Chapter One

1. Introduction to Alternative Childcare Services

**1.1 Meaning of Alternative Childcare**

**What is alternative childcare?**

Alternative childcare is any arrangement, formal or informal, temporary or permanent, that intended for children who are orphan and vulnerable (OVC). There are many kinds of alternative care but they are grouped into two main types:

**1.1.1 Informal care**

Informal care where other family members or people close to the children look after them. This is common in most countries. The national alternative child care Guidelines say that where this happens, governments still have a role to ensure their welfare and protection, with due respect for cultural, economic, gender and religious differences and practices that do not conflict with the rights and best interests of the child. Informal care may include siblings living in a child-headed household. In this case, the government is supposed to ensure the children have the support and protection of a legal guardian.

**1.1.2 Formal care**

Formal care where the government or a recognized child-care agency places a child in the care of adults who are not family members. Where this is necessary, it is usually the aim to provide a family setting as close as possible to the child’s normal home environment. Use of residential care (such as a refugee transit camp, emergency shelter, children’s home, place of safety and orphanage) is only considered where it is appropriate, necessary and in the best interests of the individual child concerned.

**1.2 Alternative Child Care Guideline**

Children who cannot live with their parents should still grow up in a loving home and enjoy all their rights. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child is so concerned that this does not happen that it has drawn up a set of Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children. The Guidelines are intended to help everyone who is responsible for the care and wellbeing of children. The Guidelines for providing alternative care all arise from two principles.

**1. The principle of necessity:** This means children should only be placed in alternative care if it is really necessary. It must be in the child’s ‘best interest’.

**2. The principle of appropriateness:** This means that children should only be placed in alternative care that suits their individual needs and situation

The Guidelines explain why it is necessary to make arrangements for some children to live away from their parents and which alternatives might be right for children in different situations..

It is important that children, young people, and those who work with them, understand what is supposed to happen, and how, if a child cannot live with his or her parents, for any reason. Children have a right to know what the Guidelines say and to give their opinions on them.

The National Alternative Child Care Guideline (2009) is the sole instrument that sets minimum standards on alternative child care services. However, the guideline does not effectively respond to the growing demand for comprehensive standards and tools to ensure quality and standards of alternative care services. As a ‘guideline’ it lacks the legal authority to serve as a regulation with force of law to ensure adherence to the guideline and accountability of care givers. So because of a number of reasons the government makes revision on it.

**1.3 Rationale for Revising the Guidelines**

The idea of revitalizing the former Guidelines primarily emanated from the outcomes of the assessment made on the implementation of the Guidelines. The following factors warranted revision of the Guidelines:

* The previous national Alternative Childcare Guidelines were less familiar to the front line practitioners of the childcare programs;
* Previous national Alternative Childcare Guidelines were of ideal standard and did not recognize the objective realities of the childcare systems in the country
* The Guidelines were not detailed and exhaustive (missions and visions stated for different alternative guidelines were almost uniform)
* The Guidelines were also outdated and need to be revisited.

Therefore, updating the Guidelines was considered paramount important to ensure the smooth and efficient implementation of the minimum conditions of care to children by all actors in the alternative childcare system.

**1.4 The State of Alternative Childcare Services**

Nowadays, a number of governmental and non-governmental organizations are increasingly opting towards implementing integrated childcare programs with a variety of alternative care components. This can be taken as a good practice in terms of widening the opportunities made available to the diverse needs of target groups leading to a larger margin of inclusion.

The range of services on offer must take into account and seek to fulfill the wide range of needs of vulnerable children and the diverse deprivations of rights that such children suffer from. Diversification and integration of services, although increasingly being adopted, is however still in its infancy and needs further development

Each type of alternative care program - whether it is institutional care, adoption, foster care and the like - likely to have its strengths as well as weaknesses. It ought to be understood that the provision of a particular form of alternative care program can offer some children the chance to develop in new ways. On the contrary, for others, the very services designed to ‘look after’ them can fail to provide well enough for their care and development and, in some cases at the worst, lead to serious abuse of their rights. As such, organizations should critically see the choices and options available and make informed decisions on the choices that are most beneficial to the child.

The participation of children and the community seems to be largely overlooked in the process of decision-making. All children, as stated in the UNCRC, have the right to participate in and state their views on all decisions that can potentially impact on their lives. Service providers and care givers need to realize that children are not merely passive recipients of care and support: their views and wishes should be taken in to account in the design and delivery of services.

These updated Alternative Childcare Guidelines derive from the recognition of these existing realities surrounding childcare in the country and it is expected that they will contribute to improve the situation of children being assisted under various alternative childcare programs.

**1.5 Objectives of the Guideline**

The general objective of the Alternative Childcare Guidelines is to establish a regulatory instrument on childcare systems with a view to contribute towards improving the quality of care and service provided by governmental and nongovernmental organizations involved in childcare and advance the welfare of the orphans and other vulnerable children (OVC) in the country. And this guide line also has the following specific objectives:

* To facilitate the provision of quality and effective care and support to OVC.
* To set minimum conditions on the delivery of alternative childcare services in the country.
* To develop sound child-oriented operational frameworks.
* To promote a participatory approach of dealing with the care and support of OVC.

**1.6 Principles of the Guideline**

These Guidelines are based on the ethical principles and legal provisions given in:

* The UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child)
* The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child;
* The Ethiopian Laws and Policies.

