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**Message
from
His Excellency General Surayud Chulanont (Ret.)
Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand**

The Royal Thai Government fully recognizes the importance of children and youth, who are at an age when they are full of energy, creativity and potential, and represent the nation's future. Thus there is a need to strengthen their immunity and opportunity for development and self-expression in accordance with their individual aptitude, so as to foster pride and self-confidence, which are prerequisites for their subsequent development. To this end, the Council of Ministers gave its approval on May 22 2007 to the Long-Term Policy and Strategy for Early Childhood Care and Development (0-5 Age Group) 2007 - 2016, as an integral part of development of our children and youth, and a framework for action on early childhood development, encompassing the initial period of the lives of our children and youth. This is indeed an important milestone, as it is the first time in Thailand's history that a policy and strategy has been prepared for the special benefit of those in early childhood.

I wish to extend my warmest thanks and sincere congratulations to all concerned on this initial success. On this occasion, I wish to request the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, the Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Interior, as well as other key agencies of the ministries concerned, to assume collective responsibilities in promoting the effective translation of the early childhood policy into concrete actions, thus achieving its goals as planned. These agencies are also urged to seek concerted the cooperation of all families, communities and segments of society in ensuring that those in early childhood can benefit from physical, spiritual, emotional, social and intellectual development, so that they will grow up to enjoy adulthood endowed with desirable characteristics namely, virtue, competencies and happiness, and thus become citizens of highest quality for the nation's future.

General  (Ret.)
(Surayud Chulanont)
Prime Minister



**Message
from
The Deputy Prime Minister**

Effective human development must necessarily begin right from conception, During the period of early childhood, which is the stage in which the foundations for all development is introduced, the family has the core responsibility for providing holistic guidance. In addition, the community and society actively participate and contribute to the care of the child at all stages of development.

The Royal Thai Government under the leadership of His Excellency General Surayud Chulanont has recognized all along the importance of children and youth development. On January 9, 2007, the Council of Ministers duly approved the Agenda for Children and Youth on the occasion of the National Children's Day. The Agenda includes five main issues of concern among which figures agenda no.3 on provision of early childhood development institutions, child development centres and kindergartens of quality. For this purpose, the public sector will cooperate with the local areas and the private sector in establishing a system for development

of nursemaids, childcare providers and kindergarten teachers, so as to attain the qualifications and capacity to promote child development concurrently with the provision of knowledge and to foster collaboration with the parents.

The publication by the Ministry of Education of 20,000 copies of the Long-Term Policy and Strategy for Early Childhood Care and Development (0-5 Age Group) 2007 - 2016 is indeed in accord with the government policy aimed at involving the efforts of all segments concerned for the translation of the Policy and Strategy into action. Such implementation requires pushing forth and coordination of collective efforts for early childhood development to reach the quality required, so as to form an essential formulation for the nation's continuous development in future.



(Mr. Paiboon Wattanasiritham)

Deputy Prime Minister
Minister of Social Development
and Human Security



**Message
from
Minister of Public Health**

The Ministry of Public Health is most proud to participate in the formulation of the Long-Term Plan and Strategy for Early Childhood Care and Development (0-5 Age Group) 2007 - 2016, aimed at developing those in early childhood in physical, intellectual, emotional, mental, social and ethical. As the main anchor responsible for strengthening the system of national public health, the Ministry of Public Health fully recognizes the importance of promoting a healthy life for the people of all age groups, particularly for those in early childhood, who will one day grow up to be valuable human resources for the future of our country. With such dedication, the Ministry of Public Health has concurrently prepared its plan and measures for health development of the children in this age group. The plan and measures are harmonious and intrinsically linked with the policy and strategy for early childhood care and development of the various agencies concerned, and thus contributing to pushing forth concrete implementation of the Policy and Strategy.

The Ministry of Public Health is confident that concerted efforts through cooperation of the agencies involved and all segments of society will lead to gratifying achievements in early childhood care and development, resulting in desirable growth of Thai children, who will become citizens of quality for the nation's future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Na Songkhla', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

(Dr. Mongkol Na Songkhla)
Minister of Public Health



**Message
from
The Minister of Education**

As we all realize, education is a crucial instrument for human resource development, especially human development right from birth. Effective human development necessarily begins at the time of conception. Early childhood development therefore contributes to sustainable development of human quality, leading to long-term prevention of social problems. Such process requires closest participation of the family serving as the main anchor, with the community and society, providing the foundation for active contributions to all stages of child development.

On May 22, 2007, the Council of Ministers gave its approval to the Long-Term Plan and Strategy for Early Childhood Care and Development (0-5 Age Group) 2007 - 2016, and has entrusted the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Interior, and other ministries and agencies concerned with the joint responsibilities for translating the policy into effective implementation leading to concrete results, so as to develop Thai

children to be the nation's citizens of high quality.

May I sincerely express my appreciation and warmest thanks to all parties involved in the preparation of the Policy and Strategy for Early Childhood Care and Development (0-5 Age Group). All concerned are urged to join efforts in collectively pushing forth the policy and strategy for early childhood care and development into concrete implementation, leading to gratifying success in attaining all the achievements as targetted.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Wijiit Srisa-arn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

(Mr. Wijiit Srisa-arn)

Minister of Education

FOREWORD

The Council of Ministers at its meeting on May 22, 2007 gave approval to the Long-Term Plan and Strategy for Early Childhood Care and Development (0-5 Age Group) 2007 - 2016. It has also assigned all ministries and agencies concerned to avail of the Policy and Strategy, which provides them with guidelines for early childhood development.

Early childhood development of the 0-5 age group occurs at the age with highest rate of learning. It represents the most important and crucial period required for development of the human brain. Early childhood development is indeed regarded as the best investment, as it requires less costs than those needed for solution of subsequent social problems arising from lack of quality the people.

