

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

NATIONAL PARENTING SUPPORT POLICY

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MESSAGE FROM THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF EDUCATION

The Ministry of Education recognises that parents are our students' first and, in many cases, most important teachers. Supportive, consistent parental involvement is therefore critical to a strong education system. On behalf of the Ministry of Education, I take pleasure in presenting this National Policy on Parenting Support.

Parenting is a critical component of national development, and not just through the support positive parenting can bring to enhancing the quality of our education system. Positive parenting is critical to national development because it supports the wholesome and healthy development of citizens. It can also help to reduce the annual birth rate and prevent the debilitating cycles of violent behavior that prey on our society by changing the way in which we speak with each other, the way we discipline our children and the way we negotiate aspects of our daily lives.

The Government of Jamaica recognises that the issue of parenting cannot be divorced from:

- i) the socio-economic environment and conditions of poverty
- ii) a discussion on the Jamaican family structure and organization
- iii) the limited involvement of fathers in family life and education of their children
- iv) the exposure of many families to crime and violence.

Through this National Parenting Support Policy and its implementing agency, the soon-to-be established National Parenting Support Commission (NPSC), we intend to ensure that our parents are aware of and understand what their responsibilities are under the law. We intend to ensure that they are supported as they seek to meet these responsibilities, by promoting and coordinating organizational efforts and resources throughout the country that parents need to realise positive parenting practices. However, the Government also intends to ensure that our parents understand the consequences of defaulting on their responsibilities to their children under the law.

Above all, through this policy, we are committed to facilitating an enabling environment that will support our parents in achieving this **national vision** for parenting:

All parents in Jamaica – whether —by virtue of having given birth, adopting or serving as guardians - recognize, accept and discharge their duty to ensure that the rights of children are always upheld, the best interests of children are always promoted and their children are always loved and provided with opportunities and resources to achieve their full potential and ultimate fulfillment, within safe, caring and nurturing environments.

There are a few simple truths in which this policy is rooted and which the NPSC will hold dear, and

these are global truths:

- All parents have hopes and goals for their children.
- Parents differ in their abilities and/or resources to help their children reach those goals.
- Parents are the central contributors to children's education and their development.

We know that the majority of Jamaicans, despite many challenges, have managed to successfully raise their children, and through the NPSC we will work to acknowledge their successes and the best practices at work across the island. Together and through this policy, we will elevate parenting on the national agenda and provide concrete support to our nation's parents. We will need the help of our partners to do this--NGOs, International Development Partners (IDPs), civil society and, of course, the media, arguably the most powerful educator of us all.

On behalf of the Ministry of Education, I thank all the partners involved in the creation of this policy document, especially UNICEF for its consistent support, and the Early Childhood Commission (ECC) for initiating the policy development process.

The future of parenting in Jamaica looks promising as we work towards the day when no child will be "parentless" and no parent will ever have to say, "I did not know where to go to get help." We look forward to the day when we can find answers to the challenges we all face, no matter how educated or trained we may be, in raising children in today's fast-paced, and all too often violent, world. With strong, supported and empowered parents Jamaica will reach our 2030 development goal of being the desired place to live, work, raise families and do business.

Andrew Holness, MP

November 2010

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD COMMISSION

Children begin learning about the world around them from the moment they are born. Typically, their first learning environment is the home and their early experiences come through interactions with parents, siblings and other family members in the home and community environment. These experiences form the basis of the learning process on which all other experiences are built, thereby developing personalities, which ultimately influence the types of adults our children become. It is critical that these interactions and learning experiences are positive, supportive and meaningful to ensure optimal child development and a promising future for our nation.

Effective parenting is a critical component in developing a productive and successful citizenry. Parents, therefore, have the awesome responsibility of molding and shaping future leaders who will become help direct the engine of positive socio-economic growth for our country. Governments must ensure that parents are fulfilling their roles in developing critically thinking, socially competent and healthy Jamaican children who are ready for life and ready to contribute to the positive growth of their society.

Parenting presents us as a nation with the greatest opportunity to impact our future. The recognition of the importance of parenting to national development led the Early Childhood Commission to spearhead the development of this National Parenting Support Policy. The policy seeks to provide an enabling environment to support parents in executing their responsibilities. It defines the institutional framework required to support national programming, inclusive of the establishment of the National Parenting Support Commission to guide its implementation. It also identifies and defines the role of key stakeholders in this important process, including non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, the private sector, academic institutions, the media, faith-based organizations, international development partners and others. Particular emphasis is placed on support for families made vulnerable by poverty, illness and other disadvantages.

The Early Childhood Commission extends appreciation to the numerous stakeholders and partners who contributed to the development of this policy. We look forward to your continued support as we seek to meaningfully engage parents, potential parents, guardians and duty-bearers in its execution.

Maureen Samms-Vaughan

November 2010

List of Acronyms

BWA Bureau of Women's Affairs

CBO Community Based Organization

CAP Career Advancement Programme

CARICOM Caribbean Community and Common Market

CBP Coalition for Better Parenting

CCDC Caribbean Child Development Centre of the University of the West Indies

CCPA Child Care and Protection Act

CDA Child Development Agency

CHDP Child Health Development Passport

CRC Convention on the Rights of the Child

DFID Department for International Development

DLG Department of Local Government (in the Office of the Prime Minister)

ECC Early Childhood Commission

FBO Faith Based Organization

GOJ Government of Jamaica

HFLE Health and Family Life Education

ICPD International Conference on Population and Development

JTA Jamaica Teachers Association

JCRC Jamaican Coalition on the Rights of the Child

JSLC Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions

MDGs Millennium Development Goals

MFPS Ministry of Finance and the Public Sector

MICS Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey

MLSS Ministry of Labour and Social Security

MNS Ministry of National Security

MOE Ministry of Education

MOH Ministry of Health

MOJ Ministry of Justice

NFPB National Family Planning Board

NGO Non Governmental Organisation

NPSC National Parenting Support Commission

NPTAJ National Parent Teachers Association

PATH Programme of Advancement through Health and Education

PIOJ Planning Institute of Jamaica

UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund

UWI University of the West Indies

USAID United States Agency for International Development

Definition of Terms

1. **For the purposes of the National Parenting Support Policy, the term Parent refers not only to the biology of birth but is also defined by the following considerations in Jamaican law:**

- a. **Under the Maintenance Act of 2005:**

- The person's name is entered as a parent of the child in the general register of births pursuant to the Registration (Births and Deaths) Act, or in a register of births or parentage information kept under law of any overseas jurisdiction;
- The person is or was a party to a marriage (including a void marriage) or cohabitation and the child is a child of the marriage or cohabitation;
- The person is a part to a marriage or cohabitation and accepts as one of the family a child of the other party to the marriage or cohabitation;
- The person adopts the child;
- The person has admitted paternity or a court has made a declaration of paternity under Section 10 f the Status of Children Act against the person in respect of the child.

- b. **Under The Children (Guardianship and Custody) Act of 1957:** Person at law liable to maintain such child or entitled to its custody. Person includes any local authority, school or institution.

- c. **Under the Education Act of 1980:** In relation to any child, parent includes a guardian and any person who has actual custody of the child.

2. **For the purposes of the National Parenting Support Policy, the term Child is as defined under the-Child Care and Protection Act of 2004:** Person under the age of eighteen (18) years.
3. **For the purposes of the National Parenting Support Policy, Child Care is as defined under the Maintenance Act of 2005:** The care of children, by biological or adoptive parents or appointed guardians; also more broadly includes care by the state or other local authority such as a school.
4. **For the purposes of the National Parenting Support Policy, the Age of Majority is as defined under the Maintenance Act of 2005:** The age at which a person acquires all the rights and responsibilities of being an adult – currently 18 years of age.

Executive Summary

The development of the National Parenting Support Policy 2011 brought together a diverse group of stakeholders in different fora over three years. The process sought to address the needs of all children in Jamaica by looking at parenting issues and developing an approach to strengthening the positive areas in parenting while also addressing areas calling for improvement. The policy development process included participation from a broad range of public and private partners, including policymakers, programme managers, service providers, community leaders, civil society representatives, parents and children. These partners were charged with reviewing current data and existing initiatives to identify challenges and solutions towards improving parenting practices and outcomes in our country.

The results of these preliminary consultations were then presented to key national and community stakeholders during a further series of consultations, within which these ideas were used to develop a National Vision for Parenting and specific Goals for the National Parenting Support Policy.

The Vision is as follows:

All parents in Jamaica – whether —by virtue of having given birth, adopting or serving as guardians - recognize, accept and discharge their duty to ensure that the rights of children are always upheld , the best interests of children are always promoted and their children are always loved and provided with opportunities and resources to achieve their full potential and ultimate fulfillment, within safe, caring and nurturing environments.

In order to achieve the Vision, **five (5) major goals were selected:**

GOAL 1 – All Jamaicans make wise choices about becoming parents and make parenting a priority. This includes readiness to be a parent; the number and timing of children; and preparedness to support the health, education, moral, and social-emotional wellbeing of their children.

GOAL 2 - All Jamaican children are loved, nurtured and protected instinctively and unconditionally by their parents.¹ Parenting is a personal relationship and a private activity between an adult and a child, connected, at a minimum, by a duty of care, but ultimately, by love. It must be respected as a special, natural, and instinctive bond, which is best described and expressed in the sacrifice that one generation makes for the benefit of the following generation over and beyond any legal or enforced requirements. The most effective and committed parents love and respect their children outside of any legal obligations constructed by society. Nevertheless laws are such as the Child Care and Protection Act (2004) are in place to guarantee some fundamental rights and freedoms such as a child's right to safety and security and protection from harm.

GOAL 3 - Each parent understands and utilizes/applies positive practices in effective parenting. Effective parenting is a learned skill. Much of what parents know and practise is drawn from cultural traditions, from information generally available in the society, from the personal experiences they had with their own parents, and from what is learned from state institutions and the media. We now know more about all aspects of human development - emotional, physical, social, moral and economic- than at any other time in the history of mankind. The challenge is to increase awareness of state and civil society's resources, coordinate them accordingly and disseminate this knowledge to parents in parent-friendly formats such as the Parent Charter introduced in this policy, in order to assist them in internalizing and applying it to strengthen their own parenting skills and practices. The ultimate aim is twofold: (i) to better enable parents to recognise and meet their responsibilities under existing, and any future parenting related, legislation and (ii) to ensure greater accountability for defaulting on those responsibilities under the law.

GOAL 4 - An enabling institutional framework exists to support parenting. Government acknowledges and respects the special relationship between parent and child and the autonomy and privacy which should be accorded to the relationship. Nevertheless, it is well understood that failure in the private function of parenting can have serious and inestimable public costs to society. Parenting is inherently a private function but the State can and will intervene in the private decisions parents make only when those decisions are deemed detrimental to the care of the child.

GOAL 5 - Ensuring that the principles and implications of effective parenting are communicated to the public in user friendly ways that enable comprehension of the material. The Government must partner with the media at all levels to ensure understanding of the policy, its rationale and goals and work to see that understanding effectively communicated throughout the school system and in the general society.

¹ This includes all children and parents that are subject to Jamaican law.

Cross Cutting Strategies

The following seven (7) areas are to be developed for each of the five (5) priority goal areas:

1. Public Education and Communication
2. Policy, Advocacy, and Legislative Reform
3. Behaviour Change - including (a.) greater personal responsibility and (b.) educating parents as to the creation of abuse and violence free environments.
4. Service Quality and Access
5. Capacity Building – including (a.) implementation, (b.) evaluation and (c.) sustainability
6. Coordination
7. Monitoring, Evaluation and Research

Annual strategic plans and overall target indicators to measure the progress towards the achievements of the five (5) identified goals will be developed. A National Parenting Support Commission (NPSC) will be created by legislation to operationalize the policy, coordinate the activities of government departments and partners, ensure meaningful stakeholder participation and liaise with donors towards the achievement of the policy goals and vision. The NPSC will also be responsible for advising the Minister and reporting to the government on parenting issues.

The National Parenting Support Policy lays the foundation for future activities and provides guidelines to sectors and lead agencies on how to move forward in the development of annual operational plans that take the facilitation of effective parenting into account. As the NPSC learns and grows, and as the national situation changes, objectives and strategies will be reviewed and adapted to further strengthen parenting support and accountability islandwide.