Basically, the Guidelines took into account the four basic principles of the UNCRC, which emphasize:

* The best Interest of the Child;
* Non-discrimination;
* Survival and development of the child;
* Child participation.

The Guidelines specifically recognize that: Every child has the right2:

1. To life;
2. To a name and nationality;
3. To know and be cared for by his or her parents or legal guardians; and
4. Not to be subject to exploitative practices,

**1.7 Definition of Terms**

* **Child:** A child means every human being below the age of 18 years.
* **Abandoned Child**: An abandoned child is the child who is deliberately rejected by his/her parents.
* **Adoption:** Adoption is a childcare and protection measure that enables an unaccompanied child to benefit from a substitute and permanent family care.
* **Adoptive parent:** an adoptive parent is an Ethiopian and/or an expatriate who have adopted an Ethiopian child.
* **Domestic adoption:** It is an adoption that involves adoptive parents and a child of the same nationality and the same country of residence.
* **Inter-country Adoption:** Inter-country adoption is an adoption that involves a change in the child’s habitual country of residence, whatever the nationality of the adopting parents. It also includes an adoption that involves parents of a nationality other than that of the child, whether or not they reside and continue to reside in the child’s habitual country of residence.
* **Biological Parent/s:** Biological parent/s means both birth parents have a blood relation with their child.
* **Reunification:** It refers to a rehabilitative intervention designed to facilitate the reunion of orphans or other vulnerable children separated from their families with biological parents or member/s of the extended family to restore a family environment as a means of a permanent placement for the proper upbringing and development of the child.
* **Reintegration:** Reintegration refers to a rehabilitative intervention meant for children whose parents/extended families are untraceable or for those who reach the maximum age limits in the institution to facilitate their permanent placement in a community environment either individually or in groups.
* **Community-Based Organization (CBO):** Is a local structure and system set up through the interest of the community members or a group of individuals in a given community. For example: ***Idir, Mahber, Iqub, Youth Associations, Self-help Groups ,***etc.
* **Foster Family:** A foster family is a person/family which provides a temporary physical care and emotional support and protection for an unaccompanied child for an unspecified time.
* **Foster Family Care:** A foster family care is a planned; goal directed alternative family care where an unaccompanied child is temporarily placed and gets adequate physical, emotional and psycho-social care and protection until he/she is either reunified with his/her biological parent/s or placed within another type of permanent care or institution.
* **Institutional Childcare Services:** A type of organization that provides holistic types of care and support services designed to fulfill the physiological and psychosocial needs of children in the childcare institutions which are offered by professionally qualified workers (or experienced personnel who is supervised by such qualified workers), until the children are transferred to a more permanent alternative care program.
* **Single Orphan:** Refers to a child who lost one of his/her biological parent/s regardless of the cause of the loss.
* **Double Orphan:** Double orphan refers to a child who lost both of his/her biological parent/s regardless of the cause of the loss.
* **Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC):** Are children whose survival and development is jeopardized by certain circumstances and are therefore in need of alternative childcare services. The type of target children under this category includes but is not limited to the following groups:
* Single and double orphans;
* Street children;
* Abandoned children whose parents /families are untraceable;
* Children with disability;
* Trafficked children;
* Children exposed to the worst forms of child labor;
* Children infected or affected by HIV/AIDS;
* Victims of sexual abuse and exploitation;
* Displaced children;
* Non-orphan children whose parents are not able to support the child due to illness, injury or detention;
* Child mothers;
* Children in conflict with law;
* Child headed households;
* Separated children;
* Refugee children;
* Other target children, depending on the local definition of vulnerability.

**Chapter Two**

**1. Preventing the Need for Alternative Care**

**1.1 Promoting Parental Care**

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) recognizes that children have the best chance of developing their full potential in a family environment. The primary responsibility for their care rests upon their parents and legal guardians, who are entitled to support from the government in raising their children. The government and other stakeholders promote parental care through train parents about appropriate parenting skill; help parents to participate in income generating activities provide adequate social services and etc.

**1.2 Prevent Family Separation**

Many families need support to meet their responsibilities towards their children. The Guidelines go into detail about the policies governments are expected to have to prevent child abandonment and separation.

1. **Services**

These include providing birth registration, adequate housing, health, education and social welfare services as well as fighting poverty, substance abuse, discrimination, stigma, violence, and sexual abuse.

1. **Parenting skills**

Governments should promote and strengthen both mothers’ and fathers’ ability to care for their children. They should work with civil society, religious leaders and the media to improve social protection measures, including: services to promote positive parent- child relationships, conflict resolution skills, income-generation opportunities, social assistance, and services for parents and children with disabilities.

1. **Youth policies**

Youth policies are needed to prepare future parents to make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health, as well as care services for single and adolescent parents and their children. These should help both mothers and fathers to exercise their parental responsibilities and avoid pressure to give up their children.

**Counseling**

When a parent or legal guardian wishes to place a child in alternative care, for a short time or permanently, the government should ensure that the family receives counseling and social support to encourage and enable them to continue to care for the child. If this fails, the first step is to see whether other family members can take responsibility for the child, and whether this would be in the child’s best interests. If not, efforts should be made to find a family placement within a reasonable period.

1. **Child-headed households**

Appropriate support and services should be available to siblings who have lost their parents or caregivers and wish to remain together, as long as the eldest sibling is willing and able to act as the household head.

