

ECD workers demand R12 500 pm

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HUNDREDS of early childhood development (ECD) practitioners from the ECD Progressive Movement and the SA Liberating Public Sector Workers Union (Salipswu) in the Frances Baard and John Taolo Gaetsewe districts gathered outside the office of the HOD for Social Development yesterday, demanding a basic salary of R12 5000 and that more funds be invested in ECD centres.

A memorandum that was handed over at Latlhi Mabilo Complex also called for the absorption of ECD workers as well as that funding of R30 per child be provided as opposed to the allocated R15.

“The majority of ECDs are struggling with overcrowding due to a lack of space. If the ECD subsidies are stopped, the children will starve,” it was stated.

Vuyiswa Mngoma from the Frances Baard district indicated that if land could be provided for the erection of shacks, the municipality could allocate land, at no cost, for the construction of ECD centres.

“The Department of Social Development has failed to act on our behalf. They failed to protect and ensure the well-being of the child. The department must stop blocking donors such as the National Lottery from sponsoring ECD centres of their choice. We demand an audit report from the department, detailing the funding received from Treasury. An explanation must also be given as to why some of the

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money had to be returned,” said Mngoma.

She also called for officials at the ECD centres who were “constantly causing chaos” to be removed from the facilities.

“They are making our lives hell, they are condescending, ill-mannered and rude.”

Mokhudu Mokhele, on behalf of ECD workers in the John Taolo Gaetsewe district, stated that they should be paid on time as their

claims were submitted on time.

“The Department of Social Development and the Department of Education must treat us like professionals. The budget must be allocated according to the business plan. We demand that the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) workers be removed because funds that should go towards ECD centres are instead being used to pay the EPWP workers. ECD workers cannot serve without any compen-

sation for their entire lives,” Mokhele said.

The ECD workers have given the department seven days in which to respond to their demands, failing which they said they would orchestrate a shutdown of all Department of Social Development offices.

The HOD for Social Development, Drienie Samson, said that she would consult with the Department of Education, as the responsible authority for providing the training

and salaries of ECD workers.

“We are guided by the Constitution and legislation, in line with serving the best interests of the child as well as ECD workers. Issues of the health and safety of workers is the responsibility of local government. We will see how we can best assist,” said Samson.

She promised to provide feedback to the representatives of the ECD workers within the seven-day deadline.