



EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT – THE PROMISE OF ENDLESS OPPORTUNITIES ONLINE CERTIFICATE COURSE

PAKISTAN ALLIANCE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

BY

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Structure of the Session

What is ECD?

Why ECD?

Landscape of ECD
in Pakistan

Pakistan's
Commitments
towards ECD

Recommendations
for Programmes in
ECD

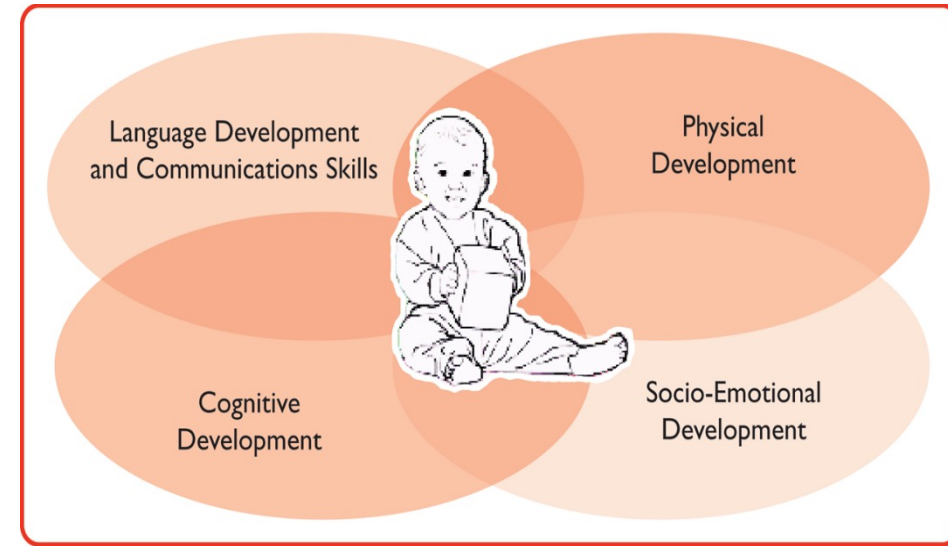
WHAT IS EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT?

What is Early Childhood Development?

- Early Years: the basis for all dimensions of sustainable development
- Holistic development (cognitive, physical, language, emotional and social) provides sound foundation for the rest of a person's life
- What happens – or does not happen – to children early in life is critical to their immediate well-being and to their future
- Early childhood is a period of rapid brain development

ECD and Developmental Domains

- Early Childhood is the period from **Conception to 8** years of age.
- Early Childhood Development refers to the **physical health, cognitive, language, social and emotional** development as approaches to learning with parents, caregivers and community support.



Developmental milestones 0-8 years

- **Age**
- **What children can do**
- **What children need**
- **How to support**

