ARNEC
Asia-Pacific Regional Network
for Early Childhood

Nurturing care for young children: seeking solutions for addressing disparities heightened by the impact of COVID-19

ARNEC Webinar Series No. 2

Thank you for joining us. The webinar will begin shortly.

Song: Let's slow down (from COVID-19 Parenting, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j1ShU5pwpaQ)

The Webinar Series 2.0 is brought to you by

Our focus in this second webinar series

policy and program solutions to address conditions of disparity among young children heightened by COVID-19

Webinar no. 1
early learning opportunities for young children during and beyond the pandemic

Impact is worst for marginalised children who were vulnerable even before the pandemic:

- 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
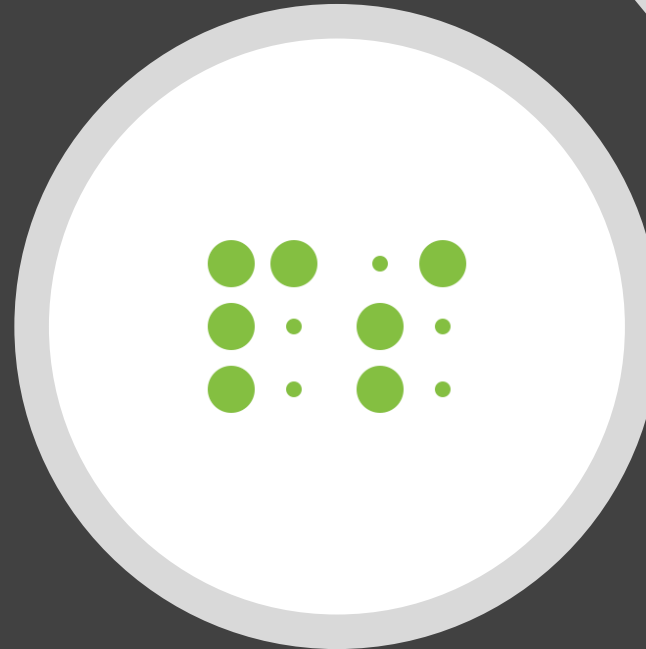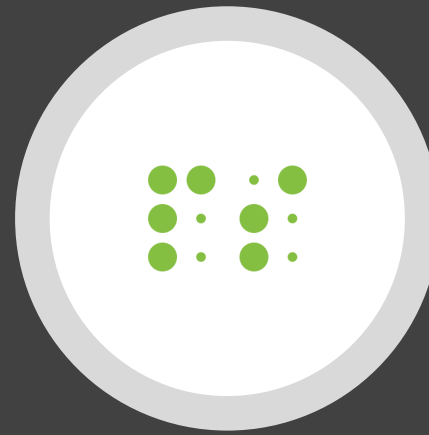
Objectives

- Present local or country-level solutions to promote nurturing care and inclusive ECD, including the redesign of policies and programs targeting marginalised young children and their families;

- Discuss evidence-based studies and emerging good practice at local and country levels; and

- Trigger conversations around cross-country and multisectoral advocacy in support of the well-being of children and reforms in policies and programs for inclusive ECD.

Our moderator

Mita Gupta

- Early Childhood Development Specialist and Disability Inclusive Education Focal Point, UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia

Gentle reminders

Please note that the **webinar will be recorded,** and resources shared will be made available on the ARNEC's website afterwards.

Please **use the Question & Answer (Q&A)** feature located in your ZOOM Meeting Control to ask questions. You can upvote a question by clicking the thumbs up.

Join us as ARNEC's member to be informed of the next webinar.
https://arnec.net/signup. Like and follow us on **Facebook** to get regular updates!

We would like to request your feedback on the webinar, please help us to complete the short survey using the link sent after the session.

Key questions

1. What challenges did the pandemic introduce in the delivery of early learning services, especially for the most vulnerable groups?

2. What are the long-term effects of COVID-19 on early learning opportunities and readiness for school based on experience from other similar crisis situations in the past?

3. What policy changes or developmental interventions are being designed or implemented to support home-, facility-, and institution-based early learning opportunities in the context of pandemic adjustments?

4. How do governments/ countries ensure that they address the early learning needs of the most vulnerable and marginalised groups of young children?

Key questions

5. What are the possible entry points for collaboration with other sectors within your program implementation?

6. What preparations have been made for the re-opening of ECE services in your country, in terms of governance, safety, teachers' training, and parental communications and support?

7. What challenges remain? What key messages would you like to share? What is your call to action?

Our speaker and presenters

Dr. Kate Moriarty

Senior Advisor, Strategic Engagement & Dialogue, Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE)

- How do emergencies and crises such as COVID-19 impact the quality of learning of young children, especially those in vulnerable situations?

Rokhaya Diawara

Education Programme Specialist and Global Early Childhood Care and Education Adviser, UNESCO Headquarters

- Guidance on reopening ECE services

Karma Gayleg

ECCD Specialist, Ministry of Education, Bhutan

- Pandemic-induced policy adjustments for early learning opportunities in Bhutan

Nikki Reyes

Planning Officer, Policy and Programs Unit, ECCD Council of the Government of the Philippines

- ECCD home-based programs: an alternative approach to learning continuity especially for the most vulnerable groups of young children in the Philippines
- Presentation prepared in collaboration with Erwin Taleon, Khara Uy, and Patrick Vicerra

Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies

- INEE is an open, global network working to ensure the right to a quality, safe, and relevant education for all who live in emergency and crisis contexts.

- As part of our work, we support and promote a multi-sectoral approach to ECD across all humanitarian settings - that includes quality health care, adequate nutrition, protection, play and early education- with a focus on equity and inclusion for the most marginalised children.

INEE ECD Task Team aims to serve as a community of practice for stakeholders working in the field of ECD in emergencies, to:
➔ Develop and disseminate practical tools and publications with aim of improving delivering of ECD and early education in crisis, promoting the INEE Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response and Recovery.
➔ Support advocacy efforts for improved investments, policy and commitments to action related to young children in emergencies
➔ Identify the needs for capacity sharing of relevant stakeholder to improve programmes and policies for young children and their families in crisis contexts.

The early years are critical, including for the most marginalised and those in vulnerable situations

Robust evidence shows nurturing care and quality holitistic ECD . . .

★ Essential for a child's optimal development.

★ Protect children's physical, cognitive and social and emotional development:
  ○ Mitigating risk of 'toxic stress'
  ○ Reducing exposure to other child protection risks.

★ Participation in early education sets strong foundations for future life chances, it is important for tackling the twin challenges of equity and learning throughout education.

