

January 2004- March 2004
Issue 1, Volume 1

Nurture

Pakistan's Pioneer Publication on Early Childhood Development

Interview with
Kathy Bartlett

Early Childhood Development:
Role of A Teacher

Unlocking Early
Childhood
Development

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about

The Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development, is a diverse consortium of agencies, donors, NGOs and foundations that links with regional-based Early Childhood Care and Development networks comprising individuals and organisations involved in programming, research, policy-advocacy, monitoring and evaluation for young children (0-8) at risk in the Majority World. The term Majority World refers to those countries that are often referred to as South countries, developing or third world countries and serves to remind us that the majority of the world's children are at risk of delayed or debilitated development.

Please note that we are not a grant-making body and regret that we are unable to provide grants, scholarships, bursaries etc. to organisations.

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Early childhood

counts: *rights from the start*



The Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development

Major Activities

- Synthesise, critically review and then share - in different forms - the lessons, findings, and impact from practice and research across regions
- Continue to strengthen regional networking, capacity-building, outreach and activities
- Strengthen and/or establish more effective links with others working in health, social welfare, community development, adult literacy and basic education.

Nurture

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WRITE
TO
US:

We look forward to your feedback. Send in your letters, comments and suggestions to:
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Website: www.ecdpak.com

WRITE
FOR
US:

We invite you to send us your stories, anecdotes, experiences related to children's development and nurturing at the above address.

For more information/resources on ECD practices, issues, programs and tools log on to www.ecdpak.com

Disclaimer

Nurture is published quarterly by the Sindh Education Foundation. The opinions reflected in the various contributions and features do not necessarily reflect the views of Sindh Education Foundation, Aga Khan Foundation (Pakistan) or USAID.

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Message from Aga Khan Foundation (AKF)

The Aga Khan Foundation places significant importance on early learning and has adopted this area as a major strategy in all the countries which it serves. In Pakistan, we are pleased to launch this magazine under the USAID sponsored program entitled "Releasing Confidence and Creativity: Building Sound Foundations for Early Learning (RCC)". With ample research worldwide, we are able to rationalize investments in early learning as making a lifetime of difference to human beings.

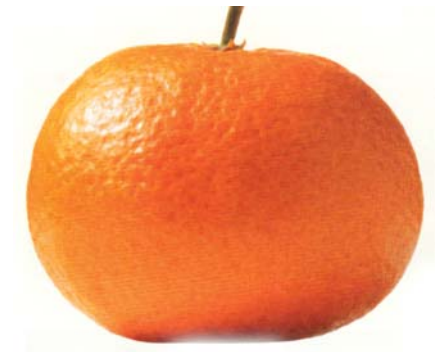
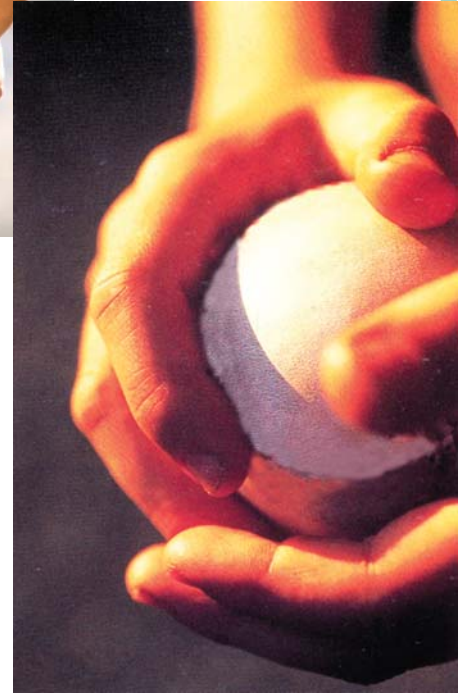
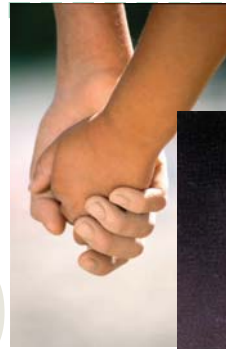
With what we are learning through the RCC program in government Katchi classrooms as well as through other early childhood initiatives in Pakistan, we are beginning to see a need for the dissemination of basic concepts, good practice, new ideas and sage community wisdom. The objective of the magazine is to do just this in a very innovative and constructive manner. A further objective of the magazine is to take the global understanding on early childhood and distill it in the local context in order to serve parents and communities at large in Pakistan.

As the name of the magazine suggests, early learning requires more than formal classroom instruction. **Nurturing** young children from birth to age of entry to the school is crucial for long-term development and so we take this opportunity to promote this magazine as a resource for Pakistan in this regard in the coming years.

On behalf of Aga Khan Foundation (Pakistan), I would like to thank our partners in the RCC programme which include USAID, the Provincial Governments of Sindh and Balochistan, HANDS, Society, AKES,P, TRC, AKU-HDP and especially SEF for taking on the task of coordinating and publishing the magazine.

With our collective energy and commitment, we hope to continue to make a difference in the lives of communities and especially the little ones throughout this great country.

Dr. Randy Hatfield
Programme Manager, Education
Aga Khan Foundation (Pakistan)



Editorial

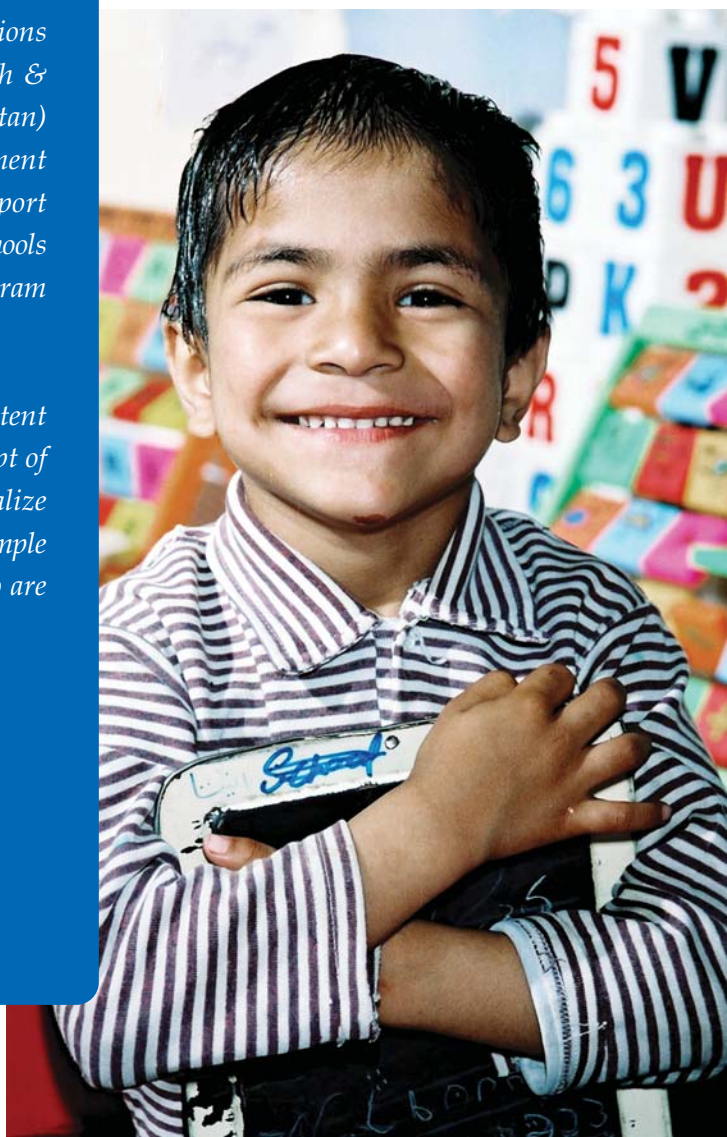
Welcome to the first edition of NURTURE, Pakistan's pioneer publication on Early Childhood Development (ECD). ECD simplified is caring for children. Technically it is a holistic concept that entails complete child development practices and themes including education, care, development, health, role of caregivers for children 0 to 8 years old. ECD begins before child birth which means mothers' health and well being is integral to ECD. One of the main objectives of this magazine is to create awareness, via literature and research findings, regarding ECD and draw on best ECD practices and models to replicate and learn from. Everybody can benefit; from parents of young children to research, development and educational organizations to teachers and practitioners working with children. It must be noted that this publication is part and parcel of the Releasing Confidence & Creativity (RCC) Program which is an Early Childhood Development Intervention by Aga Khan Foundation (Pakistan) and USAID and being implemented by leading education development organizations like Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan (AKES, P), Health & Nutrition Development Society (HANDS), SOCIETY (Balochistan) with Sindh Education Foundation (SEF), and Human Development Program of Aga Khan University (HDP-AKU) as technical support agencies. This program is being implemented in 100 government schools (kachi class) in Sindh & Balochistan. More details on RCC program are featured in the inside pages.

We hope our readers will provide us feedback on the magazine content and help us improve as we go along delving deeper into the concept of ECD. In the upcoming issues, we will make efforts to contextualize literature on ECD for our audience's understanding and feature simple meaningful information especially for parents and teachers, who are undoubtedly the chief caregivers to young children.

Until then,

Ambreena

Ambreena Ahmed,
Editor





website

guides

articles

books

magazine

research

journals

tutorials

programs

Early Childhood Development

A Resource Book

The ECD Resource Book is a repertoire of ECD related material, institutions and agencies. This initiative was undertaken to enrich the information-base of Pakistan in ECD.

This Resource Book aims to promote enhanced information sharing amongst all key agencies and will help develop institutional linkages with ECD providers in Pakistan and internationally.

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in focus

Unlocking Early Childhood Development

What is Early Childhood Development (ECD)?

The latest research suggests that the earliest years of life lay the foundation for all that follows and are the most important in developing children's capacity to learn. Good health, a safe and nurturing environment, and the right kind of mental stimulation give a child a strong framework for growth and help ensure later success at school, at work, and in society.

According to a UNICEF definition, the acronym ECD refers to a comprehensive approach to policies and programs for children from birth to eight years of age, their parents and caregivers. Its purpose is to protect the child's rights to develop his or her full cognitive, emotional, social and physical potential. Community-based services that meet the needs of infants and young children are vital to ECD and they should include attention to health, nutrition, education and water and environmental sanitation in homes and communities. The approach promotes and protects the rights of the young child to survival, growth and development.

What is Cognitive Development?

Cognitive development refers to **"how a person perceives, thinks, and gains an understanding of his or her world through the interaction and influence of genetic and learned factors"** (Plotnik, 1999)

Research areas on cognitive development include: information processing, intelligence, language development, memory, (to name a few).

