



# ARNEC

Asia-Pacific Regional Network  
for Early Childhood



## Addressing the impact of COVID-19 on young children:

Some insights from the Asia-Pacific Region

# History – Vision – Mission

- A regional professional network established in February 2008 (*UNICEF, UNESCO, Plan International*)
- To build strong partnerships in the Asia-Pacific region to advance the agenda on and investment in **Early Childhood Development (ECD)**

## Vision

All young children in the Asia-Pacific region realise optimal well-being and development.

## Mission

ARNEC shares knowledge and advocates for children's rights, and holistic and inclusive ECD.



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# Key message

1. COVID-19 has significant impact on young children and their families most especially on the most vulnerable and marginalised groups.
2. Countries have been implementing practical and innovative approaches and strategies to address the needs of young children and their families amidst COVID 19 - these need to be shared.
3. Issues of equity and disparities need to be elevated as countries slowly transition to the 'new normal' – need to have stronger advocacy.

# Impact of COVID-19 on Young Children and Early Childhood Development in the Asia-Pacific Region

*Views of the ECD community*

*June 2020*



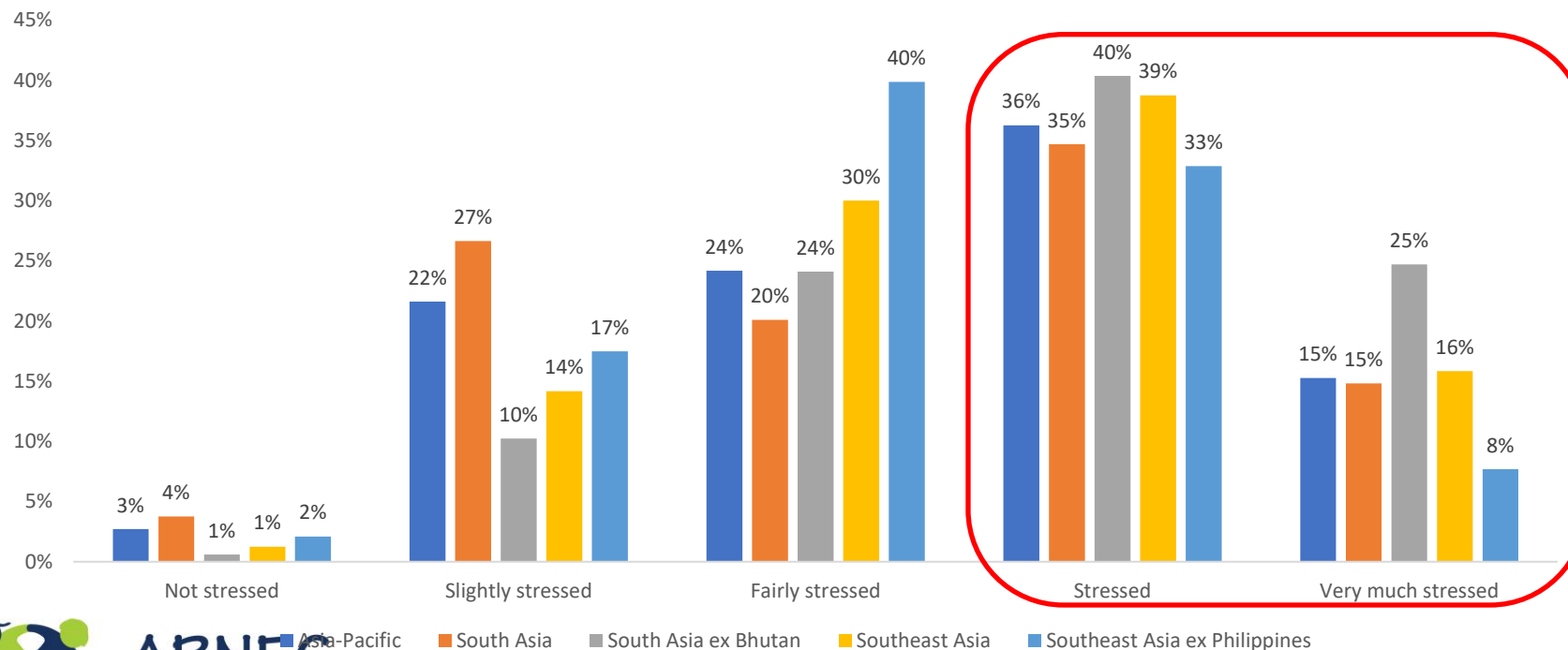
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# Stress Level Experienced by Families

More than 50% of ECD respondents in the Asia-Pacific region assess families as under pandemic induced stress - stressed and very much stressed. Respondents from Pakistan, Bangladesh, India and the Philippines assess families as the worst off, with over 70% of respondents assessing families to be under significant stress.

ECD Respondents' Assessment of Families' Stress Levels



Percentage of ECD respondents assessing families at the various stress levels

Country	Stressed & very much stressed
Bangladesh	79%
Bhutan	39%
Brunei Darussalam	10%
Cambodia	57%
India	73%
Indonesia	38%
Malaysia	67%
Nepal	45%
Pakistan	80%
Philippines	75%
Singapore	34%
Sri Lanka	33%
Viet Nam	18%
Region	Stressed & very much stressed
Asia Pacific	52%
South Asia	49%
South Asia ex Bhutan	65%
Southeast Asia	55%
Southeast Asia ex Philippines	41%

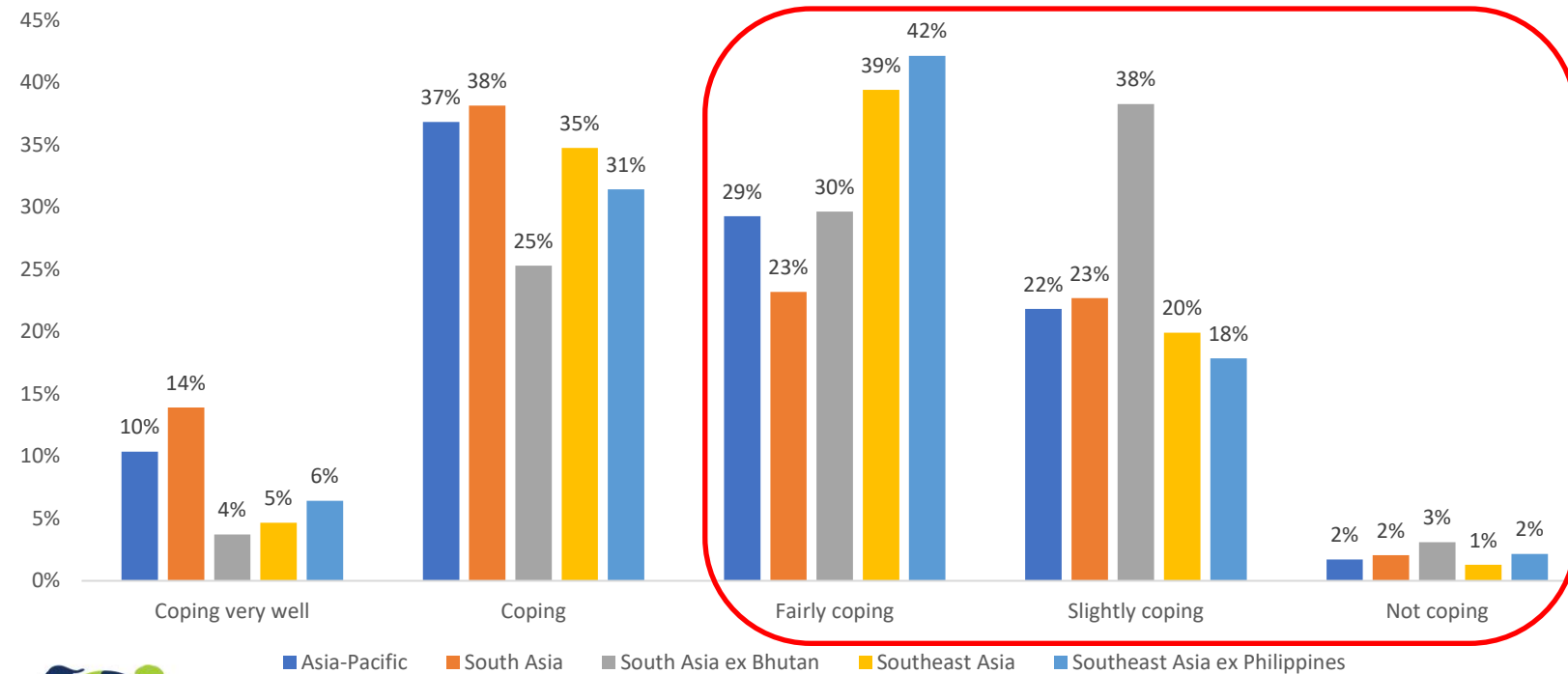


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# Coping Ability of Families

Over 50% of respondents in Asia-Pacific region assess families to be facing challenges in coping under the heightened stress. Respondents from Pakistan, India and Bangladesh assess families to have difficulty coping while those from Bhutan and Brunei assess families to be coping relatively well.

ECD Respondents' Assessment of Coping Abilities of Families



Percentage of ECD respondents assessing families' coping abilities

Country	Coping very well	Fairly, Slightly or Not Coping
Bangladesh	0%	48%
Bhutan	21%	13%
Brunei	20%	10%
Darussalam	0%	21%
Cambodia	2%	47%
India	3%	37%
Indonesia	4%	24%
Malaysia	8%	27%
Nepal	6%	50%
Pakistan	2%	23%
Philippines	3%	6%
Singapore	8%	25%
Sri Lanka	13%	6%
Viet Nam		

Region	Coping very well	Fairly, Slightly or Not Coping
Asia-Pacific	10%	53%
South Asia	14%	48%
South Asia ex Bhutan	4%	71%
Southeast Asia	5%	61%
Southeast Asia ex Philippines	6%	62%

# Factors Contributing to Family Stress

Income losses, school/ECD center closures, and prolonged home stay are top reasons for family stress in the Asia-Pacific region. Food insecurity is also significantly contributing to stress for families in India, the Philippines, and Bangladesh.

Country*	BG	BT	BN	KH	IN	ID	MY	NP	PK	PH	SG	LK	VN
Inadequate relief/response from social protection/welfare services	41%	15%	0%	43%	40%	10%	11%	38%	10%	46%	3%	23%	12%
More difficulty in guaranteeing sanitation	2%	18%	10%	7%	7%	3%	7%	0%	5%	2%	0%	8%	6%
Inadequate food/looming hunger	59%	10%	10%	29%	84%	26%	22%	38%	30%	65%	9%	38%	6%
Higher childcare burden at home	12%	38%	60%	50%	29%	52%	63%	22%	25%	9%	54%	38%	47%
Poor government handling of COVID-19 prevention/containment	34%	4%	0%	7%	9%	32%	0%	35%	20%	26%	3%	0%	0%
Limited knowledge or awareness of COVID-19 pandemic	41%	27%	10%	43%	27%	16%	7%	24%	25%	18%	9%	23%	0%
More difficulty in accessing safe water	2%	11%	0%	0%	2%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
More difficult or limited access to healthcare	59%	16%	10%	29%	40%	35%	19%	54%	45%	40%	6%	23%	24%
School/ECD centre closures	56%	78%	100%	86%	42%	52%	93%	76%	55%	45%	74%	77%	94%
Work stoppage/loss of income/limited savings	90%	66%	50%	71%	96%	77%	96%	65%	85%	91%	77%	92%	100%
Prolonged home stay/limited mobility	56%	56%	60%	21%	49%	58%	63%	68%	55%	53%	89%	54%	82%
Disrupted family routine	20%	28%	60%	36%	27%	58%	59%	32%	40%	34%	86%	46%	59%

\*Isocode of the countries are Bangladesh (BG), Bhutan (BT), Brunei Darussalam (BN), Cambodia (KH), India (IN), Indonesia (ID), Malaysia (MY), Nepal (NP), Pakistan (PK), Philippines (PH), Singapore (SG), Sri Lanka (LK) and Viet Nam (VN).