Developmental Milestones

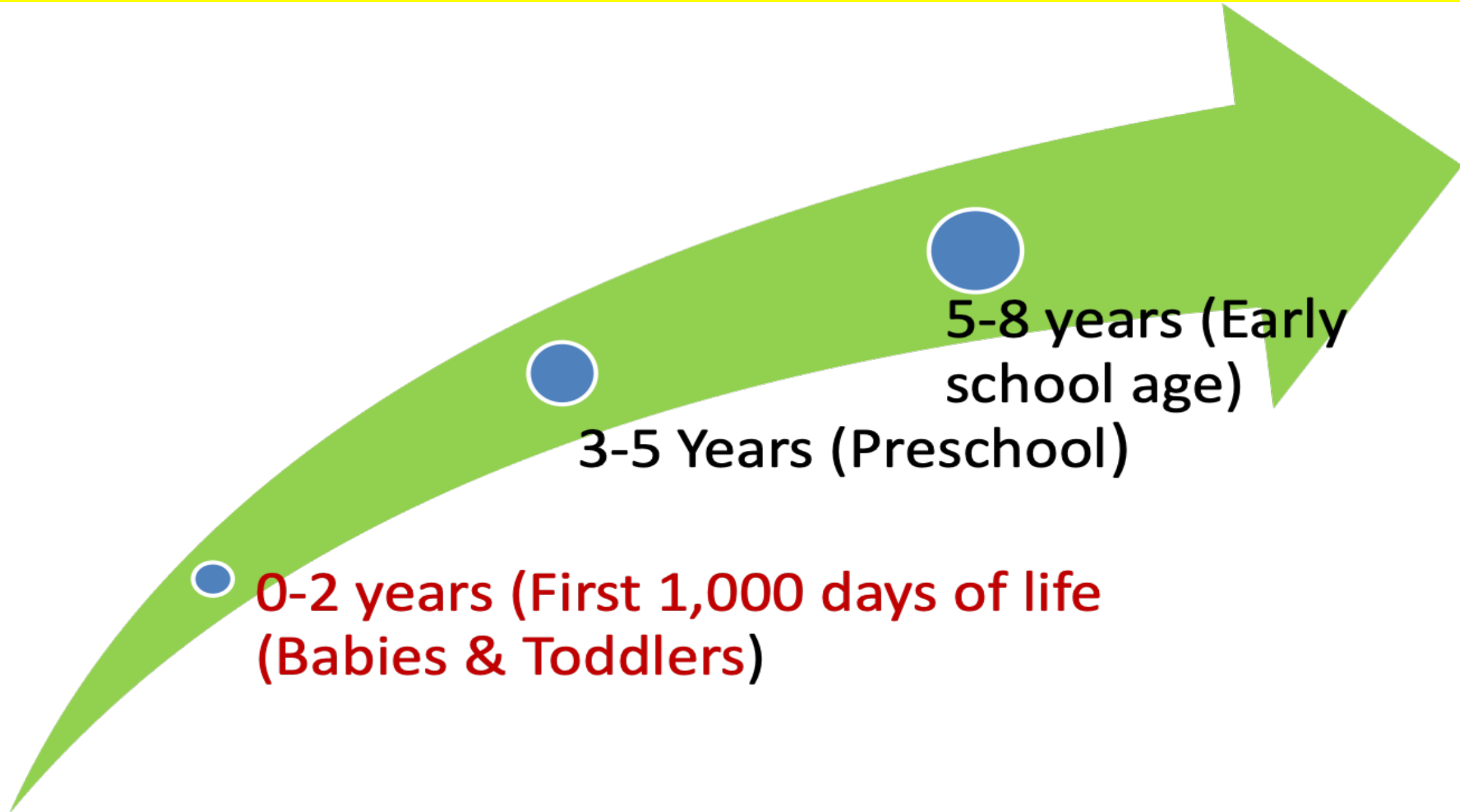
- How your child plays, learns, speaks, and acts offers important clues about your child's development
- Developmental milestones are things most children can do by a certain age.

Source and further information: www.cdc.gov/milestones

Some Key Examples of Developmental Milestones

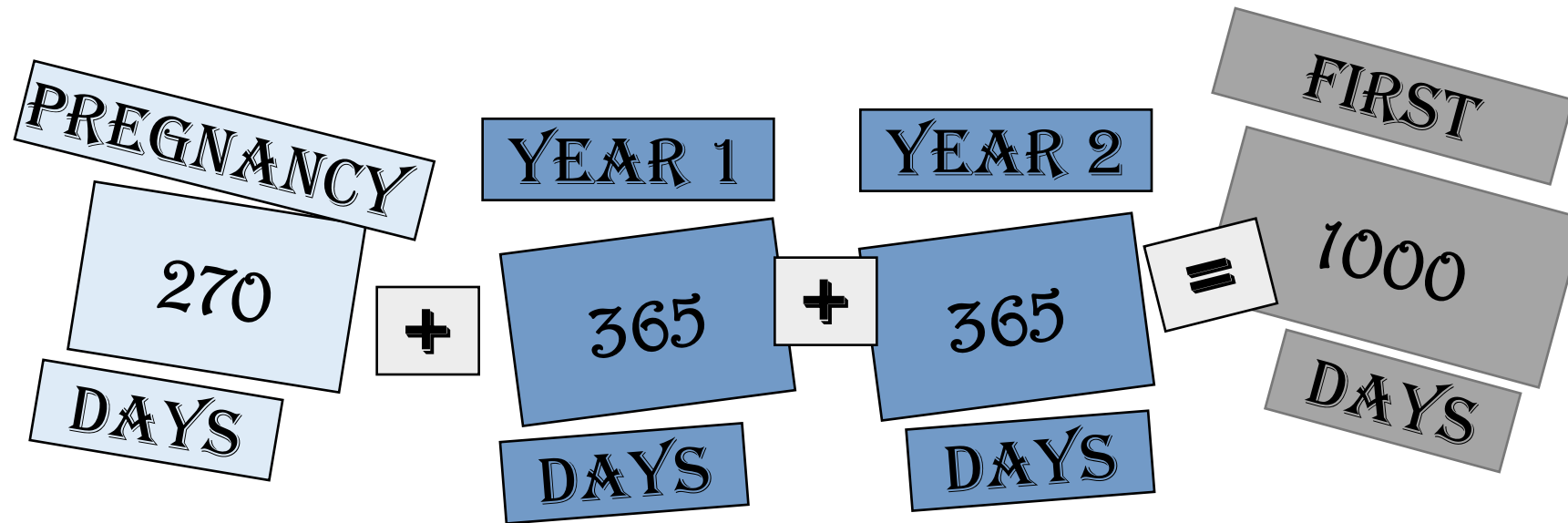
- **Talking and Thinking:** connect words to actions, participate in conversations, understand concepts, use their imagination, make a plan, complete a task (**cognitive**)
- **Moving and Doing:** develop awareness of where they are going, develop balance when they move (**physical/Motor**)
- **Feeling and Learning about Self** (**emotional**)
- **Getting Along with Others** (**social**)

