

# Strategies and implementation of a Holistic Approach to ECD



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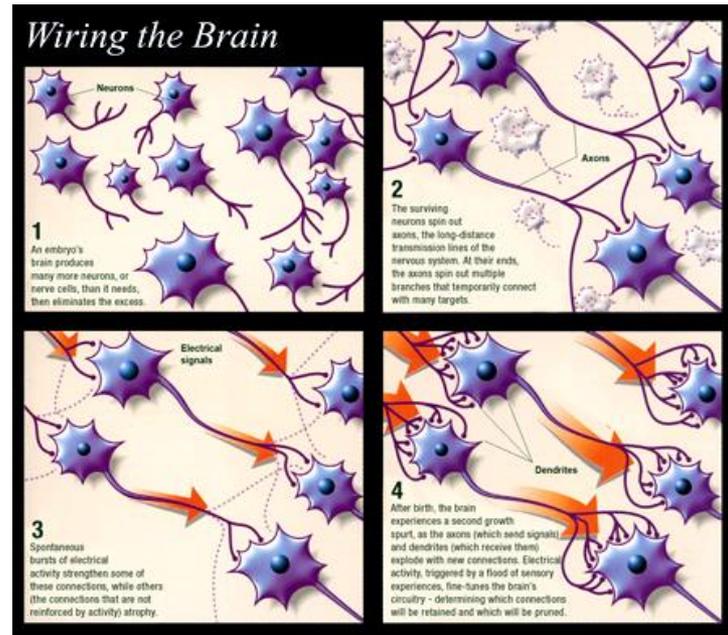
## Main subject matters:

- **Early child development in focus**
- **Holistic approach to ECD**
- **Holistic policy responses**
- **Possible strategies and implementation**
- **UNICEF Holistic ECD approach in country context – Macedonia**

# Why focus on Early Child Development ?



Today we know more than ever before about how young children develop and about how to best support early learning.



# What we know?

- The **first five years of life** are critical to a child's lifelong development.
- **Early experiences** influence brain development - establishing the neural connections that provide the foundation for language, reasoning, problem solving, social skills, behaviour and emotional health.
- **Families and communities** play critical roles in helping children get ready for school- families that are economically secure and have healthy relationships
- **Children's development suffers when** their early learning and care experiences lack appropriate social, language and cognitive stimulation.

# Why is the holistic approach an issue?



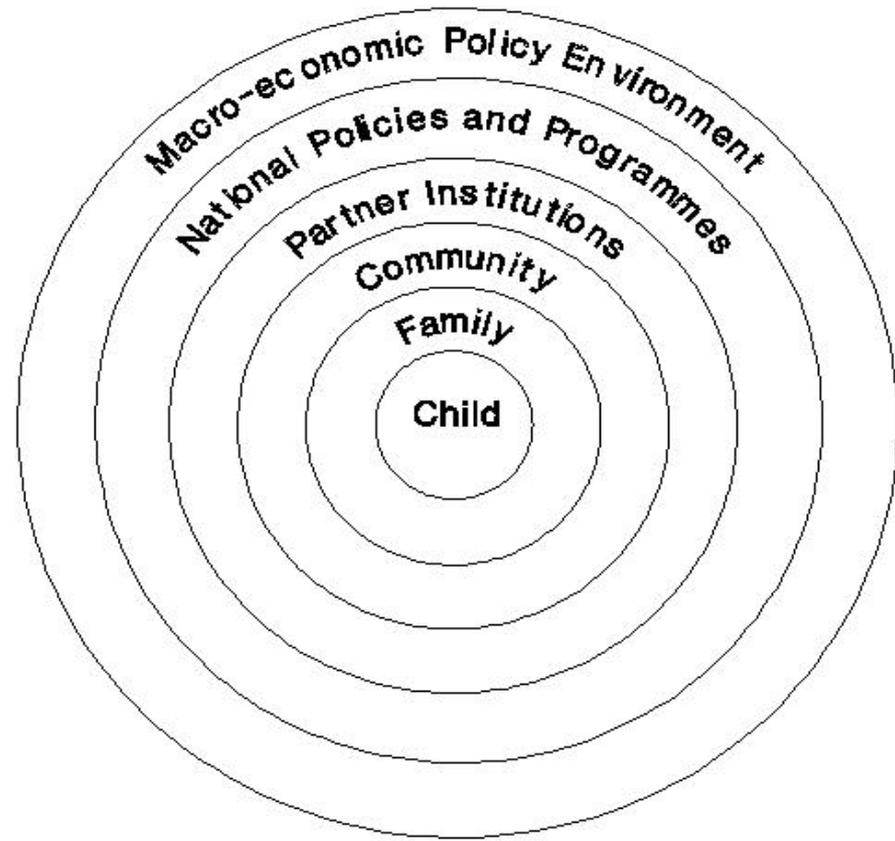
# What is Holistic Approach ?

