



GUIDELINES FOR CRÈCHE CENTER IN BHUTAN

National Commission for Women and Children
Royal Government of Bhutan
October, 2018

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----------|
| Introduction | 2 |
| Legal basis | 3 |
| Objectives..... | 4 |
| Requirements for crèche center | 4 |
| 1. Physical requirements | 4 |
| 2. Operational requirements..... | 5 |
| 3. Human resource and administration..... | 5 |
| 4. Establishment and renewal of crèche | 6 |
| 5. Planning activities and curriculum..... | 6 |
| 6. Managing crèche | 7 |
| 7. Financing crèche facility | 7 |
| 8. Monitoring and Support..... | 8 |

Introduction

Bhutan has made significant progress in human development. However, the rapid socio-economic development has been accompanied with emergence of a number of problems including rural-urban migration and changing family systems. The rise of nuclear families has put a strain on traditional childrearing practices founded on extended family support system. The lack of affordable and quality crèche could restrict entry or lead female employees to leave their work to take on crèche responsibilities. As per the Bhutan Living Standards Survey 2012 report, around 53.3 percent of the unemployed women cited home or family duties as a reason for not seeking employment.

As per the Population and Housing Census of Bhutan (PHCB) 2017, the total population is 727,145 out of which 47.7 percent are female. More than half (56.6%) of female population are in the child bearing age of 15 to 49 years and 7.9 percent are children below the age of 5 years. The huge base of female population in child bearing age coupled with increasing number of them entering labour market rationalizes the need for conducive working environment with crèche centers at workplace.

Bhutan is also witnessing the emergence of nuclear families replacing the traditional family structure. This is evident from the decrease in the average household size from 4.6 in 2005 to 3.9 in 2017 (PHCB 2005, 2017). Children who were earlier cared for by other members of the extended family are now in need of alternative support system outside the family structure.

Considering the viewpoint of child wellbeing, numerous studies and researches have shown the first three years of life of the child as the most critical period of development. In fact, the first 1000 golden days of the child is a critical window of time that sets for a person's intellectual development and lifelong health. It is a period of immense potential, but also of enormous susceptibility. These 1000 days are the brain's window of opportunity and need to be provided with proper nutrition, nurture, stimulation and protection.

As per the Bhutan Multiple Indicators Survey (BMIS) report, only about 10 percent of children aged 3-5 years are attending some form of organized early childhood education program in 2010. With only 11 crèche centers at workplace, majority of children below the age of 3 years are in the home based crèche system. This indicates that a large portion of children are not receiving early childhood education program.

The Needs Assessment of Crèche Survey 2016 conducted by National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC) highlights the emerging need to implement strategies that can ease the burden of working parents, in particular the productive and reproductive roles of working mothers. Around 70 percent of the respondents in Thimphu stated that there are no crèche or crèche centers in their workplace.

Legal basis

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan states that *“The State shall endeavour to promote those circumstances that would enable the citizens to secure an adequate livelihood”* (Article 9 (11)) and that *“The state shall endeavour to ensure equal pay for equal work, vocational guidance and training and favorable conditions of work”* (Article 9 (12)). The Labour and Employment Act (LEA) 2007 also clearly outlines the requirement to ensure favorable working conditions for pregnant and nursing mothers and equal pay for work of equal value. These important Principles of State Policy have been effectively articulated as a commitment in the National Employment Policy (2013) which provides for a gender friendly working environment where *“day care centers, crèches and other crèche centers at or near workplaces”* are to be established in order *“to encourage greater workforce participation of women with children”*.