Colours approximating orange and red hues mean high responses for factors contributing to family stress, based on the views of the ECD community in the region



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# Impacts on Young Children (1)

COVID-19 is having a significant impact on the nurturing care of young children.



- Reduced access to healthcare services/facilities
- Reduced access to childhood immunisation
- Fear/risk of COVID-19 infection



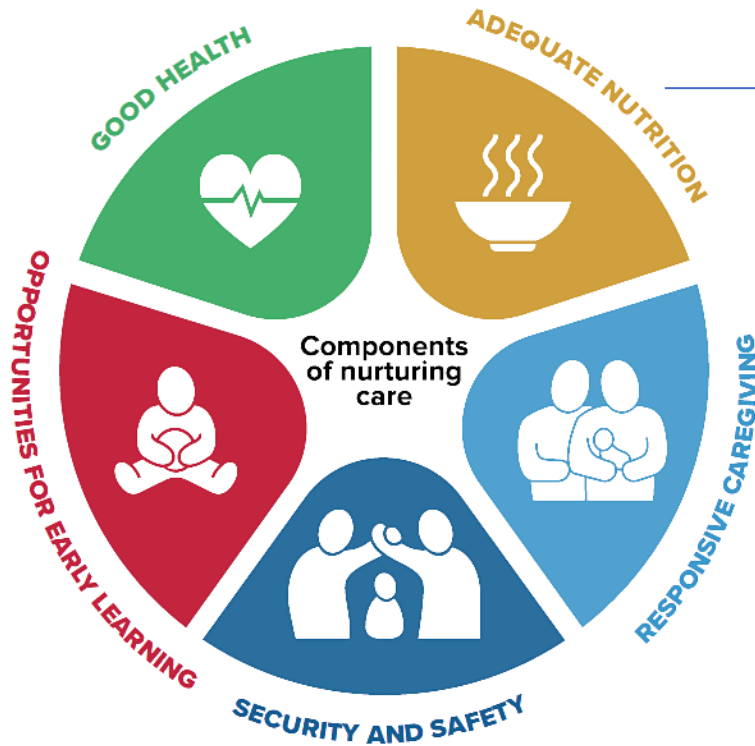
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# Impacts on Young Children (2)

Finding 7: COVID-19 is having a significant impact on the nurturing care of young children.



- Reduced access to nutritious food
- Disrupted school/centre meal programmes
- Increased food insecurity, especially for the poor



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# Impacts on Young Children (3)

Finding 7: COVID-19 is having a significant impact on the nurturing care of young children.



- Caregiving stress borne by parents/caregivers
- Challenge in accessing caregivers
- Lack of caregiving at home, especially for working parents



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# Impacts on Young Children (4)

Finding 7: COVID-19 is having a significant impact on the nurturing care of young children.



- Increased vulnerability to domestic violence, child abuse and toxic stress
- Lack of parental supervision for children with working parents
- Increased vulnerability of children to online sexual exploitation



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# Impacts on Young Children (5)

Finding 7: COVID-19 is having a significant impact on the nurturing care of young children.



- Disrupted learning routines
- Lack of quality cognitive stimulations and early learning, especially for children with uneducated caregivers
- Inability to access online learning



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# Young children from marginalised families and communities bear the heavy 'pandemic burden'

- Children with delays and disabilities;
- Children living in poverty
- Children living in informal settlements;
- Children living in rural and remote communities;
- Children of refugees and migrants; and
- Children of ethnic and linguistic minorities.



# Young children amidst COVID-19: ARNEC's Webinar series

1

Practical ECD strategies for the most vulnerable young children and their families, 13 April 2020

5

Ensuring the security and safety of young children during and beyond the pandemic, 21 May 2020

2

Caring for the caregivers: practical experiences and resources for parents and caregivers, 23 April 2020

6

Exploring the power of play in building the resilience of young children and their families, 28 May 2020

3

How young children cope with anxiety, fear, and stress, 30 April 2020

7

The ECD workforce matters, too: profiles, impacts and support measures during and beyond the pandemic, 9 June 2020

4

Distance learning approaches for young children, 12 May 2020

8

Post-pandemic ECD transitions: addressing disparities in policies and programs for young children, 21 July 2020

# Country innovations, approaches and strategies

Practical ECD strategies for the most vulnerable young children and their families

Equipping parents and caregivers with play-based activities to engage their young children

Psychosocial support to parents and caregivers

Maximise the use of technology for supporting parents and caregivers

# Country innovations, approaches and strategies

## Mobile Creches, India

3-step emergency response for migrant workers and their young children: *direct community contact; collaborations; and advocacy*

## BRAC Bangladesh

Mobilising and training community play leaders in refugee camps

## Child Development Centre HK

Group and individual services for children with special needs and their parents through e-mail; Parents' support group thru whatsapp

# Country innovations, approaches and strategies

## ECCD Council in the Philippines

Game cards containing family-based activities; age-appropriate and translated to local dialects

## UNICEF Philippines

10-day learning at home challenge shared through FB and twitter; early stimulation and learning activities

## ITA Pakistan

Parents, communities, volunteers, teachers, youth, staff and government mobilized to support continuous learning during COVID through different platforms

# Country innovations, approaches and strategies

## University of Oxford and Universiti Putra Malaya

Multi-sectoral collaboration in disseminating evidence-based parenting resources through various means (print, radio, social media, telegram)

## ChildFund Indonesia

Psychosocial support to parents and caregivers through adjusted content and modalities of parenting education programs

## UNICEF India

COVID-19 academy: an innovative platform developed through multi-agency collaboration - capacity building of frontline workers and outreach workers



# Country innovations, approaches and strategies

## Pratham India

Tapping community structures including mothers and ECE workers in creating content and delivery of play-based resources using WhatsApp, SMS, audio calls, etc.

## Save the Children Viet Nam

Using mobile phones and SMS to send messages to parents; messages aligned with developmental domains and translated into different ethnic languages

## Save the Children Philippines

Leveraging technology in low-resource settings through a parenting app with learning activities for children

## ChildFund Philippines

Play-based parent-child engagement through home-based family kits delivered through SMS blasts and FB

# Government response: addressing ECD equity and inclusion issues

1

ECD in COVID-19 recovery plans

2

Community mapping to assess vulnerability of young children

3

ECD centres as safe spaces for training/meetings with parents and families instead of children coming to the centers

4

Use of offline media (radio, TV, print) to reach the vulnerable groups

5

Social protection funds for vulnerable groups

6

Wide implementation of parenting education programs

7

Government support to private ECCD facilitators and massive training of pre-school and ECD teachers

8

Strong engagement of the private sector and NGOs

# Recommendations

Continue supporting holistic and inclusive ECD

Protect the gains of the SDGs and reverse losses due to COVID-19

**Focus on family support, parenting and caregiving**, particularly recognising the critical role of responsive caregiving and that parental stress and anxiety affect children's well-being, learning, safety and security.

**Address equity issues in post-pandemic ECD**, particularly the impacts on young children living with poor and migrant families and those who might have been excluded on the basis of location, gender, ethnicity and language, faith, disability.

**Support intersectoral policy reviews and reforms** informed by evidence and lessons from the impacts of the pandemic on the ECD sector and its inter-linkages with other sectors and make the ECD sector and systems resilient.


**Affirm the primacy of investing in young children and protect ECD budgets** to preserve child development gains and reverse losses from the pandemic, and to forestall costs of inaction for the well-being of the youngest citizens of society



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# What ARNEC can do to support post-pandemic ECD

- 1 Continue to serve as a knowledge and learning platform for addressing post-pandemic ECD issues (webinars and roundtable discussions)
  - 2 Establish learning groups and communities of practice for countries
  - 3 Undertake case studies on the situation of the vulnerable young children and families and other priority issues
  - 4 Develop and disseminate advocacy materials and engage policy-makers
- 

# Parenting Interventions and ECD in the age of COVID-19: Examples from Latin America, the Middle East and South Asia

Hirokazu Yoshikawa

Co-Director, NYU Global TIES for Children Center and University Professor,  
New York University





# Challenges of Parenting & ECD During COVID-19

(Yoshikawa, Wuermli, Britto, Dreyer, Leckman, Lye, Ponguta, Richter, & Stein, 2020, JI of Pediatrics)

- Crises of economic, food insecurity, job loss, forced migration
- Mental health and well-being challenges including risk of violence
- Closing / disruptions of existing ECD programming
- Lack of access to Internet for remote / distance interventions
- When programs reopen – challenges of social distancing in ECD
- This presentation:
- **Examples of TV, radio, WhatsApp, and phone-based parenting interventions implemented at scale in Peru, the Middle East, and Bangladesh**

# Radio, TV, Internet: Peru



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de Educación

- Internet access in Peru: **2.6 % in rural areas; 38.6% in urban areas;** even in capital of Lima only half of students have Internet access
- **Radio and TV: Daily broadcasts with set times** for preprimary, lower primary, upper primary, secondary; curricular content rotates across days / weeks
- For preprimary: Includes Plaza Sesamo, Latin American version of Sesame Street
- Age ranges of materials: ECD 0-2, 3, 4, 5, PRIMARY Grades 1-2, 3-4, 5-6; SECONDARY for each grade



PERÚ

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¡Bienvenidas y bienvenidos!

Querida familia, bienvenidos a **Aprendo en casa**, un espacio diseñado con mucho cariño pensando en ustedes. Aquí encontrarán actividades divertidas para realizar en familia, en las que podrán explorar, jugar, expresar, crear y aprender juntos. Ustedes son los protagonistas de este espacio, esperamos que lo disfruten y aprendan mucho.



