strategic plan with time-specific benchmarks for the percentage of male personnel in ECE that is proactively promoted, monitored and applied, combined with special career and other incentives, including:

(a)   care-based activities or previous work experiences that can be validated for purposes of admission to ECE training programmes and subsequent work as qualified practitioners, assistant or auxiliary staff;

(b)   training bursaries or scholarships, or low- or zero-interest loans, for male candidates;

(c)   public relations campaigns promoting ECE as suitable work for men, as well as women.

57. In the interests of access and quality outcomes for children of minority, multi-ethnic, migrant, indigenous or different home-language backgrounds, and the benefits of diversity for "mainstream" communities, a multi-ethnic, multicultural and linguistically

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[4] Given resource constraints, such centres could be mixed – for primary and ECE staff – provided that there is a dedicated ECE component of education and training.

representative ECE workforce is desirable. Recruitment policies and strategies should therefore encourage the employment of ECE personnel from diverse origins, including through:

(a) a strategic plan with recruitment benchmarks over time that is promoted, monitored and adjusted as necessary;

(b) positive action recruitment criteria, such as validation of care-based activities or previous work experience and relaxed criteria for purposes of admission to ECE training programmes;

(c) training bursaries or scholarships, or low- or zero-interest loans, for under-represented groups;

(d) accelerated career and other professional incentives, with special attention to targeted measures to upgrade teaching assistants with few or no formal qualifications to fully qualified ECE practitioner positions by means of greater access to professional development programmes (accommodation for simultaneous study and work, financial incentives);

(e) hiring bilingual teaching assistants to assist monolingual staff.

Positive action measures in favour of ECE personnel with diverse backgrounds should be applied with the necessary precautions to ensure their initial education and training and professional development in conformity with the established professional standards.

58. Countries with indigenous and tribal peoples should consider devising and implementing ECE policies that take into account the principles set out in Part VI of the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169), where ratified. Such policies should, inter alia, address the needs and value systems of indigenous and tribal peoples, and allow children to be taught in their own indigenous language or in the language most commonly used by the group to which they belong. ECE curricula and pedagogy should respect the culture and customs of indigenous and tribal peoples, and address the elimination of discrimination against them.

5.3. Management of deployment

59. According to whether ECE personnel are recruited and employed at central, regional or local level or at institutional level, the public or private employer should design and apply a transparent, equitable and efficient system for deployment of personnel that takes account of individual and overall service needs, including the following provisions:

(a) criteria for beginning and end of career assignments, including clear post or job descriptions and classifications;

(b) criteria and procedures for transfer between education jurisdictions or institutions;

(c) professional and material incentives for service in rural, remote, or disadvantaged rural or urban areas;

(d) particular needs of: men and women with family responsibilities, particularly with children of or below school age; single women and men; ethnic minority personnel (including those facing potential personal security issues); disabled staff; and those living with HIV/AIDS (appropriate infrastructure, access to support and medical

facilities). Couples separated by distance should be brought together to ensure family cohesion.

60. Deployment planning and decisions in ECE can be greatly assisted by an effective EMIS or TMIS (see paragraph 51). Especially where education systems are decentralized, good systems and mechanisms for communication, coordination and interactions between inspectors and national, district and local management will also facilitate decision-making in the light of individual interests and service needs. Human resource managers should provide clear information to ECE personnel regarding the mechanisms and criteria for deployment and transfer at the beginning of a teaching career and thereafter on request.

5.4. Background checks and vetting

61. Given the sensitive nature of work with young children, as part of due diligence, ECE authorities and employers should establish requirements and procedures for background checks or vetting of all ECE personnel before employment in relation to child abuse, sexual or other criminal or professional violations that make candidates unsuitable to work with children. Such procedures may be carried out by dedicated agencies or bodies within ECE licensing authorities or by law enforcement agencies, and assume greater importance in decentralized systems in support of local or institutional managers considering transfer or returnee candidates. Candidates for ECE jobs should have access to background checks and the right to appeal against incorrect information as part of due process.

5.5. Induction

62. Sound induction plans and management support, including mentoring, for new ECE personnel, including those returning to the profession after a career break, are needed to ensure successful beginnings in first or renewed assignments and retention of staff. Adequate induction and support for teaching in the specific contexts of rural, remote and minority population areas is particularly recommended, and should be integrated with deployment plans for such areas.

63. Induction and training programmes may be developed in cooperation with the trainee/worker in the form of a career entry profile or career entry portfolio to identify strengths and developmental needs, setting targets and goals to encourage reflection on professional practice and development so as to better connect the initial preparation for ECE work with the first assignment and later professional development.

64. Effective induction, mentoring and management support for new and returning personnel require solid training of the experienced staff and ECE managers for these roles, time off from regular working assignments for mentors and managers and those benefiting from the induction or mentoring, and recognition and support from ECE authorities and employers.

5.6. Mobility

65. Professional mobility of ECE personnel within ECE systems or between institutions or other workplaces can be beneficial to professional career development and motivation, and can enrich leadership or pedagogical approaches and skills in the interest of ECE quality. Such schemes can be especially beneficial between ECE and primary education or equivalent public or private workplaces. Public and private employers should encourage and make available as far as possible such opportunities through programmes that:

(a) are compatible with service needs and the different legal or administrative frameworks regulating transfers or mobility between public and private workplaces;

(b) provide leave and financial incentives, including replacement or relief staff, that encourage detachments or other forms of workplace exchanges for professional development and enhanced competencies;

(c) ensure the protection of acquired terms and conditions of employment, including guarantees of return to the previous or an equivalent post;

(d) offer opportunities to share knowledge and skills gained from such experiences among ECE personnel.