★ Early education is highly cost-effective strategy to improve economic prosperity and stability, yielding long-term economic and social returns.

GLOBAL COMMITMENT TO QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

THE GLOBAL GOALS
For Sustainable Development

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

Target 4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and preprimary education so that they are ready for primary education

Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies

Quality ECD and early education in emergencies provides vital support

- Young children growing up in crisis settings are often in precarious situations, with risk of physical and emotional harm impacting their immediate safety and well-being and their long-term development.

- A number of challenges threaten their ability to flourish, including separation from parents or primary caregivers, physical injury, loss of the stability and comforts of home and community, experiencing or witnessing violence.

- Young children affected by emergencies are at risk 'toxic' stress.

Access to safe, quality early education can help mitigate the harmful effects conflict and crisis.
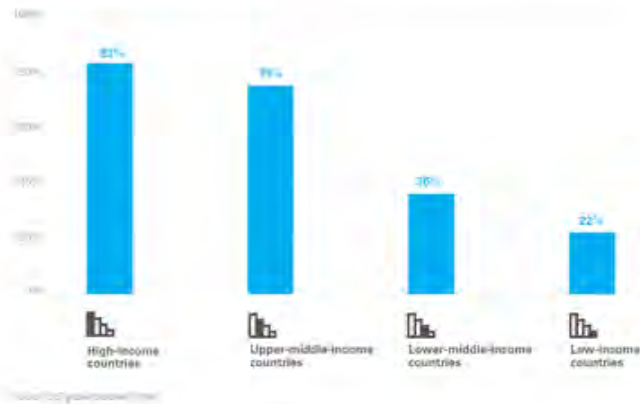
© A Oberstadt, IRC

Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies

WHAT WAS THE SITUATION PRE-COVID-19?

MORE THAN **175 MILLION CHILDREN** — NEARLY HALF OF THE WORLD'S PRE-PRIMARY-AGE CHILDREN — ARE NOT ENROLLED IN PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

Pre-primary GER by country income level

- Countries affected by emergencies are home to nearly a quarter of the world's pre-primary-age children.

- In those countries, only 1 in 3 children are currently enrolled in pre-primary education.

Pre-primary has low and declining levels of support from the donor community . . .

➢ 16 of the top 25 donors to education either gave nothing or reduced their previous spending on pre-primary education in 2017.

➢ In 2017 pre-primary share of total education aid was just 0.5%

Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies

COVID-19 and Global Education Emergency

The COVID-19 pandemic has added additional
challenges in the already complex and insecure contexts
of crisis-affected countries, compounding risk for the
youngest children.

- Restrictions to ECD services
- Community early learning centres and school
  closures
- Lack of and challenges of delivering distance
  education for the youngest children
- Increased pressure on parents and caregivers
- Increased child protection risks

Young children are missing out on critical support
needed at a time when 90% of brain development is
taking place.

**Marginalised children and those in crisis contexts
are at risk of being left further behind.**

P Biro_Nowshera-Jalozai_IRC

**Inter-agency
Network for Education
in Emergencies**

Early Education Programming during COVID-19

The COVID pandemic disrupted ability to provide early education services

➔ **INEE Members rapidly adapted their programming. One example . . .**

- In 2019, the LEGO Foundation awarded a $100 million grant to bring early ECD learning to 800,000 pre-primary and primary school aged refugee children in Ethiopia, Uganda and Tanzania. **The project, "PlayMatters: Sparking Lifelong Learning," is led by a coalition of humanitarian relief organizations - including the International Rescue Committee, who co-chair the INEE ECD Task Team.**

- **PlayMatters' interventions were in their nascent stages of development when the COVID-19 pandemic forced school closures.** While ministries of education and other service providers focused on delivering an at-home academic curriculum, PlayMatters prioritized addressing caregiver stress and mitigating learning loss through playbased methodologies that engage the whole family in reading, math, and social and emotional learning (SEL) activities.

- **PlayMatters also produced PlayMatters at Home Radio Programs** which incorporated activities from the packets and provided health and hygiene messages in a series of broadcasts. Caregivers reported that the tone was friendly and easy to understand and the songs were especially fun and engaging for children.

Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies

INEE ECD Task Team supporting safe return to early education

Safe Back to School Guide:

Annex 7: Additional considerations for Early Learning Programmes (ELPs)

Focuses on three specific challenges:

- Prevention of COVID-19 transmission
- Small group learning
- Home learning

Considerations for ELP Managers or Administrators:

- Prepare **reopening plan with parents**.
- Identify measures to improve the **adult-child ratio for physical distancing.**
- Ensure **teachers are trained on positive classroom management, MHPSS, safeguarding, social-emotional learning, infection prevention**, etc.
- Divide the class into small groups for **physical distancing.**
- Organize **materials into kits that can be used with small groups**.
- Promote **children's wellbeing and social-emotional learning**
- Use stories, songs and activities to **promote good handwashing and respiratory hygiene.**
- Follow a **regular schedule for contacting families about home learning.**

Protect, prioritise and invest in the youngest children during and after crisis

All stakeholders should work together to address the needs of the youngest children through holistic approaches to ECD and quality early education.

- Include funding for early childhood development and childcare services in all national COVID-19 responses and all humanitarian responses.
- Provide opportunities for distance early education, consulting and supporting parents and caregivers.
- Take a contextualised and balanced approach to decision-making on the closure and reopening of early education centres/schools
- Ensure safe back to school guidelines are followed to reduce transmission as early education reopens.
- Donors should prioritize pre-primary education and early cognitive support as part of their initial emergency investments and long-term strategies during all crisis. Allocating 10% of all education aid to pre-primary education
- **Governments, donors and all stakeholder should adopt specific measures to reach the most marginalised in all contexts.**

20141009_TJump_Anniversary_Philippines_IMG_1214

Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies

Thank you for listening

For more information, please visit

https://inee.org/task-teams/early-childhood-development

additional resources

[Leaving the Youngest Behind: Declining aid to early childhood education](#)
the publication on donor aid to pre-primary education was published by Theirworld in 2019

[Weighing Up the Risks: School Closures and reopening under COVID-19](#)
https://inee.org/resources/weighing-risks-school-closure-and-reopening-under-covid-19

[INEE Minimum Stardards](#) can be found on https://inee.org/standards

[Education in Emergencies Competency Framework](#)
https://inee.org/resources/education-emergencies-competency-framework
The EiE Competency Framework builds on the INEE Minimum Standards to articulate a set of required, valued and recognized competencies for the humanitarian and education in the emergencies sectors.