Radio



Televisión



0 a 2 años

3 años

4 años

5 años

ActivArte

Leemos  
juntos

#AprendoEnCasa mi sobrinito en su primer día de clases





**Ellas se lavan las manos,  
cada una desde lo que sabe, puede  
y quiere hacer.**







**Confía en lo que sabe,  
puede y desea hacer.**

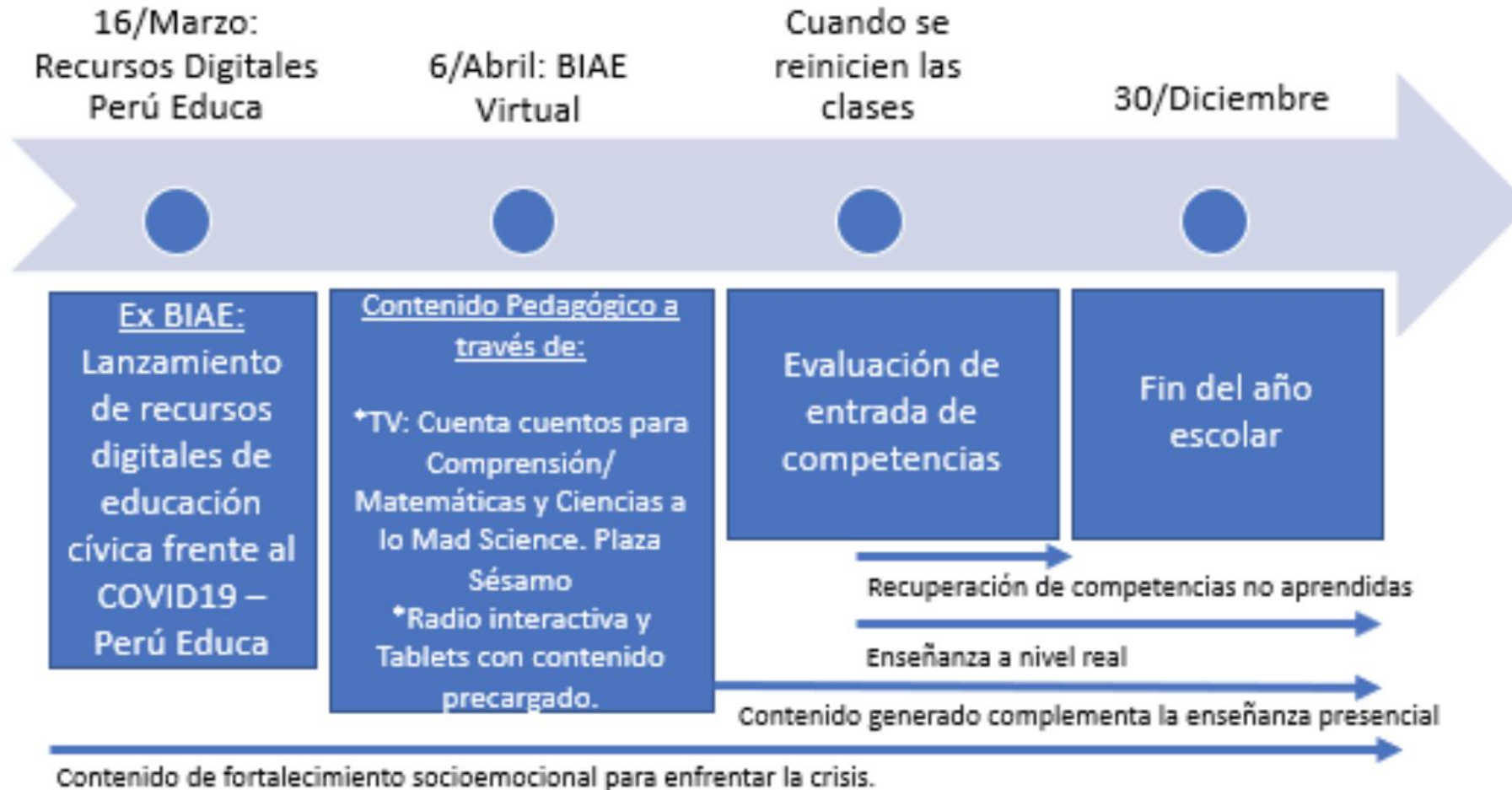




Spring 2020:  
Virtual /  
Remote  
Models

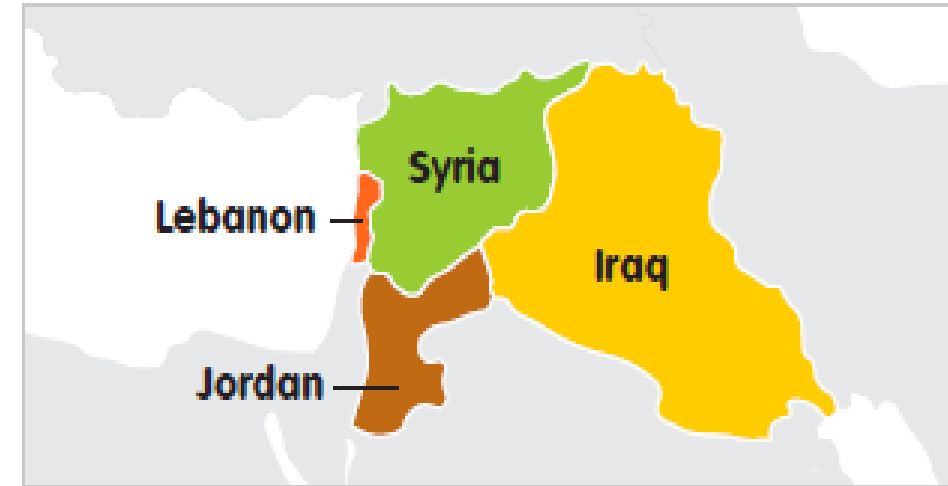
Child  
Learning  
Evaluation at  
Beginning of  
2020-2021  
School Year

Instruction at  
the Child's  
Level of  
Learning



# Ahlan Simsim: ECD in the Syrian Refugee Response Region

- More than 5 million children have been impacted by the Syrian crisis, along with another 1 million child IDPs in Iraq. These children are at **high-risk for failing to reach their full developmental potential**
- **High quality early childhood interventions** can have powerful impacts in reducing the negative effects of such early adversity
- In 2017, the IRC, Sesame Workshop, and NYU won **MacArthur Foundation's** inaugural "100&Change" award to bring **critical early childhood development (ECD) programs to the region (Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Jordan) over 5 years**. In 2018, additional funding from **LEGO Foundation**.
- Ahlan Simsim aims to **reach 1.5 million children and caregivers** through IRC direct services and millions more via mass media through the *Ahlan Simsim* TV show created by Sesame Workshop



# International Rescue Committee



- WhatsApp text message intervention for all caregivers with young children
  - Messages targeted to age of child
  - Daily texts
  - Accompanied by illustration; audio message; link to video
  - Messaging platform: Viamo
- 
- Currently testing: modality of attachment; time of day of message; language; inclusion; account for literacy level





مَرَحَبًا، حَضِرْ مَجْمُوعَةً مِنَ الْأَجْزَاءِ الْعُلَوِيَّةِ مِنَ الْقَنَانِي الْبِلَاسْتِيكِيَّةِ الْفَارِغَةِ وَقُمْ بِقَصِّهَا وَحَفِّهَا لِتُصْبِحَ حَوَافُّهَا أَمْنَةً، وَبِمَاكَانِكَ أَيْضًا أَنْ تُحْضِرَ مَجْمُوعَةً مِنَ الصُّحُونِ وَالْأَوْعِيَةِ الْبِلَاسْتِيكِيَّةِ مُخْتَلِفَةِ الْأَحْجَامِ وَاطْلُبْ مِنْ طِفْلِكَ أَنْ يُرَتِّبَهَا فَوْقَ بَعْضِهَا لِتُصْبِحَ بُرْجًا صَغِيرًا أَوْ دَاخِلَ بَعْضِهَا الْبَعْضِ.

هَذَا النَّشَاطُ يُسَاعِدُ طِفْلَكَ فِي التَّمْيِيزِ بَيْنَ الْكَبِيرِ وَالصَّغِيرِ وَفِي تَحْدِيدِ الطَّرِيقَةِ الَّتِي يَضَعُ فِيهَا الْأَشْيَاءَ فَوْقَ بَعْضِهَا كَيْ لَا تَقَعَ فَيَضَعُ الْكَبِيرَ أَوَّلًا ثُمَّ الصَّغِيرَ، أَوْ دَاخِلَ بَعْضِهَا فَيَضَعُ الصَّغِيرَ دَاخِلَ الْكَبِيرِ.

ولمزيدٍ من التوضيح شاهد الصورة المرفقة.



Hello, Try gathering a group of upper parts of empty plastic bottles and crop them so the edges are safe. Then you can also bring plastic bowls and dishes of different sizes and ask your child to stack them over each other to become a tower, or place them inside each other.

This activity assists your child in distinguishing between big and small, and determining the way in which things are placed above each other, so that they do not fall, or that there is greater or fewer.

For further clarification, see the attached photo.

# Phone-Based: Reach Up and Learn Adaptation

- 3 times a month phone calls adapted from RUL (Walker, Powell, IRC Jordan team led by Manar Shukri, Ayat Al Aqra)
- Trained community health volunteers (CHVs) in each call provide:
  - 1) COVID information, check-in and strategies
  - 2) Caregiver well-being check-in
  - 3) Selected Reach Up and Learn activities feasible to accomplish in the home
- Targeted to age range of child between 0-3 years
- Currently implemented in Jordan
- Impact Evaluation to begin in October 2020





Phone-based COVID ECD response in Cox's Bazar refugee camps and host communities, including outreach to Humanitarian PlayLab caregivers and their children

# Pashe Achhi (Beside You)

A telecommunication solution led by women



- **20 minutes** tele conversation every week between the front liner, child and caregiver
  - 10 minutes wellbeing
  - 10 learning through play
  - 0-6 age cohort
- Children, caregivers and front liners feel **respected**
- Caregiver skills **enhanced** for engagement
- **1106** front liners call **37841** caregivers and children every week



# Building Capacity

- **Integrated** curriculum developed by 37 psychologists and 37 play-based curriculum developers
- **Cascade** of trainings with one hour script and audio file
- Trainings conducted through multiple **tech** platforms
- Skillful **combination** of messaging content, communication strategy and technology
- Building capacities at **community** level

**Master Trainers  
(Experts)**

- ToT from Master Trainers for pool of trainers ( PO, PA, PC)

**Program Organizers (PO),  
Program Assistants (PA),  
Para Counselors (PC)**

- Pool of trainers provide basic training to Play Leaders

**Play Leaders**

- Play Leaders deliver script to beneficiaries

# Transformations

- A different **platform** to engage children in learning
- Delivering **play- based** curriculum from physical Play Lab to children's home through telecommunication
- **Safe space** for caregiver
- A new dimension for **women** to use telecommunication and technology for work



# Cross-cutting implementation and evaluation issues

- New integration required of health, nutrition, protection, education – while many “non-essential” services and some sectoral services are interrupted / closed
- Callers’ well-being and stress (Play Leaders calling in Pashe Acchi also of refugee backgrounds) in addition to professional development needs
- Variation in household control of digital technology or phone
- Variation in reopening levels and re-closing – hybrid models
- How to address loss of learning / variation in learning levels
- Little evidence base to work from – evaluation or M&E (e.g., few measures of quality of phone-based ECD programs)

# Thank you!

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The LEGO Foundation

# Learning through Play during COVID- 19

THE LEGO FOUNDATION'S RESPONSE





The LEGO Foundation



About the  
LEGO  
Foundation

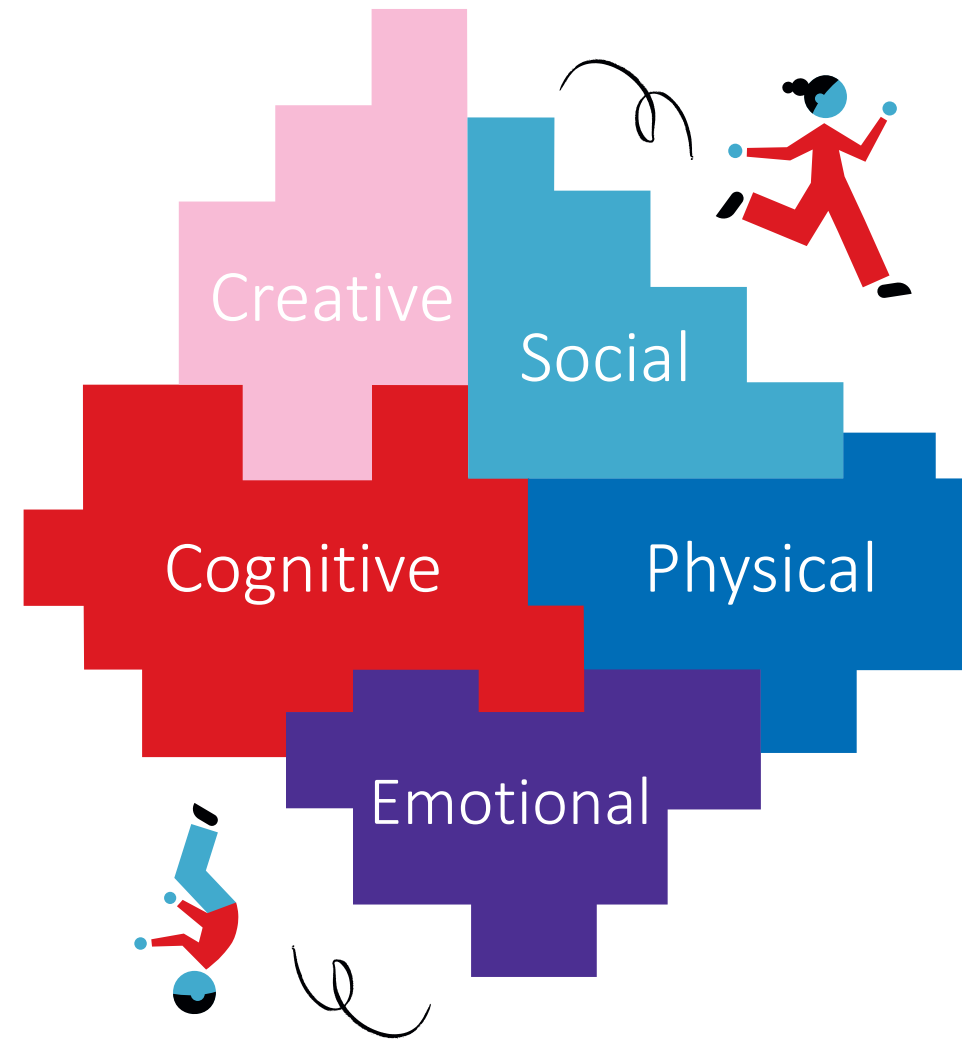
What is your favorite way to play?