I. Introduction

Jamaican research from as early as the 1950s has examined issues of family structure, family traditions and roles, and parenting practices (Seaga, 1957, Clarke, 1957). A considerable body of

knowledge has been generated that points to perceived “deficits” within historical family traditions and practices, but more recently has acknowledged cultural/social strengths in child-rearing practices as well as conditions of parental stress and poverty that contribute negatively to child outcomes.

In the early 1990s, the Ministry of Education supported the establishment of the Coalition for Better Parenting (CBP) as a coordinated approach to strengthening parenting practices particularly as they related to children’s education. Since 2000, this commitment has been reinforced by several research studies on parenting and its impact on child development. These national studies (Samms-Vaughan, 2004; Ricketts and Anderson, 2009, Anderson, 2009) have pointed to major factors impacting on effective parenting in Jamaica including: (1) limited knowledge of child development and the impact of parenting practices on children, (2) high levels of parental stress and (3) limited father involvement in child-rearing. They also pointed to the significance of existing institutions and mechanisms supporting the parenting process, such as extended family and community members serving as parenting figures and the critical role of faith-based and community services in supporting parents.

Jamaica has increased access to parenting support in promulgating a progressive Maternity Leave Act (1979), the Early Childhood Commission Act (2005) as well as the Child Care and Protection Act (2004) which obligates parents to take responsibility for their children and obligates the state to assist and support parents in that act. Steps toward a more effective monitoring and evaluation system have already begun. The forthcoming 2010 Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions (JSLC) includes a child development component which will provide national data relevant to the planning needed to action additional parenting support. Prevailing socio-economic conditions present Jamaican parents and families as a whole with challenges for which there are no easy solutions. There is also increasing recognition on the part of national policy makers as well as international donor partners that poor parenting and its attendant consequences continue to threaten the sustainability of national development. Poorly functioning families represent a serious liability to social order and the future development of Jamaica as they continue to produce new generations of children who are not able to participate effectively in, or contribute positively to, the nation’s development.

At present, the delivery of services and the development of programmes and materials in relation to parenting are widespread but affected by duplication and fragmentation of efforts as well as inadequate clarity and consistency with respect to parental roles and responsibilities (Tortello, 2006). There is need for support and recognition of positive parenting practices within Jamaican sub-cultures and communities, as well as access to guidance and the development of skills and knowledge, to ensure that parents are able to respond to varying needs within the different stages of their children’s development. Numerous local and international studies have noted the strong

correlation between parenting and children's cognitive, academic and behavioural development, which in turn are critical predictors of adult outcomes. Consistent, positive and supportive parental involvement in children's learning is positively related to achievement in school and in later life. So important is positive parental involvement and a strong home-school connection, that studies the world over, including the most recent one in Jamaica by Grace-Camille Munroe (2009) have shown that the more intensively parents are involved in their children's learning, the more beneficial the effects for all types and ages of students and schools (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, 1997).

Generally defined, a parent is anyone who nurtures and raises a child. Research has indicated that parenting plays a central role in children's development and well-being (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Several studies have shown that parental styles and behaviours have profound effects on child outcomes and family functioning. For example, parenting practices such as punitive discipline and controlling behaviours have been consistently linked to externalising and internalising behaviours and poorer social competence in children (Beyers, Bates, Pettit, & Dodge, 2003; Fletcher, Walls, Cook, Madison & Bridges, 2008; Huth-Bock & Hughes, 2008; Leve, Kim, & Pears, 2005). In addition, parental stress has been associated with increased emotional and behavioural problems for children (Huth-Bock & Hughes, 2008) and lower levels of parent-child interaction (Ricketts & Anderson, 2008).

The relationship between parenting behaviour and child outcomes highlights the need to direct resources to promoting and supporting effective parenting practices. In fact, there is mounting evidence that structured behavioural interventions to promote positive parenting reduce problems for children (especially young children) and contribute to healthy development (Dumas, Nissley-Tsiopinis, & Moreland, 2007; Sanders, 2010).

The care and protection of children are the responsibilities of the entire society, but parents and designated guardians have specific responsibilities—both legal and moral. Unless there is legal transfer of responsibility to a guardian (e.g. by adoption or placement in temporary care of the State), both parents of a child remain responsible for the physical and financial maintenance of that child until the age of 18. More specific responsibilities of parents and guardians are spelled out within the Child Care and Protection Act of 2004. In a very general sense, the *moral* obligations between parents and children can be summed up as:

Parents are responsible for the movements and actions of their children, while children are subject to the guidance and supervision of their parents. Parents and guardians are as responsible for the health, education and social-emotional wellbeing of their children as for their physical maintenance.

The GOJ, through the Ministry of Education, continues its commitment to promote effective parenting with the development of this National Parenting Support Policy. It is a manifestation of Government's recognition of its dual duty to (i) support and promote the positive individual and

national outcomes that result from effective parenting and (ii) to minimize the negative impact of parenting failure. Through this policy and its implementation, Government therefore intends to seek to set minimum standards for effective parenting supported by social consensus, policy, and legislation; and encourage, promote and support effective parenting through education, and the provision of, and access to, resources and services. Government will also seek to enforce existing penalties under the law for parental failure as needed so as to ensure that all children, including those who are not in the care of their parents, experience positive parenting. Included in this group are those children in the care of the State, children of parents who are incarcerated or have migrated, children who live/work on the streets, and children who are adopted formally or informally. As the State strives to ensure that ALL children are accorded full nurturing and protection as is their right under the Child Care and Protection Act of 2004, Government will seek to amend that act to more strongly regulate guardianship and parental responsibility as it relates to strengthening links between home and school.

The successful implementation of this policy requires a sustained effort to build on existing multi-sectoral priorities, to leverage resources, and to confront the underlying behavioural, social and political factors that affect positive parenting. However, the government cannot and should not do this alone. The full participation of each sector of society and all stakeholders are integral to this important national effort to ensure that all children in Jamaica will benefit from effective parenting as they strive to become productive and responsible citizens.

II. Conceptual Framework for the National Parenting Support Policy

1. Policy Statement

All Jamaican children have a right to effective parenting – actions based on mutual love, respect, awareness of rights and responsibilities under Jamaican law. Effective parenting can be realized in all Jamaican homes; it underpins individual and national development. All Jamaicans share in the responsibility of honouring the age-old adage, “It takes a village to raise a child.”

2. Vision Statement

All parents in Jamaica – whether —by virtue of having given birth, adopting or serving as guardians - recognize, accept and discharge their duty to ensure that the rights of children are always upheld, the best interests of children are always promoted and their children are always loved and provided with opportunities and resources to achieve their full potential and ultimate fulfillment, within safe, caring and nurturing environments

The Vision for Parenting summarizes the ideal of effective parenting and is grounded in the following vision articulated in the Jamaica 2030 Development Plan: ***“Jamaica is the place of choice to live, work, raise families, and do business”***

Given that raising families is a central factor within our national vision, it is critical that the principles and values underpinning this policy are fostered and supported. Stakeholders islandwide felt the following to be integral to the realization of the goal of access to effective parenting for all Jamaican children:

Capacity-building – supported via increased opportunities and access

Commitment to enhanced knowledge and improved action

Conscious decision-making – including preparation for child-rearing

Clear and consistent parenting roles and responsibilities – increased understanding aided by ongoing support

Proper custodial care – including age-appropriate supervision in safe, secure and hygienic home environments, free of violence and physical or psychological abuse

Greater accountability – including greater awareness and enforcement of existing laws and the proposition of additional legislation as needed

3. Purpose and Objectives of the National Parenting Support Policy

The Government is committed to ensuring that all young Jamaicans have access to effective parenting as far as is possible. The Ministry of Education recognises that parents are our students’ first and, in many cases, most important teachers. Supportive, consistent parental involvement in children’s positive socialization and learning is therefore critical to effective teaching and learning within a strong education system. Ultimately, this ensures a strong nation.

The Objectives are as follows;

- **Define and communicate a common framework for effective parenting** and parenting practices outlined in the Parent Charter that forms part of this policy.
- **Identify, mobilize and coordinate national stakeholders and resources for promoting and supporting effective parenting**, with particular attention paid to families made vulnerable by poverty, illness and other disadvantages and to the enforcement of penalties for failure to meet parental responsibilities under the law.
- **Provide a platform for advocacy** in support of improved effective parenting skills as key contributors to national development.
- **Lay the foundation for a National Plan of Action on Parenting Support**, grounded in

the rights of the child.

- **Define a coordinated legal framework** for the application and enforcement of existing laws in support of the rights of the child as well as advocacy for legislative amendments to ensure greater support on the one hand and accountability on the other.
- **Increase the use of effective parenting strategies** islandwide by parents of **ALL** socio-economic classes.

III Situation Analysis

This section of the policy provides a current profile of parenting in Jamaica including the institutional framework for parenting, a synopsis of parenting in Jamaican law and the links between the National Parenting Support Policy and current national priorities.

1. Background on Jamaica

Jamaica is the third largest island in the Caribbean (after Cuba and Hispaniola) with a total area of 11, 244 square kilometers and just under 3 million people. Of that number, over 50% live in metropolitan areas around the capital city of Kingston and the second city of Montego Bay. The island achieved its independence from Britain in 1962 and since then has maintained a Westminster style parliamentary government. The island's vibrant culture has emerged from processes of creolization and acculturation post-slavery and represents a unique cultural and racial mix creating areas of excellence in music, sports, the arts and academics. There is however wide cultural diversity as it relates to the care and well being of children.

The most important demographic variable in Jamaica is the significant change in the age profile of the population that has occurred over the past three decades. Indeed, this will continue to impact the population for at least another fifteen years. According to the 2009 UNICEF Study on Child Poverty and Disparities in Jamaica, children 0-17 years old constituted just over 35% of the population of approximately 2.65 million (p. 11). The highest proportion of these children resided in urban areas. Children live in a variety of conditions, ranging from extremely poor to financially well off, and in a variety of settings - single parent households, two parent households, extended family settings, households headed by children, the streets (both living and/or working), and in the care of the state. Children are more highly represented in female-headed households overall (79.2% in urban areas and 83.0% in rural areas) (p. 11). According to available data from the 2006 Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions (JSLC) some 18 % of children under age 18 years old live in poverty, although that percentage has shown a declining trend over the last few years (Witter, Hamil, and Spencer, 2009, pg. 48).

2. The Jamaican Family: History and Current Challenges

The family is generally accepted as the primary agent of socialization of young children, tasked with the responsibility of providing the care and nurturing integral to the development of a well adjusted person. The family provides for the development, care and protection of children and young people in order to maximise their inherent potential. The family is assumed to provide the physical necessities, emotional support, learning opportunities and requisite moral guidance to build self-esteem and resilience in children. When families fail to fulfill this responsibility to children, there can be negative consequences for children, parents, schools and ultimately the nation as a whole.

Afro-Caribbean family structures and relationships have largely defined much of parenting in Jamaica. Common patterns include early entry into child-bearing, a range of different conjugal unions which provide varying family contexts for children, the practice of child-shifting or fostering by other adults deemed more “able”, a high degree of female economic responsibility for children, and the dependence of the household on many sources of social and economic support from outside the domestic unit. Other positive patterns noted by Bloir (1997) among African-American families and relevant to Jamaican families include flexibility and resourcefulness in meeting the needs of children and contributing to the advancement of the society, including emotional closeness, parental involvement, actively monitoring behaviour, open communication and family involvement in decision-making. Enabling structures within communities that support some families in fulfilling their roles include the Church, the health network of local clinics and the institution of the extended family of kin and non-kin (Ricketts and Anderson, 2009).

At this point in time, the Jamaican family is increasingly vulnerable to pressures of economic insecurity and deprivation, migration and the cultural changes derived from increasing global interdependence and penetration. The 2000 Common Country Assessment by the United Nations development Programme (UNDP) noted that one disadvantage of international migration was that family members left behind must contend with the loss of guidance, support and sometimes finances from one or both parents. This is especially true for those families which are socially disadvantaged. One of the noted effects in this regard is emotional and or material deprivation for many children, some of whom eventually become wards of the state. Others can exhibit high levels of educational under-achievement, experience unemployment and/or develop anti-social behaviour and become involved in crime, drug-abuse and irresponsible sexual behaviour.