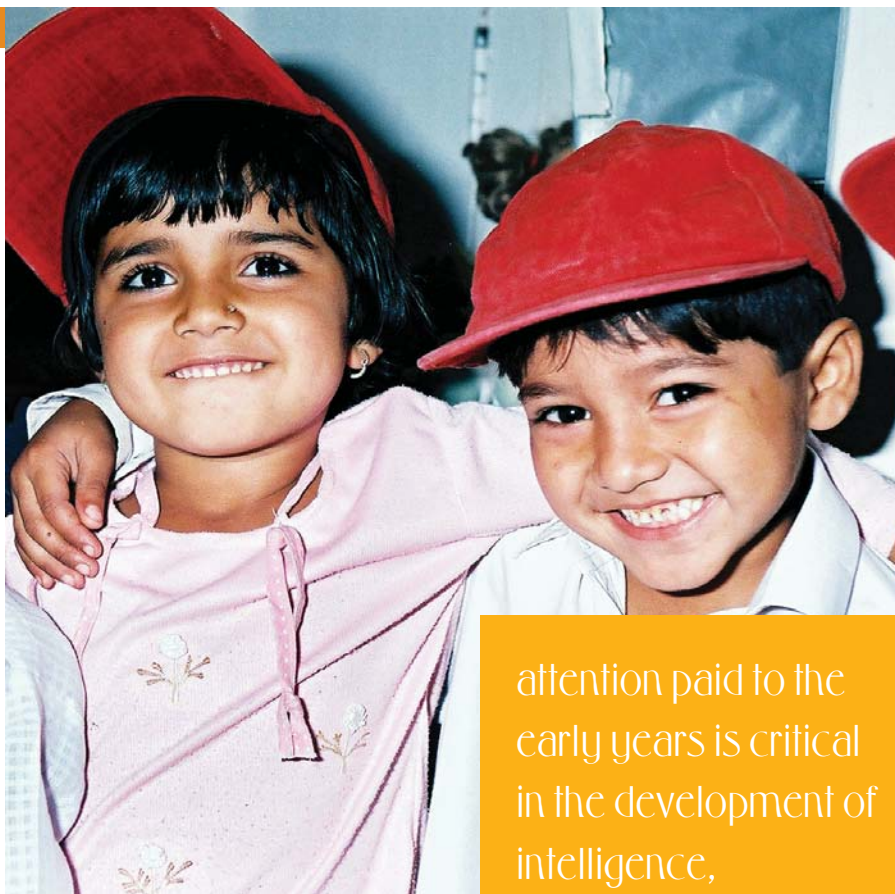
Within the history of developmental psychology, Jean Piaget's work has made the greatest impact on the study of cognitive development. A significant feature

of Piaget's theory is the focus on processes of cognitive development. According to Piaget, the child is born with an innate curiosity to interact with and understand his world. It is through interaction with others (particularly with one's peers), that the child actively constructs his development.

Early Childhood Development (ECD) is also referred to as: Early Childhood Care and (Initial) Education (UNESCO); Early Childhood Education and Care (OECD); and Early Childhood Development (World Bank).

Early childhood development draws on research and knowledge from the fields of:

- Health and nutrition,
- Education,
- Community development,
- Psychology,
- Sociology,
- Anthropology, and
- Economics.



attention paid to the early years is critical in the development of intelligence, personality, social behavior, and learning potential

ECD - The givens

- ECD covers the age group of 0-8 years
- Medical research has demonstrated that the most rapid period of brain development occurs in the first few years of life and that the experiences of early childhood have an enduring effect on an individual's future learning capacity.
- ECD includes all supports necessary for every child to realize his or her right to survival, protection and to care that will ensure optimal development.
- Early childhood refers to the developmental period from conception to age eight. During this stage, children learn through manipulating objects, and exploring and experimenting in the world around them. This "learning by doing" interval can be facilitated and enhanced through specific forms of stimulation, safe and secure surroundings, and continuity of experiences.
- ECD relies on an "enabling environment", people and places that provide warmth, affection, security, and encouragement.
- Ensuring the rights of the child must begin at the first moment of life. Choices made, and actions taken affect not only how a child develops, but also how a region and a nation progresses.

Critical Years

These are the critical periods of the earliest years:

- emotional control, ages 0-2;
- vision, ages 0-2;
- social attachment, ages 0-2;
- vocabulary, ages 0-3;
- second language, ages 0-10;
- math/logic, ages 1-4;
- music, ages 3-10

Source: Begley, Sharon. "Your Child's Brain." Newsweek. February 19, 1996, pp. 55-61.

Brain development: What the research says

- Brain development that takes place prenatally and in the first year of life is more rapid and extensive than previously suspected;
- Brain development is much more vulnerable to environmental influence than we ever suspected;
- The influence of early environment on brain development is long lasting;
- The environment affects not only the number of brain cells and number of connections among them, but also the way these connections are "wired;"
- Early stress has a negative impact on brain development.

Source: Carnegie Task Force on Meeting the Needs of Young Children, *Starting Points*, 1994

What are the benefits of Early Childhood Development?

Early childhood development programs generate a wide range of benefits for society, communities and individuals. Scientific evidence shows attention paid to the early years is critical in the development of intelligence, personality, social behavior, and learning potential. Through children, moral and social values are transmitted and maintained. Focusing on ECD also ensures greater social equity by providing all children with a fair start, and reducing gender, economic and social disparities. Benefits of ECD interventions can be found in the following areas:

- Higher intelligence scores
- Higher and timelier school enrollment
- Less grade repetition and lower dropout rates
- Higher school completion rates
- Improved nutrition and health status
- Improved social and emotional behavior
- Improved parent-child relationship
- Increased earning potential and economic self-sufficiency as an adult
- Increased female labor force participation



Who are the Caregivers in LCD

Mothers are universally known as the primary caregivers of their children. The changes in the attitude and social systems have also brought male members of the family to assume a vital role in rearing up a child. In addition, immediate family members are also a major source of support in this task. In general, during early childhood children also develop close emotional relationships with their mothers, (or another relative) who are always in close proximity and are extremely responsive to their needs. This encourages the children to develop their self-confidence, learn positive social values and identify undesirable ones, and develop early language skills.

Good health, a safe and nurturing environment, and the right kind of mental stimulation give a child a strong framework for growth and help ensure later success at school, at work, and in society.

References:

- *We the Children; End-decade review of follow up to the World Summit for Children, Report of the Secretary-General (advance unedited copy)*
- *Develop a Child, Asian Development Bank, 2001*
- *State of the World's Children, UNICEF, 2001*
<http://www.worldbank.org/children/benefits.html>

Compiled by Ambreena Ahmed



ECD PROGRAM: RELEASING CONFIDENCE & CREATIVITY PROGRAM

The Aga Khan Foundation with support from USAID has initiated a pilot Early Childhood Development program in the Sindh & Balochistan provinces. The program entitled 'Releasing Confidence and Creativity (RCC): Building Sound Foundations for Early Learning in Pakistan', is being implemented in 100 government schools in Sindh and Balochistan.

The program will directly benefit all children going to these schools especially those enrolled in kachi class. Other important beneficiaries of this program include teachers, head teachers, parents, community members, Department of Education & members of local government.

Partners:

The partners of RCC program have come together to pilot formal and non formal approaches that promote positive early learning opportunities, as well as good child care, nutrition and health practices at home and in the community.

Technical Support Agencies

- Teachers' Resource Center (www.trconline.org)
- Human Development Program – Aga Khan University
- Sindh Education Foundation (www.sef.org.pk)

Implementing Agencies

- Aga Khan Education Services, Pakistan (www.akdn.org/agency/akes.html)
- Health and Nutrition Development Society (www.hands.org.pk)
- The Society for Community Support for Primary Education in Balochistan (www.scspeb.sdnpk.org)

KEY AREAS OF RCC PROGRAM INTERVENTION

Human and Institutional Capacity Development

This component focuses on early childhood development 'ethos'; curriculum and materials development; teacher, school head and administrator development; capacity strengthening of NGOs, parents and communities to participate in their children's education and education reform; mechanisms and resource centers for ongoing professional development of teachers and school heads and monitoring the quality of learning in the classroom; and the application of distance education technologies.

Improving the Physical and Learning Environment

This component focuses on creating incentives and innovative models for investing in the school environment, including matching grants, special awards and better access to and use of resources from other donor agencies, local government and public-private partnerships.

Community-level interventions

This component focuses on community mobilization and training to increase participation of parents, communities, NGOs and the private sector in basic education in public schools. This is especially applied during the early years through training of school management bodies (PTAs, Village Education Committees), adult literacy, raising awareness about the importance of girls' education and adaptation of other successful social mobilization models.

Training for Local Governance under the Government of Pakistan's (GoP) Devolution Plans

This component focuses on training local governing bodies such as Union and Village Councils and Citizen Community Boards to enhance their accountability and the effectiveness of community outreach/participation. It also seeks linkages with other programs promoting civic education, especially those serving women.

Learning, Dissemination of Lessons and Policy Dialogue for Education Reform

This component reviews and distills research and learning that is already being undertaken by AKDN and other NGOs; and commissions new research to inform policy dialogue with the GoP. Critically-needed areas of research include: a

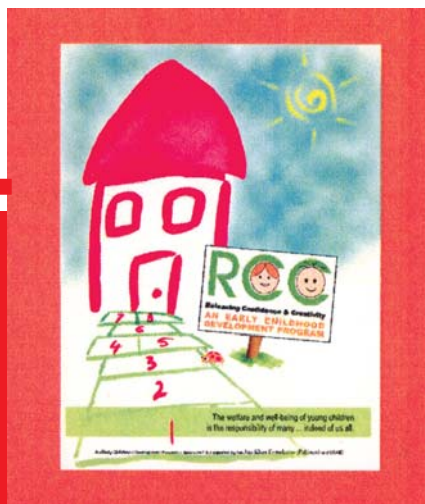
comparative study and analysis of different school governance; management and financing models that exist in Pakistan and their relative effectiveness in providing quality and access; baseline data collection and school profiles; and tools for measuring skills attainment and learning at kachi level. A dissemination strategy targeting district, provincial and national government education officials will be developed.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES & BENEFICIARIES OF RCC PROGRAM

- Improved teacher capacity and more effective school administration and management in targeted schools.
- Models for replication of innovative early childhood programs piloted and dissemination of early lessons begun.
- New models for public-private partnerships and resource mobilization to support basic education and early learning created.
- Skills' development related to supporting children's early learning at home and higher levels of involvement of communities and parents in the education of their children in public schools exhibited.
- Institutional capacity for engaging with GoP in policy dialogue to affect change and education reform at the community, district, provincial and national level strengthened.
- Increased readiness of schools to work with young learners.

Awareness Raising Material developed by

Sindh Education Foundation



RCC Program Brochure:

The RCC Program brochure was created keeping in mind that RCC program is an Early Childhood Development project hence the brochure is an attempt to encompass the holistic concept of ECD by using bright and vibrant colors. It also imparts the salient features of the RCC program and the information regarding the RCC partners. The brochure's design has been commended by all the RCC partners.

RCC Posters

Posters are a self explanatory tool. In terms of their mileage they are a cost effective tool to reach to multiple target groups simultaneously.

Posters bearing images and very little text messages (due to the higher percentage of illiteracy in the targeted areas) have been developed to create and raise

awareness regarding the ECD concept and RCC program. The images used are catchy and interesting portraying the concept of ECD. The limited amount of text is in the native languages (Urdu and Sindhi) to cater to both targeted provinces.



RCC Giveaways

The RCC program is mainly *child* oriented, therefore these tools are known to be more influenced by material that generates interest.

Caps with RCC Logo and slogan have been designed for children in RCC schools to create interest and awareness regarding the program during the implementation phase. Caps will be used to create mass level awareness **by the children for the children** and their families.