Early Childhood Stages/Phases



The First 1000 Days of Child's Life

The **first 1000 days** beginning at the time of conception on to a baby's second birthday



First 1000 days- A Critical Window of Life-Time Opportunity

“In the first few years of life, more than 1 million new neural connections form every second. After this period of rapid proliferation, connections are reduced through a process called pruning, which allows brain circuits to become more efficient.”

SOURCE: CENTER ON THE DEVELOPING CHILD- HARVARD UNIVERSITY

THEREFORE, FIRST 1,000 DAYS OF LIFE HAVE A PROFOUND IMPACT ON BRAIN DEVELOPMENT.

Why Early Experience Matters



Newborn
Brain
Average
Weight
333 grams

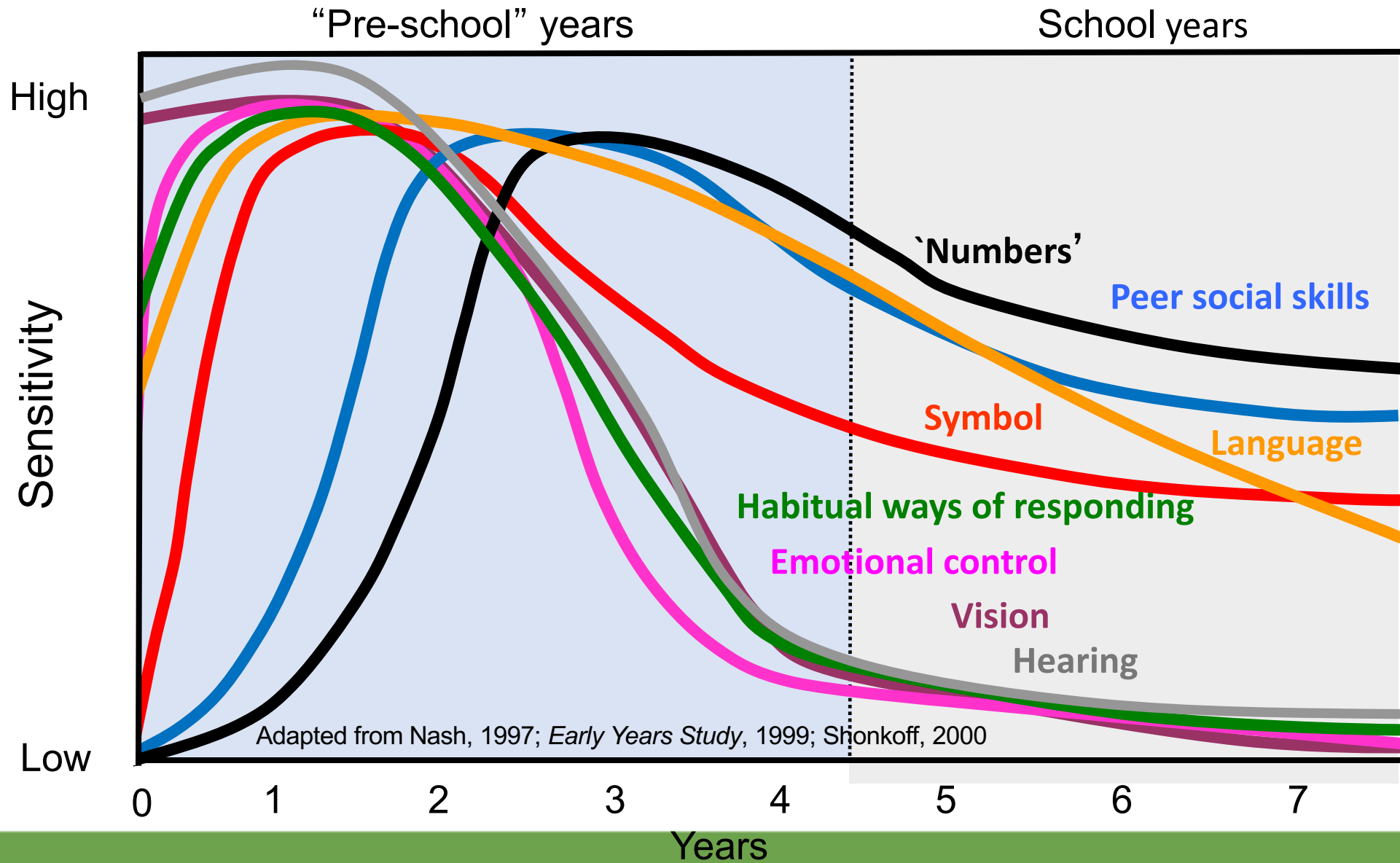


2 Year Old's Brain