Inter-agency
Network for Education
in Emergencies

LATEST FIGURES: Status of school closures / re-openings

(Status on 01 December)

ACADEMIC BREAK
14 countries
45 mil students

CLOSED DUE TO COVID-19
29 countries
279 mil students

PARTIALLY OPEN - REGIONS
19 countries
485 mil students

3%

18%

32%

3%

4%

40%
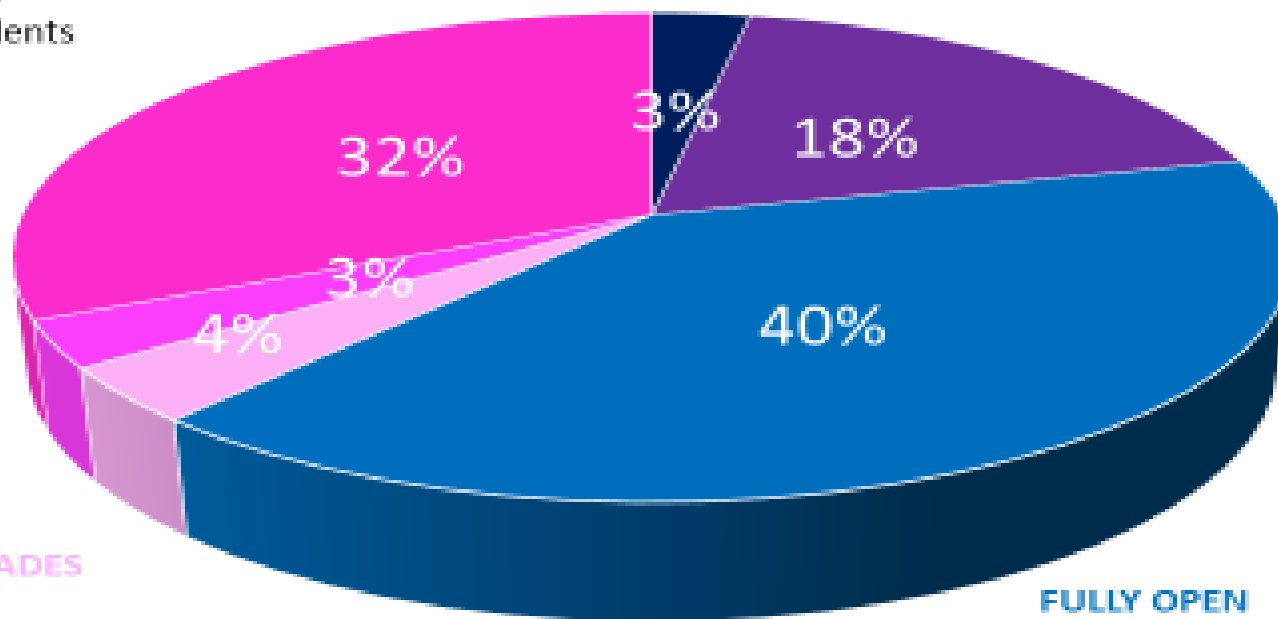
PARTIALLY OPEN - HYBRID
17 countries
47 mil students

PARTIALLY OPEN - GRADES
15 countries
56 mil students

FULLY OPEN
116 countries
613 mil students

UNESCO

UNESCO

WORLD BANK GROUP

unicef
for every child

Education
2030

Number of students impacted by school status, level and sex (in millions)

	Closed due to COVID-19		Fully open		Partially open		Academic break	
	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female
Pre-primary	35	17	92	44	79	38	5	2
Primary	127	61	305	145	266	129	27	13
Secondary	118	58	217	102	242	117	13	7
Tertiary	43	22	94	48	86	45	5	2
Total	322	158	708	339	674	329	49	24

Number of students impacted in Asia region Pre-primary by sex (in millions)

Central and Southern Asia								
	Closed due to COVID-19		Fully open		Partially open		Academic break	
	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female
Pre-primary	12	6	1	0	47	23	0	0
Northern Africa and Western Asia								
Pre-primary	3	2	1	1	3	2	0	0
Eastern and South-Eastern Asia								
Pre-primary	3	2	57	27	6	3	0	0

UNESCO

Objective and alignment with other frameworks/guidance

To serve planning for reopening: policy, financing, safe operations, learning, reaching the most marginalized and well-being/protection.

Linked to The World Health Organization (WHO) guidance for reopening schools based on careful risk assessment

This Global Guidance on Reopening ECE Settings is aligned with the *Framework for Reopening Schools* and the WHO guidance, but provides additional content specifically for ECE settings.

UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, WFP and UNHCR 'Framework for Reopening Schools', June 2020,

WHO, 'Considerations for School-related Public Health Measures in the Context of COVID-19', WHO, Geneva, 14; September 2020, p. 1,