66. Cross-border regional or international mobility of ECE personnel may also offer professional enrichment opportunities and help meet shortages in receiving countries. Staff employed from another country should meet the requisite professional standards of the receiving country established by the relevant authority and should be guaranteed the same employment terms and conditions as nationals with equivalent qualifications in accordance with national law and regulation.

6. Professional and career development

6.1. Continual professional development (CPD)

67. A strong body of evidence indicates that quality ECE services depend as much on comprehensive, career-long CPD for all staff as on initial preparation for ECE work. For maximum effectiveness, CPD should be organized as a continuum linked to:

(a) initial education and training;

(b) entry into careers or jobs through induction and mentoring, or renewal through licensing or accreditation;

(c) new or more appropriate learning practices, leadership and support skills, respectively, for practitioners, ECE leaders and teaching support staff derived from ongoing institution-based practitioner training or specialist research;

(d) appraisal and career development.

68. Practitioner training policies and programmes need to increase CPD provision, especially in remote and disadvantaged areas and for those working with disadvantaged, marginalized and vulnerable populations, where initial preparation may be weakest and the need for support greatest. Where resources are limited, the gap can be partly filled through cascade methods using experienced national or regional trainers to train trainers who will share professional development knowledge and skills with local levels or institutions.

69. Comprehensive CPD that reaches all ECE personnel requires policies and sufficient investments to ensure to the greatest extent possible:

(a) professional development free of charge, and where this is not possible on a cost-sharing basis that does not inhibit access for ECE personnel with low incomes; cost-sharing should be based on a consistent fee structure of CPD services to the greatest extent possible;

(b) a guaranteed number of professional development days per year;

(c) adequate non-contact time for professional development recipients and providers, including for induction and mentoring and on-site or centre-based training;

(d) leave time for professional development provided outside the ECE institution;

(e) substitute or relief staff for those on leave, or reorganization of work time that does not unduly increase the working hours or reduce the quality of service provided by staff not on professional development leave;

(f) equitable access to CPD to all regions, including remote areas.

To these ends, education authorities may consider fixing benchmarks for investment in CPD of up to 1 per cent of the overall staff payroll of the ECE system or institution, and ensure investment and provision in all jurisdictions, including those with lower resources.

70. ECE authorities and employers should actively involve ECE staff and the organizations representing them in determining the goals, objectives and content of CPD activities. They should also associate CPD provided directly by ECE personnel organizations with overall professional development efforts.

71. To further promote CPD, ECE personnel, especially those who have not attained full qualifications, could be required to complete professional development during their careers as a condition of continued licensing or accreditation by the appropriate professional agency or body. Mandatory professional development should not be subject to staff financial contributions and the constraints of family responsibilities that would inhibit participation.

72. CPD can be delivered through a variety of approaches, such as external training, in-service training, research, peer-to-peer knowledge sharing and support, Internet-based training, and blended methodologies.

6.2. Reflective practice

73. Reflective practice – iterative critical reflection on past practice and adaption of practice in light of lessons learned – constitutes an essential strategy in establishing effective ECE learning practices. Evidence suggests that ECE personnel can substantially enhance their reflective practices through participating in CPD programmes within the framework of practice-based research, action research projects and knowledge sharing. Two approaches have proven useful: institutional professional development initiatives supported by ECE leaders, which can enhance the quality of teamwork between (for example) ECE educators and assistants and improve pedagogical practices at centre or school level; and opportunities for exchanges of good practice among teachers and support staff through networks of ECE providers. Elements for successful realization of these goals include:

(a) organization of working time to allow the necessary non-contact time within overall working hour obligations;

(b) designation of a pedagogical coordinator or adviser to support the team in developing their professional competences;

(c) leave time and encouragement to participate in professional knowledge sharing of professional associations and ECE networks. Where possible, web-based practitioners' networks can allow for knowledge sharing in an efficient manner.

6.3. Career development

74. As part of comprehensive ECE practitioner recruitment, retention and development policies, public and private employers should develop and apply clear career paths and a diversified structure, which permit staff mobility in response to individual staff needs and motivations, as well as service needs. Career structures should:

(a) to the greatest extent possible, allow horizontal mobility (between ECE jurisdictions or institutions and levels of education, notably primary to ECE and back, or to specialist technical jobs such as curricula developers or pedagogical advisers for qualified ECE personnel) and vertical mobility (promotion to fully qualified ECE practitioner status for less qualified support staff, or to posts of responsibility as ECE centre directors, system inspectors or senior management jobs for qualified personnel);

(b) be built around an agreed staff appraisal system;

(c) have transparent, equitable and merit-based criteria and procedures for career changes (based on consultations with organizations representing ECE personnel) that avoid direct or indirect discrimination and favour desired ECE competencies and skills; particular attention should be paid to criteria and procedures that permit more gender balance in practitioner, management and leadership posts in ECE;

(d) reward professional development, including self-initiated professional development, relevant prior learning experiences, and decisions to take up positions in rural, remote or disadvantaged areas.

75. A professional career in ECE should normally commence with a probationary period, which provides an opportunity for initiation of the entrant into work requirements, assessing aptitudes for the job, meeting and maintaining professional standards and ethics, and assistance in developing professional proficiency. Where applicable, final certification or accreditation may validate successful completion of a probationary period. The duration and conditions for successfully completing probation based on professional competence should be known in advance, and provision made for appeal of unfavourable decisions, associated with remedial professional development to address appraised weaknesses.

76. To the greatest extent possible, a unified career structure encompassing ECE and primary education, management and support staff should be envisaged in the interest of mobility and enriched ECE learning practices.