The Immunization Regulations (1986) and the attendant Public Health Act of 2003 require all parents to comply with specific age- appropriate vaccines. However, the health of the nation’s children may now be at increased risk due to insufficient compliance by parents and budgetary constraints being faced by the Ministry of Health. According to the 2009 UNICEF report,

“Jamaican Children: Twenty Years after the Convention on the Rights of the Child,” the health of Jamaican children has improved overall and there is widespread awareness of the need for vaccination, but “there has not been sustained progress on some key health indicators since the ratification of the CRC in 1989. While children’s nutritional status continues to improve generally, overweight children and the declining practice of exclusive breastfeeding are causes for concern. Exclusive breastfeeding continues to decline. According to MICS 2005, only 15% of children at six months are exclusively breastfed, far lower than the recommended rate.” The report references Jamaica’s immunization rate as 92% in 1995 and notes that immunization rates now lag behind the national goal of 95% average coverage. (Online at http://www.unicef.org/jamaica/CRC20_in_Jamaica.pdf, pg. 6). The main reasons for slippage in vaccination coverage include difficulties in accessing health services, inadequate transportation, community violence, limited numbers of health staff for vaccination purposes, and personal financial constraints. In addition, public awareness is fading and misconceptions still prevail in particular communities. With the introduction in the 2010-11 school year of the National Student Registration System beginning at Grade 1, the school system should be able to better track and more efficiently report immunization compliance.

With regard to education the 2009 UNICEF report, indicates that while Jamaica enjoys universal access to primary education, “the education sector faces serious challenges in its efforts to provide quality learning opportunities for children up to age eighteen.” Of particular concern is the lack of preparedness at each of the major transition points in the education system; “Jamaican children enjoy high levels of access to schools with universal access to the Grade 9 level, but only 84% of the students access grades 10 and 11...which is further magnified by the estimated 10% of students accessing grades 12 and 13.”

Poor overall performance on key national and regional exams highlights the need to focus on improving the quality of education the nation’s children are experiencing. Research shows that parental involvement has a significant role to play in making this goal a reality beginning with improved states of emergent literacy among those entering the formal schooling system at Grade 1. Gender issues are also cause for concern and attention from home and school. As the 2009 UNICEF report notes:

In the Grade One Readiness Inventory, only about 42% of the children mastered all four domains while in the Grade Four Literacy Test three-quarters of girls showed mastery compared to 53% of boys. Similar patterns also persist for the Grade Six Achievement Test (GSAT) performance; overall performance is stagnant with mean scores of around 50% each year and girls outperforming boys by more than 10 percentage points each year. At the CXC level, low passes in the two core subjects Mathematics and English, while improving, remain far too low for subjects that are core pre-requisites for further study and jobs. There is a major disparity between the performance in these subjects of students at upgraded and technical schools and those at secondary high schools. (Online at

Although it is widely believed that more effective parenting practices would impact positively on student performance, common reasons for poor parenting include: lack of access to day care and other social services, lack of community support, and insufficient or non-existent opportunities for learning about alternative parenting practices. This is especially true for families whose children have specialized needs.

3. Institutional Framework for Parenting and Parenting Support

The Child Development Agency (CDA), under the Ministry of Health, has direct responsibility for ensuring full implementation of the internationally agreed Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its local manifestation, the Child Care and Protection Act (CCPA) 2004. Its central focus is to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child, taking into consideration the child's developmental needs, the capacity of his parents and family as well as environmental factors. As an executive agency the CDA acts independently regarding its operations and organization. It has absorbed the functions of the former Children Services Division, the Child Support Unit and the Adoption Board.

The Ministry of Education (MOE) has responsibility for the education of children to equip them to participate in global economy and interchange. It acts from the position that "every child can learn and every child must learn." A critical aspect of this task is ensuring continuity between the schools and other learning environments, including that of the home. The Ministry of Education has a commitment, *inter alia*, to strengthen home/school links and the capacity of parents to serve as their children's first and sometimes most important teachers, and to help maximize the school's success in delivering its educational objectives.

The Ministry of Health (MOH) has responsibility to ensure the provision of quality health services and to promote healthy lifestyles and environmental practices. The Ministry seeks to educate the population for their own health, to make informed decisions and adopt healthy lifestyle habits within a clean, healthy environment where families and communities actively participate and are integrated into the system of health.

The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) has responsibility to ensure that Jamaica is a just and law-abiding society with an accessible, efficient and fair system of justice for all.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS) is concerned with matters affecting individuals in their capacity as workers, employers and members of the country's labour force. These matters include industrial safety, employment promotion, providing a source of income for workers who are injured on the job, and retirement benefits. It aims to promote a stable industrial climate through tripartite dialogue, ensure the highest standards of occupational safety and health at the workplace, facilitate increased access to employment and effectively manage social protection programmes including those for groups with special needs such as households below the poverty line, the elderly and persons with disabilities.

The Early Childhood Commission (ECC) was established in March 2003 to govern the administration and coordination of early childhood care, education and development services in Jamaica. The mandate of the ECC is to facilitate, “an integrated and coordinated delivery of quality early childhood programmes and services, which provide equity and access for children zero to eight years within healthy, safe and nurturing environments.” The ECC Board is inter-ministerial and inter-sectoral in its membership and oversight.

The Office of the Children’s Advocate (OCA) is mandated under the CCPA and has responsibility for acting on behalf of the nation’s children in conflict with the law as well as providing assistance to children in conditions of domestic abuse or those who have complaints about acts of the State which infringe on their rights and interests. The first Children’s Advocate was appointed in January 2006.

The Office of the Children’s Registry (OCR), also mandated under the CCPA, was established in 2007 to receive, record, and store reports on all forms of reported child abuse, abandonment and neglect. Under the Act, incidents of child abuse can attract up to a JD1 million dollar fine.

The Bureau of Women’s Affairs (BWA) is part of the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture. Its mandate is act as a catalyst to ensure that government addresses the problems that confront women, including: high rates of unemployment, violence against women in various forms such as spousal abuse, rape, incest and sexual harassment.

The National Family Planning Board is the government agency with the responsibility of preparing, carrying out and promoting sustainable family planning services in Jamaica. It aims to enable individuals to achieve good Reproductive Health (Family Planning and Reproductive Health outcomes) through the provision of high quality, voluntary Family Planning and Health and Family Life Education services implemented efficiently and effectively.

Coalition for Better Parenting (CBP) is an umbrella organisation representing a number of local agencies and organisations which focus on parenting issues. In addition, many faith based organizations also exist that work in the field of parenting.

National Parent-Teacher Association of Jamaica (NPTAJ) is the islandwide non-governmental organisation which facilitates partnerships and interaction among parents, teachers and the school community.

The Jamaica Teachers Association (JTA) is dedicated to the professional, financial and social advancement of its members and the promotion of the highest educational standards.

The Registrar General’s Department (RGD) whose mandate is to support national planning and to provide evidence of every birth, stillbirth, death, adoption and marriage and provide a secure repository for public records.

The Department of Local Government (DLG) in the Office of the Prime Minister whose mission is to provide sound and clear policy direction, technical support and to monitor our local agencies

and authorities in a timely manner, enabling the delivery of high-quality services, good local governance and sustainable development for the benefit of our citizens, through partnership with stakeholders and a cadre of highly-motivated and well-trained staff.

The National Parenting Support Commission (NPSC) is to be the newest response from the Government to provide improved coordination in the area of support to parents. The overall mission of the NPSC is to facilitate the implementation of all aspects of this National Parenting Support Policy. This includes raising awareness of parenting issues nationally and of means of accessing parenting support, coordinating and streamlining the delivery of existing parenting programmes, and initiating programming responsive to emerging needs. Specifically, the NPSC will offer increased access to effective parenting information and support services. It will focus on strengthening the institutional framework to assist parents in meeting their responsibilities, and on clarifying and facilitating systems of accountability for those parents who are deemed negligent under the law.

4. (i) Legislative and Policy Environment - International

The main international treaties that form the basis for the rights of all Jamaicans are the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD); the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the ILO Convention 182 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour; The Inter-American Convention on Human Rights; the Pact of San Jose, Costa Rica and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women. Together, they provide for upholding the rights of all persons including children, or they deal exclusively with children's rights calling for the elimination of all forms of discrimination and inequality in relation to age, colour, race and gender. Jamaica ratified and is bound by all these international and regional human rights instruments. In 2000, all members of the United Nations also agreed to a set of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), requiring among other things that all signatories strive to achieve universal primary education and eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education (by 2005) and to all levels of education by 2015, promote gender equality and empower women, and reduce child and maternal mortality.

Jamaica ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in June 1991 after much advocacy from the Jamaican Coalition on the Rights of the Child (JCRC). The CRC is based on the fundamental principle that all children have the same rights; all rights are interconnected and of equal importance. The articles of the Convention, in addition to spelling out the foundational principles underpinning these rights, call for the provision of specific resources, skills and

contributions necessary to ensure the survival and development of children to their maximum capabilities. The articles also require the creation of means to protect children from neglect, exploitation and abuse. The Convention expressly recognises that parents bear the most important role in the raising of children. The text encourages parents to deal with rights issues with their children "in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child" (Article 5). In 2004, the Jamaican Government enacted the Child Care and Protection Act (CCPA), legislation to align with the principles espoused in the CRC. The wider Caribbean region via CARICOM Heads of State adopted in 1997 the Caribbean Plan of Action for Early Childhood Education, Care and Development which among its broad priorities included the importance of capacity building of parents and parent support systems. CARICOM's early childhood care and development regional working group includes Jamaican representation as it strives to coordinate mechanisms for realizing the rights of Caribbean families and children in keeping with the CRC.

4. (ii). Legislative and Policy Environment - Local

The Child Care and Protection Act (CCPA) 2004, represents the domestic response to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and has been cited as the Government's effort to bring all legislation pertaining to children in line within the standards of the CRC. Specifically, the CCPA states that "...a family is the preferred environment for care and upbringing of children and the responsibility for the protection of children rest primarily with the parents;" and that "...while parents need help in caring for children, help should give support to the autonomy and integrity of the family unit and wherever possible, be provided on the basis of mutual consent." The Act goes on to further delineate the role of the State as follows: "...if, with available support services, a family can provide a safe and nurturing environment for a child, support services should be provided". Further, the CCPA indicates that, the response from the State in relation to the provision of child services should be carried out in a manner which demonstrates "respect for the child's needs for continuity of care and for stable family relationships...."

The Act is also very clear as it relates to the grounds on which the State can intervene to protect a child's rights. According to the CCPA a child shall be considered in need of care and protection in the following circumstances:

...the child either has no living parents or guardians, or the parents or guardians are declared unfit, and as a result of their neglect the child is either falling into bad associations, exposed to moral danger or beyond control; OR

...the child is being cared for in circumstances which negatively impact on his or her physical or mental health, emotional state, or where it is found that the child is being exposed to substantial risk which will seriously undermine his or her development.

Under the CCPA, parents are also provided with the right to bring the child before the Courts in circumstances where the child is considered to be out of control. In such cases, if the Court agrees with the parent, the child may be committed to the care of someone who is deemed to be both willing and able to take care of the child, or be placed under the supervision of a Court-appointed officer for up to three years.

The concept of effective parenting under Jamaican law finds support in the activities of the Family Court System guided by the Judicature (Family Court) Act (1975), the Maintenance Act (2005), the CCPA and other child related acts such as the Education Act (1965). This policy recognizes that the Family Court System faces multiple challenges in effecting its mandate to determine disputes between parents and other persons concerned with the child or young person's welfare or care. In making its decisions, the Family Court's paramount consideration is the best interests of the child or young person. This means that matters relating to the care and protection of the child must be considered by the Family Court when making decisions. This policy recognises that the Family Court System in its present incarnation faces many challenges including access to sufficient support services (including adequate supply of social work services) to carry out its mandate effectively. It therefore proposes a review of the current system in terms of better maximizing the training of those involved as it relates to parental support in line with newly devised standards for content and delivery of parenting programmes. It is further suggested that consideration be given to the redeployment of relevant government resources to provide additional support to the Family Court system in the execution of its mandate.