Average Weight
999 grams

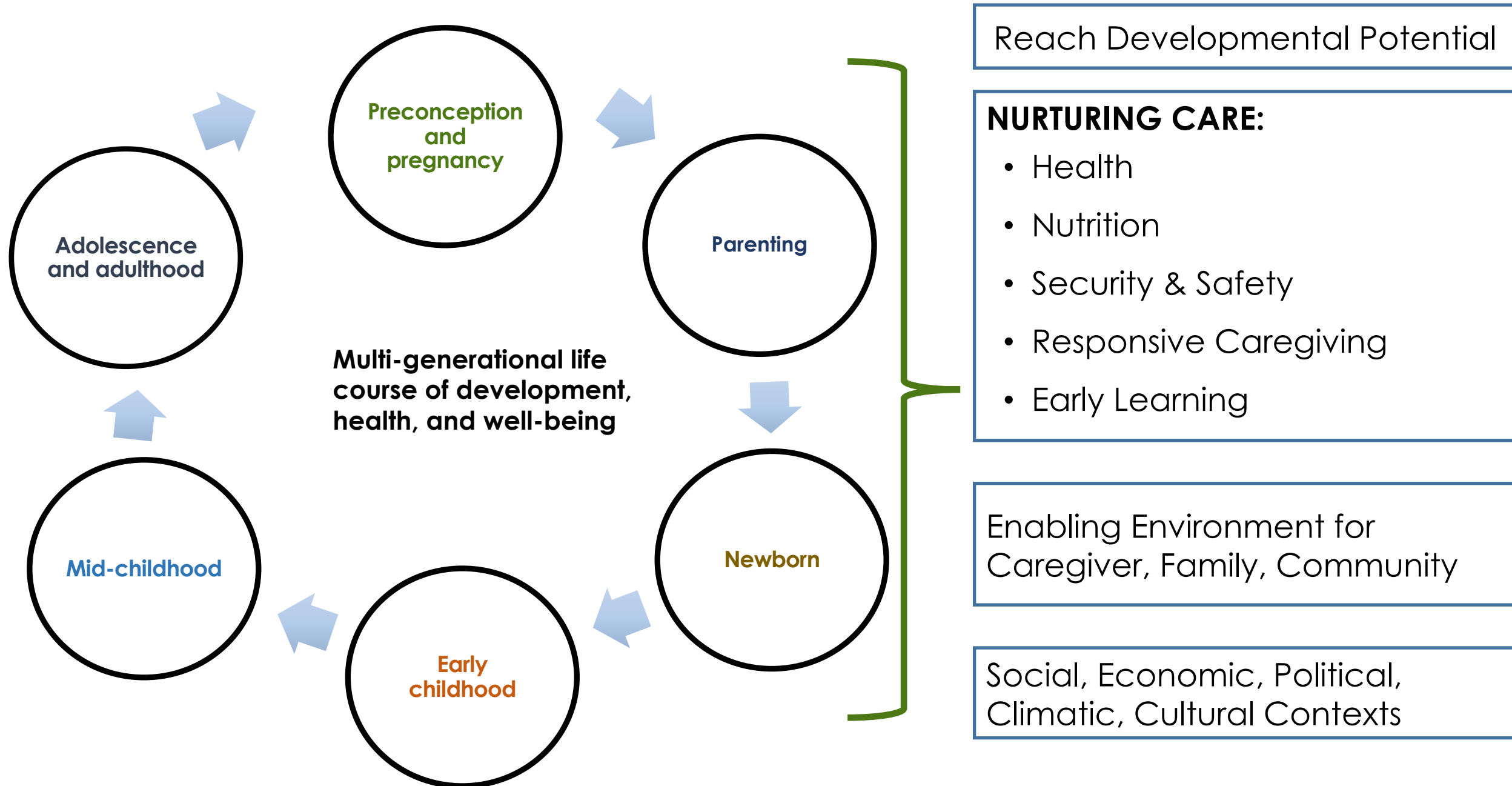


Adult Brain
Average Weight
1400 grams

'Sensitive Periods' in Early Brain Development



New Evidence Advancing ECD: A Life Course Perspective



The Plasticity of Brain Architecture Decreases over Time

- The neuroplasticity formed at the early age underlies a child's physical and mental health, life long capacity to learn, adapt to change and develop psychological resilience
- Brain has more plasticity in early years and its capacity for change decreases with age
- Accommodates a wide range of environments and interaction during early years
- Early Plasticity makes the brain both more vulnerable to harm and more capable of recovery
- Window of opportunity for different type of skills

