

Challenges

- Lack of programs for children from birth to three years of age.
- Inadequate professional training and motivation of ECD personnel.
- Limited inter-sectoral coordination and commitment from various ministries for holistic ECD services.
- Insufficient funding to implement ECD programs.

Priorities

- Strengthen inter-ministerial coordination mechanism.
- Strengthen parental programs to ensure holistic development of children under three.
- Create a strong network between the government, communities, NGOs, and INGOs to advocate for ECD programs in Nepal, align on priorities, and coordinate actions.
- Mainstream independently-operated private centers under a common ECD curricular framework.
- Improve quality of ECD programs by building capacities of ECD personnel.
- Strengthen ECD program monitoring and supervision.
- Promote and advocate cultural and children rights. Incorporate indigenous knowledge and traditional practices into Parental Education and ECD Education Programs through activities such as music, dance, storytelling, and plays.

Noteworthy practices

Collaborative partnerships to scale up ECD programs

- The government's efforts to expand ECD centers have been matched with strong support from local communities, including NGOs, community-based organizations, and the private sector.
- Achievements: Rapid expansion of ECD centers from 5,023 in 2004 to 35,121 in 2014. 77 percent of girls between three and four years of age are enrolled in 35,121 ECD centers nationally.

District Integrated ECD Plan (District ECD committees supported by UNICEF)

- District Integrated ECD Plan is a coordinated and joint effort to provide holistic ECD services in the districts. Under District ECD committees, stakeholders like District Development Committee, District Education Office, District Public Health Office, District Child Welfare Board, District Water and Sanitation Office, NGOs and schools come together to plan for integrated ECD services.
- Achievements: 23 out of 75 districts have developed District Integrated ECD Plans.

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Asia-Pacific Regional Network
for Early Childhood



Nepal Country Profile

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT



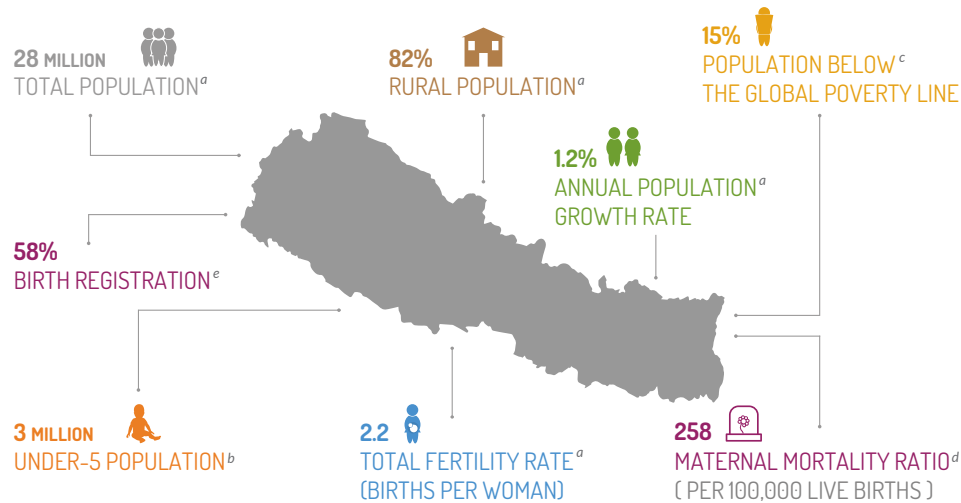
Early Childhood Development in Nepal¹

The Government of Nepal is committed to ECD² as demonstrated through the Strategy Paper adopted in 2004, National Plan of Action, and the draft amendment of the Education Act. With the new School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) starting in July 2016, the government is committed to increase quality access of ECD programs nationwide by funding one year of pre-primary education. Participation from the communities and non-government organizations are also strongly encouraged to expand and improve ECD provisions.

