



START THEM RIGHT

A User Guide to the Early Childhood Act, Regulations and Standards
for the Operation of Early Childhood Institutions in Jamaica.

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The Early Childhood Commission wishes to thank all the children EC
practitioners and parents whose photographs have truly enhanced this
User Guide.

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INTRODUCTION

The Importance of Early Childhood Development

The care that children receive in the first six to eight years of life will determine the adults that they will become. These are the years when the foundation for growth and development; health and nutrition; physical, social, language, creative and cognitive abilities is laid. The experiences children have and the way in which they interact with their parents, family members, other adults and caregivers influence the way they learn and behave. These experiences continue to influence them when they become teenagers and adults.

The Importance of Early Childhood Institutions

Almost all Jamaican children attend early childhood institutions (ECIs) in the first few years of their lives. An ECI is defined as any place that cares for four or more children under the age of six years for up to six hours per day. This includes nurseries, centres or homes which offer day care, basic schools, kindergartens, pre-schools, and infant schools. Children, therefore, spend many of the hours of their early years in ECIs with caregivers and teachers. One way in which Jamaican children can be provided with a good start in life is to ensure that all ECIs provide services that promote children's development.

The Role of the Government of Jamaica

The Government of Jamaica has undertaken the responsibility of ensuring that all Jamaican children have access to quality early childhood development programmes so that they can become healthy, well-balanced adults and self-sufficient citizens. In order to achieve this goal, important laws were passed to guide early childhood development in Jamaica.

Laws to Guide Early Childhood Development

The Early Childhood Commission Act (2003), set up a special body, the Early Childhood Commission (ECC) to coordinate all early childhood activities and develop appropriate plans and programmes for the entire early childhood sector. One important function of the ECC is to supervise and regulate early childhood institutions (ECIs) to make sure they are efficiently run and meet the health and development needs of children. See Appendix 2 (page 41s) to learn more about the other functions of the ECC.

INTRODUCTION CONT'D

The Early Childhood Act (2005) and The Early Childhood Regulations (2005), describe the requirements that an ECI must meet in order to be registered by the ECC as a legally operating ECI. The laws will ensure that all ECIs provide the services that children need to grow and develop well. Anyone wishing to operate an ECI must now find out what is required under the law. Laws are not usually written in ways that the public can easily understand so the ECC has developed a detailed document called "Policies and Standards for the Operation, Management and Administration of Early Childhood Institutions" particularly for ECIs.

National Standards for the Operation, Management and Administration of ECIs

There are 12 categories of standards for the operation of Early Childhood Institutions:

1. Staffing
2. Developmental and Educational Programmes
3. Interactions and Relationships with Children
4. Physical Environment
5. Indoor and Outdoor Equipment, Furnishing and Supplies
6. Health
7. Nutrition
8. Safety
9. Child Rights, Protection and Equality
10. Interactions with Parents and Community Members
11. Administration
12. Finance

For each standard there is a statement that describes what the standard is trying to achieve. Each statement has clearly stated measures (performance criteria) by which the standard will be assessed. Some of the performance criteria are set out in the law (i.e. they are in the EC Act or the EC Regulations) and some are voluntary. Those that must be met under the law are those that are required for registration. Voluntary Criteria will also be monitored by the ECC.

The voluntary criteria provide ECIs with guidance to improve the quality of service they provide to a level higher than that required for registration. The complete standard document will be made available to every ECI. It can also be viewed at the ECC office or on the ECC website: www.ecc.gov.jm.

STANDARD STATEMENTS

Standard 1: STAFFING

The staff at early childhood institutions has the characteristics, training, knowledge, skills, and attitude to help children achieve their full potential.

Standard 2: DEVELOPMENTAL AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

Early childhood institutions have comprehensive programmes designed to meet the language, physical, cognitive, creative, socio-emotional, spiritual, cultural and school readiness needs of children.

Standard 3: INTERACTIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN

Early childhood staff has the characteristics, training, knowledge, skills and attitude to promote positive behaviours and reduce difficult and challenging behaviours in children.

Standard 4: PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Early childhood institutions have physical environments that meet building, health and safety requirements; allow adequate space for children and facilitate the development of children and staff.

Standard 5: INDOOR AND OUTDOOR EQUIPMENT, FURNISHING AND SUPPLIES

Early childhood institutions have indoor and outdoor equipment and furnishings that are safe, child-friendly and promote optimal development of children.

Standard 6: HEALTH

Early childhood institutions have physical facilities, policies, programmes and procedures that promote healthy lifestyles and protect children and staff from illness.

Standard 7: NUTRITION

Early childhood institutions provide children in their care with nutritious meals and model good nutritional practices for children and families.

