

AU ECED-FLN GLOSSARY

Early Childhood Education & Development
Foundational Learning & Numeracy

Produced by the African Union ECED-FLN Cluster

<https://www.ecedflncluster-au.org/>

1000 terms · Updated 25 September 2026

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Developmental Readiness	Developmental Screening
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Early Childhood Development and Family (ECD&F)	Early Childhood Development and Family Centre
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Early Childhood Education Enrolment	Early Childhood Education Framework
Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED)	Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) Facilitators
Early Childhood Education and Development and Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (ECED-FLN)	Early Childhood Educator
Early Childhood Facilitation	Early Childhood Infrastructure
Early Childhood Intervention (ECI)	Early Childhood Nutrition
Early Childhood Pedagogy	Early Childhood Stimulation
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Early Childhood Wellbeing	Early Childhood Workforce
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Early Literacy and Numeracy	Early Numeracy
Early Primary Education	Early Reading Skills
Early Screening and Intervention	Early Stimulation
Early Years	Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
Educare	Educare Management
Education Management Information System (EMIS)	Education Policy
Education Quality Assurance Systems	Education Reform
Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP)	Education System Actors
Education Systems Strengthening	Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)
Education in Crisis-Affected Contexts	Educational Capacity Building
Educational Modules	Educational Outcomes
Educational Resources	Educational Technology (EdTech)
Educational Theatre	Educational Transitions
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Educator Effectiveness	Educator Training
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Emotional Development	Emotional Regulation
Emotional Skills	Emotional Well-Being
Enabling Environments	Endline Assessment
English Language Instruction	Enrollment
Environmental Learning Activities	Equitable Access
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Gender-Responsive Play-Based Learning (GR-PBL)	Gender-Sensitive Caregiving
Girl Child	Girls' Education
Global Learning Crisis	Grade R
Grade RR	Grade Repetition
Gross Motor Development	Growing Together Model
Growth Monitoring and Promotion (GMP)	Guided Activities
Guided Discussion	Guided Learning
Guided Practice	Guided Reflection
Hands-On Learning	Health Monitoring
Hearing Impairment	Holistic Approach
Holistic Care	Holistic Child Development
Holistic Child Development Outcomes	Holistic Child Wellbeing
Holistic Education	Holistic Learning
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Home Learning Materials	Home Literacy Practices
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Home-Based Early Learning	Home-Based Interventions
Home-Centre Partnerships	Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF)
Hub and Community-Based Satellite Model	Human Capital Development
Implementation Framework	Implementation Research
In-Service Teacher Training (INSET)	In-Service Teachers
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Inclusive Early Childhood Development and Learning (IECDL)	Inclusive Education
Inclusive Education Guidelines	Inclusive Latrines
Inclusive Learning Environments	Inclusive Literacy Practices
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Individualised Care Plan	Individualised Education Plan (IEP)
Individualised Learning Plan (ILP)	Individualised Support
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Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF)	Informal Childcare Providers
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Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE)	Interactive Learning
Minimum Standards	International Development and Early Learning Assessment (IDELA)
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Linguistic Diversity	Listening Skills
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Literacy Development	Literacy Ecosystem
Literacy Instruction	Literacy Intervention
Literacy Language	Literacy Outcomes
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Literacy Skills	Literacy-Rich Environment
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Low-Cost Play Materials	Low-Cost Private Schools (LCPS)
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Mainstream Education	Mainstream Schools
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Mentorship	Middle-Tier Leadership
Mini-Libraries	Minimum Safety Standards
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Mobile Library Outreach	Model Crèche
Model Lesson Plans	Model Schools
Monitoring and Assessment Tools	Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)
Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL)	Monograde Teaching
Montessori Education	Montessori Pedagogy
Moral Duty Bearers	Mother Tongue
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Motor Skills	Multigrade Teaching
Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs)	Multilingual FLN Assessment
Multilingual Learning	Multisectoral Approach
Multisectoral Collaboration	Multisensory Instruction
National Curriculum	National Curriculum Framework for Early Childhood Development (NCfECD)
National Early Childhood Development Standards	National Languages
Nature-Based Curriculum	Needs Assessment
Neurodevelopment	Neurodevelopmental Delays
Neurodivergent Learners	Neurodiversity
Neuroplasticity	Nigeria Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF)
Nkuza Neza	Norms and Standards

Numeracy	Numeracy Development
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Numeracy Readiness	Numeracy Stimulation
Nursery School	Nurturing Care
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Nutrition	Nutrition Education
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Nutritional Support	OPTIMA
Occupational Therapy	On-Site Mentorship
Opportunities for Early Learning	Optimal Child Development
Oral Language	Organised Learning Programmes
Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC)	Out-of-School Children (OOSC)
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Pedagogical Tools	Pedagogy
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Phonemic Awareness	Phonics
Phonological Awareness	Physical Development
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Play-Based Teacher Professional Development	Pop-Up Crèche
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Positive Discipline	Positive Parent-Child Interaction
Positive Parenting	Post-Placement Monitoring
Practitioner Training and Professional Development	Pre- and Post-Assessments
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Pre-Mathematics	Pre-Primary 1 (PP1)
Pre-Primary 2 (PP2)	Pre-Primary Curriculum
Pre-Primary Education (PPE)	Pre-Primary Provision
Pre-Primary School	Pre-Primary Sector

Pre-Reading Comprehension	Pre-Reading Skills
Pre-Service Teacher Training (PRESET)	Preparatory Year
Preschool Age	Preschool Children
Preschool Intervention	Preschool Teachers
Primary Education	Problem-Solving Skills
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Professional Standards	Professionalisation of the Early Childhood Development Sector
Programme de Renforcement des Équipes de Gestion Régionale des Ressources d'Apprentissage (PREGRRRA)	Project-Based Learning (PBL)
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Proximity of Care	Psychomotor Skills
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Rehabilitation Services	Remedial Education
Responsive Care Training	Responsive Caregiver
Responsive Caregiving	Right to Education (RTE)
Rights-Based Early Learning Systems	Rote Learning
Safe Learning Environments	Safe Spaces
Safeguarding	Salone Pikin 4 Play en Lan
School Accountability Systems	School Accreditation
School Attendance	School Dropout
School Engagement	School Enrollment
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Secondary Education	Secure Attachment Figures
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Sensory Stimulation	Sequencing Stories
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Sign Language Training	Skills Development
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Social Protection	Social Protection Systems
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Social-Emotional Knowledge	Social-Emotional Milestones
Social-Emotional Needs	Social-Emotional Skills
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Sounding Letters	South-South Learning
Spatial Agency	Special Education Strategies
Special Educational Needs (SEN)	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
Specific Learning Needs	Speech and Language Therapy (SLT)
Sport-Based Learning	Stage-Based Curriculum
Standard One	Standardized Screening Tools
Standards-Based Curriculum	Stimulating Learning Environments
Stimulation	Storytelling
Strengths-Based Approach	Structural Quality
Structured Curriculum	Structured Early Learning
Structured Learning Resources	Structured Lesson Delivery
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Structured Literacy	Structured Literacy Instruction
Structured Literacy Programmes	Structured Pedagogy
Structured Phonics Instruction	Structured Play
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Structured Reading Activities	Struggling Readers
Student Workbooks	Student-to-Teacher Ratio (STR)
Stunting	Support Visits
Supportive Supervision	Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4)
Synthetic Phonics	Systemic Reform
Systems Strengthening	Targeted Interventions
Taux Brut de Préscolarisation (TBP)	Teacher Capacity Building
Teacher Coaches	Teacher Coaching
Teacher Competencies	Teacher Education
Teacher Effectiveness	Teacher Guides
Teacher Licensing	Teacher Modeling
Teacher Preparation	Teacher Professional Development (TPD)
Teacher Quality	Teacher Support
Teacher Training	Teacher Training Curriculum
Teacher Training Institutions (TTI)	Teacher-Directed Instruction
Teacher-Made Materials	Teaching Approaches
Teaching Methodologies	Teaching Practice
Teaching Quality	Teaching Skills
Teaching Strategies	Teaching and Learning
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Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL)	Technical Assistance (TA)
Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)	Therapeutic Interventions
Thinking Skills	Three-Tier Mentoring Model
Thrive by Five Index	Toy Library

Toy-Based Pedagogy	Traditional Number Games
Training of Trainers (ToT)	Transition Management
Transition Mechanisms	Transition to Primary Education
Transitional Learning Centres (TLCs)	Trauma-Informed Approaches
Tuition-Free Education	Tuseme Clubs
Ubuntu Pedagogy	Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
Unstructured Play	Violence Against Children (VAC)
Visual Teaching Aids	Visual-Motor Integration (VMI)
Vocabulary Development	Vulnerable Children
Washington Group Child Functioning Module (CFM)	Wasting
Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)	Welcome Sesame
Well-Being	Whole Child Approach
Workforce Development	Zambian Sign Language (ZSL)

About this glossary

This glossary defines key terms used across Early Childhood Education & Development (ECED) and Foundational Learning & Numeracy (FLN) initiatives submitted to the African Union ECED-FLN Cluster platform. Definitions are grounded in how the terms are used in practice across initiatives from many African countries. This document is generated automatically and reflects the glossary's most recent revisions.

A

ATLAS

A child-centered, competency-based educational framework designed to strengthen foundational learning and early childhood development through pre-service and in-service teacher capacity building, inclusive pedagogy, and safe learning environments.

Ability Grouping

An instructional approach where learners are organized into groups based on their demonstrated learning levels rather than age or grade, enabling targeted teaching and accelerated progress for struggling pupils.

Also known as: ability-based grouping

Accelerated Education Programme (AEP)

A flexible, condensed educational programme designed to provide over-age, out-of-school, or disadvantaged children with an expedited pathway to acquire foundational competencies and transition into mainstream education.

Also known as: accelerated education programmes, AEP

Accessible Learning Environments

Educational spaces, facilities, and instructional designs intentionally arranged to ensure that all children, including those with disabilities or diverse learning needs, can freely enter, navigate, and participate in learning.

Accommodations

Adjustments or modifications made to instructional materials, physical settings, or assessment procedures that enable learners with diverse needs or disabilities to access educational opportunities on an equal basis with their peers.

Accredited Qualifications

Formally recognized professional certifications and educational credentials awarded by authorized institutions, validating that an early childhood educator meets established national or sector-wide competency and practice standards.

Accredited Training

Formal educational or professional development programmes officially recognized, verified, and certified by an authorized quality assurance body to ensure adherence to established competency and instructional standards.

Active Learning

An instructional approach that directly engages learners in the educational process through problem-solving, discussion, hands-on tasks, and reflection, rather than passive reception of information.

Also known as: active learning methods

Active Learning Environments

Physical or structured educational spaces intentionally designed to encourage children to explore, manipulate materials, collaborate with peers, and participate dynamically in hands-on, inquiry-driven educational experiences.

Active Parenting

A caregiver engagement approach characterized by direct, intentional, and consistent involvement in a child's holistic development, daily learning, emotional nurturing, and early educational progress.

Active Teaching and Learning (ATL)

A child-centered, competency-based pedagogical approach that engages learners through participatory, play-based methods and interactive experiences to strengthen foundational literacy, numeracy, and holistic developmental outcomes.

Also known as: active teaching and learning, Active Teaching and Learning Approaches

Activity-Based Learning (ABL)

A child-centred pedagogical methodology where learners construct knowledge and develop foundational skills through hands-on activities, practical experimentation, educational games, and sensory exploration.

Also known as: activity-based learning

Adapted Learning Programmes

Educational curricula and instructional pathways tailored or modified in content, delivery pace, or methodology to accommodate the specific learning abilities, developmental levels, and developmental needs of diverse learners.

Adaptive Education

A flexible and responsive educational approach that adjusts teaching methods, curricula, and delivery pathways to accommodate diverse learner needs, contextual challenges, and external disruptions to sustain learning continuity.

Adaptive Education Pathways

Flexible, contextually responsive learning routes designed to ensure continuous education by adapting to diverse learner needs, environmental disruptions, and evolving digital demands.

Adaptive Feedback

Responsive guidance informed by ongoing learning data that adjusts to individual learner performance and instructional needs to improve educational outcomes continuously.

Adaptive Management

An iterative programming approach that uses ongoing monitoring data and regular stakeholder reviews to adjust strategies, improve implementation, and foster sustainable, scalable outcomes.

Adaptive Teaching

Instructional practices that adjust methods, content, and pacing to accommodate learners' diverse needs, learning disabilities, and developmental stages, fostering inclusive participation and academic confidence.

Also known as: adaptive teaching strategies

Additional Educator

The physical and built environment conceptualized as an active, instructional agent that purposefully shapes, enriches, and supports early childhood development and learning experiences alongside human teachers.

Also known as: added educator

Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (ASRHR)

The framework encompassing adolescents' bodily autonomy, sexual health education, access to healthcare services, and the protection of their reproductive rights and well-being within their communities.

Also known as: ASRHR

Adoption

A legal and social process that permanently places a child into a family other than their biological parents, transferring all parental rights and responsibilities to provide lifelong care and protection.

Adult Literacy

The ability of grown individuals to read, write, and comprehend text, developed through targeted education programmes to enhance personal empowerment, livelihoods, and the capacity to support children's foundational education.

Also known as: alphabétisation des adultes

Adult-Child Relationships

Dynamic, nurturing interactions between caregivers or educators and children that form the foundation for healthy brain development, emotional security, and social-emotional growth.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Potentially traumatic events occurring during childhood, such as abuse, neglect, or household dysfunction, that can undermine healthy brain development, attachment, and lifelong well-being.

Also known as: adverse childhood experiences

After-School Care

Supervised, structured developmental and care services provided to children outside standard school hours within safe environments that offer holistic stimulation, social-emotional support, and academic reinforcement.

After-School Support

Structured academic, recreational, or developmental assistance provided outside formal school hours to help vulnerable learners overcome educational difficulties and build social confidence in safe environments.

Age-Appropriate Expectations

Realistic developmental and academic milestones tailored to children's specific chronological ages and maturation levels, guiding effective instruction and equitable curriculum delivery.

Age-Appropriate Learning Materials

Educational resources, books, toys, and manipulative items specifically designed to match the developmental capabilities, cognitive levels, and physical milestones of children at particular growth stages.

Also known as: age appropriate books, age-appropriate educational materials

Age-Appropriate Learning Opportunities

Educational experiences, play-based activities, and supportive environments purposefully designed to match children's developmental stages, cognitive abilities, and physical capacities safely and effectively.

Age-Appropriate Sexuality Education

A developmentally suitable approach to teaching children and young people about physical development, relationships, health, and personal safety to support their wellbeing and protection.

Age-Appropriateness

The intentional alignment of learning materials, pedagogical activities, and instructional methods with the developmental stages, cognitive abilities, and socio-emotional readiness of children at a specific age.

Also known as: age-appropriate

Almajiri System

A traditional Islamic education framework where children, often boys living away from home, receive religious instruction while frequently facing heightened socioeconomic vulnerability and exclusion from formal schooling.

Also known as: almajiri

Alternative Care

Formal and informal substitute care arrangements provided to children outside their biological family environment, encompassing kinship networks, community-based arrangements, foster families, or residential protective facilities.

Anthropometric Measurements

Quantitative physical measurements, such as height and weight, collected to track children's physical growth, evaluate nutritional status, and detect developmental risks like stunting.

Assessment

The systematic process of gathering, analysing, and evaluating evidence of a child's knowledge, skills, and developmental progress to inform instruction and track educational attainment.

Also known as: assessments

Assessment Checklists

Structured observational tools used by educators to record and monitor children's acquisition of foundational skills, behavioral competencies, and developmental milestones against defined learning standards.

Assessment Data

Quantitative and qualitative information gathered from evaluating learner performance, used to monitor learning outcomes, demonstrate program effectiveness, and guide educational interventions and policy decisions.

Assessment Practices

The methods, routines, and strategies employed by educators to evaluate, track, and document children's learning progress and developmental milestones within the classroom.

Assessment Tools

Standardized instruments, rubrics, or protocols used by educators and evaluators to systematically measure children's developmental progress, foundational skill acquisition, and the overall quality of early learning environments.

Assessment for Learning (AfL)

An ongoing, formative evaluation approach where educators gather continuous evidence of learner progress during instruction to provide feedback, adapt teaching methods, and actively enhance student understanding.

Also known as: assessment for learning

Assessment for Play-Based Early Childhood Education

An observational evaluation framework designed to measure young children's developmental milestones and foundational competencies through structured, interactive, and child-centered playful learning experiences.

Assistive Devices

Specialized equipment, tools, or physical aids—such as wheelchairs, crutches, or sensory tools—designed to enhance functional capabilities and enable children with disabilities to access learning environments equitably.

Assistive Learning Resources

Specialized materials, adaptive tools, and educational devices designed to support children with disabilities or diverse educational needs in actively participating and accessing foundational learning.

Attachment

A deep, enduring emotional bond between a young child and their primary caregiver that provides safety, security, and a foundation for healthy emotional and social development.

Attachment Disorders

Psychological conditions in which young children struggle to form secure, healthy emotional bonds with primary caregivers, often resulting from early experiences of neglect, trauma, or institutionalization.

Attendance

The regular, physical presence and active participation of learners in early childhood development centres or foundational school programmes to support continuous learning and holistic development.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

A neurodevelopmental condition characterized by persistent patterns of inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity that can affect a child's executive functioning, social interactions, and ability to engage effectively in learning environments.

Also known as: ADD, ADHD

Attunement

A caregiver's responsive awareness and emotional connection to a young child's non-verbal and verbal cues, fostering trust, security, and co-regulation within the caregiving relationship.

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

A diverse set of tools, systems, and strategies that supplement or replace spoken language to enable children and individuals with speech, language, or physical impairments to communicate effectively.

Also known as: AAC, augmentative and alternative communication

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Assessment

A comprehensive evaluation process that identifies the specific communication needs, functional abilities, and environmental barriers of individuals with speech or physical disabilities to determine appropriate non-verbal communication supports and technologies.

Also known as: AAC assessment

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

A neurodevelopmental condition characterized by diverse differences in social communication, interaction, and sensory processing, requiring inclusive, differentiated, and individualized instructional support in early childhood learning environments.