6.4. Other retention incentives

77. Where appropriate, special non-monetary awards or recognition of outstanding performance in ECE work can be developed by education authorities and employers as a means of encouraging and rewarding professional competency and dedication. Such incentives can include participation in national, regional or international meetings and CPD opportunities, and recognition as master ECE practitioners. Such awards should be based on child-oriented criteria developed together with ECE personnel and stakeholders.

78. Beyond individual incentives, the development and retention of a qualified ECE workforce require the cultivation of a professional identity and respect from other practitioners, parents and the community for ECE workers. Support for professional organizations and development of professional standards is one step in this direction. Proactive publicity campaigns highlighting the importance of ECE work and measures to reinforce a positive image of ECE workers could also be considered.

7. Employment terms and conditions

7.1. Remuneration

79. Current remuneration levels of ECE personnel do not always reflect the importance of work in this increasingly vital education sector. ECE employers should seek to define and implement remuneration policies and levels based on key guiding principles:

    (a) base salaries and overall remuneration should reflect the importance attached to ECE in relation to national income levels;

    (b) remuneration should be adjusted as needed to a level that provides a decent standard of living in the area of work concerned;

    (c) remuneration should be set at the same level as the equivalent job in primary education with similar qualifications and competency requirements (comparator professions), whether through separate or unified salary scales;

    (d) remuneration levels should correspond to the responsibilities of the ECE job (competencies and skills required) as set out in job descriptions objectively defined through systematic evaluation or appraisals of the work to be performed;

    (e) equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value.

80. As far as possible, salary levels and their periodic adjustment to reflect increases in relevant income levels or costs in the standard of living should be established on the basis of negotiations or collective bargaining agreements derived from social dialogue between employers and organizations representing ECE personnel. Where remuneration structures and levels are fixed by legislation or regulation, this should be done after consultations with representatives of employers and ECE personnel.

81. In the absence of a social dialogue mechanism to determine remuneration, ECE authorities should consider a national, regional or local minimum wage or equivalent salary "floor" mechanism linked to agreed professional qualification standards, particularly for the lowest-paid staff categories, in order to help realize the guiding principles for remuneration. To this end, the relevant ECE authority may need to establish a special fund as part of ECE financing, which provides the necessary tax incentives or direct grants that assist smaller or relatively under-resourced centres, especially to meet staff compensation standards.

82. Working hours, including evening or weekend shifts, in excess of the normal working week should be compensated by overtime pay, which should be set according to prevailing regulations or practices concerning overtime remuneration. In the case of work performed on a weekly rest day or excessive overtime hours, a compensatory rest period should be provided.

83. Contracts for ECE personnel should clearly set out wages.

84. In addition to appropriate salary structures and levels relevant to ECE teaching and learning objectives, it is important for ECE authorities and employers to ensure efficient salary management by avoiding fraudulent or non-existent staff payments ("ghost" staff or centres), late payments that may occur in rural and remote areas, and overly centralized payment procedures (requirements for ECE personnel to collect salaries from offices in rural areas where transport is poor, for example). More efficient salary administration can be obtained through a workable and up-to-date EMIS or TMIS where possible, periodic

audits to clean up payroll practices, and alternative forms of payment through bank accounts (via mobile phones, for example).

7.2. Other financial incentives

85. As practiced by public and private employers in some countries, as far as possible, means should be applied in line with national and, where applicable, international wage-fixing standards and service needs to compensate ECE personnel above the base salary for responsibilities, in addition to normal duties or as part of targeted recruitment or retention strategies, including:

(a) salary adjustments or targeted allowance for extra management or learning support responsibilities (unit heads, lead or mentor teachers, instructional and induction coaches, curriculum developers, pedagogic advisers) or for work in specialized or shortage areas (bilingual ECE personnel and those working with disabled, migrant or indigenous populations);

(b) additional holidays or other paid leave for qualified, experienced older personnel;

(c) long-term service awards;

(d) incentives in line with policies to recruit qualified ECE personnel to rural and remote areas.

7.3. Employment relationships and contracts

86. ECE personnel can be employed on employment contracts that comply with national law and practice and provide decent work.

87. Once they have passed probationary periods and licensing or accreditation requirements, staff should benefit from an open-ended contract that optimizes stability and commitment to ECE service, subject to renewal of professional standards set by licensing or accreditation authorities and fulfilment of professional conduct standards established by systemic or institutional regulations. Home-based providers should have rights of association and a decent income. ECE personnel should be adequately protected against arbitrary or biased action affecting their employment relationship, notably through transparent and equitable disciplinary procedures.

88. Stable employment provisions should be encouraged, as far as possible, especially in the context of restructuring for financial, demographic or other reasons. These may include:

(a) protective "ring-fencing" of essential ECE jobs, especially in times of public service budget restrictions;

(b) as far as possible, deployment to other jobs within an education system or institution commensurate with staff qualifications and experience, accompanied by retraining programmes where necessary;

(c) in consultation with representatives of private and non-profit providers and ECE personnel, application of innovative plans for redeployment of staff from small and under-resourced centres that are closed for economic or structural reasons to other ECE jobs; these might include ECE job exchanges or networks and tax incentives for hiring unemployed staff.

89. In line with concepts of greater professionalism and employment stability, ECE authorities and employers should promote stable employment and, as far as possible, direct employment relationships.

90. ECE personnel should enjoy protection from unjustified termination as set out in international standards, including appeals procedures to an impartial body. ECE personnel should be entitled to a reasonable period of notice of termination or compensation in lieu thereof, unless they are guilty of serious misconduct (see section 7.4). In accordance with national law and practice, terminated ECE workers should be provided with severance allowance, determined according to level of wages and length of service, or unemployment benefits, as set out in national social security systems.