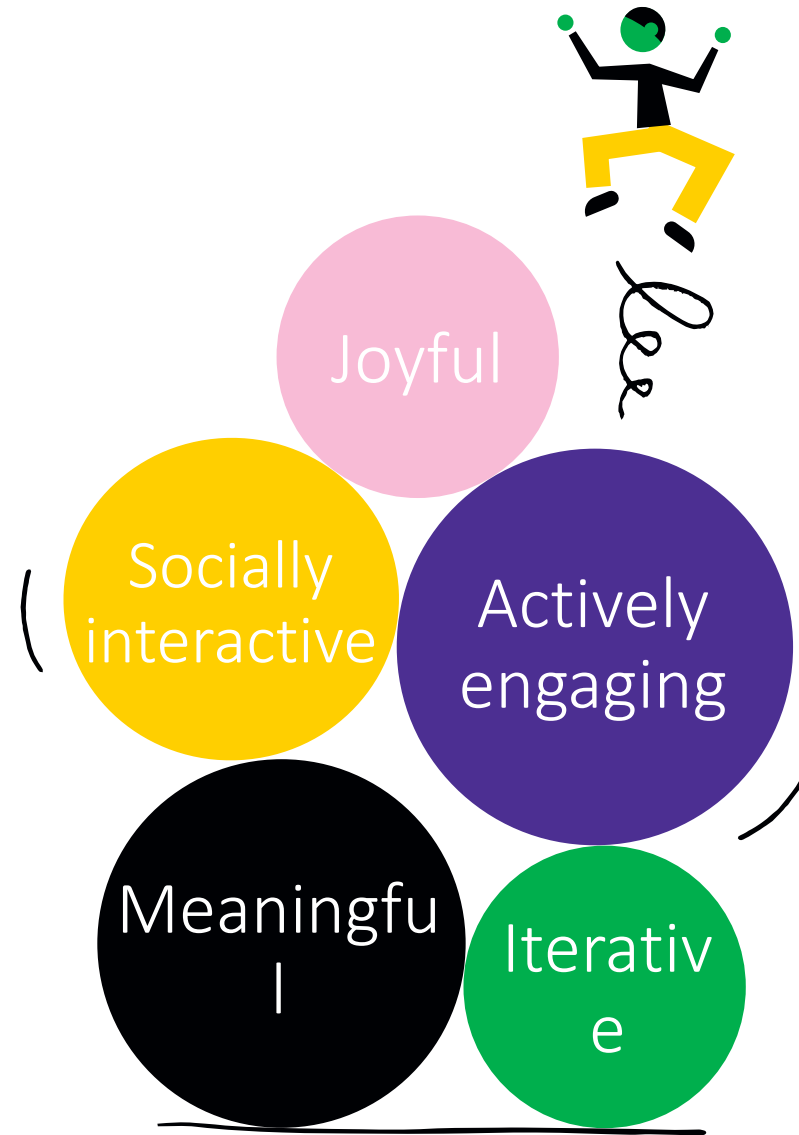
Holistic skills



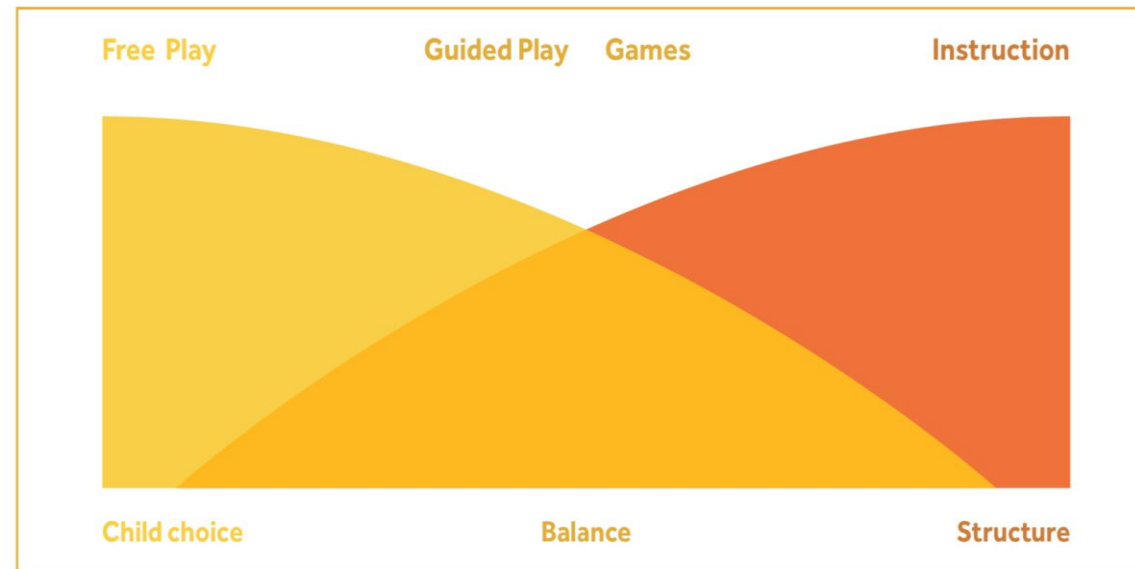
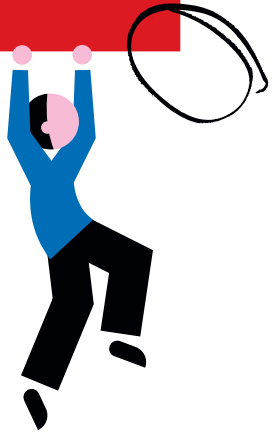
[https://www.legofoundation.com/media/1064/neuroscience-review\\_web.pdf](https://www.legofoundation.com/media/1064/neuroscience-review_web.pdf)

Characteristic of playful  
learning experiences

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01124/full>

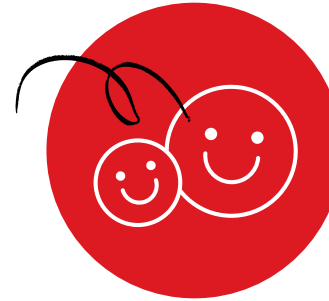


# Play facilitation spectrum

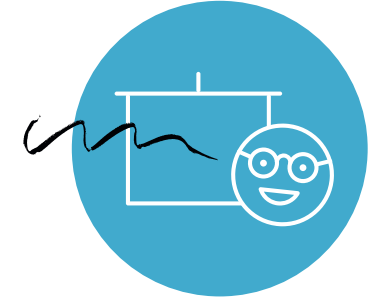


The impact we seek:

Learning through play  
empowers children to  
become creative, engaged,  
lifelong learners and develop  
the holistic skills that serve  
them, their communities and  
society throughout a  
lifetime.



caregivers



professionals



systems



governments





# Our COVID-19 response

# Four Streams of Work

- Learning through Play campaign and playlist
- Local Community Engagement with the LEGO Group
- COVID-19 support to Foundation partners
- Distance learning solutions





**During these times, **Parents** are also **Teachers** and **Employees** while having children at home**

**Share What We Know:**

<https://playlist.legofoundation.com/en/all-activities/>



## Reach Local Communities



## Support Partners

- Continuity during uncertainty
- Community response
- Vulnerable children
- Bold thinking