Additional pieces of legislation in support of parents, parental rights and the best interests of the nation's children include:

- the Adoption of Children Act (1958),
- the Age of Majority Act (1979),
- the Children (Guardianship and Custody) Act (1957),
- the Registration (Births and Deaths) Act 1881,
- The Education Act (1965),
- the Status of Children Act (1976),
- the Domestic Violence Act (1996);
- The Early Childhood Commission Act and the Early Childhood Act (2003 and 2005 respectively),
- the Maternity Leave Act (1979) ,
- the Maintenance Act (2005),
- The Maintenance Orders (Facilities for Enforcement) Act (1988)
- the Sexual Offences Act (2009) and

- the Wills Act (1979), and the Intestates (Estates and Property Charges) Act (1937).

According to the 2009 UNICEF Report “Jamaican Children: Twenty Years after the Convention on the Rights of the Child,” in an effort to fulfill the World Fit for Children commitments, Jamaica focused on the creation of a number of social development policies in the mid 1990s. Of significance is the National Youth Policy (1994), which “represented the first comprehensive policy on youth, addressing education and training, employment and entrepreneurship, health care, youth participation and empowerment, and care and protection. The policy was updated in 2004 and is currently under review. Other policies of note included the Poverty Eradication Policy (1995) and the National Policy on Children (1997).” In addition the report makes special mention of The Social Investment for Children Initiative, launched in 2006 with support from UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Cabinet Office, Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ), CDA and JCRC, which seeks to increase the level of social investment for children.

The UNICEF report also takes note of The National Plan of Action for Children (1995-2000) crafted to “provide an institutional framework to address and enforce children’s rights.” Recently, this has been followed by a comprehensive National Framework of Action for Children now before Cabinet.

Other policies highlighted in the UNICEF document include: The National Policy for HIV/AIDS Management in Schools (2004) which seeks to “ensure access to education by children infected and affected by HIV/AIDS and the delivery of HIV/AIDS and family life education to prevent infection.” In addition, in further recognition of the need to provide support to the most vulnerable, in 2005, the Government also drafted The National Plan of Action for an Integrated Response to Children and Violence, a blueprint for a multifaceted approach to reducing violence against children. It has not yet been adopted by the Government. (Online at http://www.unicef.org/jamaica/CRC20_in_Jamaica.pdf, pg 5).

Other policies, most developed between 2000-2010, related to effective parenting and the need for parenting support include the:

- Health and Family Life Education Policy
- Healthy Lifestyle Policy
- National Policy on Children
- Special Education Policy
- National Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Development
- National Population Policy
- Policy for Persons with Disabilities

While some legislation provides for sanctions against persons who violate the rights of children and

others, some of the policies formulate aspects of parent support. For example, one of the goals of the National Population Policy (1983) is to ensure the provision of opportunities and conditions to enable all children to fulfill their potential and enhance their total development. Special measures to achieve this goal include the strengthening of Family Life Education and the importance of family planning.

Similarly, the National Youth Policy (2005) identifies the living environment of Jamaica's young people as a critical area of focus. The goal recognises the importance of creating enabling environments for the development of the child, by ensuring the provision of support to parents who needed it. Specifically, it highlighted the need for "the development of supportive families and communities that provide youth with an environment conducive to their positive development and well-being."

Policies and legislation that are currently being developed or are in draft stage include the:

- Draft Early Childhood Development Policy
- Draft Gender Policy
- Draft Safety and Security in Schools Policy
- Draft National Play Policy
- Draft Compulsory Education Act
- Draft Infant and Young Child Nutrition Policy

Other government action plans developed within the last ten years by various stakeholder groups also provide some indication of legislative and policy provisions or intentions in support of positive parenting. These include the:

- National Comprehensive Literacy Plan
- Framework of Action for Children
- National Plan of Action for Children and Violence
- Plan of Action for Child Justice
- Plan of Action on Child Pornography
- Plan of Action on Trafficking in Persons
- National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan
- National Plan of Action for Orphans and Other Children made Vulnerable by HIV/AIDS

However, although the CCPA in Section 28 makes provision for the duty of every person having custody for the care of a child to ensure that they are cared for and the Education Act (1965), makes provision that children are to be educated, no existing law speaks to the fact that there is to be no "parentless" child. In response, the DRAFT Compulsory Education Policy states that parents

have a duty to ensure that their child(ren) are attached to a structured learning environment from age 3-18 years old, relative to their age and ability. However, education requires the equal participation of home and school and the duty cannot stop at mere attendance. The National Parenting Support Policy therefore proposes that the duty be extended to the continuous involvement of the parents in the child's education. This involvement is not limited to financial issues, but also involves participating in the child's school life, attending PTA meetings, supervising school work, attending parent-teacher conferences, etc.

This policy further proposes conferring on principals the power to summon parents where previous attempts at arranging meetings have failed and the principal determines with due cause that the:

- (i) behaviour of a student poses a threat to him/herself or others,
- (ii) student's academic performance is below an age-appropriate standard and/or below the perceived ability of the student,
- (iii) student's social circumstances seem to place him/her at risk (i.e. the student appears malnourished, un-kept, unhealthy, bruised....)

This policy posits that the Education Act (1965) be amended to state clearly that the principal has a duty to intervene in the advancement of the child's interest and convene a meeting with the parents. Should he/she not succeed in getting the parent to meet after reasonable effort, his/her actions should be backed by the power of law. The principal should be able to apply to the courts for the issue of a parental summons, supported by affidavit evidence setting out the grounds on which the application is made and all previous unsuccessful attempts to arrange a parental conference, thereby initiating a legal course of action and supervision by the courts.

This policy further recommends that the principal and the parent will then have a duty to agree on a joint plan of action on the way forward within a specified time frame. The school will activate its resources and notify the NPSC in order to establish a joint support team of school and community resources around that family in the best interest of the child. Outcomes will be reviewed in a timely manner and should a parent(s) default by virtue of no show or by virtue of non-compliance, the parent(s) must understand that he/she/they can be called to appear before the Courts where a judgment of parental neglect may apply. The power of the Court will include the supervision of a behavioural and/or remedial program for the child and the monitoring of its implementation.

In addition, the Ministry of Education, through its Health and Family Life Education Programme (HFLE), is working towards strengthening awareness and understanding of parenting and family issues by embedding material on parenting and family into the national curriculum from the early childhood level. In particular, the Ministry is promoting a parenting component in the Life Skills course in its new Career Advancement Programme (CAP) targeting 16-18 year olds – a module it also plans to present for consideration at the tertiary level.

More details on the above institutional framework, legislation, policies and action plans can be found on the websites of each listed organization.

IV Guiding Principles and Values of the Policy

The following Guiding Principles of the National Parenting Support Policy 2010, are based on legislative review, reviews of international and local best practices and numerous consultations with stakeholders islandwide:

- **Political Leadership and Commitment** - Strong political leadership and solid commitment at all levels is essential for strengthening all aspects of parenting.
- **Good Governance, Transparency and Accountability** - An effective national parenting response requires leadership to mobilize and manage human, financial and organizational resources in an effective, transparent and accountable manner if it is to ultimately produce a prosperous, vibrant, safe and secure society.
- **Multisectoral and Bi-Partisan Approaches and Partnerships** - The active involvement of all sectors of society is necessary to ensure full support for parents and for positive parenting.
- **Participation** - The meaningful and broad involvement of communities and community members in supporting positive parenting and in contributing to holistic child development is vital to optimise stated outcomes.
- **Equity** - All parents regardless of their ability, health status or area of residence should have access to information, skills development and support services to enable them to become the best parents they can be.
- **Gender Sensitivity** - engendering equal participation of both parents in a child's life by ensuring that both parents have equal rights and responsibilities.
- **Promotion and Protection of Child and Adult Rights** - The rights to equality before the law and freedom from discrimination must be respected, protected and fulfilled. Discriminatory practices can lead to parents not being able to meet and fulfill their role as parents. This also means that parents need to be made aware of child rights, and the parental role in fulfilling these rights. Parents also need to understand that when they do not perform their roles well, they increase the risks of violating the rights of children. In order to prevent this, every parent and child must know and understand the provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and of the Jamaican Child Care and Protection Act as well as the approached and activities outlined in the Jamaican Parent Charter
- **Enlisting existing and new legislation as required**
Parents need to understand what their responsibilities are under Jamaican law

towards their children and what penalties exist for neglecting to fulfill these obligations. It is the responsibility of the State to educate the whole society about these responsibilities and about the consequences of not taking them seriously.

V. Major Policy Goals

(Please refer the matrix in Appendix IV for an indication of the partnerships suggested to enable policy implementation)

GOAL 1 – All Jamaicans make wise choices about becoming parents and make parenting a priority.

Related Policy Commitments

1. Jamaicans are to be educated on the responsibilities of effective parenting so that they can make deliberate and informed choices prior to, and on, becoming parents.
2. Safe and affordable family planning options will be made available to all Jamaicans to promote informed decision making as to numbers and spacing of children.
3. Jamaicans will effectively plan for parenthood and make parenting a priority in their lives.

Although many Jamaican women (and men) report in Reproductive Health Surveys that they have had unwanted or mistimed pregnancies this revelation seems to be more prevalent among mothers who had children in the teen years. One possible cause for this persistent problem lies with the fact that decisions to have sex are detached from decisions to procreate. Unplanned and unwanted conception can contribute to resentment, neglect and in some instances, abuse of the resulting child on the part of mothers and fathers.

Lack of planned conception also contributes to low levels of involvement of fathers in children's lives. A 1998 study by Chevannes and Brown found that men who are unable to provide for their children as a result of unemployment and poverty find their authority as fathers eroded. In their response to this lack of recognition of their role in the household, they relinquish their role as father or in some cases are denied access to their children by the mother, becoming marginal to the functions of parenting. This absence of the father figure and the often-related loss of financial supports for children have been identified as underlying factors in child-shifting, or the practice of leaving children in the care of others. Samms-Vaughan's recent research in Jamaica (2004) revealed that child shifting occurred more frequently among children living in families with unskilled female household heads (cited in Ricketts and Anderson, 2005: 21). In the circumstance of a single *father* parenting a child, that child was more likely to be out of school and, if male, more

likely to be violent, than when the single parent was the mother.

A 2003 study conducted by the University of the West Indies' Department of Sociology, Psychology and Social Work revealed that young teen mothers were especially vulnerable as childbearing interrupted and usually ended their academic careers. Early pregnancy often led to difficulties in finding adequate employment to support their children and they often received limited or no financial support from the children's fathers, many of whom were unemployed high school drop-outs. Being a parent requires emotional maturity and can obviously be an easier process when the individual has access to the required financial and emotional resources to support him or her in this role. Most teen parents rarely receive the requisite level of support and this places them as well as their offspring at greater risk for social exclusion and poverty.²

In addition to the economic hardships they face, many were also not emotionally ready to become parents and their children often suffered the consequences. Jagdeo (1994) suggests that this problem can largely be attributed to poor communication between parents and their children about sex and pregnancy. Consequently, as he explains, young females operate from a basis of misunderstanding about their bodies as their mothers only provided girls with information on a "have to know" basis such as after menstruation began, because they feared their daughters would become pregnant. Young boys reportedly received even less information from their parents. This view is supported by the work of Le Franc, Bailey and Branche (1998) who found that girls got information about puberty "off the streets" and from their peers, as there was very limited communication between parents and children.

The fact is that too many young Jamaican acquire information on pregnancy from their peers rather than from adults and/or specific education modules. As a result, teenage mothers are half as likely to breastfeed; three times more likely to smoke during pregnancy and have three times the rate of post natal depression, with a higher risk of poor mental health in the immediate post birth period. Teen parents are less likely to provide the care required by children and less likely to return to school to complete their own education. All of this has possible implications for the infant's development.

This policy recognises teenagers as an important target group to prevent teen pregnancies. Through the Health and Family Life Enrichment Program (HFLE), which is present up to Grade 9, and the Career Advancement Programme (CAP), which targets 16-18 year olds, the Ministry of Education is working to broaden awareness of parenting and its accompanying responsibilities, as well as facilitate a deeper understanding of issues related to effective parenting. The aim is to ensure that all future parents will not only plan for parenthood, but be well-equipped to begin that stage of their lives with a sound knowledge of child developmental stages, parenting styles, the goals and responsibilities of effective parenting as laid out in the Jamaican Parent Charter embedded in this policy and parental responsibilities under the law. Within the next few years both HFLE and CAP

are slated to become national, present in some form in all secondary schools.

