

PRESS RELEASE

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THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP
ON EARLY CHILDHOOD
CARE AND DEVELOPMENT

Global Education Report Confirms:

- **Children's Success in Life Begins in Their Early Childhood Years**
- **Governments and Donors are Slow to Act**

The 2007 Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report (GMR), titled **Strong Foundations**, focuses on EFA Goal No. 1, **Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)**. The report highlights that ...

Early childhood programs are vital to offset social and economic disadvantage. ECCE is an instrument to guarantee children's rights that opens the way to all the EFA goals and contributes powerfully to reducing poverty, the overarching objective of the Millennium Development Goals (p. 6)

At the World Education Forum held in Dakar in 2000, 164 countries adopted six Education for All (EFA) goals. In recognition of a growing body of research that early interventions, especially for disadvantaged young children and their caregivers, significantly contribute to preparing young children for success in life and school, the first EFA goal called for ...

Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

Report Findings:

Although some progress has been made, the findings of this report indicate that global attention to Early Childhood Care and Education programs for children from 0 – 8 years of age and their parents and other caregivers, remains very limited:

- Millions of children still lack access to basic immunizations, clean water, adequate food and early stimulation that they need to survive and thrive;
- Few countries have systematic programs addressing the diverse health, nutrition, care and education needs of children from 0 to 3 years of age;
- Access to pre-school programs has expanded worldwide, but coverage remains very low in sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab States;
- Within countries there is a global pattern that children from poorer and rural households have less access to ECCE programs than those from richer and urban ones, yet it is the poor, rural and disadvantaged children who would benefit the most from ECCE programs;
- Although ECCE programs require cross-sectoral collaboration, few countries have established national policy frameworks to coordinate such programs;
- For many governments, ECCE programs still have low priority in national budgets, including those for education;
- Most donor agencies are yet to recognize ECCE as a priority for investment.

ECCE and Links to Other EFA Goals

Although EFA Goal No. 1 is significant in and of itself, **quality ECCE programs** also set **Strong Foundations for achieving other EFA goals**. As this report highlights, evidence suggests that ECCE programs ...

- Facilitate improved primary school enrolment and smooth transition to school, which leads to better results in the first years of school, especially for disadvantaged children (EFA goal 2);
- Contribute to reducing school dropout, grade repetition and the need for special education placements in schools, and therefore improve the internal efficiency of primary education and reduce costs for both governments and families (EFA goal 2);
- Are an important instrument for promoting gender parity in terms of children's equitable participation in ECCE programs and positively influencing their subsequent enrolment in school (EFA Goal 5);
- Release older female siblings from child-care responsibilities and enable them to attend school (EFA goal 5);
- Provide care givers often with access to parental and adult education, as well as family literacy programs, which in turn improve adult learning (EFA goals 3 and 4); and
- Improves children's school participation and achievement, and contributes to the quality of the education system as a whole (EFA goal 6).

What Is Required to Ensure Strong Foundations for All Young Children?

More Attention and More Investment, NOW!

- **Increased high-level policy and political commitment to ECCE in all nations is necessary for achieving children's rights and Education For All.**
- **ECCE should be included in all national budgets**, all sectoral plans for education, health, sanitation and social protection, and in all Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers.
- **Significantly increased public funding of ECCE at national, provincial and local levels is essential**, especially targeting vulnerable, marginalized children and their parents and caregivers – including children living in poverty, rural areas, and ethnic minority groups or affected by HIV/AIDS, malaria or other diseases, malnutrition, disabilities, conflicts or domestic violence.
- **Stronger political and financial commitment from international donors is urgently required for expanding ECCE.**

The Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development (CGECCD) is a consortium of agencies, donors, NGOs, as well as regional and national networks that works collaboratively to identify critical issues and emergency areas of need related to Early Childhood Care and Development.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE CGECCD: Visit: www.ecdgroup.com

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To access the Global Monitoring Report on Early Childhood Care and Education: <http://www.unesco.org/education>