As new evidence on the epidemiology of COVID-19 emerges, the content may be updated accordingly; any subsequent revisions to the guidance note
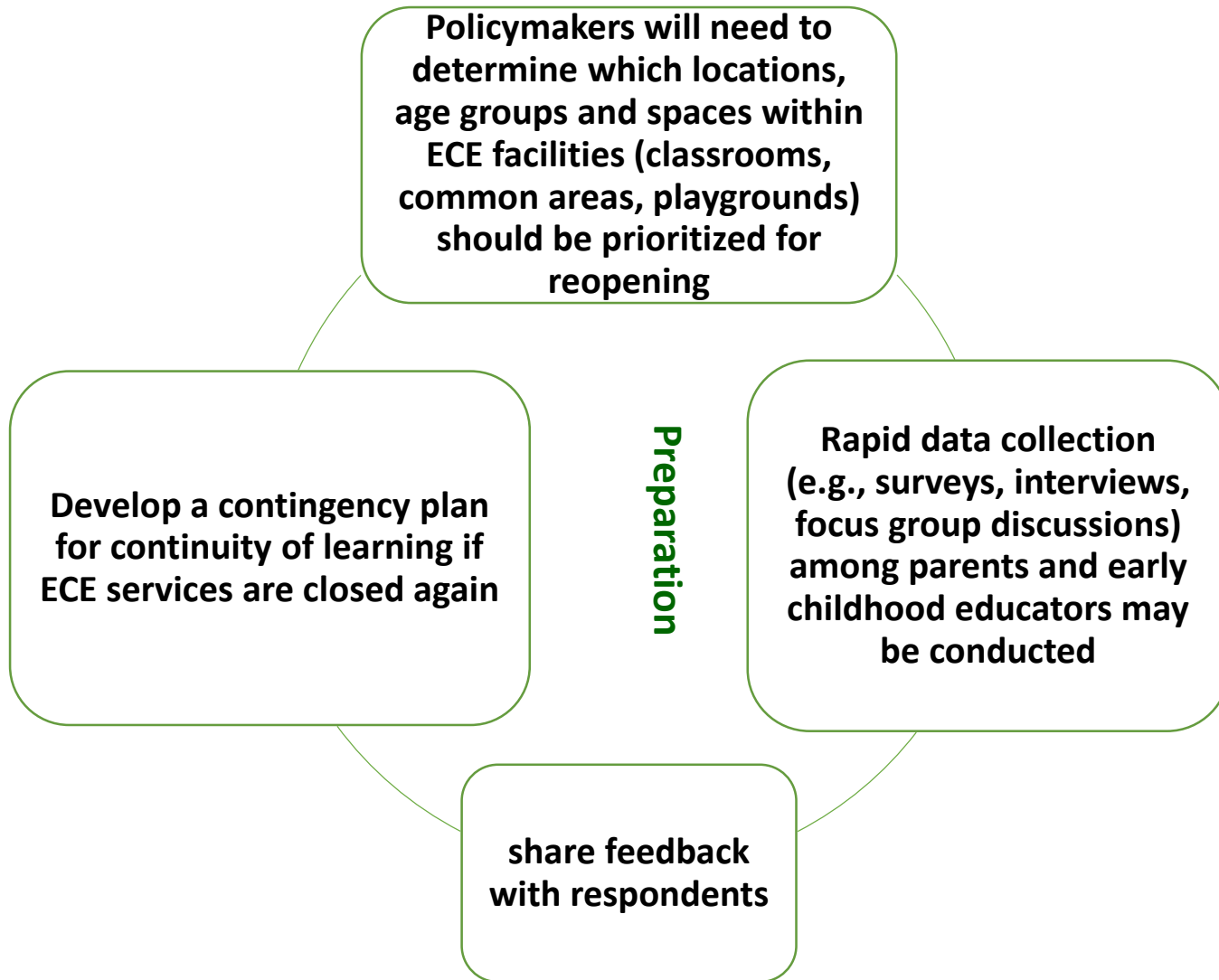
UNESCO

Overview of the principles

	Guiding Principle	Description
1	**Take time to plan and prepare for reopening of ECE settings**	Develop d**ata-based** strategies to address a full range of factors that are crucial for reopening, including how to resource, finance and safely operate the ECE setting. These plans should be clearly communicated to teachers, children, parents and community members.
2	**Ensure ECE settings can maintain child-friendly and developmentally appropriate practices**	Develop plans to adapt facilities, **lesson plans, curricula and teaching methods** to integrate measures for COVID-19 prevention and hygiene protocols. Young children's opportunities for social engagement, learning and play should be maintained and the ECE classroom should continue to offer safe and inclusive learning environments for all children.
3	**Ensure staff have training prior to reopening and support once opened**	Teachers, directors and other personnel will need **practical guidance to adapt activities** and routines and training to identify socio-emotional needs along with regular opportunities to share and process their experiences.
4	**Protect children while engaging in play and learning**	More than ever, young children need **interaction and stimulating learning activities**. Reopening strives to bring children back to routine and comfort in the environments where they play and learn.
5	**Establish healthy hygiene behaviors and practices among young children**	Support children to develop good hygiene practices by integrating age-appropriate information about the virus into the curriculum and **safety and health measures** into enjoyable and stimulating learning activities. Capitalize on teachable moments to help children understand why measures are being taken to keep them and others healthy.

Continued…

6	**Prevent disease transmission and establish procedures if staff and children become unwell**	School leadership can take steps to minimize community spread, including regular monitoring of staff and children's health, minimizing the entry of non-personnel into the building, separating sick staff and children (without stigma) and record keeping. Ensure flexible leave policies and paid sick leave for staff.
7	**Partner with families to ensure good transition from home to ECE settings and ensure open ongoing communication**	Communicate with families and parents clearly, positively and openly, in languages they understand through a variety of channels. This includes informing families and engaging them to support effective prevention measures and providing ongoing support to children at home.
8	**Adopt a coordinated and integrated approach to ensure children's holistic needs are met when they return to ECE settings**	Recognizing that the pandemic has multifaceted impacts on young children – especially the most vulnerable – ECE reopening plans should be inclusive of additional supports and referral mechanisms. This encompasses child protection, mental health and psychosocial support, health and rehabilitation, nutrition and other issues that may emerge as a result of the COVID-19 confinement.
9	**Make adaptations to reach the most vulnerable children and families**	Consider barriers that may prevent vulnerable children from returning to school (fees, uniforms, supplies, etc). Learning materials/platforms, public health information and communication should be offered in multiple, accessible formats. Modifications should be made to ensure water, hygiene and sanitation services are accessible. Plan for continuity of assistive services if schools are reclosed.
10	**Plan ahead to support teachers, children and parents/caregivers in the event of reclosure**	In consultation with national and local education and public health authorities, policymakers and managers should be prepared if ECE services need to be fully or partially closed again due to a resurgence of COVID-19 cases or other pandemic-related emergency.

UNESCO

Policymakers will need to determine which locations, age groups and spaces within ECE facilities (classrooms, common areas, playgrounds) should be prioritized for reopening

Preparation

Develop a contingency plan for continuity of learning if ECE services are closed again

Rapid data collection (e.g., surveys, interviews, focus group discussions) among parents and early childhood educators may be conducted

share feedback with respondents

Safe operation of ECE sett

- Daily hygiene and health practices
- Safety and hygiene for preparing and serving meals for young children
- Minimizing community spread

English
French
Arab
Spanish

Child well-being and development
- Physical distancing in ECE settings
- Arrangements for learning

Communication about the protocol
- Insite the ECCE center
- Drop-off and pickup
- Child wellbeing

Conclusion

- Reopening still a challenge for policymakers,

- Inclusive cooperation and clear communication between stakeholders is vital

- flexibility is essential

Additional Resources to the Global Guidance on Reopening ECE settings

- **Annex 1 Continuing professional support for ECE teachers and directors**

- **Annex 2 Suggested questions for parents and other caregivers on reopening ECE settings**

- **Annex 3 Key messages for teachers on reopening ECE settings**

- **Annex 4 Key message for early learners on reopening ECE settings**

- **Annex 5 Key messages for parents on reopening ECE settings**

https://www.unicef.org/media/82951/file/Additional-resources-for-global-guidance-on-reopening-early-childhood-education-settings.pdf