- Addressing the child's multiple rights within the context of the family and community, using a variety of strategies.
- Add value to any activity directed toward young children and their families.
- Single focus programs has demonstrated limitations and ineffectiveness.



# Holistic Approach to Child Development

"The holistic ideology values the whole child understanding the young child as an individual within the context of his or her family, community and culture."

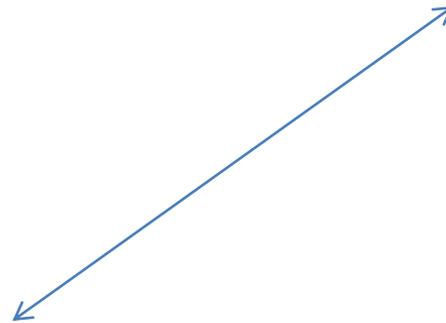
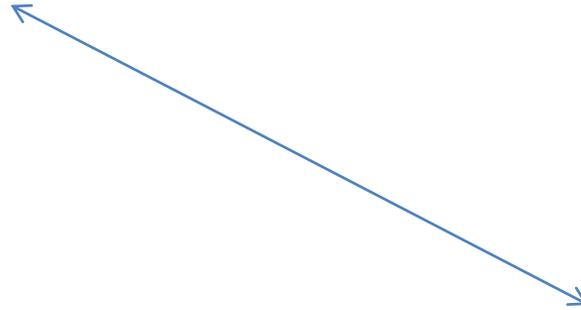


# The scope of definition “early childhood education and care” \*

- **all types of services** that provide education and care to children under school age, whether coordinated or not, belong to the same field.
- **all arrangements for the care and education** of children from birth to compulsory school age, regardless of setting, funding or operating hours.
  - such as family support,
  - gender equality,
  - health,
  - lifelong learning,
  - employment and
  - social integration policies, addressing the field’s multiple dimensions.
  - the child’s transition from home to ECEC, compulsory school and out-of-school provision.
- **overcome the barriers that have obstructed unified action** in the field of early childhood
- **eradicating the historical split between** “child care” and “early childhood education”.
- **convergent actions** across the board – in policy, programmes and research.
- **suitable for developing and developed countries**

\* Starting Strong, Thematic Review, OECD, 2006

# Child environment context



And the most challenging question is .....

Holistic view of the child or  
a holistic view of service provision ?

# WHY?

**Development is holistic; it consists of inter-dependent dimensions.**

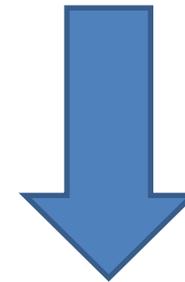
This means that the child's development **cannot be fragmented** into health, nutrition, education, social, emotional and spiritual variables. All are **interconnected** in a child's life and **are developing simultaneously**.

Progress in one area affects progress in others.

Similarly, when something goes wrong in any one of those areas, it has an impact on all the other areas.

**Holistic community response to developmental needs**

- integration – creating a network of services that work together
- coordination- effective referral system
- diversification- flexible service provision
- Community participation
- Involving parents/caregivers
- Partnership –



**QUALITY SERVICE PROVISION**

# Early learning environment

- a focus on individual development
- an emphasis on child-initiated not adult-directed learning
- learning is co-constructed with adults and peers
- children are active agents not passive recipients
- a view of children as competent learners rather than immature adults
- listening to and respecting children and their choices
- learning is shaped by context and community.

# Holistic strategies:

An integrated set of actions for ensuring young children's rights:

- to grow up healthy,
- well-nourished,
- protected from harm,
- with a sense of identity and self-worth and
- opportunities for learning.

