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[Signature]

Prepared by the Committees on Education, Arts and Culture; Youth, Women and Family Relations; and Finance with Senators Angara, Cayetano (P.) and Drilon as author

**AN ACT
RECOGNIZING THE EARLY YEARS FROM ZERO (0) TO AGE EIGHT (8)
AS THE FIRST CRUCIAL STAGE OF EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT,
STRENGTHENING THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT
COUNCIL, AND RENAMING THE DAY CARE CENTER AS CHILD
DEVELOPMENT CENTER AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

1 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "Early Years Act
2 (EYA) of 2012".

3 SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to
4 promote the rights of children to survival, development and special protection
5 with full recognition of the nature of childhood and as well as the need to
6 provide developmentally appropriate experiences to address their needs; and
7 to support parents in their roles as primary caregivers and as their children's
8 first teachers.

9 The State shall institutionalize a National System for Early Childhood
10 Care and Development (ECCD) that is comprehensive, integrative and
11 sustainable, that involves multi-sectoral and inter-agency collaboration at the
12 national and local levels among government; among service providers,
13 families and communities, and among the public and private sectors,

1 nongovernment organizations; professional associations, and academic
2 institutions.

3 This System shall promote the inclusion of children with special needs,
4 and advocate respect for cultural and linguistic diversity. It shall be anchored
5 on complementary strategies for ECCD that include service delivery for
6 children from zero (0) to age eight (8), educating parents and caregivers,
7 encouraging the active involvement of parents and communities in ECCD
8 programs, raising awareness about the important efforts that improve the
9 quality of life for young children and families.

10 It shall also be the policy of the State to recognize the years from zero
11 (0) to age eight (8) as the first crucial stage of educational development of
12 which the years from zero (0) to age four (4) shall be the responsibility of the
13 ECCD Council.

14 *SEC. 3. Objectives.* - The objectives of the National ECCD System are:

15 a) To achieve improved infant and child survival rates by ensuring that
16 adequate health and nutrition programs and services are accessible to
17 infants and young children and their parents, from the prenatal period
18 and throughout the early childhood years;

19 b) To enhance the physical-motor, socio-emotional, cognitive,
20 language, psychological and spiritual development of young children;

21 c) To facilitate a smooth transition from care and education provided at
22 home to community or school-based setting and to Kindergarten;

23 d) To ensure that young children are adequately prepared for
24 the formal learning system that begins at Kindergarten;

1 e) To establish an efficient system for early identification, prevention,
2 referral and intervention for the wide range of children with special
3 needs from zero (0) to age four (4);

4 f) To upgrade and update the capabilities of service providers and their
5 supervisors to comply with quality standards for various ECCD
6 programs;

7 g) To reinforce the role of parents and other caregivers as the primary
8 caregivers and educators of their children especially from zero (0) to
9 age four (4);

10 h) To enhance and sustain the efforts of communities to promote
11 ECCD programs and ensure that special support is provided for the
12 poor, disadvantaged, and linguistic minority communities, migrant
13 families and children with special needs to include those with
14 disabilities and giftedness;

15 i) To improve the quality standards of public and private ECCD
16 programs through, but not limited to, a registration and credential
17 system for ECCD service providers and facilities.

18 *SEC. 4. Definitions. - For purposes of this Act:*

19 a) Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) System shall refer to the
20 full range of health, nutrition, early education and social services development
21 programs that provide for the basic holistic needs of young children from zero
22 (0) to age four (4), and to promote their optimum growth and development.

23 *These programs shall include:

24 1) Center-based programs, such as the day care service established
25 under Republic Act No. 6972, hereinafter referred to as the child

1 development service, community or church-based early childhood
2 education programs initiated by nongovernment organizations or
3 people's organizations, workplace-related child care and education
4 programs, child-minding centers, health centers and stations; and;

5 2) Home-based programs, such as the neighborhood-based play
6 groups, family child care programs, parent education and home visiting
7 programs.