Also known as: autism

B**Barriers to Learning**

Physical, systemic, cognitive, socio-economic, or environmental obstacles that impede a child's ability to access education, actively participate in classroom activities, or attain foundational learning milestones.

Barriers to Registration

Administrative, financial, geographical, or regulatory obstacles that prevent early childhood centres, schools, or individual children from being formally enrolled or officially accredited by educational authorities.

Baseline Assessment

An initial evaluation of learners' skills, knowledge, or developmental status conducted prior to an intervention to establish a reference point against which subsequent progress and programme impact are measured.

Also known as: baseline, baseline assessments

Basic Education

The foundational cycle of formal schooling, encompassing early childhood, pre-primary, and primary education, that provides children with essential literacy, numeracy, and core life competencies necessary for lifelong learning.

Also known as: éducation de base

Behaviour Management

Classroom strategies and positive discipline techniques used by educators to guide children's conduct, encourage self-regulation, and maintain a supportive, predictable environment conducive to learning.

Birth Defects

Structural or functional abnormalities present from birth that can impair physical or cognitive development, requiring timely detection and early medical or therapeutic intervention to prevent long-term disability.

Also known as: birth deformities, congenital anomalies, congenital disorders, congenital malformations

Birth Defects Surveillance

The systematic and ongoing collection, analysis, and interpretation of health data on congenital anomalies in newborns to inform early identification, prevention, and timely intervention services.

Blended Learning

An instructional model that integrates digital tools and educational technology with traditional in-person facilitation and classroom teaching to enrich pedagogical delivery and expand access to learning.

Blending

The foundational phonics skill of smoothly combining individual letter sounds together to pronounce whole written words, serving as a critical stepping stone toward reading fluency.

Bodily Autonomy

The right and foundational awareness of individuals to govern their own bodies, empowering young children to recognize personal boundaries, identify trusted adults, and protect their personal safety.

Also known as: body autonomy

Book-Sharing

An interactive, relational early literacy practice where adults and young children look at books together, converse about the pictures, and stimulate language, cognitive, and socio-emotional development.

Brain Development

The rapid biological growth and formation of neural pathways in early childhood that establish the foundation for lifelong cognitive, emotional, social, and physical capacities.

Brain-Based Pedagogy

An instructional approach grounded in neuroscience principles concerning how the human brain develops and learns, emphasizing emotional safety, stress reduction, and supportive relationships to optimize cognitive growth.

C**Capacity Building**

The process of developing and strengthening the knowledge, skills, competencies, and institutional resources of educators, caregivers, and stakeholders to improve the delivery and sustainability of early learning and care.

Also known as: capacity development, capacity-building

Care Economy

The sector of economic activity encompassing paid and unpaid caregiving, domestic work, and early childhood development services, essential for social well-being and largely sustained by women.

Care Workforce

The collective cadre of paid or unpaid personnel, encompassing both formal and informal workers, responsible for delivering childcare, early childhood development, health, and daily nurturing care services to young children.

Caregiver

Any parent, guardian, family member, or community practitioner with primary responsibility for nurturing, protecting, and supporting the physical, emotional, and cognitive development of a young child.

Also known as: caregivers

Caregiver Behaviour Change

The adoption of positive parenting, early stimulation, nutrition, and responsive care practices by parents and guardians through targeted skills training, mentorship, and enabling community environments.

Also known as: caregiver behavior change

Caregiver Capacity Building

The provision of training, resources, and continuous support to parents and guardians to strengthen their skills and knowledge in fostering young children's health, nutrition, and early development.

Also known as: caregiver capacity

Caregiver Coaching

Targeted, interactive mentoring and guidance delivered to parents or guardians to strengthen their confidence, responsive caregiving skills, and ability to foster stimulating early learning environments at home.

Caregiver Competencies

The essential knowledge, practical skills, and behavioral capacities required by parents and guardians to deliver nurturing, safe, and developmentally appropriate care to young children.

Caregiver Empowerment

The process of building parents' and guardians' agency, confidence, and access to resources, enabling them to make informed decisions that promote their children's holistic development.

Caregiver Engagement

The active participation and sustained involvement of parents or guardians in supporting their children's early stimulation, school readiness, foundational learning, and holistic development at home and within learning centers.

Caregiver Mental Health

The emotional, psychological, and social well-being of parents and guardians, which directly influences their capacity to maintain positive, responsive, and stress-free interactions with their children.

Caregiver Support Circles

Community-based peer groups where parents and guardians gather to exchange experiences, build social solidarity, and learn practical strategies for nurturing early child development.

Caregiver Training

Structured educational programs that equip parents, guardians, and early childhood practitioners with knowledge, responsive caregiving strategies, and play-based techniques to nurture young children's holistic development, learning, and well-being.

Caregiver-Child Relationships

The dynamic emotional bonds and daily reciprocal interactions between children and their primary carers, forming the foundational basis for healthy cognitive, social, and emotional development.

Caregiving Environments

The physical, social, and emotional settings within households and communities where children receive protection, nutrition, responsive interactions, and opportunities for early learning.

Caregiving Infrastructure

The physical facilities, spatial environments, and institutional services—including early childhood centres, healthcare clinics, and safe recreational spaces—that support families in providing comprehensive care.

Also known as: caregiving infrastructures

Caregiving Practices

The routine behaviors, nurturing methods, and protective actions that parents and educators employ to support children's health, nutrition, hygiene, emotional security, and overall developmental growth.

Cash Transfer Programmes

Social protection interventions that deliver direct financial assistance to vulnerable households, frequently combined with developmental interventions to improve children's health, nutrition, and access to education.

Also known as: cash transfer programme

Catch-Up Programmes

Targeted educational interventions designed to help learners who have fallen behind achieve grade-level proficiency through accelerated, level-appropriate instruction in foundational literacy and numeracy.

Also known as: Catch Up programme

Centre Registration

The formal process by which early childhood development facilities obtain official recognition and licensing from relevant government authorities by satisfying established safety, infrastructure, and quality standards.

Centre d'Éveil et d'Éducation Préscolaire (CEEP)

A community-based or public early childhood center that provides structured care, early stimulation, and pre-primary education for young children to promote school readiness and holistic development.

Also known as: CEEP, centre d'éveil et d'éducation préscolaire

Centre-Based Early Childhood Development

Early childhood care, learning, and development services delivered within dedicated institutional facilities or designated physical premises, as distinguished from home-based or informal community care models.

Also known as: institution-based ECD arrangements

Child Agency

The capacity, confidence, and opportunity of young children to make choices, express preferences, voice opinions, and actively influence their learning experiences, environment, and social interactions.

Child Assessment

The systematic observation, documentation, and evaluation of young children's developmental progress, foundational learning, and behavioral milestones to inform targeted instruction, interventions, and individual learning support.

Child Development

The continuous, multi-dimensional progression of physical, cognitive, linguistic, and socio-emotional changes and milestone achievements that children undergo from conception through the early childhood years.

Also known as: child growth and development

Child Development Assessment Tools

Standardized instruments, rubrics, or observational measures used by educators and practitioners to systematically evaluate, track, and generate data on early cognitive, physical, linguistic, and socio-emotional growth.

Child Development Indicators

Standardized, measurable benchmarks used to assess, monitor, and evaluate young children's physical, cognitive, socio-emotional, and language milestones over time.

Also known as: child development indicator profiles

Child Development Milestones

Key physical, cognitive, linguistic, and socio-emotional abilities or behavioral markers that children are typically expected to reach by specific ages as they grow and mature.

Child Development Monitoring

The systematic and continuous tracking of young children's developmental progress to identify delays, assess growth milestones, and inform timely instructional adjustments and interventions.

Child Development Outcomes

Measurable indicators of a young child's holistic growth, learning, and wellbeing across physical, cognitive, linguistic, and socio-emotional domains, often used to evaluate school readiness and programme impact.

Child Engagement

The degree of active, meaningful, and sustained participation, curiosity, and emotional involvement that a young learner demonstrates during educational routines, play-based tasks, and peer interactions.

Child Learning Outcomes

Measurable knowledge, foundational competencies, and cognitive skills that young learners acquire and demonstrate as a direct result of educational interventions and classroom instruction.

Child Learning Services

Structured educational and developmental programs, activities, and care provisions designed to foster cognitive, emotional, and foundational skill acquisition for young children, typically prior to formal primary schooling.

Child Nutrition

The provision and intake of balanced, age-appropriate dietary nutrients essential for supporting the healthy physical growth, cognitive development, immune function, and learning readiness of infants and young children.

Child Outcomes

The holistic, measurable indicators reflecting a young child's overall health, cognitive development, emotional well-being, and social capabilities resulting from combined early interventions, home environments, and community support.

Child Participation

The deliberate practice of actively involving young learners in decision-making, classroom dialogue, play-based activities, and community initiatives in ways appropriate to their evolving capacities and age.

Child Protection Interventions

Targeted programmatic measures, policies, and social support services designed to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence against vulnerable children while promoting family stability and wellbeing.

Child Protection Systems

A comprehensive network of laws, policies, procedures, and community services designed to prevent and respond to violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation against children through coordinated reporting and referral mechanisms.

Child Protection and Safeguarding

Policies, procedures, and practices designed to prevent, identify, and address harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation, ensuring children learn and thrive in physically and emotionally secure environments.

Also known as: child protection, child safeguarding

Child Psychology

The scientific study of children's mental, emotional, behavioral, and cognitive development, utilized by educators to understand developmental milestones and design developmentally appropriate pedagogical and protective interventions.

Child Rights

Fundamental entitlements and protective legal standards guaranteed to all children to safeguard their well-being, protect them from harm and exploitation, and support their survival, growth, and active participation.

Also known as: children's rights

Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (CSEA)

Any actual or attempted abuse of power, trust, or vulnerability to sexually harm, coerce, or exploit a child through physical, online, or other non-consensual acts.

Also known as: child sexual exploitation and abuse, CSEA

Child Support Grant (CSG)

A targeted social assistance cash transfer provided by governments to low-income primary caregivers to support the basic nutritional, health, and developmental needs of vulnerable children.

Also known as: Child Support Grant

Child Welfare

A system of services, policies, and community-based interventions designed to protect vulnerable children from harm, support families, and ensure safe, nurturing alternative care arrangements such as foster care or reunification.

Child Well-Being

The holistic state of a child's health, happiness, and developmental success, encompassing physical, cognitive, social-emotional health, and safety within supportive household and community environments.

Also known as: child wellbeing, children's well-being

Child Well-Being Indicators

Standardised qualitative and quantitative measures used to evaluate, track, and monitor the health, nutritional status, safety, emotional stability, and overall developmental outcomes of children over time.

Child, Early, and Forced Marriage (CEFM)

A harmful practice involving any formal or informal union where at least one party is under eighteen years of age or has not given free and full consent, severely threatening children's safety, health, and education.

Also known as: CEFM, child early and forced marriage

Child-Centred Classroom Management

An educational approach that organises learning environments and fosters positive behaviour by focusing on learners' developmental needs, active engagement, and agency rather than rigid, punitive teacher control.

Child-Centred Learning

An instructional model that positions learners as active participants in constructing knowledge, utilising play-based, experiential, and inquiry-led activities tailored to their individual developmental stages and interests.

Also known as: child centred learning

Child-Centred Learning Environments

Educational spaces and pedagogical practices structured around the developmental needs, interests, and active participation of learners, encouraging play, inquiry, and collaborative discovery.

Also known as: child-centered learning environment

Child-Centred Pedagogy

An educational approach that places the child's developmental needs, interests, and active participation at the core of the learning process through play, inquiry, and responsive facilitation.

Also known as: child-cantered teaching practices, child-centered, child-centered approach, child-centered implementation, child-centered learning, child-centered learning methods, child-centered pedagogy, child-centered teaching methodologies, child-centred, child-centred approach, child-centred approaches, child-centred instruction, child-centred learning, child-centred teaching and learning

Child-Centred and Protective Practices

Educational and caregiving approaches that promote children's holistic development, voice, and active participation while establishing secure environments that protect them from violence, abuse, and neglect.

Also known as: child-centered and protective practices

Child-Friendly Learning Environments

Safe, inclusive, and stimulating educational spaces designed to support children's physical, emotional, and cognitive well-being through protective infrastructure, developmentally appropriate resources, and participatory teaching approaches.

Also known as: child-friendly environments, child-friendly school environments

Child-Friendly Services

Health, education, or social care provisions specifically designed to be safe, welcoming, and accessible to children while respecting their unique rights, voices, and developmental requirements.

Child-Friendly Spaces (CFS)

Safe, supportive, and stimulating environments designed to protect young children from harm while providing access to early learning, play, psychosocial support, and essential safeguarding measures.

Also known as: child-friendly spaces, child-safe learning spaces

Childcare

The provision of safe supervision, basic health, nutrition, and nurturing daily support for infants and young children, often enabling parents and primary caregivers to pursue livelihoods or employment.

Childcare Institutions

Residential facilities that provide out-of-home, non-family-based care and accommodation to vulnerable, orphaned, or separated children on a temporary or extended basis.

Also known as: child care institutions

Childcare Practices

The everyday behaviors, methods, and routines employed by caregivers to ensure children's physical health, safety, emotional wellbeing, and cognitive stimulation.

Childcare Providers

Individuals or organizations that deliver formal or informal care, supervision, and early learning support to young children outside of parental care.

Also known as: childcare provider

Childcare Record-Keeping

The systematic collection and maintenance of critical data concerning children's attendance, health status, nutritional needs, developmental milestones, and family details within early childhood care settings.

Also known as: childcare record keeping

Childcare Reform

Systemic structural, legislative, and programmatic transformations designed to replace institutional residential care with family-based, community-led, and protective alternative care models for vulnerable children.

Childcare Services

Organized center-based or community-led arrangements that provide safe supervision, nurturing care, and early learning stimulation for infants and young children, often supporting working parents.

Children at Risk

Young learners who face socio-economic deprivation, adverse environments, or developmental challenges that threaten their overall growth, well-being, and capacity to achieve expected learning and developmental milestones.

Children with Disabilities (CWD)

Young learners experiencing physical, sensory, cognitive, or developmental impairments who require inclusive learning environments, assistive support, and accessible services to participate fully and thrive alongside their peers.

Also known as: children with disabilities, learners with disabilities

Children with Special Educational Needs (CSEN)

Learners who require adapted teaching methods, specialized accommodations, or accessible educational environments due to physical, sensory, cognitive, or developmental disabilities and learning challenges.

Also known as: children with special educational needs, CSEN

Circonscription d'Éducation de Base (CEB)

A decentralized administrative and pedagogical district responsible for the supervision, monitoring, and operational support of pre-primary and primary schools within a designated geographic area.

Also known as: circonscription d'éducation de base

Classes d'Alphabétisation

Structured non-formal educational sessions designed to teach basic reading, writing, and foundational numeracy skills, often conducted in national or local languages for youth and adult learners.

Classroom Instruction

The structured, intentional delivery of educational content and learning experiences by an educator using interactive, child-centered pedagogical methods and materials to build foundational competencies.

Classroom Interactions

The dynamic social, emotional, and instructional exchanges between educators and learners, as well as among peers, within the daily school environment.

Classroom Management

The set of pedagogical strategies, organizational routines, and positive behavior techniques educators use to foster an inclusive, safe, and stimulating environment conducive to learning and student engagement.

Classroom Observation

A structured assessment method involving the systematic viewing and recording of teaching practices, child engagement, and classroom dynamics to assess educational quality and inform teacher professional development.

Also known as: classroom observations

Classroom Observation Techniques

Systematic methods and tools used by educators, mentors, or evaluators to monitor, record, and assess instructional practices, learning environments, and child engagement within an active learning setting.

Classroom Practice

The instructional strategies, learning activities, behavioral management techniques, and daily interactions that educators implement within learning environments to facilitate children's engagement, holistic development, and academic progress.

Also known as: classroom practices

Classroom Practice Standards

Formal benchmarks and guidelines that outline high-quality pedagogical methods, instructional delivery expectations, and learning environment conditions required of educators to ensure equitable and effective student learning.

Classroom Quality

The overall standard of an educational setting, determined by supportive teacher-child relationships, effective instructional methods, adequate materials, and an environment conducive to holistic learning.

Classroom Routines

Established daily schedules, recurring procedures, and predictable behavioral patterns that provide structure, minimize disruptions, and foster a safe, organized learning environment for young learners.

Classroom-Based Coaching

An on-site, individualized form of professional development where trained mentors observe educators in their teaching spaces and provide continuous, practical feedback to enhance instructional practices.

Also known as: classroom coaching

Clubfoot

A congenital physical deformity in which an infant's foot is turned inward and downward, requiring timely therapeutic or corrective intervention to ensure normal mobility and prevent permanent physical disability.

Cluster School Refreshers

Periodic, decentralized professional development meetings where educators from a localized group of nearby schools gather to reinforce pedagogical competencies, share practical experiences, and update their teaching practices.

Co-Regulation

A supportive, interactive process in which an adult provides warm, responsive guidance and scaffolding to help a child manage emotions, behavior, and attention until independent self-regulation is achieved.

Co-Teaching

A collaborative instructional approach in which two or more educators jointly plan, deliver, and assess instruction to a shared group of learners within the same physical or virtual classroom.

Coaching

An ongoing, practical professional development approach where experienced mentors provide individualized guidance, feedback, and hands-on demonstrations to educators within their classroom contexts to improve instructional practices.

Cognitive Development

The progressive growth and maturation of intellectual processes, including thinking, reasoning, problem-solving, and language acquisition, which enable children to perceive, understand, and interact effectively with the world around them.

Also known as: cognitive growth

Cognitive Skills

Core mental capabilities, including memory, reasoning, and problem-solving, that enable children to process information, understand concepts, and acquire foundational academic competencies like literacy and numeracy.

Cognitive Stimulation

Purposeful, play-based activities and communicative interactions that engage a young child's brain to foster problem-solving abilities, executive function, memory, language, and foundational numeracy and literacy skills.

Cognitive Well-Being

The healthy state of an individual's mental and intellectual functioning, characterized by optimal curiosity, focus, reasoning, memory retention, and the capacity to acquire and apply new knowledge effectively.

