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MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
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NEWS RELEASE **8th January, 2012**

Achieving Universal Early Childhood Education:

NEW ECCE CENTRES OPENING IN JANUARY

The Ministry of Education wishes to announce the opening of five new Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Centres as we continue working to achieve Universal ECCE to ensure that all of the children of our nation are given the opportunity to commence effective learning and development from as early an age as possible. Once accomplished, Trinidad and Tobago will be the first country in the world to achieve Universal Early Childhood Care Education.

The News ECCE centres to open their doors on 9th January 2012 are:

- **Carlsen Field ECCE Centre -** Cashew gardens, Carlsen Field 3A, Carlsen Field Tasker Road (HDC Settlement)
- **Harmony Hall ECCE Centre -** Harmony Hall, LSA Settlement, Gasparillo
- **Golconda ECCE Centre -** Ridgewood Gardens, Golconda (HDC Settlement)
- **Retrench ECCE Centre** - Hillcrest Gardens, Retrench, San-Fernando (HDC Settlement)
- **Wellington Road ECCE Centre -** Wellington Gardens, Wellington Road, Debe (HDC Settlement

These new ECCE centres are designed specifically for the care and teaching of young children; the facilities and services provided are intended to provide holistic development of the children. Among the main features of the centres are: colourful and child-friendly materials that are easy to maintain, non-toxic and durable; adequate floor space; activity areas; washroom facilities; toys and books, etc.

Excellence in Education!

It is expected by March, 18 more ECCE Centres will be opened – construction of which has already been completed. Another 24 centres are being constructed under the IDB (Inter-American Development Bank) loan programme. Construction will also begin on 85 additional centres to be built on the compounds of selected Primary Schools.

The Ministry of Education will be making world history with this groundbreaking policy via a unique, innovative method of public sector/private sector partnership to open another 100 kindergartens within a one-year period, in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations.

More teaching jobs will be created as the Ministry moves forward to achieve Universal Early Childhood Education. A total of 3,600 ECCE teachers will be required within two to three years. Training of the first batch of teachers is expected in February, following ongoing discussions with the University of the West Indies, the University of Trinidad and Tobago, the University of the Southern Caribbean, ROYTEC and COSTAATT.

The objective is to ensure that Centres meet the requirements of the Ministry in terms of infrastructure, materials and equipment, and qualified teachers.

Currently, Government takes care of only 7,000 children of the 34, 000 in the three to five year old age group, in a formal setting. Minister Gopeesingh has indicated that "it is important for us to bring the 28,000 remaining into the main stream of education."

During the 17-month period of the People's Partnership Government, 10 Primary Schools have been constructed, including Tunapuna Government Primary School, Balmain Presbyterian Primary School, Tulsa Trace Hindu Primary School, Mount Pleasant Government Primary School, Charlieville Presbyterian Primary School and Bon Air Government Primary School; as well as 3 Secondary Schools – Marabella and Biche have already been opened and Aranguez North Secondary will be opening tomorrow, January 9th, 2012.

For further information please contact the Ministry's Communications Division at 628-1581.