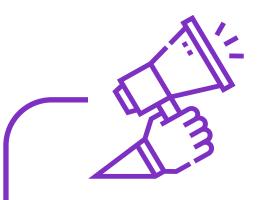# Early Childhood Development in Emergencies (ECDiE) Coordinator Learning Cohort Initiative

Quick Tips and Good Practice: Advocating for integrated ECD support for children and families

Advocating for integrated ECD support for children and families

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Coordination is crucial for effective advocacy to strengthen ECD support for children and families in crisis contexts. By bringing together diverse stakeholders, including policymakers, practitioners, and advocates, a coordinated approach creates a unified voice and strengthens advocacy efforts. Coordinated advocacy ensures that the needs of young children in crises are prioritized and communicated effectively to decision-makers and the public.

Where significant investment is made in coordination, it can facilitate the exchange of best practices, research, and evidence, bolstering the credibility of advocacy messages. Through collaboration, coordinated advocacy campaigns can raise awareness, mobilize resources, and influence policies and programs that support ECD in emergencies. The power of coordination lies in its ability to amplify voices, drive systemic change, and secure the necessary support and investments for the holistic development of children in crisis settings.

QUICK TIPS AND GOOD PRACTICE:

- ✓ **Ensure that ECDiE needs and program impacts are visible, well documented, and presented in ways that are easily understandable to donors, cluster partners, and the humanitarian leadership, especially host governments.** For example, the ECD Working Group in Cox's Bazar proactively gathers real-time evidence and research from cluster partners and others and uses the information and analysis to demonstrate the high-quality implementation of ECDiE programs in Cox's Bazaar to humanitarian partners and potential donors.

- ✓ **Look for strategic opportunities and entry points to influence policy and practice, especially in broader national-level policy development processes that have implications for ECD.** For example, as the Government of Colombia was developing its National Development Plan 2022-2026, the ECD Working Group participated in a National Conference on Early Childhood and advocated for the inclusion of ECDiE in the outcome document, which offered policy recommendations to inform the National Development Plan. Meanwhile, in Jordan, the National Early Childhood

Development Team advocated to ensure inclusion of ECD in the recently finalized Jordanian Economic Modernization Vision (2022) after long and deep consultations with national and international bodies. The inclusion of ECD as an economic priority from nursery age upwards is considered a significant win.

- ✅ **Make use of established frameworks to define ECD and tools to strengthen ECD advocacy—such as those compiled in the Early Childhood Development Action Network's online [resource centre](#).** For example, the ECCD Working Group in Ukraine found success in leveraging the Nurturing Care Framework to define the multi-sectoral scope of ECCD in their terms of reference and conversations with the Education Cluster and the [Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science](#).

- ✅ **Aim to understand the host government's existing priorities and consider whether/how ECD advocacy can align with those priorities.** For example, the Ukrainian government identified mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) as a priority and set up an MHPSS Task Force with a dedicated secretariat that engaged with the World Health Organization (WHO). The ECCD Working Group leveraged this prioritization of MHPSS as an opportunity to engage with the task team and sub-group to advocate for increased focus on MHPSS for young children and their caregivers.

- ✅ **Collaborate with existing networks of local and/or national organizations to gain insights on ECDiE needs in real-time and reinforce advocacy messages to elevate ECDiE in donor meetings and funding documents.** This requires regular and sustained engagement with these networks and groups. For example, in response to the February 2023 earthquakes in Türkiye and Syria, the ECD Syria Network was able to understand what was happening in real time because the members of this network are primarily local civil society organizations working in the earthquake affected area. This enabled the network to draw from their on-the-ground presence and insights to inform advocacy messages for donor meetings and funding documents.