School bags have also been designed for the RCC school children. These bags were developed as they would prove quite useful to the children and would also create awareness regarding RCC Program.

The production of these school bags has been stalled due to the lack of financial resources. SEF welcomes interested individuals to contribute towards generating resources for this useful tool.

RCC Appreciation Certificates

The idea of Appreciation Certificate was generated by the SEF team based on the extensive experience of working with the communities at the grass roots level. These certificates are being given to parents for their contribution in the RCC program along with the SMC members, Teachers, Local Government/DoE members and SMC/PTSMC members for extending their valuable services to the RCC program.

Such efforts will stimulate the communities' motivation regarding the RCC program and also will help create ownership of the program within the communities. These efforts are made to prepare the ground work for the sustainability of the program as no project can sustain without the participation of the communities. This idea has been extremely appreciated by AKF as well as the implementing NGOs.





Baseline Survey Tools

The Baseline Survey Tools have been developed in order to establish a frame of reference for evaluating the impact of the RCC intervention as well as aid in fine-tuning the intervention strategy. The strategy emphasizes participatory monitoring by bringing the government and SMC/PTSMCs on board. Hence, at the end, the impact of the program can be assessed and the main reasons for success or failures can be highlighted.

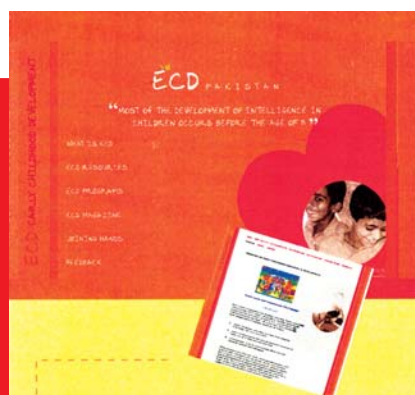
The development of the Baseline Tools was a highly collaborative process in the RCC Program. The five forms in the Baseline Survey were developed in an attempt to encompass the comprehensiveness of ECD. The forms include a Family Profile Form, Community Profile Form, Child Assessment Form, Classroom Observation Form and School Survey Form. All forms have been translated into Urdu and Sindhi.

These tools are the first of their kind in Pakistan and will be very useful and valuable resource materials for ECD interventions anywhere in the world.

ECD Website

The ECD website creates awareness regarding the concept of Early Childhood Development and the RCC Program and creates an interface between the Pakistani-based ECD initiatives and international programs. The website will serve as a forum for information sharing and exchange of ECD related experiences for international NGOs, social development agencies and like-minded organizations all over the world. It will strive to create interactive networks with agencies working in the field of ECD and will serve as a basis to share knowledge and research findings in this vast area. By mobilizing technical and financial resources, this website will function as a voice for ECD on the same lines as the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development.

Keeping in view the short duration of the RCC program, it is aimed that the ECD website will continue to function and grow not only to strengthen Pakistan's ECD linkages but also for opening an international gateway to future funding opportunities for the program's sustainability and replicability.
<http://www.ecdpak.com>



Early Childhood Development- A Resource Book

The ECD Resource Book is a repertoire of all the ECD related activities undertaken so far by any agency within or outside RCC program. This initiative was undertaken due to the lack of information regarding the availability of already existing ECD material and resources which results in duplication of efforts and consequently in wastage of financial, technical and human resources.

This effort will be instrumental in promoting better information sharing amongst all agencies. Also it will provide all RCC partners with an opportunity to develop better linkages with other ECD providers in Pakistan so that every agency's ideas and efforts are shared across the country, rather than to be functioning in isolation. Any form of cohesive effort in terms of better utilization of already existing material is invariably going to reduce the pre-liminary groundwork for any research-based initiatives in terms of ECD.

The ECD Resource Book will also be shared electronically at the federal and provincial as well as the local government levels for them to be able to take informed decisions regarding classroom learning material and teaching aids to be supplied to all government schools.



REFLECTIONS

Teachers become Caregivers

The government teachers involved in the RCC program are quite experienced, most of them working in these schools for 7 years now. Not very different from their own teachers who had taught them in schools, they still took the children through grueling and boring routines of rote learning the alphabets from the Primer, numbers off the blackboard and sessions of screaming multiplication tables in unison right before school was let off. Every now and then, a misbehaving child also got the perfunctory slap on the hand or a mild beating for not being able to recite his alphabets/numbers properly or misbehavior of any sort. They had all attended numerous training sessions and workshops organized by the government.

Zamarud Suleiman, a government teacher for katchi class in Tando Saindad claims that there have been great changes after the RCC interventions in the school environment and the way children respond to the idea of schooling. "Previously, children were very scared of their teachers, were always crying and fearful of the concept of school. It is not like that anymore and now there is a marked change in the lives of our children." She is now engaging the children in learning through play techniques, and has also softened her attitude towards them as a teacher. She repeatedly emphasizes that it was her lack of knowledge that led her to behave in a harsh manner towards children and that now she knows that children will learn and respond better in an environment where they are given love and affection coupled with the security that they can trust their teachers. She quotes the example of a girl called Zaib-un-Nisa who used to come to school with her mother and cried continuously, but now that she's receiving the teachers' attention and is surrounded by a friendly atmosphere, she has started to come to school herself with newfound interest. The parents are also very happy with this change and she now meets little boys who insist that they want to study in her school too!



FROM THE FIELD

Paving Way for Girls' Education



It is a well known fact that in smaller villages, education is not considered a necessity and hence not promoted either. If anything, it has a very bad reputation and is perceived as an element which leads to the breakdown of well established societal norms and therefore discouraged.

Gul Bano, an Assistant Teacher for the katchi class in Yar Mohammad Kandra, a small village in Tando Mohammad Khan belongs to such a community. An educated girl from the village had taken off to get married to someone she liked without the consent of her family and this scandalous behavior had further cemented the belief that girls should not receive any education at all as it would "spoil them." Gul Bano's family, however, had a different outlook on education and she was the first girl in her village who had completed her education till the Intermediate level.

She was a volunteer teacher in the village school after she completed her education and helped out teachers in all the classes whenever and wherever needed. Employed by the AKES,P in the RCC program a few months ago, she is now a regular part of the government school's Katchi class. She was not very different from the other government school teachers when she came to the first training session, as everyone was employing age old methods of teaching the children through rote learning techniques. On her return from the training, she would apply the new teaching methods to her nieces and nephews at home and observed that they were very happy and willing to learn, which encouraged and excited her about being a teacher as well as the program.

She claims that her teachers had always been role models for her and she learnt a lot from them. Now she is a role model for the girls in her community who not only want to be educated but also want to help others receive education. Her newly gained respect in the community has given her confidence and seeing the happy and eager faces of the children in her class gives her great happiness and satisfaction.

Contributed by: Umme Leila Mahmoodi,
RCC Research Officer,
Aga Khan Education Services, Pakistan (AKES,P)

Protecting Children, Safeguarding Life

RCC intervention at village level is an eye opening experience for the communities as they now have the opportunity to send their young ones to schools. Parents are enthusiastically looking up to the teachers as to how they will deal with the youngest population of their village. Even though, the RCC intervention was fruitful, a sad incidence marred the cheers of Luqman Korejo village inhabitants.

Government Girls Primary School, Luqman Korejo is situated near Hala city at a distance of 12 kms. The compound wall of the school building is damaged and a pond of sewerage water is situated at the front end of this damaged wall. Afsheen, a little girl of 3 years, came to the shop with her younger sister Seema to purchase some sweets. The shop lies at the brink of the filthy and deserted street in front of the school building. Afsheen had something else to do as well so she asked her younger sister to stand at the shop till she returned. When Afsheen left, Seema strolled till the end of the street and fell in the pond. She was dead when she was discovered.

The existence of ponds or any other hazardous spaces in the proximity of the school building is extremely perilous for the young children because

the consequences could be fatal as the story of Seema indicates. Following immediate actions need to be taken to prevent any future mishaps:

- School environment and its surroundings should be made free from destructive elements/ spaces, which may lead to life threatening consequences.
- Awareness raising sessions should be carried out for parents and communities to inform them about safety measures they may undertake while letting their young children venture out alone out of the house.

Contributed by
The RCC team, HANDS



Visits to RCC Schools in Balochistan

The SOCIETY team, as well as the AKF representative, visited schools in 5 clusters of Balochistan, in which SOCIETY is implementing RCC. The visits gave the RCC team an opportunity to observe and reflect on the impact of initial implementation of RCC in the Katchi classes after 3 months of operation.

Upon entering the schools, the team immediately noticed a marked difference in the Kachi classes in comparison to the rest of the school. The children were sitting in circles instead of traditional lines. There was no blackboard. The classroom walls were decorated with pictures and students' work. The students were not sitting quietly or listening silently, as one might expect, rather they were involved in different activities. When asked whether they liked their school, the reply was an enthusiastic, resounding "yes!" The teachers also acknowledged how much the children enjoy school and pointed out that the regular attendance of students in the kachi class was an important achievement and they thought it was due to the conducive environment of the ECE classroom.

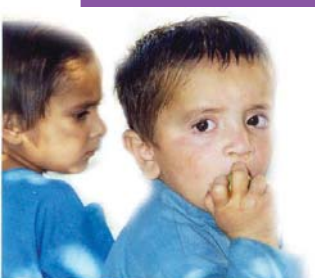
Along with the teachers, the team also carried out discussions with the Village Education Committee (VEC or WVEC) members, who were very supportive of the kachi class. They were happy with the fact that their young children now have an opportunity to attend school, learn in an amicable environment and acquire



knowledge about basic mannerisms (such as saying Asalam-o-alaikum, Shukriah), familiarity with colors, poems and basic counting.

Due to lack of extra space for the kachi class, in most schools, temporary space has been arranged by relocating the older children. In a few schools, the VECs have also taken the initiative of starting classroom construction for the kachi class.

During these visits, the team was able to observe a variety of activities, which allowed them to see how the children were learning. In GGPS Sharah Kawas, a government school in Ziarat, the team observed children engaged in a numeracy activity. They were divided into two groups and were given slips of paper, by the teacher, which had numbers from 1-9 written on them. The children, with the assistance of the teacher, were able to line up according to their numbered slip. When we asked who had a '5' or a '3' the children were able to respond, showing their understanding of the numbers. Interestingly, during this activity, we noted that two children, a girl and a boy, had taken a lead role and were assisting other children. In fact, they did so throughout the duration of the team's visit by taking initiative in helping the teacher and eagerly answering questions. It appeared that they had the confidence that the program sought to release.



Another activity that one of the team members performed was asking students questions about animals by showing them pictures on the cards from the Pehla Taleemi Basta (a teaching aid developed by Teacher's Resource Center). A variety of creative responses came out of this activity. Children named the animals, often in local language and at points in Urdu, answered questions about where the

animals lived, their color, size and so on. In one school, the children insisted that each animal lived on the mountain 'ghar.' And in many schools there was usually one child who had all the animals such as monkeys, lions, elephants and even crocodiles in their home.

This activity also allowed the teachers to observe an interactive session with the students and notice the affect it had on them. The children were often smiling, laughing, engaged and eager to respond which proved the importance of child centered, friendly, activity-based teaching methods.