In addition, the NPSC, as the National Parenting Support Policy's implementing body, will work closely with the National Family Planning Board and the Bureau of Women's Affairs, the Child Development Agency, the Women's Centre of Jamaica Foundation and other related government and non-governmental agencies and institutions to effect the realisation of this goal.

GOAL 2 - All Jamaican Children are loved, nurtured unconditionally and protected from harm and danger by their parents.

Related Policy Commitments

1. Each Jamaican child is to be registered as close to birth as possible to ensure that he/she has a legal identity and is ensured access to relevant state services. Both parents names are to appear on the birth certificate.
2. Responsible parenting will be promoted, so that mothers and fathers partner to be effective parents to their children.
3. Each parent must be provided opportunities to gain the skills and knowledge needed to effectively care and provide for children through the life cycle.
4. Whenever parents fail to meet their parental responsibilities of care (including uptake of education) with no reasonable cause, protection and financial support, the state will intervene with appropriate assistance and where necessary, apply sanctions to the parent(s) in accordance with the law.

UNICEF, in a recently released study on Child Poverty and Disparity in Jamaica, highlighted the critical issue of family life deprivation. The authors referenced the 2004 Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions (JSLC) data on family life. One question asked: "In the past month, did you or any other adult family member do any of the following with any of your children?" (multiple answers allowed)

- Read books or look at picture books with child
- Tell stories to a child
- Sing songs with child
- Play games/play with child
- Take child out
- Spend time with child in learning activities (e.g. drawing, painting, helping with school work)
- Do household chores with child (e.g. cooking, caring for animals)
- Teach child about spiritual/religious practices, ethical or moral

The UNICEF study posited that three (3) or fewer checked activities on the above list signaled severe deprivation; the criterion for less severe deprivation was four (4) or five (5) activities.

By these criteria, 89% of children were severely deprived of family life and 7% were less severely deprived (Witter, Hamil and Spencer, 2009, p. 82).

Table 2.1.16: Activities Parents share with children	
Number of Activities	Percentage
0	76.3
1-3	12.7
4	4.2
5	2.8
6 or more	4.0
Source – JSLC 2004	

Ricketts and Anderson, in their 2009 study on parenting in Jamaica, referenced the same JSLC data set and others and concluded that “Jamaican caregivers carry out their child-rearing activities on the basis of a very limited understanding of the scope and developmental importance of informal learning activities within the home.” They went on to query whether or not “Jamaican families are bypassing critical developmental opportunities during their child’s formative years,” (p. 57).

One possible reason for this lack of family life activity might be lack of education and awareness. Ricketts and Anderson (2009) again noted that only 25.4% of respondents who fell below the poverty line indicated that they had received parenting information, and that this was a critical factor which impacted negatively on their abilities to parent. They also noted that in addition to economic and consumption status, a caregiver’s age, level of education and their geographic location were significant factors in determining whether they received information on parenting. Younger parents were seen to have received more information than older parents and, like those in wealthier quintiles, they tended to interact more with their children. (pp. 84, 90). This local data confirms the perceived need for consistent messages backed up by authoritative research on issues in parenting, which can be communicated in facilitated discussions with parents at the community level to encourage capacity development. The NPSC will review data on birth registration

statistics and partner with the Registrar General's Department to achieve full early registration that ensures the child's right to a name and nationality. In addition, as this policy proposes, it will support the call for the Compulsory Registration of Fathers and promote the need for early registration in line with the Ministry of Education's newly launched National Student Registration System and advocate for a review of existing penalties for failure to adhere to this responsibility with an aim to arriving at reasonable and enforceable penalties for failure to comply under existing Jamaican law. The NPSC will also work with the Ministry of Health to track the number of parents receiving the Child Health Development Passport (CHDT) which will become one of the most important documents a parent will receive on birth registration.

In recognition of the significant impact of parenting on the development of the child, the effective preparation of parents is of paramount significance. Nutrition, early stimulation, emotional bonding and an understanding of the various stages of the child's development and the required levels of involvement for each are some of the critical core issues – all of which, along with parental responsibilities under the law, are covered in the Ministry of Education's Home and Family Life (HFLE), Career Advancement Programmes (CAP) programmes and the new Parenting Support Strategy built around the establishment of Parents' Places to be rolled out by the National Parenting Support Commission (NPSC) as part of policy implementation. (This strategy is described in greater detail beginning on page 46).

GOAL 3 – Each parent understands and applies positive practices in effective parenting

Related Policy Commitments

1. The principles and importance of the Jamaican Parent Charter should be made known to all members of Jamaican society, as well as the vital importance of effective parenting to national development.
2. Each parent should have access to appropriate and affordable family, community and state support services to assist them in their roles as parents.
3. The extended family and community are recognised as key elements in child-rearing to be supported and strengthened.
4. Early stimulation is regarded as a positive practice for all parents; this not only builds affective bonds between parent and child, it also provides a range of skills to the young child to support early literacy and school readiness.
5. Early and regular parent participation in school-related activities is a critical aspect of parental responsibility; attending regular PTA meetings (at a minimum one/year) and parent-teacher conferences (at a minimum one/term) are important ways parents can remain involved in their children's school life.

Parenting support is defined as "...any intervention for parents or carers aimed at reducing risks and/or promoting protective factors for their children, in relation to their social, physical and

emotional well-being,” (Moran, Moran, Ghate & van der Merwe, 2004, p. 6). Parenting support can be both formal and informal and can focus on prevention as well as intervention. Additionally, programmes can be population based (universal) or targeted at specific groups of parents identified as ‘at-risk’ or who indicate that they need support. Research has shown that many different types of parenting programmes can be successful at improving parenting skills and competencies which lead to better outcomes for children and families (Landry, Smith, Swank & Guttentag, 2008; Moran et al., 2004). However, the literature points to several key elements that have been the most effective in parenting supports (e.g. Dumas et al., 2007; Moran et al., 2004). The following summarizes the main findings from this body of research:

- Early Interventions - the earlier the better. Early interventions (including prenatal) report better and more durable outcomes for children; but late intervention is better than none and may help parents deal with parenting under stress
- A ‘Strengths-Based’ Approach which builds on the competencies existing in families
- Culturally Sensitive Initiatives
- Sufficient Time
 - Interventions of longer duration, with follow-up/booster sessions, for problems of greater severity or for higher risk groups of parents
 - 20 hours or more for parents of children experiencing behavioural problems
 - 45 hours minimum for high-risk families
 - However, shorter low level interventions are useful for delivering fact-based advice to parents, increasing knowledge of child development and encouraging change in ‘simple’ behaviours
- Programmes that are delivered and/or closely monitored by appropriately trained and skilled practitioners
- Parenting Support Services that allow multiple routes for families (variety of referral routes)
- Multi-Component Interventions:
 - Interventions using more than one method of delivery
 - Interventions with a strong theoretical base and clear and measurable objectives
 - Community-based group training programmes may produce better changes and more cost-effective and ‘user-friendly’ than individual clinic-based programmes.
 - Interventions that pay close attention to implementation factors for engaging and retaining parents (in practical, relational, cultural/contextual, strategic and structural domains) e.g. childcare
- Programmes that support and promote quality relationships between parents and their children

In particular, local research has advised of the need to focus on greater awareness of the need for early stimulation, the different stages of child development and for a better understanding of the benefits of authoritative versus authoritarian styles of parenting.

Early Stimulation

Parent-child interaction, e.g. reading and playing with children, spending time with them, showing affection, and the quality of the home-environment are posited as the most important factors in influencing a child's academic performance (Downey, 2002). Locally, Samms-Vaughan (2004) emphasized that the quality of the stimulation provide at home was the most important factor in determining intelligence in the pre-school years. This stimulation includes parent-child social and verbal interaction, with the quality of the latter being singled out as the strongest predictor of the child's later IQ (as cited in Ricketts and Anderson, 2009, p. 10). Evans and Davies (1997) documented the phenomena of low frequency parental communication with young children in Jamaica. They cited research revealing that low-income parents conversed with their young children only once or twice a week, and middle income parents in rural areas also seemed unaware of the value of regular communication with their young offspring. According to the authors the parents favoured the use of commands over conversation and often abandoned the reasoning that aids understanding of the causes and consequences of behaviour. It is fair to assume then that most Jamaican children are not getting the best start they can. Parents need to be supported and encouraged to explore books and print material with their children from infancy, to read regularly with their children until they can read independently and to encourage regular time for reading thereafter. They also need to be encouraged and supported to discuss ideas, activities and experiences with their children and move away from the "commands over conversation" model of interaction.

International research, backed by local studies, has shown that parents also need to be assisted to understand why it is important for them to be involved in their children's schools from the beginning. Involved parents make for stronger schools and often result in stronger academic performance by students (Hoover-Dempsey, 1997, Munroe, 2009). Based on the recognition that education is a partnership between home, school and community, this policy is recommending that parents be assisted by schools, PTAs and other relevant support services to support their children entering school emergent literate and numerate and as they get older, in the completion of their homework. It also posits that all parents understand the need to attend school meetings, committing to attend at least one PTA meeting per school year and at least one parent-teacher conference per school term. The NPSC will work closely with the NPTAJ and other relevant support services to not only communicate these recommendations, but to facilitate and monitor compliance.

Positive Discipline

A 2005 paper by Samms-Vaughan, Williams and Brown on "Disciplinary Practices among Jamaican Parents of Six Year Olds" revealed that 46% of parents used physical assault (including spanking, beating, pinching and shaking) as methods of "discipline." About 25% resorted to psychological methods including threatening to hit, undressing to underwear, scolding, shouting

and spitting. Evans and Davies (1997) assert that the Jamaican tendency to rely on corporal punishment particularly for younger children results from a general lack of knowledge about child development and the high, and often, unrealistic expectations held of young children.

This assertion was also supported by Ricketts and Anderson (2005) who found that corporal punishment was a popular resort for parents, especially those in rural Jamaica and was mostly used for disciplining young children, while quarrelling/shouting, reasoning and removing privileges were mostly used for older children. An undated online report entitled, Gender Achievements and Prospects in Education, the UN Girl's Education Initiative (UNGEI) indicated that in Jamaica, child rearing practices can border on child abuse disguised as discipline to the point where the extent of the problem seems almost endemic. Hemmings (1984 as cited in Wint and Brown 1988) noted that this abuse of young children was due in part to parental stress and lack of parental support. Wint and Brown (1988) have also indicated that direct interventions through the use of group parenting education workshops can lead to positive changes in the approach to discipline, as many parents admitted that beatings were not always effective but they did not know of alternative approaches to discipline. The workshop training intervention led to a reduction in beatings from three times a week to once a week or less (as cited in Ricketts and Anderson, 2009, p. 11).

The Ministry of Education does not condone the use of force in disciplining the nation's children, focusing instead on methods of positive discipline and behaviour modification strategies. The Early Childhood Act (2005) prohibits the use of corporal punishment on children aged 6 and under. The Education Act (1980) is currently under revision to prohibit the use of corporal punishment for students in primary and secondary level institutions.

Need for Greater Awareness of the Stages of Child Development

There is a growing volume of research indicating the importance of pregnancy and the first eight years of a child's life. This very early period can lay the foundations for individual health, well-being, cognitive development and emotional security, not just in childhood but also in adult life. Research has also shown that the quality of interaction between caregivers or parents and children as well as the relationships between family members can have a significant impact on child development during this time. According to Brian and Roberta Morgan (1987), birth to age six represents the fastest period of brain growth. In addition, low birth rate associated with excessive alcohol or drug consumption and smoking during pregnancy (factors that can be a result of parental lack of awareness), has also been identified as a predictive factor for poor adult outcomes and health complications throughout childhood (Schiebel, 1997).

Within the early years, young children go through a long period where play and hands-on

experiences are vital to learning. This process is essential to success in more complex tasks later in life. Parents and caregivers therefore have to be prepared to understand and support this critical stage of growth. In addition to actual skills, parents also require access to the kinds of physical environments which can support them in fulfilling these roles. Several pieces of research done in Jamaica over the last 10 years have identified issues of capacity deficiency affecting parenting in Jamaica. In the process of national consultations, there overwhelming evidence was presented that parents had limited skills, some based on the fact that they themselves are children, and are largely unprepared for the responsibilities of child care. As a result, work has already begun to increase access to information on the responsibilities of parents under Jamaican law, awareness of internationally agreed parenting best practices, and stages of child development, within the existing early childhood, primary and secondary school curricula through the Health and Family Life Enrichment and Career Advancement Programmes (HFLE and CAP). The National Parenting Support Commission (NPSC) will work to monitor this new emphasis in personal development subject matter and work towards effecting its expansion into tertiary institutions and the workplace.

