SOWETO BUSINESS DIRECTORY

ECD in plain English

Teacher Fusi helps us ask the useful questions.



Care. Play. Clear next steps.

For ordinary people doing important work with young children.

Illustrated edition | 26 October 2026

Fictional community scene, with a stylised Orlando Towers nod.

Start here

You may already have the government booklet. This companion helps make the words usable: a familiar scene, a plain explanation and a next step.

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How to use it

Read the scene, unpack the term, then try the tool. Each chapter has a fictional example and a Sho't left action. Use the current official process when applying or submitting.

Teacher Fusi is the named guide for this companion. Scenes, teaching wording and cartoon appearances are invented, not records, quotations, a biography or a real-person likeness. No real centre or child is assessed.

This is a learning companion, not legal or medical advice, a complete curriculum, safeguarding policy or official registration pack. Tools are copy/print aids, not interactive fields. Local requirements and certificate conditions must be checked for the actual programme and site.

Separate from the NPO notebook.

1 | Know what each document does

One creche. Different paperwork.



The table has an NPO certificate, a health document and an ECD application. Someone puts them in one plastic sleeve. The sleeve looks very organised. The questions are still loose.

Teacher Fusi starts with the useful question: which document answers which question? A neat file is lovely. Knowing what is inside it is even better.

Illustrative teaching scene. Not a real incident, portrait or quotation.

Teacher Fusi helps us ask: Are we registering the organisation, the programme or the premises?

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ECD and ELP

Early childhood development (ECD) concerns children's development and care. An early learning programme (ELP) is one type of ECD programme. ELPs can include centres, playgroups and day mothers. Programme type affects registration requirements.

Organisation, programme and place

NPO registration concerns the organisation. It is separate from ECD registration through provincial education. An NPO certificate does not register a partial-care facility or ECD programme. Partial care refers to caring for children on behalf of their parents or caregivers for part of a day or night. Ask the district which legal category applies to your arrangement. A health document alone is not ECD registration either.

The municipality has its own questions

Health, land use or zoning, building and other local requirements are not replaced by an NPO number. Ask the district ECD official and municipality what applies to the actual programme and site. Do not assume one site's papers cover another site.

A branch is not automatically another organisation

A different address alone does not automatically require a second NPO number. First establish whether the same legal organisation is expanding or a separate organisation is being formed. Check its founding rules and any specific legal or funding requirement. The separate NPO notebook explains the organisation side.

Sources: [1], [2], [8]. Full source notes at the back. Checked 26 October 2026.

Your tool: The three-question file map

Copy or print this page. Private working aid, not an official form, full policy or certificate. Use the current official requirements alongside it.

What to organise	Evidence / gap / action
Who runs the organisation?	_____ _____
What is the programme and exact site?	_____ _____
What must the municipality check?	_____ _____
Which requirement is still unclear?	_____ _____

What a useful answer looks like

FICTIONAL EXAMPLE | No real child or programme record

A team opening another site has its organisation's NPO certificate. It has not confirmed the new site's ECD and municipal requirements. Its next action is to ask the district and municipality about that address and programme, not print another copy of the old certificate.

Sho't left: put it to work
Label each document by the question it answers. When someone asks for registration, ask: of what, with whom, for which site?

2 | Understand the registration journey

Bronze is a beginning.



A colleague spots the word Bronze and starts planning a medal ceremony. There is tea ready already. The kettle has excellent timing.

Teacher Fusi brings the team back to the certificate: what stage have we reached, what conditions apply, and what comes next? Celebrate progress. Keep the next page open.

Illustrative teaching scene. Not a real incident, portrait or quotation.

Teacher Fusi helps us ask: What do Apply, Comply and Complete mean?

What do Apply, Comply and Complete mean?

APPLY

The current DBE Bana Pele route starts with an application through the official registration route. An approved initial application leads to Bronze. Do not describe Bronze as full registration or treat an application receipt as a certificate.

COMPLY

The programme supplies remaining documents and prepares for assessment and site visits. Current eCares guidance includes Silver/Gold submissions, corrections and assessment. Municipal environmental health information forms part of this work. Uploaded is not the same as approved.

COMPLETE

Silver is conditional registration: some requirements still need to be met under stated conditions and time limits. Gold is full registration. Read the actual certificate for the site, approved details, conditions and expiry. The March 2026 guide notes that validity periods can vary by province. This booklet does not promise a fixed duration or outcome.