During the visits, the team also had the opportunity to observe the teachers' behavior, attitudes and teaching methodologies. For the most part, it was felt that the training provided to ECD teachers has had an impact on the way they view teaching methods and schooling for young children. Elements of

the training appeared in many of the activities and classrooms that the team observed.

ECD teachers appeared to be putting in a good effort despite the many challenges they face. The majority of the classes did not have a proper room as yet, and as a result, extensive material had not been distributed, both of which are important for creating a good learning environment. Still, some encouraging signs of innovation were evident like goshas and materials made out of cardboard boxes, children using sticks to write letters on the ground, and child-made figures made out of sand/mud.

At the same time, it was felt that more efforts need to be made in order to fully reap benefits of early childhood development. It is necessary that ECD teachers receive constant support, guidance and training as it is a new concept for all. To facilitate this effort, SOCIETY teams will play a vital role and training efforts are underway.

Overall, the visits to the RCC schools prove that just a few months of operation, represent a good beginning. No doubt a great deal of work needs to be done, however it is a positive step in the right direction.

Contributed by:
Aamir Mirza (RCC Coordinator)
Tatiana Spariaguina (Intern)
Ayesha Awan (Assessment & Development Officer)
SOCIETY

Interview with
Kathy Bartlett

Supporting

Kathy Bartlett, Ph.D, has been working for over 10 years with Aga Khan Foundation (AKF). She is currently a Senior Programme Officer responsible for overall program planning, management, monitoring and policy dialogue related to AKF's Early Childhood Development Programmes, in particular, but also including Primary Education Programmes often in close collaboration with AKF staff - in South Asia, Eastern Africa, Tajikistan, Portugal, USA and Syria. Kathy is also the Co-director of the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development, an international consortium of donor agencies, NGOs and regional networks working to improve the conditions of young children and families through knowledge networking and policy advocacy (since April 1999). She has a vast experience of working as a teacher trainer at pre- and primary levels: 2 years in the U.S., 2 years in Honduras and as Peace Corp Trainer for the Integrated Early Childhood Development Programme in Costa Rica. She represents AKF at selected international fora, particularly those related to ECD and basic education and prepares related papers, presentations and other communication materials for wide dissemination. She has also co-organized Strategy Session on ECCD global trends and future directions at the World Education Forum on behalf of the Consultative Group on ECCD, Dakar, Senegal, April 2000.

Q. Why did you choose to work in the field of Early Childhood Development?

For as long as I can remember I have wanted to work with children. This may be in part because of my own family background as well as the experiences I had starting out as a Bilingual Kindergarten teacher working with mainly immigrant and migrant children in a small rural town in Southern California. In both cases, the issue of social support systems for young children and their families, especially the caregivers, is the dominant theme. Watching my father cope as a single parent, and seeing how my extended family came in and supported him created a



Young Children & Families: A Life-long Passion

lasting impression. All this, I think, fed into my working and evolving beliefs of what children need, and what families need to raise and care for their children, and give them enough love and support.

Q. When did you realize that merely teaching children is not enough and when did you want to venture beyond the confines of the classroom?

When I was teaching, many of the 32 or so children I had in Kindergarten came from migrant families who moved around during the school year. Usually half my class did not speak any English when they arrived and another quarter spoke only a little. The families lived on very limited incomes, many were at or below the poverty line and some were illegal. I was with the children for only half a day, and then they would go home – or somewhere. Their fathers and mothers were out in the fields all day. I never knew what they were going home to; I never knew who was going to be there. I wanted to go out and visit the families, and talk to the parents (I spoke Spanish). I would say that many if not most of my teacher colleagues didn't seem to worry about this and my principal, (the head teacher) didn't believe in making visits to students' homes and interact with families and the students in their home environment. I grew increasingly frustrated with this since during parent-teacher conferences it seemed clear the mothers and fathers were open to and needed extra support.

By the third year, I had begun to think about working within the migrant education system in California which would allow me to work more closely with the children and families, but my Spanish needed to be improved. I decided then to join the U.S. Peace Corps as a volunteer and was eventually assigned to Honduras where I lived for 2 ½ years in a very rural and small village. I look back at my life now and see this as a significant point of change in my personal and professional life. The frustrations I had as a teacher disappeared when I lived with a young – and newly married couple – in a one-room home in a village of twelve houses. There was no running water and electricity; I took bath and washed my clothes in the river with the other women and helped gather water from the well. My job was to work as the local coordinator for a

Honduran NGO that was piloting family-centres that provided pre-school services to young children from our and other nearby communities. I trained and worked with adolescent girls (the pre-school teachers) and helped develop a curriculum for the pre-school programme. I worked with local women's income-generating as well as with the men in raising awareness and support for our ECD programme. My earlier frustrations as a teacher disappeared. It wasn't a choice of whether I could only do this, or that; I was able and encouraged to work with children, youth, parents, and the wider community. In Honduras, I discovered and began to work in what is now a life-long passion: understanding and finding appropriate ways to support young children and families.

I have never found distinctions between sectors very helpful – at least for getting things done on the ground. I look back at the training I had as an early childhood teacher and I find that it was very inadequate. This became evident once I started working in the classroom: there was much I needed to know but was not prepared for – one example is dealing with parents – at least in a meaningful way and beyond the 2-3 parent-teacher meetings each year. Another was working with the many needs and emotions of children – I had studied many theories of child development and had learnt how to make

wonderful materials that the children could use (which was very useful). However, we did not spend as much time as I now think is necessary in applying what we learned about child development, for example in terms of observing their development and then devising future lessons to build on this. I had a basic knowledge – but could have used much more in, for example, counseling skills with children and parents.

I came to realize that fundamentally (at least for me) ECD is about working with children and their families (whoever and however constituted and defined). It's not just about the child. In every place I have worked or visited, it seems to me we lose sight of this. Instead, we try to organize and divide responsibilities across sectors – for what may start out as understandable reasons. In the end, and specifically in terms of being clear about the 'big' picture in terms of young children, sectors more often get in the way. As a result, in many places, we have a narrow definition of what a teacher does, what a nurse does, what a social worker does and what a doctor does. In most places, each of these actors (and others not mentioned) do not understand each others' roles or responsibilities – creating possibilities for overlap and territorial guarding of one's own patch (even if there is an understanding that no one person or institution can do all of ECD on their own). Moreover, we have numerous professionals who don't know how to interact with parents and children as human beings.

In addition, for those adults (parents/family members) who may

not have attended formal schools (let alone finished primary or secondary schooling) – there is a tremendous barrier and sense of worry/fear just to walk into a school and register your child for school – let alone complain, challenge or ask questions to the teachers or heads. Too many parents feel they are not welcomed in their local schools (or health centers). The messages seem to be – you are not educated, (therefore) you are not really worth interacting with. I as a professional know what to do, you just sit and listen. You do what I tell you to do. Don't ask me any questions.' All of this to say that I believe there is much room for improvement in the professional training of teachers, health workers, social workers, etc.

What do you think of television as a medium to communicate with children?

There are 'good' and there are terrible programmes on television. How this plays out across different countries varies tremendously. In some places there are thoughtful programmes which aim to support children's learning. I would

I came to realize that fundamentally ECD is about working with children and their families. It's not just about the child.

tend to say the majority do not engage at this level. However, if we return to my earlier point of children within the context of their families, then a question to be raised for parents and those of us working in ECD is "How do you see television – and specifically children's programming: as a pseudo-babysitter when you are busy, as a 'treat' to offer when children are 'good' (or to be taken away when they are not behaving), as one option that is used during the day or week for children?" Where I lived in Honduras, this was not even

remotely an option because we had no electricity, and this is still true for many millions of children in the world. In urban areas like Karachi – it is more accessible and therefore may be an issue. Nonetheless, in general, some of the recent studies I have heard or read about indicated that in the United States, children who watching violent television shows display and act out in more violent or anti-social ways. In addition, there is a difference when parents watch T.V. with their children – and then discuss. The unfortunate thing with television is that one can stop communicating with those around – this is not unlike the growing numbers of children who are glued to their computers (and internet). Social interaction – and therefore learning how to 'give and take' in a variety of social contexts seems to be decreasing quite a lot for many – this, for me, is a very real worry.

Do you think the parents use TV as a means to keep children busy while they take care of other things?

I want to expand this question beyond the use of TV since there are other issues in communities where this medium is not present that still get in the way of who does the watching over of children – and how it seems to me that parents are busier, and more stressed and often just trying to cope. We should not be surprised that parents – especially mothers since they continue to bear the largest burden of childcare and household work – look for alternative strategies that will allow them to get on with their multiple tasks and concerns. The point, then, is to what extent do parents have social support systems around them that allow for different types of assistance, including child care to take place, in a timely and appropriate manner. Like many families here in Pakistan, I grew up with an extended family – even if not everyone was living in our home. My father (the single parent) had my grandmother (who lived with us) as well as various aunts and uncles and other family friends that he could depend upon for a whole range of issues, including for the care of his three children. We also visited my mother and our step-father and new brothers every month growing up.

Many young families don't have such support systems around them while they are raising children and this is increasing as urbanization continues.

In my view, this (the area of parent support systems) is one of the most difficult and challenging areas we in the field of ECD need to think about

and work with families on for the coming years. This is particularly true for single parent households (most of which are headed by women) who are isolated or live far from their extended family or others living in difficult circumstances (poverty or otherwise). The pressures are often overwhelming and can spill over to the home environment – and therefore to the children and the care provided to them. We are all humans, we all get tired, we all get cranky, and we all have a lot of stress in our lives – no one can be the perfect parent all the time, especially when you are worrying about everything from the economic survival to children's development. Every parent needs reassurances and assistance – emotional, practical, as well as financial at times. The thing I worry about most is not T.V., but rather seeing what (new) kinds of support

Social interaction – and therefore learning how to 'give and take' in a variety of social contexts seems to be decreasing quite a lot for many – this, for me, is a very real worry.



systems are around or can be created. This means human support systems that help guide, provide mentoring to adults and to children, and can ensure loving and secure care for children – at all stages and ages of their development. I am convinced that more and more we need to create and then sustain support systems for families that go beyond government or NGO assistance and support – they must emerge in and out of communities where there is mutual need and interest in the improvement of well-being for all members – from the youngest infant to the oldest member.

Interviewed by the SEF team

ECCD: BEST INVESTMENT FOR THE FUTURE

National Health Sciences Symposium
Aga Khan University: 2002



Poverty & Investment in ECCD

It is hard to convince a family trapped in a cycle of poverty, and constantly facing medical costs that reduced work and extra food for mother is a priority. It is even harder to convince them that time spent nurturing a child might help that child earn more as an adolescent.

Most South Asian governments have yet to be convinced that investing in quality care of mothers as well as by mothers (Ramalingaswami, Jonsson and Rohde 1996, p.15) costs a family and society much less in the longer term than later remedial services, and there is a 'mismatch' between opportunity and investment (Perry 1966). Although the ability to influence the developing brain is greatest in the unborn child and during the early years, direct government support to young families is trivial, compared to later government investments in education, remedial services, hospitals, courts, prisons, and social welfare services (McCain and Mustard 1999, pp.122-123).