Cognitive and Social Skills Development

The progressive growth of a child's mental capabilities, such as problem-solving and reasoning, alongside their interpersonal abilities to communicate, collaborate, and build positive relationships with peers and adults.

Cognitive and Socio-Emotional Skills

The foundational combination of intellectual capacities—including reasoning, language, and memory—alongside interpersonal and emotional competencies needed to manage emotions, establish relationships, and succeed in formal schooling and daily life.

Cognitive, Social, and Emotional Development

The holistic and interconnected growth of a child's thinking, self-regulation, interpersonal, and emotional capacities nurtured through safe, supportive environments and interactive play.

Also known as: cognitive, social and emotional development

Cognitive-Psychomotor Learning

An instructional approach that integrates mental processes and intellectual development with physical movement and motor skill coordination to promote holistic early learning and child development.

Also known as: cognitive psychomotor learning

Common Learning Environment

An inclusive educational setting where children of diverse abilities and backgrounds learn together in the same space, supported by interventions that identify and remove systemic barriers to participation.

Communication Access

The equitable provision of assistive tools, environments, and accommodations ensuring that all individuals have the fundamental right and ability to effectively express themselves, interact, and receive information.

Communication Barriers

Obstacles that impede a child's ability to express, receive, or understand language and information, stemming from linguistic differences, sensory impairments, developmental delays, or neurodevelopmental conditions.

Also known as: communication challenges

Communication Needs Assessment

A systematic evaluation process used to identify a child's expressive and receptive language abilities, barriers, and requirements in order to determine appropriate augmentative, alternative, or specialized communication supports.

Communication Skills

The foundational abilities young children develop to express ideas, feelings, and needs effectively and to comprehend others through verbal language, non-verbal cues, active listening, and emergent literacy practices.

Communities of Practice (CoP)

Collaborative groups of educators, practitioners, and stakeholders who regularly interact and share knowledge, experiences, and resources to solve common challenges and improve professional practice within the sector.

Also known as: communities of practice

Community Caregivers

Local individuals who provide nurturing care, supervision, and early developmental support to young children within their neighborhoods, often bridging home settings and formal early childhood services.

Also known as: community caregiver

Community Educators

Locally recruited instructors or facilitators who deliver non-formal instruction, early learning activities, and developmental support to children and families directly within grassroots community settings.

Community Engagement

The collaborative process of involving families, caregivers, and local leaders as active partners in supporting, enriching, and sustaining children's early learning and developmental initiatives.

Community Learning Centres (CLC)

Grassroots educational facilities established within local neighborhoods to provide accessible early childhood development programs, basic education, and safe spaces for vulnerable or displaced children.

Also known as: community learning centres

Community Learning Spaces

Locally accessible environments established within neighborhoods or villages that provide young learners and caregivers with books, educational resources, and safe physical spaces to foster foundational literacy and shared learning.

Community Mobilization

A process of engaging and organizing local stakeholders, families, and leaders to take collective action, raise awareness, and allocate resources in support of early childhood education and child welfare.

Community Play Sessions

Structured, locally organized group gatherings where young children engage in interactive, play-based learning activities while caregivers practice responsive caregiving and receive developmental guidance.

Community Playgroups

Locally organized early childhood gatherings where young children engage in play-based learning and socialization, often supported by caregivers and local facilitators to expand access to developmental opportunities in underserved areas.

Also known as: community-based playgroups

Community Schools

Locally initiated and managed educational institutions established by community members to provide accessible early learning and primary education, particularly in marginalized or remote areas lacking sufficient public schooling.

Also known as: community school

Community-Based Childcare

Locally organized and managed early care and learning services that utilize communal resources, spaces, or mobile facilities to provide accessible, flexible support for young children and their working families.

Community-Based Childcare Centre (CBCC)

A locally established and managed facility that provides accessible early care, play-based learning, and developmental support to young children, particularly within underserved or rural communities.

Also known as: CBCC, CBCCs, community child based centres, community-based child care centre, community-based childcare centers, community-based childcare centre, community-based childcare centres, community-based early childhood centres, community-based ECD centers

Community-Based Childcare Centre (CBCC) Facilitators

Frontline educators or caregivers who manage daily activities, early learning routines, and nurturing care within locally organized community childcare centers to support holistic child development and welfare.

Also known as: CBCC facilitators

Community-Based Coaches

Trained local individuals who provide direct mentorship, guidance, and ongoing support to parents, caregivers, and early educators to promote responsive caregiving, positive parenting, and child development within their localities.

Community-Based ECD Services

Holistic early childhood development programs and interventions planned, operated, or hosted within local communities to provide young children and their caregivers with accessible health, nutrition, and early learning support.

Community-Based Inclusive Development (CBID)

A participatory approach that mobilizes local communities to ensure children and individuals with disabilities have equal access to inclusive early education, healthcare, social support, and developmental opportunities.

Also known as: CBID, community-based inclusive development

Community-Based Learning

An educational approach that leverages local community resources, environments, and stakeholder participation outside formal institutional settings to deliver accessible, contextually relevant learning and developmental support to young children and families.

Community-Based Learning Environments

Localized, community-rooted educational settings that deliver culturally relevant, inclusive early childhood instruction and activities, fostering social-emotional growth, empathy, and respect for diversity among young children.

Community-Based Literature

Reading materials, texts, or educational resources produced with or tailored for specific local populations, reflecting their cultural, linguistic, or specialized developmental experiences to support contextualized learning and engagement.

Community-Based Play Centres

Dedicated local facilities that offer structured and unstructured play-based learning opportunities to foster school readiness, cognitive growth, and social-emotional wellbeing, particularly for vulnerable children in underserved settings.

Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR)

A decentralized strategy that empowers families and local frontline workers to deliver early intervention, developmental support, and inclusion services for children with disabilities directly within their local communities.

Also known as: CBR, community-based rehabilitation

Community-Based Support

Assistance, guidance, and referral networks mobilized within local settings to empower parents and caregivers, promote early identification of developmental needs, and complement formal educational and health services.

Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC)

An educational framework designed around the practical demonstration of specific skills, knowledge, and attitudes, allowing learners to progress through mastery of defined learning outcomes tailored to individual needs and real-world application.

Also known as: CBC, Competency-Based Curriculum

Competency-Based Education (CBE)

A pedagogical approach centered on learners demonstrating mastery of concrete knowledge, practical skills, and measurable developmental outcomes through active, child-centered learning rather than completion of instructional time.

Also known as: competency-based education, competency-based model

Conflict Management

The practice of identifying, addressing, and resolving interpersonal disputes or behavioral challenges constructively through self-regulation, empathy, and positive problem-solving strategies in learning and caregiving environments.

Conscious Discipline

A trauma-informed, brain-based approach that trains adult caregivers and educators in self-regulation, empathy, and conflict management to foster emotionally safe and nurturing environments for young children.

Contextualized Learning Approaches

Pedagogical strategies and curriculum adaptations that align foundational education with learners' local environments, cultural contexts, everyday experiences, and linguistic backgrounds to make learning meaningful and effective.

Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA)

A comprehensive strategic framework designed to reorient and transform education and training systems across Africa, focusing on expanding access, improving quality and relevance, and supporting sustainable development.

Also known as: Continental Education Strategy for Africa

Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016–2025 (CESA 16-25)

A ten-year pan-African strategic roadmap established to guide national and continental education policies toward expanding equitable access, fostering quality and innovation, and aligning education outcomes with sustainable development goals.

Also known as: CESA 16–25

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Ongoing training, mentoring, and capacity-building opportunities that allow educators and caregivers to continuously update their pedagogical knowledge, enhance instructional practices, and maintain professional standards.

Also known as: continuing professional development, continuous professional development, continuous professional learning, CPD, professional development, professional formation and development

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Framework

A structured institutional guide outlining the standards, core competencies, and training pathways required to systematically deliver, monitor, and sustain ongoing professional learning and mentorship for educators.

Also known as: CPD framework

Continuity of Learning

The uninterrupted progression of educational and developmental experiences as children transition across grades, environments, or during crises, ensuring consistent skill acquisition and school readiness.

Also known as: continuity in learning, learning continuity

Continuous Assessment

An ongoing evaluation process that systematically tracks and documents a child's developmental progress and foundational learning over time, informing instructional adjustments rather than relying solely on periodic high-stakes exams.

Continuous Learning

An ongoing, adaptive process of acquiring skills and knowledge over time, supporting both uninterrupted developmental progress for learners and iterative programmatic improvement through feedback and reflection.

Continuous Mentoring

An ongoing professional development process where educators receive sustained guidance, practical coaching, and constructive feedback over time to reinforce training, refine pedagogical skills, and improve classroom practices.

Continuous Observation and Assessment

An ongoing pedagogical practice of monitoring learners' developmental and academic progress during routine activities to inform and adapt instructional strategies to their evolving needs.

Continuum of Care

An integrated and coordinated system of multi-sectoral support and services delivered seamlessly across different developmental stages to support children and their families.

Corporal Punishment

The use of physical force intended to cause pain or discomfort as a disciplinary measure or means of behavior control in learning environments.

Creative Arts

A foundational learning domain encompassing visual arts, music, movement, and drama that fosters self-expression, imagination, fine motor development, and socio-emotional growth in early learners.

Also known as: creative art

Critical Early Numeracy Outcomes (CENOs)

The essential foundational mathematical skills and cognitive competencies that young children are expected to master during early childhood and early primary grades to ensure future mathematical proficiency.

Also known as: CENOs, critical early numeracy outcomes

Critical Pedagogy

An educational approach that treats learners as active agents capable of critical reflection, dialogue, and collaborative action to influence their own learning, safety, and social wellbeing.

Critical Thinking

The cognitive ability to analyze information objectively, evaluate ideas, solve problems, and make reasoned judgments through inquiry, reflection, and purposeful engagement with learning experiences.

Crèche

A community-based or institutional facility providing daytime care, protection, and early stimulation for infants and young children, often supporting working parents while fostering foundational developmental milestones.

Cultural Immersion

An instructional approach that deeply embeds local languages, traditions, and community practices into the learning environment to promote language acquisition and a strong sense of identity.

Culturally Relevant Learning Materials

Educational resources, books, and instructional aids that reflect the languages, daily experiences, and cultural backgrounds of the learners using them.

Culturally Relevant Storybooks

Illustrated reading materials that reflect the linguistic backgrounds, familiar environments, traditions, and lived experiences of young learners to foster reading engagement, comprehension, and a love for reading.

Culturally Responsive Early Childhood Programs

Early childhood services intentionally designed to respect, reflect, and integrate the cultural values, languages, and child-rearing practices of the local communities they serve.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP)

An instructional approach that grounds teaching in learners' home languages, cultural backgrounds, and local practices to make learning meaningful, inclusive, and developmentally effective.

Also known as: culturally responsive pedagogy, culturally responsive strategies, culturally responsive teaching approaches

Culture of Reading

An environment within homes, schools, and communities where reading is consistently valued, modeled, and enjoyed as a routine practice to support foundational literacy.

Curriculum

A structured educational framework outlining learning objectives, developmental content, pedagogical methods, and activities designed to guide teaching and foster children's holistic cognitive, physical, and socio-emotional development.

Also known as: curricula

Curriculum Alignment

The systematic structuring of learning materials, pedagogical strategies, and assessments to directly match and reinforce official national educational frameworks and learning standards.

Also known as: curriculum-aligned

Curriculum Development

The systematic process of designing, planning, and refining educational content, instructional guides, and pedagogical strategies to ensure learning programmes are age-appropriate, contextually relevant, and effective.

Curriculum Guides

Instructional resources that outline specific learning goals, pedagogical methods, pacing, and assessment strategies to help educators effectively deliver a standardized educational curriculum.

Curriculum Implementation

The process of translating intended educational frameworks, syllabi, and pedagogical approaches into day-to-day teaching practices and learning experiences within classrooms or early learning centers.

Curriculum Improvement

The systematic process of updating and refining educational content, pedagogical approaches, and instructional materials to enhance learning quality, relevance, and alignment with developmental needs.

Curriculum Review

A systematic evaluation and re-examination of an educational program to identify gaps, align content with modern pedagogical standards, and ensure effective foundational learning outcomes.

Curriculum Standards

Established benchmarks that define the specific knowledge, competencies, and developmental milestones children are expected to achieve at each stage of their education.

Curriculum and Assessment Policy

An official regulatory framework that defines national learning standards, subject syllabi, pedagogical guidelines, and learner evaluation practices across education levels.

Curriculum and Instruction

The coordinated system of planned educational content, learning objectives, and pedagogical teaching practices designed to support learners' cognitive, social, and physical development.

D

Daily Programme

A structured schedule of routine activities, play, and instruction implemented in early childhood centers to ensure balanced coverage of all foundational learning and developmental areas.

Data-Driven Learning

An educational approach that uses systematically gathered assessment information and performance metrics to guide instructional decisions, adjust teaching strategies, and optimize individual learner outcomes.

Data-Informed Intervention Planning

The process of using assessment metrics and learner progress evidence to design targeted remedial strategies, instructional supports, and early developmental interventions.

Day Mothers

Community-based, often home-operated caregivers who provide daily supervision, nurturing care, and early stimulation to small groups of infants and young children in local neighborhoods.

Daycare Centre

A formal or semi-formal facility that provides structured daytime care, developmental stimulation, and supervision for infants and young children prior to primary school entry.

Also known as: day care centre, daycare

Decolonisation of Early Childhood Development (ECD)

The process of centering indigenous knowledge, local languages, and culturally relevant practices within early learning systems to dismantle Eurocentric paradigms and reflect learners' authentic cultural contexts.

Also known as: decolonization of ECD

Department of Basic Education Subsidy (DBE Subsidy)

Public funding allocated by education authorities to registered early childhood centers to subsidize operational costs, provide nutritional support, and improve the quality of early learning services.

Also known as: DBE subsidy

Design Thinking

A human-centered, iterative problem-solving framework that guides learners through empathizing, defining, ideating, prototyping, and testing to foster creativity, critical inquiry, and practical solutions to real-world challenges.

Developmental Assessment

The systematic process of monitoring and evaluating a young child's physical, cognitive, language, and socio-emotional milestones to understand their progress and identify early intervention needs.

Also known as: developmental assessments, early assessment

Developmental Delay

A condition in which a child does not reach expected physical, cognitive, communication, or socio-emotional milestones at the typical age, often requiring early identification and targeted intervention.

Also known as: delayed milestones, developmental delays, developmental lags

Developmental Domains

Specific categories of child growth and learning—typically encompassing physical, cognitive, linguistic, and socio-emotional areas—used to structure holistic early childhood assessment and curriculum planning.

Developmental Gains

Measurable improvements or advancements in a child's cognitive, physical, social, or emotional capabilities achieved over time through nurturing care, play, and targeted educational interventions.

Developmental Milestones

Predictable physical, cognitive, linguistic, and socio-emotional skills or behaviors that children typically achieve within specific age ranges, serving as benchmarks to monitor healthy growth and identify support needs.

Developmental Monitoring

The ongoing, systematic observation and tracking of a child's physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional milestones over time to ensure healthy progress and identify potential delays early.

Also known as: developmental stage monitoring

Developmental Needs

The essential physical, cognitive, social, and emotional requirements that must be met at specific age stages to support a child's healthy growth, well-being, and capacity to learn.

Developmental Outcomes

The observable and measurable indicators of a child's growth, health, cognitive capability, and socio-emotional maturation achieved as a result of early interventions, nurturing care, and quality educational experiences.

Also known as: development outcomes, early child development outcomes

Developmental Potential

The optimal level of physical, cognitive, and psychosocial growth a child can achieve when supported by nurturing care, adequate nutrition, protection, and stimulating learning environments.

Developmental Psychology

The scientific study of how human beings grow, learn, and adapt mentally, emotionally, and socially across different life stages, particularly during early childhood.

Developmental Readiness

The state of physical, cognitive, linguistic, and social-emotional maturity that enables a young child to successfully engage with and transition into structured primary schooling.

Developmental Screening

A brief, standardized assessment procedure designed to identify children who may be experiencing delays in reaching expected milestones and who require further comprehensive evaluation or early intervention services.

Developmental Status

The current condition of a child's cognitive, physical, socio-emotional, and language growth measured against normative, age-appropriate developmental milestones and benchmarks.

Developmentally Appropriate Learning Environments

Educational spaces deliberately designed to match the physical, emotional, and cognitive stages of young children through safe, inclusive, and play-based learning opportunities.

Developmentally Appropriate Learning Materials

Educational resources, play equipment, and manipulatives specifically chosen or designed to align with the age, physical capabilities, and cognitive stages of young children to stimulate active learning.

Also known as: developmentally appropriate materials

Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP)

An instructional and caregiving framework grounded in child development research that tailors teaching methods, materials, and learning environments to children's age stages, individual capabilities, and sociocultural contexts.

Also known as: developmentally appropriate practices

Developmentally on Track

A status indicating that a child is successfully meeting age-expected cognitive, physical, linguistic, and socio-emotional milestones within standard normative ranges for healthy growth.

Differentiated Instruction

A teaching approach that adapts pedagogical methods, content, pacing, and learning activities to accommodate the diverse needs, abilities, and learning styles of individual children within a classroom.

Digital Identity

A verified electronic record of an individual's personal information and legal existence, enabling secure recognition and access to essential social, educational, and protective services.

Digital Learning

The delivery of educational content and foundational instruction through interactive technological tools, digital media, and software to enhance learning outcomes and engagement.

Digital Learning Platforms

Technology-based systems and software applications designed to deliver structured instructional content, facilitate foundational skill development, track real-time learner progress, and support continuous instructional management.

Digital Literacy

The ability to access, navigate, understand, and safely use technological tools and media to support learning, communication, and problem-solving from an early age.

Direct Child Assessment

An evaluation method in which a trained assessor directly interacts with or tests a child to measure their specific developmental milestones, competencies, and foundational learning outcomes.

Also known as: direct child assessments

Direct Instruction

A teacher-led pedagogical approach characterized by structured, explicit teaching and guided practice, often contrasted with child-centered or play-based learning methods.