In recognition of such importance, the Office of the Education Council has published the Long-Term Plan and Strategy for Early Childhood Care and Development (0-5 Age Group) 2007 - 2016, for dissemination of useful guidelines on Thailand's early childhood development for the benefit of all agencies and parties concerned.

Amrung Chantavanich

(Mr. Amrung Chantavanich)

Secretary-General of the Education Council

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Long-Term Plan and Strategy for Early Childhood Care and Development (0-5 Age Group)* 2007 - 2016

1. Background

1) National Education Act 1999

The legal provisions of the National Education Act 1999 and Amendments 2002 include several sections on early childhood care and development e.g.:

Section 13 (1) stipulates that parents or guardians are entitled to benefit from state support for knowledge and competencies in bringing up and providing education for their children or those under their care.

Section 14 (1) stipulates that individuals, families, communities, community organizations, professional bodies, religious institutions, enterprises and other social institutions, which support or provide basic education are entitled to benefit from state support for knowledge and competencies in bringing up those under their care.

Section 18 and 18 (1) require provision of early childhood and basic education in the following institutions: childcare centres; child development centres; pre-school child development

* Young children in the 0-5 age group means the newborn to those aged 5 years, 11 months and 29 days or those under age six.

centres of religious institutions; initial care centres for disabled children or those with special needs, or early childhood development centres under other names.

Section 47 requires establishment of a system of educational quality assurance to ensure improvement of educational quality and standards at all levels. Such a system is comprised of both internal and external quality assurance.

From the above legal provisions of the National Education Act 1999, it can be concluded that early childhood education can be provided through all the 3 types of education i.e. formal, non-formal and informal education. It can be offered in educational institutions similar to those providing basic education, requiring a system of internal quality assurance to ensure development of educational quality and standards. Furthermore, all segments of society are required to participate in provision of early childhood education. Parents or guardians, individuals and various social institutions are entitled to receive knowledge on proper child rearing.

2) The 10th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2007 - 2011)

The 10th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2007 - 2011) has an overriding objective of national development towards a "**Green and Happiness Society**" through adherence to the "**Sufficiency Economy Philosophy**". Among



the national development strategy identified is Strategy 5.1: Development of the Thai people and Thai society towards a society of wisdom and learning i.e. human development for attaining morality, which precedes knowledge, and self-immunity through spiritual development concurrent with lifelong learning of people of all walks of life and all ages. Such development, which begins since childhood, has the objective of achieving a sound basic education as well as the requisite life skills.

3) National Scheme of Education

The National Scheme of Education (2002 - 2016) includes Objective 1: All-round and balanced human development serving as foundation of overall development. The policy guideline for implementation requires enhancing access to lifelong learning for all, with a target set that all children aged 0-5 years will receive pre-school development programme for readiness in all aspects before entering the education system. The implementation framework for necessary measures includes:

3.1 Promotion and support for development and preparedness for those in early childhood through a variety of modalities, especially provision of knowledge for parents, guardians and would-be parents;

3.2 Promotion and support for early childhood education of quality, covering the entire target group, so as to provide a foundation for appropriate development for all.

Exigencies of the 10th National Economic and Social Development Plan, together with an overview of the educational problems experienced in the past, and rapid contextual changes under the tide of globalization have had a tremendous influence on education provision in Thailand. This has resulted in preparation of the (draft) educational development framework in accord with the National Scheme of Education (2002 - 2016) during the period of the 10th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2007 - 2011). For the strategic framework and implementation of Strategy 1 on early childhood education, a target has been set that by 2011, all those in early childhood will receive proper development, grow up appropriately in accord with their age, and are well prepared to proceed to learning at the basic education level; 100% of the 3-5 age group will therefore receive pre-primary education.

4) Policies and Plans for Development of Children

4.1 In Thailand, formulation of national plans for development of children began as early as 1979 with the preparation of the Long-Term Plan for Development of Children and Youth 1979-1999. Furthermore, in 1992, a Policy on Development of Children was formulated, based on the situation regarding basic needs and services for children. Mr. Anand Panyarachun, former Prime Minister, duly appointed a Committee for Development of Children's Education and Rearing in order to carry out an



analytical study of the problems, and propose pertinent recommendations on education and rearing of children, from the newborn to those aged twelve.

These measures have proved to be beneficial and have stimulated an awareness of the importance of children's development. Steps for implementation of the policies, however, have proved to be inadequate due to lack of continuity required.

4.2 Thailand subsequently formulated a Plan for Provision of Education for All (2002 - 2016), stipulating a policy for nurturing and development of children aged 0-5 in all aspects. A target has also been set that, by 2006, more of the children under age three must receive all-round rearing and development suitable to their respective ages. All children aged 3-5 must be developed in all aspects before receiving compulsory education. Besides, a strategy has been identified for maximal participation of all segments of society in the pressure and creation of social awareness of the importance of the support for children, youth and all people to have access to lifelong education right from birth. Encouraging such participation has been carried out through various modalities e.g. group process and mobilization for assistance and cooperation of all segments of the community.

4.3 UNICEF and other organizations with mandate on children's affairs worldwide have accorded special recognition of the importance of early childhood development. These children

indeed require full development in all aspects - physical, intellectual, emotional, social and moral, all of which have their own specificities and sensitivities. The UN World Summit for Children in 1990 adopted a policy on "A World Fit for Children", which attaches importance to young children not yet enrolled in Grade 1. A worldwide campaign has also been conducted for recognition of the importance of the children in this age group.

4.4 On November 6, 2005, the Ministry of Education made an official announcement on the education reform for which 6 urgent areas of concern were identified, priority being given to the importance of development of early childhood education, so as to have concrete and succinct measures for development of the children in this age group, thus forming a firm foundation for subsequent development.

2. Importance of Early Childhood Care and Development

1) An effective human development must necessarily begin right from inception, **especially from early childhood which is the foundation for all subsequent developments. Sustainable development of human quality and long-term prevention of social problems** must also begin from early childhood with an emphasis on the **family** as the main anchor, and the **community and society** playing an active role in child rearing in all stages.