# Distance Learning





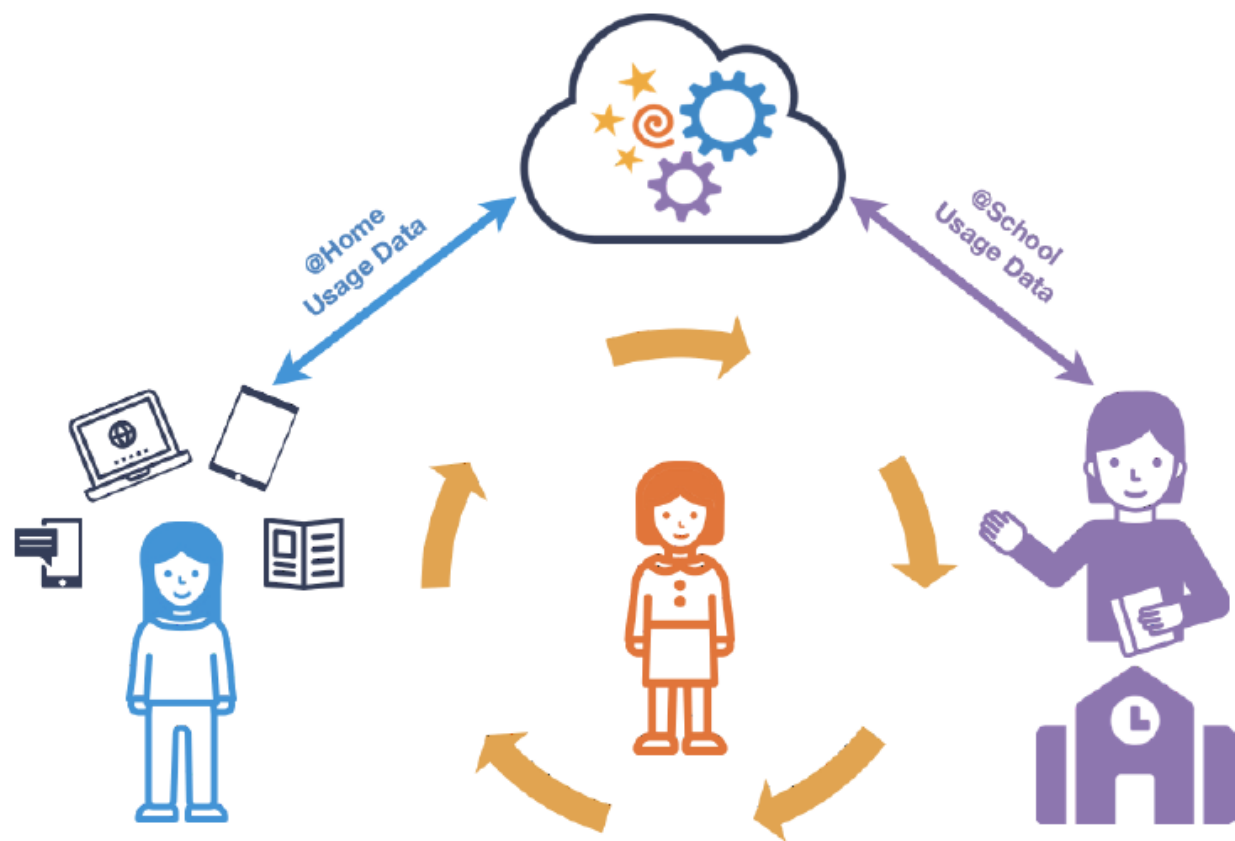
Stellenbosch University

Regional Psychosocial  
Support Initiative

Africa Early Childhood  
Network



# Tools of the Mind

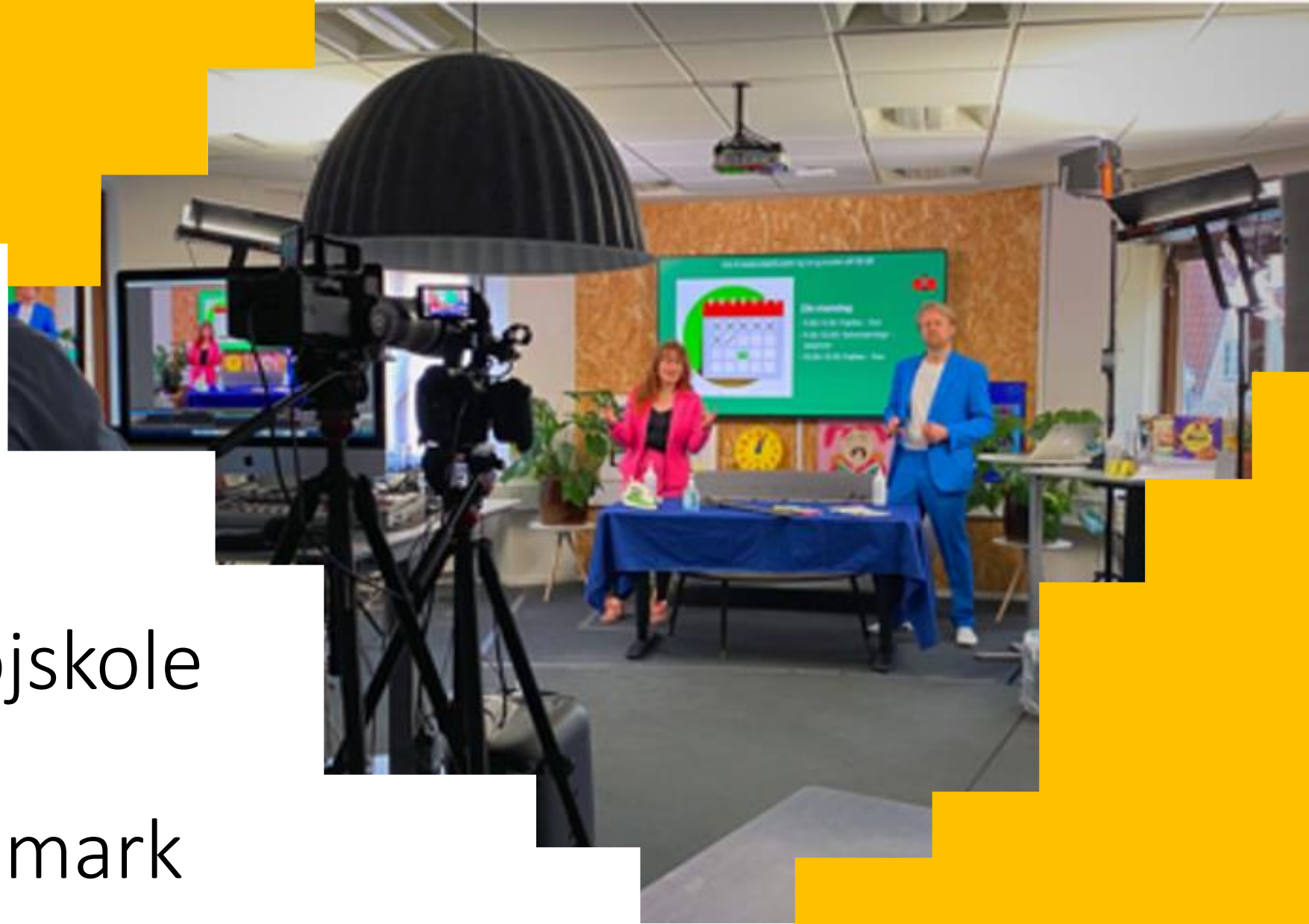




Alinea

Københavns  
Professionshøjskole

Southern Denmark  
University





## basic education

Department:  
Basic Education  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**



# Learning agenda

- Can proven in-person parenting programs replicate impact virtually?
- Can proven school-based programs engage parents to ensure continuity?
- Can lessons from lockdown enliven reopening?
- Can play-based learning enliven fewer subjects and ensure foundational learning?





## Get to know us better

[www.LEGOfoundation.com](http://www.LEGOfoundation.com)

[facebook.com/LEGOfoundation](https://facebook.com/LEGOfoundation)

[@LEGOfoundation](https://twitter.com/LEGOfoundation)

[www.linkedin.com/company/LEGO-foundation](https://www.linkedin.com/company/LEGO-foundation)



# Assessing Children's Development and Cognitive Learning





## Early childhood care and education

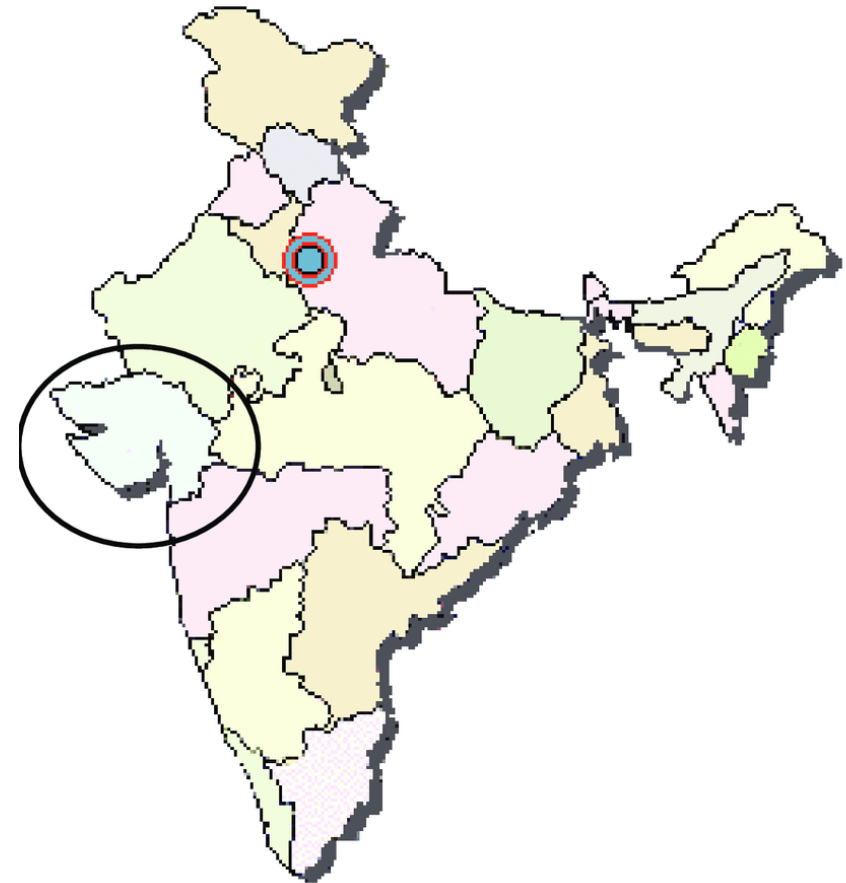
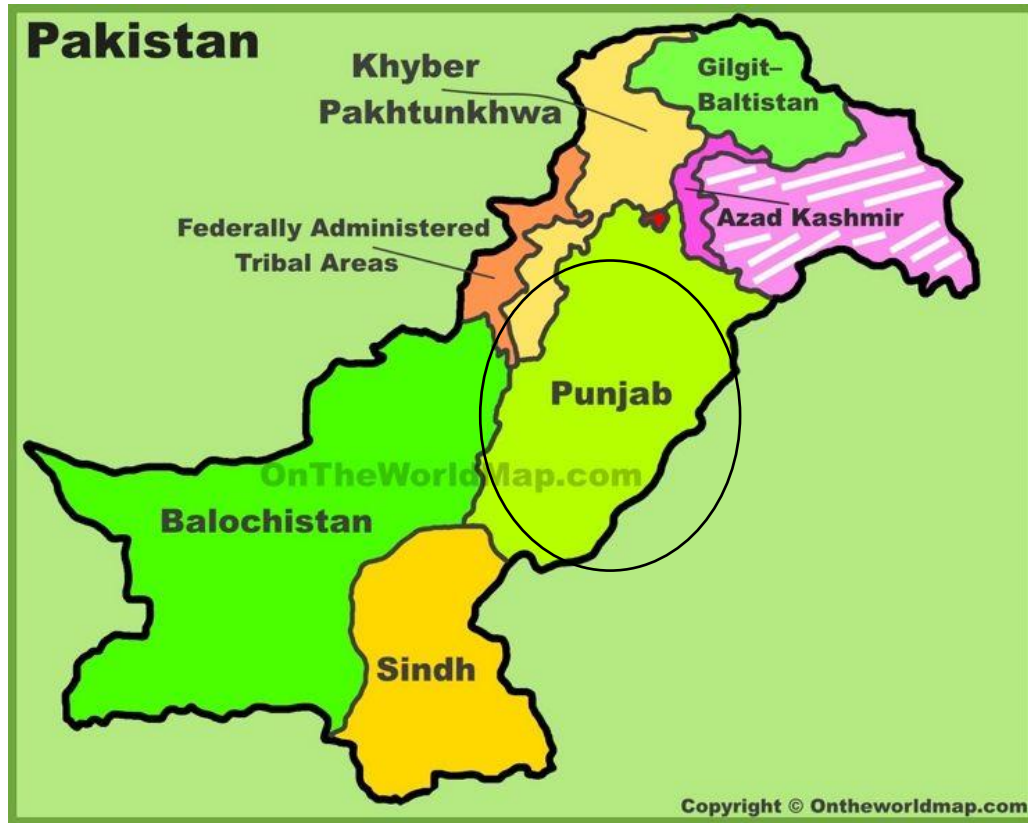
- Mostly target the following aims
  - Readiness to start compulsory school
  - Child's physical and cognitive development
  - Child's health and safety
  - Encourage parental labour force participation
- Not compulsory before 5 years of age
- Not a clear policy
- Only framework for practice
- Not assessment based

# The situation!

- Public sector is underfunded
- Private sector is struggling
- Enrolment is all year around
- Disconnect from education is always an event in a child's life.
- Lockdown will be the most common reason of school dropout
- There is no strategic plan/incentives to bring back all children in schools

# Initiatives to support the ECE sector

- Food vouchers to overcome child hunger during school closures (England)
- 20% reduction in private school fees (Pakistan, Punjab)
- National TV programmes for children's learning at home (England, Pakistan, India)
- Online school (England, Pakistan)
- Last to close in March 2020 but first to open in May 2020 (England)