Use the current checklist

The current guide explains a business plan, site layout, applicable founding document, emergency plan, implementation plan and qualification or experience evidence. Requirements differ by programme type. ECD registration is free. The DBE warns against paying people for registration support.

Registration is not a funding promise

Registration can enable an application for a subsidy or support; it does not guarantee funding. Ask separately about current eligibility, documents, application windows and the decision. Do not budget as if a grant has been approved before it is confirmed.

Sources: [1], [2], [3]. Full source notes at the back. Checked 26 October 2026.

Your tool: My registration next-step tracker

Copy or print this page. Private working aid, not an official form, full policy or certificate. Use the current official requirements alongside it.

What to organise	Evidence / gap / action
Programme type and exact site	_____
Application / certificate stage	_____
Conditions, expiry and corrections	_____
Official documents still required	_____
Owner / next date / proof saved	_____

What a useful answer looks like

FICTIONAL EXAMPLE | No real child or programme record

Bronze is approved. The team still needs municipal inspection information and its completed emergency plan for the next submission. It assigns an owner to each item and saves copies of submissions and replies. Its status is next stage in progress, not Gold sorted.

Sho't left: put it to work
Read the certificate and latest official response together. Write the next action in one sentence, with an owner and date.

3 | Safe space and child protection

Safety lives here every day.



The classroom is tidy for a visit. The cupboard looks magnificent. A chair is doing the important job of hiding the broken latch.

Teacher Fusi notices it. The chair is thanked for its service and moved away. A safe space must work on an ordinary Tuesday too, not only when someone carries a clipboard.

Illustrative teaching scene. Not a real incident, portrait or quotation.

Teacher Fusi helps us ask: Can children and staff use this space safely every day?

Can children and staff use this space safely every day?

Check the real space

The norms cover clean, safe premises and equipment, adult supervision, ventilation, safe water, toilets, secure harmful substances and emergencies. Check inside and outside. Keep exits usable. A decorative poster does not repair a hazard.

Capacity is not how many chairs fit

Ages, numbers, space, sanitation and staffing matter. Check the current framework and approved conditions with the district and environmental health practitioner (EHP). Do not use one internet staff ratio for all ages or forget required assistants. Never admit beyond authorised capacity.

Required checks come before access

DBE guidance says all adults working in an ECD programme must be screened against the National Child Protection Register. Confirm all applicable suitability checks, including the National Register for Sex Offenders. A general police clearance is not automatically a substitute for required register checks.

Reporting is more than telling the manager

Under section 110, teachers and partial-care staff or volunteers who on reasonable grounds conclude that a child has been abused causing physical injury, sexually abused or deliberately neglected must report through the prescribed process (Form 22) to provincial DSD, a designated child protection organisation or a police official. Internal reporting alone does not complete that duty. Seek emergency help without delay for a child in immediate danger.

Prepare, train and practise

Keep emergency contacts, evacuation arrangements and responsibilities accessible. Train staff, test and review the plan. Record facts privately and use trained protection services. This is not a full safeguarding policy or investigation guide.

Sources: [2], [4], [7], [9], [10]. Full source notes at the back. Checked 26 October 2026.

Your tool: The everyday safety walk

Copy or print this page. Private working aid, not an official form, full policy or certificate. Use the current official requirements alongside it.

What to organise	Evidence / gap / action
Gates, exits, indoor and outdoor areas	_____ _____
Equipment, electricity and storage	_____ _____
Water, toilets and handwashing	_____ _____
Supervision, ages and staff cover	_____ _____
Emergency plan / drills / contacts	_____ _____
Screening and protection process	_____ _____

What a useful answer looks like

FICTIONAL EXAMPLE | No real child or programme record

A shelf is loose. The team stops children using that area, arranges safe repair and names who must check it before use resumes. It does not wait for the next inspection. A worksheet tick does not certify legal compliance.

Sho't left: put it to work
Walk the route a child uses. Record a real hazard and the protective action now. Use the current official assessment for the full check.

4 | Plan for children, not a photo

Play is doing the learning.



The cardboard building is taller than the plan. Two children call it a taxi. Another calls it a house. Nobody has applied for zoning yet.

Teacher Fusi listens: children are explaining, comparing, negotiating and trying again. The activity looks like play because it is play. That does not make the learning smaller.

Illustrative teaching scene. Not a real incident, portrait or quotation.

Teacher Fusi helps us ask: What learning can we notice in an ordinary joyful activity?

What learning can we notice in an ordinary joyful activity?

NCF in plain English

The National Curriculum Framework from Birth to Four (NCF) helps adults plan meaningful experiences. It is flexible, not a script every child must finish at the same speed. This chapter focuses on birth-to-four learning. Grade R has a separate curriculum context.