UNESCO

Thank you

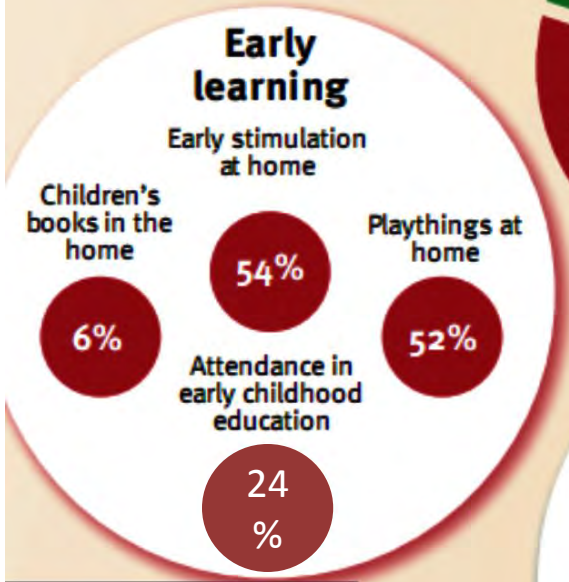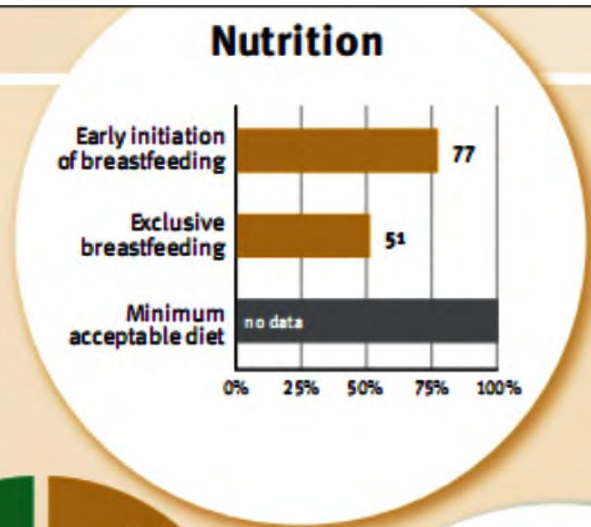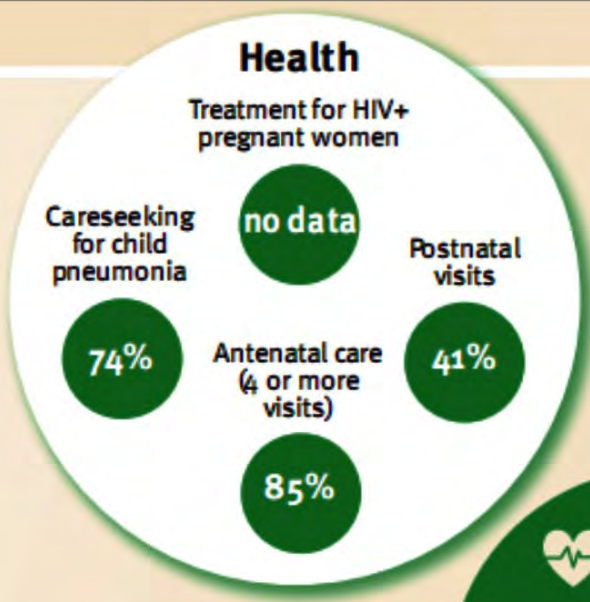Learn more: www.unesco.org/education

@UNESCO

UNESCO | UNESCO

Pandemic Induced Policy Adjustments for Early Learning Opportunities in Bhutan

Karma Gayleg
Ministry of Education, Bhutan

Background: Nurturing Care

Health
- Treatment for HIV+ pregnant women: no data
- Careseeking for child pneumonia: 74%
- Antenatal care (4 or more visits): 85%
- Postnatal visits: 41%

Nutrition
- Early initiation of breastfeeding: 77
- Exclusive breastfeeding: 51
- Minimum acceptable diet: no data

Early learning
- Early stimulation at home: 54%
- Children's books in the home: 6%
- Playthings at home: 52%
- Attendance in early childhood education: 24%

Security and safety
- Birth registration: 100
- Positive discipline: no data
- Basic drinking water: 97
- Basic sanitation: 69

Responsive Caregiving
ECCD parenting education: 24%
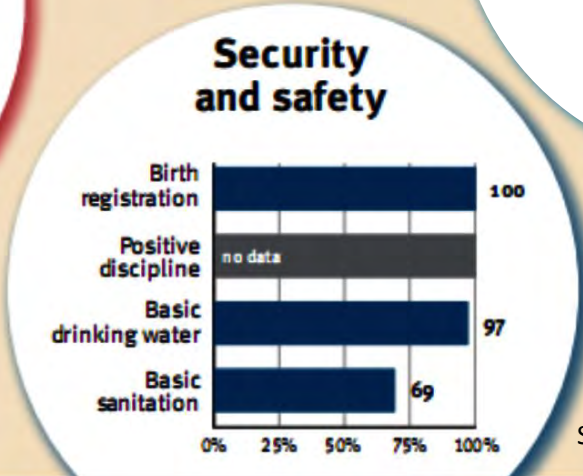
18 – ‹26   ≥26

18 – ‹26   ≥26

Source: ARNEC Country Profile, Bhutan

Effects of the Pandemic on Children and Families

Parenting:
Economic impact and pandemic stress of parents may have had an impact on health, nutrition & parenting ability

Closure of ECCD Centres:
More than 9000 children aged 3-5 have been home bound since March

Disruption of daily lives and learning of young children

Increased vulnerability to abuse:
In such a stressful time, children are vulnerable to violence and abuse.

Exposure to unlimited Screen time
vulnerability to extended / unlimited screentime and inappropriate content

kama@2020

COVID-19 Response Interventions

1. Developed and distributed ECCD in Emergency package to ensure continuity of learning for children

2. Translated and distributed COVID-19 Parenting Guide to help families cope with the emergency.

3. ECCD facilitators provided remote learning support and support through Home visits and online learning

4. ECCD facilitators' stories documented to provide a platform for sharing good practices and showcasing efforts of ECCD facilitators.
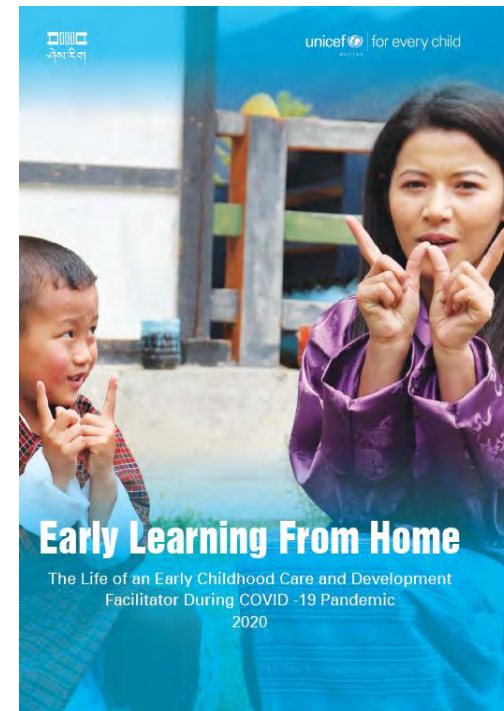
COVID-19 Response Interventions

