Early childhood, which spans the period up to 8 years of age, is critical for cognitive, social, emotional and physical development. During these years, a child’s newly developing brain is highly plastic and responsive to change. Optimal early childhood development requires a stimulating and nurturing environment, access to books and learning materials, interactions with responsive and attentive caregivers, adequate nutrients, access to good quality early childhood education, and safety and protection. All these aspects of the environment contribute to developmental outcomes for children.

Engaging in activities like reading books to the child; telling stories to the child; singing songs to the child; taking the child outside the home; playing with the child; and naming, counting or drawing things with the child is one of the fundamental factors in child development.

Children facing a broad range of risk factors including poverty; poor health; high levels of family and environmental stress and exposure to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation; and inadequate care and learning opportunities face inequalities and may fail to reach their developmental potential. Investing in the early years is one of the most critical and cost-effective ways countries can reduce gaps that often place children with low social and economic status at a disadvantage.

Key Messages

- Early stimulation and responsive care for children aged 2-4 years is mainly carried out by mothers (60%), while fathers’ participation is much less (8%).
- Attendance at kindergarten is related to area of residence, age and level of wellbeing. Percentage of children attending kindergarten is 16 percentage point higher for urban area than in rural area. Attendance at kindergarten is 10 percentage point higher among the children aged 4 than aged 3. There is a correlation of the attendance at kindergarten and poverty, attendance of children living in the richest families is 26 percentage point higher than in poorest.
- Among the children attending kindergarten, 94% of children attend public and 6% - private kindergarten, while only <1% of children are attending other type of kindergarten.
- Media usage among children is becoming widespread. 35% of children under 5 are using electronic devices for more than 1 hour a day. There is a significant disparity between urban and rural population. Severity of using electronic devices among children under 5 is higher in urban than in rural areas. 40% and 27% respectively.
- 64% of children under 5 play with toys from the store, 94% - household items, including objects found outside, and lower percentage of children with homemade toys (12%).
- 44% of the children do not have at least 3 children’s books.
- 4% of children under 5 were left under inadequate supervision – alone or supervised by another child below 10 years old for more than one hour in the week prior to the survey. There are notable regional differences from 2% in Guria to 8% in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti.
Support for Learning

### Attendance at Kindergarten

**National**
- Public: 94%
- Private: 6%
- Other: <1%

**Urban**
- Public: 92%
- Private: 8%
- Other: 0%

**Rural**
- Public: 98%
- Private: 2%
- Other: <1%

Percentage distribution of children age 36-59 months who are attending kindergarten, by type of kindergarten management.

### Children’s Media Use

**Children using electronic devices for more than 1 hour a day**

**National**
- Total: 78%
- Boys: 76%
- Girls: 79%
- Age 3 years: 73%
- Age 4 years: 83%
- Rural: 68%
- Urban: 84%
- Kvemo Kartli: 41%
- Tbilisi: 88%
- Poorest: 61%
- Richest: 87%

**Urban**
- Total: 73%
- Boys: 73%
- Girls: 83%
- Age 3 years: 68%
- Age 4 years: 84%
- Rural: 41%
- Urban: 88%
- Kvemo Kartli: 61%
- Tbilisi: 87%
- Poorest: 34%
- Richest: 32%

**Rural**
- Boys: 27%
- Girls: 25%
- Age 3 years: 24%
- Age 4 years: 27%
- Kvemo Kartli: 29%
- Shida Kartli: 34%

Percentage distribution of children age 0-59 months who are using electronic devices more than 1 hour a day, by area and region.
Today’s children grow up immersed in digital media, which has both positive and negative effects on healthy development. Problems begin when media use displaces physical activity, hands-on exploration and face-to-face social interaction in the real world, which is critical to learning. Too much screen time can also harm the amount and quality of sleep.

- For children younger than 18 months, avoid use of screen media other than video-chatting.
- Parents of children 18 to 24 months of age who want to introduce digital media should choose high-quality programming, and watch it with their children to help them understand what they’re seeing.
- For children ages 2 to 5 years, limit screen use to 1 hour per day of high-quality programs. Parents should co-view media with children to help them understand what they are seeing and apply it to the world around them.