NURTURING CARE
FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

A closer look at the nurturing care components

Component	Definition	Illustrative examples of interventions
Good health	Refers to the health and well-being of the children <u>and</u> their caregivers. Why both? We know that the physical and mental health of caregivers can affect their ability to care for the child.	- Family planning - HIV testing, prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV - Essential newborn care including kangaroo care for small babies - Immunization of mother and child - Growth monitoring and counselling - Promotion of health and well-being including health care seeking behaviour - Prevention and treatment of childhood illness and caregiver physical and mental health problems - Care for children with developmental difficulties or disabilities
Adequate nutrition	Refers to maternal <u>and</u> child nutrition. Why both? We know that the nutritional status of the mother during pregnancy affects her health and well-being and that of her unborn child. After birth, the mother's nutritional status affects her ability to breastfeed and provide adequate care.	- Maternal nutrition - Early initiation and exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months, continued breastfeeding after 6 months with appropriate and responsive complementary feeding - Micronutrient supplementation for mother and child, as needed - Adequate physical activity, sedentary behaviour and sleep in early childhood - Management of moderate and severe malnutrition as well as overweight and obesity
Safety and security	Refers to safe and secure environments for children and their families. Includes physical dangers, emotional stress, environmental risks (e.g., pollution), and access to food and water.	- Birth registration - Food security and access to clean water - Clean indoor and outdoor air - Good hygiene - Protecting children from physical punishment, abuse, and neglect - Safe spaces to play - Social care services including cash transfer to the most vulnerable families

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Opportunities for early learning	Refers to any opportunity for the baby, toddler or child to interact with a person, place, or object in their environment. Recognizes that every interaction (positive or negative, or absence of an interaction) is contributing to the child's brain development and laying the foundation for later learning.	*At home and in child care spaces:* - Activities that encourage young children to move their bodies, activate their five senses, hear and use language, and explore - Using daily routines to talk to, play, and interact with baby/toddler/child - Telling stories (including by elders) - Exploring books together and reading to the baby/toddler/child - Talking to and with the baby/toddler/child - Smiling, imitating/copying, and simple games (e.g., peek a boo) - Age-appropriate play with household objects and people - Quality standards in formal child care spaces
Responsive caregiving	Refers to the ability of the parent/caregiver to notice, understand, and respond to their child's signals in a timely and appropriate manner. Considered the foundational component because responsive caregivers are better able to support the other four components.	*Across multiple services and touchpoints:* - Modelling and encouraging caregivers to make eye contact, smile, cuddle, praise - Helping caregivers to notice their child's cues and respond appropriately (sensitivity and responsiveness) – for example signs of hunger, satiety, illness, emotional distress, interest to play, pleasure - Supporting caregivers to identify and use everyday moments to communicate and play with their child (e.g., feeding, bedtime) - Encouraging caregivers to develop safe and mutually rewarding relationships with their child (e.g., they enjoy being together)

For more information and examples see:
Nurturing Care Framework for Early Childhood Development (pp. 12-19)
The five components of nurturing care at www.nurturing-care.org