5. Supplied soaps and home learning kits targeting vulnerable children

6. Conducted webinar and virtual meetings with ECCD Facilitators and DEOs to support and mentor them.

7. Built WASH Facilities in selected ECCD Centres prioritizing vulnerable communities
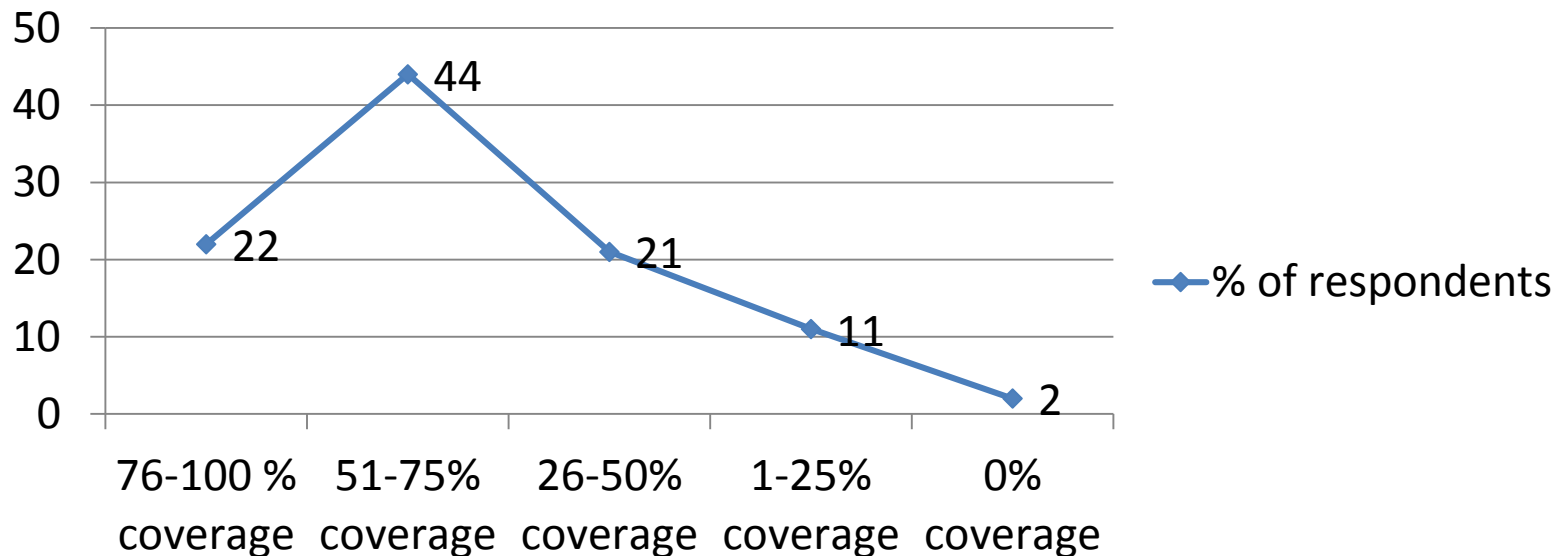
8. Private ECCD Centres reopened since July, following COVID-19 protocols

How effective have ECCD Interventions been?

- Survey included 208 respondents who were all ECCD Facilitators
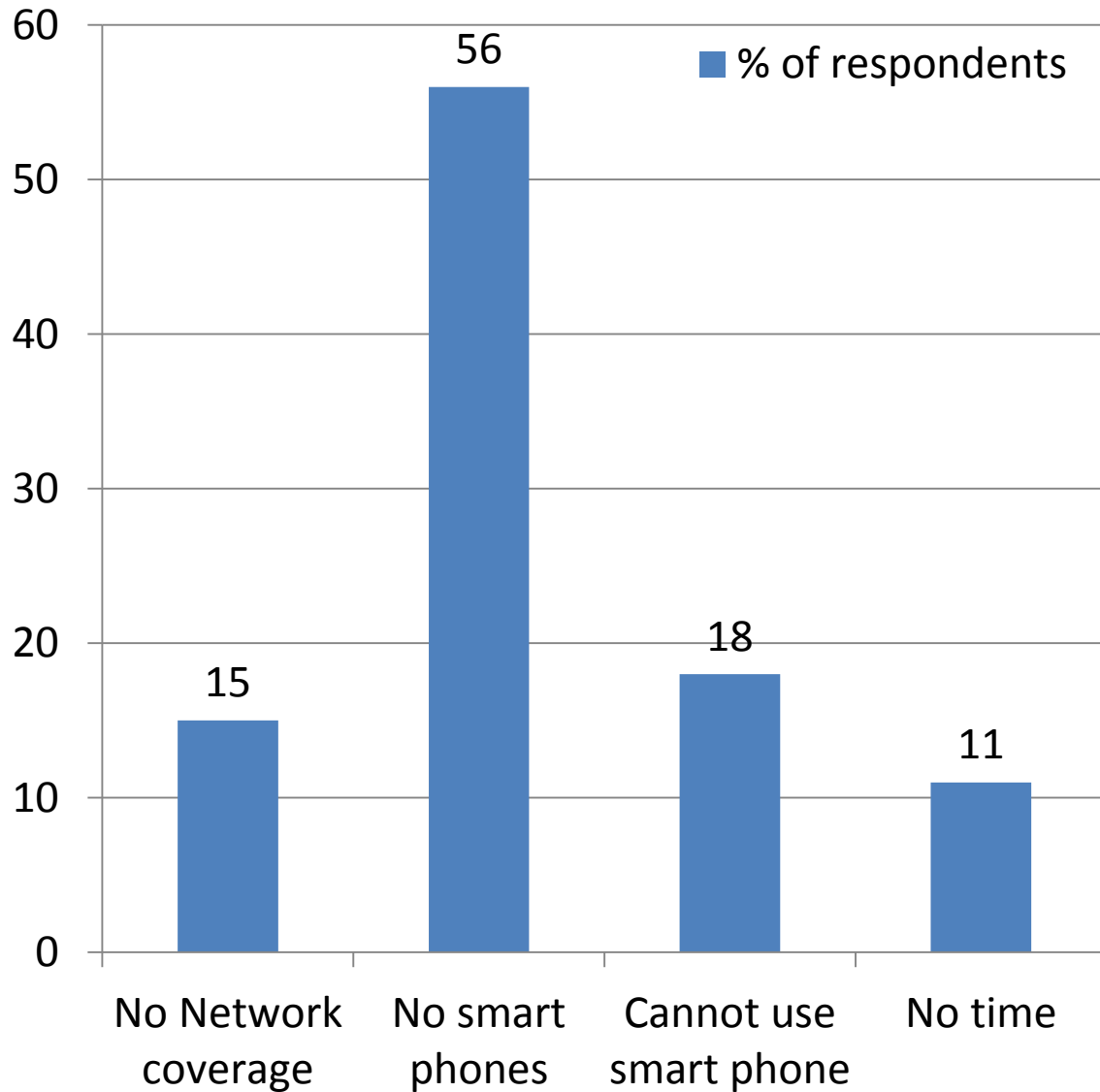- Review workshop of DEOs and ECCD Facilitators

