
SUMMARY OF EFFECTIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM APPROACHES

There are a variety of cost-effective early childhood education models that help improve learning. These include:

- **WORKING WITH PARENTS.** Parents are the child’s first teachers and provide children with the experiences they need to develop their learning capacity. Parent programs include formats such as parent education, parent support groups, and home visiting programs. One example is a mother-education project in Turkey that has been piloted, evaluated, and validated in a longitudinal research effort, showing that helping mothers develop greater parenting skills has long-term effects on children, including on their ability to learn and achieve. This program has also demonstrated effective use of an adult education network to house and disseminate the mother education model on a broad scale throughout the country, adding in elements of mother literacy and retraining of unoccupied adult educators to provide the services.
- **ADDING AN EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND STIMULATION COMPONENT TO ONGOING HEALTH OR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS, OR ADDING HEALTH AND NUTRITION TO A CHILD CARE SETTING, CREATING AN INTEGRATED PROGRAM THAT MEETS THE HOLISTIC NEEDS OF THE CHILD.** Research shows that care and nutrition have a synergistic effect, each enhancing the effects of the other on children’s physical, mental, and emotional development. Experience in feeding programs in Guatemala demonstrates that there are better outcomes for children when there is a focus on the interaction between the adult and the child in a feeding situation than when the child is simply given additional food.
- **TRAINING COMMUNITY-BASED TRADITIONAL CAREGIVERS IN QUALITY CHILD CARE PRACTICES.** This involves building on caregiving situations that are already provided in the community. An example comes from a program in Mali where older women in the community serve as caregivers, with the help of youth. This group of caregivers receives additional training to enhance their role and their ability to more fully respond to young children’s needs.
- **USING MEDIA.** Media such as radio can be used to reach parents and caregivers with good childrearing information and/or to inform the broader public as to the needs of young children and their families. Radio is being used effectively as part of a parent education program in the Philippines to provide hard-to-reach families with child development information.

- **PROVIDING INFORMATION TO OLDER SIBLINGS WHO ARE FREQUENTLY MAJOR CAREGIVERS IN A HOUSEHOLD.** Child-to-Child programs engage both older and younger children in new behaviors and new informational activities. In Botswana, primary school children are part of helping younger children in the community make the transition into the primary school. These “little teachers” bring the younger children to the primary school and socialize them into school activities.
- **WORKING WITH EXISTING RESOURCES OR NETWORKS.** ECCD messages can be added to the curriculum of adult education programs, women’s programs, and community development efforts, so that adults can better meet children’s needs. In Nepal where literacy programs have been in place for many years there was a search for new topics and materials for newly literate women. A series on child development and parenting was created that met women’s need for more relevant reading material, while at the same time it provided them with information useful to them in their role as parents.
- **ADDRESSING CHILDREN’S NEEDS IN CONJUNCTION WITH WOMEN’S PROGRAMS.** This can be done through creating child care programs that meet the needs of young children but that also meet the needs of women for child care so that they can engage in income-producing activities. An example is a family day care home program developed in Vietnam as part of a women’s credit scheme, providing good care for the child while women are engaged in income-generating activities.
- **LINKING EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS WITH PRIMARY SCHOOLS TO FACILITATE CHILDREN’S TRANSITION INTO THE PRIMARY SCHOOL.** To facilitate learning achievement, schools and other educational programs need to be *ready for the learners*. Primary teachers can be given training in how to provide children with developmentally-appropriate learning experiences. Curricula need to be adapted so that they take into account the child’s mother tongue, the children’s need for active learning, and the children’s cultural and personal learning needs. Through district-based resource centers in Kenya, preschool teachers are provided on-going training and support. Upon seeing what the preschool teachers were learning, primary teachers requested to be included. This was the beginning of joint training sessions providing preschool and primary teachers with a common understanding of child growth and development and appropriate methodologies to be used in teaching young children. In terms of curricula, within the Kenya program local stories, songs, games, jokes and riddles have been collected and published for use by the preschool teachers. Primary school teachers asked for comparable materials to be included as a part of the early primary curriculum.

Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development, November 1997.

Early Childhood Counts: Programming Resources for Early Childhood Care and Development. CD-ROM. The Consultative Group on ECCD. Washington D.C.: World Bank, 1999.