Early childhood development policy

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Goals

3.2. GOAL AND OBJECTIVE OF ECD POLICY

Goal of ECD policy
To ensure all Rwandan children achieve their potential, are healthy, well-nourished and safe, and their mothers, fathers and communities become nurturing caregivers through receiving integrated early childhood development services.

3.3. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The ECD policy seeks to contribute:

1. To improve birth outcomes, reduce infant and maternal mortality and high fertility rates through the expanded use of family planning; pre-conception services; HIV prevention and care services and antenatal education; health and nutrition care services; and the increased use of medically attended births as well as improved neonatal care.

2. To improve parents? and legal guardians? knowledge, skills and resources to support the development of their children, with an emphasis on infants and children up to 6 years of age.

3. To ensure infants and toddlers receive nurturing care and developmental services, and that young children from 3 years to primary school entry are well developed and prepared for success in school and life.

4. To prevent and reduce stunted growth, and improve child development outcomes for the most vulnerable children and children with special needs.

5. To reduce malnutrition and children under-5 child mortality and morbidity through preventive measures and basic maternal-child health care and nutrition services, with emphasis on neonatal and post-natal care and maternal-child nutritional rehabilitation services.

6. To reduce the incidence of childhood illnesses and diseases due to unclean water, poor hygiene and unhygienic waste disposal.

7. To ensure that all new-borns are registered, the rights of all young children are respected, and orphans and vulnerable children from birth to 6 years are identified and receive quality, well-coordinated child protective services.

8. To provide comprehensive ECD services of high quality through developing culturally appropriate and state-of-the-art curricula, training manuals, educational materials, teaching aides, and pre-and in-service training for teachers, community facilitators and supervisors of ECD programmes and services.

9. To ensure that all children are ready to begin school at the correct age and this may entail the special provision of rapid school readiness programmes.

10. To support the coordination, monitoring and evaluation of all processes, programmes and services related to ECD, and to promote
the preparation of research studies on key child development issues.

11. To sensitise local authorities, opinion leaders, parents, communities and journalists about the importance of children’s early development, ECD Policy provisions, and their roles in assisting with planning, implementing, and overseeing essential children’s services.

**Strategies**

**Strategies and activities related to nutrition:**

5. RECOMMENDED POLICY ACTIONS

The ECD Strategic Plan contains a comprehensive results framework which is organised into four Strategic Outcomes, which will be achieved over the course of the five-year Strategic Plan.

a) Operationalize policy and institutional framework to support the implementation of ECD at all levels

b) Increase equitable access for all children aged 0-6 to adequate early stimulation, effective and relevant education, sufficient nutrition, quality health care and protection.

c) Strengthen effective public-private and international partnership supporting the integration of services, scale up & sustainability of ECD interventions

d) Evidence Based Programming and Effective Monitoring and Evaluation There are Output-level results for each Outcome which contains specific activities, with indicators, targets, timelines and budgets, with the responsible actor identified for each activity.

While the ECD Strategic Plan lays out the recommended policy actions in greater detail, below are the key recommended policy actions which will be implemented to meet the ECD Policy Objectives:

**Operationalize policy and institutional framework to support the implementation of ECD at all levels**

1) Develop and disseminate ECD Standards and Guidelines to support smooth implementation

2) Establish National institutional framework to define roles and responsibilities, including TORs and induction programme for National coordinating bodies.

3) Establish Multi-sectoral ECD implementation teams at district and sector levels, conduct induction program and advocate for budget provision for ECD at district level.

4) Build Capacity of community ECD centre management teams and develop manual for ECD centre management.

5) Develop and Implement Communication strategy, organize seminars and sensitization campaigns on ECD and protection of children against violence, and contribute to Radio/TV talk shows, develop flyers, newspapers articles etc.

**Increase equitable access for all children aged 0-6 to adequate early stimulation, effective and relevant education, sufficient nutrition, quality health care and protection.**

1) Adapt and include Family ECD package (stimulation, nutrition, child protection and primary health care) into existing health and nutrition programs for infants and toddlers, integrate family ECD package into training for health professionals and sensitize community leaders, parents and future parents on the importance of ECD and protection of children.

2) Scale up Mother and child primary health care services in communities.

3) Develop screening tools to identify children with special needs and developmental delays and incorporate intervention programmes for children with special needs and into ECD programmes.

4) Provide ECD facilities and equipment countrywide to ensure one ECD centre per Sector (Community based, school based, Health centre-based, centres for children in vulnerable circumstances).

5) Establish ECD pre and in service training system (accreditation and professional development) and produce textbooks and tutors’ guide for ECD.

6) Improve quality of ECD service provision in ECD centres (3-6 year old) though curriculum and materials development, integrating ECD
supervision, mentoring and monitoring support into induction programme for all Sector Officers.

7) Support ECD Nutrition Programme.

8) Train communities on child rights and protection, including protecting children against violence.

**Strengthen effective public-private and international partnership supporting the integration of services, scale up & sustainability of ECD interventions**

1) Establish Effective Coordination and resource mobilisation mechanisms to bring together Public and Private sector partners, putting in place a national ECD Secretariat and a fundraising package to mobilize resources for ECD scale up.

2) Develop MoUs with Public and Private actors, civil society, FBOs and development partners outlining commitments to support ECD.

3) Establish a trust fund to support community ECD activities and ensure sustainability.

**Evidence Based Programming and Effective Monitoring and Evaluation**

1) Develop and Operationalize Strategic M & E and Research Plan and disseminate and publish key findings.

2) Establish Data management, information and reporting systems, agree upon key ECD indicators for Rwanda ensuring their integration into national information system (DEVI INFO, EMIS, IMIS)

3) Implement M&E capacity building plan at national, district and community level

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**Policy topics:**

- Low birth weight
- Stunting in children 0-5 yrs
- Underweight in women
- Nutrition counselling on healthy diets

**Partners in policy implementation**

- Government
  - Health
  - Education and research

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