STANDARD STATEMENTS CONT'D

Standard 8: SAFETY

Early childhood institutions provide safe indoor and outdoor environments for children, staff and visitors to the institution.

Standard 9: CHILD RIGHTS, CHILD PROTECTION AND EQUALITY

Early childhood institutions uphold the rights of children, protect them from harm and ensure that all children have equal access to services.

Standard 10: INTERACTIONS WITH PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

The management and staff of early childhood institutions have good relationships with parents, caregivers, family members and the community.

Standard 11: ADMINISTRATION

Early childhood institutions have a management structure that ensures good administration. There are plans, policies, procedures and programmes that ensure child, family and staff well-being.

Standard 12: FINANCE

Early childhood institutions have sound financial practices and adhere to standard accounting principles

USER GUIDE

This User Guide has been developed to assist the public in understanding the new legal requirements and the national standards for ECIs. It contains the twelve standard statements. Each of the standards is accompanied by criteria that measure the performance of the ECI in that area. All those that must be met under the law, and are therefore required for full registration, are included. Only a few of the voluntary criteria have been included and are specially identified in blue print. Voluntary Criteria will also be monitored by the ECC.

Standard



STAFFING

The staff at early childhood institutions has the characteristics, training, knowledge, skills, and attitude to help children achieve their full potential.



Standard STAFFING

It is important that the persons who are entrusted with the care of Jamaica's children are suitable for the job, both by their character and their training.

- ✓ Employees of ECIs must be in good mental and physical health.
- ✓ Employees of ECIs should be honest and of sound moral character. Employees must prove that they do not have criminal records. They should not have been convicted for using or selling drugs or for any other offences under the Dangerous Drugs Act, the Offences Against the Person Act or the Child Care and Protection Act.
- ✓ The operator and persons who are supervising or teaching children must be trained in early childhood development (ECD) by an institution that the ECC recognizes. In addition, ECIs which cater to children over three years old must employ at least one qualified teacher.
- ✓ The staff must be able to recognize the symptoms of common childhood diseases. It is important for them to be trained in paediatric first aid and the hygienic handling of accidental spills of blood and other body fluids. Staff must know the signs of child abuse and be aware of the incidents they must report under the Public Health and the Child Care and Protection Acts.
- ✓ Staff should also be trained in the care and development of children with special needs and in acceptable methods of disciplining young children.
- ✓ There must always be adequate staff members to ensure that children are supervised and can receive the attention they need. Young children require greater attention to meet their developmental needs.
 - Children under 1 year, 1 staff member to 5 children;
 - Children 1-2 years, 1 staff member to 8 children;
 - Children 3-5 years, 1 staff member to 10 children;
- ✓ Operators of ECIs and teachers employed to ECIs are expected to keep up to date with information in ECD and so should continuously upgrade their training through workshops, seminars and courses.

Standard



DEVELOPMENTAL AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

Early childhood institutions have comprehensive programmes designed to meet the language, physical, cognitive, creative, socio-emotional, spiritual, cultural and school readiness needs of children.



Standard DEVELOPMENTAL AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

ECIs are responsible for promoting children's development in all areas, and preparing older children for primary level schooling. Therefore, ECIs must design appropriate programmes to achieve these goals.

✓ PROGRAMME PLANNING

Each ECI must prepare and display a daily programme of activities. Copies are to be available to parents whose children attend the ECI, parents who are thinking about sending their children to the ECI and the ECC, if requested.

✓ PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

The learning programmes must be designed to accommodate different age groups. Learning programmes should also ensure that:

- the needs and abilities of each child, and the different ways in which children learn are addressed
- there are activities that contribute to all aspects of a child's development
- boys and girls have the same experiences and opportunities (i.e. no gender stereotyping)
- the use of Standard English is encouraged while respecting the primary language of many Jamaican children (creole or patois)

✓ The plan should also include different types of activities as follows:

- indoor and outdoor activities that will promote the proper coordination of the movement of their small and large muscles
- activities that will encourage children to express themselves in different ways, for example, through art, drama, music and language
- activities such as speaking, reading, storytelling and singing to help children develop their language skills
- activities that promote the development of self-esteem and self-reliance. These may include taking care of their personal hygiene,

Standard DEVELOPMENTAL AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

... dressing themselves, making their own art creations, etc.

- activities that promote exploration and discovery to encourage children to think and learn for themselves

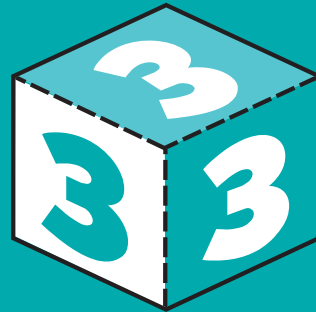
✓ Additionally, programme plans must have different ways in which children can take part in their activities, as follows:

- activities that teach children to play by themselves and in groups
- activities that the child chooses and activities that the teacher chooses
- active play , quiet play and rest or sleep times.
- tidy-up time, to teach children responsibility

✓ ECIs should assist each child to develop as an individual by encouraging him or her to choose activities.

