

In areas of conflict, child rearing and early education of children under 6 is often disrupted. This disruption can affect a child’s mental, physical and social development with life-long effects. Early childhood development activities address the care, health, and stimulation needs of young children. These activities can be supported through formal centers or through the training of parents and communities. In most situations, these activities can be implemented inexpensively using local materials and models for toys and equipment.

Radda Barnen has established the following acronym to guide the implementation of their ECD programs:

- S** - for space and structure
- T** - for time, trust and talking
- O** - opportunities to play
- P** - partnership with parents

Reasons for Early childhood Education

- Caring stimulating environment shapes the mental development of children including higher IQ, school readiness with lasting effects into adult hood
- Establishing normalcy within the lives of children.
- Supports and enhances parents child relationship
- A catalyst for community involvement and achievement
- Frees up the time of parents and particularly older siblings to attend school.
- Provides meaningful activities for volunteers - youth and elderly

Program Approach	Participants and Beneficiaries	Objectives	Models / Examples
Delivering Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children aged 0-2 and 3-6 years old 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survival • Overall development • Socialization • Caregiver child care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home day care • Formal and non-formal pre-schools
Educating Caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents • Family • Siblings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create awareness and change attitudes of the importance of ECD • Improve practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home visiting • Parental Education • Child-to-child programs
Promoting Community involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoters • Leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awareness • Mobilize for action • Change conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical mobilization • Social mobilization

Strategies

- Enhance parent-caregiver/child relationship
- Build on local culture to create sustainable ECD systems

Incorporating local culture and customs can enhance the effectiveness and acceptance of ECD programs. For example, ECD activities through training and community awareness can possibly be built into indigenous education structures such as religious schools (madrasas), or traditional songs and story telling by elders. Local child-rearing customs should always be investigated as they vary worldwide and will affect the program design. For example, in some parts of the world, older siblings take care of their young siblings rather than the parents, grandparents or relatives. With this in mind, ECD programs should not target only adults but also older children.

- Facilitate the development of sustainable ECD programs
- Target pre-school children in most vulnerable portions of community
- Early child education programs should be integrated with other humanitarian services and provision of materials.

Ideally, ECD activities should be close to Maternity Child Health (MCH) clinics to ensure that children's health concerns and especially immunization are addressed. ECD activities for children and training for parents should be included in therapeutic feeding programs.

Checklist

Assessment of early childhood activities

- Did early childhood education exist before the crisis? Was food provided? Was the service half-day or full day?
- In what areas did early childhood education exist?
- Did the government support the early childhood program?
- Did parents pay for their children to attend? Was the service only for people who belonged to a certain company or the government?
- Were the teachers/facilitators/volunteers trained? Where were they trained? Could young people or elderly be involved in providing the activities for children?
- Is the ECD center located close to a facility offering services for under-five children such as a Maternity Child Health Clinic?

Existing activities in ECD centers:

- Are ECD activities presently occurring within the community? Are all children able to access these activities? Minorities? Children with disabilities? Which ages?
- Is the space sufficient for both indoor and outdoor play?
- If space is insufficient can morning and afternoon activities be held to accommodate all of the children?
- Are the teachers/facilitators/volunteers trained? Where were they trained? Could young people or the elderly be involved in providing activities for children?
- Is there a system of referral in place for traumatized children or children with special protection needs? To whom are they referred? What cases have been referred?
- What is the relationship between the existing activities and the government? Are the ECD activities registered with the government?

Parent Training:

- As survivors of a crisis, do parents and caregivers regularly have the opportunity debrief each other on their experiences and the challenges of raising children in a difficult environment?
- Have parents received written materials or training on the importance of early childhood development and activities that they could do at home? Have child rights been included in the parent/caregiver training?

- Who traditionally takes care of young children within the household i.e. older siblings, grandparents? Are these people attending the trainings? How is this training spread throughout the family?

Community Training:

- How has the community been sensitized to the importance of early childhood education?
- What strategies have been developed to ensure support the sustainability of the program? Monetary and material support? Training of government education officials?

Resources available on INEE website: www.ineesite.org

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