2) Proven theories and relevant research findings have substantiated that proper environment and care can affect the structure and effectiveness of the functioning of the human brain. **The most important and necessary period for brain development is during the first five years in life.**

3) During the past decade, new concepts and bodies of knowledge have emerged through application of various sciences for full analysis of the brain, including photogrammetry technique to study brain development in all stages. The new bodies of knowledge reveal maximal learning opportunity and highest learning rate in early childhood. Brain growth and development form the foundation for learning, and in fact begin right from the stage of being a foetus. During the 3-6 months of the mother's pregnancy, the growth of the brain cells is at its highest rate. The growth of the brain itself enjoys the highest rate at the age of 0-6 years, leading to a growth of 90-95% in size. The brain, however, does not stop growing at the age of six, but continues to the age of 20-25. A study on learning through the brain has also revealed that the left and right sides of the brain do not function independently, but in coordination. These findings have led to new concepts of learning design, so as to be attuned to development of the brain.

4) In regard to development of the children's desirable characteristics in accord with their age, those in the 3-5 age

group need to be educated on **righteousness** i.e. ability to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong. Parents need to teach them to admit their faults; not to take possession of others' belongings; and not to hurt others. They must learn that punishment will automatically follow wrongdoing. Regarding control of emotion, the children at this age do what pleases them. If stopped, they will resort to violent expression. The parents will therefore have to exert firmness, and not to bow to their children's whims. These children must be trained in self-control, and control of anger and desires. They must learn how to wait. Some parents feel guilty, because they cannot devote full time to the children, who are compensated with toys. They are ready to provide their children with anything regardless of suitability, resulting in the problem of the children's inability to control their desires. (Dr.Yongyud Wongpiromsarn, **Characteristics of the Thai people, 2004**).

5) Early childhood care and development is regarded as a **cost-effective investment**. Relevant research findings have shown that such investment incurs less costs than those for solving social problems due to lack of the requisite quality of the people in society.



3. Present Situation and Problems

Proven theories on child development and pertinent research findings on those in early childhood both in Thailand and other countries have shown that early childhood is the most important period required for forming a firm foundation for appropriate development in all aspects. If the children are well nurtured in accord with psychology theories and other academic principles, they will be able to enjoy development to their highest potentiality. On the contrary, without proper care and opportunity for development during this period, such a golden chance can never be recalled.

Therefore, parents, guardians, teachers and childcare providers are required to have knowledge and understanding, as well as appreciate the importance of development of those in the 0-5 age group, so as to be able to properly nurture the children, who are provided with care and experiences, thus enabling them to learn and develop themselves to the best of their ability.

1) Present situation regarding childcare for those in the 0-5 age group

The 2004 data on early childhood care and development show that there was a total of 5,842,069 children in the 0-5 age group, comprising: 2,850,937 of the 0-3 years old. These children are nurtured and cared for by their families. In cases

where the families could not take care of them, they would be sent to childcare facilities or child development centres, offering a variety of services. These facilities include 3 categories i.e. 1) child centre/nursery; 2) pre-school class (of one-year duration); and 3) kindergarten for the 3-5 age group.

Most of the 0-3-year-olds would be nourished and cared for by their families, while the majority of the 3-5-year-olds would benefit from educational services. For the academic year 2004, there was a total of 2,466,693 of the 3-5-year-olds, who benefitted from services provided by childcare facilities, representing 82.5% of the 3-5 age group.

Age	Nourished and cared for by	
	Families	Childcare facilities
Less than 3 years: Population: 2,850,937	2,784,167 Representing 97.7%	Providing services for 66,770 children (nurseries) Representing 2.3%
3-5 age group: Population: 2,991,132		Providing services for 2,466,693 children: - Child centres : 641,482 - Pre-school classes : 11,575 - Kindergartens : 1,813,636 Ratio of public : private institutions 79.6 : 20.4 - Public : 1,964,384 - Private : 502,309 Representing 82.5%
	Representing 17.5%	

Source: Statistics on Education in Thailand for Academic Year 2004. Bureau of Educational Research and Development, Office of the Education Council, Ministry of Education



2) Situation regarding existing problems

The present situation has given rise to a serious concern, and can even be regarded as a crisis for those in early childhood. Evaluation of the prevalent situation and stringent testing on development of the 0-5 age group led to the findings of delayed development in various aspects - physical, emotional, mental, social, intellectual and moral. From the appraisal of the existing problems, the following conclusions have been reached:

2.1 Nurturing

2.1.1 Nurturing by the family

1) The 0-5-year-olds living with the family: parents have no opportunity of learning about desirable parenting and the appropriate way of treating their children. Many have failed to recognize the importance of looking after the children themselves, and leave them under the care of relatives or nurse maids. Several still have misconception of child rearing e.g. manifestation of love through material rewards; corporal punishment for each mistake; threat to withdraw love if not obedient; and fright of those for whom they should trust e.g. doctors, police etc..

2.1.2 Nurturing by institutions providing early childhood care and development*

1) **The 0-3-year-olds receiving services of nurseries:** assessments of the services provided by these facilities have revealed inadequacies in both administration and management, especially in regard to appropriate quality and standard in various aspects e.g. childcare standards, those for childcare institutions and those for childcare providers. Nor has there been established a system for effective and continuous monitoring and control of the quality and standard required.

2) **The 3-5-year-olds receiving services of early childhood care and development institutions in the form of childcare centres:** assessments have revealed inadequacies regarding the way the children learn, child psychology and child development e.g. rote learning only; no encouragement for the children to develop their thinking ability; they are confined to their seats all day long; they are under pressure to learn to read, write and do seems. Teaching-learning activities are organized without understanding the basic concept of child learning. For the production of teachers and childcare providers as well as preparation of necessary personnel, attention must be paid to their training in order to acquire appropriate qualifications,

* Institution providing early childhood care and development means a nursery; child development institution; childcare centre; child centre; pre-school child development institution; kindergarten; and those under other names.



knowledge and understanding, with particular emphasis on child psychology and child development. Systematic pre-service and in-service training is at present lacking. Effectiveness and continuity required of such training are needed. Furthermore, there is a lack of systematic monitoring and control of the quality and standards of early childhood care and development centres.