Positive (or Authoritative) Culture of Parenting and Parent-Child Communication

Many parents attempt to enforce traditional approaches which were part of their own upbringing, including practices such as 'keeping things from the children' and an authoritarian approach to parenting. An authoritarian parent tends to raise his/her child in a restrictive environment. The parent requires that the child follows direction without explaining the reasons behind the rules or boundaries. Children with this type of parenting tend to be less socially competent because they are not encouraged to develop independent thought. There is considerable evidence to suggest that an *authoritative* rather than authoritarian style of parenting produces more of the positive child outcomes most parents express they want for their children. Authoritative parenting provides boundaries and guidelines for children's behaviour, but recognises the increasing importance of parent-child dialogue as a primary factor in personal growth and development. As such, this policy promotes an authoritative parenting style as part of effective parenting.

A study commissioned by UNICEF (Unfriendly Parents in Jamaica, 2001) cited a serious lack of friendly communication between parents and their children and highlighted the severe punishment and public humiliation often meted out to children, both factors seriously hindering the development of positive social-emotional development. Leo-Rhynie (1993) identified a lack of verbal interaction in Jamaican homes, as she asserts many parents are unaware of the "value of language to be used as an instrument of thought, description and analysis" and of its "importance in encouraging initiative and creativity" (p. 17). This lack of communication was attributed to cultural practices that discourage cordial discussions with children, lack of information on child development by parents and a lack of understanding of adolescent behaviour. For some parents, their own issues with literacy and numeracy as well as other basic skills can act as significant

deterrents to their meaningful engagement in their children's learning. Improving these skills among parents would support their increased participation in the process of their children's learning and also support their own re-engagement with training and education opportunities. The National Parenting Support Commission (NPSC) will work towards establishing the related partnerships with the NPTAJ and government agencies such as the Jamaica Foundation for Lifelong Learning (JFLL) and the HEART Trust to enable these opportunities to be realized through its Parents' Place support structure.

GOAL 4 - An enabling institutional framework exists to support parenting, with particular emphasis placed on children temporarily or permanently separated from the care of their parents.

Related Policy Commitments

1. All children in the care of the state – in children homes, detention centres or foster care – will be given the care, education and support needed for their full development.
2. Children living and/or working on the streets will be reintegrated into their families and communities, provided support and in extreme cases, taken into state care.
3. Clear guidelines and mechanisms will be in place for parents who need to temporarily or permanently set aside their parenting roles and responsibilities. All parents who are voluntarily separated from their children (e.g by reason migration) should, as best as possible, make provision for the guardianship, care and wellbeing of their children. These parents will make the custodial care arrangements known to schools as the appropriate state authorities accordingly, ensuring that schools have all relevant contact information.
4. The legal and regulatory framework will support all aspects of effective parenting, including the inclusion of courses in fostering a home-school connection in teacher/principal training and licensing. In addition, the framework will support the accordance of the power to summon parents to principals and the establishment of joint school-community support teams for parents whose children have been recognised by the school as in need of attention by virtue of behaviour, academic performance or social circumstances. This framework will also assist in the elimination of systemic biases related to gender, disability, health status, religion, economic status and geographic area.

Several pieces of research point to increasing levels of parental neglect and child abuse, inappropriate care and socialization of children, and disintegration of extended family supports related to parental migration, child shifting and progressively younger grandparents still in the workforce (Ricketts and Anderson, 2009, Samms-Vaughan, 2004). Many of these factors emanate from inadequate parental knowledge, skills and resources. Public consultations repeatedly raise concerns over inadequate levels of parental responsibility, and the varied causes of this reality. Questions are raised about how much is attributable to parental lack of knowledge and skill, how

much to ignorance about the consequences of such neglect, or how much to conditions of poverty or unemployment which can confound parents' best intentions. Early introduction to sexuality and resultant unplanned pregnancies also have long-term consequences for youth not yet ready for the responsibilities of parenthood, and can lead to resentment, neglect and sometimes abuse of children. Participants at the policy consultations had quite a lot to say about these issues.

There is considerable concern for situations in which parents:

1. have too many children and are unprepared to meet the socio-economic consequences of this responsibility.
2. leave their children without appropriate or sufficient arrangements for their care and protection, shifting their care to others based on the requirements of new personal relationships or employment opportunities, without taking the children's needs and feelings into account.
3. migrate and leave children in the informal care of relatives or friends without notifying the State to ensure some monitoring of care

Of particular concern to parents and child care practitioners during the policy consultations was the perception that more parents were abandoning children to the care of the State and not maintaining contact and relationships with them. This was said to be particularly true of children with disabilities, who often remain in the care of the institution for their lifetime. These same discussions rued the dearth and inaccessibility (by distance, cost) of services for families of children with special needs. This policy advocates for an urgent review of the enforcement of the Child Care and Protection Act (CCPA) which clearly states the penalties for child abuse and neglect.

Participants also noted the general lack of supportive networks and community-based services to facilitate parental empowerment and skill acquisition. Concerns were also expressed about the PATH programme which many felt was: (i) inadequate for the needs and numbers of potential recipients, (ii) lacked a proper monitoring mechanism for the use of the benefits and (iii) needed a more transparent selection system. This policy notes the need for the NPSC to work closely with the MLSS and the PATH program in the implementation of parenting support programmes.

The 2005 UNICEF Situation Analysis of Children in Jamaica showed that there were over 5,100 children orphaned by HIV/AIDS in 2003. The number of children made vulnerable by the disease is significantly higher, estimated at between 10,000 and 20,000 children. The population of children in institutional care was 5,134, inclusive of those in foster care and home on trial. In 2003, the GOJ commissioned an assessment of children's homes. The study identified the need to

develop long term strategies to reduce the number of children in care by strengthening their families, and to address such issues as the present poor preparation for life after care, the risk or incidence of sexual activity among children and abuse/molestation of children by workers.

Steady migration of adults, usually a response to the social and economic conditions, has contributed to the continuing weakening of families and community support systems. Although cash remittances may help ensure the children's access to education and other basic services, they do not compensate for the absence of parents and sometimes of their love, care, protection and guidance. This policy recognises the need for the creation of a system that helps parents ensure that the State authorities (namely schools) have full knowledge of any long term custodial care arrangements made for their children that could affect their schooling. It therefore calls for the enactment of legislation to require that such formal notice be given to the child's school. The State needs to be able to contact the person(s) with jurisdiction over children within Jamaica in the absence of the parent(s) or legal guardian.

This policy also acknowledges that the school's contact with parents/guardians is essential to a child's successful participation in school and for that reason is in alignment with the Ministry of Education's new National Student Registration Programme that begins at Grade 1 and requires recognition of the parents or guardian. In that respect, it recommends that schools communicate with parents to share both when the child is performing/behaving well and when the child is performing/behaving poorly. In the case of poor performance, the principal should have the power to summon parents(s) and also the duty to work out a joint plan for action with the parents thereby putting measures in place to hold the parents accountable for their actions and inactions calling on the Courts as needed. In addition, it recommends that the NPSC work with schools to create case investigation and support teams for children/families in need, once so identified by schools in compliance with school safety and security guidelines, the Critical Incident Management Report and student evaluations. Lastly, this policy recommends reviewing the right to activate Attendance Orders on parents to ensure their child's attendance at school. Under the Education Act (1965) this right sits with district educational boards and the policy recommends consideration of transferring same to principals.

Legislative Review indicates that Jamaican law is quite specific as it relates to parental responsibility. The penalties under the Child Care and Protection Act state that proven neglect of a child can result in a maximum sentence of three years. Other types of abuse attract higher sentences based on the level of harm done to the child. Failing to report if you know or suspect that a child is abused or is in need of care and protection can result in a sentence of six months in prison or a fine of \$500,000. In addition, the maximum sentence for incest has been increased to 16 years of imprisonment. Furthermore, hiring a child to work in a night club attracts a penalty of \$1,000,000 and the risk of having the club closed by the authorities. Lastly, parents who are

deemed to have harmed their children may be prevented from living with their children. There is a need for greater awareness and enforcement of existing laws.

Gender and culture emerged as two areas that need to be addressed in order to strengthen the enabling environment for Jamaican parents. There is need to apply specific interventions targeted at improving the socio-economic standing of women while at the same time providing more specific support to men in relation to their participation in all aspects of positive parenting. The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) focus specifically on a range of government activities for the improvement of the status of women. Some of the specific issues include eliminating violence against women in general; making it possible through laws for women to combine the roles of child-bearing, breast-feeding and child rearing with participation in the workforce; investing in measures which serve to reduce the daily domestic burden, the greatest share of which falls on women; eliminating discrimination against women and assisting them in realizing their rights. Laws and programmes in relation to the workplace are needed programmes to enable employees of both sexes to balance their family and work responsibilities. The National Parenting Support Commission (NPSC) will work to advocate for inclusion of these issues on related legislative and programme agendas.

Ricketts and Anderson (2009) found that a higher percentage of female household heads in Jamaica fell below the poverty line, and they were more likely to have responsibility for a larger number of children. Witter, Hamil and Spencer, in the 2009 UNICEF Study on Child Poverty noted that, 46.3% of Jamaican households were headed by females and children were more highly represented in those households headed by females (79.2%). This data points to the need for focus on the situation of women both to empower them to be able to provide for themselves and their families, but also to be able to make decisions for the benefit of their families. Another critical area of concern, noted in the ICPD Programme of Action, is the need to involve men more actively in population issues. It noted that men play a key role in the process of gender equality largely because they are the holders of power in our societies and thus have a critical role ranging from personal decisions regarding the size of families to the policy and programme decisions introduced within Government. Specifically the ICPD proposed that Governments should focus on promotion of the “equal participation of women and men in all areas of family and household responsibilities including family planning, child rearing, shared control and contribution to family income, children’s education, health and nutrition. This should be pursued through employment legislation and by fostering an economically enabling environment, such as family leave for both men and women. In the context of Jamaica, it is also important to note the need for a national examination of hospital policies at childbirth within the public health system there remain obstacles to the participation of fathers during childbirth. With the revised registration of Births and Deaths Act (1881) and this policy’s support of the Compulsory Registration of Fathers, both parents have

the primary duty to report the birth of a child. The NPSC will work with the RGD and other relevant agencies to communicate this requirement.

GOAL 5 - Ensuring that the principles and implications of effective parenting are communicated to the public in user friendly ways that enable comprehension of the material.

Related Policy Commitments

1. The State will engage in and promote meaningful dialogue and partnership building for effective parenting at all levels, including between state agencies, home and school, Civil Society and the private sector.
2. The State will promote education, economic, social protection and labour market policies that are supportive of family life and effective parenting practices.
3. The State will work to provide or ensure the development of safe and appropriate family friendly public spaces, green spaces and play spaces to support effective parenting and parent child interactions.
4. The State will encourage media, entertainers and cultural activities to promote and support effective parenting and the responsibilities outlined in the Parent Charter (which follows).

The following Parent Charter has been developed with varied stakeholders to put the policy goals into “affirmations” for parents that spell out the implications of these goals in specific expectations. It is hoped that it will become part of courses on parenting within the general curricula through the Health and Family Life Enrichment (HFLE) Programme and the recently piloted Career Advancement Programme (CAP) both of which have units on parenting, parental responsibility and the family which are to be reviewed and strengthened. In addition, it is useful in what will hopefully become mandatory courses for teacher/principal licensing. Lastly, this policy recognizes the need for the media to assist in facilitating greater awareness of the Charter, its components and the Government’s work around establishing a stronger support network for the nation’s parents. This includes the promotion of the Ministry of Education’s new parenting support strategy rooted in the recognition of existing Government and community locations as Parents’ Places, access to more training in parent facilitation for existing relevant government and non-governmental staff, and the promotion of the Ministry of Education’s annual Parent Month activities which includes the recognition of two model parents per education region who are then asked to assist in parental outreach. This policy suggests that the natural outgrowth of this is for the media to assist in advocating for the idea that parenting be include as a category for national honours so as to further elevate the necessary discussion of the meaning of effective parenting on the national stage.