7.4. Disciplinary procedures

91. Disciplinary procedures should be in place to deal with misconduct on the part of any ECE personnel, based on clearly defined grounds and procedures, and involving the authorities competent to decide on sanctions. These will include provision to dismiss in accordance with national law and practice. Legislation or regulation should distinguish between dismissal from a particular position or centre and loss of permanent accreditation if already obtained. Where ECE personnel request an organization to represent them, then such an organization should be consulted on and involved in the disciplinary mechanisms. Equitable safeguards in line with due process should be in place, including:

(a) the right to full information on allegations, grounds, possible consequences and relevant evidence;

(b) time to prepare defence, and representation of the staff member's choice;

(c) the right to participate at all stages, including hearings;

(d) confidentiality in the proceedings and outcomes unless the staff member requests public disclosure, prohibition from further work in ECE is decided, or the protection of early childhood learners so requires;

(e) the right to have decisions and reasons for them in writing and to appeal to the highest decision-making body.

92. Effective appeal procedures should be in place for staff who have been dismissed or to appeal against removal of permanent status or accreditation as an ECE practitioner. As with appointment, appeals bodies should be composed of impartial, well-trained individuals, selected on principles of diversity, and remunerated at a level that removes the risk of corruption.

7.5. Part-time work

93. Employers may provide part-time work opportunities based on:

(a) the same stable employment provisions as for full-time staff with similar qualifications;

(b) the same remuneration on a proportionate basis and the same basic employment conditions as those of full-time staff, including opportunities for career progression (promotions), working time (planning, preparation, assessment and non-teaching duties), and safety and health;

(c) leave conditions that correspond to those of full-time staff, subject to the same eligibility requirements on a proportionate basis;

(d) social security benefits, where they exist, including pensions, equivalent to those of comparable full-time workers; and determined in proportion to hours of work, contributions or earnings;

(e) the same rights at work as full-time staff.

94. Part-time work should be offered as an incentive for ECE personnel looking for such work. It should not be used as a means of achieving cost savings and denying full-time entitlements and benefits.

95. ECE employers may also meet service requirements and provide flexible working-time benefits for their staff through job sharing by ECE personnel, who take joint responsibility for a full-time post and the accompanying duties and responsibilities. Job-sharers would be expected to organize the division of the required tasks that make up the job between themselves in agreement with ECE centre management.

96. ECE employers should, to the extent possible, take measures to allow transfers from full-time to part-time work or vice versa, in accordance with national law and practice and by mutual agreement between the employer and personnel.

7.6. Auxiliary and paraprofessional staff

97. Although acting in key roles in very early years education, auxiliary staff can be among the lowest qualified and paid staff in ECE, resulting in very high turnover rates that do not favour quality education. A key policy consideration for education authorities and ECE employers is to define: (a) clear and appropriate roles and responsibilities; (b) the skills and knowledge required to fulfil those roles and responsibilities; and (c) the training required to ensure the acquisition of skills and knowledge. This could entail raising qualification levels and incentives of such staff through greater investment in training and professional development, linked to better remuneration, where necessary through minimum wage or other salary floor mechanisms. Other measures can include requiring qualified personnel to support auxiliary staff engaged in teaching assistant roles. Consideration should be given to workforce strategies specifically targeted at improving terms and conditions for auxiliary and paraprofessional workers, implemented through regulations or negotiations with trade union organizations representing these staff.

7.7. ECE leaders

98. Recognizing the importance of management and leadership excellence in ECE, education authorities and public and private employers should ensure that:

(a) initial preparation and professional development opportunities to prepare for their roles and responsibilities (see paragraph 39) are guaranteed to all managerial and leadership staff;

(b) remuneration is commensurate with their roles and responsibilities;

(c) managers and leaders also benefit from stable employment and have opportunities for job sharing and part-time working arrangements, provided that they can organize their work so as not to weaken ECE delivery;

(d) in centres large enough to permit it, reduced teaching responsibilities are available for managers and leaders to accommodate their other responsibilities.

99. To these ends, countries should consider specific leadership development programmes as part of overall ECE workforce strategies and national education management systems.

7.8. Leave

100. Paid leave is an important component of decent working conditions to ensure professional development and job satisfaction and to meet individual and service needs. Subject to the provisions determined by law, regulation or the outcomes of social dialogue mechanisms, including collective agreements where they exist, and under arrangements specified in employment contracts to meet service provision, public and private employers should provide leave arrangements to all ECE personnel for the following purposes:

(a) annual leave (holidays);

(b) sickness or injury;

(c) maternity and paternity leave;

(d) parental leave;

(e) emergency leave;

(f) professional or career development (or study leave).

101. To ensure effective leave arrangements while meeting service requirements, public and private employers should ensure adequate overall staffing and a roster of qualified replacement staff.

7.9.   ECE workers with family responsibilities

102. Family-friendly employment conditions can act as a powerful incentive in the recruitment of qualified ECE workers. Subject to national law and practice, and ratified international labour standards, such conditions can include:

(a) deployment to postings and transfer criteria that are compatible with family responsibilities;

(b) career structures that accommodate staff with family obligations for purposes of grade-level placement, salary and promotion;

(c) professional development opportunities that take account of family responsibilities;

(d) family-friendly working arrangements including, as appropriate, flexible working schedules, rest periods and holidays, provision of annual leave, short leave for emergencies, part time, flexitime, breastfeeding breaks, reduction of daily hours of work and of overtime and night work;

(e) maternity, paternity and parental leave, with employment protection and maintenance of seniority credits for career progression, pension benefits and the determination of any other employment rights;

(f) childcare provisions in ECE or other workplace premises;

(g) family allowances or other financial benefits not otherwise provided for by national schemes.