# **Strategies for Developing a Holistic Approach to Early Child Development**

**Start with building a communication strategy.**

**Focus, first and foremost, on the whole child.**

**Start with what is possible and with willing partners.**

**Make scientific knowledge about ECD accessible to everyone.**

# **Strategies for Developing a Holistic Approach to Early Child Development**

**Remind programmers that they are also parents.**

**Remind caregivers that they are also role models.**

**Look for opportunities to add components to existing interventions.**

**Look for opportunities to link services.**

**Remember that family relationships are critical.**

**Produce communication media and materials locally.**

## **Programming Strategies :** **Putting the Pieces Together: the challenge.**

- >Support young children's development through direct services.
- >Educate parents and caregivers.
- >Promote community development.
- >Strengthen demand.

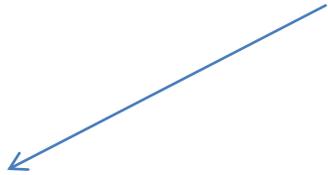


# Key aspects in strategy implementation

- Universal access including focus on at-risk children –availability and proximity
- scalability,
- parental involvement,
- outcome orientation, and
- sustainable and long-term commitment

# Holistic Framework – ELDS

- a set of statements that reflect expectations for children’s knowledge and behavior
- across several developmental domains



young children’s learning  
is **multi-dimensional**



ELDS highlight the fact that young children grow physically, socially, emotionally, linguistically, and cognitively **at the same time,**

# ELDS

- Support the curriculum development process
- Reference for informing parents and care givers in all ECD setting
- Reference for developing policy options
- Entry point for reforming ECD system
- Reference for quality assurance in service provision
- Reference for inclusive approach in ECD

# **UNICEF Holistic ECD approach in country context – Macedonia**

# The context

- National definition of ECD is pre-school education (Law on Child Protection)
- Main responsibility of MLSP (but also MoES, MoH)
- Low pre-school education coverage (14%)
- Existence of community-based ECD centres (Lifestart materials)- sustainability an issue
- Outdated curricula in kindergartens
- Non-existence of in-service training
- Lack of standards

# The opportunities

- Focus on economic growth & human capital development
- Increase in spending in public sector
- Ongoing debate on standards (education)
- Child rights
- Decentralization
- IPA

# UNICEF Early learning and developing standards for children from 0-6



## **ELDS as entry point for reforming the ECD system (National ECD policy)**

- Inter-sectoral cooperation, national-local cooperation and partnerships (experts, NGOs)
- Increase access (link between kindergartens and community-based centres, health preventive teams)
- Improve quality (basis for revision of curricula, parenting materials, pre and in-service training)
- Raise awareness on importance of ECD

# Key initiatives 2010

- ECD financial study as key contribution in ECD policy development was finalized. The study provides a financially feasible plan for expanding ECD coverage.
- A training programme for ELDS implementation - piloted in five kindergartens and 20 community-based centres.
- Instruments for monitoring child outcomes based on ELDS have been developed and tested and have been included in the new regulation for record keeping and documentation in kindergartens.
- Community-based ECD centres have been supported as forms of ECD provision for the most marginalized children (in rural areas and Roma communities).
- Municipalities increasingly choose to invest in these centres (expected that in total 6 will be funded by municipalities in 2011). Standards for their functioning were developed and expected to be included in the next revision of the Law on Child Protection.
- All these key initiative are based on implementing Early Learning and Development Standards as a reference for reforming and improving services in ECD field. .

# Successful programmes

1. Incorporate the principles of the CRC/  
CEDAW
2. Use the existing strengths
3. Have a broad framework,
4. Are developed with and for families
5. Are developed with and for communities
- 6 Provide equal access for all children
7. Are flexible and reflect diversity
8. Meet the highest quality standards.
9. Are cost-effective and sustainable



# Early Childhood Development System

**Comprehensive health services that meet children's vision, hearing, nutrition, behavioral, and oral health as well as medical health needs.**

**Early care and education opportunities in nurturing environments where children can learn what they need to succeed in school and life.**

**Early Learning**

**Health, Mental Health and Nutrition**

**Family Support**



**Special Needs/ Early Intervention**

**Early identification, assessment and appropriate services for children with special health care needs, disabilities, or developmental delays**

**Economic and parenting supports to ensure children have nurturing and stable relationships with caring adults.**



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