The 11th Five Year Plan (FYP) identified gender equality as a cross-cutting theme and stipulates for the establishment of crèche centers to ensure safety and wellbeing of children. Recognizing the importance, the Annual Performance Agreement (APA) 2016-2017 mandated all the ministries and autonomous agencies to establish crèche centers for their employees. The 12th FYP further continues the effort of government commitment by including establishment of crèche centers in government agencies as a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) under the Agency Key Result Area (AKRA) *“Gender friendly working conditions and environment strengthened”*.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which Bhutan ratified in 1990 explicitly recognizes the need for parents to receive assistance in their crèche responsibilities as well as the rights of children to benefit from crèche centers. Article 18 (2&3) of the CRC specifies that *“For the purpose of guaranteeing and promoting the rights set forth in the present Convention, States Parties shall render appropriate assistance to parents and legal guardians in the performance of their child-rearing responsibilities and shall ensure the development of institutions, centers and services for the care of children”* and that *“States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that children of working parents have the right to benefit from child-care services and centers for which they are eligible”*.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), ratified by Bhutan in 1981 sets out an agenda for national action to end discrimination against women. Article 11 (2c) states that *“States Parties shall take appropriate measures to encourage the provision of the necessary supporting social services to enable parents to combine family obligations with work responsibilities and participation in public life, in particular through promoting the establishment and development of a network of child-care centers”*.

The Cabinet Secretary conveyed the directives of the 92nd Lhengye Zhungtshong vide letter no. C-3/92/168 dated 25 December 2015 addressed to the Chairperson of the Royal Civil Service Commission (RCSC) to establish crèche in respective office premises to provide support to child from one to three years. Further the NCWC, in collaboration with the RCSC, is also directed to develop a standard operational guideline for management and operation of crèches.

Objectives

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide minimum required standards on establishment, registration, management and monitoring of crèche services for children aged 0 to 3 years to ensure effective implementation of crèche services in the country. It is aimed that the crèche service providers shall meet the minimum requirements reflected in the guidelines.

The guidelines represent genuine effort of the Royal Government of Bhutan to promote gender equality and aims to create a conducive and enabling environment for women to participate effectively in the labour force and provide quality early childhood care for children. It is also reflective of the highest priority accorded to providing a safe environment to promote children's wellbeing.

Requirements for crèche center

General characteristics and standards of the crèche centers are provided under physical, operational, administration and human resource, establishment and renewal, planning activities and curriculum, management, financing and monitoring and evaluation requirements.

1. Physical requirements

For the safety, hygiene and conducive environment for child development, including children with special needs, an appropriate physical structure free from pollution are required for the crèche facility. The crèche facility must be safely constructed and maintained in a safe and healthy condition. The compound should be properly fenced using safe materials. The minimum standard requirements must be met for each of the following:

- 1.1 Space requirements
- 1.2 Floors, walls, and ceilings
- 1.3 Windows and doors
- 1.4 Stairways
- 1.5 Lighting
- 1.6 Ventilation and heating
- 1.7 Water supply
- 1.8 Sewage system
- 1.9 Sinks
- 1.10 Washrooms
- 1.11 Laundry area
- 1.12 Food preparation area
- 1.13 Storage area
- 1.14 Sleeping area
- 1.15 Diapering area
- 1.16 Sick child area

- 1.17 Play and learning materials
- 1.18 Other equipment

2. Operational requirements

For the effective and smooth operation of the crèche, the minimum set requirements must be fulfilled for the following:

- 2.1 Food
- 2.2 Sleep and rest
- 2.3 Play and learning
- 2.4 Toilet and diapering
- 2.5 Personal hygiene
- 2.6 Illness and sick children
- 2.7 Sick staff
- 2.8 Communicable diseases
- 2.9 Emergency preparedness
- 2.10 Safety and hazard
- 2.11 Maintenance and cleaning
- 2.12 First aid kit
- 2.13 Laundering
- 2.14 Garbage
- 2.15 Ratios and group sizes

3. Human resource and administration

- 3.1 Human Resource: the crèche shall have adequate caregivers as per the caregiver-children ratio set out in the minimum standards. They shall undertake roles and responsibilities as per the ToR (Annexure 1)
- 3.2 Administration and Management: For the effective functioning of the crèche:
 - a. A management board should be formed.
 - b. Crèche center should develop an operational guideline as per Annexure 2
- 3.3 Record and documentation: The crèche center shall maintain the following records:
 - a. Child records
 - b. Staff records
 - c. Attendance register (child and staffs)
 - d. Incident report