✓ Each ECI is required to observe and record each child's progress in different areas of learning.

Standard



INTERACTIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN

Early childhood staff has the characteristics, training, knowledge, skills and attitude to promote positive behaviours and reduce difficult and challenging behaviours in children.



Standard INTERACTIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN

Even in these early years children are already beginning to understand their own emotions and behaviour as well as those of the people they interact with every day. Children often imitate the behaviour of the older children and adults around them. The staff of the ECI is responsible for creating a caring and positive environment that encourages good behaviour in children.

- ✓ The staff is pleasant and caring; respects and values children as individuals and helps them to develop self-esteem.
- ✓ The staff responds appropriately to children's expressions of affection and responds promptly to their hurt and distress.
- ✓ The staff encourages children to express their emotions in positive ways and assists children to understand other people's emotions.
- ✓ The staff encourages children to develop good manners and assists children in learning to work with each other as well as to be independent.
- ✓ No form of physical punishment is allowed in ECIs, including slapping, pinching, shaking, pushing and putting in unusual positions etc.
- ✓ No form of emotional abuse or neglect is to be used to discipline children. Only appropriate forms of discipline e.g. time out, are allowed in ECIs.

Standard



PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Early childhood institutions have physical environments that meet building, health and safety requirements; allow adequate space for children, and facilitate the development of children and staff.



Standard PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

ECIs must be operated in safe, well-designed, comfortable and secure buildings, with sufficient space inside and out for the children and staff to work, play and rest comfortably.

SUITABILITY

- ✓ The premises must have all necessary approval from the local parish council
- ✓ The premises must be inspected and approved to be free from danger of fires and other disasters by the Jamaica Fire Brigade.
- ✓ The premises must be inspected and approved as being clean, safe and hygienic and meeting all requirements under the Public Health Act.
- ✓ If the ECI is located in a home or other residence, the section in which the ECI is operated must not be used for any other purpose during opening hours.

INFRASTRUCTURE

- ✓ The building in which the ECI is operated must be a solid structure with a secure, weather-tight roof to protect the children from rain and sun. It must have sufficient windows to ensure good ventilation and proper lighting. The floors must be tiled, wooden or concrete and the building must always be in good repair.
- ✓ The premises must have:
 - clean water supply and adequate amounts of safe drinking water;
 - safe garbage disposal and sewage and drainage systems that meet public health standards.

Standard PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

PHYSICAL LAYOUT

- ✓ A sturdy fence must be built around the premises. Children must not be able to reach the latch on the gate.
- ✓ The premises must have adequate space for children. The learning and play areas must have at least 20 square feet for each child.
- ✓ There must be adequate space for play outside, with some areas of shade.
- ✓ The space should be planned to make sure that there are special areas where:
 - the operator can meet with parents and staff and where files, and documents can be safely stored (an administrative area)
 - children's learning and play take place
 - equipment and other materials can be safely stored
 - food is stored and prepared
 - children can eat and rest
 - sick children can rest away from other children (sick bay)

CARE OF INFANTS (CHILDREN UNDER 18 MONTHS)

- ✓ Infants should be kept on the ground level of the building
- ✓ There should be separate areas for changing, feeding and sleeping
- ✓ Infants should have an area separate from older children when infants and older children are in the same ECI.

FOR PERSONS WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

- ✓ Any newly built ECI (i.e. those built after the commencement of the EC Act) must be able to accommodate children, staff and visitors with physical disabilities. This means children and adults in wheelchairs or using crutches must be able to move around comfortably; doors should open inwards for entry and outwards for exit. Face basins must be provided at wheelchair height.

Standard



INDOOR AND OUT- DOOR EQUIPMENT, FURNISHING AND SUPPLIES

Early childhood institutions have indoor and outdoor equipment and furnishings that are safe, child-friendly and promote optimal development of children.



Standard



INDOOR AND OUTDOOR EQUIPMENT, FURNISHING AND SUPPLIES

Children must feel comfortable in order to get the most from their learning and play experiences.

INDOOR EQUIPMENT AND FURNISHINGS

SLEEPING

- ✓ ECIs should have enough cribs, cots, sleeping mats, etc. so children attending the institution can have somewhere to rest.
- ✓ Each infant (child under 18 months) should have his or her own crib.
- ✓ Cribs should be sturdily built with appropriately spaced rails to prevent trapping of parts of the body.
- ✓ Cribs must be arranged so as to allow sufficient space between them for staff to move freely in the area.