Six areas, one connected child

The six Early Learning and Development Areas (ELDAs) are well-being; identity and belonging; communication; exploring mathematics; creativity; and knowledge and understanding of the world. They connect in routines and play. They are not six examinations.

Plan an opportunity, then pay attention

Choose safe materials suited to the children's ages, abilities and interests. Invite exploration, talk and movement. Observe, adapt and help each child participate, including children with disabilities. Small loose items are unsuitable for children who may swallow them.

Observation is not a label

Record what a child did or said, not lazy, naughty or a diagnosis. Use observations to plan support and speak privately with families. The NCF says developmental guidelines are not a checklist for ticking. Seek appropriate support with families where needed; do not diagnose from a play activity.

The whole day matters

Provide a varied rhythm of play, stories, movement, meals, hygiene, rest and relationships. Include children's languages and experiences. A programme is what children experience, not only what is printed in the planning file.

Sources: [4], [5], [6]. Full source notes at the back. Checked 26 October 2026.

Your tool: One activity, useful noticing

Copy or print this page. Private working aid, not an official form, full policy or certificate. Use the current official requirements alongside it.

What to organise	Evidence / gap / action
Children / ages / interests	_____ _____
Safe materials and activity	_____ _____
ELDAs connected to the experience	_____ _____
Access and support for each child	_____ _____
Observation / next adaptation	_____ _____

What a useful answer looks like

FICTIONAL EXAMPLE | No real child or programme record

For ages 3-4, children use large cardboard blocks in pretend taxi play. They count passengers, explain the route and negotiate turns. One child joins through gestures; the practitioner offers picture choices. These are examples of mathematics, communication and belonging, not a test result.

Sho't left: put it to work
Choose one ordinary activity. Name the learning, watch the children, and change one thing to help more children participate.

5 | Families, attendance and private records

Welcome the family, not just the form.



A parent asks what to bring. The answer is on a phone, in a voice note, somewhere between a lunch photo and a very enthusiastic good-morning message.

Teacher Fusi suggests one clear welcome note and a private child record. The group can keep its sunshine messages. Important arrangements deserve an easier home.

Illustrative teaching scene. Not a real incident, portrait or quotation.

Teacher Fusi helps us ask: What must the family and the programme know before care begins?

What must the family and the programme know before care begins?

Explain the agreement

Explain hours, fees, what is included, what to bring, communication, collection and policies. Use words and explanations the caregiver can understand. Do not hide important conditions in small print. This booklet does not set a centre's fees or contract terms.

Prepare a proper child record

Use current admission requirements and approved forms. Relevant information includes child details, parent or caregiver contacts, emergency contacts, health and support needs. Verify collection permissions and keep them current. Our worksheet is not a complete admission form.

Know who is here

Record attendance accurately. Supervise arrival, the day and departure. Follow agreed collection and identity checks. Resolve an unexpected collector through the approved procedure, not a child's guess or pressure at the gate.

Private and findable

Authorised staff need essential care information when needed, including in emergencies. Store it securely. Do not post health details, identity records, protection concerns or full registers in an open group. Handle photo permissions separately from enrolment and follow privacy requirements.

Families are partners

Ask about routines, language, comfort and support needs. Share factual observations and invite questions. Discuss concerns privately and respectfully. A warm relationship and a clear record support each other.

Sources: [2], [3], [4], [5]. Full source notes at the back. Checked 26 October 2026.

Your tool: Before the first day

Copy or print this page. Private working aid, not an official form, full policy or certificate. Use the current official requirements alongside it.

What to organise	Evidence / gap / action
Welcome information explained	_____
Admission record / contacts checked	_____
Health and support needs agreed privately	_____
Collection arrangements confirmed	_____
Attendance and arrival process ready	_____
Safe storage / authorised access	_____

What a useful answer looks like

FICTIONAL EXAMPLE | No real child or programme record

A caregiver changes phone number. The programme verifies and updates the private record, checks the emergency contact and tells authorised staff where current information is kept. The old number is not left as the only emergency route.

Sho't left: put it to work
Ask a colleague to find the blank admission form and explain collection. If that needs a treasure hunt, fix the system before the next family arrives.

6 | Food, hygiene and health

The menu is part of the programme.



The kitchen team compares vegetables like judges at a talent show. The carrots have colour. The beans have substance. Clean water has a very important supporting role.

