

Policy for holistic development of children up to 6 yrs on the anvil^[1]

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EXCERPTS

To ensure the holistic and integrated development of children up to six years, Punjab Government will soon formulate 'Punjab State Early Childhood Care and Education Policy'.

Announcing this, the state Social Security, Women and Child Development Minister Aruna Chaudhary on Monday said that the Government has sought suggestions and recommendations of the members of State Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Council up till February 1 to achieve this target.

The Social Security Department would endeavor to implement the policy in the State this year after the Cabinet approval, she said while presiding over the State Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Council's maiden meeting.

Chaudhary said that all government and non-government play-way schools in the State will be regulated to ensure safety and inclusive development of the children under the new policy.

"The syllabus of playschools and Anganwaris would be set in such a manner as to ensure consistent development of the child," she said, adding that besides imparting training to the children on communication skills, the emphasis will be laid on teaching English apart from the mother tongue Punjabi.

Among other things, the policy will set minimum educational qualification of professional teachers for play-way schools, besides laying down the criteria and standards of play materials for children, places in schools, furniture, learning materials, literature, buildings and facilities in the premises and training for teachers.

Chaudhary said that the purpose of this policy is to bring all government and non-government play-way schools under the dedicated act.

Looking forward to suggestions and recommendations from the concerned departments, she said that the people of the State would also be asked for suggestions on the Department's website — www.sswcd.punjab.gov.in^[3] — for framing the policy keeping in view the Punjab perspective.

She categorically said that the policy would be disabled-friendly, and there will also be focus on ensuring nutritious food for the intellectual and physical development of the children.

"Emphasis to be laid on moral education instead of traditional education, so that the children could be able to address social issues as well as issues like environmental protection and water conservation," she said.

Similarly, girls will be apprised about bad and good touch, said the Minister, adding that the State Council will take into account the recommendations of the National Early Childhood Care and Education Council, while devising the policy.

The Minister asked the Education Department officials to play an active role as it is already dealing with the policies related to the children. She asked the official of the Punjab Agricultural University to submit their study on Anganwaris to the Social Security Department so that it could also be taken into consideration.

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