In the world of investment, the longer the time In the world of investment, the longer the time and the larger the distance between a decision to invest and the effect of that investment, the harder it is to get the investment (Doryan, Gautam and Foege 2002, p. 379). When it takes a long time to get a 'return' on an 'investment', other options that have a faster 'pay-back' are preferred. ECD is hard to 'sell' to governments as a good investment, partly because some of the most important effects are not observable for many years.

The Aga Khan University Symposium: September 2002

How are early childhood care and development, human capital formation and national development linked? Does it make good economic sense to invest in the care of women and children? Who should invest in ECD? Who benefits? A large number of national and international speakers and papers addressed this theme: ECCD: Best Investment for the Future in the 2002 Aga Khan University, Faculty of Health Sciences Symposium. A number of papers, posters, workshops and plenary discussions combined to reinforce their messages.



Quotable Quotes

CHILD MENTAL HEALTH

Child psychiatrist, Dr Syed Arshad Husain, from the University of Missouri, reminded us that children are the conscience and future of a nation. He reviewed the history of childhood, assessed the state of children's health, mental

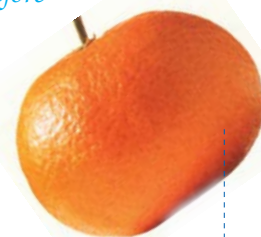
health and educational opportunities in Pakistan, and argued for commitment of more resources to child mental health.

The care and attention expressed for the children become the most elegant measure of that nation's regard for itself... Societies who neglect their children's welfare are doomed to fail as a nation. This is why the World Summit for Children agreed that children are innocent, vulnerable and dependent. They are also curious, active and full of hope. Their time should be one of joy, and peace, of playing, learning and growing. Their future should be shaped in harmony and cooperation.

CHILD NUTRITION

Based on a long career within government, championing improved nutritional status of children, as well as adults, Dr Mushtaq Khan, from the Centre for Research on Poverty Reduction and Income Distribution (CRPRID), Islamabad, argued:

Malnutrition is both one of the consequences of social injustice and one of the factors contributing to its maintenance. It bears hardest on small children. Contributing to the massive death toll among the young ones, and together with other adverse environmental factors, it interferes with growth and development of the survivors. It reduces their capacity to learn during childhood and earn during adulthood... Measures that will improve the nutrition of mothers before and during pregnancy, and of infants and young children, will reduce morbidity, will improve the effectiveness of expenditures on education, will reduce the cost of health care, and will increase the work productivity of adults.





THE HIGH COST OF LOW QUALITY EDUCATION

Using data from the Education for All (EFA) Year 2000 Assessment, Dr Jim Irvine from the AKU-Human Development Program, argued that

lack of attention to readiness for school has its legacies in significant enrolment and completion disparities in primary schools throughout the region. Furthermore, because issues of quality have not been adequately addressed, repetition and drop-out rates remain high. It would be more efficient and cheaper to address readiness rather than remediation.

For families with limited resources, the opportunity costs and real costs of educating their adolescent children are very high. If they perceive schooling to be inefficient, irrelevant or unlikely to enhance earning opportunities, their children may be forced to drop out, without acquiring functional levels of literacy or numeracy.

Conversely, increased investment in the care of women and young children, and in the quality components of basic education can enhance the prospects for many children to progress beyond the primary cycle in minimum time, with benefits to education systems of less wastage of time and resources (e.g. reduced repetition and drop-out), and a more skilled work force graduating and contributing to national development.



ECCD PROGRAM OUTCOMES IN THE CONTEXT OF UN RESOLUTIONS

Several global UN-led commitments to a stronger focus and greater investment in ECD were reviewed by Dr Femida Jalil, from King Edward Medical College, Lahore. In a World Fit for Children, leaders have pledged resources and committed support to ECD initiatives. One of the recurring weaknesses in making the case for increased investment has been the lack of internationally comparable data on the psycho-social status of infants and young children.

Over 150 countries have taken ECCD initiatives: 120 knowledgeable professionals were contacted globally to opine on effectiveness as an outcome of various ECCD programs/projects. 35 projects/programs were thought to be effective, however further analyses revealed only 10 were truly 'effective'. Other projects need to re-evaluate their strategies and methodologies. At the same time, all countries need technical support and financial commitment for effective ECCD programs.

Indicators to evaluate projects/programs and to assess psycho-social development have been developed through studies in 5 countries. These need fine tuning before they can be used as a recurring theme in the State of the World's Children.

ECCD LEADERS AND INTEGRATED PROGRAMS

Integrated approaches to ECD combine best thinking and practice from a number of perspectives, such as health, nutrition, community dev-



elopment, psychosocial development, environmental hygiene and sanitation, and early education. ECD advocates argue that an integrated approach is more effective together than interventions applied separately. But where are the programs to educate the new ECD leaders who must break down the traditional disciplinary, donor and ministerial boundaries or 'silos'?

Dr Bartlett from the Aga Khan Foundation, Geneva, outlined key developments and approaches in South Asia and other regions, (e.g. the ECD Virtual University) and endorsed plans for the AKU-Human Development Program (AKU-HDP) that combine research, education and training, community ECD model building, and advocacy and constituency building as inter-dependent components of a Program to build ECD leadership capacity in Pakistan and in the wider region.

A critical gap and, indeed, a growing area of real concern for many who have been advocating for quality, effective ECD programs, research and policies is the very limited resource base of ECD 'leaders' across countries who are experienced and well-grounded, and who also understand the holistic and integrated nature of ECD.

EXPERIENCE BASED BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

Keynote speaker, Dr Fraser Mustard, from the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research (Mustard 2002), argued the need for more serious attention to brain development in the critical prenatal period and the early years.

One of the least understood relationships has been how brain development in the early years influences physical and mental health in the later stages of life... coronary artery disease, type II diabetes, blood pressure, performance in the formal school system and the level of education attained.

Poor early childhood development affects key aspects of brain development including the stress pathway (hypothalamus pituitary adrenal axis – HPA axis) which affects all body tissues during life including the immune system, and brain development with effects on cognition and behaviour.

In the world of investment, investing in quality early childhood development and parenting programs is a 'hard' investment, as important to society as investments in bridges, power stations and dams.



THE ECONOMICS OF ECCD

Development economist, Dr Jacques van der Gaag, University of Amsterdam, linked integrated programs of ECCD that improve the nutrition, health, cognitive development, and social interaction of children in the early years, with Human Development — education, health (including nutrition), social development, and growth — but at the scale of a nation.

Four critical “pathways” link ECD to HD: through education; health; social capital; and by the potential of ECD programs to address inequality in society... ECD programs can make a dramatic difference. They are associated with decreased morbidity and mortality among children, fewer cases of malnutrition and stunting, improved personal hygiene and health care, and fewer instances of child abuse.

Well-executed and well-targeted ECD programs are initiators of HD. They stimulate improvements in education, health, social capital, and equality that have both immediate and long-term benefits for the children participating in the programs. Investments in ECD programs are in many ways investments in the future of a nation.

FOETO- MATERNAL NUTRITION



Dr Zulfiqar Bhutta, Department of Paediatrics, AKU, linked Pakistan's poor progress in human development indicators to the lack of investment in health, education and social development, highlighting the life-long cost of inadequate attention to the nutritional status of women and the unborn child.

The poor nutritional status of the population is specifically apparent among the most vulnerable, namely the women and children of Pakistan... Low Birth Weight (LBW) infants account for almost 30% of all births, with maternal malnutrition as a dominant risk factor... LBW may account for several long-term effects on the health and productivity that may impact on national economic performance and outcomes...

Despite this information,... there are very few intervention programs geared towards improving maternal malnutrition in a sustainable fashion.

TARGETING THE MESSAGE AND THE EVIDENCE

ECD may well be an expanding area of investment globally, but far too many South Asian mothers and babies continue to die of preventable causes. Too many children are malnourished and irreversibly stunted before their second birthday. Too many schools are poorly prepared to make early learning rewarding.

Perhaps those who need convincing about ECD have not heard nor understood why national development remains 'irreversibly stunted'. It cannot be due to shortage of resources but lack of political will. There is money for rockets and armies, but investment in family support and ECD remains trivial.

The ECCD messages may be clear to those in the field but they are not getting to the right mail-boxes. We all share the challenge of advocacy, and the need to base requests for resources on hard evidence that ECCD is a demonstrably good investment.

Readers wishing to access the AKU ECCD Symposium Proceedings, or contribute further information on this critical issue are invited to visit the Symposium entry on the AKU-website: www.aku.edu/news/seminars/eccd and contact the Planning Coordinator, Human Development Program, AKU, Stadium Road, Karachi 74800, Pakistan, through rehan.tejani@aku.edu with information that can be shared with ECD advocates throughout the region.

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By Dr. Jim Irvine
Human Development Program
(HDP)-
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Dr Jim Irvine or is the Planning Coordinator of the Human Development Program, Aga Khan University Hospital. Dr. Irvine worked initially in multi-grade and primary schools in rural Australia and the UK; then in university teaching, research and administration in Canada, Australia and New Zealand; and, since 1991, in international development work in Asia. During his career at the UNE in Australia, he directed a cooperative, multi-disciplinary, service, research and resource centre for children with developmental delays and special education needs. From 1999 to 2001, Dr Irvine was UNICEF's Regional Adviser for Education and ECD in East Asia and the Pacific. From 1994 to 1999, he was UNICEF Education Adviser for South Asia, and supported UNICEF Country Offices in the seven SAARC countries and Afghanistan. He represented UNICEF globally in the EFA 2000 Assessment. In 2001, Dr. Irvine worked as a consultant to the Aga Khan University's Human Development Programme, and in 2002 came on board as Planning Coordinator. The AKU-HDP is a recent initiative of AKU, dedicated to enhancing human development through Early Childhood Development (ECD), in order to break the inter-generational cycle of poverty, illiteracy, and poor care that inhibit later learning, behavior, and mental and physical health.

SAY NO TO CHILD ABUSE *

A person is abusing a child if he or she:

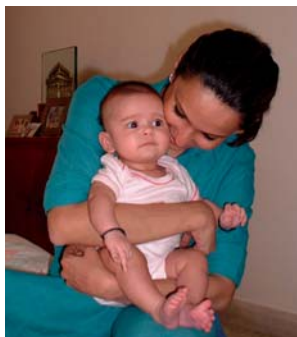
- Beats the child;
- Burns the child's hands or other body parts;
- Sexually abuses the child;
- Leaves the child alone with no one to look after him;
- Denies the child food or drink;
- Locks the child out of the house;
- Curses or shouts a lot at the child;
- Teases a child too much and makes him feel stupid; or
- Demeans a child by spitting on him.



LEARNING BY DOING *

Your child's brain works in a very special way:

- First he watches, listens and imitates
- Then he compares what he is doing to other things he has already done
- He asks you and himself questions about what he is doing
- Then he tries to do better
- And he repeats, repeats, repeats his actions in order to master them.



HEALTHY MOTHERS, HEALTHY BABIES: *

In order for children to get a fair start in life, pregnant mothers must be healthy and eat well. If a mother does not feed well, the baby will be weak and small.

The diet for mothers should have a variety of foods such as dark green and orange vegetables, meat, liver and fish. Apart from feeding well, pregnant mothers need to think well about themselves and their situations. Unborn babies can be affected by a mother's stress or depression, which can also leave the mother unable to take good care of her baby once it is born.

