

# CHAPTER 2

## EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The majority of participants who were involved in the three music projects that were undertaken in South Africa for the purpose of this study, were black ECD practitioners from underprivileged schools in the Limpopo, Gauteng and Mpumalanga provinces. As explained in Chapter 1, the only experience the researcher previously had in the presentation of skills development music training workshops for teachers on the proposed music programme, was with white teachers from fairly well to well-resourced schools. With her goal to implement the music programme through practical hands-on music training workshops with musically untrained black ECD teachers to find out to what extent her methodology would fit into the country's vision of "education for all", it was necessary to do a literature review of the position of ECD in South Africa. She hoped that this review would help her find a way through which she could link Music Education (her "comfort zone") with ECD (the participants' "comfort zone") in a more understandable way.

The more she became involved with the training of black ECD teachers, the more she realized how little she knew about the problems that these teachers were facing in their day-to-day struggle to teach in places where resources were scarce and living conditions not always favorable. Although she shifted her personal focus to the teaching of music appreciation to pre-school children from January 1994, she was not a trained ECD teacher and did not have in-depth knowledge of government policies and strategies for ECD in South Africa. Although she was "vaguely" aware of the racial struggle and inequalities that existed between black and white schools, it did not matter to her at the time. With the onset of this study, she had to admit that she had been trapped for many years in a comfort zone where she was teaching music with blinkers on, unaware of the need of the underprivileged around her. Today she often wonders how it is possible that she did not become involved earlier with outreach programmes through which she could share her expertise, skills, knowledge and love for Classical music with those who need it most in the country.

In order to provide a backdrop for better understanding the current inequalities in ECD in South Africa, the chapter starts with a brief presentation of the history of ECD provision in the South African context, followed by the current situation of young children and ECD practitioners. Government policies and strategies that influenced ECD after 1994 will also be investigated with the main focus on Arts and Culture. Lastly the education and training of the ECD sector will be put into perspective.

Hyde & Kabiru (2003:62) state that the availability of data relating to ECD is poor in virtually all of Sub-Saharan Africa; even poorer than data for the primary and secondary levels. This paucity of data makes monitoring and quality control extremely difficult in ECD. Although many sources were used in this chapter, the main source of information which provided statistical data on ECD was the *Nation-wide Audit on ECD Provisioning* (DoE<sup>4</sup> 2001a:5). This valuable source provided data on 23,482 ECD sites and 1,030,500 learners between the ages of 0 and 7 years. This document was the first extensive empirically grounded information ever made available in South Africa that reflected the nature and state of ECD provisioning in the country.

## 2.2 DEFINITION OF ECD

Early Childhood Development is defined by several sources as “an umbrella term which applies to the process by which children from birth to nine years grow and thrive: physically, emotionally, mentally, socially, spiritually and morally” (DoE 1995:33; DoE 1996:3; DoE 1997a: Glossary; DoE 2001a:9; DoE 2001b:par.1.3.2).

## 2.3 A BRIEF HISTORY OF ECD PROVISIONING BEFORE 1994

The history of the “majority of children in South Africa”<sup>5</sup> is one of deprivation in which their development has been negatively influenced by different social inequalities and inadequacies. The racist practices of apartheid and related socio-economic inequalities played a major part in the creation of the adverse childhood that most

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<sup>4</sup> As explained in the Acronyms and Abbreviations, DoE is the abbreviation for the South African national Department of Education. In the Sources, alphabetical reference is made to the Department of Education. In the text, however, references are indicated as DoE, for the sake of brevity.

<sup>5</sup> The “majority of children in South Africa” refers specifically to black children. It might seem as if the author tried to simplify the historical past of ECD in South Africa by only referring to Blacks and Whites and not mentioning Coloureds and Indians. For the purpose of this study, which was aimed at black teachers from underprivileged black schools in South Africa, the researcher was interested to research their past.

black children experienced in the past. The following paragraphs are a summary of the history of ECD provisioning in South Africa as explained in the first chapter of the *Nation-wide Audit on ECD Provisioning* (DoE 2001a:8-10).

The history of current ECD programmes in South Africa can be traced as far back as the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the high infant mortality rate in the country led to the creation of parent and community initiatives whose aim was to provide care and education for young children outside the home. A voluntary organization, the South African Council for Child and Family Welfare, was established in 1908 to investigate fatal diseases and to give support to parents and communities. By 1940 there was a definite separation between daycare centres and nursery schools. While daycare centres received per capita subsidy from the Department of Social Welfare, nursery schools were supported by provincial education departments. In 1939 the South African Association for Early Childhood Education (SAAECE), which was primarily an association of white nursery school teachers, was responsible for setting the standards for ECD services.

A major setback for home-based centres and crèches came with the recommendation of the Committee of Heads of Education Departments in 1940 that nursery schools should be recognized as adjunct to the national system of education. Crèches were seen as places that primarily provided custodial care for young children, whereas nursery schools were seen as places that were able to provide a more educational function. Although welfare subsidies were available for all groups, black nursery schools were not eligible to receive these grants. With the increase of running costs at nursery schools, without the increase of subsidies, these schools had to rely more on the income that they generated from fees paid by the parents. Although most Whites could afford the increase in fees, it was impossible for working class Blacks to keep up with the fees and therefore they had to put their children into custodial care. The result of this was that the provision became increasingly better at establishments for Whites and most of the trained teachers were teaching there. In sharp contrast with these privileged middle-class institutions, the provision for children in custodial care was neglected.

The historical situation of racial discrepancies can also be seen in the training provision of pre-school teachers who mostly had to be trained by NGOs. Although the state did not provide pre-school training facilities, a subsidy was given to training

done by others. The grant unfortunately did not last long for race groups other than Whites, because there was a decline in government support for ECD during 1940-1969. The limited amount of money that was available was channeled towards the support of white children. With the implementation of the National Education Policy Act in 1967, white education departments were empowered to take charge of nursery education. This led to the further growth of provisioning for white children in the 1970s. The salaries of qualified white teachers were paid by the DoE. Centres registered with the DoE that chose to remain private were subsidized, pre-primary classes were established at some schools and teacher training courses for ECD were introduced at different teacher training colleges.

Unfortunately the same ECD services and privileges were not experienced by black children. Limits that were put on parental income placed restrictions on welfare subsidies for black children. In 1958 training courses for black teachers were restricted, but those for white teachers were allowed to continue (although on a small scale). By the end of 1990 lower level teacher training courses that had been set up by the provincial education departments were phased out. The state's obvious unwillingness to invest in pre-school services became increasingly evident between 1980 and 1990. This lack of state involvement led to the flourishing of the NGO sector which took over the bulk of the responsibility to train ECD educators and to take care of the rest of the provisioning for the ECD sector.

As early as 1983, the De Lange Commission already emphasized the importance of ECD (DoE 2001a:9), especially for children from disadvantaged communities. The Commission recommended the creation of a bridging course before children entered their formal schooling career. Although the state's acceptance of the need for a one or two year bridging course is reflected in the White Paper on the Provision of Education in 1983, the state did not have adequate resources to implement these necessary interventions. State provisioning was therefore seen at that stage as "inadequate, segregated, fragmented, un-coordinated and lacking a comprehensive vision" (DoE 2001a:10).

The *Child Care Act*, issued in 1983 by the apartheid government, made provision for the registration of children's homes and places of care. The state's fragmented and inequitable ECD provisioning for children "at risk" was further emphasized by this new legislation. Although it seemed like a step towards the formalization of ECD

provisioning, it tried to cover up the separation and downgrading that existed between places of care and educational centres.