7.10. ECE personnel with disabilities and those living with HIV/AIDS

103. Consistent with principles of non-discrimination in employment matters and the HIV and AIDS Recommendation, 2010 (No. 200), terms and conditions for disabled ECE personnel and those living with HIV/AIDS should be clearly set out in administrative regulations or the outcomes of social dialogue mechanisms, including collective bargaining agreements where they exist, that will permit equal opportunity and productive employment of such staff in ECE settings. Terms and conditions should be aimed at creating:

(a) a caring and supportive environment guaranteeing physical access to facilities and flexible working arrangements where necessary for disabled staff, as well as the necessary social protection measures;

(b) care and support for staff living with HIV/AIDS, including reasonable accommodation [5] in the working environment, flexible working arrangements and reduced working hours, prevention programmes and universal precautions to reduce the risk of transmission, access to the necessary medical treatment and social protection, and confidentiality in workplace matters relating to their HIV/AIDS status.

104. Education authorities, in consultation with organizations representing ECE personnel, employers, and recognized organizations representing disabled persons and those representing people living with HIV/AIDS, should design, elaborate and apply workplace policies that help to ensure healthy, safe and supportive working environments for disabled staff and those living with HIV/AIDS.

8. Learning and teaching conditions

105. Evidence increasingly supports the view that ECE personnel work best in conditions that promote effective, individualized learning and maximize the professional skills, time and teamwork spent on core teaching, learning, management and support responsibilities. [6]

8.1. Working time

106. As with remuneration, working time for ECE personnel should be aligned with that of primary education staff in the interests of a higher status and better teaching and learning conditions.

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[5] For the purposes of these Guidelines, "reasonable accommodation" means any modification or adjustment to a job or to the workplace that is reasonably practicable and enables a disabled person or a person living with HIV or AIDS to have access to, or participate or advance in, employment.

[6] OECD (2012): *Starting Strong III*, Policy Levers 2 and 3; UNESCO (2007): *Strong Foundations: EFA Global Monitoring Report*, Chapter 6.

107. Working time should be established as part of negotiations on terms and conditions of employment with organizations representing ECE personnel or in the absence of elected representatives, with ECE personnel directly. Where national law and practice provide for the fixing of working time by special boards or other bodies, this should be done in consultation with representatives of employers and ECE personnel.

108. When fixing total hours of work, account should be taken of the multiple components of work required of ECE personnel, including:

    (a) instructional (contact) time according to the agreed learning programme;

    (b) numbers of children a staff member is responsible for educating or supervising per day or week;

    (c) preparation and planning time for instruction or managerial responsibilities, including teamwork;

    (d) assessment of individual learning progress and of the overall learning programme of the ECE institution, including reflections on individual and team practice;

    (e) supervision of children in activities other than core learning activities;

    (f) centre-based and off-site professional development time;

    (g) consultation time with parents and community representatives.

109. Requirements for overall hours of work and any specific components should be clearly stated in and communicated through national law, regulation or collective agreements so as to ensure clarity for staff in regard to their rights and responsibilities and, where appropriate, to inform parents using ECE services of service operating hours.

110. In fixing working time, it would be desirable to establish a fixed percentage of the overall working time obligations as non-contact time to favour preparation of learning activities, reflections on practice, team planning, and centre-based professional development.

111. A fixed allocation of paid working hours or days per year should be allocated to all ECE staff for in-service professional development, especially where CPD is a requirement for the renewal of licensing or accreditation.

112. In accordance with national law and practice, elected representatives of ECE personnel should be granted paid time off to participate in meetings of trade unions or organizations representing staff in such a manner as to avoid disrupting normal ECE services.

113. Required hours of work should normally not exceed 40 hours per week, or the equivalent per month, in the interests of ECE personnel with family responsibilities, in order to have a healthy work–life balance and to avoid excessive workload leading to staff stress and reduced learning quality. Where overtime or night work is necessary or proposed by the public or private employer to meet service needs, it should be regulated and compensated at overtime rates or in the form of compensatory leave in accordance with national law and practice or the outcomes of social dialogue mechanisms, including collective agreements where they exist.

8.2. ECE staff–child ratios

114. To effectively implement basic ECE programme objectives to promote child-centred learning, it is essential for classes, groups or learning environments to be as small as feasible in relation to available resources so as to permit ECE personnel to have frequent quality interaction with children.

115. It is recommended that relevant government authorities and public and private employers establish policy or regulatory benchmarks for staff–child ratios. Benchmarks will vary according to national, regional, local or institutional funding, organizational and human resource capacity, and the profiles of the population groups to be educated. Whether established by policy or fixed by law, regulation or the outcomes of social dialogue mechanisms, including collective bargaining agreements where they exist, staff–child ratios should:

(a) be based on only fully qualified personnel per learning class or group, assisted by one or more teaching assistants or auxiliary staff who can provide learning support as needed;

(b) establish maximum class or group learning sizes and staff–child ratios. Evidence points to maximum class or learning group sizes of 20 children and qualified staff–child ratios of approximately 1:10 or less as being most effective for learning outcomes in developed countries. Some international organizations have recommended a maximum staff–child ratio of 1:15 in pre-primary levels of high-income countries, while some national benchmarks establish a ratio as low as 1:3 for ages 0 to 12 months, and 1:5 for very early years education (1–3 years).