TIDBITS

FAT FOOD FOR GROWING BRAINS *

While a baby is in the womb, the brain grows more rapidly than in any other stage of infant or child development. And during the first year after birth, the brain continues to grow rapidly, tripling in size by an infant's first birthday. So, it would make sense for a pregnant and lactating mother to supplement her diet with brain-building nutrients, primarily the omega 3 fatty acids found in fish and flax oil (one tablespoon of flax oil daily, four ounces of tuna or salmon three times a week). In fact, some nutritionists recommend that pregnant and lactating women take 200 milligrams of DHA (docosahexaenoic acid) supplements a day. DHA is the primary structural component of brain tissue, so it stands to reason that a deficiency of DHA in the diet could translate into a deficiency in brain function.

LOVING YOUR CHILDREN HELPS THEM GROW WELL *

All children need love and attention in order to grow well. Children need things to play with but just as importantly, they need loving people to be with and play with. Mother and father are the most important people in this regard who have a lasting impact on the child. Both parents can help their sons and daughters develop well by:

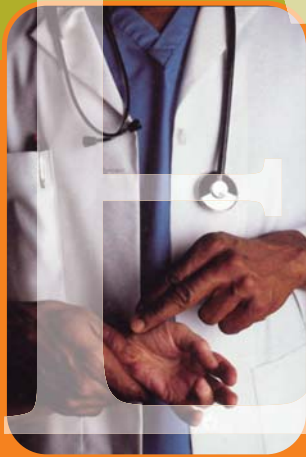
- Talking to the child
- Touching the child
- Hugging the child
- Listening and responding to the child.



HERE'S AN IDEA! *

Talk about and touch your child when possible: the things you see in the sky, in the house, near the house, at the clinic, at the market. Mention colors, shapes, sizes. Talk about smell and touch the flowers, plants and trees around you. Ask your children what sounds they hear.

Set good examples and be consistent. It is important that everyone involved in looking after your child is teaching in more or less the same way. If you and your partner or child-minder do things very differently, your child will not learn easily. She will not know whose standards to follow. She will not be confused.



ECD: a health perspective

In Sri Lanka, Priyanthi, a 28-year-old mother in the Matale District, remembers the evening that she carried her daughter, Madushika, 7 kilometres to the closest medical facility. It was about five in the late afternoon and almost dark when the small woman began her frightful journey with the 18-month-old toddler in her arms struggling for air. Stumbling over the fallen branches and underbrush cluttering the narrow dirt paths, she heard her daughter's laborious gasps growing weaker. By 6 p.m., she and the baby reached the clinic.

The doctor's words still haunt this woman with tired eyes and underscore her race against the clock. Had she delayed the trip by a mere 15 minutes, she remembers him saying, her baby, whose chest cold had turned into pneumonia, would have been dead. Had Madushika, now a healthy five-year-old, been born just a decade earlier, without the availability of life-saving drugs, the pneumonia would have likely won the race.

Priyanthi's children, Madushika and her younger brother Madusha have benefited from Sri Lanka's system of health services and early childcare programs. Both children were born in the relative safety of a hospital, like nearly 90 per cent of Sri Lankan live births today. When the young mother was pregnant with her two-year-old son, she received regular health check-ups in the village clinic and pregnancy advice from the village midwife. She learned how talking

to her infant during breastfeeding would improve his mind and body. She learned that cooing and babbling to her child in response to his sounds, commonly called 'motherese', would help the baby boy learn to talk.

Once released from the hospital, Priyanthi and her newborn participated in a program in which trained volunteers visited them in their home. Madusha's height and weight continued to be monitored. Priyanthi also continued to get support and advice on the importance of touching, talking and singing, as well as on bathing and feeding her baby.

Priyanthi's family is 1 of 22 families from Ambanganga, a small village about 25 kilometers from Matale, involved in a home-based program

Had Madushika, now a healthy five-year-old, been born just a decade earlier, without the availability of life-saving drugs, the pneumonia would have likely won the race.

carried out by a local NGO called Sithuwama, with UNICEF support. Sithuwama, which means 'raising a child with enjoyment', promotes early childhood care, including healthy childcare practices and cognitive stimulation. Its services are provided through home-visiting programs for infants up to three-year-olds and for pre-schoolers from age three to five.

Through Sri Lanka's home-based service, Priyanthi learns that good nutrition, home hygiene and sanitation practices and cognitive stimulation are all necessary ingredients for her children to grow and develop. Now, she is investing the focused time, care and attention that are vital for improving her children's lives. She collects extra firewood to boil water for her children to drink. She finds legumes that add to the nutritional value of their meals. She makes certain that they use the latrine and wash their hands afterwards. She asks her children their thoughts about the birds chattering overhead during their baths in the stream. She takes them to village health days.

Priyanthi, her husband and children live in a small, four-room, cement house without electricity or running water. They sleep together on a dirt floor on woven straw mats. The family survives on a little over 2,000 rupees (about \$27) a month that Priyanthi's husband earns on a tea plantation.

Sithuwama's volunteer home visitors helped Priyanthi figure out how to promote her children's psychosocial and cognitive development without spending much money. The NGO's volunteers teach her the importance of play for her children's physical and mental well being. She and her husband constructed a playhouse for the children. The airy structure is made from twigs and branches tied together with pieces of cloth and covered with a tarp. Little wooden shelves are filled with colorful boxes, gourds, coconut shells, ceramic bowls, metal cans and flowers they have picked. Through play, Madushika and Madusha are learning about colors, shapes, sizes, labeling and sorting. They are also learning to dream and imagine.

Priyanthi meets weekly with a program volunteer and once a month with a group of other parents in support sessions. Learning from each other, the parents compare notes

about their babies' height, weight and other milestones. They review the opportunities throughout the day to engage their children in teachable moments — waking up, mealtime, washing and bathing, cooking, visiting, working outdoors, playing and getting ready for bed.

This was one example of a successful case study from a country like Srilanka, which does not have abundant resources but possesses an exemplary model of basic social services. Pakistan, on the other hand, is a resource-rich country as compared to Srilanka but its Human Development Index reflects a poor status: *(please refer to table on the left)*



Through Sri Lanka’s home-based service, Priyanthi learns that good nutrition, home hygiene and sanitation practices and cognitive stimulation are all necessary ingredients for her children to grow and develop.

Indicator	Pakistan Status	Srilanka Status
Life Expectancy	65	74
Infant Mortality Rate	84	17
Population Growth Rate	2.7	1.5
Adult Literacy	45	90
% of Central Govt. Expenditure		
Health	1	6
Education	2	11
Defense	31	17
Statistics of 1999		

Community-based services that meet the needs of infants and young children are vital to Early Childhood Development and they should include attention to health, nutrition, education, water and environmental sanitation in homes and communities. The approach promotes and protects the rights of the young child to survival, growth and development. The ECD approach remained unfortunately a lost out opportunity vis-à-vis the policies and programs of Government of Pakistan until recently. At present there are many ECD initiatives underway, both by the Government and donors, to promote ECD approaches for education and development of young children in Pakistan. *(For more details please refer to the section on RCC Program)*

Most brain development occurs before a child turns three. In the first moments, months and years of life, every touch, movement and emotion in a young child's life translates into an explosion of electrical and chemical activity in the brain, as billions of cells are organizing themselves into networks requiring trillions of synapses between them.

Long before many adults even realize what is happening, the brain cells of a new infant proliferate, synapses crackle and the patterns of a lifetime are established. In a short period of 36 months, children develop their abilities to think and speak, learn and reason and foundation are laid for their values and social behavior as adults.

These early childhood years are when experiences and interactions with parents, family members and other adults influence the way a child's brain develops, with as much impact

as such factors as adequate nutrition, good health and clean water. And how the child develops during this period sets the stage for later success in school and the character of adolescence and adulthood.

When infants are held and touched in soothing ways, they tend to thrive. Warm, responsive care seems to have a protective function, to some extent immunizing an infant against the effects of stress experienced later in life. But the brain's malleability during these early years also means that when children do not get the care they need, or if they experience starvation, abuse or neglect, their brain development may be compromised.

The effects of what happens during the prenatal period and during the earliest months and years of a child's life can last a lifetime. All the key ingredients of emotional intelligence – confidence, curiosity, self-control, relatedness, capacity to communicate and cooperativeness – that determine how a child learns and relates in school and in life in general, depend on the kind of early care he or she receives from parents, pre-school teachers and caregivers. Emphasizing the care of babies and toddlers means focusing on women whose physical and emotional conditions influences their pregnancies and their babies development

Educating families about the importance of proper diet and health care for pregnant women is also the part of ECD, as is educating men about their important role in caring for their pregnant wives and nurturing their children. When fathers as well as mothers are convinced about the support required for healthy pregnancies and child development, harmful health practices can be eliminated.

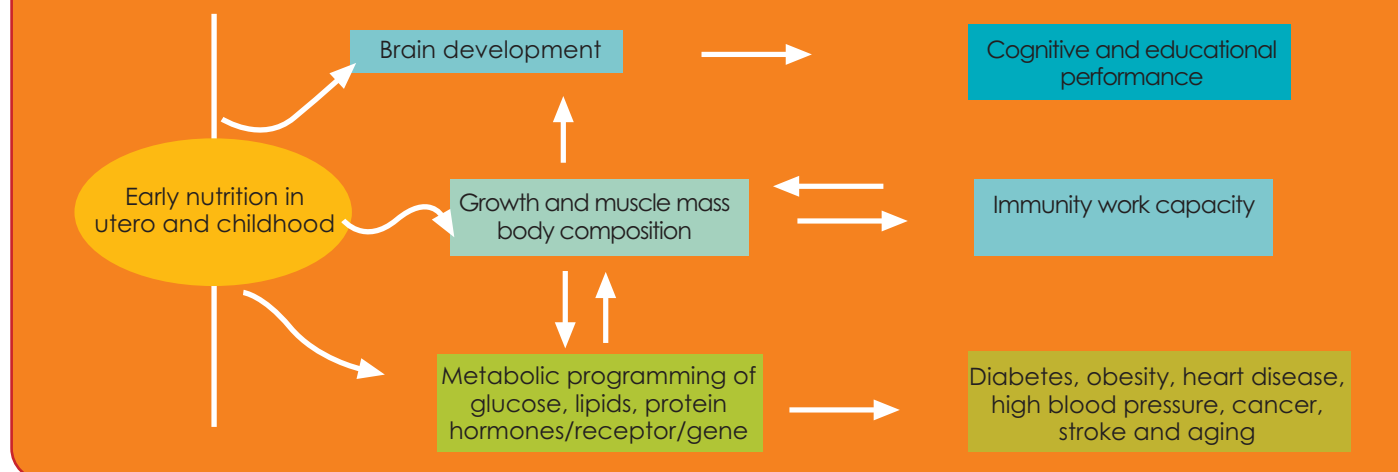
ECD requires integration of different departments especially health, education and community development. Health department should focus on integrated, holistic early childhood development. All children have the right to be delivered safely. It is possible only in the presence of well-trained community based

midwives. Luckily, in Pakistan we have a strong network of 50,000 Lady Health Workers covering nearly 50% of the country's population under the National Program of Primary Health Care. Many have the potential to be up-graded to do more specialized jobs.