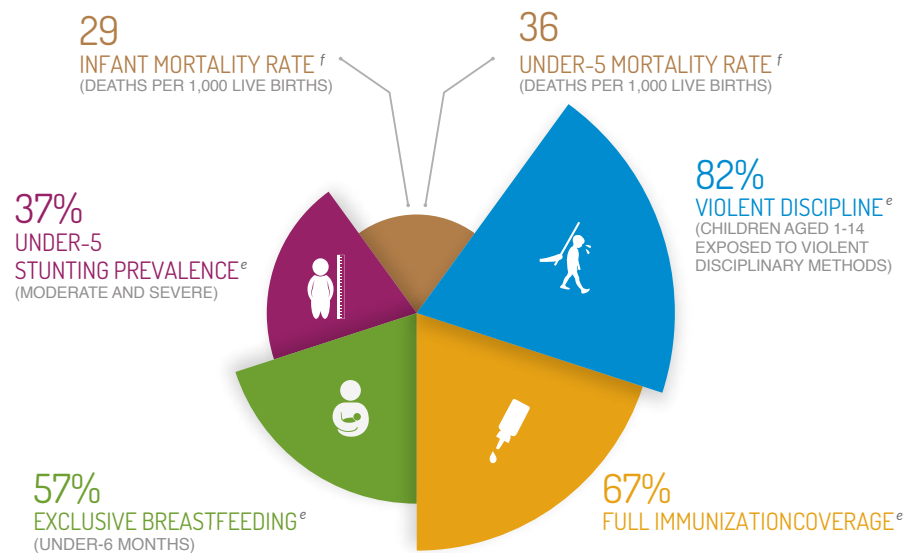
The term ECD is generally used in Nepal and distinguishable in two forms to target children between three and five years of age: i) school-based pre-primary classes and ii) community-based child development centers. Children under three are generally supported through home-based programs and daycare centers.

Since 1996³, Nepal has successfully halved the rates of infant, under five, and maternal mortality. Despite progress, the high prevalence of stunting and low birth weight due to malnutrition continues to plague the country. With 15% of its population living below the poverty line, pressure continues to intensify in providing comprehensive and quality ECD services to benefit all children in Nepal.

DEMOGRAPHICS^a AND PRENATAL



BIRTH TO 5 YEARS



Sources (year)

- ^a World Bank (2014)
- ^b UN Population Division (2015⁵)
- ^c World bank (2010)
- ^d World bank (2015)
- ^e MICS (2014⁶)
- ^f UN IGME (2015⁷)
- ^g UIS (2015⁸)
- ^h UIS (2014)

Disclaimer: Numbers have been rounded except for fertility and population growth rate. Data is as of May 2016.

SCHOOL READINESS

5% AVAILABILITY OF^e CHILDREN'S BOOKS

10% FATHER'S SUPPORT^e FOR LEARNING

85% GROSS ENROLLMENT^g RATIO IN PRE-PRIMARY

0.97 GENDER PARITY INDEX OF^g GROSS ENROLLMENT RATIO; FEMALE / MALE (%)



60% CHILDREN ENTERING^g GRADE 1 WITH ECD EXPERIENCE

18% GRADE 1^h REPETITION RATE

64% EARLY CHILDHOOD^e DEVELOPMENT INDEX

1.02 GENDER PARITY INDEX^g OF CHILDREN WITH ECD EXPERIENCE; FEMALE/MALE

Key policies

- National Strategy Paper for Early Childhood Development
- National Minimum Standards for ECD Centers and Children
- Early Childhood Education and Development in School Sector
- Reform Plan (SSRP, 2009-2015)
- Draft amendment of the Education Act
- School Sector Development Plan 2016-2023

Ministries in charge

Ministry of Education (Department of Education) in collaboration with Ministry of Health, Ministry of Women, Children, and Social Welfare, and Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development

References

- ¹ Ministry of Education and Sports Department of Education. (2004). *Strategy paper for early childhood development in Nepal*.
- ² Rao and Sun. (2010). *Early childhood care and education in the Asia Pacific region: Moving towards goal 1*. (Paper commissioned for the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Asia and the Pacific's World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education (WCECCE) in Moscow 2010).
- ³ USAID. (2014). *Nepal: Nutrition profile*.
- ⁴ World Bank. (2015). *World Bank Open Data* (Accessed April 20, 2016).
- ⁵ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. (2015). *World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision, DVD Edition* (Accessed May 3, 2016).
- ⁶ Central Bureau of Statistics. (2015). *Nepal Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2014, Final Report*. Kathmandu, Nepal: Central Bureau of Statistics and UNICEF Nepal.
- ⁷ United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME). (2015). *Level & trends in child mortality: Report 2015* (pp. 23). New York: UNICEF.
- ⁸ UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). (2016). *Education dataset* (Accessed April 20, 2016).