

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

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Quick Tips and Good Practice:  
Integrating ECD into needs  
assessments and response  
plans





# Integrating ECD into needs assessments and response plans

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Ensuring that the specific needs of young children and their caregivers are explicitly assessed and reflected in response plans is critical since it will help to ensure that appropriate levels of funding are requested to meet these needs. While a growing number of countries and humanitarian organizations have prioritized ECDiE, globally only two percent of humanitarian funding goes to ECD. Thus more explicit inclusion of ECDiE in mainstream humanitarian assessment and funding documents such as country-level UN Needs Assessment and Humanitarian Response Plans (HRP) is needed.

HRPs articulate a shared vision and the related funding requirements to respond to the assessed and expressed needs of the affected population. These plans are the go-to documents for donors and policymakers. If there is no mention of ECD in the HRP, funding decisions and related action on the specific needs of young children and their caregivers are likely to be piecemeal and poorly joined up. Inclusion of ECDiE priorities in HRPs also helps generate discussions with government which, in turn, increases the likelihood of the state taking up and sustaining ECD initiatives beyond the emergency phase/context, and the integration of ECD in recovery and development planning processes and documents.

## QUICK TIPS AND GOOD PRACTICE:

- ✓ **Identify assessment, appeals, and planning processes relevant to ECDiE and begin to engage.** In response to the Türkiye/Syria earthquake in February 2023, the International Rescue Committee, Sesame Workshop, and UVA issued a [Syria and Türkiye Earthquake Needs Assessment and Appeals Advocacy Guidance Note](#) with tips for identifying entry points for engagement in needs assessments, appeals, and planning processes, including:
- ✓ **Determine if your organization has the ability to provide direct feedback internally or externally on assessments and appeals and supply suggested language and evidence** (see guidance note above for example suggested language).
- ✓ **Find out who you can connect with who oversees inputs into these plans or influences these processes, and discuss the importance of ECDiE with them.** Likely partners include your organization's emergency planning team or representatives to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC).

- ✔ **Determine if the regional and national ECD 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 ask that you or another ECD focal point input into the review process.
- ✔ **Identify the timelines 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 appropriate for young children, etc.
- ✔ **Follow up and take a proactive role in the review, including tracking opportunities for input and providing thoughtful and comprehensive comments.** Try to track which inputs and comments were accepted (and which were not) to inform future inputs.
- ✔ **Ensure that needs assessments include explicit references to the five components of holistic ECD: adequate nutrition, safety and security, responsive caregiving, and opportunities for early learning.** For example, the ECDiE Coordinator in Colombia worked with partners to include a set of targeted questions on ECD in the needs assessment questionnaire for development of the humanitarian response plan. These questions were an essential step in gathering data to check whether migrant children were able to access services and to improve targeting of ECDiE interventions to a broad range of cross-cutting humanitarian issues including food security, health (i.e. vaccination efforts), and early education.
- ✔ **Ensuring inclusion of ECDiE priorities in needs assessments should also extend to any sector-specific assessment where ECDiE-related service provision should be considered.** For example, Uganda's 2022-2023 Education Response Plan (ERP) includes [a focus on ECDiE](#). With the age range including children ages 0-8 in this second iteration of the plan (the first was issued in 2018), a projected 186,600 additional children are now targeted for ECD integration.
- ✔ **Where possible, identify opportunities to align with or build upon the national government's approach to ECD needs assessments and service planning.** For example, while developing the targeted list of ECD questions for the needs assessment questionnaire in Colombia, the ECD Working Group leveraged the government's "whole child approach" in which 13 interventions are mandated for all children ages 0-5. The Working Group cross-analyzed these 13 mandated interventions and the needs assessment questionnaire, resulting in the development of an additional question to identify access to early education and other areas. Close collaboration with the government was essential during this process. The Colombian Government has an open perspective and a well-organised set of policy interventions to integrate Venezuelan migrants in the country and a good track record in supporting this population.