Teacher Fusi checks the useful things: nutritious food, clean preparation and each child's needs. A meal brings pleasure and care. The paperwork should help it happen safely.

Illustrative teaching scene. Not a real incident, portrait or quotation.

Teacher Fusi helps us ask: How do food, hygiene and health work together each day?

How do food, hygiene and health work together each day?

Good nutrition needs a plan

The ECD norms require at least one meal per day and meals and snacks meeting children's nutritional needs. Plan for the actual hours, ages and needs, with appropriate guidance. This is not an infant-feeding plan, allergy protocol or therapeutic diet.

Keep food and hazards apart

Use a clean, safe preparation area away from children, safe drinking water and appropriate cooling for perishable food. Store food safely. Keep chemicals and medicines separately secured, out of reach. Do not put dangerous liquids into drink bottles.

Hygiene is a routine

Plan handwashing, toilets, nappy changing, cleaning and waste disposal. Keep nappy-changing work away from food preparation. Use current health and EHP instructions for cleaning products and water safety. Do not improvise chemical mixtures or copy old dilution recipes.

When a child is ill

Follow health policy and trained first-aid procedures. Contact the caregiver promptly and seek appropriate care. An ill child still needs safe supervision. Keep a first-aid kit and trained staff. In an emergency, get medical help without waiting to finish a register.

Medicines need a controlled process

Follow the approved policy, prescription and caregiver instructions, with secure storage and an administration record. Verify the child, medicine and instructions. Never guess doses, share another child's medicine or use this booklet as medical advice. Record health incidents and accidents factually and privately.

Sources: [2], [3], [4]. Full source notes at the back. Checked 26 October 2026.

Your tool: Daily care preparation

Copy or print this page. Private working aid, not an official form, full policy or certificate. Use the current official requirements alongside it.

What to organise	Evidence / gap / action
Menu / individual dietary needs	_____ _____
Safe water and food storage	_____ _____
Handwashing / toilets / changing	_____ _____
Cleaning / secure chemical storage	_____ _____
Health contacts / first aid / medicines	_____ _____
Incident records and follow-up	_____ _____

What a useful answer looks like

FICTIONAL EXAMPLE | No real child or programme record

The refrigerator is not keeping food safely cool. The team stops using food whose safety is uncertain, follows appropriate food-safety advice and arranges a safe alternative. It records the problem and repair action. A menu tick cannot make unsafe food safe.

Sho't left: put it to work
Follow one meal from storage through serving and clean-up. Find the weak point and assign the fix.

7 | People, plans and money

A good programme supports its team.



The staff meeting has notebooks, tea and a biscuit tin with excellent attendance. Someone says the whole plan is in her head.

Teacher Fusi smiles. That head is doing enough already. A shared plan lets the team help and keeps the day moving when one person is away.

Illustrative teaching scene. Not a real incident, portrait or quotation.

Teacher Fusi helps us ask: Can the programme work without one person carrying everything?

Can the programme work without one person carrying everything?

A business plan explains how you run

The current guide's business-plan headings include programme overview, finances, management, daily programme and discipline policy. Plain words work: who is served, who does what, what happens each day and how resources cover it. Use current official submission requirements.

An implementation plan turns a gap into work

Write what must improve, who will do it, what help is needed and when it will be checked. Do not call a wish an action. Use actual official deadlines for registration conditions, not a convenient invented date.

Training and cover matter

Check required qualification or experience evidence. Plan induction, protection checks, first aid, learning support and cover. Confirm staffing against the current age mix, framework and certificate conditions, including assistants. Volunteers still need appropriate checks and supervision.

Positive guidance, not physical punishment

The norms prohibit physical punishment, including hitting, smacking, slapping, kicking or pinching. Use humane, developmentally appropriate guidance: predictable routines, calm boundaries, support and respectful modelling. Staff must use the policy, not only sign for it.

Money must match the real work

List expected fees, other confirmed income and actual costs such as staff, food, premises and supplies. Separate confirmed money from hoped-for grants. Keep receipts and check records. The NPO notebook covers organisation finance and governance. This is not an employment contract, legal pay guide or complete accounting system.

Sources: [2], [3], [4]. Full source notes at the back. Checked 26 October 2026.

Your tool: One gap, one owner, one check

Copy or print this page. Private working aid, not an official form, full policy or certificate. Use the current official requirements alongside it.