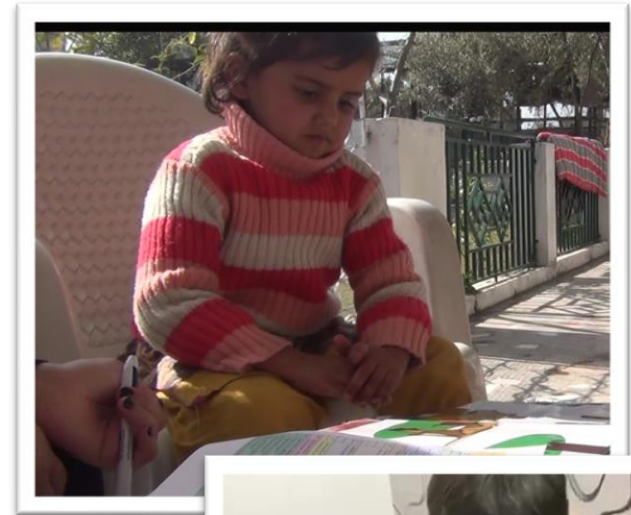


# Research objectives

To assess school readiness of children aged 3.5 to 6 years old

To assess how much children's cognitive learning develop in a year

To assess the difference between children's learning who go to school and those who do not go to school





## Selection of households and children

Enumerators' local area/community/neighbourhood

Household who have a child/children aged 3.5 to 6

A wide range of households from different socioeconomic background

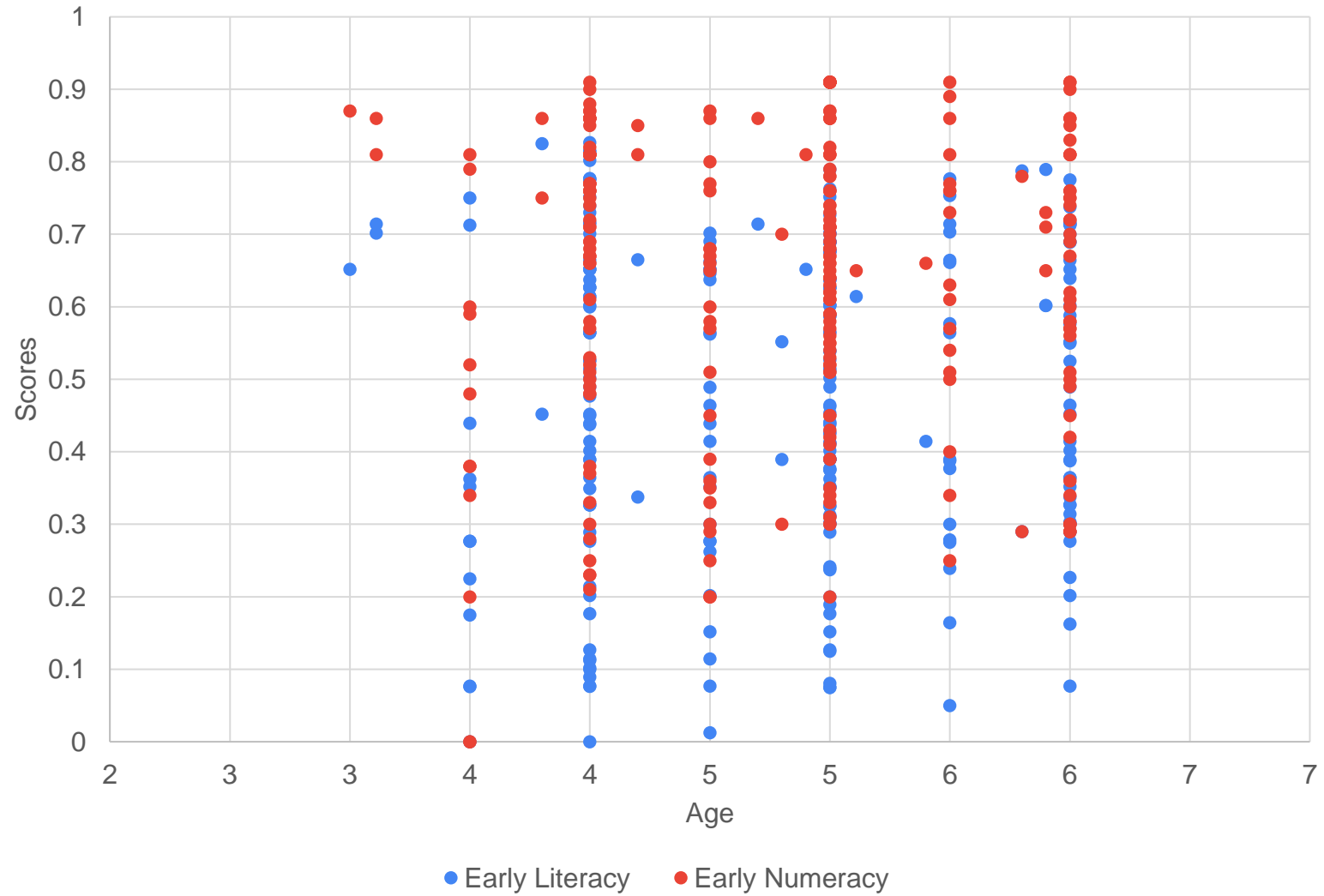
Households from rural and urban settings

## Longitudinal study

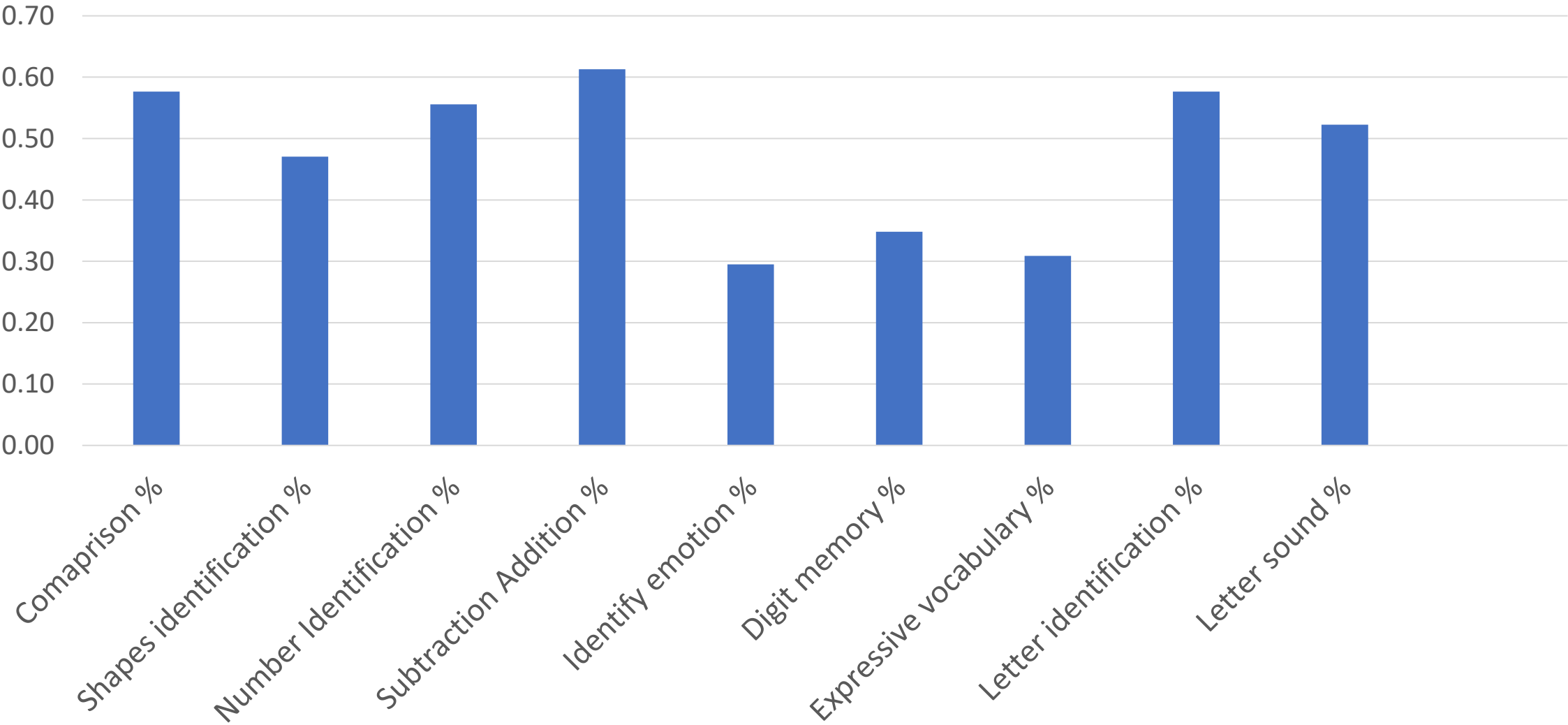
- After **12 months** all households and children will do the same exercise
- Keep **track** of households and children you selected in the study
- Each enumerator will select at least **20 children** and their **households** and track them for **two data sweeps**

<b>Emergent Literacy and Language</b>	<b>Emergent Numeracy</b>	<b>Social-emotional Development</b>
Print awareness	Comparison by size and length	Peer relations
Expressive vocabulary	Number identification	Emotional awareness
Letter identification	Classification/ Sorting	Empathy
Emergent writing	Shape identification	Conflict resolution
Initial sound discrimination	Simple operations One-to-one correspondence	Self-awareness
Listening comprehension	addition and subtraction	
	Jigsaw	
Executive Function (short-term memory and inhibitory control)		
Approaches to learning		

Age-Literacy and Numeracy

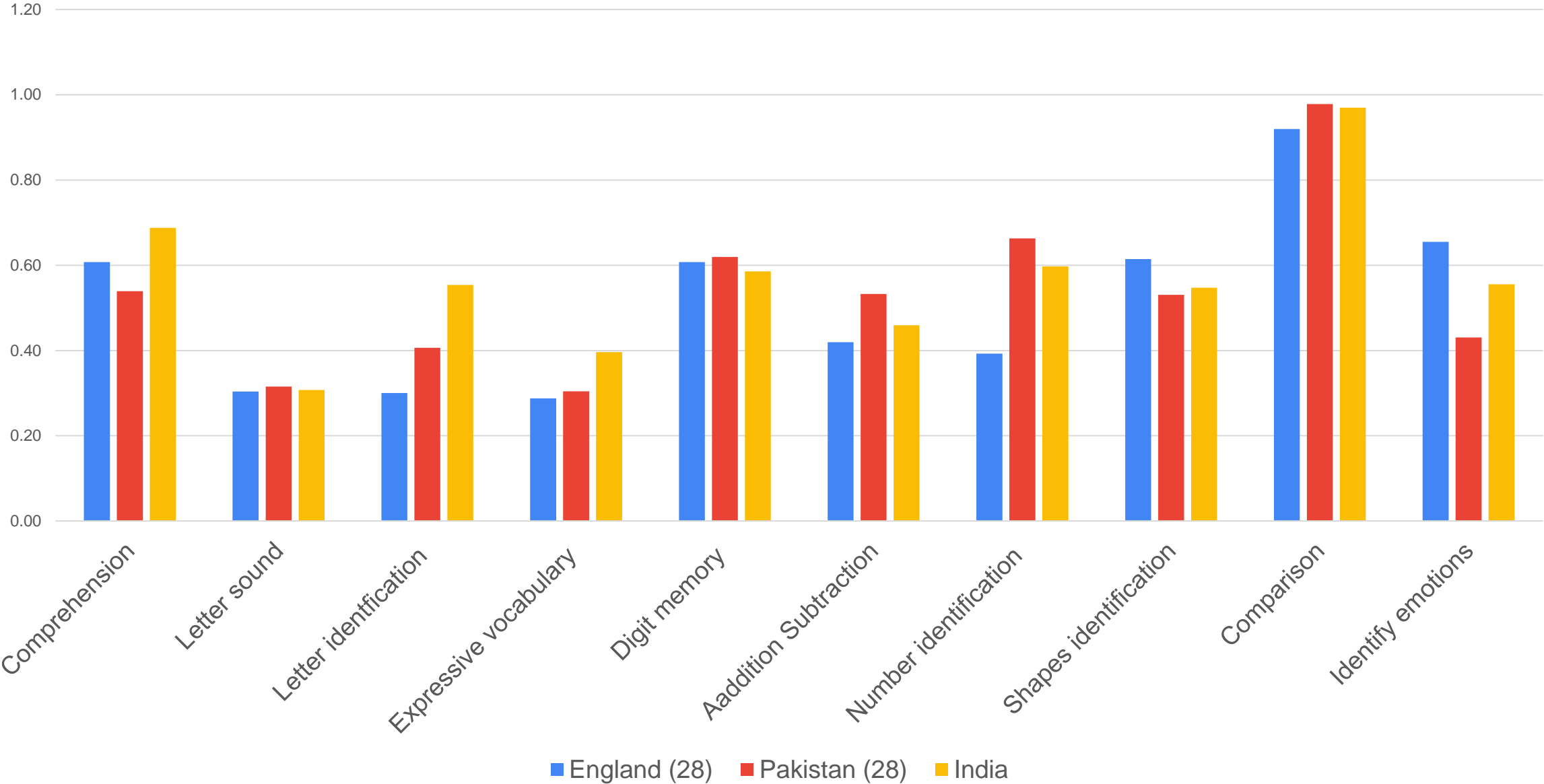


Overall percentage in emergent literacy and numeracy





Average percentage comparison



1.Children's enrolment in schools showed some positive impact in their literacy and numeracy skills. However, within these two domains some aspects of learning were not related with children's school enrolment/attendance.

