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# Lack of support for Gauteng ECD centres leaves children vulnerable

EDUCATION

Sergio Dos Santos | Published 3 months ago

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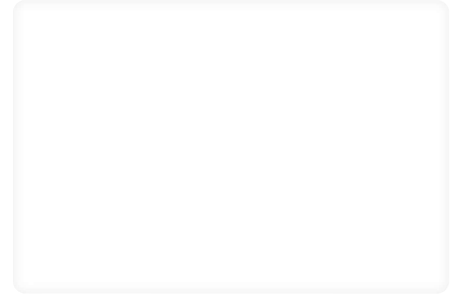


Gauteng Department of Education has spent over R186 million on management fees for Early Childhood Development logistics from 2019 to 2024, rather than directly benefiting the children, says the writer.

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The Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) has constantly failed in its mandate to provide effective oversight and support for Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres in line with Section 94 of the Children's Act (2005).

A glaring example is the unresolved impasse over the Bantu Bonke ECD Centre in Vereeniging, where more than 100 children have been denied access due to bureaucratic confusion between the GDE and the Department of Social Development regarding the facility's transfer and ownership.

The injustice continues; the ECD government subsidy, which was suspended at R17 per child per day since 2019, is set to increase to R24 in 2025. This increment still falls short of the target of R36 per child per day, which experts say would be sufficient to cover the costs of beneficial ECD programmes.

Moreover, recent statistics from the 2024 General Household Survey further illustrate the scale of the issue: only 41.1% of children aged 0–4 in Gauteng attend formal Early Childhood Development (ECD) facilities.

GDE has spent over R186 million on management fees for ECD logistics from 2019 to 2024, rather than directly benefiting the children. The MEC of Education, Matome Chiloane, failed to provide a basic register of the number of ECD centres that meet the basic infrastructure standards in Gauteng. He was responding to the DA's questions tabled in the Gauteng Provincial Legislature (GPL).

These shortcomings have left thousands of children without access to quality early learning, undermining the province's developmental goals and perpetuating educational inequality.

The DA Gauteng demands that the GDE prioritise universal access to ECD programmes by ensuring that proper facilities are available to all children, particularly in disadvantaged and impoverished communities.

***Sergio Dos Santos MPL, DA Gauteng Shadow MEC for Education***

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