

Govt budgets Shs100b to start childhood education

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ENTEBBE. The government will provide at least Shs100b to kick-start implementation of the delayed Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) beginning 2019, a senior Education ministry official has said.

Mr Robinson Nsumba Lyazi, the director for basic and secondary education, said yesterday that they have set aside another \$1m (Shs3.6b) to expedite consultations, curriculum development, research and engagement with stakeholders as part of the ECDE policy review.

"This money is only for review [and] not implementation of the policy... many of these [ECDE policy review] steps will require a lot of money, but we have seen that early childhood development is a priority right now," he said.

He made the remarks yesterday at a conference organised by the Aga Khan Foundation held at Lake Victoria Serena Hotel in Kigo, Entebbe.

"We are here to see that ECDE improves and gets embraced by different stake holders. We have been doing this over the years, but it is high time we involved other stakeholders and that is why we have different people from different sectors of the government and the country," said Mr Isaac Opu, the Aga Khan Foundation communications officer.

A government plan to introduce compulsory early childhood education has been in the works for years, and Mr Daniel Nkaada, the commissioner of basic education, announced yesterday that they plan to use 10 per cent of the Shs1-trillion Universal Primary Education budget, or Shs100b, to bankroll the ECDE programme.

He said: "ECDE will be compulsory among all schools. We shall have at least 100 children between three and five years on the ECDE programme for every school from baby, middle and upper [classes], which most people like to call nursery."

Currently, pre-primary education in the country is provided by the pri-



Addressing. Mr Robinson Nsumba Lyazi (centre), the director of basic and secondary education addresses participants during the national conference on strengthening the Early Childhood Development Landscape in Uganda in Entebbe yesterday. On the left is Dr Daniel Nkaada, commissioner for basic education, while on the right is Aga Khan Foundation regional chairman, Mr Nazeem Mohamed.

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vate sector.

Mbale Woman Member of Parliament, Connie Nakayenze Galiwango, said government had for long ignored early childhood development yet to develop a child's brain "needs

to begin early".

"We want to see the government take it up seriously," she said.

Mr Fagil Mandy, an educationist, said more emphasis in ECDE should be on the contribution by parents.