1. **Training**

Specific training should be provided to teachers and others working with children, in order to help them to identify situations of abuse, neglect, exploitation or risk of abandonment and to refer such cases to people who can help.

**1.3 Types of alternative childcare services**

**1. Community-based childcare**

Community-based childcare is an alternative that provides care and support to the children in a state of condition that is familiar to the children who used to experience it. The objective of the Community-based Childcare Service is to mobilize the community, its resources and indigenous knowledge with the ultimate goal of addressing the needs and rights of orphans and other vulnerable children (OVC) in a sustainable manner. Practically, community-based childcare is believed to be a better alternative because of the fact that it is by far cost effective and its greater advantage of reaching large number of target children in a given community. This approach encompasses a wide range of preventive, curative and rehabilitative strategies which respond to the needs and best interests of the target children.

**1.1Guideline on Community-Based Childcare**

The underlining rationale behind this approach is that the grassroots community structures and organizations can provide for and fulfill the emotional, social, physiological and spiritual needs of OVC and effectively protect them from abuse and exploitation, without such children being removed from their families or community environment. Thus, organizations engaged in the provision of community-based childcare programs should focus more on building the capacity of the community to care for its orphans and vulnerable children and working with existing structures, institutions and organizations and empowering them to assume responsibilities for providing care and support for OVC. This endeavor requires guidelines on how it should be done.

**1.2 Objectives**

The overall objective of the community-based childcare program is to mobilize the community and its resources with the ultimate goal of ensuring a sustainable and healthy growth and development of orphans and vulnerable children within a given community.

Community based child care service also have the following Specific Objectives:

* To enhance the participation and capacity of the community-based organizations so as to enable them to deliver a sustainable care and support for orphans and vulnerable children.
* To fulfill the basic rights/needs of orphans and vulnerable children including their rights of access to:
* Shelter
* Food
* Supplementary nutritional assistance
* Academic and/or vocational education
* Care and affection
* Health care and counseling
* Play and recreation
* Special care and attention for children with disabilities

**1.3 Eligibility of a Target Child**

* All the target children under the category of OVC stated in section one, article 6.25 of these Guidelines is eligible to benefit from a community-based childcare programme;
* Detail criteria for prioritization of the most vulnerable target children shall be established by the organization based on the existing reality and the results of the situational analysis. However, the community should be actively involved in the identification and selection of target children;
* When identifying the eligible child, Community-Based Childcare Organizations (CBCCO) shall make sure that the child has not already been recruited for a similar support by another organization.

**1.4Roles and Responsibilities of Community Based Child Care Organizations (CBCCO**)

A CBCCO have the following major roles and responsibilities:

* Initiate, plan, implement, follow-up, monitor and evaluate the childcare program;
* Design and mainstream child protection policy of the organization
* Raise funds, mobilize resources and solicit support from members of the community and external sources;
* Facilitate the meaningful participation of the community
* Build the technical and financial capacity of CBCCOs
* Advocate for the rights of OVC
* Empowering members of a community to the welfare/well-being of children in their community;
* Create Network and collaboration with other stakeholders
* Submit quarterly, biannual and annual reports to the relevant authorities.

**1.5Types of Services provided by CBCCO**

The types of services and minimum required activities of a community-based childcare organization shall include but not be limited to:

* Food
* Education
* Health
* Economic Support
* Psychological support and counseling
* Parenting Education
* Legal Protection

**1.6Alternative Placements**

Depending on the extent of vulnerability of children as defined by the community, community-based childcare organizations shall work with the grassroots structures and explore other alternative models of placements within the community setting.

Alternatives for placement of orphans and vulnerable children in the community include:

* **Kinship care:** facilitate the support and care by placing children in the extended family systems;
* **Sponsorship care:** facilitate the provision of care and support to OVC and their family through volunteers and organizations (inside and outside the country);
* **Child-Headed Household:** Community-based childcare organizations shall support the placement of orphans (siblings) intact in their home with the elder siblings acting as a parent. This alternative is appropriate when there are children fifteen years or older in the family to take care of the younger siblings;
* **Group home:** Orphans and vulnerable children can be placed in a community-based group home, where by a group of six to eight children are placed under one roof with a surrogate mother assigned to them as caretaker;
* **Foster family care:** placing the children for a short or long term care with a volunteer family is also another option to facilitate family oriented care and support to OVC.

Organizations implementing community-based childcare programs should take the following into account when making decisions about placing children in one or the other arrangements:

* Assess locally acceptable and appropriate model of placement;
* Enhance the capacity of the family where OVC are placed through imparting knowledge, providing training and creating access to microfinance service;
* Provide parenting skills for care givers;
* Build OVC’s capacity through Income Generating Activities (IGA) in order to help them become self-supportive;
* Discourage separating siblings in OVC placements;
* Network and coordinate with organizations working with OVC;
* Consider the participation of OVC and the community at large in the process.

