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2nd April, 2025

Dear Chief Secretary / Administrator,

As you are aware, the National Education Policy 2020 envisages that “*extant 10+2 structure in school education will be modified with a new pedagogical and curricular restructuring of 5+3+3+4 covering ages 3-18.*” (Part I-School Education).

Further, it also mentions that “*Currently, children in the age group of 3-6 are not covered in the 10+2 structure as grade 1 begins at age 6. In the new 5+3+3+4 structure, a strong base of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) from age 3 is also included, which is aimed at promoting better overall learning & development, and their social emotional well-being.*” In this structure, the initial 5 years are termed as ‘**Foundational stage**’ comprising of children aged 3 to 8 years i.e. three years of preschool education (3 to 6 years) and two years of early primary Grade 1 and 2 (6 to 8 years).

Para 1.9 of the policy also directs that ECCE will be “*carried out jointly by the Ministries of HRD (read Education), Women and Child Development (WCD), Health and Family Welfare (HFW), and Tribal Affairs*” so that continuous guidance can be provided for the smooth integration of ECCE into school education.

Accordingly, both the Ministries of Education and Women & Child Development are committed to pursue the common goal of development of social and human capital by incorporation of ‘**play-based**’ Early Childhood Care and Education through the extensive network of Anganwadis including standalone ones and AWCs co-located with schools, as well as Balvatikas in Schools. **Detailed guidelines for co-location are under consideration by Department of School Education & Literacy and Ministry of Women and Child Development.** Meanwhile, it is recommended that States/UTs may draw up plans to enhance ECCE by adopting a Whole-of-Government approach, ensuring better integration across the three areas of education, health, and nutrition. Field-level coordination in States/UTs between Department of School Education and Women & Child Development needs to be enhanced to address operational challenges in the Co-Location of Anganwadis with Schools. Towards this end, following steps may be taken:

- i. Mapping of all Anganwadis with nearby schools to have a synchronized approach facilitating holistic child development, early education outcomes and admission to Grade 1.

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- ii. Special emphasis should be on improving ECCE outcomes in remote, rural and tribal areas through stronger linkages between Anganwadis and primary schools. Anganwadis located in rented buildings and mini AWCs now being converted to Anganwadis may preferably be colocated with schools having Grade 1 which do not have 3 years of Balvatikas.
- iii. The feasibility of colocation may be explored at the state and field level in view of facilities available in school and Infrastructure as per extant guidelines of Mission Poshan 2.0 to accommodate children and other beneficiaries like pregnant and lactating mothers and adolescent girls that should include separate entry and exit provision.
- iv. AWWs and pre-school teachers should have well defined roles including working together for the common cause of ECCE implementation while maintaining other essential services of health and nutrition provided at AWCs. A joint mechanism for conducting activities on a common basis (e.g., ECCE Days, Annual Days, Poshan Maah etc) may be developed to promote collaborative engagement and ensure a harmonized approach toward child development.
- v. The learning outcomes developed for Nipun Bharat Mission (copy enclosed) and Aadharshila (copy enclosed) as per NCF-FS may be communicated to all AWCs and Balvatikas at the field level. These outcomes as outlined in the National Curricular Framework – Foundational Stage (NCF-FS), form the basis for both the TLM of DoSEL (Jaadui Pitara) and Aadharshila & PSE Kits of WCD. **The aim should be that a child is school ready for class 1 by age 6.**
- vi. A joint training mechanism between School Education and WCD Departments may be considered to strengthen 'play-based' ECCE pedagogy for Capacity Building and Training of Anganwadi Workers/Helpers (AWWs/AWHs) and pre-primary school teachers. Training programs may be conducted in collaboration with NCERT, SCERTs, and DIETs at Panchayat and block levels and NIPCCD at the regional level.
- vii. MoWCD and DoSE&L encourage use of toys for play based learning and teaching learning material (TLM) such as Jaadui Pitara, e-Jaadui Pitara, Aadharshila, Navchetana, Pre-School Education Kits to enhance the Early Childhood Care and Education experience in Anganwadis and pre-primary schools.
- viii. Both Departments may streamline data-sharing processes to facilitate effective monitoring of ECCE initiatives and ensure smooth transition of children from AWCs to schools. States/UTs are requested to cooperate in developing efficient data exchange mechanisms to enhance tracking and implementation. A common unique ID may be adopted which can be the APAAR ID for life long continuity of education and access to digital locker.

- ix. Both Departments at the State level may ensure seamless integration of Anganwadis with primary schools, ensuring that priorities of both MoWCD and MoE are met effectively. Both Departments must ensure that that coordination at all levels, especially field level functionaries, is established to minimise ground-level challenges, ensure effective policy execution and better monitoring.

Your cooperation and timely implementation of these measures will be instrumental in improving the delivery of ECCE and Foundational Literacy & Numeracy (FLN) services across the country, in the true spirit of NEP 2020 to lay a strong foundation for young and healthy students, who will be torch-bearers for Viksit Bharat 2047.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,


(Sanjay Kumar)


(Anil Malik)

To: Chief Secretaries/Administrators: All States/UTs.

Copy to:

1. PS to Hon'ble Minister for Education
2. PS to Hon'ble Minister for WCD
3. Principal Secretaries / Secretaries, Deptt. of School Education, all States/UTs.
4. Principal Secretaries / Secretaries, Deptt. of Women & Child Development, all States/UTs.

Copy also to:

- a. Director NCERT
- b. Director NIPCCD