Positive Parenting and Social Inclusion: Vulnerability of Families with Children

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Overview

Part 1: Why look at Early Childhood and Parenting NOW

Part 2: The Evidence

Part 3: Nurturing Care
Why look at ECD and Parenting?

- **Normative: ECD is a right:** Global Commitment SDGs, Target 4.2
- **Neuroscience and Economic Argument**
- **Social Returns:** Evidence on ECD as an important platform that can facilitate social cohesion
- **ECD can promote Gender equality:** Family-Friendly policies, Parenting support, Fathers
Economic Evidence

Early Childhood is the foundation of sustainable development
Economic Benefits of Investing in Early Childhood Development

- **Return on investment for individuals:** 25% increase in earnings as an adult.

- **Return on investment for societies:** 13% annually if all children born today could be educated to a basic level of literacy and numeracy skills in LMICs.

- **ECD Programmes are affordable:** On average, ECD programmes cost $0.50 per capita per year.

- **The cost of inaction is high:** Governments spend 2-3 times the cost of ECD programmes in related health and education programmes by not making these initial investments from the start of a child’s life.
5 Key Messages from Neuroscience

**Message 1:** The relationship between genes and environment is closer than ever before

**Message 2:** Timing matters - early intervention is the answer

**Message 3:** Toxic stress during early childhood = lifelong impact

**Message 4:** Brain complexity - not homogenous but interconnected

**Message 5:** Nourishing the mind = nutrition + stimulation
Early Intervention is Key!

- Early Entry into Foster Care Resulted in Higher Average Intelligence...
  - Institutionalized children
  - Institutionalized children, placed in foster care after 2 years old
  - Institutionalized children, placed in foster care before 2 years old
  - Never institutionalized children
  - Average DQ is 100

- ...and Brain Functioning at Age 8 Almost Matched That of Never Institutionalized Children
  - Brain’s electrical activity
  - Lower levels
  - Front of brain
  - Back of brain
  - Higher levels

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Nutrition + Stimulation Makes the Difference

The healthy development of a baby’s brain depends on nurturing care.
Implications for Programming: A child with such an Inter-related Brain is going to need Multi-sectoral Action!
CONCLUSION

- To ensure social inclusion and the critical period of brain development in early childhood development, supporting parents and families is absolutely critical.
- “Parenting support is a set of (service and other) activities oriented to improving how parents approach and execute their role as parents and to increasing parents’ child-rearing resources (including information, knowledge, skills and social support) and competencies.”
- Moving from parents as trainees to parents as partners, in line with appreciative inquiry approaches.