Also known as: direct instructional methods

Disability Assessment Centre

A specialized facility staffed by professionals to identify, evaluate, and diagnose developmental delays or physical and learning impairments, facilitating targeted interventions and support services.

Disability Burden

The cumulative social, economic, and health-related impact experienced by individuals, families, and communities resulting from living with unaddressed or poorly managed physical, sensory, or cognitive impairments.

Disability Inclusion

The systematic practice of removing physical, social, and pedagogical barriers to ensure that children and individuals with disabilities have full, equal access and participation in education, development, and community life.

Also known as: disability-inclusive, inclusion of children with disabilities

Disability Mainstreaming

The systematic integration of children with special needs and functional impairments into general education systems, programs, and community services through inclusive practices and tailored support.

Also known as: mainstreaming disability

Disability Screening

A preliminary evaluation process used in schools or communities to identify children showing signs of developmental delays or functional impairments who require specialized assessment and early intervention.

Disability-Inclusive Pedagogy

Teaching and learning approaches designed to accommodate and actively engage children with diverse physical, sensory, cognitive, or developmental disabilities within accessible, play-based, and supportive early childhood environments.

Also known as: disability-inclusive pedagogies, disability-inclusive practices

Diverse Learning Needs

The wide range of cognitive, developmental, physical, and socio-emotional profiles among children, requiring differentiated instruction and inclusive support systems so that every learner can thrive.

Also known as: developmental differences

Domestic Childcare Workers

Individuals employed within private households to provide direct care, daily supervision, and early developmental support to infants and young children.

Down Syndrome

A genetic condition associated with characteristic physical features and mild to moderate intellectual disability, requiring tailored educational, developmental, and inclusive learning support during early childhood.

Drop-In Centre

A community-based facility that offers flexible, accessible early learning activities, care, and developmental support services to young children and families without requiring formal, structured enrollment.

Also known as: drop-in centers

Dyslexia

A neurodevelopmental condition that affects phonological processing, reading accuracy, and spelling, requiring specialized, equity-focused instructional interventions to support foundational literacy development.

E

Early Childhood

The formative developmental period from birth to age eight during which rapid brain growth occurs, establishing the essential cognitive, social, emotional, and physical foundations for lifelong learning and well-being.

Also known as: petite enfance

Early Childhood Care

The provision of holistic support, nurturing environments, nutrition, protection, and developmental supervision to foster the physical, emotional, and cognitive well-being of infants and young children.

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

Holistic provision encompassing learning, physical care, protection, and stimulation designed to support the comprehensive developmental and foundational learning needs of young children from birth up to formal primary school entry.

Also known as: early childhood care and development, early childhood care and education, Early Childhood Care, Development, and Education, early childhood education and care

Early Childhood Development (ECD)

An integrated approach encompassing physical, cognitive, socio-emotional, and health interventions that nurture and support a young child's growth, wellbeing, and learning capacity from birth through the early years.

Also known as: développement de la petite enfance, early child development, early childhood development, early childhood development and education, early childhood education and development, early development, ECCD, ECCDE, ECCE, ECD, ECDE

Early Childhood Development A and B (ECD A and B)

Two sequential levels of formal pre-primary education designed for young children before primary school entry, focusing on foundational cognitive, social, and emotional readiness skills.

Also known as: ECD A and B

Early Childhood Development Caregiver (ECD Caregiver)

A professional or community practitioner responsible for the nurturing care, protection, and early foundational learning of young children within community-based or institutional early childhood development settings.

Also known as: ECD caregivers

Early Childhood Development Centre (ECDC)

A community-based or institutional facility that provides comprehensive care, early learning, nutrition, and psychosocial support to young children in a safe, structured, and nurturing environment.

Also known as: early childhood centers, early childhood centres, early childhood development centre, early childhood development centres, early childhood education centres, early childhood learning centers, early learning centres, ECCD centers, ECD centers, ECD centre, ECD centres

Early Childhood Development Committee (ECD Committee)

A community-level governance body composed of educators, parents, and local stakeholders that oversees early learning facilities, mobilizes resources, and promotes community ownership of child development programs.

Also known as: ECD committee

Early Childhood Development Content (ECD Content)

Curricular resources, learning activities, and educational materials designed to support the holistic cognitive, physical, socio-emotional, and linguistic development of young children in early learning programmes.

Also known as: ECD content

Early Childhood Development Ecosystem (ECD Ecosystem)

The interconnected network of policymakers, service providers, caregivers, communities, institutions, and resources that collectively shape, support, and deliver comprehensive care and education for young children.

Also known as: ECCE ecosystem

Early Childhood Development Facilitator (ECD Facilitator)

A trained practitioner who guides and delivers early learning, play-based stimulation, and developmental activities to nurture the holistic growth of young children and engage their caregivers.

Also known as: ECD facilitators

Early Childhood Development Forums (ECD Forums)

Collaborative networks of early childhood care and education practitioners, centres, and local stakeholders organized at community or district levels to share resources, coordinate services, and advocate for sector improvements.

Also known as: ECD forums

Early Childhood Development Frontline Workers (ECD Frontline Workers)

Practitioners, educators, caregivers, and community health agents who directly deliver essential early learning, care, nutrition, and protection services to young children and their families within communities.

Also known as: ECD frontline workers

Early Childhood Development Infrastructure (ECD Infrastructure)

The physical facilities, built environments, and material assets, such as child-friendly classrooms, sanitation facilities, and safe play areas, required to deliver early learning and care services.

Also known as: ECD infrastructure

Early Childhood Development Interventions (ECD Interventions)

Targeted programmes, services, or activities designed to promote the health, nutrition, early learning, safety, and holistic developmental outcomes of young children during their critical early years.

Also known as: ECD interventions

Early Childhood Development Learning (ECD Learning)

The process through which young children acquire foundational cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical skills and understanding, typically supported through play-based and responsive early education activities.

Also known as: ECD learning

Early Childhood Development National Strategy (ECD National Strategy)

A government-led framework and policy roadmap outlining national priorities, cross-sectoral coordination, targets, and investments to expand and improve comprehensive care and education for young children across a country.

Also known as: ECD National Strategy

Early Childhood Development Officer (ECD Officer)

A professional responsible for coordinating, managing, monitoring, and supporting the implementation of early childhood development policies, programmes, and services within a specific administrative area or organization.

Also known as: early childhood development officers

Early Childhood Development Outcomes (ECD Outcomes)

Measurable developmental results and improvements in young children's cognitive, physical, linguistic, and socio-emotional well-being and school readiness achieved through integrated services, policies, and quality learning interventions.

Also known as: ECD outcomes

Early Childhood Development Policy (ECD Policy)

An official institutional or governmental framework that establishes regulations, quality standards, qualification requirements, and strategic guidelines governing the provision and administration of early childhood care and education.

Also known as: ECD policies

Early Childhood Development Policy Formulation (ECD Policy Formulation)

The formal process of designing, developing, and establishing government policies, legal frameworks, and strategic guidelines to govern and support comprehensive services for young children and their families.

Also known as: ECD policy formulation

Early Childhood Development Practitioner (ECD Practitioner)

A trained educator, caregiver, or facilitator responsible for providing nurturing care, cognitive stimulation, and early learning opportunities to young children within formal or informal early childhood settings.

Also known as: early childhood development practitioners, early childhood practitioners, early learning practitioner, early learning practitioners, early years practitioner, ECD practitioner, ECD practitioners, practitioner, practitioners

Early Childhood Development Principal (ECD Principal)

An administrative and educational leader responsible for managing the day-to-day operations, instructional quality, compliance, and staff within an early learning or early childhood development centre.

Also known as: ECD principals

Early Childhood Development Programmes (ECD Programmes)

Structured interventions and services designed to promote the holistic physical, cognitive, linguistic, and socio-emotional growth and well-being of young children, often incorporating family and community support.

Also known as: ECD programmes

Early Childhood Development Provision (ECD Provision)

The comprehensive delivery of educational, nutritional, health, and care services and learning environments designed to support the holistic development and well-being of young children prior to formal schooling.

Also known as: early childhood development provision, early provisioning, early years provision, ECD provision

Early Childhood Development Reporting (ECD Reporting)

Media coverage, journalistic communication, and public information dissemination focused on raising awareness, shaping policy dialogue, and highlighting issues related to young children's care and learning.

Also known as: ECD reporting

Early Childhood Development Resource Hub (ECD Resource Hub)

A centralized facility or support platform that equips early childhood centres with instructional materials, small development grants, capacity-building tools, and networking opportunities to improve service quality.

Also known as: ECD resource hub

Early Childhood Development Services (ECD Services)

An integrated range of programs encompassing early learning, health, nutrition, responsive caregiving, and child protection designed to support the holistic growth of children from birth to eight years.

Also known as: early childhood development services, early childhood services, early learning services, early years services, ECD services

Early Childhood Development Settings (ECD Settings)

Physical or institutional environments, including formal centres, home-based arrangements, and community facilities, where early childhood care, play, and foundational education services are delivered to young children.

Also known as: ECD settings

Early Childhood Development Sites (ECD Sites)

Physical facilities, such as preschools, crèches, and day-care centres, that deliver structured early learning, developmental support, and play-based care to young children.

Also known as: ECD sites

Early Childhood Development Spaces (ECD Spaces)

Designated physical environments within communities, facilities, or households arranged to provide safe, protective, and stimulating surroundings for young children to play, socialize, and learn.

Also known as: ECD spaces

Early Childhood Development Standards (ECD Standards)

Regulatory benchmarks, quality criteria, and policy guidelines established to regulate learning environments, curriculum delivery, practitioner competencies, and safety across early childhood care and education centres.

Also known as: ECCD Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards, ECCE standards

Early Childhood Development System (ECD System)

An integrated, multi-sectoral framework of policies, institutions, and services that coordinates health, nutrition, education, and protection to support holistic child development and school readiness across a population.

Also known as: early childhood development systems, early childhood systems, ECD system, ECD systems

Early Childhood Development Teacher (ECD Teacher)

An educator or trained practitioner responsible for guiding, facilitating, and managing foundational learning, care routines, and developmental activities for young children in early learning environments.

Also known as: ECD teachers

Early Childhood Development Teaching (ECD Teaching)

The pedagogical practice of facilitating age-appropriate, play-based learning, socialisation, and holistic care routines for young children within early learning and foundational development settings.

Also known as: ECD teaching

Early Childhood Development and Family (ECD&F)

An integrated approach and centre model that combines early learning and child care with direct support, parenting education, and resources for caregivers and households.

Also known as: ECD&F

Early Childhood Development and Family Centre

An integrated community facility providing comprehensive early education, healthcare, nutrition, and psychosocial support services to young children while offering parenting guidance and resources to families.

Also known as: early childhood development and family centres

Early Childhood Development in Emergencies (ECDIE)

Targeted interventions and programmes that provide essential early learning, nurturing care, psychosocial support, and protection to young children and their caregivers affected by humanitarian crises or natural disasters.

Also known as: ECDIE

Early Childhood Education (ECE)

Structured educational programmes and pedagogical practices designed for young children prior to primary school entry to support early cognitive, linguistic, social, and emotional development in safe learning environments.

Also known as: early childhood education, early education, early years education, ECE, éducation de la petite enfance

Early Childhood Education Enrolment

The formal process of registering and admitting young children into organized early learning, preschool, or pre-primary educational programmes and institutions.

Also known as: early childhood education enrollment

Early Childhood Education Framework

A comprehensive policy or curricular guideline that defines learning standards, developmental outcomes, pedagogical approaches, and quality benchmarks for early learning programmes across an education system.

Also known as: early childhood education frameworks

Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED)

Comprehensive multi-sectoral programming, policies, and educational practices that nurture a child's cognitive, physical, emotional, and social development from birth up to the early years of primary school.

Also known as: ECED

Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) Facilitators

Trained educators or community practitioners who guide and support young children's holistic growth, foundational learning, and developmental milestones within early learning programmes and community centres.

Also known as: ECED facilitators

Early Childhood Education and Development and Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (ECED-FLN)

An integrated continuum spanning early childhood care through early primary grades, designed to foster holistic developmental readiness while building essential foundational reading, writing, and mathematical competencies in young children.

Also known as: ECED-FLN

Early Childhood Educator

A trained professional who facilitates play-based learning, nurtures holistic development, and delivers foundational education and care to young children during their critical early years.

Also known as: early childhood development teachers, early childhood educators, early childhood teachers, éducateur de la petite enfance

Early Childhood Facilitation

The practice of guiding and supporting young children's holistic development and learning experiences through child-centered, age-appropriate interactions and activities.

Early Childhood Infrastructure

The broader network of physical facilities, learning environments, and community-based spaces designed to support the holistic care, development, and school readiness of young children.

Also known as: early learning infrastructure

Early Childhood Intervention (ECI)

Targeted multi-sectoral services, therapies, and developmental support provided during the formative early years to mitigate developmental delays, identify and manage disabilities, and enhance children's functional outcomes and wellbeing.

Also known as: early childhood interventions, early intervention, early intervention programmes, early intervention services

Early Childhood Nutrition

The provision of adequate, balanced, and micronutrient-rich dietary intake necessary to support healthy physical growth, immune function, and optimal brain development during the critical early years of life.

Early Childhood Pedagogy

The educational theories, instructional strategies, and developmentally appropriate practices used by educators to support the holistic learning, care, and cognitive growth of young children during their earliest years.

Early Childhood Stimulation

Responsive caregiving and play-based interactions that activate young children's senses and cognitive abilities, fostering essential brain development, emotional attachment, and holistic school readiness.

Also known as: age-appropriate stimulation, child stimulation

Early Childhood Support

The provision of holistic services, resources, and care to young children and their families to promote healthy physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional development.

Early Childhood Teaching Practices

Pedagogical methods and instructional strategies designed specifically for young learners to foster foundational cognitive, social, emotional, and physical competencies through play-based and interactive learning.

Early Childhood Wellbeing

The holistic physical, social, emotional, and cognitive health of young children, supported by safe environments, responsive caregiving, adequate nutrition, and accessible early childhood services.

Early Childhood Workforce

The collective group of educators, caregivers, and practitioners who provide care, instruction, and developmental support to young children across early childhood settings.

Early Deaf Childhood

The early developmental life stage of children who are deaf or hard of hearing, focusing on accessible communication, early language acquisition, and inclusive community support.

Early Detection

The timely identification of developmental delays, disabilities, or learning and behavioural challenges in young children to enable prompt intervention and referral to appropriate support services.

Early Grade Learners

Children enrolled in the initial levels of primary school, typically grades one through three, who are acquiring essential foundational literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional skills.

Early Grade Learning Outcomes

Measurable knowledge, competencies, and skills—especially in foundational literacy and numeracy—demonstrated by primary school children during their first years of formal schooling.

Early Grade Literacy and Numeracy Instruction

Structured teaching methods and pedagogical interventions targeted at building fundamental reading, writing, and basic mathematical competencies among children in the initial years of primary schooling.

Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA)

An oral, individually administered diagnostic assessment tool designed to measure foundational numeracy and mathematical competencies acquired by children in the early primary grades.

Also known as: EGMA

Early Grade Numeracy Outcomes

Specific proficiencies in foundational mathematical concepts, arithmetic skills, and basic problem-solving demonstrated by pupils during the initial years of primary education.

Early Grade Reading

The instructional focus and acquisition of foundational literacy skills, such as letter-sound recognition, fluency, and basic comprehension, among children in their initial primary school years.

Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA)

An oral assessment tool designed to measure foundational literacy skills in young learners, diagnosing learning gaps and establishing baseline data to inform instruction and policy.

Also known as: EGRA

Early Grade Reading Instruction

Systematic pedagogical methods and activities designed to develop core reading capabilities, such as phonemic awareness, decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension, in young primary school students.

Early Grades

The initial levels of formal primary education, typically covering grades one through three, that establish critical foundational cognitive, reading, and mathematical competencies.

Early Identification

The systematic and timely recognition of developmental delays, disabilities, or learning vulnerabilities in young children to facilitate prompt intervention, referral, and targeted support services.

Also known as: early identification of developmental challenges

Early Identification and Intervention

The process of screening, recognizing, and diagnosing developmental delays, learning difficulties, or disabilities in young children early to promptly provide targeted support and mitigate long-term impacts.

Also known as: early identification and management of suspected challenges

Early Identification and Referral

The timely process of screening and recognizing developmental delays, disabilities, or health concerns in children and directing them to appropriate healthcare, educational, or social support services.

Early Language Development

The progressive acquisition of communication, listening, speaking, and emergent literacy skills that enable young children to express thoughts, interact socially, and understand their environment.

Also known as: early language

Early Learners

Young children, typically spanning from birth or preschool age through the early primary grades, who are in the foundational stages of cognitive, linguistic, physical, and socio-emotional development.

Early Learning

The developmental process and practical experiences through which young children gain critical knowledge, social skills, and cognitive abilities through interactive play, caregiver engagement, and structured stimulation prior to primary school.

Also known as: early childhood learning

Early Learning Access

The equitable availability and opportunity for all young children to enroll in and participate in quality pre-primary and developmental early childhood education programmes.

Early Learning Environments

Physical and psychosocial spaces, including classrooms, homes, and community centres, designed to provide safe, inclusive, and stimulating conditions that promote young children's exploration, play, and development.

Also known as: early childhood learning environments, early learning settings, early learning spaces

Early Learning Experiences

Diverse activities, interactions, and structured play opportunities encountered by young children that stimulate and support their holistic cognitive, physical, linguistic, social, and emotional development during formative years.

Early Learning Materials

Age-appropriate educational resources, including books, toys, manipulatives, and sensory tools, designed to stimulate cognitive growth, language acquisition, creativity, and foundational skills in young children.

Early Learning Methodologies

Pedagogical strategies, instructional approaches, and play-based practices designed specifically to support the cognitive, social-emotional, and physical development of young children.

Early Learning Milestones

Age-specific developmental benchmarks and core competencies in cognitive, motor, linguistic, and socio-emotional domains that children are expected to achieve before transitioning into formal primary education.

Early Learning Opportunities

Structured and informal experiences, environments, and interactions that enable young children to explore, play, and acquire foundational cognitive, social, emotional, and language skills before entering formal schooling.