8 b) ECCD Service Providers shall include the various professionals,
9 paraprofessionals and volunteer caregivers who are directly responsible for
10 the care and education of young children from zero (0) to age four (4) through
11 the various center and home-based programs. They include, but are not
12 limited to, day care workers hereinafter referred to as child development
13 workers, child development teachers, teacher-aides, rural health midwives,
14 social workers, community health workers, barangay nutrition scholars, parent
15 effectiveness service volunteers, and family day care providers.

16 c) ECCD Curriculum shall refer to the developmentally appropriate
17 educational objectives and practices, programs of activities, organized
18 learning experiences, recommended learning materials and appropriate
19 assessment for children from zero (0) to age four (4) that are implemented by
20 service providers through center and home-based programs. It shall consist of
21 national program goals and guidelines, instructional objectives, and content
22 outlines that are age-appropriate, individually appropriate and culturally-
23 relevant.

24 d) Parent Education shall refer to the various formal and alternative means of
25 providing parents with information, skills, and support systems to assist them

1 in their roles as their children's primary caregivers and educators. These
2 include public and private parent education programs linked to center, home
3 and media-based childcare and education programs.

4 *SEC. 5. System Framework and Components.* – The ECCD System shall
5 ensure that the National ECCD Program is implemented in accordance with
6 quality standards for accreditation and for this purpose there shall be
7 established a National ECCD Monitoring & Evaluation Framework. The ECCD
8 System shall include the following components:

9 a) ECCD Curriculum. - Focuses on children's total development and
10 takes into account age, individual and socio-cultural appropriateness. It
11 shall promote the delivery of complementary and integrative services
12 for health, nutrition, early childhood education, sanitation and cultural
13 activities. It shall use the child's first language as the medium of
14 instruction.

15 b) Parent Education and Involvement, Advocacy and Mobilization of
16 Communities and Local Government Units. - Harness and develop
17 parents' strengths as providers of ECCD programs at home, as active
18 partners of other stakeholders, as advocates for community and LGU
19 concerns that affect children, and as pillars of support for local and
20 national ECCD programs through community organization efforts

21 c) Human Resource Development Program. - Establishes mechanisms
22 for the systematic professionalization of ECCD service providers,
23 through enrolment in educational programs in site-based or distance
24 education modes, through pre-service or in-service training including

1 continuing education programs, whereby a registration and credential
2 system shall be developed in the ECCD System.

3 d) ECCD Management. - Focuses on a continuing process of planning,
4 implementation, supervision, financial management, monitoring,
5 evaluation and reporting to persons concerned. It shall encourage the
6 active involvement and build the capabilities of service providers,
7 parents and local government officials to sustain the program.

8 *SEC. 6. Expanding the ECCD System.* - The National ECCD System shall be
9 expanded to all provinces, cities/municipalities and barangays as may be
10 determined by the ECCD Council to achieve universal ECCD coverage for all
11 children from zero (0) to age four (4).

12 *SEC. 7. Implementing Arrangements and Operational Structures.* – the
13 implementation of the National ECCD System shall be the responsibility of the
14 ECCD Council.

15 a) *Responsibilities of the ECCD Council.* - The ECCD Council shall be
16 responsible for establishing national standards, developing policies and
17 programs, ensuring compliance thereof, providing technical assistance
18 and support to the ECCD service providers in consultation with
19 coordinating committees at the provincial, city/municipal and barangay
20 levels.

21 The ECCD Council, The Department of Education (DepED), the
22 Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the
23 Department of Health (DOH), the National Nutrition Council (NNC) and
24 the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP) shall meet in
25 an annual workshop to prepare work and financial plans incorporating

1 the financial and technical support of said entities as referred to under
2 Section 12 hereof. It shall consolidate the following existing program
3 implementing guidelines to ensure consistency in integrated service
4 delivery within the National ECCD System.

5 *b) Responsibility of the DepED.* - The DepED shall recognize the
6 National ECCD Program as the foundation of the learning continuum
7 and shall promote it for all children from zero (0) to age four (4).

8 *c) Responsibilities of the DSWD, DOH, and NNC.* – The DSWD, DOH
9 and NNC shall provide continuing professional development program
10 support, supplementary learning materials, reference materials,
11 supplemental nutrition and health care services. A program support
12 plan shall be fully implemented by the above mentioned agencies
13 within two (2) years from effectivity of this Act, and thereafter
14 mainstreamed as regular program support to the National ECCD
15 System.