8.3. Health and safety

116. To ensure a safe and healthy ECE environment, relevant government authorities and public and private employers, in consultation with ECE personnel and organizations representing ECE personnel where they exist, should, in accordance with national law and practice, put in place safe and healthy conditions, such as:

(a) an occupational safety and health framework (in accordance with the ILO Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187), and the ILO Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), where ratified) for each ECE centre or institution, suitably adapted to the specific needs of educating and caring for young children. Such a framework should address, in consultation with ECE personnel as part of social dialogue mechanisms, inter alia, preventative measures to avoid exposure to communicable diseases, biohazards linked to ECE, and hazards related to ergonomic injury and use of chemicals such as cleaning agents; should provide for occupational safety and health monitoring procedures and reporting mechanisms for problems; and should be subject to regular review and evaluation;

(b) because ECE involves emotional work, sectoral or workplace policies to address the psychological aspects of the work performed;

(c) sectoral or workplace policies on HIV/AIDS;

(d) provisions for general health management for ECE personnel, including maternal health care, and access to basic medical examinations and care;

(e) health coverage of ECE personnel for activities and injuries suffered during teaching or supervision of children when engaged in school activities within or away from the school premises;

(f) regular training for all ECE personnel on good practices regarding disease control and management and awareness of the needs of vulnerable groups such as HIV/AIDS-infected and affected children and personnel.

117. In order to protect young children, provisions on sickness and injury leave should take into account the importance of full recovery time needed for ECE personnel in the case of illness caused by communicable disease. Full recovery time is also important for injuries in view of the physical demands of ECE.

118. Governments have the responsibility to monitor and enforce laws and regulations on a healthy and safe working and learning environment for all ECE providers, public, private or non-profit, in consultation with providers and staff. Where health and safety issues are also determined through the outcomes of social dialogue mechanisms, including collective bargaining agreements where they exist, between employers and trade unions representing ECE personnel, they should complement government monitoring and regulation. Proactive policies on accident prevention and health and safety audits can be effective means of encouraging compliance.

8.4. Violence-free workplace

119. Creating a safe and healthy teaching and learning environment implies a violence-free workplace, including the absence of verbal harassment and bullying. To this end, education authorities, public and private employers, ECE personnel and their representatives should:

(a) cooperate in developing and implementing appropriate policies and procedures to minimize the risk of violence for personnel and children within the ECE institution and from external sources, based on a culture of dialogue within ECE; and

(b) as necessary, cooperate with outside experts, such as law enforcement, social or psychological workers to this end.

120. Using an occupational safety and health approach, anti-violence measures should:

(a) seek to prevent problems through development of a policy specific to the ECE environment;

(b) organize work around respective roles and responsibilities;

(c) plan for contingencies;

(d) provide training for implementation, monitoring, and review and adaptation of the policy or procedures as needed.

Given the small-scale nature of many ECE institutions, employers and staff should receive assistance from education authorities to reach these goals.

121. In areas affected by armed conflict, governments have special responsibilities in ensuring that ECE centres, staff and children are protected from violence. Measures can include: agreements between parties of an armed conflict to designate ECE centres as demilitarized zones; not to target staff, children, parents and infrastructure in relation to an ECE facility; and to continue operation of ECE services in the event of a change of power over a

locality. ECE centres can be supported to establish necessary procedures in case of imminent or actual violence (evacuation of staff and children, protective measures for staff and children), and to establish community-based early warning capacities to monitor risks of violence.

8.5. ECE infrastructure and resources

122. Universally accessible and quality ECE depends on the necessary infrastructure, equipment and teaching materials to support high learning outcomes. Strategies that include proper levels of investment, public and private, should seek to achieve for all ECE learners:

(a) safe, attractive schools and centres (including play areas) that are suitably adapted to the needs of early years education, as set out in the objectives of these Guidelines; constructed and maintained in accordance with established sanitary and building standards; durable and economical; and based on design and use inputs from experienced ECE staff;

(b) adequate and developmentally and culturally appropriate teaching aids or materials, including, where practicable, ICT equipment and assistive devices, in consultation with experienced ECE staff and their representatives, and, where practicable, specialists in the area of disability.

123. In application of these objectives, education authorities and public and private employers may find it useful to:

(a) measure infrastructure planning and implementation against international or national quality standards or guidelines on the teaching and learning environment, physical space, furnishings and learning aids;

(b) construct ECE facilities in association with primary schools or renovate unused primary school space to economize on costs and benefit from proximity to other education levels;

(c) establish benchmarks for a certain percentage of capital investment on infrastructure and learning aids within ECE budgets.

124. Regulatory authorities' licences to operate ECE provision should ensure the suitability of infrastructure and learning aids in accordance with the learning environment and objectives, with the licences to be regularly reviewed and standards enforced by national law and practice, which can include adequately staffed ECE inspection services.

9. Social security and social protection

9.1. Social security

125. Where social security systems are in place, all ECE personnel should be entitled to benefits provided at national level. Where these systems are not in place, governments should, in accordance with national circumstances, establish social protection floors comprising basic social security guarantees as set out in the ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202).

9.2. Maternity or paternity protection

126. In view of the fact that the ECE workforce is mainly made up of young female workers, education authorities and public and private employers should provide, as part of decent work provisions and good human resource policies, maternity protection, taking into account national law and practice, ratified international labour standards and the outcome of social dialogue mechanisms, including collective agreements where they exist. Such provisions could include:

(a) discrimination-free terms of employment and working environment, including access to employment, rights of return to the same or equivalent positions paid at the same rate and consideration of maternity, paternity and parental leave as periods of service for the determination of ECE personnel's employment rights, including protection of career advancement opportunities following maternity leave;

(b) maternity leave with adequate cash and medical benefits;

(c) health protection at work for pregnant and nursing staff, including breastfeeding arrangements;

(d) family-friendly working arrangements to accommodate family responsibilities.

