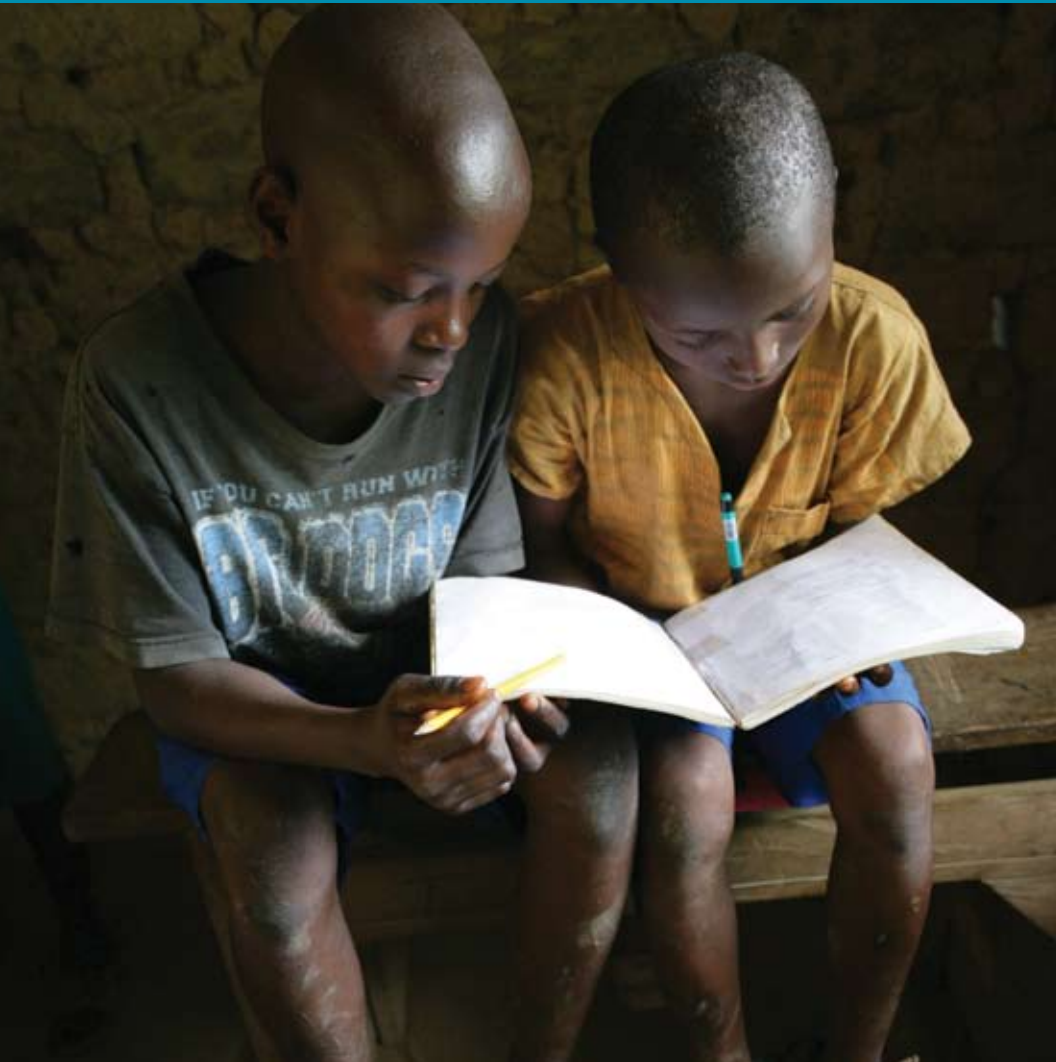




**Getting Ready  
for School**

A Child-to-Child Approach

# The rhythm of Schooling





## ▶ Getting Ready for School

“Getting Ready for School: A Child-to-Child Approach” is an innovative and cost-effective approach to early education. The overall goal of this approach is to foster a rhythm of schooling by preparing preschool children and their families for on-time school enrolment and success.

Recognizing the lack of formal preschools and other early learning opportunities for most children in developing countries, this strategy builds on the natural phenomenon of younger children learning from and interacting with older children.

The initiative – a collaboration between the Child-to-Child Trust and UNICEF – builds on a successful health promotion model that has been widely used in many developing countries.

This Child-to-Child approach recognizes that, in addition to parents and other adults, preschool children are often cared for and influenced by their daily interactions with older siblings and peers. By developing the skills of its older students, primary schools can build on this natural phenomenon to promote school readiness of its youngest students.



## 1. Early childhood: A missed opportunity

During the last decades, economists, educators and scientists have come to recognize the importance of the first five years of life: a time of tremendous brain growth that lays a foundation for later learning. What and how much children learn later in school largely depends on the social, emotional and cognitive skills they develop in their first six years. Early childhood programmes that focus on developing skills in these young children can affect their later well-being, especially those children at risk of poor health, inadequate nutrition and school failure.