16 *d) Responsibilities of Local Government Units.* – Local Government
17 Units (LGUs) shall support the National ECCD System through the
18 following:

- 19 1) Ensure the implementation of their ECCD Program;
- 20 2) Organize and support parent cooperatives to establish
21 community-based ECCD programs;
- 22 3) Provide counterpart funds for the continuing professional
23 development of their ECCD public service providers; and
- 24 4) Provide the facilities for the conduct of their ECCD Program.

1 For this purpose, the LGUs shall allocate a portion of their Special
2 Education Fund (SEF) and/or a portion of their Twenty Percent (20%)
3 Development Fund in addition to other local funds.

4 e) Responsibilities of Families and Communities. - Families and
5 communities shall initiate establishment of various community-based
6 projects such as but not limited to health, nutrition, social development
7 and early childhood education projects for the overall development of
8 their children from zero (0) to age four (4), with the active assistance
9 and technical support of the DSWD and the LGU concerned.

10 *SEC. 8. Strengthening the ECCD Council.* - The ECCD Council shall be
11 strengthened to ensure the State's focus on building a strong foundation for
12 the development and learning of children during the early years from zero (0)
13 to age four (4), to support the full range of health, nutrition, early education
14 and social development programs for the child's holistic development and
15 ensure sustained inter-agency and multi-sectoral collaboration. The Council
16 shall be attached to the DepEd.

17 *SEC. 9. Organization of the ECCD Council.* - The ECCD Council shall be
18 composed of:

19 a) ECCD Governing Board. - The ECCD Governing Board shall be composed
20 of:

21 1) Secretary of the Department of Education (DepEd) as Ex-Oficio
22 Chairperson;

23 2) Director-General of the ECCD Council as Vice Chairperson;

24 3) Secretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development
25 (DSWD);

- 1 4) Secretary of the Department of Health (DOH);
- 2 5) Executive Director National Nutrition Council (NNC);
- 3 6) President of the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP);
- 4 and
- 5 7) One (1) private individual who is an ECCD practitioner and expert
- 6 shall be appointed by the President upon the recommendation of the
- 7 Board.

8 The Board shall meet once a month or upon the call of the chairperson or
9 three members of the Board.

10 *b) Council Secretariat.* - There shall be established an ECCD
11 Secretariat headed by the Director-General who shall be its chief
12 executive to be appointed by the President. The Director-General shall
13 have the rank, privileges and emoluments of an Undersecretary.
14 The Director-General shall be assisted by two (2) permanent positions
15 of Deputy Director-General to be appointed by the Board, one of whom
16 shall be responsible for ECCD programs and activities and the other for
17 general administrative and financial services of the ECCD Council.

18 *SEC. 10. Functions of the ECCD Council.* - The ECCD Council shall carry out
19 the objectives of the National Early Childhood Care and Development System
20 by performing the following functions:

- 21 a) Promulgate policies and implementing guidelines for ECCD
- 22 programs in consultation with stakeholders, including the regional
- 23 level when appropriate, consistent with the national policy and program
- 24 frameworks as defined in this Act;

- 1 b) Establish ECCD program standards that reflect developmentally
2 appropriate practices for ECCD programs, which shall interface with
3 the kindergarten curriculum of the DepEd;
- 4 c) Develop a national system for the recruitment, registration,
5 accreditation, continuing education and equivalency, and credential
6 system of ECCD service providers, supervisors and administrators to
7 improve and professionalize the ECCD sector and upgrade quality
8 standards of public and private ECCD programs;
- 9 d) *Develop a national system of awards and recognition to deserving*
10 ECCD program implementers and service providers;
- 11 e) Promote, encourage and coordinate the various ECCD programs of
12 the DepEd, the DSWD, the DOH and the NNC, and monitor the
13 delivery of services to the ECCD program beneficiaries nationwide;
- 14 f) Evaluate and assess the impact and outcome of various ECCD
15 programs nationwide through an effective information system;
- 16 g) Develop a national system for early identification, screening and
17 surveillance of young children from zero (0) to age four (4);
- 18 h) Develop various support mechanisms that maximize the public and
19 private resources for implementing ECCD programs, giving priority to
20 the needy and at-risk children from poor communities and migrant
21 families;
- 22 i) Provide funds to poor and disadvantaged communities for the
23 establishment and expansion of public ECCD programs, improvement
24 of physical facilities and for hiring of ECCD service providers;