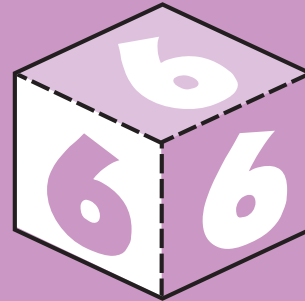
TOILET FACILITIES

- ✓ There should be separate toilets for children and staff; there should be one toilet to every 20 children and one face basin for every 40 children.
- ✓ Toilets and face basins must be of a size and height that children can use them comfortably.
- ✓ All newly built ECIs (ie. those built after the commencement of the EC Act) must have toilets and face basins at wheelchair height to accommodate children with disabilities.

OUTDOOR PLAY AREAS

- ✓ Swings, jungle gyms, slides and other similar play equipment must be placed on soft grass or soft sand so children will not get bruised or hurt when they fall.
- ✓ Where there are tricycles or other riding toys at an ECI, there must be paved areas where children can ride. Cars and other motor vehicles must not be allowed in this area.
- ✓ Outdoor areas must be checked regularly to ensure that there are no broken bottles or glass, sharp stones, poisonous plants or other substances that might hurt a child.

Standard



HEALTH

Early childhood institutions have physical facilities, policies, programmes and procedures that promote healthy lifestyles and protect children and staff from illness.



Standard HEALTH

Teachers are able to provide the best care and the most stimulating learning environment when they are healthy. Children are best able to learn when they are healthy. ECIs must therefore ensure the health of children and staff.

MAINTENANCE OF HEALTH RECORDS FOR CHILDREN AND STAFF

- ✓ Parents must present a medical certificate of good health as well as immunisation cards to show that children are healthy and have received all the shots against communicable diseases for their age before they can be admitted into an ECI.
- ✓ Parents are required to provide ECIs with written information about any special diets, allergies or medication to be administered.
- ✓ Staff must present medical certificates of good health when being employed and must also have regular medical examinations while employed at the institution.
- ✓ ECIs must keep records of children's health including copies of: immunization records; medical reports; medication and illness records; injury records and records of children's allergies to food and medication.
- ✓ Every time a child is given medication at an ECI it must be recorded. Information recorded must include the name of the medication, dose and the time it was given.
- ✓ Every time a child gets ill at an ECI it must be recorded. The report must include:
 - date and time of the illness;
 - person affected;

Standard HEALTH

- description of the symptoms of the illness;
- action taken by staff (if medication was given, a medication report must be completed).
- the names of the persons contacted about the child's illness.

MANAGEMENT OF ACCIDENTS/INJURIES

- ✓ Every time a child or adult gets injured at an ECI, it must be recorded. Information recorded must include:
 - the date, time, location and type of injury;
 - a description of what happened leading up to the injury/accident;
 - how staff treated the injury;
 - the name of the persons contacted (family member or doctor)
 - the name of the person completing the report.
 - the name of the member of staff caring for the child at the time of the accident/injury. Three copies of the injury report are to be done: one for the injured person or their parents/guardian/caregiver; the second for the child or staff member's personal file at the ECI and the third for the injury log of the ECI.
- ✓ Each ECI must have a standard method for dealing with medical emergencies which involve the children in their care.
- ✓ Each ECI is required to have first aid supplies on the premises and a first aid kit must be taken on all trips.
- ✓ Each ECI should have contact information for the nearest healthcare provider.

MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

- ✓ As soon as a staff member discovers that a child has a communicable disease (i.e. a disease that can be easily passed from one child to another)

Standard HEALTH

such as measles or chicken pox), that child must be separated from the other children immediately. The child should be sent home as soon as possible and should not be allowed to return to the ECI without a letter from a doctor advising that he/she is well.

- ✓ The operator must notify the Medical Officer for the parish of the illness immediately.

HYGIENE

- ✓ The premises and equipment of the ECI must meet the standards set by the Government regarding public health.
- ✓ Children and staff must wash hands regularly, especially after using the toilet and before preparing and eating food.
- ✓ Children must not be allowed to share toys that they can put in their mouths. These toys must be washed and disinfected every time they are used.
- ✓ Toys, bedding and equipment should be frequently washed and sterilized. Crib sheets and pillow cases should be washed and disinfected at least once per week.

PLANS

- ✓ All ECIs must have written health and sanitation plans that include all the practices and procedures mentioned above.

Standard



NUTRITION

Early childhood institutions provide children in their care with nutritious meals and model good nutritional practices for children and families.



Standard NUTRITION

The foods children eat in the early years will play an important role in their growth and development. While not having enough to eat can cause brain damage and delay development, eating too much will result in children being overweight. Practising good nutrition in ECIs and informing families about good nutrition will encourage healthy eating habits at home.

