



Save the Children
100 YEARS

NURTURING CARE

A FOUNDATION FOR CAMBODIA'S FUTURE



WHAT IS NCF for ECCD?

1. Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) covers the stage in a child's life from the point of conception to primary school age (6 years old in Cambodia).
2. Nurturing Care is a subdivision of ECCD specifically focusing on children from conception to three years old (Cto3). It is important to focus on Cto3 because 80% of a child's brain development - quite literally their future potential - happens during this early period.
3. Nurturing Care consists of five inter-related components: health, nutrition, safety and security, early learning, and responsive caregiving. All children need all five components of Nurturing Care to meet their full potential. Through these five Nurturing Care components, the five developmental domains (physical, socio-emotional, cognitive, linguistic, and moral) are addressed in a way that is most appropriate for very young children.
4. The Nurturing Care Framework (NCF) provides a globally recognized, evidence-based method of understanding, planning, and implementing effective ECCD activities, services, and policies specifically for the age group of Cto3. It is a guidance document for Governments and other stakeholders.

CHALLENGES IN OPERATIONALIZING NCF IN CAMBODIA



Limited Conceptual Understanding of holistic ECCD

- There are sector-specific actions to address the needs of children aged Cto3, but not integrated action.
- Generally, the focus during this period is on nutrition and health; responsive caregiving and early learning receive little attention.



Roles and Responsibilities

- The ECCD work of Commune Committee for Women and Children (CCWC) is narrowly understood as "getting children into pre-school."
- Commune Investment Planning (CIP) neglects holistic ECCD and Cto3 age group.



Limited collaborative integration

- Support for children is traditionally planned and delivered by individual ministries. Few interventions are meaningfully integrated.
- Over time redundancies and policy duplications have evolved which can lead to confusion for services providers and caregivers.



Age specific targeting

- The specific needs of very young children, especially cognitive and socio-emotional needs, are "lost" under policies that refer to "children" but actually address older children (6-18 year-old).
- Ministries, multi-lateralism and NGOs have only limited data related to children in the Cto3 age group.



Public financial resourcing

- Estimates suggest that the national investment in the Cto3 age group is insufficient.
- Improved transparency and meaningful evaluation of national expenditure will enhance results.

BENEFITS of ECCD



Economic growth and competitiveness



Healthy individuals: body, mind, emotions



Poverty reduction and reduction of inequality



Pre-school readiness and better academic achievement



A peaceful society



STEPS TO SUCCESS (approaches)

- Focus on children aged Cto3.
- Target caregivers as the primary gateway for nurturing care by ensuring a facilitating environment of legislation, policies, services, and community support.
- Integrate attention to all five NCF components
- Use existing service delivery platforms to provide appropriate care

RECOMMENDATIONS



Build understanding about holistic child development for all implementers, from service delivery to national Ministries

- National Committee on Early Childhood Care and Development (NC-ECCD) run a series of learning events among all Ministry authorities about NCF, especially effectiveness of integrated services for Cto3.



Clarify roles and responsibilities to increase transparency and accountability for holistic early child development.

- NC-ECCD and Ministry of Interior (MoI) should work together to clarify actor roles and responsibilities for children Cto3 at sub-national level, and strengthen WCCC and CCWC technical skills and adequately resource them to coordinate between actors.



Collaborate more effectively by removing duplication and inconsistencies

- NC-ECCD take the lead to capitalize on cross-ministry opportunities in existing programs and systems that do not yet coordinate sufficiently by (1) developing a set of core messages about holistic care for Cto3 that all NC-ECCD members promote, and (2) reducing duplication and inconsistencies from existing delivery platforms.



Specify age and measure results specifically for Cto3.

- Each of the 13 NC-ECCD member ministries should develop monitoring indicators and data specific for Cto3 and which comparable across Ministries, supported by National Institute of Statistic (NIS).



Increase budget by mandating all Ministries to articulate budgets allocated for specified age groups as an investment in making children smarter.

- Ministry of Economy and Finance (MoEF) ensures that all NC-ECCD member ministries allocate budget for specified age groups (e.g. Cto3 and children 4-5 year-old) and MoEF measure increases of investment year on year.