



Sarah Bones

THE ESSENTIAL PACKAGE: Developing Age-Appropriate Program Quality Standards for Young OVC in the context of HIV and AIDS

BACKGROUND

Children affected or infected by HIV and AIDS are at a distinct disadvantage in virtually all aspects of life – education, nutrition, health, safety, and development. These children are less likely to have their basic needs met and are more likely to be sick or malnourished, suffer psychological trauma, lag behind in a series of developmental outcomes, endure abuse and become HIV positive. Young children are especially vulnerable to the effects of HIV and AIDS, given the critical importance of the first five years of life in providing the foundations for lifelong development. The evidence base for investment in early childhood development (ECD) is compelling. A recent study in

the American Academy of Pediatrics Journal revealed staggering developmental delays among infected children¹.

	Percentage of HIV Infected children 18-36 months with delays	Percentage of HIV Affected Children 18-36 months with delays
Cognitive Functioning	60%	40%
Motor Skills	29%	14%
Language Expression	85%	47%

As researchers and program implementers uncover more evidence of the long term consequences of HIV/AIDS on children, new approaches are urgently needed.



25
YEARS
1984-2009



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Save the Children and CARE, in collaboration with the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development will spearhead a unique initiative, funded by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, to address the developmental needs of children affected by HIV and AIDS. In collaboration with a multitude of stakeholders in both the HIV and ECD fields, CARE and Save the Children will develop an Essential Package for young children and their caregivers which will include age appropriate program quality standards. The Essential Package will provide tools and guides for program implementers that enable programs to address the unique needs and competencies of young children in an integrated and holistic way.

INITIATIVE

CARE and Save the Children will co-facilitate a two-year process to develop an Essential Package for young children affected by AIDS that better addresses their developmental needs. The Essential Package will consist of three main components: (1) the rationale for mainstreaming ECD into HIV and AIDS programming; (2) age-appropriate quality standards for OVC; and (3) a Tool Kit for managers and implementers to design, implement, and monitor programs. The goal of this work will be to empower volunteers, home based care providers and other paraprofessionals at the point of service delivery to offer a comprehensive range of services that will enable children to reach their developmental potential. The initiative will also propose frameworks for action coupled with guidance and tools on key interventions to improve child and caregiver outcomes.

We will have achieved our goal if (1) the tools are broadly owned, shared, and used and (2) the tools help service providers improve the quality of life and long-term developmental outcomes for OVC; mitigate the impact and reduce vulnerability of HIV and AIDS for young OVC (0-8).

¹ Van Rei, Annelies, Mupuala, Aimee, and Anna Dow. "Impact of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic on the Neurodevelopment of Pre-School-Aged Children in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo". *Pediatrics*. 122; e123-e128. (2008)

INFORMING THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY

This project comes at an optimal and critical time, given the new U.S. Government's focus on health service integration and the global movement towards standards development for OVC programs. There is also widespread recognition that OVC programs must attend to the various needs of children across the developmental continuum. This initiative will focus on standards that address the needs of young children (0-8) by recommending key interventions that encourage optimal growth and development. These recommendations must be practical for service providers at the point of delivery. The initiative will also build off projects such as "Care that Counts," that have laid a foundation for a standards based approach to OVC programming. The Essential Package will be validated in a number of country settings some of which have already begun the process of developing or have adopted national level OVC service standards.

PRODUCTS UNDER DEVELOPMENT

Save the Children and CARE along with experts in the ECD and OVC fields are currently working on a comprehensive literature and program review on how HIV/AIDS affects the development of young children and what programs are doing to try and mitigate these shocks. Moreover, it is the intention that the findings from the literature and program review will then inform the content of the age-appropriate standards. The standards will be based on an ages and stages approach and will be HIV sensitive rather than HIV exclusive.

WAY FORWARD

The final products of the Essential Package will be housed on the Consultative Group's Website using a Knowledge Management Platform which will be regularly updated with case studies, tools, and other information from the field.

For more information, please contact:

Bill Philbrick

Director, HIV/AIDS and Emerging Infectious Diseases, CARE USA
bphilbrick@care.org

Kendra Blackett-Dibinga

Senior Technical Specialist, HIV/AIDS, and Orphans and Vulnerable Children, Save the Children USA
kblackett@savechildren.org

Ivelina Borisova

Senior Technical Specialist in Early Childhood Development, Save the Children USA
iborisova@savechildren.org