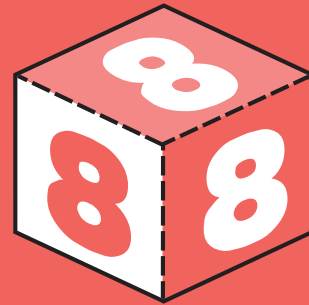
MEALS

- ✓ Each ECI must ensure that the children in its care get the proper nutrition from the meals they prepare.
- ✓ These meals should contain all the food groups in the amounts recommended for their age by the Ministry of Health.

PLANS

- ✓ Each ECI must have a written nutrition plan.

Standard



SAFETY

Early childhood institutions provide safe indoor and outdoor environments for children, staff and visitors to the institution.



Standard SAFETY

Children learn by exploring their environments, both indoors and outdoors. ECIs must provide environments that are safe for children to play and explore, and are also safe for the adults who work in or visit the institution.

INDOOR SAFETY

- ✓ All medicines, cleaning agents and any other items which may harm children must be kept out of their reach.
 - Medicines should be stored in a cupboard used only for that purpose and out of the reach of children. Each medication should be clearly labelled with the child's name, the dose and time to be given.
 - Cleaning agents and other poisonous substances should also be clearly labelled and stored in a secure place away from the area where food is stored or handled and well out of the reach of children.
- ✓ All electrical outlets must be protected by safety covers.
- ✓ Children should only be allowed to play with toys that are suitable for their age. Toys for small children should not have small parts that can result in swallowing or choking. Toys should be safe and sturdy and free of lead-based paint. Toys must be kept germ free by regular washing.
- ✓ Each ECI must keep for each child a file of the names, addresses and telephone numbers of persons to be contacted in case of an emergency; and persons authorized to collect the child from the ECI.

OUTDOOR SAFETY

Requirements for outdoor safety were already addressed in Standard 5, Indoor and Outdoor Equipment, Furnishings and Supplies.

Standard SAFETY

FIRE AND DISASTER SAFETY

- ✓ Fire fighting equipment should be kept where employees can see them and where they can be easily reached in an emergency. All employees should know how to use them. Fire equipment must be checked at least once per year to ensure that they are working properly.
- ✓ All children and members of staff must participate in regular fire drills.

PLANS

- ✓ Each ECI must have a written fire safety plan which must include the type of fire fighting equipment in the ECI, and state where in the building they are located and the steps to be taken in case of a fire or disaster. The plan must be approved by the Jamaica Fire Brigade and must be displayed in the ECI. The plan must also be submitted to the ECC within 90 days of registration.
- ✓ Each ECI must have a written disaster plan that includes evacuation of the building in an emergency.

Standard



CHILD RIGHTS, CHILD PROTECTION AND EQUALITY

Early childhood institutions uphold the rights of children, protect them from harm and ensure that all children have equal access to services.



Standard CHILD RIGHTS, CHILD PROTECTION AND EQUALITY

Jamaica has stated its support for the rights of children by signing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. All institutions must therefore ensure that children's rights are upheld. Young children in, particular, depend on the adults who care for them to ensure their rights.

RIGHTS

Many child rights requirements have already been addressed in previous standards as follows:

- Child's right to an education - Standards 1 & 2
- Child's right to protection from abuse - Standard 3
- Child's right to play - Standards 4 & 5
- Child's right to health - Standards 6 & 7
- Child's right to safety - Standard 8

PROTECTION

- ✓ All ***suspected*** cases of child abuse and neglect occurring at an ECI must be reported to the Early Childhood Commission (ECC) and the Child Development Agency (CDA).

EQUALITY

- ✓ ECIs cannot refuse to take children because they are physically or mentally disabled. However, parents of children with disabilities must inform the ECI of the type of disability the child has when he/she is being enrolled. If the disability occurs while the child is attending the ECI, the ECI should be informed as soon as possible. Parents are also responsible for providing any special equipment that the child needs (e.g. a wheelchair) to encourage participation in activities.
- ✓ The ECI must provide teaching, learning and play material appropriate for children with disabilities and do all that is possible to help disabled children to develop to the best of their capabilities.

Standard



INTERACTIONS WITH PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

The management and staff of early childhood institutions have good relationships with parents, caregivers, family members and the community.



Standard INTERACTIONS WITH PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Children benefit most when all partners work together to promote their development. When parents and family members are very involved with their children's ECI, children learn and develop better. Community members assist ECIs by including children in community activities, volunteering at ECIs, raising funds to assist ECIs and by being generally supportive of ECIs.