- 1 j) Promote and encourage private sector initiatives for the
2 establishment of ECCD programs;
- 3 k) Provide guidelines for the conduct of solicitations from local and
4 international civic organizations, and requests and private foundations
5 to supplement available resources; and
- 6 l) Perform such other functions as the ECCD Council may deem
7 necessary.

8 *Sec.11. Financing ECCD Programs* - ECCD programs shall be financed
9 through a combination of public and private funds. All public ECCD program
10 providers shall prioritize children from zero (0) to age four (4) from families
11 who are in greatest need and who can least afford private ECCD programs.

12 a) The DepEd, DSWD, DOH, NNC and ULAP shall support the
13 implementation of the National ECCD System and shall include in their
14 respective annual general appropriation beginning the fiscal year
15 following the approval of this Act the necessary funding to achieve the
16 goal of universal coverage of ECCD programs to all children from zero
17 (0) to age four (4) and sustain the Program from thereon.

18 *b) Support for ECCD Programs* - The government shall support public
19 ECCD programs that shall involve the LGUs, and funds from the
20 national government agencies for technical assistance and support.
21 Additional funds may be generated from intergovernmental donors and
22 financial institutions by the appropriate government agencies through
23 the NEDA to support the public programs in all municipalities including
24 the urban poor.

1 There shall be established a fund for an ECCD Program Contracting
2 Scheme with accredited private providers at the community levels.

3 *c) Fees and Contributions* - Fees and contributions collected for both
4 public and private ECCD programs shall be monitored by the ECCD
5 Council to ensure that these are affordable and within reasonable
6 limits. Families are encouraged to volunteer their time and services to
7 support the ECCD programs.

8 *Sec. 12. Appropriations.* - For the implementation of this Act the amount of
9 Five Hundred Million Pesos (Php 500,000,000.00) per year for five (5) years is
10 hereby appropriated for the National ECCD Program, effective upon approval
11 of this Act. Said amount shall be funded from the gross income of the
12 Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation and shall be directly remitted
13 in four (4) quarterly instalments to a special account of the ECCD Council.

14 Funds for the operations of the Council as an attached agency of the
15 DepEd shall be included in the General Appropriations Act.

16 Financial and technical support packages provided by the DepEd, DSWD,
17 DOH and NNC for ECCD Programs shall be specified as separate line items
18 in their respective annual budgets in the General Appropriations Act.

19 *Sec. 13. Annual Report.* - The ECCD Council shall, at the close of each
20 calendar year, submit an annual report to Congress, giving a detailed account
21 of its proceedings and accomplishments during the year, making
22 recommendations for the adoption of measures that will improve the National
23 ECCD System and ensuring achievement of universal coverage of ECCD
24 benefits to all children from zero (0) to age four (4) within a period of five (5)
25 years.

1 *SEC. 14. Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - The Council, in consultation
2 with appropriate government agencies and nongovernment organizations,
3 shall formulate and issue the necessary rules and regulations for the
4 implementation of this Act within thirty (30) days after the effectivity of this Act.

5 *SEC. 15. Repealing Clause.* - Republic Act No. 8980, otherwise known as "An
6 Act Promulgating A Comprehensive Policy And A National System For Early
7 Childhood Care And Development (ECCD), Providing Funds Therefore And
8 For Other Purposes" is hereby repealed. Pertinent provisions of all laws,
9 decrees, executive orders, presidential proclamations, rules and regulations
10 or parts thereof contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are
11 hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

12 *SEC. 16. Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act is declared
13 unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity and effectivity of the
14 other provisions hereof.

15 *SEC. 17. Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after
16 its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of
17 general circulation.

18 Approved.