10. Evaluating ECE personnel to support quality practice

127. Evaluation or appraisal of ECE practitioners, managers and other personnel is a key component of quality ECE provision, accountability to parents and guardians who use such services, career development and basic job satisfaction as part of decent work conditions. Evaluation of performance with a view to encouraging performance improvements that lead to better child development in line with overall ECE objectives is particularly important.

10.1. Purpose and forms of evaluation

128. Appraisal systems should operate according to a number of key concepts and principles. They should:

(a) make a distinction between formative and summative evaluation;

(b) incorporate diagnostic and formative evaluation that is designed to identify staff weaknesses and professional development needs so as to develop better skills and competencies and encourage performance improvements to meet high professional standards, of which care and concern for the education and protection of children in their charge are the most important;

(c) be fair, objective, constructive and holistic in their approach, based on all variables in an ECE setting that affect the learning environment;

(d) be coherent in approach, aligned with national or institutional ECE orientations;

(e) be conducted regularly throughout ECE personnel employment;

(f) offer opportunities and incentives for individual career progress linked with successful professional development;

(g) function so as not to diminish the freedom, initiative, creativity and responsibility of ECE personnel;

(h) serve to enhance teamwork and cohesion, collegiality, and leadership;

(i) be based on multiple sources of information, including such sources as self-appraisal, teacher portfolio, peer review, direct classroom observation, or video evidence. Where feasible, multiple evaluators, including independent evaluators, should be used to ensure objectivity;

(j) be designed in consultation with ECE personnel and, if requested, with their organizations, and with employers and their organizations.

129. In line with these objectives, self- and peer evaluation (including that carried out by centre leaders in small or less formal institutional settings), as well as "upward" evaluation of ECE managers by other staff, may be effective means of sharing knowledge and ideas on performance improvements, and building teamwork. Following emerging concepts in other education levels, a "whole school" approach may be adopted in which all the staff and the ECE institution itself are evaluated together. Assessment by an external authority (inspector, specialist body responsible for standards) may also be a useful complementary means of evaluating staff. Incorporating evaluation as part of induction of new staff establishes a sound basis for all future assessments.

130. Given the close involvement of parents in ECE, parental involvement in institutional assessment may also be considered, based on assessing the centre or site as a whole rather than purely individual performance.

131. More formal (summative) evaluation systems should be based on the most objective criteria possible, as well as transparent procedures, including the right to appeal against assessments that staff consider unjustified. Where assessment is linked to career progression or the employment relationship, including probationary periods and accreditation if required, procedures should respect the due process recommendations set out in these Guidelines.

132. After multiple evaluations of consistently poor or negative work with children in ECE, accompanied by the necessary professional development to address competency or skill weaknesses, a public or private employer should have the authority to transfer staff to other tasks or even dismiss them in the interests of children's education. Sanctions of these kinds should only take place in accordance with national law and practice. The criteria and procedures for such assessments should be done in consultation with representatives of ECE personnel where requested and the employer should make the ECE personnel aware of their rights to representation.

10.2. Professional ethics

133. In line with the overall objectives set out in these Guidelines, it is expected that ECE practitioners, leaders, managers and other staff engaged in ECE should display the highest level of professional standards and ethical behaviour in their work. To this end, codes of professional ethics may be defined as follows:

(a) fixed, monitored and applied by qualifications or professional standards bodies (qualifications authorities, practitioners, managerial or other professional councils, specific either to education or to ECE) in relation to employment, licensing and accreditation, and renewal of these where applicable to professional job categories;

(b) established and promoted by organizations representing ECE personnel as part of their contributions to respect for professional ethics among their members and staff.

134. Such professional codes of ethics serve multiple functions: (a) support and protection for staff by outlining clear guidelines and rules of behaviour, serving as a reference point when ethical dilemmas arise, helping to prevent unfair accusations against staff and enhancing ownership and commitment to responsible behaviour; (b) protection for children and parents against unethical behaviour by staff, as well as providing rules and procedures for complaints; and (c) promotion of ECE centre and staff accountability to young learners, parents and the community.

135. ECE codes of professional ethics should be developed by the profession. ECE personnel should have ethics training as part of initial education and CPD.

136. Codes of professional ethics can include such topics as ethical responsibilities to children, to families, to colleagues, to employers, to communities and to the teaching profession.

11. ECE governance and social dialogue

11.1. ECE governance and inter-sectoral coordination

137. Policy coherence, strong governance and coordination among different government levels, agencies, and public and private providers are vital in securing universally accessible quality ECE provision and decent work for ECE personnel. Evidence from national experiences and policy recommendations from international organizations suggest that good governance, adequate funding and better staff professionalism and decent working conditions within ECE are more likely [7] if:

(a) the Ministry of Education or equivalent institution is the lead government agency in charge of ECE, provided that within this responsibility, policies and organization of education for the very early years (0–2 years) are equal to those of pre-primary (3–6 years) and primary education;

(b) where other government agencies have responsibility for ECE within a broader concept of education and care or development of children (for example ministries of health, social affairs, welfare or the equivalent), the education component is given high priority in decisions on standards, funding and staffing and coordinated with other child welfare programmes;

(c) coordination mechanisms are sufficiently sound to ensure that policies, standards, funding and staffing are equitable and uniform among the various governance levels of federal States or between central and decentralized education authorities (by means of a national partnership agreement, for example), and where not, special programmes target inequalities, particularly between richer and poorer localities and between urban and rural areas;

(d) ECE is incorporated in relevant national legislation, and operates as an integral part of a country's education system.

