

## The inclusion of ECDiE in 2023 Syria and Türkiye Earthquake Needs Assessment and Appeals Advocacy Guidance Note

As local responders, governments, and international funders and implementers assess and plan for a longer-term response to the needs of children and families impacted by the earthquake in Syria and Türkiye, it is crucial that the response address the holistic needs of children and caregivers. This includes not only their immediate physical needs for safety, shelter, food, and medical care but also their longer term needs for psycho-social support, learning opportunities, and the maintenance or creation of nurturing relationships with the adults in their lives. These needs are especially acute for children with disabilities and those who have been separated from their families.

To support the identification, planning, and resourcing of responses that meet the full needs of young children and their caregivers, members of the early childhood development in emergencies (ECDiE) community encourage immediate advocacy on these issues. What follows are recommended actions based on prior work to build ECDiE into crisis responses.<sup>1</sup>

### **Step 1: Identify assessment, appeals, and planning processes and begin to engage.**

- a. Determine if your organization has the ability to provide direct feedback internally or externally on assessments and appeals and supply suggested language and evidence.
- b. Determine with whom you can actively connect that may oversee input into these plans or otherwise influence these processes and discuss with them the importance of ECDiE. Likely partners include your organization’s emergency planning team or representatives to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) of cluster teams.
- c. Determine if the regional and national Early Childhood Development advisors/focal points within your organization are engaged in related planning reviews and if they have the ability to weigh in. If not, it’s important to identify the emergency focal points in your organization and engage with them and ask that you or another ECD focal point input into the review processes.
- d. Identify the reviews, timeline and internal and external mechanisms for review – this should include not just education plans, but also those of other NCF-impacted sectors such as health, nutrition, psycho-social support, and protection. These reviews can include assessing cluster priorities to ensure the needs of young children and caregivers are reflected, identifying that minimum care or educational packages are definitely appropriately for young children, etc.

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<sup>1</sup> In 2020, Sesame Workshop and the University of Virginia’s Humanitarian Collaborative conducted a technical scan of the United Nations Global Humanitarian Response Plans (GHRPs) for COVID-19. The scan helped identify where and how elements of ECD were represented in or absent from the initial GHRP. Between the initial GHRP and subsequent versions, concerted advocacy from UNICEF and others helped move the needle for increased inclusion of ECD. The original recommendations came from the effort and were developed in collaboration with UNICEF and the International Rescue Committee, co-leads of the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) ECD Working Group.

- e. Follow up and take an active and proactive role in the review, including tracking opportunities for input and providing thoughtful and comprehensive comments; and track which inputs and comments were accepted and which were not to inform future inputs.

**Step 2. Once engaged in the processes, identify and focus on critical content areas of assessments, appeals, and plans.**

Key content opportunities include:

- a. More explicit mention and **coverage for the key populations of concern for early childhood development**, including, at a minimum, children ages 0-8, caregivers, and particular attention to the needs of young children or caregivers with disabilities. This disaggregation is important not only in services provision but also in data collection and reporting mechanisms.
- b. Every component of the Nurturing Care Framework (NCF) should be included in your advocacy. However, it is crucial that the **most underrepresented NCF components be prioritized** in order to ensure an even and complete ECDiE. From the technical scan of the COVID appeals these included:
  - Safety and security
  - Responsive caregiving and support to caregivers
  - Early Learning, including play-based learning
- c. Some **sections or areas of assessments and appeals may be better targets** for inclusion of explicit ECD language. If you have the opportunity to provide direct edits, coordinated efforts could focus on the following sections:
  - Population-specific sections (entitled “most affected population groups: children” in the COVID-19 GHRP)
  - Sectoral objectives and responses:
    - Education cluster
    - Health cluster
    - Nutrition cluster
    - Protection cluster
    - Priority monitoring indicators
    - Evaluation criteria for the response

**Step 3: Advocate for the inclusion of essential language for young children and caregivers.**

Sample strong language by NCF Component includes<sup>2</sup>:

- a. Good Physical and Mental Health
  - “With approximately xxx million births expected in the next three months the disruption in delivery and newborn care will leave mothers and newborns at high risk.”

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<sup>2</sup> The specific language suggestions in quotation marks are drawn from (and may reflect) the COVID-19 GHRPs; the content on mental health is drawn from the Feb 2023 joint call to action from ECDAN and the Moving Minds Alliance.



**Step 4: As the response continues, consider the creation of an ECDiE coordination mechanism and identification of an ECDiE coordinator.**

Throughout 2022, Sesame Workshop and UVA brought together a global cohort of ECDiE coordinators to learn what is most essential to delivering effective ECDiE programming at the crisis level. This group has affirmed the critical role of a distinct coordination body and coordinator for effectively advancing nurturing care in emergency settings.<sup>3</sup>

Once in place, an effective coordination body and ECDiE coordinator can:

- Identify and quantify service and data gaps related to young children and caregivers;
- Push for inclusion of ECD-relevant questions in needs assessments;
- Advocate for concerted attention to ECD and consolidation of information under one ECD heading in assessments and appeals;
- Consolidate ECD-related data in one place rather than having it siloed between sectors and clusters;
- Coordinate with leads for other cross-cutting topics so that they adopt similar language and analysis, giving ECD more prominence in coordination, programming and funding structures;
- Bring good practice from other contexts, including use of the life-cycle approach in needs assessments to drive a coordinated and integrated ECD (including health, nutrition, early education, mental health, protection and WASH interventions).

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<sup>3</sup> There are significantly more resources available on ECDiE coordination and coordinators for interested organizations. Please reach out to [advocacy@sesame.org](mailto:advocacy@sesame.org) for further information and support.