**1.7 Core Values**

* Community Participation
* Participation of the Child
* Holistic Approaches
* The child at the centre but not the child in isolation
* Mainstreaming disability and gender

**2. Reunification and Reintegration Programs**

Reunifying children separated from their parents/relatives due to natural or manmade catastrophe to their birth families or relatives is a widely recognized practice as a primary alternative against residential care and other out-of-home child welfare services. Undeniably, children can best develop a feeling of security, physical/mental health and personal identity within their families. Hence, organizations engaged in institutional care have a responsibility to implement reunification/reintegration as an ongoing and integral part of their services. Returning children as early and safely as possible to their families or communities is strongly recommendable as a means to achieve better outcomes for children, retention of important family connections and avoid their drift into long-term and often problematic pathways in out-of-home care.

**2.1 Guideline on Reunification and Reintegration Programs**

Reunification and reintegration should not be done randomly, and there is a need to set standard procedures and modalities which can inform and guide the reintegration process.

**2.2 Objectives**

**2.2.1 Objectives of the Child-Family Reunification Program**

* Restore child-family ties by reuniting the child with biological parents or extended family members;
* Facilitate conditions for the assimilation of children with their parents and members of the extended family and promote their all rounded development;
* Create opportunities for children in which they can learn familiar and social values and norms living with their parents and/or members of the extended family;
* Support parents and/or members of extended families to re-assume their responsibility to cater for their children.

**2.2.2 Objectives of the Reintegration Program**

* Facilitate conditions for children's adjustment in the community;
* Equip the children with necessary skills and financial resources to enable them to become independent and self-reliant citizens;
* Create opportunities in which children can interact in the community life, learn socio-cultural values and norms of the community for their proper development and reintegration.

**2.3 Eligibility**

A child is eligible for child-family reunification if:

* The Child preferably be below the age of 15;
* The child is willing to be reunified with his/her biological parents or member/s of extended family;
* The biological parents or members of the extended family are mentally sound and free from terminal illness;
* The reunification would ultimately serve the best interests of the child.

A Youngster is Eligible for Reintegration if He/She:

* Reaches the maximum age limit (18 years) under the care of a childcare institutions;
* Is willing to be reintegrated before reaching the maximum age limit and is, preferably, over the age of 15;
* Reaches the maximum age limit, but his/her parents are untraceable or certified by accredited bodies to be terminally ill;
* Is unable to pursue his/her academic education while living in the childcare institution; Demonstrates readiness to lead an independent life

**2.4 Roles and Responsibilities of the Organization**

A childcare organization implementing reunification/reintegration program shall have the following main roles and responsibilities:

* Properly plan the reunification and reintegration as an integral part of its ongoing programs;
* Allocate proper financial, material and human resources to carry out the reunification and reintegration program;
* Carry out the program in accordance with the best interests of the child;
* Provide the parents an induction on parenting skill and the rights of the child;
* Conduct family tracing and identify biological parent or member of extended family;
* Conduct periodic follow-up and evaluation on a reunified/reintegrated child
* Submit quarterly, biannual and annual activity reports of the organization to the competent government authority.

**2.5 Procedures of Reunification and Reintegration**

**2.5.1 Reunification Procedure**

Child-family reunification involves a series of steps starting from pre reunification and reunification to post reunification activities that need to be carried out for a successful and safe placement of the child to his/her biological parents or extended family. The following must be carried out in each phase of the reunification process.

**A. Pre-Reunification**

* Preparation of the reunification program:
* Collecting and managing appropriate background information on the child:
* Tracing a Family and Confirming Eligibility:
* Providing pre-reunification Services:

**B. Reunification Phase**

* **The reunification phase encompasses two major processes** i.e. the transport arrangement and the actual reunion of the child with the parents or the extended family;
* **Trip to the family:**
* A childcare organization implementing reunification program shall use appropriate means of transportation;
* While traveling to join the family, children shall be accompanied at least by a social worker;
* When travel arrangements are made, the following items need to be taken along with the child:
* School certificates,
* Personal belongings, clothes, blankets, bed sheets (when it is necessary),
* First aid kits including some simple medicines,
* Snacks.
* **Services at the Time of Reunification:**
* Material and financial support to the child’s parent/s
* Support where necessary economically disadvantaged families with a sustainable means of income to guarantee the child’s healthy post-reunification adjustment
* Signed reunion agreement between the family and the organization

**C. Post Reunification (Follow-up phase):**

After reunification, the organization shall conduct regular follow-up of the child-

* + Health status;
	+ Nutritional status;
	+ Physical development;
	+ Educational development;
	+ Adjustment in the family, peer and neighborhood relationship, etc;
	+ Emotional and spiritual development.

**2.5.2 Reintegration Procedure**

A childcare organization implementing reintegration programs shall develop a series of steps involving pre-integration, integration and post integration phases.

**A. Pre-Reintegration Phase:**

Pre- Integration Services

* + Provide guidance and counseling focusing on vocational and career development
	+ Assist and encourage the youngsters (target groups) to come up with a proposal for vocational training and a business plan after offering them the necessary orientations and counseling;
	+ Provide medical check-up and treatment for the youngster;
	+ Provide Pre-reintegration life-skills training
	+ Equip youngsters with necessary skills

**B. Reintegration phase:**

* Reintegration agreement shall be signed between the organization and the youngster
* A youngster shall be entitled to take his/her belongings away,
* A childcare organization shall keep records about the address of the reintegrated child

**C. Post-reintegration phase:**

* After completing the reintegration process, shall conduct follow-up at least once in a year on the progress and adjustment of youngsters development with respect to:
* Career development (employment/self-employment of the youngster);
* Social development and interaction;
* Emotional and spiritual development;
* Status of self-reliance /independence.
* provide the necessary periodic advice and counseling to enable the youngster to be well adjusted within the surrounding environment;
* A childcare organization shall take necessary precaution not to strengthen dependency of the youngster on the organization. The summary of the periodic follow-up shall be included in reports that shall be submitted to the relevant authority.