3) **The 3-5-year-olds receiving services of early childhood care and development institutions in the form of kindergartens:** inadequacies have also been found regarding provision of early childhood education e.g. the children are under pressure to learn to read, write and do sums to qualify for Grade 1 entrance examination; self-expression is not permitted; forbidden to speak, the children have no choice but just remain silent; daily homework is mandatory. Besides, there is a prevalent misconception and misinterpretation of learning through the learner-centred approach. There is also a lack of policy for teacher production and development, and also provision of personnel required for children's development e.g. personnel with knowledge and understanding, with special emphasis on child psychology and child development; paediatricians; child psychiatrists; child psychologists; and teachers specializing in early childhood education. Development of learning sources and learning materials and media on early childhood personnel concerned to study for their continuous

self-development, is also insufficient.

2.2 Child development

1) Lack of appreciation of the concept of early childhood development

At present, teaching-learning activities for young children are organized without appreciation of the basic concept of human development, particularly during early childhood, as well as lack of understanding of the rights of the child and human rights; hence no recognition of the importance of protection for their survival and enjoying development and growth in all aspects in accord with their age.

2) Lack of application of synthesized research/knowledge conducive to children's learning and development

In other countries, extensive research has been undertaken to attain new bodies of knowledge on child development, proper child rearing and theories on young children's learning for their care. These new bodies of knowledge should have been studied and suitably adapted to the context of Thai society. Stimulation for research and development is needed, including information dissemination for increasing competencies of teaching and research personnel at higher education level for training purposes for the benefit of young children on a long-term basis.



3) Lack of effective and efficient administration and management

Most administrators of early childhood services and education do not have specialized knowledge required for an effective delivery; nor do they have expertise in acquiring and utilizing resources suitable to the children's age. Establishment of a database for holistic information provision on all aspects of early childhood development as well as utilization of available data on administration and management are also lacking.

4) Lack of effective integration

A holistic early childhood development needs integrated contributions in various aspects, namely: health, education, protection, social security and welfare. It calls for an effective coordination with families, communities and society. It must be flexible for adjustment in keeping with the trends of events. It also requires sufficient personnel for attuning to the advancement of knowledge and skills at all levels - local, national and international.

5) Lack of coordination among agencies providing development services

There are at present no less than 8 ministries and 35 agencies, from both the public and private sectors, offering early childhood care and development services (0-5 age group), as well as providing parents and guardians with knowledge on

child rearing. The services offered for strengthening the families for early childhood care and development, however, are not adequate either in terms of quantity or quality. Coordination is lacking, nor is there unity in educational policy and orientation.

6) Lack of community and public participation

The general public and the community must be more interested and have a more active participation in early childhood care and development, so as to benefit from the continuous and effective contributions of members of the general public and the community.

7) Lack of translation of short-term and long-term plans into action

Thailand has had child development policies and plans for more than 20 years. There has, however, no identification of specific agencies for plan implementation. There is a lack of mechanism for functioning at national and local levels; nor have there been follow-up and evaluation to ensure translation of the various policies and plans into action.

8) Lack of resource mobilization

All segments of society, especially the public sector, so far has not had a policy for investing in succinct, suitable and continuous early childhood care and development.

Realizing the prevalent serious situation and the enormity of early childhood problems at present, together with the government's commitment to solve the problems



encountered, the Ministries of Education, Public Health, Social Development and Human Security, Interior, Labour, Culture and other ministries involved, representatives of the various professions and no less than 35 entities concerned with child development, from both public and private sectors, have conducted a collective brainstorming to prepare the Draft Long-Term Plan and Strategy of Early Childhood Care and Development (0-5 Age Group) 2007-2016.

4. Vision

By 2016, all young children will be given an opportunity for desirable, suitable, all-round and balanced development to the best of their potentiality, enabling them to enjoy learning and growth of quality in accord with their age, thus forming an essential foundation for their subsequent development.

5. Objectives of the Policy and Strategy

- 1) To have a common concept and guidelines at the national and other levels for strengthening and supporting all those in early childhood to develop to their highest potentiality;
- 2) To enable the various ministries and other agencies concerned to utilize the Policy and Strategy for preparation of concrete strategies/operational plans for effective early childhood

development;

3) To provide an orientation for data and information collection, research, follow-up and evaluation; and

4) To include early childhood development in the education reform.

6. Policy

To provide all children in the 0-5 age group with an opportunity for quality development to their highest potentiality, with the **family** serving as the main anchor, and with **the childcare providers and all segments of society** participating in providing desirable and suitable services and environment in keeping with the local context and the children's development in accord with their age.

7. Target Groups

- 1) All 0-5-year-olds;
- 2) Parents, family members, would-be parents;
- 3) Those directly involved in provision of childcare services e.g. administrators of early childhood development institutions; teachers; nannies; childcare providers; nurse maids; the elderly in charge of young children; doctors; nurses; psychologists; social welfare workers; public health workers etc.;



4) Various segments of community e.g. local administration organizations; community organizations; religious leaders; volunteers for different services; professional groups, students/youth etc.; and

5) Various segments of society e.g. social institutions; mass media; research institutions; educational institutions; professionals and different professional organizations; state agencies; private business, international organizations etc..

8. Main Strategies

The 3 main strategies, providing the concept and orientation for framework for preparation of concrete operational plans, include the following:

1. Strategies for strengthening early childhood development;
2. Strategies for strengthening parents and persons concerned for early childhood development; and
3. Strategies for strengthening the environment conducive to early childhood development.