4. Establishment and renewal of crèche

4.1 Government

- a. The agency submits proposal to the NCWC with the detailed proposal after carrying out a feasibility study by the GCFP of the agency.
- b. The NCWC accords approval in principle.
- c. The agency pursues preparatory works such as facility preparation and caregiver recruitment.
- d. The NCWC carries out final assessment for final approval upon fulfillment of the minimum requirements for the establishment of the crèche.
- e. The agency and the NCWC sign Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that is valid for five years.
- f. The Memorandum of Understanding is renewed after every five years.

4.2 Private

- a. The proponent submits proposal to the relevant agency (MoE/MoH).
- b. The MoE/MoH scrutinizes the proposal and carries out a feasibility study.
- c. If found feasible the concerned agency accords approval in principle.
- d. Proponent pursues preparatory works such as facility preparation and caregiver recruitment.
- e. Proponent informs the concerned agency on completion of preparation for operation and requests for formal approval for commencement of the crèche.
- f. The concerned agency accords formal approval for commencement if the crèche fulfills the national minimum requirements for establishment of crèche.
- g. The proprietor and relevant agency sign Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that is valid for five years.
- h. The Memorandum of Understanding is renewed after every five-year, subject to the crèche fulfilling the national minimum requirements.
- i. Private crèche shall be evaluated by the relevant agency prior to the renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding every five years and shall be disqualified for operation if programs do not meet the national minimum standards.

5. Planning activities and curriculum

A curriculum is a program of activities designed to achieve a certain educational objective. In simpler words, activities form a curriculum. For crèche centers, it is very important to have a child-centered curriculum to assist the development of the children. The activities designed as part of the curriculum should enable children to use their senses to explore and discover, relate new experiences to previous learning, and share the experience with others.

To ensure holistic development, the care provider has to plan a schedule and corresponding activities with reference to C4CD plus. This will ensure that the child will be provided with opportunities to enhance their proficiency in the areas related to visual, aural and motor skills,

language and reading,

Every child is an individual. His/her growth and development are powerfully shaped by the social and cultural experiences obtained at home, in the neighborhood and at the crèche center. Therefore, communicating and working with parents is important in designing the routines and activities for children. When a curriculum takes into cognizance the basic needs of every child, it will enable the child to grow and develop in a socially and culturally appropriate environment. It will also enable the child to grow with the right pace and ease and have every opportunity to achieve his/her maximum potential.

6. Managing crèche

Staff qualification and specialization is very important for the success of a crèche as parents trust them for the care of their children. They must fulfill the minimum requirements set out in the minimum standards for crèche. The caregiver should at least have a basic training on caregiving. They must have adequate first aid training to cope with any emergency at the crèche. They must preferably be matured enough to care for a child properly.

The staff of the crèche must be committed and motivated to provide crèche to the children and must be physically and mentally capable of meeting the required development and educational needs of each child. Special consideration should be given to the character and the personality of the staff, and it should be made clear beforehand that they have never been convicted of any offence.

7. Financing crèche facility

The crèche should be managed in a financially sustainable manner. For the government offices, respective ministries/agencies shall help to ensure that there is a supply of crèche centers available. Apart from direct public provision of services, government funding to centers may be in the form of grants. Grants to providers can sometimes be used for capital expenditure to encourage start-ups, and at other times may apply to recurrent expenditures such as staff salaries, rent or meals. Besides, the parents will contribute minimal fees to run the center. The modality of financing of the center will be worked out by the relevant agencies keeping in mind the sustainability and standard of the center.

For private crèche, the proponent shall establish the crèche facility fulfilling the minimum requirements. The fees shall be decided by the proponent depending on the services provided and keeping in mind the sustainability and standard of the center.

8. Monitoring and Support

The monitoring shall be carried out at two levels:

8.1 External

The monitoring and evaluation of the crèches will be carried out by the NCWC once a year. The NCWC shall provide feedback to the concerned center within a month from monitoring visit. The monitoring will be carried as per the crèche monitoring tool (Annexure 3).