In spite of increased recognition of the importance of learning in the early years, many children in developing countries still do not have access to any early childhood development opportunities. And many children arrive at school later than the prescribed starting age. Over-age children without basic early learning skills are likely to perform poorly and drop out early. This in turn undermines efforts to improve school retention and completion rates and learning achievement.



## 2. A Child-to-Child Approach

Child-to-Child is a promising strategy for delivering services to young children in resource-poor countries and communities. Child-to-Child activities have children directly and actively promote health education to younger children or peers in their families and communities.

The initiative will use Child-to-Child principles to meet the growing demand for early childhood opportunities in developing countries. It is an immediate and practical response to a serious problem.

**The primary goals of the “Getting Ready for School: A Child-to-Child Approach” are to:**

- Ensure that children arrive at school with both a strong foundation in literacy and numeracy and the social and emotional skills required for learning.
- Increase on-time primary school enrolment for both girls and boys.
- Decrease early drop-out rates and enhance overall primary school performance.

**In addition, it is hoped the initiative will also benefit older children, parents and families, teachers and schools. The following outcomes are anticipated:**

- Primary school children will develop skills for early learning, cooperative learning and life skills and increased self-esteem.
- Parents and families will gain awareness of the importance of child development and on-time enrolment and skills for promoting early learning opportunities.
- Teachers will increase awareness of the importance of early childhood for later learning and improve their teaching methods.
- Schools will establish home/school/community partnerships and develop child-friendly learning and teaching environments.

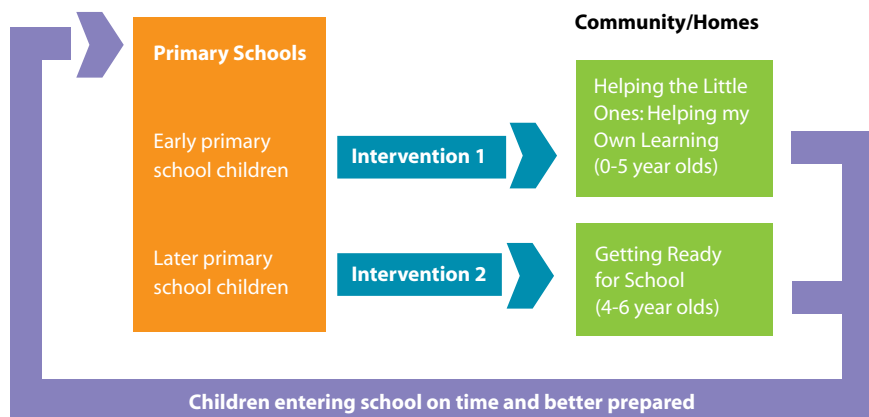


## Programme components

*Helping the Little Ones: Helping My Own Learning* uses a set of early readers and fun learning activities. Children in the early years of primary school will be encouraged to use these materials with preschool children. They are designed to enhance the social, language and thinking skills of children during their first five years of life. The games also reinforce the older child's understanding of basic numeracy, language and early literacy skills.

*Getting Ready for School* is a series of interactive learning games and activities that teach the basic building blocks of numeracy and literacy. It is designed for children in upper primary school to use with children the year before formal school enrolment. The activities can be used to create child-friendly environments during the first year of primary school. All learning materials and methods are flexible and can be easily adapted to meet a wide range of circumstances.

In an effort to achieve these goals, two interventions are planned: **Helping the Little Ones: Helping My Own Learning** and **Getting Ready for School**.



Additional materials will further mobilize families and communities. Communication through many channels will raise awareness of the importance of early learning for school readiness and of on-time school enrolment. The effectiveness of the Child-to-Child approach in resource-poor environments will be closely monitored and evaluated. A set of culturally appropriate measures will be developed to assess programme outcomes and impact.





### 3. Getting started: Participating countries

The initiative will begin in six countries: Bangladesh, China, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Tajikistan and Yemen. Factors considered in selecting these countries included:

- Low levels of primary school enrolment.
- High levels of over-age children enrolled in primary school.
- Low preschool coverage and absence of other early learning opportunities and programmes, such as community-based childcare and development.

- Poor retention rates, weak learning achievement and high levels of drop-out in the early years of primary school.

Based on the insights gained during this first phase, the materials will be revised and made available to other interested countries.

Setting the rhythm of schooling begins early in a child's life. Working with families, schools, and communities, "Getting Ready for School: A Child to Child" approach hopes to ensure that all children arrive at school at the right age and equipped with the social, emotional and learning tools they need to succeed.





Progress with getting all children to access and complete primary education – as well as the quality of that education – will continue to suffer setbacks as long as too many children start school later than the prescribed age and are poorly prepared for learning.

Early learning gets children ready to start school at the right age and with the right skills.

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