8.1 Strategies for strengthening early childhood development

Concept

1) All 0-5-year-olds i.e. children with normal disposition, those with special needs and gifted and talented children require

nurturing to promote development in all aspects - physical, emotional, mental, social, moral and ethical. Special recognition will be given to the importance of creating wisdom to attain virtue, righteousness (spirituality), culture and local wisdom and access to communication and learning. Disadvantaged groups and those with particular needs are entitled to receive special care and assistance. They need to have a secure life for their survival and protection. They also need full development to their highest potentiality, so as to be able to lead a happy and creative life in society.

2) There is a need to develop diversified models of suitable services for the benefit of all children i.e. those with normal disposition, those with special needs and gifted and talented children, enabling them to attain full development in all aspects - physical, intellectual, emotional, mental, social, ethical and desirable character from quality nurturing by parents, guardians, childcare providers, early childhood teachers or those under other names.

3) A participatory approach is developed for effective transition of children's services in accord with their age between families and service-providing institutions and/or education institutions.



Targets

1) Development of children under age three

For those under age three, **the family will serve as the main anchor for nurturing and strengthening development in all aspects.** In unavoidable circumstances, early childhood care institutions of various models will take care of the nurturing and development of the children, with trained childcare providers/nurse maids with the necessary skills for providing such services. Most important is the requirement for maximal and closest participation by parents and family members.

2) Development of children in the 0-5 age group

For the 0-5-year-olds, **the family continues to be the main anchor for their nurturing and developmental strengthening.** Early childhood development institutions, educational institutions and other modalities, offering formal, non-formal and informal education, are required to provide the children with protection and developmental opportunity. Childcare providers, teachers etc. are true "**professionals**", endowed with knowledge, desirable attitudes and values as well as most appropriate and best skills for the protection and all-round development. The environment should also be conducive to their development, with continuous participation and cooperation of parents, guardians and family members.

In cases where the parents wish to take care of and educate their children themselves, or through community groupings, state support is required for providing the parents with knowledge and skills in home-schooling.

3) High quality is required for children in the 0-5 age group, **including continuous services regarding their physical and mental health for early identification of problems and diagnosis of deficiencies through an efficient and timely transition system. A link is required between the homes, early childhood development centres, schools and units for medical consultation.** In necessary cases, the children will receive timely diagnosis, care as well as rehabilitation.

Guidelines/measures

8.1.1 Strengthening and support for quality services offered by early childhood development institutions, schools, and institutions of other types for the benefit of all those in early childhood by agencies of the public, private, private business sectors and communities are required. Particular attention will be given to character building and strengthening the children's holistic development in all aspects - physical, intellectual, emotional, mental, social, moral and ethical. Special attention will be given to the importance of continuously creating wisdom to attain virtue, righteousness (spirituality), culture, local wisdom, desirable values and personality in accord with their age; adherence and



devotion to the institutions of nation, religion and monarchy; provision of learning experiences through the learner-centred approach, with emphases on creative thinking; initiation; imagination; active participation in self-learning and ability for free and suitable expression of thoughts, points of view and sentiments; ability to inculcate self-discipline; enjoying good relationship with others; self-help and assistance for others; optimistic view of the world; enthusiasm and thirst for knowledge and curiosity, and appreciation of the beauty of nature. There will also be a reform of methods of child rearing; provision of learning experiences; development of thinking process; and all types of learning media, so as to allow the children to develop themselves through suitable process or modality; environment and ambiance conducive to learning. These measures will contribute to kindling the children's desire to learn all the more, and provide them with contentment and happiness.

8.1.2 Support is required for various projects aimed at holistic and all-round early childhood development e.g. Family Development Project, Happy Family Project etc., by encouraging communities to effectively and efficiently proceed with their existing programmes on a continuous basis; support will also be given to other projects beneficial to communities in towns and groups of villages/villages aimed at children's development, with local leaders playing the leading role. There will be

coordination with public and private agencies providing such support.

8.1.3 Those in early childhood need physical check-up and developmental assessment for early diagnosis and warning. Should deficiencies are found, childcare providers (parents, guardians, doctors, nurses etc.) have to provide immediate medical care and treatment, or transfer the children to centres or agencies providing specialized services.

8.1.4 The state is required to provide developmental and educational services to meet the needs of all children, particularly the gifted and talented, those with special needs and disadvantaged groups. Such services must be sufficiently provided on a continuous basis.

8.1.5 There is a need for prescription of criteria and national standards requiring quality indicators and standards for early childhood education services at the international level, as well as attuned to new bodies of knowledge and innovative methodology for child development. There is also a need for follow-up and quality evaluation, as prescribed by the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (Public Organization) in accord with Sections 47, 48 and 49 of the National Education Act 1999 and Amendments 2002.

8.1.6 Childcare institutions will be encouraged to adopt a suitable system of internal and external quality assurance,



so as to allow users to examine and choose appropriate services.

8.1.7 There is a need to develop a participatory transition system for transfer of services in accord with the children's age, linking homes to nurseries/ childcare institutions/ kindergartens. Special attention will be given to the transition system for transfer of those with deficiencies to specialists or provide early diagnosis and treatment to these children. There will be a system thinking parents and guardians with different caregivers providing services for the benefit of young children.

8.1.8 Public, private, and private business organizations and early childhood development practitioners will be encouraged to produce low-cost learning materials suitable to development of young children's skills in all aspects.

8.2 Strategies for strengthening parents and persons concerned for early childhood development

Concept

Parents, guardians, family members, newlyweds, would-be parents, expecting mothers, teachers, medical and public health personnel, and community and local leaders require development for acquiring knowledge, understanding and skills in child rearing providing the children with appropriate and suitable experience and environment conducive to early childhood development, as well as protection against possible accident and harm.

Targets

1) The home-based approach will be adopted for holistic development of those in the 0-5 age group, for whom the important persons concerned are parents, guardians and family members.