Early Learning Outcomes

Measurable competencies, skills, knowledge, and developmental milestones that young children acquire through foundational early education, care, and play-based experiences, signaling readiness for formal primary schooling.

Also known as: early childhood learning outcomes

Early Learning Outcomes Measure (ELOM)

A standardised, locally validated assessment instrument used to evaluate developmental progress and school readiness across multiple cognitive, motor, and socio-emotional domains in young children.

Also known as: ELOM 4&5, ELOM assessments

Early Learning Practices

Pedagogical methods, caregiving behaviors, and structured instructional routines employed by educators and parents to foster curiosity, foundational literacy, numeracy, and holistic development in young children.

Early Learning Programmes (ELPs)

Structured educational and developmental services designed for young children prior to primary school to foster cognitive, physical, linguistic, and socio-emotional skills through age-appropriate curricula and play-based activities.

Also known as: early childhood programs, early learning program, early learning programme, early learning programmes, ELPs

Early Learning Resources

Physical instructional materials, play equipment, books, and teaching aids designed to stimulate cognitive growth, language development, and foundational skills in young children.

Early Learning Systems

Coordinated frameworks of policies, institutional structures, pedagogical resources, workforce training, and community partnerships established to deliver equitable, high-quality early childhood education and development services at scale.

Early Learning and Development

The progressive acquisition of foundational cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical skills and milestones by children from birth through the early primary years.

Early Learning and Development Areas (ELDAs)

Broad, interconnected curriculum domains or learning categories defined in early childhood frameworks to guide practitioners in delivering holistic, balanced instruction across developmental milestones.

Also known as: early learning development areas, ELDAs

Early Literacy

The foundational knowledge, emergent skills, and attitudes regarding reading, writing, and language comprehension that children acquire during their formative years to support successful formal education.

Also known as: early literacy development, early literacy skills

Early Literacy Curriculum

A structured instructional plan detailing learning goals, pedagogical activities, and instructional materials designed to systematically develop oral language, phonemic awareness, print familiarity, and emergent reading skills in young children.

Early Literacy and Numeracy

Fundamental competencies in print awareness, oral language, letter recognition, basic counting, number sense, and pattern identification acquired during formative childhood years to anchor future learning.

Also known as: early numeracy and literacy

Early Numeracy

Foundational mathematical concepts and skills, including number sense, counting, spatial awareness, pattern recognition, and basic problem-solving, acquired during early childhood to support subsequent academic success.

Also known as: early mathematics skills

Early Primary Education

The initial tier of formal elementary schooling, typically encompassing grades one through three, dedicated to establishing foundational competencies in reading, writing, mathematics, and socio-emotional readiness for later schooling.

Early Reading Skills

Foundational abilities that precede fluent reading, such as print awareness, phonological processing, alphabet knowledge, vocabulary comprehension, and basic decoding necessary for emergent literacy development.

Early Screening and Intervention

The systematic process of identifying developmental delays, learning challenges, or health needs in young children, followed by prompt, targeted support to prevent long-term deficits and optimize educational growth.

Early Stimulation

The intentional provision of responsive interactions, sensory experiences, and play-based activities designed to promote optimal brain development, cognitive growth, and emotional well-being during a child's most formative years.

Early Years

The critical formative stage of child development, typically spanning from birth to age eight, that establishes the cognitive, physical, emotional, and social foundations for lifelong learning and well-being.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

A comprehensive early childhood curriculum framework that sets statutory standards for the learning, development, and holistic care of children from birth to age five.

Also known as: Early Years Foundation Stage, EYFS

Educare

An integrated early childhood service model or centre that combines structured early education with holistic nurturing care to promote children's health, safety, and school readiness.

Educare Management

The administrative, operational, and pedagogical leadership of early childhood development centres to maintain regulatory standards, support practitioners, and foster safe, stimulating learning environments for young children.

Education Management Information System (EMIS)

An institutionalized data infrastructure designed to collect, integrate, analyze, and report educational data to support sector planning, resource allocation, and performance monitoring.

Also known as: EMIS

Education Policy

The formal principles, laws, strategic frameworks, and regulations established by governments to govern the operation, quality, and administration of education systems.

Also known as: educational policy

Education Quality Assurance Systems

Institutional mechanisms, standards, and evaluation processes designed to monitor, uphold, and enhance the quality of teaching, institutional governance, and learning outcomes across education systems.

Education Reform

The intentional, systematic restructuring of educational policies, curricula, and institutional practices to address systemic challenges and improve access, equity, and learning outcomes.

Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP)

A multi-year national policy and operational roadmap that outlines a government's priorities, strategies, and resource allocations to guide and improve the delivery of education services across all levels.

Also known as: Education Sector Strategic Plan, ESSP

Education System Actors

Individuals, institutions, and community stakeholders—including teachers, school leaders, government officials, and service providers—involved in governing, supporting, and delivering education services within a learning system.

Education Systems Strengthening

The strategic process of building institutional capacity, improving policies, and enhancing governance across national and local structures to sustainably improve educational delivery, equity, and learning outcomes.

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

A pedagogical approach that equips learners with the knowledge, skills, values, and agency needed to address environmental, climate, and socioeconomic challenges through locally relevant, sustainable practices.

Also known as: education for sustainable development, ESD

Education in Crisis-Affected Contexts

The provision of safe, protective, and quality learning opportunities for children and youth living through humanitarian emergencies, armed conflicts, natural disasters, or forced displacement.

Educational Capacity Building

The continuous process of strengthening the knowledge, skills, institutional resources, and teaching competencies of educators and institutions to improve educational delivery and sustainability.

Educational Modules

Standardized, self-contained instructional units designed around specific thematic areas or learning objectives to support structured curriculum delivery and teacher training.

Educational Outcomes

The overall gains, competencies, academic achievements, and holistic developmental results that learners realize through participation in educational programs and supportive learning interventions.

Also known as: education outcomes

Educational Resources

Materials, curricula, instructional tools, and learning media utilized by teachers and students to facilitate, support, and enrich the teaching and learning process.

Educational Technology (EdTech)

Digital tools, applications, hardware, and media used systematically to facilitate, enhance, and scale teaching, learning, and education administration, particularly in expanding learning opportunities.

Also known as: EdTech, educational technologies

Educational Theatre

A performance-based pedagogical method that uses drama and interactive storytelling to raise awareness, convey critical knowledge, and engage communities on social and developmental topics.

Also known as: educational theater

Educational Transitions

The progression of learners across different phases or levels of formal education, such as advancing from early childhood development into primary school.

Also known as: transition in education

Educational Workshops

Structured, interactive learning sessions designed to impart specific knowledge, practical skills, and conceptual understanding to participants through guided activities, discussions, and reflection.

Educator Capacity Building

Continuous professional development and targeted training initiatives designed to enhance teachers' instructional skills, pedagogical knowledge, and ability to address diverse learner needs effectively.

Also known as: educator capacitation

Educator Effectiveness

The extent to which an instructor utilizes high-quality teaching practices, classroom management, and pedagogical skills to foster meaningful student engagement, development, and learning gains.

Educator Training

Professional development programs designed to equip teachers and early childhood practitioners with the pedagogical knowledge, instructional techniques, and practical tools needed to enhance learning outcomes.

Effective Instruction

Teaching practices, strategies, and methodologies that successfully engage learners, meet diverse developmental needs, and optimize the acquisition of foundational knowledge and skills.

Emergent Reading Skills

Early developmental capacities, behaviors, and concepts that young children acquire prior to conventional reading, including print awareness, letter recognition, and oral language comprehension.

Emotional Development

The gradual process through which young children learn to recognize, understand, express, and regulate their feelings while developing empathy and forming meaningful relationships with others.

Emotional Regulation

The developmental ability of an individual to monitor, manage, and adaptively express their emotional reactions, impulses, and behavioral responses within diverse social and learning environments.

Emotional Skills

The learned abilities to identify, express, and regulate one's own feelings effectively, cope with stress, and respond with empathy to the emotions of peers and adults.

Emotional Well-Being

A state of psychological and affective health characterized by the ability to understand and regulate emotions, navigate stress, develop resilience, and form positive interpersonal relationships.

Enabling Environments

Physical, social, and structural conditions and community systems that provide safe, nurturing, and resourced surroundings essential for children's holistic development and protection.

Endline Assessment

An evaluation conducted at the conclusion of an educational program or intervention to measure cumulative learning gains, skill development, and outcomes against baseline data.

Also known as: end-line assessments, endline assessments

English Language Instruction

Structured teaching and learning approaches designed to develop proficiency, comprehension, and foundational literacy skills in English for young learners, particularly in contexts where it serves as a primary language of instruction.

Enrollment

The formal process of registering and admitting eligible children into educational or early childhood development programs, expanding their access to foundational learning opportunities.

Environmental Learning Activities

Hands-on educational experiences and play-based exercises designed to foster young children's awareness, curiosity, and understanding of the natural world and their local ecosystem.

Equitable Access

The fair and inclusive provision of quality learning opportunities, resources, and facilities to all children, specifically removing barriers for marginalized, vulnerable, and underserved populations.

Equitable Childcare Access

The fair and barrier-free availability of affordable, safe, and quality early learning and care services for all families, regardless of socioeconomic status or geographical location.

Equity and Inclusion

The principle and practice of ensuring all children, particularly marginalized or vulnerable groups, receive fair access, personalized support, and equal opportunities to participate and thrive in education.

Essential Package of Services

A core bundle of integrated healthcare, nutritional, developmental, and social protection interventions provided to pregnant women, infants, and young children to support optimal early childhood development.

Evidence-Based Decision-Making

The practice of using empirical data, monitoring information, and verified research findings to guide educational policies, program adjustments, and resource allocation.

Evidence-Based Pedagogical Knowledge

An understanding of instructional strategies, learning methodologies, and developmental practices that have been systematically tested and proven effective through rigorous educational research.

Evidence-Based Practice

Instructional and caregiving strategies, interventions, and policies that are systematically informed by empirical research, documented data, and demonstrated effectiveness to achieve optimal developmental and educational outcomes.

Also known as: evidence-based action, evidence-based approaches, evidence-based practices

Executive Functioning

A set of interrelated cognitive processes—including working memory, mental flexibility, and inhibitory control—that enable individuals to focus attention, plan, regulate emotions, and manage multi-step tasks effectively.

Also known as: executive function, executive functions

Experiential Learning

An active, child-centred approach to education where learners acquire knowledge and skills through direct hands-on experience, practical exploration, play, and structured reflection rather than passive rote instruction.

Experiential Play-Based Learning

A child-centered pedagogical approach where young learners actively explore concepts, solve problems, and develop foundational skills through hands-on, guided play and direct sensory experiences.

Also known as: experiential play based learning

Exploring Mathematics

The process of investigating foundational numerical concepts, spatial relationships, shapes, and patterns through active inquiry, practical activities, and guided discovery.

F

Family Engagement

An active, collaborative partnership between parents, caregivers, and educators or service providers to support a child's early learning, development, and access to necessary interventions.

Family Literacy

An intergenerational educational approach that promotes reading, writing, and language development within the home by empowering parents to support their young children's learning while simultaneously strengthening their own literacy skills.

Family Matching

The systematic process of evaluating and pairing a vulnerable, orphaned, or foster child with a suitable prospective family based on complementary profiles, needs, and best interests.

Family Reunification

The process of safely returning separated, displaced, or alternative-care children to the care of their biological parents, extended family, or primary caregivers within a protective environment.

Also known as: reunification

Family Strengthening

Supportive interventions and social services designed to enhance household resilience, prevent child protection risks, and promote positive parenting and child well-being in vulnerable communities.

Also known as: family strengthening intervention

Family Well-Being

The holistic state of health, economic security, emotional stability, and social functioning that enables households to provide safe, nurturing, and supportive environments for child development.

Father Engagement

The intentional, active, and sustained involvement of fathers or male caregivers in the nurturing care, protection, emotional well-being, and foundational learning of their young children within the home.

Feeding Scheme

A structured school- or center-based nutrition program providing regular, balanced meals to children to support physical health, daily attendance, and cognitive focus in the classroom.

Fine Motor Skills

The coordination of small muscle movements, particularly of the hands and fingers with the eyes, essential for tasks such as writing, drawing, and handling learning materials.

Also known as: fine motor coordination

First 1,000 Days

The critical developmental window from conception through a child's second birthday, during which rapid neurodevelopmental and physical growth establish lasting foundations for health, cognitive potential, and lifelong learning.

Also known as: 1000 days of the life, first 1000 days

First Teachers

Parents and primary caregivers viewed in their fundamental role as the earliest educators who nurture children's early cognitive, emotional, and social development before formal schooling begins.

Formal Duty Bearers (FDBs)

Government officials, ministries, and legally mandated institutional authorities responsible for respecting, protecting, and fulfilling the rights and basic services of children and citizens across local, regional, and national levels.

Also known as: FDBs, formal duty bearers

Formal Education

Structured, systematic schooling delivered within institutional learning environments such as registered schools, governed by official curricula, certified teachers, and standardised assessment frameworks.

Also known as: formal schooling

Formal Education Systems

The officially recognized, institutionalized networks of schools and regulatory frameworks managed or accredited by national authorities to deliver standardized, curriculum-based instruction.

Formal Learning

Structured, curriculum-driven education delivered within institutional settings, typically guided by trained educators and designed to systematically achieve specific academic competencies and milestones.

Formal Learning Environments

Structured institutional settings, such as registered classrooms and schools, characterized by standardized curricula, scheduled instruction, academic expectations, and systematic learner evaluations.

Formal Primary Education

The initial stage of institutionalized, state-regulated elementary schooling designed to build core literacy, numeracy, and life skills within an established national curriculum.

Formative Assessment

Ongoing evaluation methods used by educators during instruction to monitor student understanding, identify learning gaps, and adapt teaching strategies to support continuous academic progress.

Formative Assessment Tools

Practical instruments, checklists, and observation guides utilized by educators during the learning process to systematically monitor student comprehension and inform immediate instructional adjustments.

Foster Care

A formal or informal protective arrangement in which a child temporarily or permanently separated from their biological parents is placed under the structured custody and nurturing care of certified alternative caregivers.

Foundation Phase

The initial stage of formal schooling, typically spanning pre-primary through early primary grades, focused on establishing core competencies in foundational literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional development.

Also known as: foundational phase

Foundational Learning

The acquisition of core literacy, numeracy, and socio-emotional skills during early childhood and the early primary grades, providing the essential base required for all subsequent learning and academic success.

Also known as: apprentissages fondamentaux, foundational education

Foundational Learning Activities

Structured, play-based instructional tasks and educational exercises designed to cultivate essential early literacy, numeracy, cognitive, and socio-emotional competencies in young children.

Foundational Learning Gap

The shortfall between the basic literacy and numeracy competencies children are expected to achieve and their actual learning outcomes, often persisting throughout subsequent stages of education.

Also known as: foundational learning gaps

Foundational Learning Outcomes

The core competencies and measurable proficiency levels in basic literacy, numeracy, and socio-emotional skills that young children acquire to support subsequent learning and educational attainment.

Foundational Learning Pathways

Structured educational trajectories, policies, and instructional progressions that guide children through the acquisition of essential literacy, numeracy, and socioemotional skills from early childhood into primary education.

Foundational Learning Readiness

The developmental preparation and emerging cognitive, linguistic, and socioemotional competencies that young children need to successfully transition into and benefit from early literacy and numeracy instruction.

Foundational Learning Readiness Indicators

Measurable benchmarks and developmental milestones, such as letter recognition and phonological awareness, used to assess a young child's preparedness to acquire core literacy and numeracy skills.

Also known as: foundational readiness indicators

Foundational Learning Systems

Comprehensive institutional, curricular, and policy frameworks that coordinate policies, educators, resources, and community structures to deliver quality basic literacy, numeracy, and early childhood education.

Foundational Literacy

The acquisition of essential basic reading, writing, and communication skills in early childhood that enables learners to comprehend text, express meaning, and succeed in subsequent education.

Also known as: basic literacy, foundational literacy skills

Foundational Literacy Outcomes

Measurable levels of achievement in core reading, writing, and language comprehension skills attained by young children during their early childhood and primary schooling.

Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN)

The essential core abilities in reading, writing, and basic mathematics that children must master in their early schooling years to enable meaningful future learning and personal development.

Also known as: FLN, foundational literacy and numeracy, foundational literacy and numeracy skills

Foundational Numeracy

The core mathematical concepts and basic computational abilities, such as number recognition, counting, and simple problem-solving, acquired in early childhood to support lifelong learning and daily reasoning.

Also known as: basic math, foundational math skills

Foundational Skills

Core competencies in early literacy, numeracy, and socio-emotional abilities that serve as essential building blocks for higher-order learning, academic progression, and overall personal development.

Also known as: foundational academic competencies, foundational knowledge

Foundational Teacher Training

Core professional development programs that equip educators with essential instructional methods, classroom management techniques, and pedagogical competencies needed to teach early literacy and numeracy effectively.

Foundational Years

The critical early childhood period from birth through early primary schooling during which essential cognitive, socio-emotional, language, and physical development takes place.

Frontline Community Workers

Grassroots personnel and service providers who engage directly with families and children at the local level to deliver essential health, early intervention, care, and developmental support.

Functional Abilities

An individual's practical capabilities to carry out essential everyday activities, interact with their environment, and engage meaningfully in learning and social development with independence.

Functional Development

The progressive acquisition and enhancement of practical motor, sensory, cognitive, and adaptive skills that enable a child to interact effectively with their environment and participate in daily routines.

G

Gender Equality

The state in which individuals of all genders have equal rights, opportunities, resources, and protection, ensuring fair participation in learning, play, and societal development.

Gender-Responsive Education

Educational approaches, policies, and learning environments that actively identify and address gender-specific barriers and disparities, promoting equitable participation, safety, and achievement for all learners.

Gender-Responsive Pedagogy (GRP)

An instructional approach that consciously addresses the distinct learning needs, social barriers, and potentials of girls and boys by integrating gender equality into teaching methodologies, learning materials, and classroom management.

Also known as: gender responsive pedagogy, gender-responsive pedagogy, gender-sensitive pedagogical approaches

Gender-Responsive Play-Based Learning (GR-PBL)

An early pedagogical approach that uses play to foster foundational learning while actively addressing gender stereotypes, ensuring equal participation, engagement, and developmental opportunities for all children.