By 1988 the “*White*” *Education Affairs Act* (DoE 2001a:10) provided for the establishment and maintenance of public pre-primary schools, the registration of private pre-schools and the provision of subsidies. Both public and private pre-primary schools that were registered with the Department of Education could apply for subsidies if they provided afternoon care. These schools could also apply for tax deductions and enjoy the payment of special rates while places of care and education that were registered under the Department of Welfare were regarded as businesses and were therefore not eligible to receive the same benefits.

A further reflection of racial discrepancy in the history of ECD provisioning in South Africa was the lack of national representatives of all races at an organizational level. Although the SAAECE opened its doors to all races in the early 1980s, the organization still mainly operated in urban areas and focused more on advantaged communities. The social struggles that existed in ECD became more prominent when many NGOs started to raise their voices for the rights of children during the tense political climate of the 1980s. The NGOs were looking for alternative ways for ECD provisioning, especially for the training of educators. The National Interim Working Committee (NIWC) was launched in 1990 to represent ECD nationally. The NIWC and the SAAECE eventually amalgamated in 1994 to form the current SACECD (see Chapter 1.2.2.1) which plays both a lobbying and organizational role in South Africa through which ECD educators are represented and their provisioning is addressed.

A 1992 study conducted by the World Bank (2005) and the Centre for Education Policy Development provided an initial estimate of coverage that revealed that almost 10% of South African children between 0 and 6 had access to some form of ECD site, and 3% had access to a subsidized service. While more than one third of white children attended early childhood facilities, only 6% of black children had such access. The differential between expenditure per capita on white children and black children exceeded 40.

## 2.4 THE ECD SITUATION IN SOUTH AFRICA AFTER 1994

The historical overview given in paragraph 2.3 highlights the fundamental inequities in the developmental environment of the majority of South Africa's children. According to Chisholm (2004:1), the registration of ECD centres was still very fragmented in 1994, when the first democratic elections in the country took place. Public pre-primary schools were registered under education, and "educare centres" and "crèches" were still registered under welfare. As the history of ECD provisioning in South Africa has pointed out, the centres that were marginalised during the previous bureaucracy, such as those that can be found in informal settlements and rural areas were still not registered, because they could not meet the requirements which were largely based on serviced urban sites. In spite of these setbacks, there was a strong drive and willpower amongst all role players in ECD to tackle the inequalities of the past.

Ten years after South Africa's transition to democracy, there were few areas of education that were untouched by the drive since 1994 to overcome the legacy of apartheid (Chisholm 2004:1). The common goal of the new ECD sector that emerged out of the broader democratic struggle was to sort out the lack of a nurturing, educative and supportive environment for formerly severely disadvantaged children. Farisani (1997:1) says that the situation in South Africa with "traditional and modern societies living side by side, and sometimes even within the same family" is a unique situation which is rapidly changing. A new Early Childhood policy was therefore needed that could recognize the full spectrum of the population, and not, as was seen in the past, concentrate only on the culture which was most familiar to policy makers. According to Farisani (1997:1), South Africa has uncritically imported day care centre models from Europe and the USA in the past without taking the needs of the majority of ECD learners into consideration. The result of this was that good, quality, expensive services were only available to a small minority of the population while the rest were exposed to extremely low quality ECD provision, if at all.

### 2.4.1 From Educare to ECD

According to the *Nation-wide Audit on ECD Provisioning* (DoE 2001a:9), ECD emerged out of the broader democratic struggle against apartheid with the goal of "addressing the lack of a nurturing, educative and supportive environment for the

vast majority of South Africa's disenfranchised children". The *Interim Early Childhood Development Policy* (DoE 1996:1) states that ECD is a relatively new term in the South African vernacular. The term *Educare*, which refers to the provision of care and the education of children from birth to age 6, was commonly used before the first democratic elections. After the new government took charge of the country, a strong belief started to evolve that the care of young children should involve more than the act of just keeping watch over them. The result of this decision was that the term *Educare* was replaced by Early Childhood Development (ECD) which encompasses children from birth to at least nine years, depending on their age when they enter formal education.

The paradigm shift from *Educare* to Early Childhood Development expanded the focus from the inclusion of 0-6 year olds to the inclusion of 0-9 year olds. Seeing that there was a remarkable difference between the learning patterns of children in the 0-9 year old cohort and older children, these changes in ECD led to new challenges that had to be taken care of (DoE 2001a:12).

#### **2.4.2 The holistic approach**

In order to find solutions for the inequalities of the past in South Africa, there was a general tendency after 1994 that a more holistic approach should be followed in ECD. Farisani (1997:4) reckoned that this "multidisciplinary approach" was needed so that the welfare as well as the development of young children in the country could be emphasized. This integrated approach which is concerned with the development of the "whole child" is advocated worldwide and is also well supported and promoted by UNICEF. According to Misrak Elias (2004:2), previous UNICEF Country Representative of South Africa, integration in the context of ECD means that no single sector or type of service can contribute to the holistic development of children on its own. It is therefore the responsibility of many different sectors to work together as a team to reach this holistic goal.

While family life differs from one child to the next in terms of composition, values and roles within each family, the young child and its caregiver should have access not only to food and shelter, but also to loving care that fosters both physical and cognitive development and psychosocial support. It is therefore important to recognise that the notion of an integrated (holistic) approach values the contribution

and role that each person, sector and service provider plays in ensuring the well-being of children. The approach puts the child at the centre, in a protective and enabling environment and brings together all the necessary elements for the full and sustainable development of the child. Elias (2004:4) notes that it is important that parents, other primary caregivers and family members, who all have a major influence in the development of the young child, should have access to basic social services such as primary health care, adequate nutrition, safe water, basic sanitation, birth registration, protection from abuse and violence, psychosocial support and early childhood care. Farisani (1997:1) is of the opinion that ECD should be firmly located within family and community development, but on the other hand, he is worried about the fact that families in disadvantaged areas are struggling to meet children's basic needs. He therefore agrees that they need help from outside and they need to find partners who can help them meet those needs.

The pressure towards achieving a holistic approach for ECD in South Africa posed many problems in the provisioning for this sector with a constant question amongst the different government departments and stakeholders of "who is responsible for what?" The holistic and integrated nature of the South African ECD model has led to many different types of ECD sites with a variety of delivery modes across multiple sectors. This included national departments that were most involved in ECD, namely Education, Social Development and Health, as well as links between broader community development and women's development and empowerment. It was clear that there was a definite drive in ECD towards the fulfilment of requirements set by the holistic model that was envisaged in order to cater for the physical, developmental, emotional and cognitive needs of young children.

### **2.4.3 The rights of children**

UNICEF (1990) declared in article 27 of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* that every child has the right to a standard of living adequate for his or her physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. Unfortunately the environment in which the majority of children found themselves after 1994 in South Africa was still developmentally suspect due to the decades of racially discriminatory political, social and economic policies and practices. While previous regimes had, to a certain extent, made some provision for a facilitative growth environment for those children who were classified as White, African children were rendered increasingly vulnerable by



the discriminatory nature of apartheid laws and policies. After the election of the African National Congress (ANC) to government in 1994, President Nelson Mandela pledged that his government would make the needs of children a priority. He and his wife, Graça Machel, made a promise to all young children in South Africa by saying (Mandela & Machel 2001):

Each one of you deserves to have the best possible start in life, to complete a basic education of the highest quality, to be allowed to develop your full potential and provided the opportunities for meaningful participation in your communities. And until every one of you, no matter who you are, enjoys your rights, I, Nelson, and I, Graça, will not rest.