The Parent Charter proposed by this policy is intended to assist parents to understand more specifically what is meant by effective parenting and what is expected of them, to debate and assess

their own performance in child-rearing and support to their children's education and overall development, and to realize the consequences for themselves and for their children when these expectations are not taken seriously. **Detailed examples to assist parents in understanding the implications of the Charter are given in Appendix II.**

A Short Summary of The Parent Charter -

Jamaican Parent(s) will...

- ... Plan for parenthood and make parenting a priority in their lives.
- ... Strive to achieve a positive relationship and partnership so that both mother and father play an active role in the child(ren)'s life.
- ... Give consistent love and affection to their child(ren), and praise and encouragement for their efforts.
- ... Provide a safe, healthy and nurturing home environment, free from any form of abuse.
- ... Deal constructively with behaviour and seek help and advice as needed.
- ... Ensure the child(ren) are protected from emotional, physical or sexual abuse and exploitation.
- ... Ensure the child(ren) are adequately supervised and properly cared for at all times.
- ... Maintain a healthy lifestyle for themselves (especially for mothers who should begin in early pregnancy), so as to serve as models for their children.
- ... Spend quality time with their child(ren).
- ... Encourage the child(ren) to participate in family decisions, activities and community life.
- ... Prepare the child(ren) to begin formal schooling emergent literate/numerate by reading, talking and playing with their children often; this supports their mental and emotional readiness for formal school.
- ... Ensure that if they have to leave their child(ren) in the care of a relative or friend or a prolonged period the child's school is informed in order to ensure guardianship responsibilities are fulfilled.
- ... Become active partners in their child(ren)'s education by encouraging and supporting opportunities for them to learn and grow into critically thinking, creative, productive,

socially aware, tolerant adults.

...Continue to support a strong home-school connection and ensure parallel reinforcement of lessons learned.

...Attend PTA meetings at least once per year and actively participate in school activities including parent-teacher conferences at least once/term.

See Appendix II for detailed examples of what the Charter affirmations imply for parents.

VI. Jamaica's Development Partners' Support for Parenting

Parenting in Jamaica has benefitted from a consistent level of support from local and international development partners for parenting. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has provided support not only for the development of this policy and its implementation body, the National Parenting Support Commission (NPSC), but for the development and review of parenting material in Jamaica; the development of the Coalition for Better Parenting (CBP) as the umbrella non-governmental organization for parenting in Jamaica; the Roving Care Givers Programme, an internationally recognised best practice in parenting which is focused on early stimulation and parent education at the community level. UNICEF also supported the Parent Support Advisory Team (PSAT) pilot programmes in St. Catherine and St. James, the Child Development Module in the Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions (JSLC) as well as the development of, and partial funding for a Parenting Facilitators Course.

The PIOJ's update on Official Development Assistance received by Jamaica since 2005 indicates that the Department for International Development (DFID) has had a strategic focus on the areas of community safety and security in its support to Jamaica. The Sustainable Development Strategy (2005-2009), prepared by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), places emphasis on areas of education, health (particularly reproductive health) and poverty.

The World Bank, through grants to the Early Childhood Commission (ECC), has been supporting a number of complementary processes focused on parenting research, particularly targeting issues of parents with children with disabilities, and understanding positive practices in parenting for children from birth to eight years old. The Environmental Foundation of Jamaica (EFJ) has also provided funding to the ECC for a consultancy to examine best practices in parenting education programmes at the local and international levels. Women for PACE Canada recently funded the development of a parenting education outreach strategy for early childhood institutions piloted in

PACE supported schools in 2010. In addition, early, effective parenting is one of the five priority areas in the Government's National Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Development, partially funded over five years by a US\$15m loan from the World Bank. Outcomes from the World Bank early childhood loan funded program include a parenting education strategy for families of children 0 – 8 which advocates for the establishment of "Parents' Places" islandwide, drawing on aspects of existing community/government and business places and resources. Developed by a regional leader in parenting, Parenting Partners Caribbean (PPC), the strategy recommends three levels of Parents' Places. Level 1 is an information centre and most easily achieved in partnership with the Jamaica Library Service network and the nation's schools. Level 2 Parents' Places include information as in Level 1 but also the provision of parenting workshops and family support activities. These are most easily achieved through non-governmental, faith- and community-based organizations, churches, schools with active PTAs, early childhood education centres and adolescent focused youth information centres. Level 3 adds specialized services for parents and children with higher levels of risk or vulnerability to what is offered in levels 1 and 2. These will likely be clinical care facilities such as health clinics. There are suggestions too for a virtual level 4 linked to all other levels to facilitate additional information and training. In addition it is recommended that all schools create a Parent Corner, supported by the NPSC which will regularly share relevant material and information. Importantly, the World Bank's support has also enabled the development of certification standards for parenting program content and delivery which will enable a much-needed measure of quality assurance. A training plan is currently being developed to identify parenting support facilitators to coordinate, monitor and deliver parent education sessions on a sustainable basis using the redeployment of existing GOJ personnel, e.g. guidance counselors, Social Development Commission officers, mental health nurses and others.

Private sector organisations, NGOs, CBOs, faith-based organizations, philanthropic organizations and individuals, and parent-teachers' organizations, have also consistently been active in advocacy for the advancement of child protection and the provision of critical services to support parents in carrying out their roles. A number of these organisations operate at the community level and provide facilities for remedial training and vocational training for children as well as parents, particularly those most vulnerable, including those with disabilities..

A number of government and non-governmental agencies and organizations currently work in the area of parenting training and parenting support. Based on their existing mandates and priority populations they will form the key agencies in fully operationalizing this policy and will be coordinated through the National Parenting Support Commission (NPSC)'s multi-sectoral board. These agencies and organizations will be responsible for the direction and day-to-day implementation of the policy's goals and strategies. Specifically, they will be expected to:

- Carry out the activities of the National Parenting Support Policy and the Strategic Plans

developed that are within their specific areas, including greater public awareness of effective parenting through their relationships with the media;

- ☐ Liaise with other partners towards achieving specific outcomes in relation to the National Parenting Support Policy's Five Goal Areas;
- ☐ Provide required feedback on the implementation of key areas that are consistent with the National Parenting Support Policy's Goals;
- ☐ Participate in the monitoring and evaluation process of the National Parenting Support Policy; and
- ☐ Implement the key recommendations from annual reviews in their respective programme areas.

While lead agencies have been identified in the formulation of this National Parenting Support Policy there also are a number of partnering agencies which must share in the responsibility of supporting effective parenting including CBOs, NGOs, FBOs, the NPTAJ and the media. Some of these agencies currently are active players, others may be co-opted to take on the mandate of strengthening parenting initiatives and others may be formed in the next few years to address identified gaps. All agencies, ranging from small to large and from public to private, and having mandates that range from advocacy to training to business development, are important players in fully implementing this policy. Ongoing communication across agencies, therefore, will be essential in order to share best practices and learn from one another's experiences. The efforts of all the partners towards the realization of the policy goals will be coordinated and monitored by the National Parenting Support Commission (NPSC).

VII. Challenges for Effective Parenting

The fulsome implementation of this policy will support the work of the Ministry of Education around developing strong and effective parents and strengthening home-school links, and will support the work of the Ministry of Health in achieving a population practicing healthy lifestyles. Implementation faces many challenges, however, while presenting our nation's greatest opportunity to positively impact national development and growth. These challenges include:

1. Prevailing incidences of poverty.
2. A very high incidence of mistimed or unwanted pregnancies which is especially true for teenage and young mothers. In addition, the use of a condom at last sex, although

improving, is still not where it should be to contribute to reducing unwanted pregnancies, as well as sexually transmitted infections.

3. The myth that poor parenting practices are confined to lower socio-economic groups is a barrier to fulsome parenting programmes that address all levels of society. The assumption that parents who can afford it are not in need of training and support is pervasive throughout the society, often prohibiting parents who know they need help from actively seeking out training, help and support due to the stigmas that are associated with poor parenting practices.
4. The matrifocality of the act of childbirth and the fact that fathers are still unnamed on birth certificates, and do not assume full economic or other responsibilities for their children. Fathers are not sufficiently considered in the planning, preparation and birth of their children in public health policies. Opportunities for early interventions are therefore often missed.
5. Harsh and inappropriate methods of discipline that border on, and in many cases, are clear instances of child abuse (both emotional and physical) remain far too commonplace.
6. There are a number of parents who are incarcerated, or emigrate for economic opportunity and leave children behind. In some cases, such children are not provided adequate alternative care or are completely abandoned by their parents. No notice is currently required or given to an agent of the state as to guardianship provisions for the child/ren.
7. The tendency of the majority of poor households to be headed by single parents, most often women.
8. There is often little connection between the timing and types of support services needed and those offered to parents. In addition, cost and distance from existing services are often prohibitive, making these services inaccessible to those who are in the greatest need of them.
9. There is a serious lack of requisite numbers of trained personnel to meet the needs for parental support throughout the society.
10. Significant gaps exist in holding parents accountable under existing laws and the need to create additional legislation to strengthen the vital home-school connection.
11. The plethora of parenting education programmes of varying standards for content and delivery.

VIII Priority Target Groups

In outlining the mandate for developing the National Parenting Support Policy, the Ministry of Education clearly outlined the need to identify the issues affecting parenting in Jamaica, with due regard for the needs of the most vulnerable. This policy has been deliberate in identifying different

priority groups based on the policy issues identified. The identification of specific cohorts for priority attention does not in any way infer that the National Parenting Support Policy will not seek to address the needs of all Jamaicans. This however is recognition that in order to achieve the intended outcome of equitable and equal support, some groups will require more targeted interventions to achieve at best a 'level playing field'. Such vulnerable groups identified include:

- Teen parents
- Single parents
- Parents with disabilities
- Parents of children with disabilities
- Parents experiencing high levels of stress
- Fathers who are not currently involved in the lives of their children
- Parents of children in the care of the state and/or who are in conflict with the law
- Families involving parents who have migrated/moved leaving children behind.
- Families in extreme conditions of poverty.

IX Implementing Mechanisms

This policy will be managed directly through the National Parenting Support Commission (NPSC) a Commission, a statutory body reporting to the Ministry of Education.

The newly formed National Parenting Support Commission (NPSC) will have responsibility for coordinating the implementation of the National Parenting Support Policy and the creation of an enabling parenting environment. Specifically, the NPSC is expected to develop a comprehensive and inclusive Plan for Implementation, which should detail strategies and actions, and address issues of partnerships, resources and timeframes for implementation as well as mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation.

It is expected that the NPSC will continue to utilize the multi-sectoral approach that was used to develop the policy in its implementation and monitoring. The Commission will be supported in the fulfillment of its role by (initially) a NPSC Working Group and (eventually) a Board of Commissioners with sub-committees related to aspects of policy implementation. It is anticipated that both will provide input into the development of annual implementation plans, and guidance for developing mechanisms to support rationalization of existing programming. Critical roles for the Commission are those of fostering increased coordination and collaboration between stakeholders, developing approaches for monitoring and evaluating the implementation process and leading in parenting advocacy efforts, both for resources to support policy implementation and for the development of an enabling environment.

X. Monitoring and Evaluation

This National Parenting Support Policy is the nation's first attempt at codifying a broad national understanding of parenting issues and at stating its commitments to strengthen and improve support services nationally. It lays the foundation for future-years activities and provides guidelines to sectors and agencies for how to move forward in the development of annual operational plans. These operational plans need to detail specific objectives and strategies towards achieving the vision and goals of the policy.

As a statutory body under the Ministry of Education, the NPSC will serve as the implementing agency for the policy. As it learns and grows, and as the nature of parenting and services for parenting change, its objectives and strategies will be evaluated and adapted to strengthen the national response to parenting matters.

The NPSC will commit to conducting an annual strategic review around parenting support that will bring partners together to assess progress and develop related plans of actions and accountability measures.

XI. Proposed Legislative Agenda

In the interest of realizing the overarching goal of greater parenting support this policy acknowledges that legislation regarding parental/guardianship rights and obligations require a comprehensive review. In some instances new legislation will be required. A primary duty of the NPSC will be to advocate for this legislative review and action.

