

Written questions member's Islandcouncil for the Executive Council/ Government Commissioners.
(art.159, lid 1 WolBES/ art. 46 RvO Islandcouncil)

Issue : Child Care Benefits
Date question : May 25, 2021
Sender : Rechelline Leerdam
Date answer : **(within 15 days)**
Responsible Com./Gov.Com. : A. Francis
Responsible editor :

QUESTIONS:

The BES (t) 4Kids project serves to improve the accessibility and quality of childcare on St Eustatius. In 2021, a budget of USD 2.3M is reserved for the housing program, consultancy cost and program cost.

1. Is the BES (t) 4 Kids a foundation?

BES(t)4K is a partnership between the public entities of Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba and the Ministries of SZW(social affairs),OCW (education and culture),VWS(public health and sport) and BZK (interior and kingdom relations).

2. The purpose is to strengthen the childcare and out-of-school care in the Caribbean Netherlands. The Program focuses on the creation of a safe and caring environment for children, which is accessible to all parents. So that every child has the chance to fully develop.

3. Can you provide information on the Housing program?

Housing Program: To make sure that the Centers are in accordance with the Basic Childcare Law St.Eustatius 2019. Two years ago initiative was taken by BES(t)4K Sint Eustatius with 3 foundations, namely Mega D Youth Foundation, Daughters of the King Foundation and A+ Academics to make a plan for a building to be used by all 3 out-of-school programs. This was presented in December 2019 to the Government representative Mr. M Steegers and was approved; he presented it to SZW for approval. Via the "Regio envelop" Funds were allocated; it is now in process and discussions are ongoing with the stakeholders , the Island Government and BES(t)4K to take a final decision .

In 2019 from BES(t)4 funds maintenance was done at the Buzzy Bees Daycare Center and in 2020 extension of the Baby room took place

4. Are the Daycares/after school programs being financed through BES 4 Kids?
 - a. If Yes, Who are all recipients of the BES 4 Kids financial subsidy?
 - b. Who are the recipients:

***All Childcare organizations (7) with a License to operate may request subsidy from BES(t)4K via UVB. In 2023 the subsidy scheme is planned to be definite.**

*Daughters Of The King: via Island Government based on previous agreements with Ministry VWS and Extra funds (temporary subsidy scheme) via UVB (Uitvoering van Beleid)

*Mega D Youth Foundation funds via Island Government based on previous agreements with ministry of VWS and extra funds (temporary subsidy scheme) via UVB

*Happy Kids: Temporary Subsidy scheme via UVB

*Buzzy Bees : via Island Government (regular budget) and Temporarily Subsidy via UVB

Three organizations are in the process to request subsidy via UVB

- Bethel Methodist School (Early stimulation)
- Lynch Plantation SDA School (Early Stimulation)
- Maychees Daycare Center

B What are the policies.

All childcare organizations with a license may request subsidy. There is a Front Office on Sint Eustatius that works closely with UVB

- c. What are the policies that governs the financial subsidy?

The policies are laid down in the following documents (all attached);

*Tijdelijke Subsidieregeling kinderopvang

*Verwerkersovereenkomst

*Manual

5. Is there a new childcare law in draft?

a. If Yes, who are the author of the Law? The law is mostly based on the Island Government ratified Basic Ordinance on Childcare. Legal representative(s) of St. Eustatius was also involved in the process.

b. If Yes, was this also discuss with Central dialogue? And what was their Feedback? Central dialogue posed written concerns to representatives of the Ministry of Social Affairs, formal response letter will be sent shortly. A point of importance brought forward by the CD is the care for children with special needs.

We are working on a "pilot Integral care" on St. Eustatius to make sure that children with special needs can be taken care of in Childcare organizations. Based on this pilot policy will be written, including a budget. There will be an article in the "by laws". In this process ECE is actively involved, youth health and other stakeholders.

We have a Platform B(ES)t4K that meets every other week with the organizations and also individually. During those meetings information is shared.

c. Were there discussions with the Stakeholders concerning the new childcare law? The draft law was discussed with all stakeholders.

A committee was formed with stakeholders from the Central Government and from each Island.

The articles were all discussed in the meetings with all stakeholders (including the Island departments of legal affairs) and in principle as a draft approved by the Steering Committee

In 2020 from September on the articles that were different from the approved Island Ordinance, were sent to the Organizations, to the Parents, To the Island Government and to the Central Dialogue

With each stakeholder group consultation meetings took place. All the information was sent to the committee, including the written comments from the Central Dialogue.

Answers will be given at the end of this month to all the stakeholders. It will take till 2023 before the law will take into effect.