2) Development of knowledge and skills for personnel and those concerned with early childhood development regarding child psychology, child development from conception to the age of five, including providing basic knowledge on development of the 6-8 age group to attain continuous understanding of early childhood development; the measures taken must necessarily cover all levels i.e. family, community and specialist.

Guidelines/measures

8.2.1 Providing services for strengthening knowledge, understanding and skill-training for parents, family members, newlyweds, nurse maids, childcare providers, teachers regarding early childhood psychology and appropriate and suitable methods of rearing all young children in different situations in accord with their age. There will also be an awareness-rousing for the former to appreciate the value of bringing up their children with responsibility, love, warmth and care; they will also be able to provide them with learning experiences and serve as good examples for their children. The parents and guardians will have access to modern bodies of knowledge on child development,



and have skills in providing rearing of high quality for the benefit of their children, especially those in the rural or remote areas.

8.2.2 Providing incentives, strengthening and support for production of different types of media to give accurate knowledge on early childhood care and development for the benefit of parents, expecting mothers, guardians, childcare providers, teachers, those concerned with children, communities and society; these media will be in the diversified forms of printed material; journal; poster, pamphlet; radio and TV programmes; VCD; CD-ROM and other electronic media.

8.2.3 Development of advance guidelines for evaluation of child development suitable to their ages for application by persons and agencies concerned; **there will also be appropriate evaluation methods for early childhood development, and simple manuals for child development observation,** which the parents, guardians and childcare providers can avail of. They will thus be able to diagnose the children's deficiencies right from the beginning. Such early diagnosis will lead to timely treatment and care. There should also be data collection on sources of knowledge and services provided, so that the parents and guardians can conveniently and speedily contact for advice or assistance for early childhood care and development. The agencies and persons concerned

are encouraged to share these media to avoid overlapping of effort and for economizing the budget required.

8.2.4 Reform of the process for production of nurse maids, childcare providers, teachers and other personnel e.g. doctors, nurses, psychologists, social welfare personnel, public health workers, volunteers etc., so as to be better qualified and more suited to work for children of this age group; particular attention will be given to knowledge and skills in child psychology, concept and orientation for child development psychology of perception and the art of transmitting knowledge and desirable values to children.

8.2.5 **Development of all types of personnel in childcare centres and early childhood educational institutions to become "professionals"** and capable of working together on a multidisciplinary basis, by providing systematic, diversified and continuous training for childcare providers, teachers etc. with differences in basic knowledge and educational level, so as to increase their specialized knowledge and skills, including those needed for assisting children with behavioural, intellectual and learning problems. They will thus be able to provide child rearing at the lowest standard prescribed.

8.2.6 **Raising remuneration and improvement of welfare of childcare providers and those providing services to the children;** an awarding system will be initiated to boost the



morale of personnel of quality, serving as role models for their peers.

8.2.7 Promotion, support and strengthening of professional associations of early childhood personnel and other associations concerned e.g. Kindergarten Teachers Associations in the various regions, enabling them to acquire advance knowledge, apply different technologies, increase their innovative experiences, become interested in all types of media for the benefit of young children as well as acquire professional ethics. A legislation recognizing such professional ethics will also be enacted.

8.2.8 Promotion and support for establishment of parents associations for early childhood to raise the quality of life of children in this age group; special attention will be given to grouping for parents associations for the benefit of groups of children with special needs, in order to have exchange of learnings and assisting the children to develop to their highest potentiality.

8.3 Strategies for strengthening the environment conducive to early childhood development

Concepts

1) All segments of society e.g. organizations, institutions and mass media at all levels participate in the warning, care, promotion, protection and mobilization of resources for invest-

ment in early childhood development of quality, suitable to the local area. Such contributions will enable the young children i.e. those with normal disposition, those with special needs and those whose parents are not capable of taking care and responsibility for them to receive further developmental strengthening on all aspects - physical, intellectual, emotional, mental, social, moral and ethical. Special recognition will be given to the importance of creating wisdom to attain virtue, righteousness (spirituality), culture and local wisdom, enabling them to proceed to receive basic education and lead a happy life in society.

2) Creating bodies of knowledge on early childhood development; the action required includes promotion and support for research and experimentation to formulate concrete and diversified modalities for suitable early childhood development.

Targets

1) The state and society will share responsibilities for providing the environment and services enabling the families and childcare providers to develop those in early childhood through a holistic approach including operational plan preparation, warning, monitoring, checking and evaluation.

2) Providing economic and social preparedness for communities and local organizations enabling them to assist families with children in the 0-5 age group, providing the children with care and protection and most effective learning experiences.



3) When the communities and local areas use sufficiently strengthened, both in terms of financial means and knowledge and competencies, the state will decentralize full responsibilities to the local entities (families, communities, local administration organizations, private sector, private organizations, business organizations etc.) for maximal functioning in all aspects. The state will assume the role of formulation of national policy, guidelines, modalities, checking, standard, evaluation, support and assistance to various disadvantaged groups, at the same time providing the environment and media conducive to the children's learning and development.

4) Mass media play an important role in protecting the rights and promoting development of those in early childhood, through dissemination of knowledge and skills for parents and childcare providers in various modalities, as well as an awareness-raising for the society to recognize the importance of early childhood development.

Guidelines/measures

8.3.1 Encouragement of participation

8.3.1.1 Encouraging the community and society to participate in taking responsibilities and warning activities required for early childhood development, by promoting and supporting parents and guardians to contribute to administration and management of early childhood develop-

ment, and joining personnel of child development centres in caring for the children in the community; the private sector and community will be encouraged to establish and expand services for the benefit of those in early childhood to cover all areas.

8.3.1.2 Promotion and support for educational institutions, institutes of education and agencies or organizations concerned from both the public and private sectors, private organizations, local administration organizations and communities for the provision of early childhood education, regarded as a binding commitment requiring sufficient measures of quality and budgetary support from the public and private sectors for holistic approach to development.