Also known as: gender-responsive play-based learning, GR-PBL

Gender-Sensitive Caregiving

Nurturing and childcare practices that recognize and address the distinct needs of all children without reinforcing restrictive gender stereotypes, ensuring equitable support, protection, and opportunities for girls and boys.

Girl Child

A female infant, child, or adolescent, highlighted within development contexts to focus targeted interventions on overcoming systemic discrimination, educational exclusion, and social vulnerabilities.

Girls' Education

Policies, programmes, and pedagogical practices dedicated to ensuring equitable access, safe participation, retention, and quality learning outcomes for female children across all levels of schooling.

Global Learning Crisis

The widespread challenge where a substantial proportion of children around the world are attending school without acquiring foundational literacy, numeracy, and essential life skills.

Grade R

A reception or pre-primary school year designed for young children, providing structured early learning and developmental preparation before entry into formal primary schooling.

Also known as: Gr R

Grade RR

An early childhood education year designed for young learners, typically aged four to five, preceding the reception year to develop foundational cognitive, physical, and socio-emotional skills.

Grade Repetition

The practice of requiring a student who has not achieved specified academic benchmarks to remain in the same academic level or grade for an additional school year.

Also known as: repetition, repetition rates

Gross Motor Development

The gradual growth and coordination of large muscle groups and whole-body movements essential for balance, posture, running, jumping, and general physical mobility during early childhood.

Also known as: gross motor coordination

Growing Together Model

An early childhood development intervention framework focused on holistic nurture, health, and developmental stimulation for infants and young children, particularly during their first 1,000 days of life.

Growth Monitoring and Promotion (GMP)

A routine child health strategy that involves regular physical measurements, assessment of development against standard charts, and tailored nutritional counselling to prevent malnutrition and support optimal early development.

Also known as: growth monitoring

Guided Activities

Structured learning tasks facilitated or supported by an educator to encourage children's purposeful exploration, inquiry, and practical skill development within a defined learning framework.

Guided Discussion

A facilitated conversational strategy where an educator prompts and steers learner dialogue around specific questions or themes to foster critical thinking, collaborative reflection, and deeper conceptual understanding.

Guided Learning

An instructional approach where teachers or caregivers provide intentional structure, scaffolding, and ongoing support to help children acquire knowledge and foundational skills both in class and at home.

Guided Practice

An interactive instructional stage where learners apply newly demonstrated concepts with ongoing teacher assistance, feedback, and scaffolding before transitioning to independent application.

Guided Reflection

A structured, facilitated process where learners or participants review, analyze, and draw meaningful insights from recent activities or experiences to deepen their personal, emotional, or educational development.

H**Hands-On Learning**

An experiential instructional method where learners actively acquire skills and understanding through direct physical engagement, interactive activities, practical experimentation, and manipulation of materials rather than passive observation.

Also known as: hands-on projects, learning-by-doing

Health Monitoring

The systematic observation, assessment, and tracking of children's physical health, growth metrics, and developmental milestones to ensure early detection and intervention for medical or nutritional issues.

Hearing Impairment

A partial or total inability to perceive sounds across one or both ears, encompassing hard-of-hearing and deaf individuals requiring supportive accommodations such as sign language or assistive devices.

Also known as: hard-of-hearing

Holistic Approach

A comprehensive methodology that addresses all interconnected aspects of a child's development, including cognitive, physical, social, emotional, and neurological growth, rather than treating these developmental domains in isolation.

Holistic Care

An integrated approach to child wellbeing that addresses physical, emotional, social, nutritional, and health needs alongside academic and developmental support.

Holistic Child Development

An integrated approach to nurturing a child's interconnected physical, cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and creative capacities, ensuring all developmental dimensions are simultaneously supported for overall wellbeing.

Also known as: développement global de l'enfant, holistic development, holistic early childhood development, holistic growth, holistic growth and development, physical, cognitive, and psychosocial development

Holistic Child Development Outcomes

Measurable gains across interconnected domains of a child's growth, including cognitive, physical, socio-emotional, motor, and language capabilities, rather than academic indicators alone.

Holistic Child Wellbeing

The overall state of optimal thriving in a child, encompassing integrated physical health, adequate nutrition, emotional stability, social connectedness, and cognitive growth within a supportive and nurturing environment.

Holistic Education

A comprehensive approach to teaching and learning that nurtures all dimensions of a learner, including intellectual, social, emotional, ethical, physical, and practical life skills.

Also known as: holistic educational goals

Holistic Learning

An educational approach that nurtures all facets of a child's development, integrating cognitive, physical, social-emotional, and creative growth rather than focusing exclusively on academic instruction.

Holistic Learning Outcomes

Measurable achievements encompassing a child's cognitive, social-emotional, physical, and foundational academic growth, reflecting a comprehensive approach to child development and well-being beyond traditional academic testing.

Also known as: holistic outcomes

Home Language

The primary language or dialect spoken in a child's household, which serves as the foundational medium for early communication, cognitive development, and initial literacy acquisition.

Home Language Materials

Educational texts, storybooks, and learning resources produced in a child's native or familial language to foster early literacy, comprehension, and foundational learning in a familiar linguistic context.

Also known as: home-language books

Home Learning Activities

Structured or play-based educational exercises conducted by parents and caregivers within the household to reinforce foundational skills, promote cognitive development, and extend learning beyond formal schooling settings.

Also known as: home-learning activities

Home Learning Materials

Physical or digital educational resources, such as books, writing supplies, and manipulative toys, kept in the household to support children's early literacy, numeracy, and overall cognitive development.

Also known as: in-home learning materials

Home Literacy Practices

Family-based routines and interactive behaviors, such as oral storytelling, shared book reading, and singing, that occur in the domestic environment to nurture children's early language and emerging literacy skills.

Home Visiting

A community-based service delivery approach where trained practitioners visit caregivers and young children at home to provide tailored coaching on responsive parenting, health, nutrition, and early learning stimulation.

Also known as: home visit program, home visit programmes, home visiting programme, home visits, home-visiting, home-visiting intervention

Home-Based Care

Nurturing and developmental support provided to young children within domestic or residential settings, encompassing childcare, health, nutrition, and early stimulation by formal or informal caregivers.

Home-Based Caregivers

Parents, family members, or informal childminders who provide primary nurturing care, health support, and developmental stimulation to young children within residential settings rather than formal institutional facilities.

Home-Based Childcare

Early childhood care and supervision provided within a family or residential home environment, offering young children nurture, safety, and stimulation while caregivers work or attend to livelihood activities.

Home-Based Early Learning

An educational approach in which early stimulation, caregiving practices, and foundational learning activities take place within the domestic environment, supported by parents, caregivers, and community facilitators.

Also known as: home-based education, home-based learning

Home-Based Interventions

Targeted developmental, nutritional, and early stimulation activities carried out by parents or caregivers within the household to support early childhood health, learning, and overall wellbeing.

Home-Centre Partnerships

Collaborative relationships between early childhood development centres and families that coordinate care, share developmental practices, and actively engage caregivers in children's early learning.

Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF)

A targeted school meal model that procures food directly from local smallholder farmers to provide balanced daily nutrition to learners while boosting agricultural livelihoods and community resilience.

Also known as: HGSF, home grown school feeding

Hub and Community-Based Satellite Model

A service-delivery approach linking a central resource facility to smaller, community-managed outreach centres, expanding early childhood education access in underserved or remote areas.

Human Capital Development

The process of building individual knowledge, skills, health, and capabilities through sustained educational and developmental investments to advance personal agency and long-term socio-economic progress.

I

Implementation Framework

A structured operational guide that outlines the processes, standards, institutional responsibilities, and monitoring mechanisms required to translate education policies or strategies into practical action.

Also known as: référentiel de mise en œuvre

Implementation Research

The systematic study of the methods, barriers, and facilitators affecting the execution of policies and programmes to improve real-world delivery, effectiveness, and sustainability.

In-Service Teacher Training (INSET)

Continuing professional development and structured capacity-building provided to practicing educators to improve their pedagogical competencies, subject knowledge, and instructional effectiveness.

Also known as: in-service programmes, in-service teacher training, in-service training

In-Service Teachers

Practicing educators currently employed and actively working in learning environments who engage in ongoing professional learning to enhance their instructional practice.

Inclusion

The practice and principle of ensuring that all learners, regardless of disability, gender, background, or learning difference, have equitable access to learning, participation, and resources within educational and social environments.

Also known as: inclusiveness

Inclusive Childcare

Early care and development services designed to accommodate and support all children regardless of their gender, physical abilities, socio-economic status, or developmental challenges.

Inclusive Classrooms

Learning environments designed to welcome, accommodate, and equitably support all children regardless of their diverse physical, cognitive, socio-economic, or linguistic backgrounds.

Inclusive Early Childhood Development and Education (IECDE)

Provision of early childhood education and care that actively embraces all young children regardless of disability, displacement, or background, fostering holistic development in welcoming, accessible, and supportive learning environments.

Also known as: inclusive early childhood development education, inclusive early childhood education

Inclusive Early Childhood Development and Learning (IECDL)

Comprehensive early childhood services and educational practices designed to ensure that all young children, particularly those with disabilities or developmental differences, receive equitable nurturing care, intervention, and early learning opportunities.

Also known as: IECDL, inclusive early childhood development and learning, inclusive early learning

Inclusive Education

An educational approach ensuring that all children, regardless of disability, gender, socio-economic status, or background, learn together equitably within supportive, accessible, and barrier-free environments.

Also known as: inclusive approaches, inclusive learning

Inclusive Education Guidelines

Official directives and practical instructions that guide educators and administrators in identifying, welcoming, and effectively accommodating learners with diverse backgrounds, abilities, and special learning needs.

Inclusive Latrines

Sanitation facilities designed with physical accessibility features, such as ramps and grab bars, ensuring children with disabilities can maintain hygiene and dignity safely.

Inclusive Learning Environments

Physical, social, and pedagogical spaces designed to accommodate and support all learners regardless of gender, ability, background, or socioeconomic status, ensuring safe, equitable, and participatory education.

Also known as: inclusive classroom environments, inclusive learning environment, inclusive learning spaces

Inclusive Literacy Practices

Reading and language instruction strategies that respect cultural diversity and adapt to the varied linguistic, physical, and cognitive abilities of all young learners.

Inclusive Participation

The meaningful and equitable engagement of all learners in educational activities, ensuring barriers related to ability, gender, or background are removed.

Inclusive Pedagogy

A teaching approach that respects and accommodates diverse learner needs, abilities, and backgrounds by using differentiated, accessible, and responsive instructional strategies to enable all children to participate and learn effectively.

Also known as: inclusive classroom practices, inclusive pedagogies, inclusive teaching methods, inclusive teaching practices

Inclusive Play

Recreational and play-based learning activities intentionally designed to ensure that children of all abilities, backgrounds, and developmental stages can participate fully, interact, and learn alongside their peers.

Inclusive Playgroups

Community- or centre-based peer gatherings where children with and without disabilities engage in collaborative play and developmental activities, often involving parents and locally made play materials.

Also known as: inclusive play groups

Inclusive Practices

Instructional strategies, policies, and attitudes implemented by educators and caregivers to actively identify, address, and remove barriers to participation and learning for children with diverse abilities and backgrounds.

Also known as: inclusive practice

Inclusive Support

Comprehensive services, accommodations, and targeted interventions designed to identify and address the diverse developmental, physical, and learning needs of young children, particularly those with disabilities or vulnerabilities.

Inclusive Teaching and Learning Materials

Educational resources developed or adapted to be accessible, representative, and responsive to the varied developmental stages, learning styles, and functional needs of diverse learners.

Also known as: inclusive learning materials

Independent Learning

A stage in the learning process where children practice and apply foundational skills, concepts, and tasks autonomously following teacher modelling and guided instruction.

Indigenous Languages

Native or ancestral languages spoken by distinct cultural communities, which serve as mother tongues that support children's early cognitive development, identity formation, and cultural continuity.

Also known as: heritage languages

Indigenous Play

Traditional games, cultural activities, and locally crafted play materials used to promote holistic child development, cognitive growth, and foundational literacy within culturally relevant learning environments.

Individualised Care Plan

A tailored strategy designed to address the specific developmental, health, nutritional, or operational care needs of individual children or early childhood service sites.

Also known as: individualized care plan

Individualised Education Plan (IEP)

A customized, structured learning plan designed by educators and specialists to address the unique developmental, academic, emotional, and physical support needs of a child with disabilities or learning differences.

Also known as: IEP, IEPs, individualised education planning, individualized education plans

Individualised Learning Plan (ILP)

A tailored educational roadmap that outlines specific learning goals, pedagogical accommodations, and support strategies to address the unique developmental needs of an individual learner, particularly children with disabilities.

Also known as: individualized learning plans

Individualised Support

Targeted assistance, resources, and pedagogical or developmental accommodations tailored to address the unique learning and well-being needs of a specific child.

Also known as: individualized support

Indoor Learning Environment

The physical and psychosocial space within an early childhood facility or classroom, designed to promote a sense of belonging, safety, and active engagement among young learners.

Also known as: indoor environment

Indoor Learning Materials

Pedagogical resources, toys, and instructional tools utilized inside a classroom or learning centre to support safe, weather-protected, and easily supervised early childhood play and education.

Also known as: indoor pedagogical resources

Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF)

A set of recommended nutritional practices encompassing breastfeeding, safe and adequate complementary feeding using accessible local foods, and related hygiene measures to promote healthy growth in early childhood.

Also known as: infant and young child feeding practices

Informal Childcare Providers

Non-state, unregulated, or community-based caregivers, often operating within informal settlements or local neighborhoods, who offer daily child minding and early care services outside formal institutional education systems.

Informal Childcare Workforce

Non-credentialed or home-based caregivers, domestic workers, and community childminders who provide essential early childhood care and supervision outside of formal, regulated education and care systems.

Also known as: informal care workforce

Institutional Capacity

The organizational capability, resources, governance structures, and administrative systems required by educational bodies, ministries, and training institutions to effectively deliver and sustain early learning programmes.

Institutional Care

Formal residential care provided to children in non-family, structured group facilities such as orphanages, often utilized when family-based alternatives or parental care are unavailable.

Institutional Strengthening

The process of enhancing the organizational capacity, governance, systems, and human resources within education bodies to improve performance, policy implementation, and the sustainable delivery of foundational learning services.

Instructional Development

The systematic design, refinement, and implementation of pedagogical strategies, learning materials, and curriculum plans to enhance teaching quality and children's foundational learning outcomes.

Instructional Leadership

The practice of school administrators and leaders actively guiding, mentoring, and supporting teachers to improve classroom pedagogy, curriculum delivery, and foundational learning outcomes for children.

Instructional Materials

Physical, visual, or digital tools, resources, and manipulatives utilized by educators and learners to facilitate concept comprehension, enhance engagement, and support the effective delivery of learning content.

Also known as: instructional resources

Instructional Models

Structured pedagogical frameworks that guide educators in designing, sequencing, and delivering organized, learner-centered lessons to improve teaching quality and student engagement in foundational education.

Instructional Planning

The systematic process in which educators establish learning objectives, select pedagogical strategies, organize content, and prepare resources to ensure coherent and purposeful classroom teaching and learning.

Instructional Practices

The pedagogical methods, classroom techniques, and strategies employed by educators to facilitate learning, assess progress, and address the diverse needs of foundational learners, particularly struggling readers.

Instructional Quality

The overall effectiveness of teaching practices, classroom interactions, and pedagogical methods in engaging learners, delivering curriculum content, and facilitating foundational academic and developmental progress.

Instructional Support

Pedagogical guidance, scaffolding, and targeted assistance provided by educators to nurture learners' understanding, build confidence, and help them overcome learning challenges in the classroom.

Instructional Time

The portion of the school day dedicated to purposeful teaching and student learning activities, maximized through effective classroom management and positive discipline to enhance foundational outcomes.

Also known as: learning time

Integrated Approaches

Holistic strategies that coordinate multi-sectoral interventions—such as health, nutrition, child protection, and early education—alongside teacher capacity building to comprehensively support young children's foundational learning and overall developmental outcomes.

Integrated Early Childhood Development (IECD) Policies

Multi-sectoral government frameworks that coordinate health, nutrition, early education, and child protection sectors to ensure holistic development, standardisation, and comprehensive support for young children from birth.

Also known as: integrated ECD policies

Integrated Early Childhood Development (IECD) Services

Comprehensive, multi-sectoral programs that simultaneously deliver early education, health care, nutrition, and responsive caregiving support to young children and their families during critical developmental stages.

Also known as: integrated early childhood development services

Integrated Management of Neonatal and Childhood Illness (IMNCI)

A holistic healthcare strategy combining clinical assessment, treatment, and preventive care to manage major childhood illnesses, promote optimal growth, and reduce mortality among infants and young children.

Also known as: IMNCI

Integrated Service Delivery

A coordinated approach where multiple sectors, agencies, and community actors collaborate to provide comprehensive, interconnected public services across education, health, and welfare, eliminating fragmented or siloed implementation.

Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Minimum Standards

A global framework outlining baseline standards and guidance to ensure equitable, safe, and quality education for children and communities affected by crises and emergencies.

Also known as: INEE Minimum Standards

Interactive Learning

A child-centred pedagogical approach that actively engages young learners through hands-on activities, guided play, storytelling, and collaborative peer exercises rather than passive instruction.

Also known as: interactive learning methods

Interactive Play

Engaging, collaborative play-based activities that foster cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development through direct interaction among children, peers, caregivers, and their learning environment.

International Development and Early Learning Assessment (IDELA)

A globally recognized direct assessment tool designed to measure foundational early learning and development skills among young children across motor, emergent literacy, emergent numeracy, and social-emotional domains.

Also known as: IDELA, International Development and Early Learning Assessment

Interpretation Services

Spoken-language translation assistance provided to eliminate communication barriers between educators, service providers, children, and families with diverse linguistic backgrounds.

J**Jolly Phonics**

A synthetic, child-centered phonics methodology that uses multi-sensory actions, songs, and games to teach young learners letter sounds, blending, and foundational reading and writing skills.

