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**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Evaluation of the Jamaica Early Childhood Curriculum

for Children Birth to Age Five

## **I. Background**

The Government of Jamaica (GOJ) recognizes Early Childhood Development (ECD) as a key strategic area for national development. In keeping with the Government of Jamaica’s strategic goal to improve the quality of early childhood development, the Early Childhood Commission (ECC) was established by an Act of Parliament in 2003. The ECC is an agency of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information, with reporting responsibilities to the Minister on policy matters relating to early childhood care, education and development in Jamaica, including initiatives and actions to achieve national early childhood development goals.

## **II. Rationale**

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) defines curricula as an organized framework that delineates the content and skills children are to learn. The Jamaica Early Childhood Curriculum is a guide that consists of four components that supports practitioners in designing activities based on learning objectives, skills and content to meet the needs of children Birth to Age Five.

The components of the Jamaica Early Childhood Curriculum include:

1. The Conceptual Framework outlines the guiding philosophical principles of the curriculum, the developmental objectives and the rationale for the curriculum.
2. The Scope and Sequence outlines the developmental objectives that children would be expected to achieve by the end of each age phase in four developmental domains- cognitive, affective, creative and psychomotor for children Birth to Age Three and Four to Five.
3. The Curriculum Guide supports the planning of activities by developmental milestones and themes/ sub-themes. The guide is divided into two documents: Birth to Three is Key and Four and Five: Getting Ready for Life. The Birth to Three is Key Guide provides practitioners with developmentally appropriates activities and experiences for children based on their developmental abilities, while the guide for the older children follows a theme based approach.
4. The Resource Book includes supplemental activities and resources to the Curriculum Guide and provides additional developmentally appropriate activities for each age group.

The implementation of the Jamaica Early Childhood Curriculum in the sector occurred in three phases. The first phase of implementation started with the curriculum guide for children birth to three years in September 2008 by the then Early Childhood Education Officers in the Ministry of Education. The second phase of the implementation consisted of the four to five-year-old curriculum guide with the focus on four year olds only in September 2009 by the then Early Childhood Education Officers in the Ministry of Education. The third and final phase of the implementation was the five year olds portion of the curriculum guide in September 2010, with the newly hired Early Childhood Commission’s Development Officers. Since September 2010, the Development Officers have trained and supported early childhood practitioners in all aspects of the Jamaica Early Childhood Curriculum. The curriculum is grounded in the constructivist approach which is based on the philosophy that children construct their own knowledge through actively exploring the learning environment. From the research report on the implementation of the Jamaica Early Childhood Curriculum for Children Birth to Five Years Old, it was highlighted that parent and community engagement are needed for general support to the home school connection. The Practitioners found the curriculum to need more attention given to literacy and numeracy, that there was not sufficient time to plan and implement the activities, that the activity plans were long and time consuming to prepare and the many booklets of the curriculum.

## **III. Objective**

The Consultant will be responsible for providing specialist services in the revision of the Jamaica Early Childhood Curriculum through the review of the curriculum. The consultant will be required to produce a desk review, a draft of the revised curriculum, the final approved curriculum with supporting templates, training materials and monitoring and evaluation framework in order to meet the present and future needs of the 21st century children.

## **IV. Specific Objectives**

The objectives are to:

1. Produce a desk review of local, regional and international trends early childhood curricula in conjunction with national criteria for the development of early childhood curricula
2. Develop a methodology to evaluate the Jamaica Early Childhood Curriculum
3. Produce a draft of the revised curriculum for review by the relevant experts including the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information
4. Amend the draft curriculum as per feedback from the review and produce a final approved curriculum with supporting manuals, templates and PowerPoint presentations for training purposes
5. Demonstrate an integration of the Jamaica Early Childhood Curriculum into the National Standard Curriculum that reflects a smooth transition of continued learning in Grades 1-3

## **V. Scope of Work**

The consultant will:

1. Conduct a desk review of local, regional and international curricula. Review relevant materials such as:
2. The Jamaica Early Childhood Curriculum for children Birth to Five, the Report on the Implementation of the Jamaica Early Childhood Curriculum for Children Birth to Five Years during its First Year of Implementation, February 2010
3. Research Report on the Implementation of the Jamaica Early Childhood Curriculum for Children Birth to Five Years, June 2013
4. The revised Curriculum for Primary Education – Ministry of Education, Youth and Information
5. The Early Childhood Commission Act 2003, The Early Childhood Act 2005, The Early Childhood Regulations 2005, Standards for the Operation and the Management and Administration of Early Childhood Institutions
6. The National Strategic Plan for ECD
7. The ECD Policy
8. Conduct stakeholder consultation meetings for the purpose of gathering information to inform the revised curriculum.
9. Submission of draft report to the ECC’s representatives and incorporation of feedback

from stakeholders into the final document.

1. Presentation of the final report to include an implementation/ training plan, training manual, training resources and monitoring and evaluation framework. The training manual should aim to standardize training through the use of scripted training guidelines, power point presentations and developmentally appropriate early childhood interactive training activities. Both documents are required in order to obtain official endorsement of the evaluation’s contents.

**V. Deliverables**

The Consultant will be required to provide the following during the contract period:

1. Full Work Plan and detailed Budget.
2. Comparative report on the review of local, regional and international curricula.
3. Comparative report should include
4. Analysis of curriculum development process
5. Review of curriculum content
6. Identified gaps, strengths and weaknesses
7. Strategies to address gaps and weaknesses in the review of the curriculum
8. Strategies to include current best practices into the existing Jamaica Early Childhood Curriculum
9. Draft revisions to the Jamaica Early Childhood Curriculum
10. Final approved revised Jamaica Early Childhood Curriculum
11. Implementation Training Plan, Training Manual, Training Resources and monitoring and evaluation framework to support the revised Jamaica Early Childhood Curriculum
12. Training Budget

## **VI. Qualification and Experience**

The individual Consultant or firm of Consultants should have at least five (5) years’ experience in curriculum development and early childhood development.

The Lead Consultant should possess:

* Post graduate qualifications in Curriculum Development
* At least five (5) years’ documented experience in Curriculum Development and Early Childhood Education or related areas of pedagogy, i.e. the approach to teaching early learners Birth to Five, STREAM, technology in EC.
* Certification or qualification through experience in understanding and consistent application of curriculum development for early childhood development
* Certification or qualification in data collection and data management/evaluation in Jamaica

The secondary specialists if they are proposed as being needed by the Lead Researcher of the Consulting Team should possess

* Post-graduate qualifications in Curriculum Development
* At least five (5) years’ documented experience in Curriculum Development and Early Childhood Education
* Experience of data collection and data management/evaluation in Jamaica

## **VII. Duration of Assignment**

This consultancy should last for six months.

## **VIII. Reporting Requirements**

The Consultant will report directly to:

The Executive Director

Early Childhood Commission

Shops 45-49 Kingston Mall

8-10 Ocean Boulevard

Kingston, Jamaica

**Terms and Conditions**

* The ECC reserves the right to terminate this consultancy or any part thereof at any stage of the project.
* Documents and materials may not be shared with third parties without written consent from the project lead at the ECC.
* The Consultant may not sub-contract this project or any part thereof.
* All documents and materials must be handed over to the ECC upon completion or termination of this consultancy.