Nurturing care framework progress report (2018-2023): Reflections and looking forward

GLOBAL LAUNCH
THURSDAY 29 JUNE 2023

#NURTURINGCARE
@NURTURINGCARE
Housekeeping

Interpretation
There is available in English, Serbian and Spanish. Please click on the globe icon located in your Zoom Meeting control to select the language.

Chat
Please use the chat feature located in your ZOOM Meeting Control to introduce yourself and exchange with participants.

Ask questions
Please use the Q&A feature located in your ZOOM Meeting Control to ask questions.

Recording
The session will be recorded and made available afterwards.
Opening remarks

Overview of the Progress Report

Regional and country experiences
ARNEC, ISSA, Ghana, Serbia, Paraguay

Questions & answers
Moderated by Maniza Ntekim, Senior Programme Officer for Early Childhood Development, East and Southern Africa, Conrad N. Hilton Foundation

Closing remarks
Welcoming remarks

Anshu Banerjee
Director
Department of Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health and Ageing
World Health Organization, Geneva

Victor Aguayo
Director
Nutrition and Child Development
UNICEF, New York
Overview of the Progress Report

Bernadette Daelmans
Unit Head
Child Health and Development Unit
Maternal, Newborn, Child, Adolescent
Health and Ageing Department
World Health Organization, Geneva

Boniface Kakhobwe
ECD Specialist
Nutrition and Child
Development Section
UNICEF, New York
Nurturing care framework progress report (2018-2023)

OVERVIEW

https://nurturing-care.org/progress-report-2023
Our questions

• How has the concept of nurturing care influenced policy and strategy by governments and partners?

• How have the five strategic actions proposed in the Framework been translated into actions at global, regional and country levels?

• How has the Framework influenced the global child health agenda?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The five strategic actions</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEAD AND INVEST</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FOCUS ON FAMILIES AND THEIR COMMUNITIES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STRENGTHEN SERVICES</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MONITOR PROGRESS</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SCALE UP AND INNOVATE</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Methodology

• Interviews with 110 key informants with a wide range of stakeholders based in 30 countries.

• A robust literature review of technical reports, policy-related documents, published and grey literature, case studies and meeting notes.

• A rapid survey of 51 randomly-selected low and middle-income countries and areas, with sampling proportional to region.

Supported by an Advisory Committee
The report sections

**Introduction** outlines the purpose and process for developing this report.

**The path to progress** describes the activities and resources that supported dissemination and operationalization of the Framework.

**Reflections on progress** presents the findings from the key informant interviews and rapid survey.

**Looking forward** outlines what areas need further attention so as to continue the momentum and advance progress.
# A short history

## FIG. 1. BRIEF TIMELINE UP TO THE FRAMEWORK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Convention on the rights of the child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Early child development in developing countries (Lancet series)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Early child development in developing countries (Lancet series)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Global strategy for women’s, children’s, and adolescents’ health 2016-2030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Advancing early childhood development: from science to scale (Lancet series)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Nurturing care for early childhood development: a framework for helping children survive and thrive to transform health and human potential</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### A snapshot of achievements 2018 to 2023

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Diverse stakeholders from multiple sectors came together</strong> to improve child development outcomes and create enabling environments for nurturing care.</th>
<th><strong>Wider recognition exists of ECD as an outcome</strong>, not a specific programme or intervention.</th>
<th><strong>Profiles for ECD have been developed for 197 countries</strong> and are regularly updated.</th>
<th><strong>More than 80%</strong> of countries and areas responding to a rapid survey reported that frontline workers were trained to strengthen caregivers’ capacity to provide their children with responsive care and opportunities for early learning.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Digital traffic on the nurturing care website increased by 650%</strong> and continues to rise.</td>
<td><strong>The concept of nurturing care was extended across the first two decades of life</strong>, articulating the health and well-being needs of children and adolescents.</td>
<td><strong>The number of low- and middle-income countries with a national policy or action plan for ECD increased by 48%</strong>. Many new policies give attention to all components of nurturing care.</td>
<td><strong>The central role of the family in creating a stimulating, safe and secure environment for young children is well recognized and includes attention to caregiver mental health and well-being.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meetings were held with nearly 1000 stakeholders from over 40 countries</strong> to facilitate understanding of the Framework and agree on actions to advance nurturing care in each context.</td>
<td><strong>Over 570 scholarly articles</strong> cited the Framework. Emerging findings are helping to build an evidence base on scaling up and innovation for nurturing care.</td>
<td><strong>The Early childhood development index 2030 and Global scales for early development marked an exciting milestone in measuring and monitoring children’s development at population level.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Over 30 resources</strong> were developed to support operationalization of the Framework.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Three strategic shifts