Although this was President Mandela and his third wife's promise, children's well-being and development still, to a large extent, depended on their parents' ability to provide for them. Most of these families, however, had to battle through poverty and HIV/AIDS.

#### **2.4.4 The effects of poverty and HIV/AIDS on young children**

Poverty is characterized in the *Poverty and Inequality in South Africa: Summary Report* (South Africa 1998b:3) as "the inability of individuals, households or communities to command sufficient resources to satisfy a socially acceptable minimum standard of living". The report states that "poor South Africans themselves perceive poverty as an alienation from the community, food insecurity, crowded homes, usage of unsafe and inefficient forms of energy, lack of jobs that are adequately paid and/or secure, and fragmentation of the family". In contrast, wealth is perceived to be characterized by good housing, the use of gas or electricity, and ownership of durable goods such as a television set or a fridge.

It is reported in an African review that was done in the *New Internationalist* (1995) on the New South Africa in which human development aspects such as life expectancy, infant mortality and adult illiteracy were measured, that South Africa compared unfavourably with several other middle-income countries in the world. These indicators also vary widely by race group, gender and geographical location within the country. Mr Vusi Madonsela, Director-General of the Department of Social Development, said in his opening address of the 2003 Business Summit at the Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg that six out of every ten South African

children live in poverty. Madonsela pointed out that it was unfortunate that it was not only adults that contracted the HIV/AIDS epidemic, but South Africa currently has one of the highest numbers of children living with HIV/AIDS. This condition has led to numerous children ending up on the streets without parents.

An increasing number of children are also heading households. CIDA's *Country Development Programming Framework for South Africa* (CIDA 2004) states that in 2001 alone, more than 660,000 children were orphaned as a result of one or both parents dying from AIDS. If the crippling effect that poverty and HIV/AIDS have on humans and the economy is taken into consideration, it is not surprising that the *Human Development Report* (HDR) of 1998 refers to them as the most “devastating diseases ever to hit Southern Africa” (South Africa 1998a:5). It was therefore important that, under these adverse circumstances that children had to face in South Africa, their rights should be taken into consideration in future government planning. Wilcox (2003:10) states that poverty is closely related to poor performance in school and that school boards are therefore continuously on the lookout for ways to narrow this gap. According to Wilcox music holds a key to accomplish this.

#### **2.4.5 ECD as a vehicle for transformation**

Since 1994 South Africa has been engaged in a process of dismantling the inherited social, economic and ideological systems and vast material divisions which were based on race, gender and social class. According to the *Nation-wide Audit on ECD Provisioning* (DoE 2001a:10), ECD was seen as an “appropriate vehicle through which the transformation processes can be advanced”. ECD interventions were regarded as particularly beneficial to disadvantaged children to break the cycle of inter-generational poverty. This was also applicable to women because there was an increasing need for such caregivers to seek employment to help them cope with household expenses. The availability of ECD facilities allowed parents and caregivers to place their children in a safe and stimulating environment. This freedom gave them more time to look for employment and allowed them to become involved in economic activities. The audit suggested that, “regardless of the parent’s choice, all ECD facilities should provide a good quality service and high standard of care to children that would aid in the development of the child” (DoE 2001a:4). The audit stated further that ECD was not only essential for assisting children’s transition to formal schooling, but that it was important for the identification of children at risk from

learning difficulties and social, behavioural and health problems. Furthermore, the pre-school years were found to be the ideal phase for the implementation of democratic principles, human rights values and the inclusion of the development of anti-racism and anti-sexism principles.

#### **2.4.6 Benefits of an investment in ECD**

Fortunately recent and ongoing developments within the ECD sector reflect a global recognition of the significance of ECD with respect to the children involved and society as a whole. Wright (1989:6) accentuates the importance of ECD and says that it is too late by age 8 to start developing the early stages of development of the young child. According to this author there is an abundance of evidence that early childhood is the most formative period for growth and development in the social, intellectual, artistic and creative domains. She continues by saying that there is also evidence that the quality of early experience can have a significant impact upon development later in life. The importance and benefits of ECD were also clearly spelt out at the biennial ADEA (Association of the Development of Education in Africa) meeting that was held at the Grand Baie International Conference Centre in Mauritius from 3-6 December 2003. In the conference report compiled after the meeting by Hyde & Kabiru (2003:20-21), the following four broad strands of evidence were mentioned to support the importance of an investment in ECD:

##### ➤ Strand 1

The first strand is based on the fact that the period up to 8 years of age is of supreme importance for emotional, intellectual and social development. Interventions at this stage can have strong and lasting impacts on health and welfare as adults. Opportunities missed at this stage can rarely be made up for in later stages.

##### ➤ Strand 2

The second strand is the growing knowledge base that demonstrates that children who have experienced ECD interventions, or received minimum pre-primary schooling, do better in school than those who have not. Children who attend ECD programmes are more motivated, perform better and usually get along well with their classmates and teachers. ECD graduates are thus less likely to drop out or to repeat.

Therefore the cost of their schooling is reduced and primary and even secondary education is more cost-effective. The report states that ECD in itself can uplift educational participation in a region of the world that lags behind on most educational indicators.

➤ Strand 3

The third strand is based on the impact of ECD that leads to better employment records, increased family formation and a reduced likelihood of engaging in criminal activities. Strong evidence has also been found that these effects are greater for girls and for children from poor or disadvantaged communities. It is clear that ECD can have a generalized positive impact on economic development and the reduction of gender, income and cultural inequities.

➤ Strand 4

The fourth strand is based on the effect that proper nutrition has on brain development. Appropriate physiological and mental development is advocated. Diseases can be prevented and common childhood infections can be reduced if children receive appropriate vaccination and inoculation during early childhood.

Although much of the evidence for the above-mentioned advantages of ECD came from Northern Africa, substantial research was also done and continues to be done in the southern parts of Africa. The report claims that the findings were therefore consistent from both hemispheres. The geographic studies that were done often focused on poor or disadvantaged children.

Evaluations of well-conceived ECD programmes, designed to foster early development, demonstrate that children who participate in these programmes tend to be more successful in later school, are more competent socially and emotionally, and show better verbal, intellectual and physical development during early childhood than children who are not enrolled in high quality programmes. According to the World Bank (2005:1), benefits of ECD interventions can also be found in the following areas:

- Higher intelligence scores
- Higher and timelier school enrolment
- Less grade repetition and lower dropout rates
- Higher school completion rates
- Improved nutrition and health status
- Improved social and emotional behaviour
- Improved parent-child relationship
- Increased earning potential and economic self-sufficiency as an adult
- Increased female labour force participation.

A sound ECD education is particularly important for underprivileged children. According to the World Bank (2005:1), numerous longitudinal studies on the benefits of early childhood programmes for children living in poverty have been conducted in the United States, as well as a few in developing countries. These studies clearly indicate the cost-effectiveness of these programmes and demonstrate the profound impact that early experiences have on adult life and productivity. It is clear that healthy cognitive and emotional development in the early years translates into tangible economic returns. Early interventions yield higher returns as a preventive measure compared with remedial services later in life. Policies that seek to remedy deficits incurred in the early years are much more costly than initial investments in the early years. The editor of *The Teacher*, Julia Grey (2001:1), mentions that research in the United States showed that for every \$1 invested in the physical and cognitive development of ECD learners, there is a \$7 return, mainly from cost savings in the future (including health and remedial costs and repeating grades).