**3. Foster Care**

Foster Care is one component in a continuum of alternative childcare services. It refers to short or long term care within the private house of foster families, mainly addressing those children who are unable to live with their biological parents and families. Providing foster care is often a difficult and demanding job, for both the organization and foster families and, as such, some financial contribution can be and is often paid to the foster family to compensate the additional costs incurred by the foster child.

**3.1 Guidelines for Foster Care**

**3.1.1Objective**

The overall objective of foster care service is to secure a substitute and temporary familial environment for orphans and vulnerable children on a temporary basis, till a child is reunified with his/her extended family or placed in other permanent alternative childcare program. The specific objectives of a foster care service involve securing:

* Shelter
* Food
* Education
* Health care
* Play and recreation
* Psychologically stimulating familial environment

**3.1.2Eligibility**

**A. Eligibility of a Child**

Foster care is especially appropriate in conditions where:

* The child is under 18 years of age
* The child is double orphan or the child is abandoned
* The child is separated from his biological parents due to detention
* The child is affected by some physical or mental disability
* The child is being subjected to physical, sexual and other form of abuse

Foster care may NOT be appropriate where:

* The child needs a temporary placement free from the emotional pressures and expectations of a family life;
* The child needs a structured therapeutic environment where his/her severe behavioral problems can be dealt with;
* There is a need to keep large sibling groups together and there is no available fostering care for them.

**B. Eligibility of an Applicant**

Based on local conditions, an individual or a family to be eligible for offering foster family care shall satisfy the following criteria:

* Ethiopian by nationality
* At least 25 years of age
* Sufficient income to raise the child
* Free from any incurable and/or contagious disease and mental health problem
* She/he is free from any criminal activities
* Ability to produce the consent of the applicant’s spouse, if married:

**3.1.3 Procedure in Foster Care Placement**

Foster care organization shall choose anyone of the following models for placing children in foster care, depending on the case study and best interests of the child:

* Transitional homes
* Foster family care
* Community-based foster homes

**4. Adoption**

The importance and expansion of adoption services as one alternative form of care is necessary as a lot of children are left to fend for themselves owing to the dire poverty and the spread of HIV pandemic in the country. This condition also contributed to mushrooming of childcare institutions and adoption agencies in great numbers in the country, to address the plight of orphans and abandoned children through inter-country adoption service.

**4.1 Guidelines on Adoption**

**4.1.1 Objectives of Adoption**

The main purpose of adoption service is to provide for the proper care and development of orphans and destitute children by placing them in a substitute and suitable familial environment.

* Specific Objectives of adoption is Securing basic services to adopted child, including:
* Shelter
* Food
* Education
* Health care
* Psychologically stimulating familial environment.
* Establish a substitute parental care and emotional bond between the child and adoptive parents.
* **Illegal Acts**

The relevant authority shall take a corrective measure when adoption service providing organizations are engaged in the following and other illegal acts according to the law of the land:

The relevant authority shall take a corrective measure when adoption service providing organizations are engaged in the following and other illegal acts according to the law of the land:

* Falsifying the information about the child and his/her family background;
* Misleading/misinforming parents about the purpose and intent of adoption;
* Facilitating adoption without the knowledge and informed consent of the child’s parents or guardians;
* Using adoption as a source of financial or other gains
* Abusing, selling and/or trafficking children through adoption;
* Facilitating an adoption without the knowledge of the concerned governmental bodies.

**4.1.2 Roles and Responsibilities**

**A. Roles and Responsibilities of Adoption Service Provider Organizations**

* Assist in building the capacity of childcare institutions/orphanage.
* Support every effort being done to encourage domestic adoption.
* Provide support to destitute children living with their families.
* Avoid selecting a child for adoption on the basis of ethnicity and religion.
* Submit quarterly, biannual and annual reports to the relevant authority.

**B. Roles and Responsibilities of Childcare Institutions in Adoption**

* Record and document detail and up-to-date information about the child.
* In collaboration with relevant bodies
* Consider adoption only when receiving permission to facilitate the adoption of a child from a relevant authority.
* Ensure that siblings are not separated and are adopted by the same family or to the same area.

**4.1.3 Eligibility**

**A. Eligibility of a Child**

A child is eligible for adoption if he/she is:

* An orphan who has no guardian/relatives to take care of him/her;
* Abandoned child whose parents are untraceable;
* Certified by accredited body that his/her parents are not able to take care of him/her owing to medical or economical reasons;
* Under the age of 18 years;
* Willing to be adopted if he/she is ten years and over;
* A child whose parent/s or legal guardians give their consent to the court when they are proved to be destitute by accredited body.

**B. Eligibility of an applicant**

* Ethiopian by nationality(for domestic adoption)
* Able to produce a document certifying that the applicant’s state law is consistent with the legal requirements of Ethiopia on adoption.( for inter-country adoption)
* At least, twenty five years of age and at most 60 years of age
* Able to produce a document from a relevant authority certifying that he/she has an income that is sufficient to raise the child;
* Free from any contagious disease and mental health problem
* Free from any criminal activities.