K**Kindergarten**

A structured early childhood educational program or setting designed to foster foundational cognitive, physical, and socio-emotional skills in young children through play-based pedagogical approaches prior to primary school.

Kinship Care

A family-based alternative care arrangement in which children unable to live with their parents are raised by extended family members or close community members.

L**Laboratory Preschool**

An early learning center operated as an educational research facility to design, pilot, and refine child-centered curricula, learning materials, and teacher-training models.

Also known as: lab pre-school

Language Acquisition

The developmental process during early childhood through which young learners naturally develop the capacity to comprehend, communicate, and produce spoken or written language.

Language Comprehension Assessment

An evaluation tool or process designed to measure a young child's ability to interpret, understand, and extract meaning from spoken or written language.

Language Development

The developmental process through which young children acquire, understand, and use verbal and non-verbal communication, building the vocabulary and expressive capacity essential for early literacy and social interaction.

Also known as: linguistic development

Language Education

Structured teaching and learning practices that build linguistic competence, support mother-tongue or target-language literacy, and preserve cultural heritage through oral and written communication.

Language Learning

The developmental process through which young children acquire communicative competence, vocabulary, and linguistic confidence, often fostered through culturally relevant storytelling, songs, and play-based foundational activities.

Language Readiness

The baseline level of vocabulary, listening comprehension, and expressive verbal skills that equips a young child to successfully engage with formal schooling.

Language Skills

Abilities to comprehend, articulate, read, and write spoken and written communication effectively, forming the bedrock for early literacy, cognitive growth, and social interaction.

Language Support

Targeted assistance, resources, and intentional interactions provided by educators or caregivers to foster children's speech development, vocabulary expansion, and comprehension in early learning environments.

Language and Literacy

A foundational early childhood learning domain encompassing listening, speaking, emergent reading, and early writing skills essential for overall cognitive development and future learning.

Language and Literacy Milestones

Age-appropriate developmental benchmarks used to measure a child's expected progress in oral communication, receptive vocabulary, and emergent reading and writing capabilities.

Language of Instruction (LoI)

The designated medium of communication used by teachers and schools to deliver curricula, teach lessons, and interact with learners in the classroom.

Also known as: language of instruction

Learner Assessment

The ongoing process of gathering, analysing, and interpreting evidence of a child's developmental progress and foundational competencies to inform instruction and guide early educational interventions.

Learner Disengagement

A state of emotional, cognitive, or behavioural detachment from educational activities, characterised by reduced participation, reluctance to engage, and diminished academic and developmental progress.

Learner Engagement

The degree of active attention, curiosity, emotional involvement, and meaningful participation that children demonstrate during instructional exercises and early learning experiences.

Also known as: student engagement

Learner Performance

The observable demonstration of knowledge acquisition, foundational skills, and developmental competencies achieved by students within an instructional or literacy programme.

Also known as: performances des apprenants

Learner Retention

The sustained participation and continued enrollment of children in an educational programme or school system over time, preventing early dropout and supporting uninterrupted educational progression.

Also known as: retention, retention rates

Learner Support

The broad range of academic, psychosocial, and material assistance provided by educators, families, and communities to help children overcome barriers and thrive in their educational development.

Also known as: learning support

Learner-Centred Classrooms

Educational environments structured around children's active participation, curiosity, and collaboration through hands-on tasks, guided discussions, and small-group problem-solving rather than rigid teacher-led instruction.

Learner-Centred Pedagogy (LCP)

An instructional approach placing students at the core of the educational process, emphasising active exploration, differentiated support, and continuous formative assessment to drive holistic development.

Also known as: learner-centered pedagogies, learner-centered pedagogy

Learners

Children or individuals actively engaged in acquiring knowledge, practical capabilities, and social-emotional competencies within formal or non-formal early learning and foundational education settings.

Learning Areas

Designated curricular themes or organised classroom spaces focused on cultivating specific developmental domains, such as early language, foundational mathematics, motor abilities, and social-emotional skills.

Learning Assemblages

Interconnected networks of diverse formal, informal, physical, and relational spaces across a community that collectively nurture and shape children's cognitive, social, and emotional development.

Learning Capacity

A child's underlying cognitive, neurological, and physical potential to acquire, process, retain, and apply new knowledge, language, and foundational skills.

Learning Centres

Designated, resourced areas within an early childhood classroom organized around specific themes or activities to encourage independent exploration, play-based discovery, and collaborative hands-on learning.

Also known as: learning centers

Learning Corners

Deliberately arranged physical stations within early childhood classrooms stocked with thematic materials to encourage self-directed, play-based exploration and focused skill acquisition.

Learning Difficulties

Neurological, cognitive, or developmental challenges that affect how a child acquires, processes, or retains foundational skills and knowledge, requiring differentiated pedagogical approaches and specialized classroom support.

Also known as: invisible learning difficulties, learning challenges

Learning Disabilities

Neurological conditions that affect a child's ability to process, retain, or apply foundational academic concepts, requiring differentiated instruction, adaptive teaching strategies, and targeted learning support.

Learning Domains

Broad, interconnected spheres of child development and curriculum design, encompassing cognitive, linguistic, physical, and socio-emotional dimensions vital for holistic growth.

Learning Environment

The physical, social, emotional, and instructional space where education occurs, purposefully organized and equipped with stimulating resources to ensure safety, inclusion, and holistic child development.

Also known as: learning environments

Learning Facilitators

Trained educators or community instructors who guide instructional activities, often grouping children by learning ability rather than age to deliver targeted foundational learning support.

Learning Gains

Measurable improvements or advancements in knowledge, literacy, numeracy, and developmental competencies achieved by students over a specified period of instruction.

Learning Gaps

The discrepancies between a child's actual academic or developmental achievement and the expected benchmarks or competencies for their specific age or grade level.

Learning Goals

Specific targets or developmental benchmarks outlining the knowledge, skills, and competencies that children are expected to acquire through an educational curriculum or intervention.

Learning Materials

Tangible educational resources, toys, manipulatives, and reading texts that children interact with directly to facilitate exploratory play, foundational skill acquisition, and overall developmental progression.

Also known as: learning resources

Learning Motivation

The internal drive, enthusiasm, and willingness of a child to actively participate in educational activities, explore new concepts, and persist in acquiring foundational skills.

Learning Outcomes

Measurable knowledge, competencies, cognitive abilities, and psychosocial skills that children acquire and demonstrate as a direct result of participating in educational programmes and developmental activities.

Learning Outcomes Measurement

The systematic assessment and evaluation of children's academic progress, developmental competencies, and skill acquisition to track instructional effectiveness and guide educational interventions.

Learning Performance

A child's demonstrated academic achievement, cognitive engagement, and ability to successfully acquire and apply foundational literacy, numeracy, and developmental skills.

Learning Processes

The cognitive, social, and developmental pathways through which children acquire, assimilate, and apply new knowledge, skills, and behaviors within their educational environments.

Learning Programme

A structured and planned sequence of educational activities, curriculum content, and teaching strategies designed to guide practitioners in delivering holistic early childhood learning experiences.

Learning Retention

The ability of children to maintain, recall, and apply acquired knowledge, competencies, and foundational skills over time following instruction.

Learning Spaces

Physical or structural environments, such as classrooms and early childhood centers, purposefully organized and equipped to facilitate children's educational activities, play, and holistic development.

Also known as: learning space

Learning Styles

The varied preferences, modalities, and approaches through which individual children best process, comprehend, and retain new information and educational experiences.

Learning Support Materials

Textual, visual, or physical resources, such as books, manipulatives, and teaching aids, provided to enrich classroom instruction and reinforce children's early literacy and numeracy development.

Learning Through Play (LtP)

A child-centred pedagogical approach where learners explore, discover, and solve problems through engaging, interactive, and joyful activities to build holistic academic, social, and emotional competencies.

Also known as: learning through play, LtP

Learning Vulnerabilities

Individual, cognitive, or environmental factors that place young learners at heightened risk of falling behind developmentally or academically, necessitating targeted interventions and inclusive learning support.

Learning and Play Materials

Physical resources, toys, manipulatives, and educational tools—often locally sourced or low-cost—used by young children and educators to facilitate sensory stimulation, active play, and foundational skill acquisition.

Lesson Planning

The process of designing, structuring, and preparing instructional activities, learning objectives, and teaching materials to deliver coherent and effective classroom instruction.

Lesson Plans

Structured, step-by-step instructional guides that outline specific learning objectives, teaching activities, timelines, and classroom resources for delivering individual lessons effectively.

Letter Knowledge

The foundational literacy ability to identify, name, write, and recognise the individual graphic symbols that make up the written alphabet.

Letter Recognition

The foundational emergent literacy skill of identifying, naming, and distinguishing both uppercase and lowercase letters of the alphabet by their visual shapes and associated sounds.

Letter-Sound Knowledge

The foundational phonics skill of understanding the direct relationships between written alphabetical letters and the spoken sounds they represent to support decoding and reading.

Also known as: letter-sound recognition

Life Outcomes

The long-term social, economic, personal, and developmental results that individuals experience across their lifespan as a consequence of early learning, health, and well-being.

Life Skills

A broad set of psychosocial, cognitive, and interpersonal competencies that enable children and youth to make informed decisions, solve problems, communicate effectively, protect themselves, and navigate daily challenges successfully.

Life Skills Education

Instruction focused on developing essential psychosocial, personal, and interpersonal competencies—such as communication, decision-making, and emotional resilience—enabling young learners to navigate daily challenges and thrive socially.

Lifelong Learning

The continuous, self-motivated acquisition of knowledge, practical competencies, and personal capabilities across the entire lifespan, underpinned by strong cognitive, social, and emotional foundations established during early childhood.

Linguistic Confidence

A learner's self-assurance and willingness to communicate, express ideas, and engage meaningfully in learning activities using their home, indigenous, or acquired language.

Linguistic Diversity

The coexistence and presence of multiple distinct languages, dialects, and mother tongues within a community, school environment, or geographical region.

Listening Skills

The foundational receptive language capabilities that allow young learners to actively attend to, process, understand, and interpret spoken information and auditory instructions.

Literacy

The fundamental ability to read, write, interpret, and communicate language effectively, serving as an essential building block for subsequent academic success and lifelong learning.

Literacy Assessment

The systematic measurement and evaluation of a learner's emergent or foundational reading and writing competencies, including phonemic awareness, decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Also known as: literacy assessment techniques

Literacy Development

The progressive acquisition of foundational reading, writing, and communication abilities in early childhood, reinforced through print-rich resources, structured instruction, and supportive family and community practices.

Literacy Ecosystem

The interconnected network of stakeholders, policies, resources, teacher capacities, community structures, and home environments that collectively support and sustain foundational reading and writing development.

Literacy Instruction

The systematic and pedagogical teaching methods used by educators to help young children acquire essential reading, writing, comprehension, and oral language skills.

Literacy Intervention

A targeted instructional programme or educational strategy designed to improve foundational reading and writing capabilities, remediate learning gaps, and strengthen overall school readiness.

Literacy Language

The specific language designated and utilized for instructing children in foundational reading, writing, and communication skills within formal or informal early learning environments.

Also known as: langue d'alphabétisation

Literacy Outcomes

Measurable competencies and skills achieved by learners in reading, writing, oral language, and phonemic awareness as a result of foundational educational interventions.

Literacy Promotion

Initiatives and educational activities designed to encourage reading, writing, and language development by providing stimulating learning environments, appropriate resources, and targeted instruction for young children.

Literacy Readiness

The stage of developmental preparedness where a young child possesses the foundational cognitive, language, and emergent print awareness skills necessary to begin formal reading and writing instruction.

Literacy Skills

The foundational abilities that enable individuals to read and write, encompassing early print awareness, letter-sound knowledge, phonological processing, vocabulary, spelling, and story comprehension.

Literacy-Rich Environment

A physical setting in homes, communities, or classrooms that provides abundant access to print materials, books, and language activities, encouraging continuous exploration and early reading practices.

Living Classroom

An interactive, real-world educational space, such as an outdoor garden, used to provide hands-on, experiential learning across various developmental areas and subject disciplines.

Local Languages

Indigenous or regional mother tongues spoken natively within a specific community, increasingly utilised as mediums of instruction to enhance foundational comprehension and cultural relevance in early education.

Also known as: langues locales

Locally Relevant Literacy Materials (LOCRELMs)

Culturally and linguistically tailored reading and learning aids produced using familiar local contexts, languages, and materials to bridge home and classroom literacy practices for young learners.

Also known as: local cultural relevant literacy materials, LOCRELMs

Low-Cost Learning Materials

Affordable instructional aids and resources made from inexpensive, locally sourced, or recycled materials to facilitate effective teaching and learning without placing heavy financial burdens on schools or families.

Low-Cost Play Materials

Inexpensive, homemade, or repurposed items and toys designed to support play-based learning and physical, social, and cognitive development in resource-constrained early childhood settings.

Low-Cost Private Schools (LCPS)

Independently operated, fee-charging primary or pre-primary schools established in low-income communities to provide accessible education where public alternatives may be limited or overburdened.

Also known as: low-cost private schools

Lower Primary

The initial grades of formal primary schooling, typically covering grades one through three, that build upon early childhood education to develop foundational literacy, numeracy, and socio-emotional skills.

M

Mainstream Classrooms

Standard, general-education learning environments where students of diverse backgrounds and learning abilities are taught together, increasingly adapted to support inclusive instructional practices.

Mainstream Education

The standard, general education system and regular school classrooms open to all learners, contrasting with specialized, segregated, or non-formal educational settings.

Also known as: mainstream schooling

Mainstream Schools

Standard public or private educational institutions designed for general student populations, as distinguished from specialised centres, that increasingly accommodate and support diverse learning needs within inclusive settings.

Marginalised Learners

Children who face systemic barriers to accessing quality education and equitable learning opportunities due to factors such as poverty, disability, geographic isolation, displacement, or social exclusion.

Also known as: marginalized learners

Market-Based Childcare Centres

Early childhood care facilities situated within or near commercial trading markets to provide safe, nurturing care and early learning opportunities for young children while their parents work.

Also known as: market-based childcare center, market-based ECD centres

Mass Registration Drive

A coordinated, large-scale campaign designed to formally register early childhood development centres or unenrolled children with relevant authorities to expand access to resources, oversight, and legal recognition.

Maternal and Child Health (MCH)

An integrated public health focus area dedicated to improving the physical, mental, and nutritional well-being of women during pregnancy and childbirth, as well as the healthcare needs of infants and young children.

Also known as: maternal and child health

Mathematical Skills

The foundational cognitive abilities to understand numbers, perform basic arithmetic operations, recognize patterns, and apply quantitative reasoning to solve real-world problems in early learning environments.

Also known as: mathematical competencies, mathematics skills

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

A comprehensive continuum of care and interventions designed to promote emotional well-being, build resilience, and address psychological distress in children and caregivers facing adversity.

Also known as: Mental Health and Psychosocial Support, MHPSS

Mentorship

A sustained, collaborative relationship in which experienced practitioners provide ongoing guidance, constructive feedback, coaching, and practical support to build the skills, confidence, and instructional quality of educators or learners.

Also known as: mentoring

Middle-Tier Leadership

Education professionals positioned between national ministries and frontline classrooms, such as headteachers and district education officers, responsible for coaching teachers, monitoring pedagogical quality, and sustaining instructional reforms.

Also known as: middle-tier leaders

Mini-Libraries

Small, localized collections of age-appropriate books and reading resources established within classrooms, early childhood centres, or communities to promote early literacy and regular reading habits.

Minimum Safety Standards

Baseline regulatory and environmental criteria that early learning facilities must satisfy regarding infrastructure, hygiene, and emergency preparedness to ensure a secure, hazard-free environment for young children.

Mixed-Ability Teaching

An instructional approach that accommodates and supports learners with diverse developmental levels, learning paces, and academic competencies within the same inclusive classroom setting.

Also known as: mixed ability

Mobile Early Learning Library

A traveling service that brings curated, age-appropriate books, educational games, and learning materials directly to underserved communities or preschools on a regular, rotational schedule.

Mobile Library Outreach

Community-focused mobile services that transport books and literacy-promotion activities to remote, under-resourced schools and neighborhoods lacking permanent library infrastructure.

Model Crèche

An exemplary early childhood development and day-care centre that demonstrates high-quality care and learning standards while serving as a benchmark, training site, and support hub for surrounding providers.

Model Lesson Plans

Exemplary, structured instructional guides that illustrate effective pedagogical practices, learning objectives, and classroom routines, serving as practical templates for teachers to design and deliver foundational learning sessions.

Model Schools

Designated educational institutions that showcase high-quality teaching practices, effective management, and conducive learning environments, serving as demonstration benchmarks and training hubs for surrounding educational facilities.

Monitoring and Assessment Tools

Instruments, checklists, and standardized frameworks used by educators and practitioners to systematically track, measure, and evaluate young children's developmental milestones, health indicators, and foundational learning progress.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

Systematic processes of routinely tracking project activities and assessing their performance, outcomes, and impact to inform decision-making, ensure accountability, and support continuous programme improvement.

Also known as: monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL)

A structured framework for systematically tracking programme implementation, assessing outcomes and impact, and applying data-driven insights and lessons learned to continuously adapt and improve educational initiatives.

Also known as: MEL, monitoring, evaluation and learning, monitoring, evaluation, and learning

Monograde Teaching

An instructional approach or classroom arrangement where an educator teaches learners of a single age cohort or academic grade level concurrently.

Also known as: mono-grade

Montessori Education

A child-centred educational approach characterized by self-directed activity, hands-on exploration with specialized materials, and mixed-age classrooms that foster independent thinking and holistic development.

Also known as: Montessori, Montessori method, Montessori philosophy

Montessori Pedagogy

A child-centred educational approach emphasizing self-directed activity, hands-on learning materials, and collaborative play to foster independence and holistic developmental growth.

Also known as: Montessori principles

Moral Duty Bearers

Individuals or community members, such as parents, caregivers, and local leaders, who hold ethical and social responsibilities to uphold, protect, and fulfill the rights and well-being of children.