Legislation to be reviewed for amendments in terms of existing provisions, penalties and adequacy of enforcement will include but not be limited to the:

- Education Act and Regulations
- Early Childhood Act
- Guardianship Act
- Child Care and Protection Act and the attachment of a Parental Code of Conduct based on the Parental Charter
- Judicature (Family Court) Act
- Maintenance Act
- Registration (of Births and Deaths) Act

In addition to any legislative needs that arise from a review of the above, it is proposed that consideration be given to the creation of legislation related to the following issues:

- Power of principals to summon parents, including the right to seek the serving of Attendance Orders.
- Power of schools to demand formal notice from parent/guardian re long-term custodial arrangements that may affect his/her child's schooling.
- Inclusion of a mandatory course on fostering home-school connections as part of teacher licensing requirements.
- The concept of paternity leave.

Appendix 1 - Methodology

The process of developing the National Parenting Support Policy began in 2006 when the Early Childhood Commission convened a Steering Committee to review the current situation, including national data, resources and programmes and then make recommendations for the way forward for developing and promoting a parenting agenda.

The Committee hired the services of consultants to conduct a literature review of parenting to include a review of local and international parenting best practices, convene a series of national consultations on the issues faced by parents and possible solutions that could be applied to the issues.

The methodology for the policy development process mirrored the national guidelines developed by the Cabinet Office and was fine tuned in consultation with national and regional government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the United Nation's International Children Fund (UNICEF) and other International Development Partners (IDPs).

The following considerations were integral to the development of the methodology:

- ***The broad participation of civil society is essential.*** This broad participation includes everyone who is affected in the issue of parenting – parents, grandparents, children, young people, teachers, faith-based organizations (FBOs), NGOs, private-sector representatives and government decision makers. The inclusion of all of these groups is essential to foster ownership during its subsequent implementation.
- ***Multi-sectoral participation in the development of the National Parenting Support Policy must be guided by a shared vision and set of priorities.*** Each stakeholder should contribute to the policy based on their specific population(s) and their own strengths. Each must recognise and take ownership of their unique role in contributing to the creation of the ideal parent.
- ***The National Parenting Support Policy should be both comprehensive and specific.*** The policy will identify each stakeholder's roles and responsibilities within agreed priority areas. Cross-cutting themes such as empowerment, policy considerations and monitoring and evaluation will be addressed within each priority area.
- ***Root causes and strategies to address them must be examined.*** In order for the National Parenting Support Policy to identify effective strategies and activities, there must be a concerted effort to examine the underlying root causes that affect people's abilities to be good parents – namely gender roles and inequities, poverty, and social vulnerability – and

the best approaches to address these causes. The specific strategies and activities identified in the policy will result from a consultative process with experts in these fields that are thoroughly researched and evidence-based.

□ ***Governance issues must be assessed within the Jamaican context.*** Both sector and civil society representatives must come together to participate in the development of common priorities and to help decide on the best ways to further the governance of the national parenting agenda.

The results of the preliminary consultations were then presented to key stakeholders during a series of consultations. These stakeholders – representing public and private entities at national and regional levels – participated in the development of specific objectives and strategies for the National Parenting Support Policy.

Appendix II: The Parent Charter in Detail

Jamaican parent(s) will...

	Examples
... Plan for parenthood and make parenting a priority in their lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider timing and spacing of pregnancies and determine the number of children for which they can be responsible.• Ensure child is registered with the RGD, to ensure the child(ren)'s an identity and citizenship.• Ensure both mother and father are a part of the child(ren)'s life, both names appear on the birth registration and both parents provide consistent support.• Pay attention to the child(ren).• Provide emotional, economic and physical support for the child(ren).
... Strive to achieve a positive relationship and partnership so that both mother and father play an active role in the child(ren)'s life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that the other parent can spend time with the child(ren).• Provide financial assistance of the child(ren).• Try not to be hostile to the other parent.• Consider as far as possible having both parents in the same household.• Do not withhold access to child(ren) as punishment to the other parent.• Ensure that should primary custodial care of the child(ren) be modified due to migration or other occurrence, the state is made aware of the changes. Notify your child(ren)'s school.
... Give consistent love and affection to their child(ren), and praise and encouragement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hold their child(ren), pick them up, sit them on your lap, kiss and cuddle and hold hands

<p>for their efforts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play games with their babies and toddlers like bouncing them on your knee, gentle tickling and massage, or wiggling toes and fingers and singing songs • Older children require active play and need affection too. Cuddles, a pat on the shoulder and goodnight kisses all show you care. And don't forget to say 'I love you' regularly. • Praise the child(ren) when they do well at something and/or are trying hard and do their best. • Reward with your attention – talking and smiling with, and listening to, your child(ren). • Respect the child(ren)'s feelings by respecting them as individuals.
<p>... Provide a safe, healthy and nurturing home environment.</p>	<p>Neglect is when any of the children's basic needs are not met. The parent(s) needs to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feed the child(ren) when they are hungry. • Keep them warm, dry and safe from danger. • Maintain an abuse and violence free home and understand the penalties that will be laid should any offences be carried out recognised as abuse in the Child Care and Protection Act and the Domestic Violence Act. • Provide appropriate food, shelter and clothing. • Help the child(ren) when in pain, scared or upset. • Provide family routines to help the children feel secure. • Spend time with their child(ren) regularly. • Make sure there is always a responsible adult to look after the child(ren).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take child(ren) to a health care provider for wellness and curative visits and immunizations. • Ensure that child(ren)'s nutrition and exercise needs are met. • Encourage child(ren) to develop lifelong healthy habits and lifestyles, model these yourself.
<p>... Become active partners in their child(ren)'s education by encouraging and supporting opportunities for them to learn and grow into critically thinking, creative, productive, socially aware, tolerant adults.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide age appropriate stimulation regularly. • Work to ensure that your child(ren) enter formal schooling emergent literate and numerate by exploring books and print material with them from infancy. • Ensure the child(ren) attend school regularly, have the supplies needed, and are learning appropriately. • Support the child(ren) at home to make progress in school work • Speak to the child(ren) about their progress, about what they think about school. • Talk to the children about their goals and provide encouragement. • Listen to the child(ren)'s career choices • Plan and save early for the child(ren)'s future education. • Participate in PTA meetings and school events and talk to teachers regularly about the child(ren). • Understand that if you fail in your duty to educate your child(ren) you may be liable to be charged with neglect under the Child Care and Protection Act and eventually suffer the removal of the child(ren) from your custody.

<p>... Deal constructively with child(ren)'s behaviour and seek help and advice as needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise that the child(ren) will misbehave at times • Don't hit, shout or threaten. • When about to lose your temper– step away, calm down and talk to someone when needed. Use positive discipline techniques such as time-outs and withdrawing privileges. • Seek information from available resources as needed
<p>... Ensure the child(ren) are protected from emotional, physical or sexual abuse and exploitation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn and understand the symptoms of abuse – accidents, changes in behaviour, infections or irritations, nightmares, bed wetting, crying, clinging, or start to be scared of people or places that were okay before. • Recognise that the child(ren) cannot always communicate what is happening to them. • If you suspect a child is being abused seek help straight away. Speak with your guidance counselor, principal, the OCR, the CDA. • Keep a watch over work activities of the child(ren) – do not allow them into the streets to ask for money, work for money, or have sex for money.
<p>... Ensure the child(ren) are adequately supervised and properly cared for at all times.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep your baby with you when awake and check on him/her regularly when asleep • Keep a constant eye - and ear - on your child(ren) • If you have to be away make sure your child(ren) have someone caring and responsible to look after them. If you leave a child alone, you could face consequences of neglect under the Child Care and Protection Act.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure caregivers/teachers are caring, responsible and experienced and that the crèche/care facility/school is clean, sanitary, safe and secure and free from abuse. • If you must leave a child over 14 years old for a short time, check that that he/she feels confident about being alone and that he/she knows what to do in an emergency. • If you must leave a child for work or other purposes, you must notify the State and arrange proper custodial care arrangements for your child and maintain regular contact.
... Maintain a healthy lifestyle for themselves so as to serve as models for their child(ren).	<p>The child(ren) of a tense parent are more likely to be upset too.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain your friends and interests • Exercise and eat right • Ask for help if needed • Make time for yourself • Make time to spend with your partner
... Encourage child(ren) to participate in family decisions, activities and community life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk and listen – tell your child(ren) what you expect and why. They also need to know that they can talk to you and you will listen. • Let the child(ren) make some decisions within reason– letting children make simple decisions and choices lets them feel they have a say and teaches them responsibility. • Encourage the child(ren) to participate in sports, team, cultural, art and community activities. • Expose the child(ren) to new activities, and new places, including national and cultural heritage sites.

...Prepare children to begin formal schooling emergent literate/numerate by reading and playing with their children often; this supports their mental and emotional readiness for formal school.

...Continue to support a strong home-school connection and ensure parallel reinforcement of lessons learned.

...Attend PTA meetings and parent/teacher conferences at least once per term and actively participate in school activities including parent-teacher conferences.

- As the child(ren) get older, give them a say in things that affect them.
- Treat the child(ren) fairly and with respect.
- Encourage the child(ren) to have someone they can trust in their lives.
- Explore books and print material with the child(ren) from infancy.
- Encourage the child(ren) to learn their names and be aware of print running from left to right.
- Provide fun, colourful, safe writing materials and scraps of paper and encourage children to draw/colour and explore writing of letters.
- Play "I Spy," rhyming games and sing songs to extend vocabulary.
- Point out shapes in your environment and play how many games to strengthen number sense.
- Get to know your child(ren)'s teachers and school staff. Make sure your child(ren) also know the names of all school staff.
- Discuss your child(ren)'s assignments and lessons learned at school with them.
- Participate actively in the PTA.
- Stay in regular contact with your child(ren)'s teachers.
- Participate in parent/teacher conferences regularly

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer for school activities.
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This Charter, developed out of a consultative, participatory process will be widely disseminated and used as the basis to develop parenting parenting support programmes for all Jamaicans.

Appendix III

Policy Goals and Policy Statements – A Summary –The Vision for Parenting and Parenting Support

All parents in Jamaica – whether —by virtue of having given birth, adopting or serving as guardians - recognize, accept and discharge their duty to ensure that the rights of children are always upheld , the best interests of children are always promoted and their children are always loved and provided with opportunities and resources to achieve their full potential and ultimate fulfillment, within safe, caring and nurturing environments.

In order to build on the individual and national achievements to date, address the challenges of parenting, and to achieve the vision of parenting and for national development, five goal areas for parenting support were identified:

- 1. All Jamaicans make wise choices about becoming parents and make parenting a priority.**
- 2. All Jamaican children are loved, nurtured and protected instinctively and unconditionally by their parents.**
- 3. Each parent understands and utilizes/applies positive practices in parenting.**
- 4. An enabling institutional framework exists to support parenting.**
- 5. Ensuring that the principles and implications of positive parenting are effectively communicated to the public in user friendly ways that enable comprehension of the material.**

**IV. Partners and Leaders in the Realization of the National Parenting Support Policy –
[Lead Implementing Agency = National Parenting Support Commission (NPSC)]**

Goal #1 - All Jamaicans make wise choices about being parents	Goal #2 - All Jamaican Children are loved, nurtured unconditionally & protected from harm and danger by their parents.	Goal #3- Each parent understands and applies positive practices in effective parenting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOE • MOH • NFPB • CDA • NPSC • Media • NGOs/CBOs/FBOs • NPTAJ • DLG • JTA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOE • NPSC • RGD • ECC • NPTAJ • NGOs/CBOs/FBOs • OCA/OCR • CDA • CCDC • MLSS • MNS • Media • MOJ/Family Court System • DLG • JTA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PATH • MLSS • MOH • MOE • ECC • PSOJ • NGOs/FBOs/CBOs • NPSC • NPTAJ • CDA • Media • DLG • JTA
Goal #4 - An enabling institutional framework exists to support parenting	Goal #5- Ensuring that the principles and implications of effective parenting are communicated to the public in user friendly ways	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PIOJ • OCA/OCR • NPSC • MOE • ECC • NFPB • CDA • MFPS • MNS • MOH • NGOs/CBOs/FBOs • NPTAJ • BWA • MLSS • PSOJ • NPSC • MOJ/Family Court System • Media • DLG • JTA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NPSC • MOE • MOH • MLSS • OCA • CDA • NGOs/CBOs/FBOs • NFPB • BWA • NPTAJ • Media • DLG • JTA 	

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