**4.1.4.Adoption Procedure**

* **Identification and Application**
* Domestic Adoption:
* A child should eligible for domestic adoption
* Sign an agreement of adoption between the potential adopter, the applicant and the parent/guardian of the child;
* The applicant shall submit his/her application to the court
* An applicant should fulfill the requirements and eligibility criteria stated in Guidelines;
* Inter-Country Adoption:
* prepare a monthly follow-up report about the details of the child
* signed adoption agreement between the applicant/s and the childcare institution or a guardian;
* conducted case study by professional experts on the child
* When necessary, age determination test of the eligible child, can be done;
* makes sure that documents are fulfilled by the applicant

**5. Institutional Childcare Service**

It is widely accepted that childcare within an institutional setting should be used as a short-term alternative care strategy and only as a last option when all other types of childcare options have been exhausted. Countries which have traditionally relied on institutional care are now making major transformations to their childcare and social welfare policies, moving towards community care options. Such transformations are rooted in the research-based evidence of the impact of institutions on children’s development the vulnerability to abuse within the institutional settings and the high operational costs such institutional care often requires (Better Care Network 2006).

**5.1 Guideline for Institutional Childcare Service**

Early intervention is of paramount importance for placing children in other alternative childcare programs, so that they would experience proper personality development. When all options are exhausted, upbringing children in institutions requires acceptable standards that should be adhered for the best interests of the child.

**5.1.1 Objectives**

The overall objective of institutional childcare is to contribute towards the improvement of the physical, social, psychological well-being and ensuring self-reliance among children in the childcare institutions, by creating access to the fulfillment of their rights for basic and psychosocial services and seeking every other possible alternative placement for permanent upbringing of children. Institutional Childcare also has the following Specific Objectives

* To provide for the basic and psychosocial needs of children
* To enable children to develop their skills and potentials to become self-reliant individuals valued by the community;
* To strive to solicit other options for placing the children in other alternative childcare programs with the view to enhance proper development of children.

**5.1.2 Eligibility**

The following target children are eligible for admission into the childcare institutions:

* Children who are double orphans and who have no one to take care of them in the family or community.
* Children who are single orphans, when the living parent is incapable of providing support to the child owing to illness, detention or any other valid reasons proved by relevant authority.
* Abandoned children or children whose parents are not traceable.
* Children whose parents are certified by the appropriate or accredited body as terminally ill or mentally incapacitated to take care of them.
* The child is under the age 18 years.

**5.1.3 Admission**

A childcare institution shall exclusively accept a child when his/her eligibility is approved and admission requested by the relevant authority.

A childcare institution shall conduct a screening at the time of admitting the child on various developmental statuses of the child including:

* Age determination test (if the exact age of the child is not known);
* Health status;
* Physical disability;
* History of abuse (if any);
* Psychological condition of the child;
* Family history/status.

**5.1.4 Roles and Responsibilities**

Keeping the common obligations of organizations indicated in section three of these Guidelines in mind, childcare institutions shall discharge the following responsibilities:

* Make sure on the number of children is balanced to the available resource capacity
* Explore every possible effort to provide other alternative care
* Provide care to children with disabilities without any discrimination
* Prepare internal child protection policy of the organization
* Arrange ways to interact with the community members in the area.
* Keep records (data) about the profile of every child under their care
* Establish and strengthen networking among other institutions
* Bodies submit bi-annual and annual report to Government authority

**5.1.5 Physical Structure**

**A. Location**

* It should take into account the availability infrastructures
* It should be free from dangerous environments
* It should be situated within the access to social services.

**B. Compound and Facilities**

* Compound shall have adequate space relative to the number of children.
* It should be free of hazardous situations and elements.
* It shall have service giving buildings.

**5.1.6 Types of Services**

Generally, the types of services to be provided by the childcare institution can be grouped into the following three categories:

1. Basic Services
2. Psychosocial Services and
3. Alternative Childcare Services
4. **Basic Services**

**A. Housing:**

* It should be constructed from non-toxic materials that are widely used in the locality
* Residing of children in one-bed room should depend on the age, gender and size of the room.
* The dormitory should accommodate the child’s belongings.
* In the lodgings, double deck beds are not allowed for children under the age of seven
* Lodgings in a childcare institution shall be well ventilated and well lighted
* These facilities shall be kept clean/ready all the time.

**B. Food:**

A childcare institution shall, at least, provide:

* Milk every two hours for children below four months
* Milk and supplementary food every three hours for children between four and twelve months; iii. Milk and supplementary food every four hours for children between one and three years;
* Four meals a day for children from four to seven years of age;
* Three meals a day for children above seven years of age

b. The food served in childcare institution should:

Be fresh and nutritious enough for the healthy development of the child; ii. Address the food culture of the locality

As much as possible approximate the quality and quantity of food available in an average household in the community in which the childcare institution is situated;

The type, quality and quantity of food served in a childcare institution should be checked regularly by the health personnel or nutritionist

 The health assistant should prepare and submit a monthly report to the administration of the childcare institution on the type, quality and quantity of the food served in the childcare institution;

A childcare institution should encourage older children to participate in cooking their food and in the purchasing of food items (exercise shopping)

The purpose of this exercise should be limited to familiarize children with food preparation and shopping so that they could easily cope with such exercise when they leave the institution. This activity, however, should not lead to child labor exploitation.



