

A Critical Evaluation of the Ownership and Responsibilities of Early Childhood Care, Development and Education in Sri Lanka

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Early Childhood Care and Development and Education are considered crucial for human development (UNICEF, 2007 cited in Gallardo, 2009). The dearth of research in Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) and education indicate that less attention is paid to its advancement in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, the child related studies conducted in Sri Lanka are limited. This paper presents a critical evaluation of the policies related to the ownership and responsibilities of ECCD and education in Sri Lanka. A qualitative research design was used for this study. Interviews were done with responsible informants at the Children's Secretariat and Provincial Councils. Furthermore, documents related to ECCD and education were analysed using thematic analysis in order to discover the emerging themes related to the policies of ECCD and education. The findings showed that there is no single designated authority who is responsible in maintaining the early childhood care and education in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, it was noted that the responsibility of ECCD and education constantly shifts from one authority to another. In addition, the contradictions in the policies regarding the responsibilities and ownership was noted. Hence, the requirement for stern and stable policies to establish authorities to maintain and also to share the responsibilities regarding the early childhood development and care and education is highlighted in the present study.

Key words: ECCD, Education, Responsible authorities, Policies, Ownership