The Framework has:

• put emphasis on the youngest children
• put a spotlight on the health sector
• put caregivers at the centre of nurturing care

... reframed ECD as an outcome
Key finding #1
NCF established a globally accepted conceptual framework

- The NCF created a clear and widely acceptable goal and shared language for early childhood development. It established:
  - a clear mandate for buy-in from multiple sectors
  - new focus on responsive caregiving
  - programme priorities for children under 3
- In turn, the NCF strengthened alignment and coordination for policy and programming processes at multiple levels:
  - across sectors and organizations
  - within organizations (internally)
  - across the lifespan
Key finding #2
NCF informed vital policy processes (and “got them on the right track”)

- Notable efforts have been directed at policy planning (strategic action #1), which some view as a precursor for actions in the other NCF strategic areas.

The number of low- and middle-income countries with a national policy or action plan for ECD increased by 48%. Many new policies give attention to all components of nurturing care.
Key finding #3
NCF contributed to strengthening aspects of service provision

- Two common programme areas include:
  - Rapid uptake of responsive caregiving, early learning and other parenting interventions. Focused on strengthening health/nutrition workforce to support caregiver capabilities.
  - Giving more attention to monitoring early childhood development and early intervention for delays and disability.

- Additional areas of common interest related to NCF include small and sick newborns, caregiver mental health, humanitarian contexts, and climate change.

Stories of change

BELIZE
Mainstreaming the Care for child development approach and supporting regional uptake

BANGLADESH
Strengthening the capacity of caregivers to responsively feed through nutrition services

INDIA, KENYA, UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
Strengthening capacity and mentoring through paediatric associations

UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
Using digital tools to train and support frontline workers
Key finding #4
Promising initiatives & progress made in other strategic areas

Monitor progress
- Country profiles of valid and reliable indicators aligned with the Framework.
- Monitoring systems aligned with national ECD policies and strategies in countries.

Data and innovation
- Digital innovations that can be scaled to support caregivers in providing nurturing care.
- Family-friendly policy initiatives and private sector engagement.

Focus on families and their communities
- Engagement of community workers, media, fathers, and mothers in the design and implementation of programmes and interventions.
“Our advocacy work in ECD picked up following the Framework. It provided the backbone for us.”
Stakeholder, civil society organization

“The Framework created a common understanding of where we are and where we want to go – particularly where we want to go.”
Stakeholder, multilateral organization

“The Framework helped us to identify priorities and gaps in service provision.”
Stakeholder, government

“The Framework is practical and easy to use. Five years on, it continues to be the way to get everyone on the same page and make a case for ECD. The Framework gives us something that isn’t everything but gives a holistic approach to understanding what children need. It has established a common agenda.”
Stakeholder, philanthropic organization

Let’s not forget how radical it was that … responsive caregiving was picked up. This is a huge change and accomplishment. People understand it. We no longer deal with just the child but the whole system around the child. The Framework brought us a notion of family-centred care that we did not talk about before.”
Stakeholder, research institution

Voices from the field
Key finding #5

Common challenges

- Translating and operationalizing the NCF into sustainable practice.
- Coordination across sectors and between levels of government.
- Financial resources to implement (donor dependent).
- Data and evidence to monitor progress.
- Health system capacity and healthcare worker burden/capabilities.
- Health sector engagement.
Looking forward

- Ongoing attention to each of the strategic actions will further strengthen the enabling environments for nurturing care so that caregivers can care for themselves and ensure every child receives nurturing care.