8.3.1.3 Educational institutions, early children development institutions, agencies responsible for early childhood development of both the public and private sectors, and mass media will join efforts in **campaigning for awareness-raising** among the general public, **who will appreciate the importance of early childhood development as well as that of their contributions** through active participation in such process.

8.3.1.4 Encouraging expansion of the role of early childhood development institutions to also serve as resource centres for the community through provision of premises, personnel, media and equipment; the communities will thus be stimulated to participate in various activities organized by the early childhood development institutions.



8.3.1.5 **Encouraging provision of informal learning sources** e.g. young children's libraries (books, toys and various types of media), playgrounds, public parks, recreation areas and institutions for promoting increased family activities and at the same time in strengthening there to become places for creating desirable interaction among family members.

8.3.1.6 Launching of a campaign for all political parties and governments to have a continuous policy, strategy and measures for early childhood development, which we clear and based on sound academic principles.

8.3.2 **Research and development and building of knowledge**

8.3.2.1 **Promotion and support for study and research including experimental and action research, and building of knowledge on early childhood for formulation of pertinent policy for translation into concrete actions:** multiplication and dissemination of research findings to those concerned as well as the general public will also be carried out.

8.3.2.2 **Support for production of research findings and programme development to strengthening of programme for early childhood development, including production of learning media for those in early childhood;** such support is aimed at attaining suitable and diversified modalities for early childhood services, including evaluation methods

appropriate to young children and modalities for assessing the services provided.

8.3.2.3 Promotion of research for professional development for the benefit of those engaged in the profession of early childhood development will also be conducted.

8.3.3 Development of organs and mechanism for administration, coordination and follow-up and evaluation

8.3.3.1 A National Committee for Early Childhood Development will be established through announcement of a regulation of the Prime Minister's Office **for continuity and for linking actions required with those of the 4 main ministries** and other ministries concerned. The Committee will comprise representatives of the public and private sectors, scholars and all segments involved and responsible for early childhood development. It will have the task of coordinating policies, plans, budget, follow-up and evaluation. It will also coordinate with existing organs or agencies responsible for children and youth programmes, including the translation of this Policy and Strategy into effective implementation.

8.3.3.2 A unit at bureau level of the Office of the Education Council will serve as secretariat of the Committee, responsible for coordinating all tasks required. There will also be established a system for data and information collection to meet the requirements of the tasks for early childhood development;



creating, coordinating and linking of networks of relevant, up-to-date, timely and reliable data and information.

8.3.4 Resource mobilization

8.3.4.1 The state will support and encourage budgetary allocation for early childhood development on integrated and ad hoc arrangements, based on the main tasks of the agencies participating in overseeing and promoting early childhood development. These budgetary allocations are regarded as an important investments for laying the foundation for all-round human development.

8.3.4.2 Adjusting tax measures and other requirements to provide incentives for individuals; families; community, private professional organization; religious institutions are encouraged to join efforts in early childhood development; these efforts include provision or support for administration of various modalities of service for the benefit of those in early childhood.

8.3.4.3 Resources will be mobilized from all segments of society for effective and continuous early childhood development.

8.3.5 Strengthening the role of mass media in early childhood development

8.3.5.1 Encouraging all types of mass media to use their capacities in disseminating knowledge beneficial

to early childhood development and the families, regarded as their binding commitment; all segments of society should be stimulated to participate in the care and protection of those in early childhood. There should be production of all types of programmes and media with accurate content suitable to early childhood development, and not detrimental to their rearing and development. Support should also be given to establish groups or organs to watch over the production and presentation of the media.

8.3.6 Support for early childhood development by local administration organizations

8.3.6.1 Promotion and support for local administration organizations for preparedness for transfer of provision of early childhood education from public agencies or other entities, or those established and run by the local administration organizations themselves for access to early childhood education of quality to all young children in the local area, thereby allowing them to enjoy development to their highest potentiality.

8.3.6.2 Local administration organizations provide the necessary personnel responsible for early childhood development in accord with a clearly established structure.

8.3.6.3 Local administration organizations conduct a public relations campaign and seek cooperation of



local communities for awareness-rousing of the importance of owning child development centres or educational institutions themselves. Parents, guardians and communities should be made to recognize, accept and appreciate the significance of early childhood development; participation in responsibilities, warning system and promotion of local childhood development in the local area. These local administration organizations will encourage persons; families; communities; community organizations, private and professional organizations; religious institutions; enterprises and other social institutions to provide or participate in services for early childhood development; as well as mobilize funds and/or establish funds for early childhood development in their local area.

8.3.7 Legal affairs

8.3.7.1 Amendments will be made to relevant laws, rules and regulations on those in early childhood and their development and protection as required by provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

