

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

Quick Tips and Good Practice:
Establishing and maintaining an
ECDiE Coordination mechanism





Establishing and maintaining an ECDiE coordination mechanism

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Humanitarian actors invest heavily in coordination mechanisms, recognizing that without a coordinated approach, a response operation can very quickly lose traction, coherence, and focus on the most vulnerable. Early childhood development is no different, with crisis-affected children in need of coordinated services to meet their unique needs and those of their caregivers. ECDiE coordination mechanisms vary and must be tailored to the contexts in which they operate. Some may be led by the formal humanitarian cluster system, while others are led by host governments and embedded in national systems.

A key step is to identify an individual (or multiple people) who will take up responsibility for coordinating ECD services within and across clusters and/or sectors. Please see this [ECDiE Coordinator Profiles](#) resource for examples of the roles and responsibilities of such individuals and the coordination mechanisms which they support. These profiles may serve as template scopes of work for establishing and managing an ECDiE coordination structure (such as a working group) or as terms of reference for ECDiE coordinators that can be replicated in other contexts.

QUICK TIPS AND GOOD PRACTICE:

- ✓ **An ECDiE coordination structure should engage stakeholders from all relevant clusters, sectors, and cross-cutting topics**, including education, nutrition, health, child protection, WASH, MHPSS, gender, disability inclusion, and other service-provision programs. The establishment of coordination mechanisms across all six contexts represented in the ECDiE Coordinator Learning Cohort demonstrates that while this is a complex and challenging undertaking, it is central to getting ECDiE, as a programmatic approach to provision of services to children, onto the humanitarian map.
- ✓ **Where possible, engage with the host government and national systems and build on existing policies and/or approaches to ECD coordination.** For example, in Uganda, the National ECD Technical Committee brings together relevant government ministries as well as humanitarian and development partners to oversee implementation of all ECD services, including targeted interventions for the most at-risk communities. Leveraging these national coordination mechanisms makes ECD services more coherent and sustainable.

✓ **At the working level, engage with national influencers on coordination, policy, and data issues.** In Jordan, the National Early Childhood Development Team is a core component of the [National Council for Family Affairs](#) (NCFA), which provides an inclusive cross-sector platform for coordination, policy, advocacy and data management for ECDiE across the country. The National ECD Team, which is composed of experts representing governmental and non-governmental organizations, has worked on developing an inclusive coordination architecture, leading on policy development on ECD issues¹, ensuring availability of a robust data platform to support program implementation and management, convening regular stakeholder meetings, circulating news and information to ECDiE stakeholders, and working with the [Arab Network on ECD](#) on guideline development for ECDiE.

✓ **In acute emergencies, aim to establish an ECD-specific forum where ECD issues and strategies can be discussed, while concurrently aiming to connect ECDiE coordination with the established humanitarian coordination structure to ensure that ECD priorities are voiced and mainstreamed in existing structures.** For example, in response to the war in Ukraine, the ECDiE Coordinator successfully supported the establishment of the [Early Childhood Care and Development \(ECCD\) Working Group](#). The first step was to connect with [Education Cluster](#) coordinators to identify gaps in ECCD coordination and connect with other

relevant agencies to gather secondary data on the impact of the crisis on young children and caregivers. Working Group [terms of reference](#)² were developed, which may serve as a template for working groups in other contexts. Regular meetings now engage 25-30 participants from local and international partner organizations.

✓ **Where possible, immediately seek to ensure local leadership of coordination efforts, particularly by engaging local organizations and affected communities.** If you are establishing an ECDiE Working Group under the humanitarian cluster system, consider identifying two co-chairs for the working group, ideally one representative from a local organization (governmental where possible) and one from an INGO or UN agency. For example, in Ukraine, the ECCD Working Group is led by the Education Cluster and the [Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science](#) (MoES) ECCD department. It is co-facilitated with support from one international organization and one local organization. The engagement and leadership from the government and local organizations ensures local ownership and thus enhances sustainability. The MoES is also able to provide data, situation updates (particularly related to preschools), and guidance on the wider ECCD strategic direction of the Ukraine response.

1 This includes (i) operational development of a Quality Management System for Nurseries; (ii) working on licensing for nurseries with technical and financial support from World University Service Canada (WUSC) through supporting access to a 700-hour course for development of nursery experts; (iii) easing licencing requirements for nurseries without compromising quality standards; and (iv) providing the Ministerial Committee with advice on optimizing coordination arrangements across nursery and kindergarten services.

2 The ECCD Working Group modeled its TOR after the TOR of the MHPSS sub-group.