- Sustained investments are needed to achieve impact at scale.
Areas that merit further attention

- Deepen coordination and collaboration mechanisms
- Strengthen policies and plans
- Improve public financing

- Involve families and communities in the design of policies and programmes
- Cultivate local champions and use multimedia

- Build a workforce fit for purpose
- Strengthen systems to provide care according to need

- Use data to inform planning, budgeting and programming
- Measure individual and collective impact

- Implement feasible, sustainable and scalable solutions
- Use implementation research
Acknowledgements

Wholehearted thanks to

- The authors of the Lancet series *Early childhood development: From science to scale* (2017) that laid the foundation for the Nurturing Care Framework

- The key informants who were interviewed

- The UNICEF and WHO staff in countries who facilitated responses to the survey

- The advisory committee that accompanied the development of the report

- And last, but not least, Kerrie Proulx who managed the development of the report.

https://nurturing-care.org/progress-report-2023
Regional experiences

Evelyn Santiago
Executive Director
Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC)

Zorica Trikic
Senior Programme Manager
International Step by Step Association (ISSA)
Nurturing Care Framework and efforts to strengthen health systems for ECD in Europe and Central Asia

International Step by Step Association

Zorica Trikic
Senior Program Manager
International Step by Step Association (ISSA)
ztrikic@issa.nl
The new perspective on the role of health care in child development

What do we want to achieve?

strengthen support for child development in all routine health care services

- Enhance support for ECD in facility-based services
- Bring ECD in home visiting
- Support developmental monitoring
- Support development of children with complex needs

• Supporting and counselling of parents on all aspects of nurturing care, addressing parental concerns
• Universal monitoring of child development based on validated tools
• Identification of children at risk of developmental difficulties
• Coordination of care and referral to other sectors/services, including for ensuring access of children to early childhood intervention services.

Website/Knowledge Hub
https://www.healthforecd.com/

• More than 5000 website visitors since December 2022
• Since November 2022 seven webinars organized including the one on regional launch of the Nurturing Care practice guide - in total more than 1000 webinar viewers
258 newsletter subscribers (more to come)
• 6 blogs (more to come)
UNICEF/ISSA “Supporting Families for Nurturing Care” resource modules training package for home visitors (https://www.issa.nl/content/supporting-for-families-nurturing-care)

- Trained 40 regional Master Trainers
- Trained National Master Trainers in Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Albania, Kosovo (more than 100)
- Modules or elements of the modules integrated in preservice and in-service training
- Knowledge presented in the modules informed policies and practices on country level
- Contributed to building multisectoral teams of trainers and implementers

- A growing set of training modules (soon to have 24 modules).
- Aiming to improve home visitors’ and other professionals’ knowledge of the key components of Nurturing Care and strengthen their skills to support parents and children.
- Supports different components of Nurturing Care and cover topics that are not routinely a part of pre-service or in service nursing and medical education in the region.
ISSA’s Initiatives in ECA region based on, or inspired and guided by NCF
Country experiences: Ghana, Serbia, Paraguay

Kofi Issah
Director of the Family Health Division of Ghana Health Services

Slavica Djukic-Dejanovic MD, PhD,
Special Adviser to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia for the Implementation of the UN Agenda 2030
Chair of Inter-sectorial Steering Committee on Playful Parenting in Early Childhood.

Milica Pejovic Milovancevic
Director of the Institute of Mental Health in Serbia
President of the MoH Working Group for the implementation of the National ECD Programme

Sonia Raquel Olmedo
Director General of Early Education in the Ministry of Education and Science in Paraguay
Member of the National Early Childhood Team (ENPI) that carries out the Kunu’u National Strategy for Comprehensive Early Childhood Care
Closing remarks

Helga Fogstad
Executive Director
Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH)

Elizabeth Lule
Executive Director
Early Childhood Development Action Network (ECDAN)
Thank you

For more information:
nurturing-care.org  
ecdan.org

Join the conversation:  
#NurturingCare  
@NurturingCare