The *South African National Treasury* (2000:60) notes that, according to international evidence, the “highest returns to education expenditure are achieved in the pre-primary phase”. It was clear that if appropriate stimulation, nutrition, care and health services could be provided during the pre-school years it would result in increased primary school enrolment, enhanced school performance, lower repetition and drop-out rates, reductions in juvenile crime rates, reduced remedial, medical and welfare costs, and improved economic and social productivity indicators. These benefits far outweigh the returns on any other form of human capital investment.

#### **2.4.7 Government policies and strategies for ECD**

According to the Bernard van Leer Foundation (1994:6), effective ECD programmes result from a series of mutually dependent partnerships of individuals, organizations

and agencies. This organization states that governments have an essential role to play in that they can set the climate of opinion and they are the ones who have to create the legal and policy frameworks for ECD. Governments set and endorse national agendas, validate private efforts, create a climate of acceptance and approval, and establish priorities. They are also fundraisers and conduits for donor agencies. At the minimum, the role of government should be to make ECD policy in collaboration with partners and ensure its implementation (Bernard van Leer Foundation 1994:7). Such policy should include items such as standards in training and curricula, and legal and administrative measures for implementing the rights of children and women.

The last decade has seen the evolution and ongoing development of new governmental policies and strategies that aim to meet the needs of millions of children in South Africa, especially those of the underprivileged. However, the paucity of South African empirical evidence hampered the development of informed policy positions and provisioning strategies. Evans (1995:2) is of the opinion that many ECD role players who are engaged in the planning and creating of programmes for young children tend to see policy as a “distant, abstract process, carried out by suited politicians sitting behind paper-laden desks”. Policymakers are therefore usually viewed as inaccessible because they make decisions about the fate of those involved in ECD, dictate national priorities and predict how the national budget will be allocated. Although role players in ECD are most of the time only aware of policy when they find themselves supported or limited by it, most of them do not see themselves as active participants in the creation of policy. Evans suggests that role players in ECD who strive to make a real difference in the lives of young children and their families should change the focus of their efforts to the creation of policies that will allow needed resources to be shifted to structures and programmes which can provide the necessary support to reach this goal.

Since 1994 a large number of government policies have flooded the education system. The most important documents that had a direct effect on ECD will now be discussed:

#### **2.4.7.1 White Paper on Education and Training (1995)**

The *White Paper on Education and Training* (DoE 1995:33-34) identified ECD as a priority that needed urgent attention. It appeared as if the Department of Education was ready to take responsibility for the education of 6-9 year old children when a promise appeared in this White Paper to develop legislation for 10 years of free and compulsory education which would include a Reception Year (Grade R). It affirmed not only government's responsibility to curriculum frameworks, but also accentuated the innovation which resided in non-state service providers by suggesting that the actual provision of services would be rendered by NGOs. Unfortunately, subsequent legislation for compulsory education revealed that this was not the case. School fees were still paid by the parents, and pre-schools remained unaffordable for many black children in South Africa.

#### **2.4.7.2 Interim Policy on Early Childhood Development (1996)**

In 1996 the *Interim Early Childhood Development Policy* (DoE 1996) was launched by the DoE, providing a broad policy vision for ECD. In this document the key considerations in the planning of the ECD policy were (DoE 1996:13-14):

- The correcting of past imbalances.
- The need to provide equal opportunities and access to ECD services for all children.
- The need to develop multi-focused strategies to ensure that greater numbers of children were reached.
- The need to ensure that ECD programmes were affordable for parents and to ensure that active funding partnerships between the government, private donors, parents and local committees were established.

Funding was still the greatest constraint to the development of ECD. The policy stated that communities could not be allowed to carry the burden of ECD provisioning on their own any longer and called therefore for a "facilitative state" with a range of partnerships that could work in collaboration to achieve the holistic vision for ECD. The policy emphasized the "multi-pronged and integrated" nature of ECD strategies for children from birth to nine years old. Better financial support was urgently required

because the lack of resources was continuing to perpetuate the sector's marginalized status. The "need for creative investigation of special measures/mechanisms to address the funding needs of ECD appropriately and to increase the existing pool of resources available for ECD programming" remained the greatest challenge facing the sector (DoE 1996:22).

The policy also suggested a framework for the introduction of a Reception Year of education through a national implementation plan. An interim curriculum framework that was seen as a "broad policy document" (DoE 1996:34) and guidelines for ECD provision that set out the guidelines for learning and teaching were important features of the document. The fact was stressed that "a practitioner with commitment, care, a knowledge base and experience can offer a good quality service in a home, centre or school setting" (DoE 1996:35).

The following is a summary of the guiding principles that the interim policy underpinned in the proposed curriculum framework for ECD (DoE 1996:35-38). There is a remarkable resemblance between these guidelines and the methodological principles that are used in the proposed music programme (see Chapter 4) on which this thesis is based.

## CHILDREN

- All children are of equal worth and are entitled to achieve their full potential.
- All children are entitled to well-planned and well-organized learning opportunities and should be accepted unconditionally.
- Children should be prepared for membership of a non-racial, multi-cultural and multi-lingual society.
- Children with special needs should be accommodated.

## PRACTITIONERS

- Should be enabled to reach their full potential.
- Should acquire and apply knowledge through investigation and problem solving to make informed choices and decisions.



- Should be afforded opportunities through ongoing in-service-training programmes to build their self-confidence and motivation to assist life-long learning.
- Should be afforded opportunities to develop their personal and social skills.
- Should be afforded opportunities to recognize cultures and spoken language through training programmes.
- Should implement and promote high quality standards in ECD provision.
- Should be competent to develop programmes that meet the needs of children.
- Should require observation and assessment skills to evaluate the growth and development of young children.
- Should be able to establish relationships with the community by promoting parent and community involvement in ECD.

## ECD PROGRAMMES

- Should be based on a developmental framework for children from birth to nine years (including older children who did not have the opportunity for ECD).
- Should focus on the needs of the child and provide realistic challenges that aim high and enable the child to reach his/her full potential.
- Should be accountable to the child, parents, community, colleagues and government departments.
- Should emphasize the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills as essential life-skills.
- Should enable the child to develop emotionally, physically, spiritually, intellectually, creatively, socially and morally, in other words, the needs of the child as a whole should be emphasized.
- Should not be limited by stereotyped views about class, cultural background, gender or special needs.
- Should be integrated rather than fragmented into subject areas.
- Should promote qualitative assessment to assist the child to reach his/her full potential and is not for promotion purposes.

- Should cater for experiences and activities that create enjoyment for and a love of learning. This should be the basic methodology. Play and educational games are examples of these experiences.
- Should be encouraged through which children could interact with each other and learn through first-hand experience. Children with differing abilities/ages and talents working with one another (see multi-aged centres are a rich source of learning).

The political and economic time was, according to Porteus (2004:353), not right during 1996 for this massive investment which the interim policy proposed for ECD. In the meantime, two research processes, namely the *National Pilot Project for ECD* and the *Nation-wide Audit on ECD Provisioning* were initiated by the DoE to investigate ECD services. Although it is arguable according to Porteus that these two processes were started to delay decisions of investment in ECD services at the time, the government defended their implementation as an attempt to find a more informed articulation of a vision for ECD service provision in South Africa.