8.2 Internal

Internal monitoring and evaluation of the crèches will be carried out by twice a year by:

- a. Internal monitoring committee- The internal monitoring committee if formed shall comprise of 3-4 members with the inclusion of gender and child focal points and a representative from parents, or
- b. The gender and child focal point of the concerned agency/dzongkhag/thromde

Annexure 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE OF CRÈCHE CAREGIVERS

Caregivers in crèche centers work with the youngest children in group settings. The quality of interactions between young children and the caregivers has significant, enduring impact on children's lives. The caregivers play a critical role in the healthy development of young children while parents go to work. With increasing emphasis on the development and learning outcomes of young children, caregivers are seen not as babysitters but professionals who contribute to the formation of strong foundations for health, learning and behaviour of children. Children spend the majority of their day in crèches and the learning experiences provided for them during that time are critical to their healthy development and the skills they need to succeed in school and in life.

The caregiver in a crèche center therefore must have knowledge, skills and competencies in critical areas to be able to create a safe and stimulating center and address the health, safety and learning needs of children as follows:

- i. Understanding how children from birth to 3 years develop, including understanding of the developmental domains, milestones and needs at different stages of development
- ii. Knowledge of the minimum standards and standard operating procedures in a childcare center
- iii. Knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of a caregiver and skills in carrying out day to day functions in the care of young children, including:
 - ✓ Practical skills such as changing, diapering, feeding, cleaning, toilet training etc.
 - ✓ Inter personal skills such as communicating with children, limit setting and managing behaviour
 - ✓ Facilitating skills such as mediating learning through play
- iv. Setting up and arranging the center as a safe and stimulating environment for children and organizing schedules and activities in the center

The NCWC as the regulatory authority for crèche centers recognizes the opportunities and the risks involved in the operation and management of crèche centers and its responsibility to promote ethical practices, behaviour and attitude. The NCWC therefore strives to promote principles and standards that will guide caregivers maintain professional behaviour, attitude and practice. The terms of reference for caregivers as detailed below provides a framework for reflection about their moral, ethical and professional responsibilities to guide them in their day to day behaviour and conduct in crèche centers.

A. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Supporting children's healthy development

The caregiver has the responsibility of supporting children's holistic development in the following domains of development:

1.1 Supporting social-emotional development

- 1.1.1 Building warm, positive and nurturing relationships
- 1.1.2 Providing consistent and responsive care, attending to every child as and when required
- 1.1.3 Supporting children when they are going through emotional outbursts such as anger, sadness, excitement, fear, etc. and helping them manage these emotions
- 1.1.4 Promoting socialization and encouraging children to interact and play with each other
- 1.1.5 Guiding behavior, setting limits and helping children develop self-discipline through positive disciplining strategies
- 1.1.6 Promoting children's sense of identity and belonging
- 1.1.7 Preparing a safe and stimulating environment for children that enables children of all abilities to experience and a sense of security
- 1.1.8 Observing children regularly and taking note of their growth and development and any unusual behaviour or tendency
- 1.1.9 Treating all children fairly and equally
- 1.1.10 Treating parents with respect and acknowledging their role in the care and nurturing of children.

1.2 Supporting cognitive development

- 1.2.1 Facilitating exploration and learning through play
- 1.2.2 Creating meaningful curriculum and engaging children in stimulating activities
- 1.2.3 Promoting imitation, symbolic representation and play
- 1.2.4 Supporting reasoning and problem solving

1.3 Supporting language and literacy development

- 1.3.1 Promoting interaction and communication among children
- 1.3.2 Expanding spoken language and listening through use of children's home languages
- 1.3.3 Promoting early literacy through reading, storytelling, songs and rhymes
- 1.3.4 Communicating with children in a kindly and openly manner and listening to them

2. Supporting health, safety and nutrition of children

- 2.1 Supporting children in building healthy toileting habits and assisting younger ones with nappy changing
- 2.2 Encouraging regular hand washing and teaching children how to wash hands properly
- 2.3 Encouraging healthy nutrition and feeding practices