Reach and Effectiveness of the Interventions

Coverage	% of respondents
76-100 % coverage	22
51-75% coverage	44
26-50% coverage	21
1-25% coverage	11
0% coverage	2

TYPES OF INTERVENTIONS USED ACROSS BHUTAN (Survey of 40% OF ECCD Facilitators)

Online interventions	56 %
Home visits	69 %
Send home activities	18%
Instructions on child engagement for parents	20 %

Why was the online ONLY intervention not effective for all in every location?

Chart showing % of respondents:
- No Network coverage: 15
- No smart phones: 56
- Cannot use smart phone: 18
- No time: 11

Policy Adjustments and Way Forward

Multisectoral Strategic Plan
- National multisectoral strategic plan for ECCD being developed, to be completed and launched by June 2021 – recognizing the need for holistic care (NCF)

Strengthening ECCD Network
- ECCD networks established in 13 of the 20 districts to support the national level technical committee for ECCD
- Formation of networks in all districts to be completed by June 2021

Caring for Caregivers
- Piloting of Caring for Caregivers package in 3 districts planned to support psychosocial well being of parents
- Home based interventions to be piloted as an alternative model for enhancing access to ECCD services since it was found effective and viable

Reopening Plan
- Reopening guideline and protocols developed
- All ECCD Centres to reopen by March 2021, except those in red zones

It truly takes a village to raise a child. This we realize, even more, in times of crisis
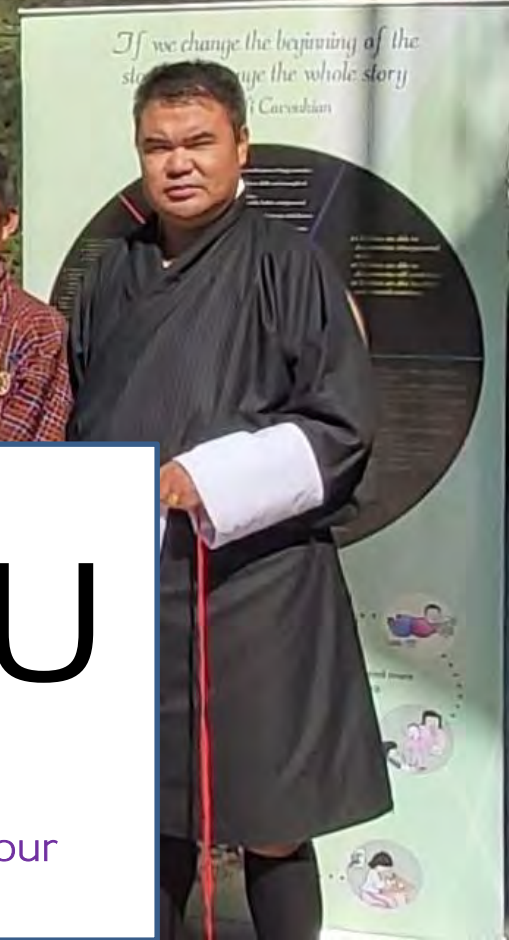
THANK YOU

And Thank YOU ARNEC & Unicef for your support during the Crisis

Background

- Child Development Centers nationwide have been closed due to COVID19
- Child Development Workers have been recruited to help in the Social Amelioration Program
- Differences in safety protocols mean variations in community mapping abilities and program delivery
- Apart from COVID19, strong typhoons have also disrupted program delivery

COVID19 Response

- Center-based Program in Alternative Venue
    Weekly session with parents
    > suggested activities for the home

- Regional Fora thru Zoom with 17 regions

The long-term plan:
Home-based ECCD Program

How is the Home-based Program different?

	Home-based ECCD Program
Goal	The program shall cultivate *in parents* developmentally appropriate practices to support responsive caregiving
The teacher	Parents/Caregivers as teachers to their own children CDWs to take up supporting role to parents
Designing activities	Home activities are modified to integrate concepts and skills Home activities are highlighted as rich source of learning opportunities for children
	CDWs and parents/caregivers work together to come up with activities Eventually, parents/caregivers will be able to come with their own activities
Group sessions	Group sessions are facilitated by Parents/Caregivers
Online groups	Online communities as support group among parents/caregivers