#### **2.4.7.3 National ECD Pilot Project (1996)**

As a result of the recommendations that were made in the *White Paper on Education and Training*, a *National ECD Pilot Project* was launched by the DoE in 1996. According to the *Report on the National ECD Pilot Project* (DoE 2001b:8), it was implemented by the Department of Education in 1997 to enable the state to accumulate data and experiences in ECD that could inform the review of policy, capacity building, coordination and collaboration and financing of community-based ECD centres. The DoE received a conditional grant from the South African National Treasury (2001:12) to phase in a pilot Reception Year (Grade R) over a 3-year period at community-based institutions and public schools at selected nodal sites across the country. According to Hyde & Kabiru (2003:71), the project took place in partnership with non-governmental organizations and community-based ECD service providers and aimed to test the *Interim Policy on ECD* which covered children from 0-9 years. It also aimed to investigate ways of expanding compulsory schooling downwards into the Reception Year. Some of the main objectives of the Pilot Project (DoE 2001b:8) were to:

- Make and test innovations in the ECD field related to interim accreditation, interim policy and subsidy systems.
- Promote outcomes-based education and assessment in ECD in line with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).
- Build capacity, particularly at provincial department level, in conjunction with Research and Training Organizations (RTOs).
- Assure quality community-based efforts in ECD through subsidies and training.
- Ensure children receive quality Reception Year education.
- Research the most effective means of delivering the Reception Year.

The *Report on the National ECD Pilot Project* (DoE 2001b:8) stated that provinces were provided pro-rata funds (totaling R40 million) to initially support subsidies of community-based sites, contract RTOs to provide training towards the achievement of accreditation of practitioners and provincial monitoring subsistence and travel costs. The provinces committed themselves to utilize the funds in accordance with the National ECD Pilot Project Design and to provide provincial funds for years 2 and 3 of the Pilot Project. Altogether, 2,730 sites and practitioners were selected by the provinces to participate, reaching approximately 66,000 learners.

As a consequence of this policy, the National ECD Pilot Project Interim Unit Standards for ECD practitioner training that were proposed in the Interim Pilot Project were developed, implemented and tested to determine if they were appropriate and achievable in practice. The report stated that although the proposed set of norms and standards were found to be appropriate, there was still a strong need amongst practitioners that they should be refined to “eliminate vagueness and ambiguities” (DoE 2001b:10) so that better practitioner performance could be established. Practitioners demonstrated that they were capable of meeting almost all the specific outcomes and the expected assessment criteria for the NQF Level 1 core unit standards for ECD, namely:

- Facilitating Active Learning,
- Managing the Learning Programme, and
- Facilitating Healthy Development.

Some practitioners, however, found it difficult to cope with the methodologies of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) and to internalize the unit standards. The result of this was that the unit standards remained vague and ambiguous rather than explicit. The report pointed out that there was a need to develop a clearer set of norms and

standards that could be reached by all practitioners. It warned against the danger that could, according to international literature, hamper rather than develop educational delivery when norms and standards were too vague and nonspecific:

There is increasing evidence from the international literature that nonspecific norms and standards do not promote equity in educational delivery because the child's opportunities for learning and development are left to the whim and commitment of the practitioner. Therefore, it is critical that clearer outcomes than those that presently exist in the Norms and Standards document are developed and instituted (DoE 2001b:10).

The Pilot Project found that a universal Reception Year (Grade R) was necessary to prepare children for compulsory primary education, increase access and curb failure and dropout rates (DoE 2001b:13). Although it was evident that primary and community-based sites were offering more or less the same level of education, it was found that the overall quality of Grade R was still too low (DoE 2001b:14) and needed improvement. All the sites participating in the research were historically disadvantaged and generally impoverished. It was therefore expected that the educational institutions that took part in the study would be able to provide these learners with the skills they were not able to obtain at home and which would enable them to alleviate poverty. The low early literacy and somewhat higher early numeracy assessment results that were found by the report highlighted the lack of quality education in Grade R. It was clear that practitioners were not spending enough time on literacy and numeracy tasks and that they had not mastered the skills to pass these methodologies effectively on to their learners. The following suggestions were put forward by the report to improve the quality of Grade R service in South Africa (DoE 2001b:14):

- Training in key methodological attitudes, skills and knowledge that is quality controlled through rigorous practitioner and RTO accreditation processes.
- Regular and systematic monitoring of practitioners through observation and feedback by education officials.
- Ensure that practitioners can demonstrate understanding of the expected outcomes or expected levels of performance (ELP).
- Provide more books and educational equipment.
- Utilize registration requirements to ensure that sites provide safe accommodation and educationally enriching environments for learners.
- Professionalize ECD practitioners, e.g. through registration with the South African Council for Educators (SACE).

#### 2.4.7.4 Nation-wide Audit on ECD Provisioning in South Africa (2001)

In 2000, the National Department of Education together with the European Union Technical Support Project conducted an audit of ECD provisioning throughout South Africa. The aim of the *Nation-wide Audit on ECD Provisioning* was to provide accurate information on the nature and extent of ECD provisioning, services and resources across the country in order to inform and support ongoing policy and planning initiatives in this crucial and expanding sector (DoE 2001a:5). The following shortcomings and most important needs in ECD were revealed by the audit:

##### ➤ Access to ECD

One out of six children between the ages of 0 and 7 has access to some sort of site-based ECD services. The majority of children are 5 to 6 years old; coverage is much more limited for children under 4 years old. Children in rural areas have the least access to services. African children have access to services with lower infrastructure and practitioner quality. Too few children have access to services which cater for their home languages. A lack of access to ECD facilities will not only have a big impact on children's development, but also on the ability of the primary caregivers (usually women) to pursue their own income-earning and other activities (South Africa 1998b:16). Neglect of this area of education will incur serious problems in the future at both economic and social levels.

##### ➤ ECD sites

According to the Nation-wide Audit on ECD Provisioning (DoE 2001a:167), the ECD sites in South Africa can be divided into three different types:

- School-based sites (17%),
- Community-based sites (49%), and
- Home-based sites (34%).

The report pointed out that 72% of these sites are located within one kilometer of a primary school. Over 80% of the sites are multi-age sites providing services to children between the ages of three and five years old. Home-based sites are smaller,

have more practitioners per learner, and tend to be the site of the youngest children. Community and home-based sites are more likely to be open for a greater number of hours per day, have more practitioners per learner, and have greater access to electricity, water, and sewerage than school-based sites.

➤ **Financial basis**

The Nation-wide Audit on ECD Provisioning found that the ECD sector is, for the most part, extremely poorly funded and sites appear to have very few financial resources to rely on at all levels of functioning (DoE 2001a:167). Nearly a quarter of the identified sites rely solely on the income of school fees. These fees are generally low with a very high rate of non-payment. Other than these school fees, 28% of the sites had no income. The user fees were less than R25 per month at one third of the sites, between R25 and R75 at another third, and were over R75 in the final third. Fee payment rates are poor across the three site typologies. Some sites depend upon limited subsidization from the governmental departments of welfare (20%), education (10%) and health (7%). The current financial basis of most ECD sites is inefficient.

The inadequate resourcing of the ECD sector was also reflected in the low salaries that educators receive. Financial resourcing of ECD sites continued to be a big challenge for the sector.

➤ **Practitioner role**

The field of ECD is highly feminized. Julia Grey (2001:1), the editor of *The Teacher*, points out that there are 55,000 ECD practitioners and child minders in South Africa, of whom 99% are women. The majority of these women earn very low salaries. The qualification and salary profile of ECD practitioners demonstrated that there was still a lot of discrimination against African practitioners prevalent in the country. Eric Atmore (2001:15), who was involved in the data gathering process for The Nation-wide Audit on ECD Provisioning, states in an assessment which he had done for the ETDP-SETA of the training needs of practitioners in the ECD sector, that the majority of ECD practitioners in South Africa (20,730 cases) received their training from NGOs. These practitioners were considered to be unqualified by the Department of Education. A large number of practitioners have no training at all (23%). The “under

qualified” cohort which was represented by these two groups represented more than 90% of ECD educators in the country. It was found that 60% of practitioners without any training were African while 61% of practitioners with recognized qualifications were White. Unfortunately low qualifications are usually associated with low pay. It is therefore not surprising that the audit pointed out that 44% of practitioners earned less than R500 per month.