3. Supporting and promoting children's rights-The Child Caregiver shall:

- 3.1 Act in the best interests of children, including children with special needs.
- 3.2 Respect the rights of children as enshrined in the Child Care and Protection Act of Bhutan (2011) and commit to advocating for these rights.
- 3.3 Work with children to help them understand that they are individuals with shared responsibilities to the environment, society and the world.
- 3.4 Respect the special relationship between children and their families and incorporate this perspective in all interactions with children.
- 3.5 Create and maintain safe, healthy environments, spaces and places, which enhance children's learning, development, engagement, initiative, self-worth, dignity and show respect for their contributions.
- 3.6 Acknowledge the uniqueness and potential of all children, in recognition that enjoying their childhood without undue pressure is important.
- 3.7 Acknowledge the holistic nature of children's learning and the significance of children's cultural and linguistic identities to their learning and development.
- 3.8 Ensure that children in their care are not discriminated against, abused (physically, mentally and psychologically) or neglected in any way on the basis of gender, age, ability, economic status, family structure, ethnicity, religion, language or culture.

B. PERSONAL COMPETENCIES AND ATTRIBUTES

The child caregiver should be:

- 1.1 a Bhutanese national and should have attained 18 years of age.
- 1.2 someone who is able to speak local dialects/languages of the children in the center
- 1.3 mentally sound
- 1.4 somebody who loves children
- 1.5 willing to work with children and can interact affably with children and their parents

- 1.6 able to demonstrate good judgment to ensure children's health and safety
- 1.7 able to act as a role model for young children
- 1.8 The Facilitator should not be somebody who has been involved in:
 - 1.8.1 criminal activities involving violence against a person;
 - 1.8.2 child abuse, neglect or exploitation
 - 1.8.3 abuse of drug and alcohol
 - 1.8.4 sexual misconduct
 - 1.8.5 acts of gross irresponsibility or disregard for the safety of others or a pattern of criminal activities.
 - 1.8.6 activities against the state.

C. EDUCATION TRAINING

The Caregiver in the Crèche should have:

- 1.1 a minimum qualification of class XII and a basic training in childcare and development
- 1.2 knowledge and skills in:
 - 1.2.1 Child development
 - 1.2.2 Early learning and development standards
 - 1.2.3 ECCD curriculum for birth to 3 years
 - 1.2.4 Special needs and disabilities
 - 1.2.5 First aid, health and nutrition
 - 1.2.6 Child rights and protection

Annexure 2: FRAMEWORK FOR OPERATIONAL GUIDELINE

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Principles
- 1.2 Definitions

2. Objectives

- 2.1 Overall objective and the specific objectives of the operational guideline

3. Physical facility

- 3.1 Whether or not the agency has met the minimum requirements.

4. Administration and Management

- 4.1 Formation of Management board-
 - a. For government agencies; the management board should be formed at the agency level including a representative from parents.
 - b. For private crèches; the management board should comprise of the proprietor, representative from the caregivers, a representative from parents, protection officers from the district.
 - c. State the frequency of the meeting of the management board
 - d. Develop ToR of the management board
- 4.2 Record and documentation-
 - a. Detailed documentation of the child records, staff records, attendance register, incident reports.
- 4.3 Recruitment and enrollment
 - a. The enrollment of children will be based on the size of the crèche.
 - b. The recruitment of the staff should be based on the number of children as per the guideline and minimum standards.
- 4.4 Fee structure
- 4.5 Visitors protocol

5. Program

- 5.1 Daily activities: Schedule of feeding, Play time, Rest and sleep, age wise programs
- 5.2 Health and Hygiene
- 5.3 Emergency preparedness and management

6. Monitoring and support

- 6.1 Formation of internal monitoring committee or other monitoring mechanisms

7. Reporting to the Competent Authority

- 7.1 The internal monitoring committee/GCFP shall submit a report to NCWC once a year.