Early brain development: A foundation for lifelong learning, behavior, and capabilities

**Message 1:** The relationship between genes and environment is closer than ever before: Genes provide the blueprint for brain development; the environment shapes it.

**Message 2:** Timing matters - early intervention is the answer.

**Message 3:** Toxic stress during early childhood = lifelong impact.

**Message 4:** Brain complexity - not homogenous but interconnected, this is why we need to work together!

**Message 5:** Nourishing the mind = nutrition + stimulation.
GOAL AREA 1: EVERY CHILD SURVIVES AND THRIVES

**Impact:** Girls and boys who are developmentally on track in literacy, numeracy, physical, learning and socio-emotional skills.

**Outcome Statement 1:** Girls and boys especially those that are marginalized and those living in humanitarian conditions have access to high impact health, nutrition, HIV, ECD interventions from pregnancy to adolescence.
## 2018 Achievement – ECD Output Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SP Output Indicator</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>2018 Milestone</th>
<th>2018 Actual</th>
<th>2019 Milestone</th>
<th>2020 Milestone</th>
<th>2021 Target</th>
<th>Progress against 2018 milestones</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Output Statement:</strong> Countries have institutionalized the delivery of quality early childhood development services as part of the health platform</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.h.1. Number of countries that have adopted ECD packages for children at scale.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>On Track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.h.2. Number of countries with national ECD policy or implementation plans for scale-up.</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>Acceleration Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.h.3 Percentage of UNICEF-targeted girls and boys in humanitarian situations who participate in organized programmes with ECD kits through UNICEF-supported programmes (humanitarian).</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>On Track</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Case Studies

India:
Multisectoral Early Childhood Development packages.
Promoting responsive caregiving using the mother and child protection card

Thailand:
Demonstration centres supporting scale-up: Emerging initiatives

Rwanda:
Ensuring implementation of early childhood development policy
Early Moments Matter Campaign

Leveraging collective action

- Father’s Day campaign: Engaged over 2 million people in 125 countries, with a potential reach of 1.6 billion users on social media
- With support from the LEGO Foundation, launched the Parenting Hub
- UNICEF and the H&M Foundation also launched the Baby Talk for Dads
- With the H&M Foundation produced a Mini Parenting Master Class on baby talk with Dr Marina Kalashnikova, which, as of November 2018, had 754,500 views and a reach of 1.8 million on Facebook.
- Greater investment in Family-Friendly Policies and support working parents to give their child the best start in life
**LESSONS LEARNED:**

- Targeted support for eight countries through the core funding set-aside for ECD helped accelerate results
- Several programmatic directions also accelerated ECD results, such as the four UNICEF-recommended packages of interventions. These include:
  1. Home visitation programmes in the first 1,000 days.
  2. Early learning and protection
  3. Caring for the Caregiver programmes
  4. Family support and strengthening
- C4D platforms critical for ECD results

**CHALLENGES:**

**Technical Challenges**

- Articulating responsive caregiving and stimulation in capacity building for front-line workers
- Absence of family friendly polices
- Sustained political will and commitment during government transitions, as well as public financing
- Effective dissemination of messages on Stimulation and responsive caregiving

**Other Challenges**

- Subnational implementation
- Limited technical capacities for promoting multisectoral ECD
- Suitable tools for services
- Reliable metrics integrated into information management systems and available for programme evaluation
How Can UNICEF Contribute to Country Progress?
In the next 2-4 years, to support governments UNICEF should:

**UNICEF contribution**

- **Increase national and organizational capacity** to deliver on the agenda (e.g., high level technical advocacy; training packages for caregivers, teachers and frontline workers; career development)
- **Leverage sectoral delivery platforms** to accelerate results (e.g., inclusion of ECD outcomes in CPD; health centers integrated stimulation into existing services)
- **Leverage partnerships and networks** (e.g., ECDAN)
- **Strive for sustainable funding** for ECD scaling up (e.g., set annual targets; Public finance)
- **Improve monitoring of progress/results** (Strengthen coding and use, within UNICEF systems for ECD programmes, outcomes and expenditures)
- **Strengthen outreach and advocacy, communications and campaigning along with intergovernmental partners** (e.g., ASEAN), regional networks (ARNEC) and civil society.
- **Improve management effectiveness** (e.g., accountability framework stating roles/responsibilities, coordinated by senior management)

**Govt. actions for success**

**Effective coordination mechanisms and implementable budgeted policies**

- **Existing delivery platforms** adapted to deliver multi-sectoral interventions for ECD

**Front line workers**, across sectors trained to deliver interventions for ECD

**Regularly Track progress** using validated metrics that monitor ECD results

**Families** supported and engaged to demand quality services for their young children

**Impact on SDGs**

Countries recognizing that the 1st 6 years of children’s life are critical to ensure they reach their developmental potential, with investments focused on health, nutrition, caring relationships, stimulation, learning and protection from violence and pollution.
High-Level Priorities 2019 and Beyond

- Enhance support for Parenting, using the life course approach and stronger articulation of the gender lens in programming in the early years
- Strengthen support to families: Advocate for Family-Friendly Policies and Plans
- Articulate Early Learning more clearly as beginning from birth, strengthen role of families and non-formal early learning modalities
- Leverage ECD for systems strengthening and delivery; Increase number of countries measuring child development outcomes
- Continue emphasis on policies and plans expanding to include nurturing care
- Enhance early detection/ interventions for young children with delays and disabilities
- Increase support (programmatic and funding) for ECD in humanitarian settings (preparedness, acute and long-term response and recovery.)
Need for Investment in ECD

- On average, ECD programmes cost US$0.50 per capita per year, while the cost of inaction is high.
- Shortfalls in funding will prevent the strengthening of systems required for scaling up of ECD programmes toward achieving the Strategic Plan’s directive to impact every child.
- Core resources are required to achieve these targets.
Thank you!