



ARNEC

Asia-Pacific Regional Network
for Early Childhood

The climate crisis impinges on children's rights and wellbeing. Urgent action required.

Young children bear the disproportionate impacts of climate change and environmental degradation (CC&ED).

- **CC&ED impacts on all five components of the WHO Nurturing Care** (i.e. good health, adequate nutrition, responsive caregiving, opportunity for early learning, and safety and security, see right).
- **Children tend to be treated as a homogenous group, and the impacts of CC&ED in early childhood at distinctive stages of development is unclear.** This significant gap limits the capacity to anticipate and respond to the different needs of children within distinctive developmental windows, especially the first 1000 days. Early childhood development stages and the individual characteristics of children (e.g., gender, experience of a disability, etc.) are significant when considering the impacts of CC&ED on their development. There are no mechanisms to reflect these important distinctions in planning and responding
- **Young children's entire lives will be impacted.** The climate crisis will result in a plethora of lost opportunities for future generations. The planet will be a more dangerous place to live, young children's ability to learn will be negatively impacted, and disasters will be more frequent, prioritising life and livelihood over education and fulfilment.
- **Young children are vulnerable, but ECD is a key building block in sustainable development.** By considering the impacts of CC&ED on today's young children, there is the opportunity to not only improve their lives now, but also to secure a stronger future for a whole community. Building resilience through ECD is not merely a response to our most vulnerable citizens; it is also an act of empowerment and a pathway to achieving sustainable development.

Reference:

ARNEC (2022). From Most Vulnerable to Most Valuable: A scoping study on putting young children at the heart of environmental and climate actions.

Good health: Exposure to air pollution alters brain development and can lead respiratory issues. CC&ED compounds conflict-affected settings limiting access to ECD services, which can increase the risk of death and injury

Adequate nutrition: Scarce or poor water quality brought on by floods or drought increases risk water borne diseases e.g., cholera and malaria. Loss of livelihoods increases food insecurity and malnutrition

Responsive caregiving: Stress and potential trauma of CC&ED impacts may result in caregivers being unable to respond to their child's needs. Toxic stress induced by climate change impacts brain development

Safety and security: Displacement, lack of access to stable and adequate housing, violence and neglect in households are all increasing due to CC&ED. Eco anxiety and perceived lack of safety are high amongst young children

Opportunities for early learning: Infrastructure damage and displacement affects access to schools and other learning services. High heat impacts ability to focus and retain information

ARNEC has made available the summary of the scoping study entitled *From Most Vulnerable to Most Valuable: A scoping study putting young children at the heart of environmental and climate actions* (link: <https://arniec.net/resources/arniec-resources/most-vulnerable-most-valuable-scoping-study-putting-young-children-heart>). Please visit the ARNEC website for updates on the launch of the full scoping study not later than 30 November 2022.