#### **2.4.7.5 Education White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Development (2001)**

The valuable statistics that were gathered in the *Nation-wide Audit on ECD Provisioning* enabled the Department of Education to complete the development of a White Paper on ECD, which was passed by Cabinet in May 2001. Porteus (2004: 354) says that it provided policy-makers with a wide range of findings which enabled them to develop a new policy strategy for ECD at the time that the policy for the White Paper 5 was developed. The Education White Paper 5 was based on the findings of the *Nation-wide Audit on ECD Provisioning*, the pilot project and a whole range of international evidence and research that confirmed the importance and national cost-effective investment of ECD, particularly for the early ages up to six years. This White Paper attempted to provide a comprehensive approach to policies and programmes for children from birth to 9 years of age with the aim to improve access to ECD, particularly for poor children.

According to the webpage of the *South African Government Information on Education* that was last modified on 10 August 2005 (South Africa 2005), it is estimated that about 90% of children under the age of 9 in South Africa do not have access to ECD prior to attending school at the age of 7. To overcome this problem, provision was made in the *Education White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Development* (DoE 2001c:par.1.4.3) for a compulsory Reception Year for all children before they started primary school with the vision that all children who enter Grade 1 would have participated in an accredited Reception Year programme by 2010. This provisioning had both a public as well as an independent component. According to Wildeman & Nomdo (2004:10), primary schools that responded effectively to the ECD challenge on a progressive basis were provided with “grants-in-aid” by provincial departments of education to establish accredited Reception Year programmes. These grants were fully “poverty targeted” (DoE 2001b:par.6.1.2) with the aim that the children of the poorest 40% of families will receive the highest per

capita level of “grants-in-aid”. Community-based sites were also accredited and subsidised to run Reception Year programmes. Although Independent Schools received the same accreditation to run Reception Year programmes, they were not subsidized by the state.

The White Paper held positive medium term promises for Pre-Reception Year children aged 4-5 years (DoE 2001b:par.1.4.6). The Department of Education committed themselves in this document to co-ordinate and support ECD strategies across the country by spearheading the development and implementation of pre-reception year programmes focusing on poor, rural and urban children with an emphasis on those infected with and affected by HIV/AIDS. According to Wildeman & Nomdo (2004:11) it was unfortunate that no education-specific funding proposals for pre Grade-R were made in this White Paper which only mentioned that these children required a combination and a variety of programmes that involved many other departments (Wildeman & Nomdo 2004:14).

Porteus (2004:354) agreed with Wildeman and Nomdo about the minimal attention that was given to Pre-Reception Year services and said that although there was a strong argument in the new policy for these services, the White Paper 5 provided “no guidelines or concrete support” on how the ends should be met to reach its goal. The responsibility for the 0-4 year old cohort was mainly shifted to the Department of Social Welfare. Porteus (2004:354) stated that although reference was made to the collaboration of programming between Education, Health, and Welfare Departments, no direction or suggestions for funding were made. Porteus (2004:355) feels that the only improvement of quality that was put forward in this new policy for ECD was that of the establishment of a national system of provision of a Reception Year based in public schools with a small community-based component. The inclusion of Grade R in the 10 year compulsory schooling in the country meant that this age group had to be included in the country’s new curriculum.

#### **2.4.7.6 Draft Revised National Curriculum Statement for Grades R-9 (Schools) (2001)**

According to Linda Chisholm (2004) the main initiative since 1994 has been the introduction of OBE in South Africa. *Curriculum 2005*, the brand name of this new National Curriculum Framework, was introduced into South African schools in 1998,



and was based on the concept of OBE. It had a set of values that were linked to social justice, human rights, equity and development and which were at the heart of *Curriculum 2005*. It was also based on a more learner-centred approach to learning. The intention of OBE was to improve the quality of the learning experience through methods that emphasized activity-based rather than rote learning. Chisholm explained further that critical and developmental outcomes that were contained in *Curriculum 2005* were derived from the South African Constitution in 1995 which provided the basis for learning outcomes. OBE regards learning as an interactive process between and among educators and learners with the focus on what learners should know and be able to do (knowledge, skills, attitudes and values). It places strong emphasis on co-operative learning, especially group work involving common tasks. The main goal of OBE was to produce active and lifelong learners for the 21<sup>st</sup> century with a thirst for knowledge and a love for learning.

*Curriculum 2005* had barely been introduced to schools when criticism began surfacing about it. The shortage of resources and training was one of the main shortcomings pointed out in the *Report of the Review Committee on Curriculum 2005* (2000:74). It stated that:

Teachers need textbooks along with other learning support materials and they need to be trained to use them effectively. Teachers generally do not have the time, the resources and the skill to develop their own materials, although this should also be encouraged.

Another common complaint was that the curriculum was excessively complex and that OBE could only work in well-resourced schools with highly qualified teachers (DoE 2001d; Chisholm 2004). Poorly-qualified teachers in rural schools were the ones who suffered the most when faced with the demands to create their own curricula and resources. *Curriculum 2005* was therefore accordingly reviewed and revised to assess its structure and design, accompanying teacher development processes, learning materials developed to support the curriculum, provincial support to teachers in schools, and implementation timeframes. The *Draft Revised National Curriculum Statement (DRNCS) for schools from Grades R – 9* (DoE 2003) builds on *Curriculum 2005* and was presented by the Ministerial Review Committee on 31 May 2000. The DRNCS consisted of a guideline of requirements and expectations at different levels and grades in the schools curriculum in the following eight learning areas:

- Languages
- Mathematics
- Natural Sciences
- Technology
- Social Sciences
- Arts and Culture
- Life Orientation
- Economic and Management Sciences.

The Foundation Phase (Grade R-3) was divided into three learning programmes through which the above-mentioned eight learning areas with their specific field of knowledge had to be obtained, namely:

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Life Skills.

The NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children), the world's largest organization that works on behalf of young children, is dedicated to improve the well-being of all young children, with particular focus on the quality of educational and developmental services for all children from birth to age 8. The NAEYC (1994:2) states that key goals of the educational process in the decades ahead will need people, more than ever, whose abilities in literacy and numeracy skills are fully developed. These goals are clearly evident in the current Foundation Phase curriculum in South Africa which centres around the above-mentioned three learning programmes. The NAEYC warns, however, that children also need to acquire a body of knowledge and skills in science, social studies, music and the visual arts, physical education and health, as identified by educators in the various disciplines. Besides acquiring a body of knowledge and skills, children must also develop positive dispositions and attitudes. They need to understand that effort is necessary for achievement, for example, and they need to have curiosity and confidence in themselves as learners. Moreover, to be able to live in a highly pluralistic society and world, young people will need to develop a positive self-identity and a tolerance for others whose perspective and experience may be different from their own.

It is very important to notice that the DRNCS (DoE 2001d:30) stressed the importance of the Arts and Culture Learning Area Statement and stated that it should cover a broad spectrum of South African arts and cultural practices because Arts and Culture are seen as an “integral part of life which embraces the spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional aspects of human endeavour within society”. It was made clear in the DRNCS that Arts and Culture outcomes could not be specified fully, and that many details in the practice of teaching simply could not be made explicit beforehand. Hauptfleisch (1997:3) echoes this statement in her reminder to educators in South Africa that they should be well aware of the new direction that the Arts and Culture learning area has taken in *Curriculum 2005* and says that:

Unlike the national curriculum in many other countries, *Curriculum 2005* does not provide explicitly for division of the arts and culture learning area subfields. Rather, it states outcomes for the learning area as a whole and prescribes an integrated approach, especially in Grades 1 to 6. Thus, music educators will in time be confronted with a range of learning programmes to integrate music to a greater or lesser extent with both the other arts and other curriculum areas [...]. It is therefore up to us as music educators to define a meaningful role for music within the arts and culture learning area.