1. **Care arrangements**

5. Communities should be assisted in playing an active role in monitoring and responding to care and protection issues facing children in their local context.

6. Care within a child’s own community, including fostering, should be encouraged, as it provides continuity in socialization and development.

7. As unaccompanied or separated children may be at heightened risk of abuse and exploitation, monitoring and specific support to cares should be foreseen to ensure their protection.

8. Children in emergency situations should not be moved to a country other than that of their habitual residence for alternative care except temporarily for compelling health, medical or safety reasons. In that case, this should be as close as possible to their home, they should be accompanied by a parent or caregiver known to them, and a clear return plan should be established.

9. Should family reintegration prove impossible within an appropriate period or be deemed contrary to the best interests of the child, stable and definitive solutions, such as adoption or kafala of Islamic law, should be envisaged; failing this, other long-term options should be considered, such as foster care or appropriate residential care, including group homes and other supervised living arrangements.

1. **Tracing and family reintegration**

10. Identifying, registering and documenting unaccompanied or separated children are priorities in any emergency and should be carried out as quickly as possible.

11. Registration activities should be conducted by or under the direct supervision of State authorities and explicitly mandated entities with responsibility for and experience in this task.

12. The confidential nature of the information collected should be respected and systems put in place for safe forwarding and storage of information. Information should only be shared among duly mandated agencies for the purpose of tracing, family reintegration and care.

13. All those engaged in tracing family members or primary legal or customary caregivers should operate within a coordinated system, using standardized forms and mutually compatible procedures, wherever possible. They should ensure that the child and others concerned would not be endangered by their actions.

14. The validity of relationships and the confirmation of the willingness of the child and family members to be reunited must be verified for every child. No action should be taken that may hinder eventual family reintegration, such as adoption, change of name or movement to places far from the family’s likely location, until all tracing efforts have been exhausted.

15. Appropriate records of any placement of a child should be made and kept in a safe and secure manner so that reunification can be facilitated in the future

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Establishment, Code of Ethics and Monitoring and Evaluation

The establishment of an organization engaged in any type of alternative childcare services shall be preceded by a registration and approval of Memorandum of Association and Project Proposal of the program by a relevant authority. An organization that proposes to establish an alternative childcare service shall produce a document affirming that it has the required financial, material, human power and technical capacity. A childcare organization can be established by the governmental, non-governmental organizations or the community groups.

**4.1. REGISTRATION PROCEDURES**

Registration of a childcare service providing organization shall be governed by application procedures and requirements for non-profit making organizations established by Associations’ Registration Office in the Ministry of Justice (MoJ); or A National NGO/Association applying for registration to carry out childcare programs is required to produce and submit the following documents to the Associations’ Registration Office:

* Original copy of the Memorandum of Association (by-Laws) signed by five founding members;
* An application signed by each founding member and appended with a passport size recent photograph and a profile form describing the background of the founding members;
* Copy of the Identity Card of each founding members, residence permit or other documents issued by any authorized governmental body certifying his/her identity and permanent address;
* The Project Proposal on which the organization/association intends to execute following registration (approval of the Project Proposal by pertinent professionals in the accredited government body is a prerequisite for registration).

An International NGO applying for registration to carry out childcare services in Ethiopia shall be required to produce and submit the following documents to the Ethiopian Mission/Embassy in its country of origin:

* Authenticated certificate(s) that stipulates the applicant to be a legal non–profit making foreign organization in the country of formation or registration;
* Authenticated by-Laws or Constitution or Statutes or internal regulation and program that confirm its present spheres of activity;
* Letter of support relating to its current activities and those under considerations, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) or a supervisory body of non-profit making organizations situated at Head Office;
* Project profile revealing the intended activities to be carried out in Ethiopia;
* Authenticated Power of Attorney or Letter of Appointment by the country representative to represent the non-profit making foreign organization in Ethiopia;
* If an organization is an ASPO, in addition to the points enumerated above, the ASPO shall be required to produce the following documents:
	+ 1. Authenticated assessment report of the work of the ASPO by the Supervisory Authority in the country of formation;
		2. Authenticated copy of a written guarantee from Government institute affirming its responsibility for the children in case the Agency discontinues its work in Ethiopia or in country of formation due to any reasons;
		3. The condition, status and list of the children ASPO previously adopted from Ethiopia;
		4. Renewed and authenticated certificate of registration that verifies the applicant to work as an ASPO;
		5. An applicant should produce a Project Proposal in addition to adoption on any social development sector to be implemented in Ethiopia after registration.
	+ Based on the particulars of the MoFA of the FDRE, the Embassies or Consulates and permanent representatives in the country verify, authenticate and transmit the documents along with its findings to the Ministry’s Directorate to International Organizations and Economic Cooperation for approval by the Ministry;
	+ The organization, if permitted to get registered and operate in Ethiopia, shall enter Ethiopia, submit its documents to the protocol Directorate of the MoFA, secure a document of authenticity and commence the registration process with the MoJ.

**4.2q. Renewal of registration**

* + Organizations applying for the renewal of their work permit should submit:
		1. Annual audit reports (original) by certified accountant.