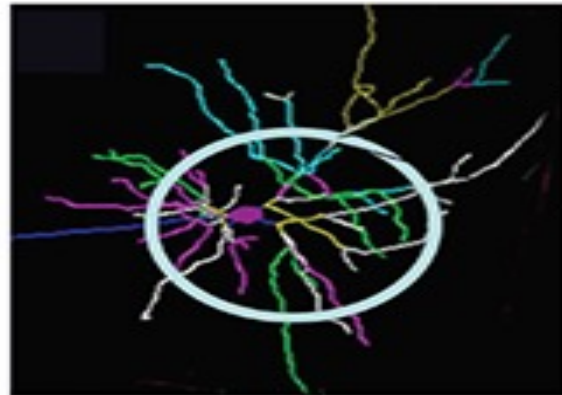
Early Childhood Stress Influences Brain Development

- Toxic stress has a negative impact on a child's development. It can undermine the development of the body's stress response systems and affect the developing brain, cardiovascular system, immune system and metabolic regulatory controls
- Early interventions are critical for optimal life course outcomes because these physiological disruptions can persist far into adulthood and lead to lifelong impairments in both physical and mental health

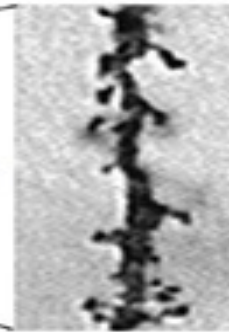
Early Childhood Stress Influences Brain Development

Persistent Stress Changes Brain Architecture

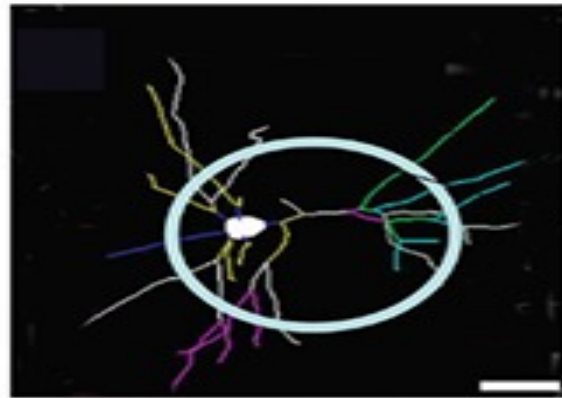
Normal



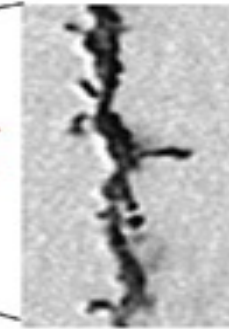
Typical neuron—
many connections



Toxic
stress



Damaged neuron—
fewer connections



Prefrontal Cortex and
Hippocampus

Early Childhood Development (Video)



INTERACTION POINT

WHY EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT?

Why Invest in Early Years?