The standpoint was that the curriculum should allow room for professional judgment and developed as a result of collegial co-operation, rather than to specify everything in detail. In a research agenda on *Curriculum 2005* that was generated at a conference by the Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape, Bak (1999:1) is of the opinion that this was not always possible, because many teachers lacked the subject knowledge on which they could base these kinds of judgments to create their own curricula and resources.

An integrated curriculum means the bringing together of subjects in the school's curriculum, such as languages, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts, music and physical education. Siraj-Blatchford (1995:52) accentuates the importance of the integration of the arts in the curriculum as a way of expression by saying that all children should have an opportunity to express themselves through their languages and the arts. Every attempt should be made to provide a balance in human achievement from a range of cultures in science, technology, literature, mathematics, music, artistic heritage, religious knowledge, sport and the humanities. All these categories contribute to the education of the child as a whole.

James (2000:14), on the other hand, feels that there is hope in the form of *Curriculum 2005* which could help raise music education and arts education from decline or total non-existence.

#### **2.4.7.7 White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (2001)**

The *White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education* was released by the DoE during July 2001 in an attempt to respond to the South African government's inclusion movement.

The main aim of the document was to extend the policy foundations, frameworks and programmes of existing policy for all bands of education and training in South Africa. The idea was that education and training will recognise and accommodate a diverse range of learning needs in the country.

The most significant conceptual change from current policy is that of access to schools, redress, equity and quality education for all (DoE 2001e:6). The paper had a direct influence on ECD because it proposed a new way of thinking that strived to make possible one single curriculum for all learners, including those between birth to 9 years. It stated that the state had a special responsibility to ensure that all learners, with and without disabilities, would pursue their learning potential to the fullest in order to establish an education and training system for the 21<sup>st</sup> century (DoE 2001e:14). The White Paper (DoE 2001e:26) accentuated the importance of the Foundation Phase because it made the targeting of an early intervention of disabilities possible. The *White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education* had a direct influence on the compilation of the RNCS that followed two years later.

#### **2.4.7.8 Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools) (2003)**

The DRNCS was followed by the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) for Grades R-9 in 2003. Implementation of this new curriculum, however, only started in 2004. Seeing that the focus of this study is on the integration of the arts in ECD, I was specifically interested to see what the government had in mind for the learning area Arts and Culture in this new proposed curriculum and what effect it would have

on the Foundation Phase. The RNCS (DoE 2003:22) loosely arranged its organising principles for Arts and Culture in the Foundation Phase as follows:

Grade R	Fantasy & play
Grade 1	Imagination in the learner and learners' environment
Grade 2	Immediate environment
Grade 3	Ideas, feelings and moods

It was clear that the incorporation of the arts in a learning programme through fantasy, play and the development of the imagination as stated above played a significant role in the Foundation Phase in the new RNCS.

The RNCS (DoE 2003:22) reminded teachers that the arts are interrelated and stated that “it would be counter-productive to the spirit of the learning area if each of the art forms or assessment standards were treated in isolation from each other”. Implementation of this Learning Area must, therefore, be based on the linking and interweaving of music, drama, dance and the visual arts, craft and design. It was suggested that assessment standards should also not be treated as separate, discrete entities but should be clustered across art forms during planning and assessment. The RNCS made it clear that all learners should experience the components of Arts and Culture through a learning programme that has an equal coverage of a variety of African and other classical arts and culture practices. It was hoped that this will “open up avenues for learners to develop inclusive, original, contemporary, South African cultural expression and to engage with trends in the rest of the world” (DoE 2003:26).

The proposal that the *White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education* has put forward concerning learners with special needs was well catered for in the RNCS (DoE 2001d:20). Educators were warned that they should be aware of barriers to learning and stated that teachers had to ensure that their teaching methods reflected awareness of multiple intelligences (see Chapter 4.5) and different ways of learning and knowing. The activities and assessment strategies had to be interpreted and adapted by teachers to overcome these barriers. According to the RNCS (DoE 2001d:28), the Arts and Culture Learning area was designed in such a way that all children can participate in Arts and Culture activities and be able to achieve the

Learning Outcomes. Inclusivity was seen as an essential part of Arts and Culture in the RNCS in which learners who were experiencing barriers to learning could also be accommodated. The new Arts and Culture curriculum (DoE 2001d:29) allowed for flexibility in which the diversity of the learner could be accommodated. Teachers were advised to adapt the general guidelines of the curriculum and to alter their ways of assessment to enable them to cater for learners with special needs. They were also advised to take the following into consideration when they were dealing with these types of learners:

- The *pace* of the lesson
- The *method* of instruction to meet the needs and learning style of the individual
- The *manner* in which the learner is required to respond
- The *structure* of assessment so that the learner may participate and demonstrate her or his potential more fully
- The *materials* so that they enhance rather than impede learning
- The *appropriateness* of the tasks
- The amount of *time* allocated for any activity.

It is important to note that the RNCS regarded learners who have been marginalized and deprived in the past also as “learners with barriers to learning”. The RNCS states that these barriers could have been systematic, like for instance a lack of basic and appropriate learning support materials, assistive devices, inadequate facilities at schools, language, or overcrowded classrooms. Societal barriers such as severe poverty, late enrolment at school, violence, or those affected by HIV/AIDS are also a possibility. The barriers could also be intrinsic (disabilities within the learner), i.e. a learner who is blind, or has HIV/AIDS. The document accentuates that the focus should be placed on the experience of the process rather than merely the creation of a product.

## **2.5 THE SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION SYSTEM**

Formal education in South Africa is categorized according to the following levels:

- The General Education and Training (GET) band consists of the Reception Year (Grade R) and learners up to Grade 9, as well as an equivalent Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) qualification.
- The Further Education and Training (FET) band consists of all education and training from the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) levels two to four (equivalent to grades 10-12 in schools) and the National Technical Certificate one to three in FET colleges.
- The Higher Education (HE) band consists of a range of degrees, diplomas and certificates up to doctoral degrees.

These levels are integrated within the NQF (National Qualifications Framework) which is provided for by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA).

### **2.5.1 Training of ECD practitioners in South Africa**

The primary focus of the Education, Training & Development Practices (ETDP) SETA in South Africa is on qualifications and unit standards. Most of the effort to integrate education and training and promote lifelong learning has focused on the schools (primary and secondary) rather than on ABET or ECD. The lack of access to ECD facilities, which was revealed in the *Nation-wide Audit of ECD Provisioning* (DoE 2001a), impacts not only on the development of young children, but also has a negative influence on the ability of primary caregivers who are in most cases usually women and prevents them from earning their own income. The *Summary Report for Poverty and Inequality in South Africa* (South Africa 1998b:17) warns that neglect of this area of education will lead to serious problems in the future at both economic and social levels. Atmore (2001:20) states that only the formal sector has legal requirements for the level of education of an educator. Although it is required that Grade R teachers should have a minimum of Level 4 training, there are no other “required” ECD training levels in South Africa.