Organizations with annual income amounting to less than ETB 50,000 (fifty thousand Ethiopian Birr) should submit financial statement/report prepared by their Head of the Finance Department and approved by the internal auditor;

1. Annual activity report of the organization /associations.
2. Both the financial and activity reports should be approved/endorsed by the general assembly of the organization/association.

 **4.3. CODE OF ETHICS**

* Organizations engaged in any type of alternative childcare service adhere to the law of the land and respect all codes of conduct that are/will be developed by relevant and authorized Government body.
* In all its activities, an organization engaged in childcare service strives to ensure the best interests of the child.
* An organization shall refrain from making childcare services as a means of income generating and ensure that the income is solely used for all round development and well-being of the children.
* An organization shall refrain from involvement in activities other than those legally permitted to it and the objectives it is established for.
* An organization makes sure that its management and implementation of the services are guided by the principles of good governance with accountability and transparency and meaningful participation of its constituencies.
* Ensures that children (target groups) are not discriminated due to their sex, color, disability, race, religion, language, HIV status and any other condition.
* In the performance of its functions, an organization discharges its duties incorruptibly and in a non-abusive manner of any privilege availed to it.
* Every childcare organization shall develop and apply a child protection policy that should be signed and respected by the staff.
* A childcare organization makes sure that the provision of the type of alternative childcare service is conducted in a manner that does not violate the rights of children and damage their physical and psycho social conditions.
* Respect the privacy of the target groups and confidentiality of personal data onthe life histories of children and other related issues that need to be kept confidential regarding their life
* A childcare organization shall establish networks with concerned governmentaland non-governmental organizations to avoid duplication of resources, efforts and check multiple servicing for the same target groups.
* The MoWA will ensure liability to regulatory measure on organizations whichfail to observe this code of ethics and other regulatory provisions of operation.

**4.4. ACCOUNTABILITY**

* A childcare organization shall be governed by policies formulated by the accredited governmental bodies.
* An organization running a childcare program shall be accountable to the accredited governmental bodies.
* An organization running a community-based childcare program shall also be accountable to the target groups and community within which it implements its programs.
* A childcare organization shall submit quarterly, biannual and annual reports to the accredited governmental body.

**4.5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEMS**

Monitoring and evaluation system is essential for the realistic project planning and for having a working management information system that is crucial for successful implementation of project/programs. Hence, along with the development of the

Guidelines, it is essential to design a system for maintaining the quality of childcare standards through regular assessment, monitoring and evaluation of organizations involved in any of the alternative childcare programs.

**4.6. Designing a Monitoring System**

* + The following factors need to be considered by childcare providing organizations while designing an efficient monitoring system:
		1. What is to be monitored? This refers to the selection of indicators which will be monitored and which reflect the effects of the project. The identification process should be participatory to get the different views of stakeholders about the observable changes expected out of the project activities;
		2. Who collects monitoring data? This refers to designation of appropriate personnel to monitoring activities. To minimize biases, target groups and community leaders can be involved depending on their capacity and time availability;
		3. How to collect monitoring data? There are different tools of collecting monitoring data including interview with individuals and groups, surveys, participatory rapid appraisal and observation. The kind of tools to be used depends on the nature of the project and the capacity of the staff. It is also necessary to consider that since monitoring is an ongoing process, there is a need to gather information repeatedly;
		4. What kind of records need to be kept for continuous assessment?

Progress Reports on quantitative and qualitative data;

* + - 1. Staff meeting minutes (project staff and management committee and project review meetings);
			2. Field visit report of project staff or other stakeholders and donors;
			3. Audio visual information: photographs, newspaper, video, etc.
		1. How to use the information collected (monitoring results) for timely management *decision?* Conduct regular review meeting with stakeholders, project users, project staff and community representatives to discuss the project in light of the monitoring reports. Such meeting is of great importance to present evidence about the progress of the project and will help the management rectify mistakes or redesign the objectives and plans.

**4.7. Designing an Evaluation framework**

* + Defining the project objectives: the first step in developing an evaluation plan is to formulate objectives. The objectives should be simple, measurable, achievable/realistic and time bounded;
	+ Devise a set of impact indicators: once the objectives are defined and specified, the next step is to devise indicators to measure progress toward achieving the objectives;
	+ Define means of verifications: after the indicators have been identified, the next logical step is to verify their actualization and determine the sources of information which give evidence for the changes/impacts made;
	+ Define critical assumptions: defining and analyzing the assumptions allows the stakeholders to realize that the proposed project in some cases might be unlikely to be successful due to some uncontrollable external factors. Hence, the management can take decisions before proceeding on the project or monitor the situation to reduce the risk of failure.

**4.8. APPLICATION OF THE GUIDELINES**

* MoWA or the relevant governmental body is responsible to promote the application of the Guidelines by all concerned childcare organizations;
* The following procedures are suggested as a core strategies to facilitate effective application of the Guidelines:
	+ A full scale and successive familiarization program should be organized to sensitize all childcare organizations about the revised Guidelines;
	+ Provision of technical support such as training and other capacity building activities to the childcare institutions;
	+ Translation of the Guidelines into local languages or working languages and dissemination of sufficient copies to all childcare institutions;
	+ The MoWA should make sure that all the Project Proposals submitted by childcare organizations for appraisal and registration comply with the Guidelines;
	+ Periodic assessment on the status of application, challenges in the implementation of the Guidelines and new trends in childcare services, etc. to obtain feedback forfuture improvement of the Guidelines.