2.Children who had a **delay in language**, struggled to communicate and to engage in activities. There could be several reasons of delay in language in the early years but children from families with modest educational attainments augmented with high level of poverty and deprivation clearly had limited opportunities of verbal engagement with parents.

3. We also observed that some children, who were not attending school and whose parents were not at home during the day, had long hours spent in **isolation** or with other siblings without presence of an adult in the house every day. This was observed in **immigrant workers** who moved from **rural to urban** settings and lived in temporary accommodation or rented servant quarters.

4. Mostly immigrant women worked as domestic helpers while men worked as guards, drivers or domestic helpers. There was very **limited verbal interaction between parents and children** and possibly that was one of the reasons that children were behind their age in speech and language development. Enrolment and attendance in school was important for children where both parents were working outside.

5.However, in cases where children were not attending school but spent time with mother at home or accompanied her to the homes where she worked as a domestic helper, the children still showed a **limited vocabulary** and skills for verbal communication.

6. In India and Pakistan, **joint families** are common, more so in rural areas. Children living **with grandparents** are found to have **better vocabulary** and reading skills compared to children in the nuclear families. Children who live in extended (two brothers' families living in the same house) families also seem to have better vocabulary because of interaction with cousin siblings.

7. There is a big difference in the quality **of private and government** school early years learning provisions. The learning spaces of **private schools** are equipped with **better resources** and **trained teaching staff**. However, government provisions of nurseries lack in resources and quality of teaching. However, one stark resemblance was observed in Anganwadi centres and pre-schools of international boards – both focus on cognition rather than reading abilities. Children attending Anganwadis as well as international board pre-schools were not taught how to read until attainment of six years of age.

8. A large number of children attend state funded early years learning centres in Punjab, Pakistan and Anganwadi centres in Gujarat, India. However, the conditions of these **state funded provisions** do not fully support the true purpose of conventional learning.

9. **Covid 19** crisis has stopped children to attend schools in both the countries. It is likely that schools will start in September and those who will attend will catch up the learning process quickly. However, we have observed that families with high income resources, parents having educational background and parents having awareness about importance of education have continued their efforts to **home school** their children.

10. **Disadvantaged families**, who have to spend long hours working for a daily wage, do not have much resources and awareness to engage children in learning activities. So this **crisis would likely effect children** to an extent that they will be equally the same as children **not enrolled in schools**.

# Parental Engagement for Early Childhood Education (ECE) in Punjab

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# Imagine you are a 4-year old in a household in Punjab...

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...On average, probability that you:



**34%**

Attend an ECE Program



**28%**

Had a parent/adult interact for a learning activity in the past 3 days



**2.5%**

Have three or more children's books



**52%**

Play with two or more types of playthings



**85%**

Are subject to violent child disciplining



# Impact of COVID-19

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## Violence & Abuse

- **Increased risk and incidence**



## Health & Nutrition

- **Increased malnutrition, and child and maternal deaths**



## Quality of Parent-Child Interactions

- **Effects on caregivers' mental health and use of violence**



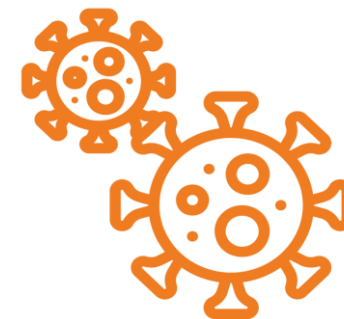
## (Quality of) Play

- **Fewer opportunities for play and physical activity**



## Return to School

- **Drop in enrolment, and learning losses**



How can early learning be promoted at home amidst such circumstances?

# Global Response

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## Protection from Violence

- Information campaigns on violence protection & psychological support
- Training frontline workers on identifying/ responding to child protection issues
- Support services for women & children experiencing violence & abuse



## Nutrition and Health

- Emergency food delivery including micronutrients & food supplements
- Promotion of family handwashing & hygiene
- Use of health & nutrition platforms to deliver key messages



## Early Stimulation & Learning

- Distribution of books, learning & play materials
- Integration of early childhood education (ECE) into distance learning programs
- Educational entertainment for young children
- Parental support through messaging on coping/parenting strategies

# ELP Project (Punjab): Early Stimulation and Learning Support

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Providing specific information & services to parents to engage in early stimulation with children, during and beyond the crisis



Public Service Ads  
(PSAs)

**Supporting parents with coping,  
dealing with stress & parenting  
strategies**



Educational Entertainment  
for Children

**Increasing learning  
opportunities for children**



Parent Activity  
Cards

**Encouraging positive playful  
parenting & play-based learning  
for children**

# Call to Action

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## Government

- Prioritize & continue provision of child-centered services in response efforts & beyond
- Provide practical support to parents on playful and supportive parenting
- Continue the focus on 2-year early childhood education
- Ensure specific hygiene protocols for young children when schools re-open
- Integrate/align ECE/ECD emergency responses with existing goals & programs
- Include ECE in (re) enrollment campaigns once schools re-open



## Private Sector

- Partner with govt. & other entities to maximize outreach of ECE/ECD related messaging/services
- Continue/sustain provision of learning opportunities for young children through private schools



## Local Communities

- Community-led information campaigns integrating messaging related to young children
- Community resource drops to deliver early learning kits/books/materials to households



# Thank you

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**PMIU-PESRP**  
Early Childhood Education

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**How has the Punjab Government engaged with and trained ECE workforce for providing service-delivery during this disruptive situation?**

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- 
- ECE in Punjab**
  - COVID- Impact and Response**
  - **Planning for schools' re-opening**
  - Way Forward**
-

## Early Childhood Education (ECE) In context of Punjab

*Early Childhood Education (ECE) programme in Punjab enables the vision of the ECE Policy (2017) by establishing dedicated ECE classrooms with set quality standards, training teachers, and developing and implementing curricula.*

**98,000+**

Enrollments

**10,000+**

ECE rooms established

**Two Year**

Curriculum approved

**40,000+**

HTs, Ts and CGs Trained

### ***Key Features***

- Each ECE classroom is provided with:
  - Colorful wall paint
  - ECE Tool Kit
  - Teacher Curriculum Guide
  - Part time Caregiver
  - Training of Head Teacher, Teacher, Caregiver and School Council Member
- MEAs and AEOs conduct routinely visits of ECE classrooms for monitoring and quality assurance purpose.



*ECE Classroom in Rahim Yar Khan*



# Early Childhood Education (ECE)

## Impact of COVID-19 and subsequent Province wide Lockdown

- COVID19 resulted in a province wide lockdown, significantly impacting various activities across the Province from mid-march 2020 onwards.

Impact	Description
In-person trainings halted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Punjab implements a cascade approach of training of ECE teachers (3 day training) and Head Teachers (3 day training)</li><li>• Caregivers are also trained In-person. (4-day training)</li></ul>
Retention of Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• One of the key impact of COVID is expected to be on the retention of children in Public schools.</li></ul>
Retention of ECE Caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ECE caregivers are hired as part-time contractual employees.</li><li>• Their remuneration is paid by school through the Non-Salary Budget.</li></ul>
Delivery of ECE Kits and guides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The ECE kits and guides are procured at the district level and distributed to the schools. Due to the lockdown the delivery of these kits and guides was disrupted.</li></ul>

# Early Childhood Education (ECE)

Service delivery *in response to COVID-19 Lockdown*

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- *To ensure that there is still continuity of activities during the COVID19 crisis, the following steps were taken by School Education Department and PMIU*
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## Key intervention

- Virtually **live training sessions** conducted for ECE teachers and caregivers by QAED- The sessions were led by the Quaid-e-Azam Academy for Education Development in support by PMIU team.
- Payment Non-Salary Budget to schools to **ensure payment of the honorarium** for caregivers' retention during nationwide lockdown
- Creating **awareness regarding Re-enrollment of children** through Awareness Strategy
- Dissemination of material provisions (kits, teacher guides) in districts where material has reached DEA offices and can be distributed to schools in piecemeal

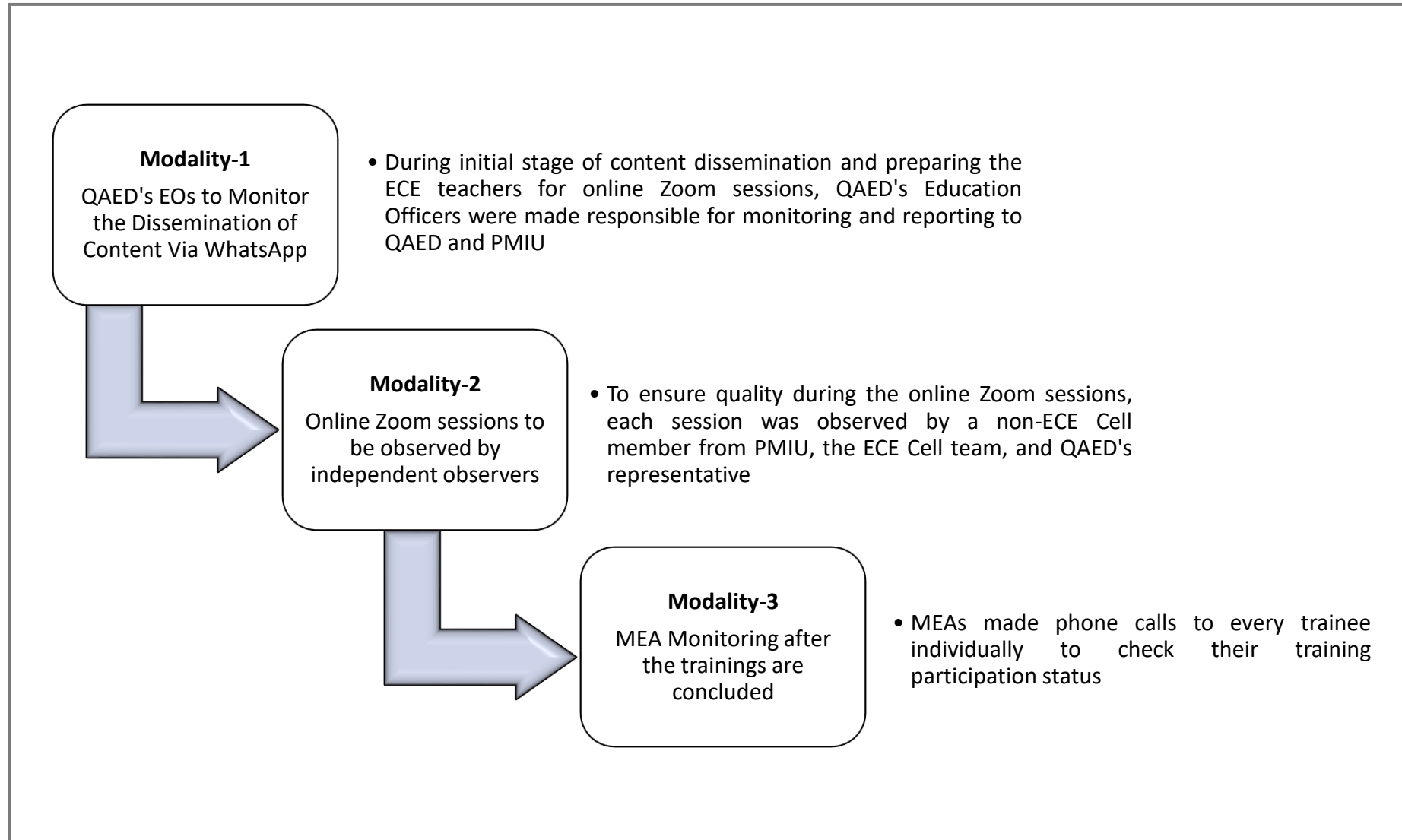
# Early Childhood Education (ECE)