The following four ECD qualifications fall under the ETDP-SETA (2005) (<http://www.etdpseta.org.za>) in South Africa:

### **2.5.1.1 Basic Certificate: Early Childhood Development: Level 1**

The purpose of the qualification is to:

- Provide access to training and recognition of prior learning for many experienced people who work with young children but have been excluded from education and training opportunities.
- Enable learners to understand and respond appropriately to the basic needs of young children in all areas of their development within a specific phase of development and in a specific setting, e.g. centre-based or home-based.
- Improve the quality of early childhood development services for young children in a variety of settings, both centre-based and home-based.

ECD practitioners who have passed grade 7 or 8 are in a position to obtain a level 1 qualification. Seeing that this is a very low level of education, Atmore (2001:15) notes that it will only be possible to obtain this certificate with the help of additional Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET 3 and/or 4).

### **2.5.1.2 National Certificate: Early Childhood Development: Level 4**

The purpose of the qualification is to:

- Enable learners to facilitate the all-round development of young children in a manner that is sensitive to individual needs (including special needs) and culture-fair within a specific phase of development and with specialization in a particular setting or role.
- Provide further education and training opportunities for those with a NQF Level 1 qualification (or equivalent) as well as a basis for further professional development in the higher education and training band for many experienced practitioners in the field who have had limited or difficult access to further career development opportunities.
- Develop ECD educators with a sound practical qualification to provide quality Early Childhood Development services for children at community-based sites.



This qualification provides an opportunity for existing learners/educators who have acquired a Level 1 ECD qualification to further their career path in ECD. It allows potential learners/educators who have acquired a GETC qualification or its equivalent to embark on a career in ECD (entry point). ECD practitioners who have passed grade 9, 10 or 11 could enrol for a Level 4 qualification. Atmore (2001:15) warns, however, that those with lower levels of schooling may have difficulty grasping the fundamentals of the qualification.

### **2.5.1.3 Higher Certificate: Early Childhood Development: Level 5**

The Higher Certificate is designed to provide access to higher education for many experienced and skilled ECD practitioners and trainers who do not have recognized qualifications. The purpose of this qualification is to develop ECD ETD practitioners (e.g. home-based, centre-based and school-based practitioners including Grade R, family and community ECD motivators, fieldworkers, facilitators, trainers and managers) to provide appropriate education, training and development services in the ECD sub-field.

According to Atmore (2001:15), ECD practitioners who have passed grade 12 should be able to enrol for training at Level 5.

### **2.5.1.4 National Diploma: Early Childhood Development: Level 5**

The purpose of the qualification is to:

- Provide access to a recognised educator qualification at Level 6 for ECD educators who have a Level 4 or Level 5 certificate in ECD, providing a bridge between non-formal and formal learning programmes.
- Enable educators/learners to plan and implement a learning programme which is based on their knowledge of child development from birth to 9 years and which helps children in a specific phase to work towards achieving the learning outcomes of the national school curriculum (where appropriate).
- Improve community-based ECD services for young children by raising the level of ECD teaching competence and/or by providing opportunities for training in support and leadership roles.

It is interesting to note that SAQA (Singaram 2006:8) has decided to terminate the existence of the Level 1: Basic Certificate for Early Childhood Development at the end of 2008. The Level 1 ECD qualification will therefore not be re-registered after the current three year period (which started January 2006). A FETC will be the minimum requirement for ECD practice. This means that ECD practitioners will have to start their ECD training from a Level 4 National Certificate.

### **2.5.2 The role of NGOs in the training of ECD practitioners**

According to Atmore (2001:17), ECD NGOs have been carrying the responsibility for the training of ECD practitioners for the past 30 years. He found that although universities, vocational colleges and private institutions provide training for ECD practitioners, almost half (49%) of ECD training in South Africa was provided by NGOs. More than 80% of the training of all ECD trainees at Levels 1 and 4 are done by NGOs. The cost for NGO training is mostly covered by donor funds. Only between 2% and 5% of training fees are paid directly by the trainees themselves. Atmore is of the opinion that, with the government's new focus on a compulsory Grade R, ECD NGOs will continue to bear the responsibility of ECD training in South Africa until at least the end of this decade.

Atmore (2001:18) says that the training needs in the ECD sector are vast and that these needs are only partially met by existing NGO training. The difficulty in obtaining regular donor funds and the inability of the trainees to pay the full cost of their training attributes to this lag. Atmore (2001:19) says that ECD practitioners need "comprehensive, practical in-service and pre-service ECD training to enable them to run up-to-standard ECD programmes". He stresses the fact that the training of ECD practitioners should enhance both their "professional and personal development". One of the four shortcomings in the training of ECD practitioners that was pointed out by Atmore (2001:22) is that there is an urgent need for personal development programmes that focus on the self-esteem of practitioners.

The basic professional education available to an ECD practitioner should, according to Atmore (2001:19), be nothing less than a full ECD qualification (including fundamentals, core and electives) at Levels 1, 4 and 5 of the NQF. Literacy, numeracy and communication skills should be included in the fundamentals, accompanied by additional training via a choice of electives. Music and movement is

one of the eleven electives that Atmore mentions in which additional training is needed. He suggests further that it is important that all training should entail on-site (workplace) visits and support to make the training more meaningful and sustainable. The link between training and implementation, and the reasons why implementation is often very poor, also need to be examined (Atmore 2001:24).

## **2.6 SUMMARY**

The importance of an education in the formative years of a child's life was continuously accentuated in this chapter. Despite the efforts of the new democratic government since 1994 to eliminate the inequalities and unfairness of the past, significant numbers of South African children were and are still living in poverty. These circumstances have a negative effect on the lives and development of the majority of children in the country. Although many new government policies have been developed since 1994 to uplift the conditions of ECD in South Africa, the majority of children and ECD teachers in the country unfortunately still continue to endure the inheritance of apartheid. In such a context, the value of ECD and the role it can play in redressing past injustices becomes more apparent and of the utmost importance. If the benefits that ECD provisioning has on society and the historical deficit of this sector are taken into account, it is clear that a strong argument should be put forward for ECD as a prime focus area in South Africa.

The literature review pointed out that the responsibility for ECD in South Africa was shared between different departments and stakeholders. Grades 1-3, for which the Department of Education was responsible, do not seem to pose so much of a problem. The biggest problem in the ECD sector was provision for children between birth and 4 years of age. The 5-6 year old group (Grade R), included in the target group for the research, still seems to be problematic, because they were scattered between formal education at primary schools and community and home-based ECD centres. The literature review revealed that provision for this age group will hopefully finally be clarified by 2010 when the attendance of an accredited Grade R programme will become compulsory for all children in South Africa. This means that all teachers who are responsible for the teaching of Grade R's in the country will have to upgrade their qualifications (if necessary) to be able to teach the accredited Grade R programme.

With all the reform that has been taking place in ECD in South Africa since 1994 many educational issues seem to be out of educators' hands. With the new OBE curriculum that was initially proposed in South Africa, teachers were using all their energy to try and implement it according to what the government expected of them. Although it was encouraging to see that the learning area Arts and Culture was included in the new curriculum, the guidelines on how to integrate it meaningfully in the ECD classroom were still unclear and very vague, especially in the Foundation Phase. Seeing that the RNCS proposed new requirements for the Arts and Culture learning area, it was important to find out whether the proposed music programme could be used as resource material to assist ECD practitioners to reach the outcomes of the RNCS. Equipped with a better understanding of the provision of ECD in the country and of what government policies that were released after 1994 had in mind for this sector, the researcher was ready to put the proposed music programme to the test to determine if it was appropriate for ECD teachers and learners. Seeing that this programme was based on Western Classical music, this music style will be placed under the spotlight in the next chapter.