8.3.7.2 Support will be given to effective enactment of these laws, rules and regulations.

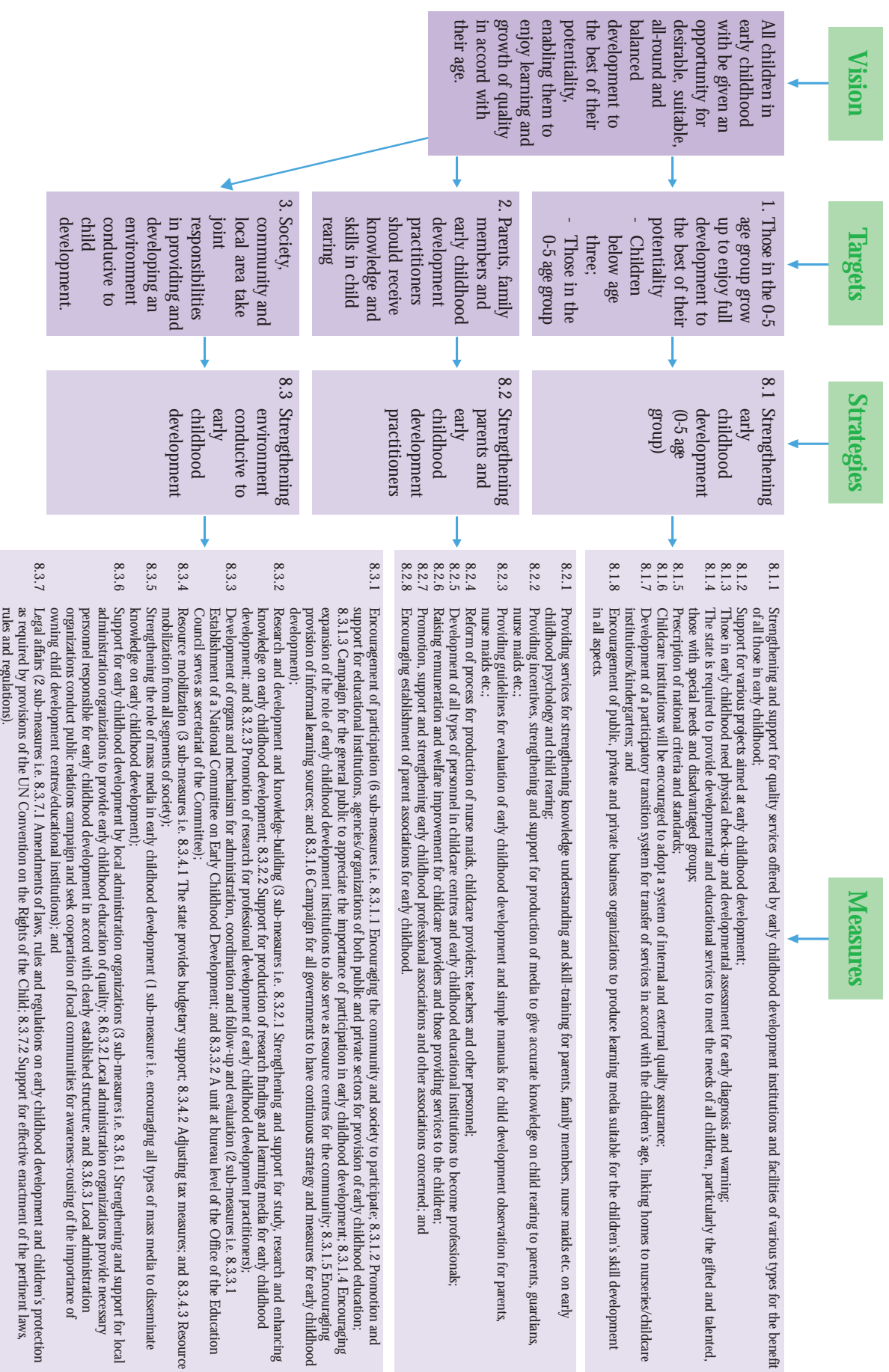
9. Conditions for Success

1) **The state will announce a clear policy and strategy for promotion and support for activities through sufficient and continuous budgetary allocations for early childhood development regarded as an important investment.**

2) Preparation of operational plans, both overall and those covering separate parts, accompanied by clear indicators covering all aspects of early childhood development; plans will also be made for concrete and continuous follow-up at all levels, enabling all ministries and agencies concerned to prepare their own operational plans.



Strategy for Early Childhood Development (0-5 Age Group) 2007-2016





Agencies Participating in Preparation of the Long-Term Policy and Strategy for Early Childhood Care and Development (0-5 Age Group) 2007 - 2016

1. Ministry of Social Development and Human Security

- 1) Department of Social Development and Welfare
- 2) Bureau of Welfare Promotion and Protection of Children, Youth, the Disadvantaged, Persons with Disabilities and Older Persons
- 3) Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development

2. Ministry of Public Health

- 1) Department of Public Health
- 2) Department of Medical Services
- 3) Department of Mental Health

3. Ministry of Interior

- Health Department, Bangkok Metropolitan Authority
- Social Development Department, Bangkok Metropolitan Authority
- Education Department, Bangkok Metropolitan Authority
- Division of Local Education Development and Coordination, Department of Local Administration

4. Ministry of Education

- 1) Office of the Basic Education Commission

- Bureau of Basic Education Policy and Planning
- Bureau of Special Education Administration
- 2) Office of the Higher Education Commission
 - Demonstration Schools Attached to Various Universities
 - Demonstration Schools Attached to the Rajamangala Institute of Technology
- 3) Office of the Permanent Secretary
 - Office of the Private Education Commission
 - Office of the Non-Formal Education Commission
- 4) Office of the Education Council
 - Bureau of Educational Standards and Learning Development

5. Ministry of Labour

- Department of Labour Protection and Welfare

6. Ministry of Culture

- Religious Affairs Department

7. Ministry of Defence

- Office of Supreme Commander
- Office of Early Childhood Care Institutions, Royal Thai Navy
- Office for Insurance Promotion Project, Royal Thai Army
- King Mongkut's College of Medical Sciences
- Directorate of the RTAF Education



8. Ministry of Justice

- Department of Corrections

9. Ministry of Finance

10. Office of the Prime Minister

- Bureau of the Budget
- Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board

11. Office of the Commissioner-General, Border Patrol Police, Office of the Commissioner-General, Royal Thai Police

12. Private sector and non-governmental organizations

- Association of Kindergarten Education, Thailand
- Education Department of the Bangkok Diocese
- Foundation for Children
- Foundation for Slum Child Care under the Patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Galyani Vadhana Krom Luang Naradhiwas Rajanagarindra
- Duang Prateep Foundation
- Sahathai Foundation
- Foundation for Books for Children
- Institute of Learning Sciences
- Office of Thai Health Promotion Foundation
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF Office for Thailand)

- Council of Children and Youth Development Organizations
- Breastfeeding Centre, Thailand
- Plan Publishing Co. Ltd.
- Family Direct Co. Ltd.
- Mother and Child Journal
- Mother and Care Journal
- Real Parenting Journal



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