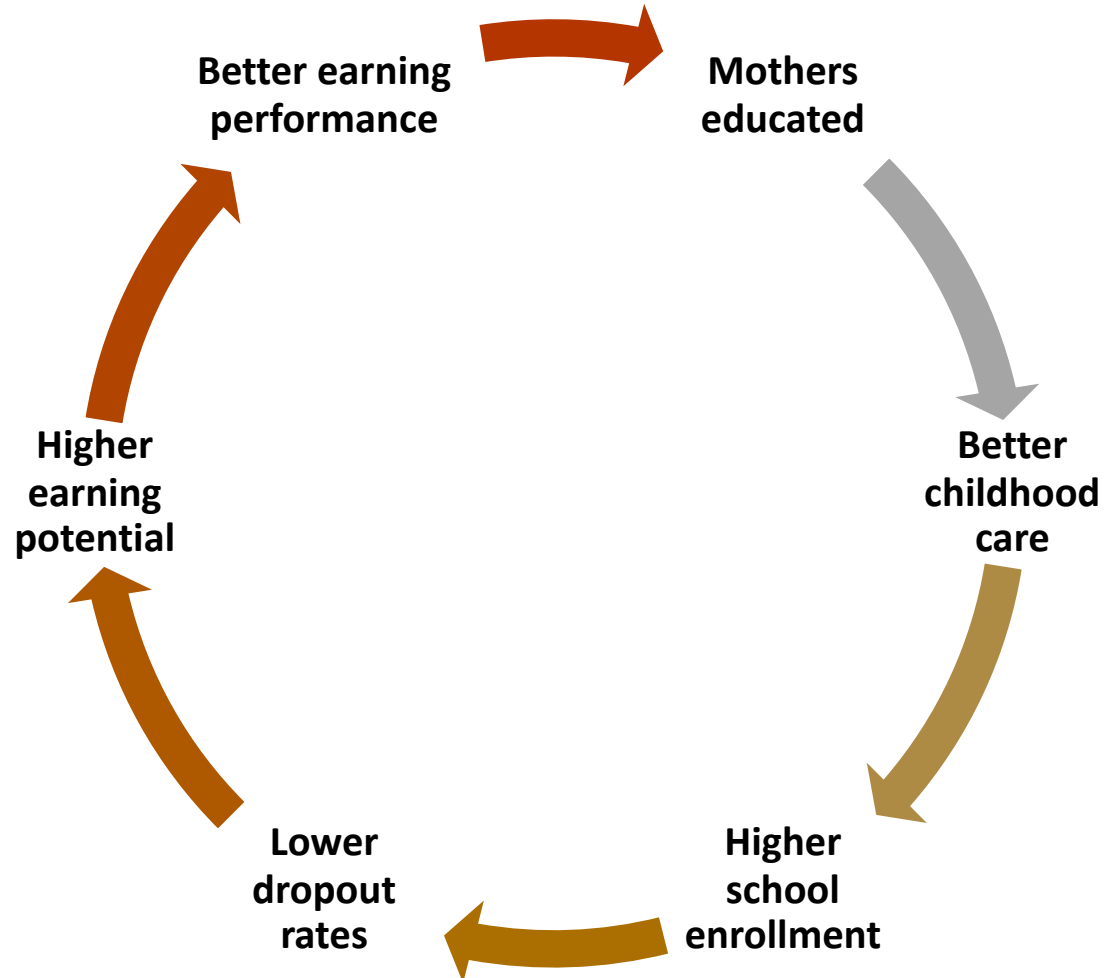
Children who get the right nutrition during the first 1000 days:

- are 10 times more likely to overcome the most life threatening child diseases
- complete 4.6 more grades at school
- go on to earn 25% more in wages as adults
- are more likely as adults to have healthier families

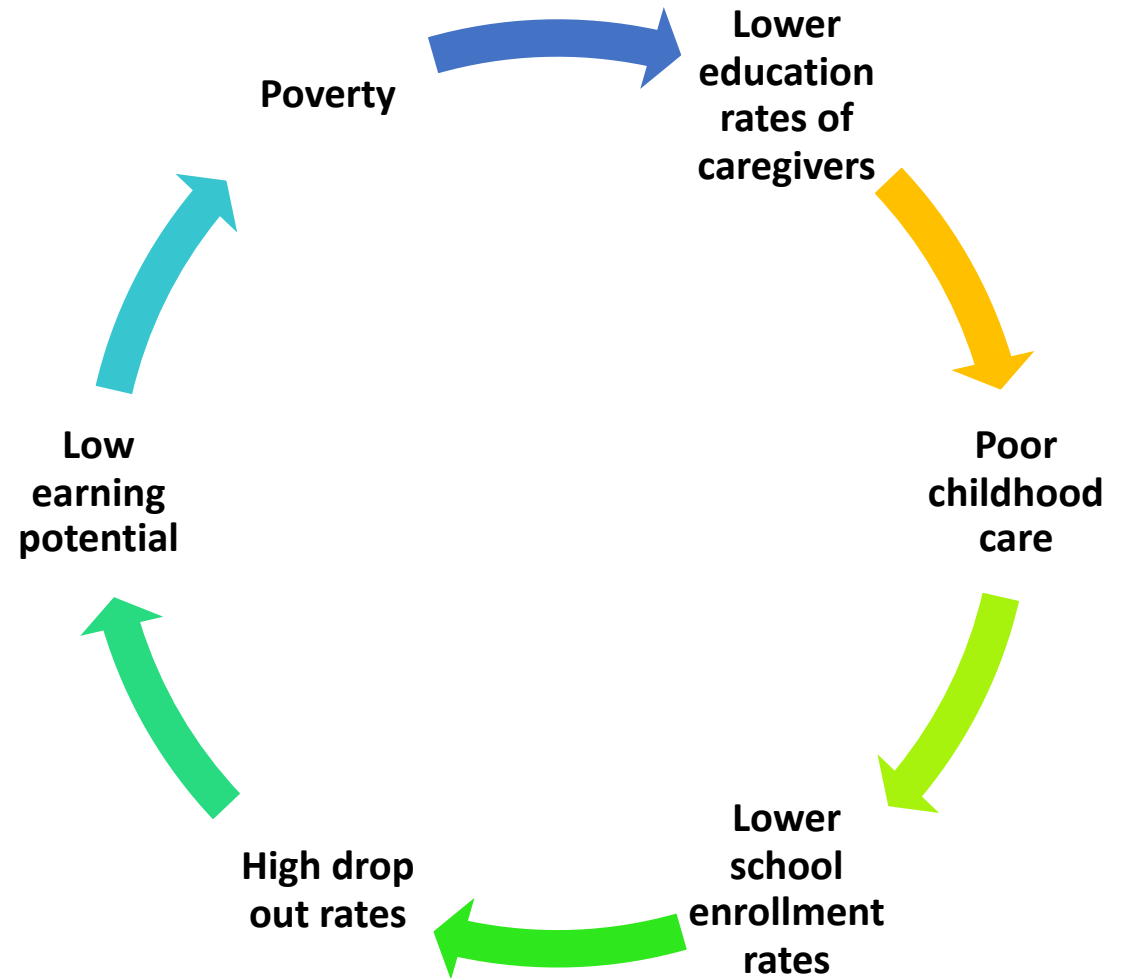
(Source Lancet Journals - ECD Series)