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[7] OECD (2012): Policy Lever 1; UNESCO (2007), Chapter 8; Y. Kaga, J. Bennett and P. Moss (2010), *Caring and learning together*.

138. Evidence suggests that good governance in ECE requires: [8]

(a) a strong link to research, data gathering and holistic programme evaluation to inform policies, organization of services and social dialogue, with special attention to very early years education (0–2 years) and to workforce levels and terms and conditions of employment of ECE personnel;

(b) data linked across multiple programmes and governance structures to ensure coherence and equity in professional standards and terms of employment.

139. Evidence suggests that specialized support agencies or units within government institutions responsible for ECE, established to undertake specific system tasks and maintain equivalent standards and accountability across large and diverse structures, are a necessary part of well-performing ECE management systems. [9] Depending on the available resources, these may include:

(a) capable policy, budgetary and human resource units (with specialized knowledge of ECE if located in general units for these tasks within ministries of education or elsewhere);

(b) a standards, professional training and curriculum authority;

(c) independent monitoring and evaluation bodies;

(d) a research unit, council or institute, with statistical capacities;

(e) a corps of pedagogical advisers and inspectors;

(f) dedicated specialists or units for workforce management, labour relations and social dialogue.

11.2. Promoting social dialogue

140. There is a general consensus among ILO tripartite constituents that social dialogue in its various forms between education authorities, public and private employers, and trade unions or other organizations representing ECE personnel is vital to ensuring decent work for ECE personnel, and to support ECE policy formulation, implementation and evaluation. It ensures that ECE workers have a voice in decisions affecting them. Social dialogue should be based on the fundamental principles and rights as set out in the 1998 ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, which includes freedom of association and the effective recognition of collective bargaining, as well as relevant, ratified ILO standards.

141. To fully realize its potential as a tool for facilitating adaptation to change and sustainable reforms, social dialogue on matters related to ECE should:

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[8] OECD (2012): Policy Lever 5; UNESCO (2007), Chapter 8; ILO (2012a), *Right beginnings: Early childhood education and educators*.

[9] OECD (2012), Policy Lever 1; UNESCO (2007), Chapter 8; Y. Kaga, J. Bennett and P. Moss (2010).

(a) fully engage governments and the social partners, respecting institutional and social partners' autonomy and the specific situation of the ECE sector;

(b) be organized and structured by law, regulation or other social dialogue mechanisms, including collective agreements where they exist, that are applicable to all ECE providers, public and private, according to the main objectives (information sharing, consultation, negotiation), with clear rules governing the contents, processes, means of enforcing agreements and dispute prevention and resolution procedures;

(c) apply information-sharing and consultative processes between education authorities, public and private employers, and trade unions or other organizations representing ECE personnel on issues such as general ECE policy and organization, initial education and training, professional and ethical standards, and criteria for assessment of ECE practitioners;

(d) apply negotiations or collective bargaining, where applicable, within ECE systems and institutions between public or private employers and trade unions representing ECE personnel on such issues as career structures (criteria and procedures), professional development, remuneration, hours of work and other terms and conditions of employment;

(e) in the interests of gender equality and non-discrimination, be accessible to all relevant actors, including women and men and disadvantaged rural, remote and emergency or conflict situation populations, whose interests may be marginalized in formal social and policy dialogue processes;

(f) where relevant, through broader ECE policy dialogue, provide a greater collective voice for stakeholders, including parents and relevant civil society organizations, notably through national, regional or local policy forums.

142. To accommodate the diversity of national experiences, the frameworks or processes for social dialogue in ECE might include:

(a) consultative councils, forums, coordinating committees or other advisory bodies composed of stakeholders to advise education authorities on ECE policy and practice at national, regional or local government levels;

(b) ECE centre or school councils or committees for daily or weekly consultation among managers and staff on service delivery;

(c) negotiations on terms and conditions between the relevant government authority and organizations representing ECE personnel, leading to published national law or regulations covering staff in civil service or equivalent systems;

(d) national or regional tripartite or bipartite councils, commissions or joint administrative committees set up to discuss and fix remuneration and other terms and conditions of employment;

(e) direct negotiations or social dialogue mechanisms, including collective bargaining where applicable, between public or private employers or their organizations and trade unions representing ECE personnel at national, local or institutional level, generally leading to a formal collective agreement;

(f) targeted mechanisms, where applicable, such as multi-employer bargaining streams specifically to assist employers and personnel in low-paid ECE jobs to reach

agreements on improving remuneration and working conditions, thereby enhancing efficiency.

143. Dispute prevention and resolution mechanisms provided by national law and practice should be available to ECE employers and workers, and their respective organizations, to further facilitate social dialogue.

12. Monitoring and follow-up of the Guidelines

144. Consistent with the Guidelines' recommendations on research, data gathering and programme evaluation for more coherence in ECE policies, ILO constituents, the ILO and other national and international stakeholders may wish to consider creating or extending the application of existing monitoring and support mechanisms specifically directed at assisting constituents in ILO member States to use these Guidelines. This might include the Joint ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel (CEART). Measures might also take the form of:

At national level

(a) strengthening the governance units on ECE research, data and programme evaluation;

(b) providing capacity for national education and labour inspection units to deal with ECE workplaces and learning environments;

At international level

(a) piloting the Guidelines, and researching and disseminating good practices in the areas covered by the guidelines;

(b) supporting the implementation of the Guidelines through development cooperation, including South–South initiatives;

(c) periodically reviewing these Guidelines and updating them in light of new needs and developments in the field of ECE, through the ILO, its constituents and partner institutions.

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