Each child, under 03 years, should have the facility of regular health checkup,

.... Priyanthi learns that good nutrition, home hygiene and sanitation practices and cognitive stimulation are all necessary ingredients for her children to grow and develop.

Short & Long term effects– optimal use of nutrition



immunization, growth promotion and supplementary feeding and referral services. Additionally, the age group of 3 to 6 requires nutrition, health education, early child care and pre-school education. The job can easily be accomplished by lady health workers and preschool teachers. A comprehensive ECD based Primary Health Care Program should also cater to the needs of adolescents, pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers and all women between 15 to 45 years of age.

The time of early childhood should merit the highest-priority attention when responsible governments are making decisions about laws, policies, programs and money. Yet, tragically both for children and for nations, these are the years that receive the least.

Timely and appropriate early childhood care saves lives. Wherever it is found, whether in war-ravaged countries or industrialized societies, programs that focus on health, education and social well-being of the youngest citizens have made a profound difference in children's survival, growth and development.

What is a fair price to pay for saving children? India's Integrated Child Development Services was estimated in 1994 to cost 27 cents a day for each child. During the same year, the Hogares Comunitarios de Bienestar program in Colombia, operating in 55,000 sites and offering full day care including food, was estimated to cost 38 cents a day. Many countries spend considerably more, with governments absorbing much of the cost.

Far-sighted leaders understand that money spent now on early childhood care will pay off in the form of healthier, more productive children and in stable families that are able to sustain themselves and contribute to society. Indeed, choosing not to provide early care for all children is the costliest mistake. For every \$1 invested in the physical and cognitive development of babies and toddlers, there is an estimated \$7 return, mainly from cost savings in the future.

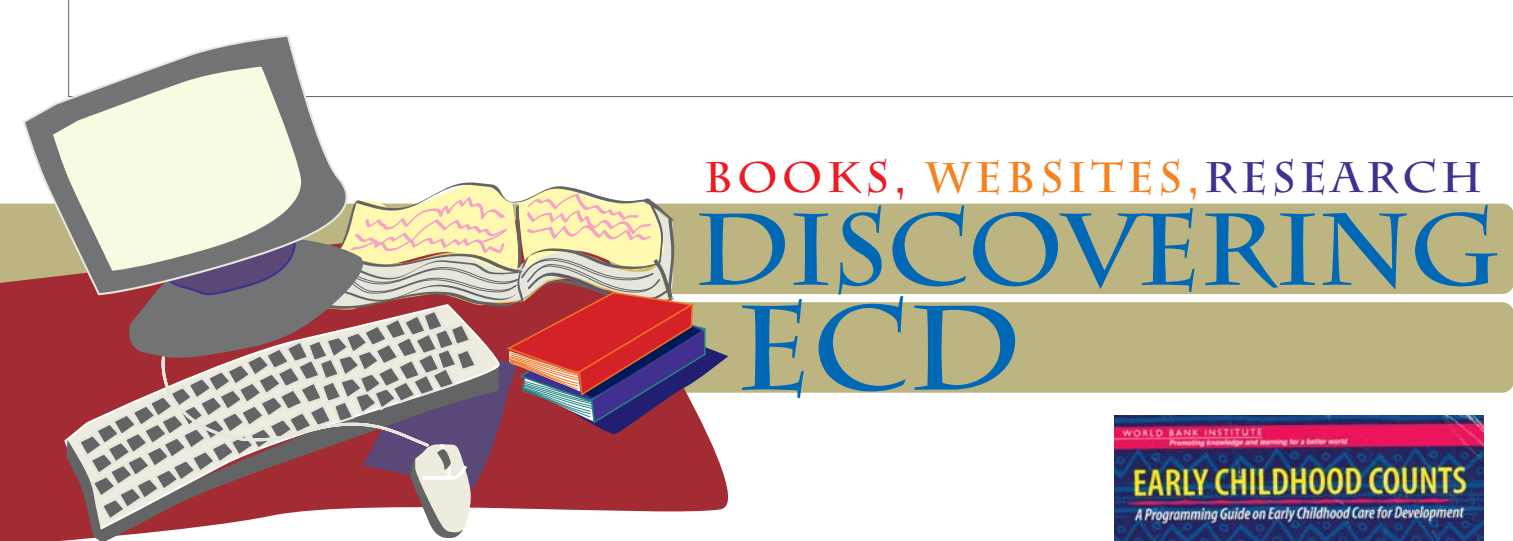
By championing the rights of the youngest children, we are taking the first step to breaking the bonds of poverty, violence, disease and discrimination and to building a world of hope and change. As Priyanthi has discovered by seeing her own small treasure thrive, the true wealth of a nation is measured in the health and strength of its youngest citizens.

Early childhood care for survival, growth and development is just an empty phrase unless governments in developing countries allocate sufficient resources (UNICEF recommend 20%) from their national budget to the basic social services and donors also do the same.

(Excerpted from:
State of the World's Children 2001 - UNICEF).

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**THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON EARLY CHILDHOOD
CARE & DEVELOPMENT:**
www.ecdgroup.com



The Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development, is a diverse consortium of agencies, donors, NGOs and foundations that links with regional-based Early Childhood Care and Development networks comprising individuals and organizations involved in programming, research, policy-advocacy, monitoring and evaluation for young children (0-8) at risk in the Majority World. The term Majority World refers to those countries that are often referred to as South countries, developing or third

world countries and serves to remind us that the majority of the world's children are at risk of delayed or debilitated development.

The website is a resource-rich forum for information on ECD and why is it important. It entails sections on:

Regional networks: There currently are eight identified regions feeding into the CG: Latin America, the Caribbean, Arab countries, South East Asia, South Asia, Eastern and Southern Africa, West Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

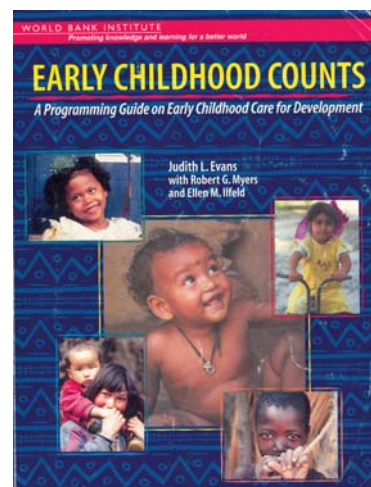
ECD info: provides information regarding the concept of ECD and how it builds the foundation of all later learning.

Initiatives: The CG operates through an International Secretariat, which draws on the consortium, the regional representatives and others' work, knowledge and expertise for its dissemination, awareness-raising and advocacy work.

Resources: provides a list of ECD websites, organizations and upcoming conferences and events advocating for children, their families and communities.

Library: you can search the library for information on Early Childhood Care and Development around the world.

The Consultative Group believes, it is critical to promote a more diverse and creative range of ECD activities that link different sectors, are more inclusive, and to better address children's needs and circumstances in the context of the family and/or community.



**EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNTS:
A Programming Guide on
Early Childhood
Development**

*Judith L. Evans with Robert G. Myers
and Ellen M. Ilfeld*

Because the world's young children are the human capital of the future, Early Childhood Development (ECD) is becoming recognized worldwide as an essential element in any long-term, sustainable development strategy. It has been shown that the economic and social benefits of ECD which accrue to the individual and to society as a whole far exceed the costs. But helping young children to thrive requires an understanding of how this multifaceted development process can be effectively applied in different cultural and socioeconomic environments. As they seek to design integrated approaches to improving children's health and cognitive

development, developing countries have shown a growing interest in international experiences with ECD policies and programs. However, these countries face a shortage of staff adequately trained in ECD policy design and program implementation. One way of addressing this shortage is through training.

This programming guide provides an extensive and rich collection of learning materials and examples of good practices from around the world, as well as a selected library of articles, reports and research findings on ECD. The book presents a range of perspectives on the possible components of designing and implementing effective ECD programs. It is divided into seven sections, each dealing with a different area of ECD programming. The sections entail information on the concept of ECD, planning an ECD project, defining goals and objectives and designing strategies and approaches, deciding on the infrastructural provisions in the ECD program and project evaluation and costing.

Early Childhood Counts is designed for development professionals, program planners, trainers, policy makers and child advocates working with children living in poverty and at risk of impeded development. The resource materials, featured in this book, can be used to support learning activities tailored to local or national needs and can help in designing and implementing effective ECD programs.

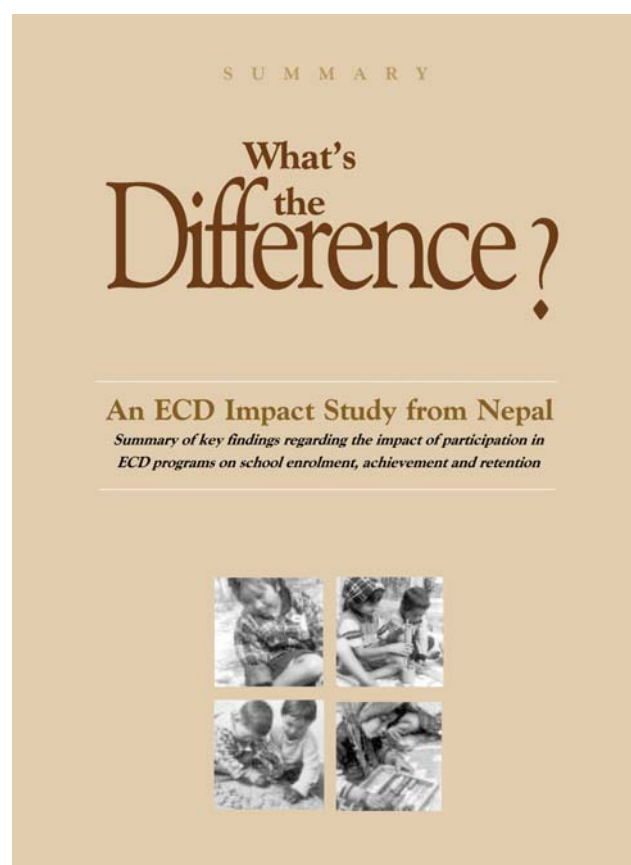
AN ECD IMPACT STUDY FROM NEPAL

"What's the Difference: The Impact of Early Childhood Development Programs - Its Effects for Children, their Families and Communities"

Far from being an unaffordable luxury for a country like Nepal we are seeing that ECD programs are a key part of ensuring young children's rights and the best investment governments, donors and families can make.

The study describes an early childhood program in Nepal and the dramatic effects it has had over just a few years, not only for young children, but for their families and communities. It looks in particular at the impact the program has had on children's transition to school, a significant issue in a country where many children never start school and where those who do start drop out in large numbers during the first and second year. The study took place in 38 communities that have ECD centers in an extremely impoverished district in the eastern Terai. The study, which Save the Children conducted with experts from the Children's Environments' Research Group, looks at the impact on children's development and at changes families identify in their relationships with their children and with their children's ECD centers and schools. Many of the findings of this study have been in regard to the impacts of ECD programs on children's school success - enrollment rates, pass rates, school retention, gender and caste breakdowns and demonstrate dramatic benefits for children exposed to early childhood development programs. Equally important, it drew on people's experience, opinions and observations in order to understand the dynamics underlying these trends. The results were particularly striking for girls and children from disadvantaged groups.