- ✓ All aspects of programmes must encourage the involvement of parents and guardians
- ✓ ECIs must have regular meetings with parents, once before the child starts attending the institution, then at least every 6 months after that. These meetings should discuss:
 - how the child has adjusted to the school
 - how the child is progressing developmentally
 - ways to appropriately discipline the child without using corporal punishment.
 - any other issues, recommendations or concerns
- ✓ Meetings must be recorded and signed by both the parent and the member of staff conducting the review.
- ✓ General comments and concerns of parents should be recorded in a log book and kept in a place that both staff and parents can easily access and read.
- ✓ Parents have the right to refuse to let their children participate in ECI activities, including going on outings.
- ✓ Parents have the right to visit the ECI at any time that their child is on the premises.
- ✓ Staff and children should participate in community events and community members should be encouraged to take part in events at the ECI.

Standard



ADMINISTRATION

Early Childhood Institutions have a management structure that ensures good administration. There are plans, policies, procedures and programmes that ensure child, family and staff well being.



Standard ADMINISTRATION

ECIs require good management to be efficiently run. Good management includes the development of systems to ensure that international and national laws are kept and the needs of children, parents, staff and other stakeholders are met.

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

- ✓ There is a designated operator (person or company who applies for registration)
- ✓ The operator(s) is(are) adult(s) 18 years or older, with no criminal conviction(s) and is (are) physically and mentally healthy
- ✓ Each ECI has a management body
- ✓ Regular management meetings are held to guide the functioning of the ECI.

PLANS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Plans, policies and procedures that ECIs must have were previously mentioned and are summarised below.

PLANS	POLICIES	PROCEDURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health • Nutrition • Sanitation • Fire Safety • Disaster 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour management • Parental involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting procedures for child abuse • Reporting procedures for injury and illness

RECORD KEEPING AND DOCUMENTS RELATING TO REGISTRATION

The Early Childhood Act outlines clearly the criteria for registering ECI (see Appendix 1 for full information on the registration process) including documents that must be presented. Copies of these documents are to be kept by the ECI.

Standard ADMINISTRATION

- ✓ The ECI's registration certificate must be prominently displayed in a place where it can be easily seen.
- ✓ The ECI must keep proper records of each child including:
 - name, gender and date of birth;
 - photograph
 - health reports: immunisation record, medical report signed by a doctor, medication record, food and drug allergies record; (as outlined in Standard 6)
 - names, addresses and contact numbers for the persons to be contacted in case of emergency and who are authorised to collect the child from the ECI (as outlined in Standard 8)
 - records of progress in different areas of learning (as outlined in Standard 2)
 - illness and accident reports (as outlined in Standard 6)
 - attendance record that includes the times of arrival and departure of each child
- ✓ The ECI must keep proper records of each employee, including:
 - training and qualifications
 - police records
 - medical certificates of health
 - food handler's permits
 - job description and terms of employment
 - attendance records
 - reports of any injury which occurred at the ECI
 - person to be contacted in an emergency
- ✓ Other administrative records to be kept include:
 - record of all medications administered to a child (medication log)

Standard ADMINISTRATION

- record of all injuries (injury report log)
- record of daily meals
- daily schedule of activities
- proper accounting records

RESPONSIBILITY FOR RECORDS

- ✓ The ECI must ensure that all personal information for each child or employee is kept confidential. Information can only be released as required by law.
- ✓ ECIs must keep records for 7 years
- ✓ Parents can request personal information regarding their child from the ECI.

Standard



FINANCE

Early childhood institutions have sound financial practices and adhere to standard accounting principles.



Standard FINANCE

It is necessary to ensure that there is transparency in the financial activities of the institutions. Stakeholders, including donors, are more likely to participate and invest in institutions that have sound financial practices.

✓ ACCOUNTING RECORDS

ECIs must keep records of all financial transactions in accordance with recognized accounting standards. This includes all receipts for money spent on running the ECI such as electricity, water and phone bills; money spent on food for children, maintenance of the building and premises, salaries paid to employees and money collected for fees.

APPENDIX 1

REGISTERING AN EARLY CHILDHOOD INSTITUTION

This section tells us what is required under the law to apply for the registration of an ECI and outlines the reasons for which registration can be suspended or cancelled. It also advises persons how to lodge a complaint against an ECI and describes how the ECC will deal with the complaint.

Applying for Registration

A1.1 The applicant must submit a completed application form to the Commission along with:

1. The fee of \$3,000
2. Two passport-sized photographs (of applicant)
3. References from two persons from the following list -
 - a Justice of the Peace
 - Minister of Religion
 - Attorney-at-Law
 - School Principal or Chair of a School Board
 - Judge or Resident Magistrate
 - a Police Officer above the rank of Inspector
 - a former employer of the applicant
4. Certificates or proof of training for the applicant and each employee
5. Report from the Jamaica Fire Brigade that the premises meet fire safety requirements and that appropriate fire prevention and safety measures are in place.
6. Certification from the Public Health Department
7. Food handler's permits for applicant and employees.
8. Approval from the Parish Council in respect of the premises.
9. Documentation for each employee of the ECI as follows:
 - medical certificate
 - job description and terms of employment

APPENDIX 1 CONT'D

A1.2 In cases where more than one ECI is being managed by the same operator

a separate application is required for each premises.