*Online Training of Teachers and Caregivers in response to COVID-19 Lockdown*

Training Type	Description
<b>1 Training of ECE Teachers</b>	<b>Training of ~100 Teachers, in two phases, on ZOOM</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Phase-1:</b> 2 groups of 25 ECE teachers each trained by Master Trainers (MTs) of the QAED followed by the dissemination of training content in the form of recorded video lectures</li><li>• <b>Phase-2:</b> Focus Group Discussion (FGD) held with ~50 teachers divided into three groups. FGDs conducted after the training content had been shared with the participants</li></ul>
<b>2 Training of ECE Part-time Caregivers</b>	<b>Training of ~400 Part-time Caregivers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• District wise training of Caregivers via dissemination of ECE Video lectures on WhatsApp followed by sharing of video links and training content</li></ul>

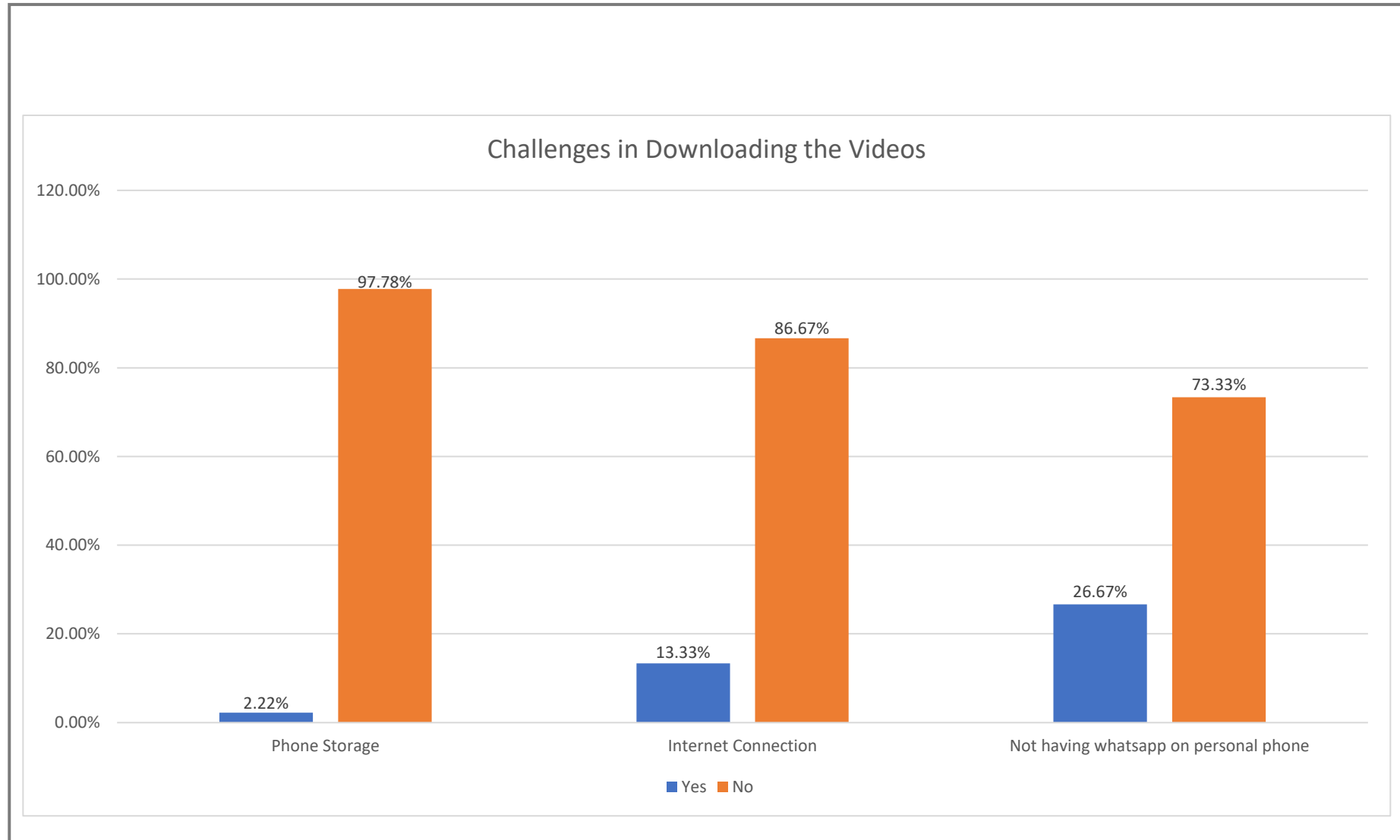
# Early Childhood Education (ECE)

## *Monitoring of Online trainings*



# Early Childhood Education (ECE)

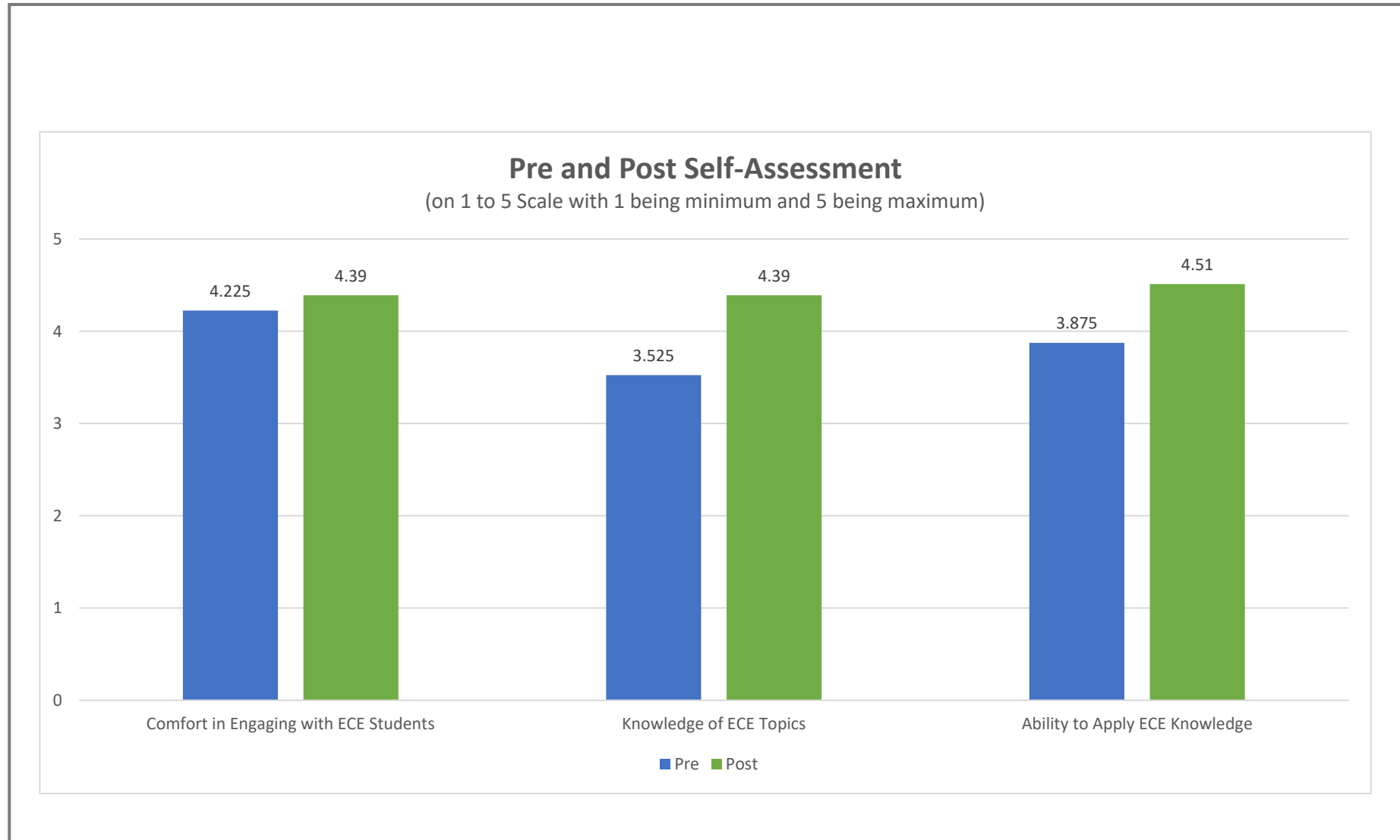
*Key challenges ( Caregivers)*





# Early Childhood Education (ECE)

*Knowledge transfer ( ECE Teachers)*



# Early Childhood Education (ECE)

## Key Learnings from Online training

### Key Learnings

- There is a high acceptability of the virtual mode of trainings; the participation rates for teachers and caregivers were as high as 90 percent and 76 percent, respectively.
- As there is no commute involved, online trainings are convenient for trainees such as working mothers to attend trainings from homes while also tending to their family needs by managing their time efficiently.
- Virtual trainings provide trainees with an opportunity to discuss and learn from diverse experiences and best practices from their colleagues across the districts.
- Virtual trainings are cost-efficient as compared with the regular in-person trainings.

# Early Childhood Education (ECE)

## Planning for re-opening of schools

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- *ECE awareness strategy to address the challenges faced in the implementation and outcome of the ECE program*
  - *Development of ECE awareness material for the schools*
- 

### ECE Awareness Strategy



Social media campaign to apprise parents and children of Covid-19 SOPs



Development of awareness material for schools including ECE video series and flexes



Awareness sessions for all the stakeholders of District Education Authorities (DEAs) and members of the community.



ECE Read at Home” pilot to enhance student learning and parental engagement

# Early Childhood Education (ECE)

## *Way Forward*



### **Online Training of ECE Head Teachers**

Online training of 2,000 Head Teachers on adapted ECE content by QAED.



### **ECE Awareness Strategy**

Development of social media campaign to apprise parents and children of Covid-19 SOPs

ECE Awareness sessions for all stakeholders (district and community level)



### **Qualitative Survey on ECE Implementation**

ECE Implementation Survey to understand challenges and devise strategies for improved on-ground ECE implementation

Development of long-term ECE implementation strategy to make the program sustainable is underway



### **Strengthening the Monitoring Mechanism**

Review of existing monitoring SOPs and application underway to improve capture of field reality.

Thank You