2020 Pilot Implementation

Antipolo City

Urban
2 supervisors
3 facilitators

0-2 y/o: 5 parents
3 y/o: 5 parents
4 y/o: 5 parents

Bustos

Rural
1 supervisor
3 facilitators

0-2 y/o: 0 parents
3 y/o: 0 parents
4 y/o: 9 parents

Marikina City

Urban
2 supervisors
3 facilitators
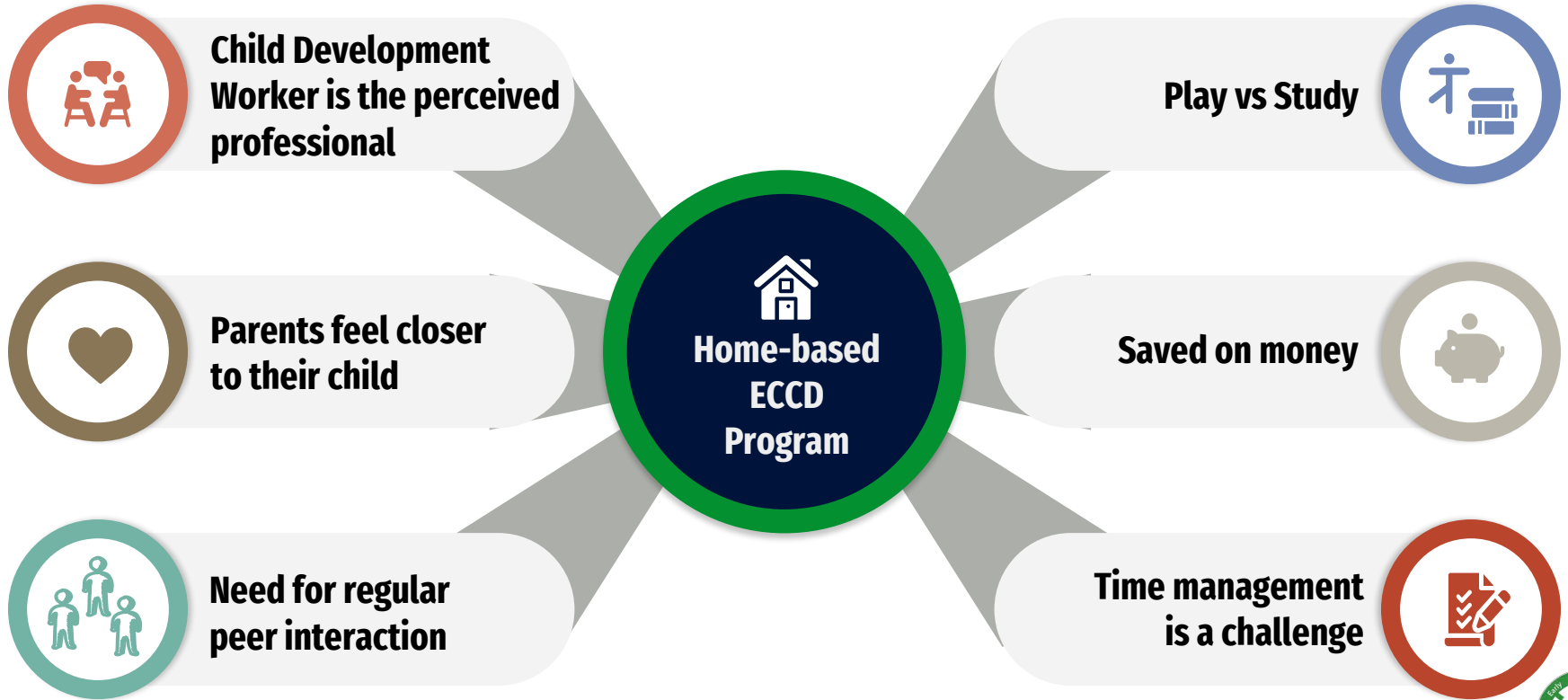
0-2 y/o: 0 parents
3 y/o: 5 parents
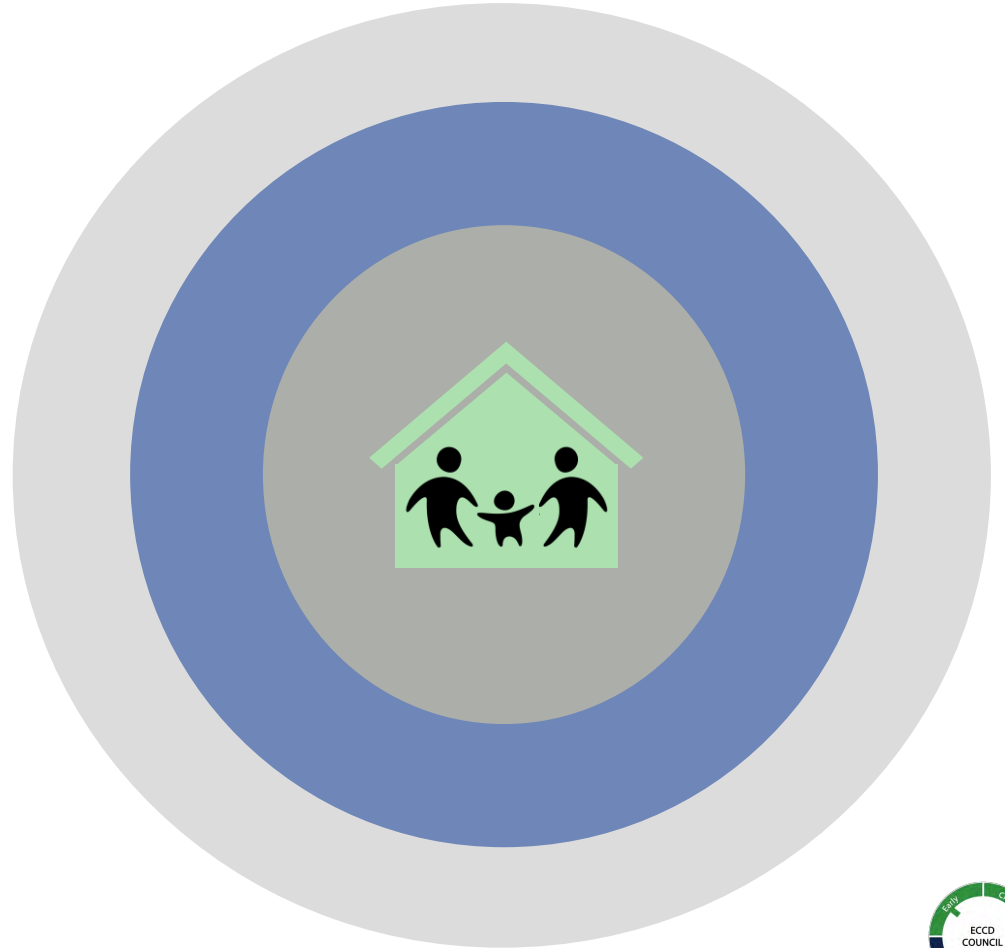4 y/o: parents

Taytay

Rural
2 supervisors
3 facilitators

0-2 y/o: 5 parents
3 y/o: 2 parents
4 y/o: 4 parents

Initial findings

Child Development Worker is the perceived professional

Play vs Study

Parents feel closer to their child

Saved on money

Need for regular peer interaction

Home-based ECCD Program

Time management is a challenge

ECCD COUNCIL

Early Childhood

Care & Development

Closing program

Requests and reminders

Your views matter.

Please evaluate us.

Click on the QR code above
or click link found in the chat
box:
https://tinyurl.com/y3xaky5h

Nurturing care for young children during and beyond COVID 19: focus on early learning opportunities

14 December 2020 4:00-5:30 SG time

You will receive the webinar documentation summary by email tomorrow.

Requests and reminders

Download the presentations from the ARNEC website.

Next webinar: health & nutrition in January 2021