A1.3 A new application must be submitted if an ECI is moved to new premises.

A1.4 A new application is also required if an ECI changes operators.

A1.5 Making false declarations on the application, or falsifying documents submitted to the ECC may result in a fine of up to \$50,000 or 30 days in prison.

A1.6 The operator must allow inspectors to enter an ECI at any time during opening hours even if it is unscheduled.

- Refusal to allow an inspection can result in a fine of up to \$10,000 or 3 months in prison.
- Willfully obstructing an inspection can result in a fine of up to \$20,000 or imprisonment for six months
- At least two inspections will be made every year.

A1.7 A fine of up to \$25,000 will be charged for registration certificates that are not properly displayed. Registration is valid for five years and application for renewal should be made to the ECC at least 30 days before the current certificate expires.

Refusal of Registration

A1.8 The ECC may refuse to register an ECI if:

- the applicant does not meet all the requirements specified in the EC Act and Regulations
- an employee is not a fit and proper person to be employed in an ECI
- the area in which the ECI is located is inappropriate because of any zoning regulations;

In these cases the ECC will send a written notice advising the applicant of the refusal and the reasons for the refusal.

APPENDIX 1 CONT'D

Suspension or Cancellation after Registration

A1.9 The ECC can suspend the registration of an ECI if:

- the ECC can suspend registration if the ECI is operated in breach of the EC Act or EC Regulations
- the ECI fails to comply with a recommendation made by the ECC

A1.10 The ECC can cancel the registration of an ECI if:

- the operator or a person employed to the institution has been convicted of an offence (as stated in Standard 1)
- the operator becomes physically or mentally ill and can no longer be responsible for the ECI
- the premises have become unsuitable
- the ECI is operating in breach of the Public Health Act
- the registration has been suspended on more than one occasion over an 18-month period
- the registration has been suspended for six months and no changes are made to bring the ECI up to the required standard.

A1.11 Registration will be renewed if the ECI can prove to the ECC that the recommended changes were implemented.

How a Complaint against an ECI is Handled

A1.12 A complaint can be made against an ECI if:

- an ECI is not meeting the requirements outlined in the EC Act and Regulations
- a child at an early childhood institution has been abused, injured or harmed because of an act or the negligence of the operator, someone acting for the operator or an employee of the ECI

APPENDIX 1 CONT'D

A1.13 On receiving the complaint in writing, the ECC will assign an inspector to investigate the matter by interviewing:

- the person making the complaint,
- the operator of the ECI
- any employee(s) involved.

The inspector is required to prepare a report for the ECC. The report to the Commission should contain the following:

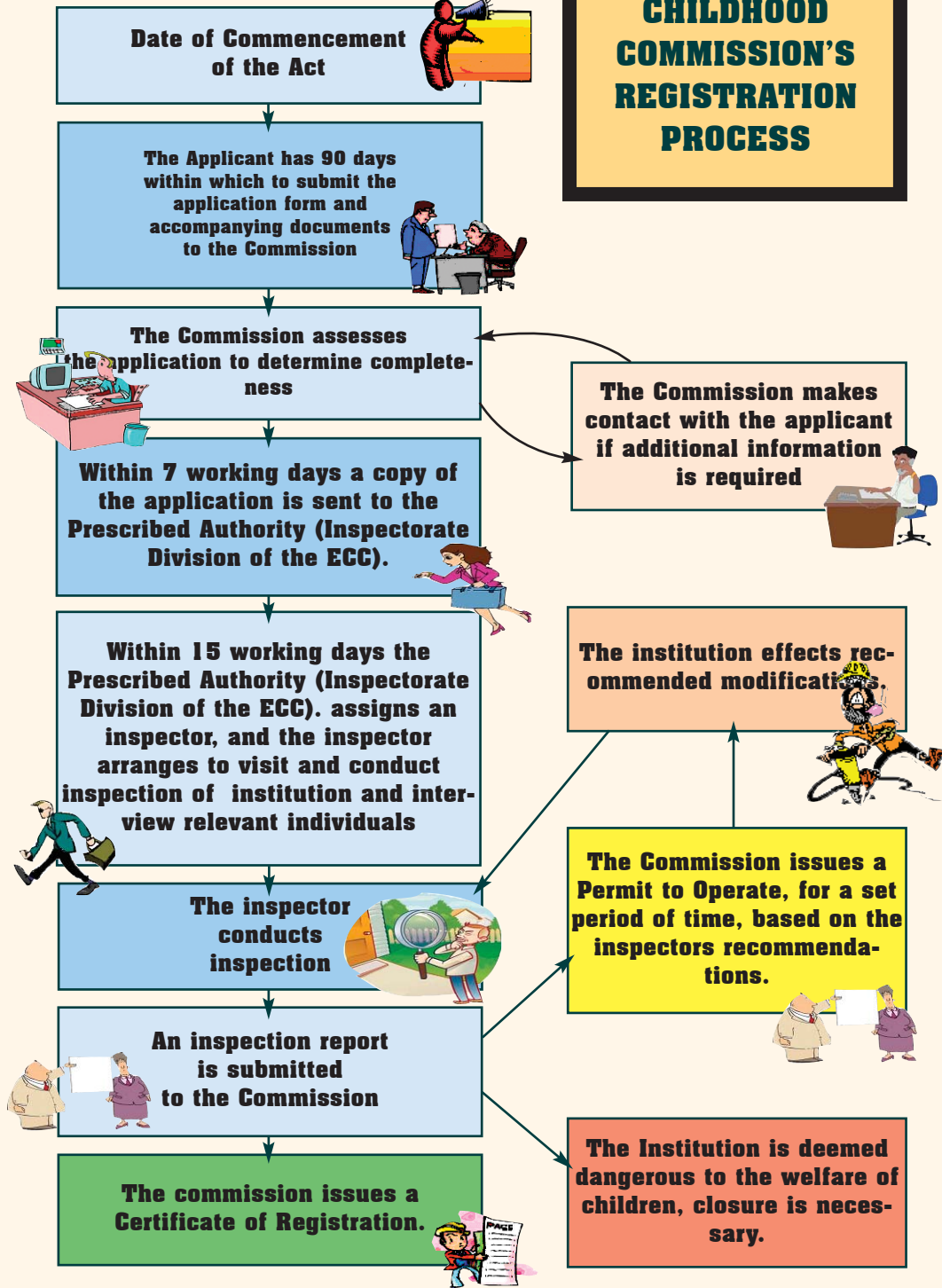
- grounds for the complaint, noting any facts in dispute
- inspector's opinion as to whether the situation can be resolved
- recommendations on how to resolve the situation
- the time that will be needed to resolve the situation

A1.14 When the ECC receives the report, it will send copies to all the parties involved, along with a letter informing them of its intention to investigate the report and their right to give their side of the story to the Commission within seven days.

After reviewing all the facts presented, the ECC may dismiss or confirm the complaint. If it sees fit, the ECC can direct that the recommendations of the inspector are put into action. The ECC may also make its own recommendations.

START

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD COMMISSION'S REGISTRATION PROCESS



APPENDIX 2

The Role of the Early Childhood Commission

Under the Early Childhood Act, an ECI is defined as any place that cares for four or more children under the age of six years for up to six hours per day. This includes nurseries, centres or homes which offer day care, basic schools, kindergartens, pre-schools, and infant schools.

The Early Childhood Commission

ECIs are overseen by the Early Childhood Commission (ECC) which was established in 2003 to take overall responsibility for Jamaica's early childhood development programme. Among its duties the ECC:

1. advises the Cabinet, through the Minister of Education and Youth, on policy matters relating to ECD, including programmes and actions to achieve national ECD goals
2. assists in preparation of plans and programmes concerning ECD;
3. monitors and assesses the way in which plans and programmes are carried out and makes recommendations for improvement to the Government
4. oversees ECD activities to ensure that they do not overlap and waste resources and that there are no gaps in providing services for the nation's children
5. sets up meetings with relevant people and organizations working in ECD as is necessary
6. decides on the needs of the sector and makes recommendations on how the money can be found to finance them
7. meets with donor agencies to request funds for ECD and monitors the expenditure of the funds provided to ensure they are used for the right activities
8. regulates early childhood institutions
9. conducts research on ECD

APPENDIX 3

Glossary/Definition of Terms

Basic school	A school that offers educational training for students under the age of six
Child with Disability	A child suffering from a disabling permanent physical handicap, i.e. a physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement of indefinite duration resulting from illness, injury or congenital defect, a disabling permanent mental handicap or a learning disability
ECC	Early Childhood Commission
Day care centre	Any premises providing non-residential day care to more than four children of up to six years for at least six hours per day
ECI	A setting that provides developmentally appropriate care, stimulation, education and socialization for children under six years, including day care centres and basic schools
Infant	A child under the age of 18 months
Operator	The person required to apply for registration of an early childhood institution
Qualified Teacher	A teacher trained at the college or university level