What to organise	Evidence / gap / action
Registration condition / current gap	_____ _____
Staff skills / checks / cover	_____ _____
Daily programme / positive guidance	_____ _____
Income / costs / missing resource	_____ _____
Action / evidence / next check	_____ _____

What a useful answer looks like

FICTIONAL EXAMPLE | No real child or programme record

Only one adult knows where the emergency file is. The team trains the authorised cover person and tests that the file can be found. Shared in the group is not treated as proof that staff know what to do.

Sho't left: put it to work
Pick the task only one person can currently do. Train an appropriate backup and test the handover.

8 | Turn understanding into action

Now get the booklet off the table.



The team closes the booklet and looks at the playground. The cardboard taxi has a new route. It apparently goes via the moon.

Teacher Fusi brings out the action page. Not twenty promises for next year. One useful step the team can check. Then there is still time to enjoy the work.

Illustrative teaching scene. Not a real incident, portrait or quotation.

Teacher Fusi helps us ask: What will we do differently after reading?

What will we do differently after reading?

Start with the real gap

Choose what matters now: an immediate safety risk, unclear status, a missing record, staff support or a learning opportunity. Urgent child safety comes first. Eight chapters do not cover every requirement.

Ask a question that can be answered

Take the exact site, programme type, certificate or official response. Ask which requirement applies and what evidence is needed. Ask the municipality about local requirements, and provincial or district education about ECD registration.

Progress is not approval

Prepared, submitted, acknowledged, assessed and approved are different states. Save copies and references. Follow up on conditions and corrections. Do not advertise approval you have not received or use a worksheet as a certificate.

Check the result

Give each action an owner and a check. Read the official reply, test the safer routine or see whether authorised staff can find the record. Update the plan when evidence changes.

Keep the joy

A child feeling welcome, a parent getting a clear answer and a team supporting each other are worth noticing. Good systems make room for that work. They should not turn ordinary helpers into frightened form collectors.

Sources: [1], [2], [3], [4]. Full source notes at the back. Checked 26 October 2026.

Your tool: Our next useful step

Copy or print this page. Private working aid, not an official form, full policy or certificate. Use the current official requirements alongside it.

What to organise	Evidence / gap / action
Gap or question	_____ _____
Protective action now, if urgent	_____ _____
Next action / responsible person	_____ _____
Official source / help needed	_____ _____
Due date / evidence / who checks	_____ _____

What a useful answer looks like

FICTIONAL EXAMPLE | No real child or programme record

The team cannot explain its certificate conditions. An authorised person gets the current certificate and official response, lists the conditions and asks the district about one unclear requirement. The team records the answer and assigns the work. No approval is invented.

Sho't left: put it to work
Finish this sentence: Before our next check-in, ___ will ___, and we will know it is done because ___.

Sources and next checks

Checked 26 October 2026. Links are reading routes, not endorsements of a programme or guarantees of approval. Requirements can change.

[1] DBE: Bana Pele registration drive

Official current starting point, free registration and Apply / Comply / Complete.

Open source

[2] Bana Pele Silver Registration Guide, March 2026

Registration stages, documents, site preparation and certificate meanings. Programme guidance hosted by ECD Info Hub.

Open source

[3] eCares: Silver/Gold applicant resources

Current process explanations and applicant documents, including admission, attendance, incidents and medicines. Use applicant resources, not restricted officials-only material.

Open source

[4] DBE: norms and standards for ECD programmes

Safety, care, nutrition, supervision, staff and positive discipline. Use with the current registration framework and local assessment.

Open source

[5] DBE: National Curriculum Framework, English 2018

Birth-to-four learning, six ELDAs, play, observation and family involvement.

Open source

Sources and next checks

Checked 26 October 2026. Links are reading routes, not endorsements of a programme or guarantees of approval. Requirements can change.

[6] DBE: NCF overview and language editions

Framework purpose and access to language editions.

Open source

[7] Justice: Children's Act questions and answers

Explanation of child-protection register checks and other protection duties. Do not rely on older named contacts without checking.

Open source

[8] DBE: 2030 ECD Strategy FAQ, December 2023

Explains distinct NPO, ECD and municipal processes. Its older registration wording must be read with the current Bana Pele pathway. NPO Act: amended Act.

Open source

[9] DSD: mandatory reporting under the Children's Act

Section 110 duty, Form 22 and reporting to provincial DSD, a designated child protection organisation or police.

Open source

[10] DBE: parliamentary reply 2928, 2025

States screening against the National Child Protection Register for adults working in ECD programmes. Screening is not replaced by personal familiarity.

Open source

Using this companion

Review the teaching scenes and Teacher Fusi presentation with the people concerned. Recheck current official requirements and local details. Use current official forms and guidance when applying.