Timely Intervention in Early Childhood

Benefits of investing in ECD



Repercussions of not investing in ECD



Investing in Early Years: Returns to Individuals

- Programmes that provide early nutrition, stimulation and protection in the first 1,000 days of life can improve individual adult earnings by almost 25%
- Investing in Early Childhood Development benefits children and in turns nations – supporting a more skilled, educated and healthy workforce

Investing in Early Years: Returns to Societies

- Evidences show that investing in ECD is effective and cost effective.
- Investments in early childhood programmes starting from the youngest age yield more than a 13% returns in reduced poverty and income gaps and increased economic competitiveness.
- Investment pays off in societies with less crime and better-equipped and peaceful workforce

Early Experiences Matters

- By age 2, a baby's brain has reached almost 80% of its adult size. Early Experiences Matters
- The quality of experiences during the first 1,000 days of life establishes either a strong or fragile foundation for everything that follows.
- Genes provide the blue print and the environment nurtures it.
- A child's early experiences affect how their brain develops and adapts to its environment and has lifelong implications on learning, resilience, and physical and mental health.

INTERACTION POINT

LANDSCAPE OF ECD IN PAKISTAN

Landscape of ECD in Pakistan

- **Health**- 55/1000 (Neonatal mortality), 54% basic vaccination; mental health is not part of primary health care
 - **Nutrition**: 40% stunting; 48% EBF and Early Initiation; 46% suffer from anemia
 - **Safety**: 32% non-access to toilet facilities, lack of focus on baby WASH
 - **Early learning opportunities**: 44% Out of School Children, 34% preschool attendance; untrained workforce
 - **Responsive care- missing link**: 30% early stimulation, 3% with 2+books at home, 3% father engagement.
- Young Mothers (birth 18y)7%
 - Services to children are in silos
 - Coverage: Mostly on Early Childhood Education but limited services for < 3 years of age
 - Huge inequities (Age, gender, geographical)

Landscape of ECD in Pakistan

PAKISTAN

Millions of children risk not meeting developmental potential:

- 40% of children < 5 years old stunted, 31% under-weight, 14% wasted and 13% pre-school age children deficient in Vitamin A.
- Pakistan is ranked 28th highest country with stunted children out of 136 countries.
- The country loses nearly US\$ 3billion on GDP to Vitamin and mineral deficiencies.(Pakistan Nutrition at a Glance, WB)
- Widespread malnutrition - children and maternal
- Lack of stimulation, exposure to environmental hazards