"What's the Difference? The Impact of Early Childhood Development Programs" is published by Save the Children, Children's Environments Research Group and UNICEF (To read the complete summary of findings visit www.ecdgroup.com)



“We discovered that education is not something which the teacher does, but that it is a natural process which develops spontaneously in the human being. It is not acquired by listening to the words, but in virtue of experiences in which the child acts on his environment. The teacher’s task is not to talk, but to prepare and arrange a series of motives for cultural activity in a special environment made for the child.”

Dr. Maria Montessori

Early Childhood Development: role of a teacher



Understanding and enhancing the role of a teacher is one of the fundamentals to facilitate the holistic development of a child. Since Early Childhood Development is a relatively new concept in our local setting, people are generally not aware of its basic components and benefits. Therefore, the responsibility of spreading awareness regarding ECD both in schools and in communities invariably rests with the teacher, who is one of the primary stakeholders in the ECD approach.

ECD demands a different kind of professional development for teachers which enables them to not only present the ideas of ECD successfully to parents and communities but also convince them to integrate ECD approaches in their day-to-day lives. Teacher development for ECD should fundamentally be geared towards enhancing their potential to help children grow and develop into healthy, well-nurtured individuals. The teachers must become change agents within the classrooms as well as beyond schools.

Research suggests that the early years are critical for the development of intelligence, personality and social behavior of a child. A child who develops well during early years will have greater opportunities in life, be more productive and very likely become a better citizen. In contrast to primary school education, which has become largely a public responsibility throughout the world, child care and early education directed towards the healthy development of young children is also essentially the collective responsibility of people and teachers play a key role.

Raising awareness and increasing enrollment are not the only tasks to be achieved by the teachers. Their actual work starts when the child enters in an ECD environment. The teacher has to prepare the enabling environment for the children. According to Jean Piaget's (1896 – 1980) developmental theories, learning and thinking involves the participation of the learners, "knowledge is not merely transmitted

verbally but must be constructed and reconstructed by the learner. For a child to know and construct knowledge of the world the child must act on objects and it is this action which provides knowledge for those objects." Sigel (1977)

Teacher development for ECD should fundamentally be geared towards enhancing their potential to help children grow and develop into healthy, well-nurtured individuals. The teachers must become change agents within the classrooms as well as beyond schools.

said that the mind organizes reality and acts upon it. Children need to explore, to manipulate, to experiment, to question and to search out answers for themselves. Teachers should be able to assess the child's present cognitive level, their strength and weaknesses and should individualize instructional material accordingly. They should ensure that children have ample opportunities and spaces in the classroom to communicate with one another and exchange ideas and experiences; the teacher here becomes a facilitator of knowledge. He/she becomes a guide to stimulate and motivate the students. The children should be allowed to make mistakes and learn from them,

learning is much more meaningful if the child is allowed to experiment on her own as opposed to silently absorbing the information being transferred from the teacher. The teacher must also assume the role of a guide, exposing children to different situations, allowing them to experiment and try their creativity whereby enhancing their learning potential.

In active learning, the teacher must have confidence in the child's ability to learn on her own, the traditional teaching methods which require the teacher to be a sole information giver to passive students is outdated and does not reap positive results. To help children become adaptive learners it is important that the learning environment they experience is relevant to their cultural context so that they are able to relate their knowledge to their surroundings. Obviously the traditional teacher would adopt text-book guided methodology in classrooms which has failed to produce thinking and productive individuals. If the ECD



intervention in the classrooms has to work, the focus will have to shift from teacher dominated classes to children centered learning spaces.

Once the classroom activities become student centered, the children will be encouraged to ask questions, to explore and draw their own conclusions. The teacher's role will logically become that of a facilitator who will assist the students in developing new insights and connecting them with their previous learning. Classroom also transforms into physical space within which the teacher interacts with the children, transfers knowledge, facilitates learning activities and helps them form inter classroom relationships with other children and their surroundings. For this purpose, the teacher has to develop her classroom. This may prove a difficult transformation since most instructors are prepared for teaching in a traditional setting. According to Susan Hanley, "classes are usually driven by 'teacher talk' and depend heavily on text books for the structure of the course. There is the idea that there is a fixed world of knowledge that the students must come to know. Information is divided into parts and built into a whole concept. Teachers serve as pipelines and seek to transfer their thought and meaning to the passive students. There is little room for students – initiated questions, independent thought or interaction between students. The goal of the learner is to regulate the accepted explanation or methodology expostulated by the teacher."

ECD also demands from teachers to build a strong relationship with the

parents of children and community. The parents have the responsibility of providing children with the love and nurturing they need from the moment of conception to the day they venture out on their own, but no parent can do it all on their own. It takes an entire community to raise a child and as a community, one must have the vision to ensure that children have the right support and services in place to help them develop and grow. Therefore, effective ECD teachers must become liaisons between the schools and communities, ensuring parental involvement, providing support to the communities and helping both to facilitate the process of children's healthy development. Henry Giroux, in his book "Teachers as Transformative Intellectuals" (1988) argues that teachers must take on the role of transformative intellectuals who are committed to understanding and engaging the struggles for equality and justice specific to their classrooms, schools and the communities they serve. This holds true for ECD as well, where teachers have to meet various challenging demands of dealing with children to ensure their holistic development.



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WHAT CHILDREN DO

WHAT TEACHERS DO

Awareness

Experience	Create the environment
Acquire an interest	.....	Provide opportunities by introducing new objects, events, people
Recognize broad parameters	.....	Invite interest by posing problem or question
Attend	.....	Respond to child's interest or shared experience
Perceive	.....	Show interest, enthusiasm

Exploration

Observe	.....	Facilitate
Explore material	.....	Support and enhance exploration
Collect information	.....	Extend play
Discover	.....	Describe the child's activity
Represent	.....	Ask open – ended questions, such as "What else could you do?"
Figure out components	.....	Respect child's thinking and rules system
Construct own understanding	.....	Allow for constructive error
Apply own rules	.....
Create personal meaning	.....

Inquiry

Examine	.....	Help children refine understanding
Investigate	.....	Guide children, focus attention
Propose explanations	.....	Ask more focused questions, such as "What else works like this? What happens if?"
Focus	.....	Provide information when requested
Compare own thinking with that of others	.....	Help children make connections
Generalize	.....	Allow time for sustained inquiry
Relate to prior learning	.....
Adjust to conventional rules systems	.....

Utilisation

Use the learning in many ways; learning becomes functional	.....	Create vehicles for application in real world
Represent learning in various ways	.....	Help children apply to new situations
Apply to new situations	.....	Provide meaningful situations to use learning
Formulate new hypotheses and repeat cycle	.....



Role of Teachers & Parents

- Children who have caregivers (parents or teachers) that are caring and consistent, are able to develop secure relationships which allow them to develop and learn better.
- Involvement of parents in ECD programs:
- Allows for consistent reinforcing of practices in the home which helps increase sustainability of ECD efforts.
- Results in more timely school enrolment and attendance rates.
- In cases, such as helping mothers to develop greater parenting skill, has long-term effects on children, including their ability to learn and achieve.

ECD Facts & Research Findings

ECD Benefits

- ECD improves efficiency of primary schooling, it can increase school readiness and enrolment, reduce repetition and dropout .
- Improvements in school and learning are likely to increase employment, economic productivity and cost savings of society.
- ECD helps reduce gender inequities by not only providing a good starting point for girls, but often changes family perceptions about girl child abilities and expectations.
- The most vulnerable, poor, disadvantaged populations benefit the most from high quality ECD programs.



Development & Needs

- Child development is a process of change which is integrated, holistic and cumulative.
- "Child needs are synergistic - that the physical, intellectual, social and emotional experiences all interact to support (or fail to support) healthy child development." (Evans)

Brain Research

- The highest period of brain growth, in terms of cell growth and synapse development (connections in the brain) occurs between 0-2 years.
- The brain attains 90% of its adult size by 6 years of age, whereas the rest of the body represents 40% of its adult size.
- Brain development is very vulnerable to environmental factors; and their effects are found to be long lasting on cognition and intellectual growth.



Learning Processes

- Children actively construct knowledge; they have a need to experiment and test out their hypotheses.
- Children learn through social interaction with peers, teachers and parents.
- Children learn through play, which includes the processes of exploration, manipulation, feedback. Play serves as a tool of the mind, enabling children to master their own behavior.
- Children's interests and "need to know" motivate learning.
- Language plays a central role in promoting development and learning.
- There is individual variation between children in how they learn.

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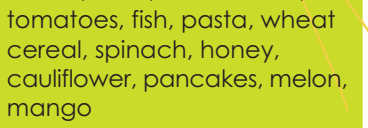

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Birth - 24 months



Age	Food Presentation	Food Sequence	Developmental Skills, Implications for Feeding
Birth to 6 months	Breastmilk and/or iron-fortified formula satisfies all nutritional requirements. Solid foods not nutritionally needed, but infant may want	Breast and/or bottle 	Designed to suck, not chew. Rooting reflex; searches for food source. Tongue-thrust reflex, pushes out solid foods. Sensitive gag reflex
6 months	Starter foods: bananas, pears, rice cereal, applesauce	Strained, pureed Fingertipful Spoonful	Tongue-thrust and gag reflexes lessen; accepts solids. Sits erect in high chair. Begins teething
7 to 9 months	Mashed potatoes, peaches, barley cereal, carrots, squash, teething biscuits, pear and apple juice 	May drink from cup. Finger foods begin. Pureed and mashed foods.	Holds bottle. Thumb-and-forefinger pickup begins. Fascination with tiny food morsels. Begins mouthing chokable food and objects (parents beware!). Bangs, drops, flings. Reaches for food and utensils. Munches food.
9 to 12 months	meat, poultry, beans, rice cakes, peas, egg yolk, cheese, oatmeal, yogurt 	Lumpier consistency. Finger foods mastered. Bite-sized, cooked vegetables. Melt-in-mouth foods. Holds trainer cup.	Self-feeding skills improve. Holds bottle and cup longer. Points and pokes, smears, enjoys mess. High-chair gymnastics increase. Tries to use utensils, spills most. 
12 to 18 months	whole milk, papaya, cottage cheese, apricots, ice cream, grapefruit, whole eggs, grape halves, beef, strawberries, tomatoes, fish, pasta, wheat cereal, spinach, honey, cauliflower, pancakes, melon, mango 	Participates in family meals. Eats chopped and mashed family foods. Begins self-feeding with utensils.	Has prolonged attention span. "Do it myself" desire intensifies. Tilts cup and head while drinking, spills less. Holds spoon better, still spills much. Begins walking – doesn't want to sit still and eat. Picks at others' plates
18 to 24 months	Eats toddler portions of sandwiches, stews & nutritious puddings.	Grazes – deserves title "picky eater". Nibble tray. Weans from bottle. Uses spoon and fork.	Molars appear – begins rotary chewing. Spoon-feeds self without spilling much. Learns food talk, signals for "more," "all done". Wants to eat on the run—needs creative feeding to hold attention at table. Has erratic feeding habits. 

Nurture

Pakistan's Pioneer Publication on Early Childhood Development



Nurture aims to establish an extensive network of local and international partners and resources to:

- support the development of innovative approaches and practices in early childhood development in Pakistan.
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