Many challenges complicate ECD

Little or no
investment in ECD

Limited progress in
addressing basic
determinants

Population
growth

Urban
migration

Natural
disasters,
pandemic

Socio-political
instability and
conflict

PAKISTAN'S COMMITMENTS TO INTERNATIONAL ECD TRENDS

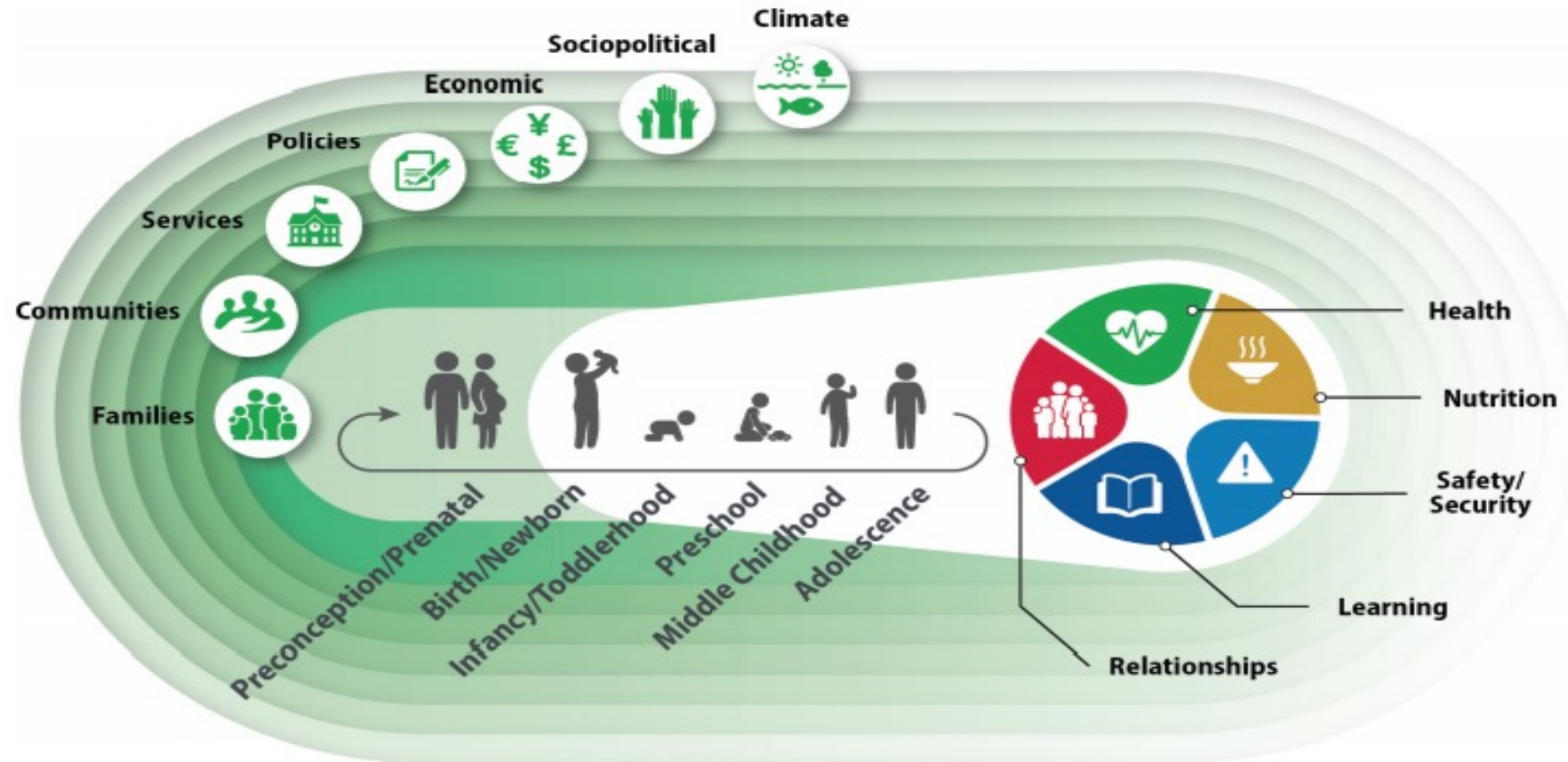
Sustainable Development Goals -SDGs:

A Unique and Significant Opportunity to drive Integrated Transformation in ECD

- Goal 1: No Poverty - ECD is cost effective
- Goal 2: Zero hunger - Stimulation and nutrition
- Goal 3: Good health & well being
- Goal 4: Quality Education -Lifelong learning begins at birth
- Goal 5: Gender equality, greater investment in quality childcare
- Goal 8: Decent work & economic growth - Promote decent work, professionalization of caregivers
- Goal 10: Reducing Inequalities
- Goal 11: Safe cities, ECD spaces, natural love for environment
- Goal 16: Peaceful societies



Nurturing Care Framework



2 Nurturing Care Framework from preconception through adolescence.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PROGRAMMES

Recommended Programmes and Policies

- Integrated & Multi-sector Policy for Zero – age 8.
- Parents Support Programme and Parental Education.
- Workforce development from caregivers to policy makers.
- Parents caregivers need a facilitating environment of laws, policies, services and community support to assist them in providing their young children with nurturing care.
- Interventions should target and support nurturing parent/caregiver-child interactions in normal and school and humanitarian settings.
- Recommended programmes and policies.

Recommended Programmes and Policies (Cont..)

- Quality Early Learning & Day Care Programme.
- Maternal Mental Health Programme.
- Material Development & Translating material into regional languages.
- Awareness raising & creating demand.
- Networking and dissemination of knowledge.

INTERACTION POINT