Mother Tongue

The first language that a child learns from birth and uses within the home, providing a vital foundation for early cognitive development, literacy acquisition, and cultural identity.

Also known as: mother tongues

Mother-Tongue Education (MTE)

An instructional approach where children are taught early academic concepts and foundational literacy in their primary home language before transitioning to additional or official national languages.

Also known as: mother-tongue education

Motor Development

The progressive growth and refinement of a child's physical ability to coordinate and control bodily movements, encompassing gross motor actions like running and fine motor tasks like grasping objects.

Also known as: gross and fine motor development, motor skill development

Motor Skills

The physical abilities involving muscle control and coordination, categorized into fine and gross movements, that enable young children to explore their environment, perform everyday tasks, and engage in classroom learning activities.

Multigrade Teaching

An instructional practice in which a single educator teaches students from two or more grade levels simultaneously within the same classroom environment.

Also known as: multi-grade

Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs)

Individual community members, caregivers, and local actors who hold an ethical or social responsibility to protect children's well-being and promote their foundational learning, often contrasted with formal state duty bearers.

Also known as: MDBs

Multilingual FLN Assessment

The evaluation of foundational literacy and numeracy competencies across two or more languages to accurately measure learning outcomes within linguistically diverse classroom settings.

Multilingual Learning

An instructional approach that utilizes two or more languages, typically beginning with a child's home language alongside official or national languages, to foster cognitive development, improve comprehension, and strengthen foundational literacy skills.

Multisectoral Approach

A coordinated strategy that integrates policies, resources, and services across diverse domains—including health, nutrition, education, and social protection—to address the holistic developmental needs of young children.

Also known as: multi-sectoral approach, multisectoral approaches

Multisectoral Collaboration

A coordinated partnership across multiple government departments, social sectors, and community agencies to provide integrated health, nutrition, protection, and educational support for early childhood development.

Multisensory Instruction

A teaching method that simultaneously engages multiple senses—such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic pathways—to enhance cognitive processing and reinforce early literacy and numeracy skills.

Also known as: multisensory methods

N

National Curriculum

The officially mandated framework, content standards, and learning objectives established by a government to guide instruction, learning materials, and assessment across schools and early childhood centres nationwide.

National Curriculum Framework for Early Childhood Development (NCfECD)

A standardized national policy framework setting out core development areas, age-appropriate learning standards, and pedagogical guidelines to govern early childhood care and pre-primary education across sectors.

Also known as: National Curriculum Framework for ECD, NCfECD

National Early Childhood Development Standards

Government-approved quality frameworks and benchmarks that establish criteria for curriculum, learning environments, child development outcomes, and practitioner qualifications in early childhood services.

Also known as: national ECD standards

National Languages

Indigenous or officially recognized local languages of a country used in educational and literacy instruction to facilitate comprehension, preserve cultural identity, and ensure effective foundational learning for non-formal and school-based learners.

Also known as: langues nationales

Nature-Based Curriculum

An educational framework that incorporates outdoor environments, gardens, and natural materials into teaching and learning, fostering children's holistic development, environmental stewardship, and foundational knowledge through hands-on exploration of the living world.

Needs Assessment

A systematic process of gathering data to identify the gaps between current conditions and desired educational outcomes, establishing baselines and guiding targeted interventions to address the specific priorities of learners and programs.

Also known as: needs assessments

Neurodevelopment

The biological and neurological growth and maturation of the brain and central nervous system, which underpins cognitive, motor, emotional, sensory, and behavioral development throughout childhood.

Also known as: neurological development

Neurodevelopmental Delays

Significant lags or impairments in reaching expected cognitive, physical, communicative, or socio-emotional milestones due to atypical brain development or functioning in early childhood.

Neurodivergent Learners

Children who process information and navigate learning environments through neurological variations—such as autism, ADHD, or dyslexia—requiring inclusive, evidence-based, and adaptive educational accommodations to thrive.

Neurodiversity

A framework recognizing natural variations in human brain function and cognition as normal differences rather than deficits, promoting inclusive support, early identification, and respect for every child's unique developmental profile.

Neuroplasticity

The brain's ability to adapt, reorganize, and form new neural connections in response to learning, environmental stimuli, and experiences, especially critical during rapid early childhood development.

Also known as: brain plasticity

Nigeria Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF)

A national system that classifies, standardizes, and recognizes skills, knowledge, and competencies across technical and vocational pathways, establishing clear progression routes from foundational learning to professional certification for formal and non-formal learners.

Also known as: Nigeria Skills Qualification Framework, NSQF

Nkuza Neza

An outcomes-based financing mechanism designed to improve the quality of informal and community-based pre-primary education centres serving young children in underserved rural communities.

Norms and Standards

Established regulatory benchmarks and quality guidelines that define minimum requirements, operating procedures, and pedagogical practices necessary to ensure safe, stimulating, and effective early learning and childcare environments.

Numeracy

The ability to understand, use, and apply basic mathematical concepts and numerical reasoning, serving as a core foundational skill for everyday problem-solving and future academic success.

Numeracy Development

The progressive process through which children acquire and strengthen fundamental mathematical concepts, spatial reasoning, and quantitative problem-solving abilities necessary for daily life and continuous educational progression.

Numeracy Learning

The developmental process through which children acquire, practice, and consolidate fundamental mathematical competencies, such as counting, spatial reasoning, and pattern recognition, through classroom instruction and engaging home-based activities.

Numeracy Pedagogy

The instructional methods, strategies, and classroom practices employed by educators to effectively teach foundational mathematical concepts, foster analytical thinking, and support young learners in understanding and applying numbers.

Also known as: numeracy teaching and learning

Numeracy Readiness

The foundational mathematical knowledge, early concepts, and cognitive skills that prepare young children to successfully engage with formal numeracy instruction upon entering primary school.

Numeracy Stimulation

Interactive, playful, and intentional early learning activities that introduce young children to basic numbers, shapes, and problem-solving concepts to foster mathematical thinking and primary school readiness.

Nursery School

An early childhood education institution that provides young children with play-based, child-centred learning experiences, socialization, and foundational skills prior to entering primary school.

Also known as: nursery schools

Nurturing Care

A comprehensive framework ensuring children receive good health, adequate nutrition, responsive caregiving, protection from harm, and early learning opportunities essential for optimal growth and lifelong well-being.

Also known as: nurturing, nurturing activities, nurturing care practices

Nurturing Care Framework (NCF)

A holistic, evidence-based model outlining five essential, interconnected domains—good health, adequate nutrition, responsive caregiving, safety and security, and opportunities for early learning—necessary for children to achieve their full developmental potential.

Also known as: nurturing care components, Nurturing Care Framework, nurturing care model

Nurturing Environments

Safe, responsive, and emotionally supportive physical and social settings that protect young children from harm, support their mental health, and provide the care required for holistic development.

Nutrition

The provision of essential dietary nourishment and health practices required to support physical growth, cognitive development, and overall well-being during early childhood.

Nutrition Education

Instructional programs and community-based guidance designed to promote healthy dietary practices, optimal infant and young child feeding, and awareness of essential nutrients to prevent malnutrition.

Nutrition Programmes

Structured initiatives implemented within early childhood settings or communities that provide balanced meals, supplementary feeding, or food cultivation activities to support young children's physical growth, health, and cognitive development.

Nutrition-Sensitive Interventions

Multi-sectoral actions and developmental strategies that address the underlying drivers of malnutrition by integrating dietary, health, hygiene, and economic support into early childhood education and care programming.

Nutritional Support

The provision of balanced meals, dietary supplements, or feeding programmes designed to meet children's dietary needs, promote healthy physical and cognitive growth, and enhance readiness to learn in early childhood settings.

O

OPTIMA

An early childhood developmental assessment and monitoring tool used to evaluate learner progress, identify developmental delays, and guide data-informed instructional interventions for young children.

Occupational Therapy

A rehabilitative service designed to help young children develop, recover, or maintain the fine motor, sensory, and functional skills necessary to perform meaningful everyday activities and participate fully in learning environments.

On-Site Mentorship

Practical, continuous coaching and supportive supervision delivered directly in teachers' classrooms or learning centres to strengthen pedagogical practices and enhance early childhood instructional quality through hands-on guidance.

Also known as: on site mentorship

Opportunities for Early Learning

Environments, interactions, and activities that stimulate a young child's curiosity, exploration, and cognitive development through play, communication, and caregiver interaction during critical foundational stages.

Optimal Child Development

The holistic realization of a child's full physical, cognitive, socio-emotional, and linguistic potential through supportive, stimulating, and nurturing early environments and caregiving practices.

Also known as: optimal development

Oral Language

The system of spoken words, listening comprehension, and verbal expression that provides the essential foundation for emergent literacy, phonological awareness, and subsequent reading development.

Organised Learning Programmes

Structured, intentional early childhood educational services delivered by trained educators or facilitators following a defined curriculum to foster foundational cognitive, socio-emotional, and school readiness skills.

Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC)

A demographic group of children who have lost one or both parents or face heightened risks such as extreme poverty, abuse, neglect, and lack of basic services, requiring targeted protection and educational support.

Also known as: orphans and vulnerable children

Out-of-School Children (OOSC)

Children of official primary or secondary school age who are not enrolled in or attending formal educational institutions, frequently due to socio-economic barriers, marginalization, or systemic exclusion.

Also known as: out-of-school children

Outcomes Partnership Model

A collaborative financing mechanism where resource allocation and stakeholder payments are tied directly to the achievement of verified, measurable educational results rather than inputs or activities.

Outcomes-Based Financing (OBF)

A funding mechanism where disbursement of financial resources is linked directly to the independently verified achievement of specific, measurable development or learning results rather than program inputs or activities.

Also known as: outcomes-based financing

Outdoor Learning

Educational activities and guided play conducted outside the traditional classroom to promote gross motor development, sensory engagement, environmental awareness, and holistic well-being in young children.

Outdoor Learning Environment

A safely designed open-air space equipped with age-appropriate and durable materials that fosters physical development, sensory stimulation, social interaction, and experiential play-based learning beyond the traditional classroom.

Also known as: outdoor environment, outdoor learning areas

Outdoor Pedagogical Resources

Physical materials, equipment, and designed open-air environments situated outside the traditional classroom that are utilized to support experiential, active, and play-based learning in early childhood education.

Over-Age Children

Learners who are older than the official or expected age for their enrolled grade level, often requiring targeted or accelerated educational interventions to support their learning progression.

P

Paraprofessionals

Community-based or auxiliary educators who receive targeted training to facilitate foundational instruction, care, and structured play-based learning activities in early childhood centres or classrooms.

Also known as: para-professionals

Parent Support Groups

Community-based networks that bring caregivers together to share experiences, receive practical training, and access local resources to foster child development, social inclusion, and family well-being.

Parent-Child Interaction

The reciprocal communicative, emotional, and social engagements between caregivers and young children that nurture secure attachments and promote foundational cognitive, language, and socio-emotional development.

Also known as: parent-child interactions, parent-child interactions

Parent-Teacher Association (PTA)

A formal collaborative school-level body of educators, parents, and community members dedicated to promoting institutional accountability, improving student attendance and welfare, and supporting foundational learning initiatives.

Also known as: Parent-Teacher Associations, PTAs

Parental Clinics

Dedicated community-based centres or service points that provide guidance, healthcare, and psychosocial support to caregivers to strengthen positive parenting practices and promote child well-being.

Parental Engagement

The active, meaningful involvement and collaboration of parents and caregivers in their children's learning, care, and development across home, early learning centres, and community environments.

Also known as: parent engagement, parent participation, parental involvement, parenting engagement

Parenting Education

Structured programmes or workshops designed to equip parents and caregivers with practical skills, guidance, and knowledge regarding responsive caregiving, early childhood stimulation, nutrition, and positive discipline.

Also known as: parent education, parental education

Parenting Interventions

Structured initiatives and support mechanisms designed to enhance caregivers' capacities, knowledge, and behaviors to foster holistic child development, responsive care, and early learning in the home.

Parenting Meetings

Facilitated community gatherings where caregivers convene to share experiences, build knowledge, and acquire practical strategies to support their children's early cognitive, emotional, and foundational learning at home.

Parenting Mentorship

Individualized guidance and supportive coaching provided by experienced peers or professionals to build the confidence, caregiving capabilities, and psychosocial well-being of young or vulnerable caregivers.

Parenting Practices

The specific behaviors, methods, and daily interactions that caregivers use to nurture, protect, socialize, and support the health, learning, and overall development of young children.

Parenting Programmes

Comprehensive institutional or community initiatives designed to systematically equip caregivers with the knowledge, practices, and resources necessary to support holistic early childhood development and responsive caregiving.

Also known as: parenting programming

Parenting Skills

The specific behavioral competencies, practical techniques, and communication abilities that enable caregivers to provide nurturing care, effective guidance, and cognitive stimulation for their children's growth and well-being.

Parenting Stress

The emotional, psychological, and physical strain experienced by caregivers when the perceived demands of child-rearing outweigh their available resources and coping capacities, potentially hindering responsive caregiving.

Parenting Support

Services, resources, and educational interventions designed to strengthen caregivers' knowledge, skills, and well-being, enabling them to provide responsive care and support their children's early development.

Participatory Action Research (PAR)

A collaborative research approach that engages community members, caregivers, and practitioners as active partners to investigate local challenges, co-create knowledge, and implement actionable solutions for educational and social improvement.

Also known as: participatory action-research

Participatory Methods

Interactive learning and research approaches that actively engage participants through practical activities, collaborative discussions, and real-life simulations to foster experiential learning and shared knowledge creation.

Also known as: participatory learning methods

Participatory Protection Pedagogy

An instructional approach that actively engages young learners as participants in classroom practices and decision-making to foster safe, inclusive, and protective early educational environments.

Participatory School Governance

A collaborative management framework that involves teachers, parents, learners, and community members in institutional decision-making to foster accountability, local ownership, and supportive learning environments.

Pedagogical Approaches

The overarching instructional principles, theories, and systematic teaching methods that educators employ to facilitate learning, structure classroom activities, and engage students effectively.

Also known as: pedagogical approach

Pedagogical Innovation

The design, adaptation, and application of novel teaching methods, tools, or learning approaches to enhance instructional quality, address contextual challenges, and improve children's developmental and learning outcomes.

Pedagogical Interventions

Structured instructional actions, targeted teaching strategies, or curriculum modifications intentionally introduced into early learning and classroom environments to improve teaching quality and foundational learning outcomes.

Pedagogical Leadership

The practice of guiding, coaching, and supervising educators to enhance classroom instruction, mentor professional growth, and institutionalize effective, evidence-based teaching practices within education systems.

Pedagogical Practices

The specific instructional strategies, teacher behaviours, and classroom methods employed by educators to guide, facilitate, and assess children's holistic learning and developmental growth.

Also known as: pratiques pédagogiques

Pedagogical Principles

The core foundational theories, values, and educational guidelines that shape curriculum design, instructional methods, and classroom practices to ensure developmentally appropriate and effective learning.

Pedagogical Resources

Educational materials, instructional tools, equipment, and physical spaces utilized by educators to facilitate, support, and enrich teaching and learning processes in foundational and early childhood settings.

Pedagogical Skills

The instructional techniques, classroom management abilities, and educational strategies that educators use to facilitate effective, developmentally appropriate learning experiences for children.

Also known as: pedagogical competence

Pedagogical Strategies

Structured methods, instructional techniques, and classroom approaches purposefully selected and applied by educators to facilitate comprehension, engage learners, and achieve defined curriculum learning objectives.

Pedagogical Tools

Instructional resources, materials, or methods used by educators to facilitate teaching and learning, support inclusive practices, and adapt curricula to learners' cultural and developmental contexts.

Pedagogy

The theory, methodology, and practical application of teaching and instructional strategies designed to facilitate learning, foster child development, and support effective curriculum delivery in educational settings.

Peer Learning

A collaborative capacity-building approach where practitioners, educators, or caregivers share experiences, practical knowledge, and best practices with one another to improve skills and solve common challenges collectively.

Peer Mentorship

A collaborative professional development model in which experienced educators guide and support colleagues through structured sharing of knowledge, feedback, and encouragement to strengthen instructional capacity and confidence.

Peer Observation

A professional development practice where teachers visit colleagues' classrooms to observe instructional techniques, share constructive feedback, and reflect collaboratively to improve early learning classroom practices.

Perceptual Development

The progressive process through which young children learn to interpret sensory information, enabling them to make sense of their environment, recognize patterns, and build foundational cognitive and motor skills.

Phonemic Awareness

The foundational early literacy ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds within spoken words, serving as a critical stepping stone for decoding and reading development.

Phonics

A foundational reading instruction method that teaches learners the relationships between spoken sounds and written letters or letter combinations, enabling them to decode words and build early literacy skills.

Phonological Awareness

The ability to recognize, distinguish, and manipulate the spoken sounds of language, such as syllables, rhymes, and individual phonemes, serving as a critical foundation for early literacy.

Physical Development

The growth and refinement of a child's bodily control, coordination, and motor skills through active movement, outdoor exploration, and sensory experiences essential for overall health and learning readiness.

Physical Learning Environment

The structural, spatial, and material aspects of an educational setting, encompassing the classroom layout, outdoor spaces, furniture, lighting, and physical resources that support learning and safety.

Also known as: physical environment, physical learning environments

Physical Therapy

A rehabilitative health service designed to support, restore, or enhance children's physical functioning, mobility, and motor skill development through targeted therapeutic exercises and movement interventions.

Play Kits

Curated collections of low-cost, locally sourced, or homemade toys, games, and learning materials designed to support play-based learning and early cognitive development in homes and community settings.

Play Spaces

Safe, stimulating physical environments within schools, early learning centres, or communities designated for children to engage in active, exploratory, and social play essential for holistic development.

Play Therapy

A specialized therapeutic approach that uses child-centered play activities to help young children communicate feelings, address emotional dysregulation, and overcome developmental delays in safe learning environments.

Play and Stimulation

Interactive, playful activities and responsive sensory experiences provided by caregivers and educators to promote brain architecture, holistic development, and foundational learning during early childhood.

Play-Based Activities

Interactive games, playful exercises, and hands-on tasks designed to foster children's cognitive, physical, and socioemotional development while engaging them meaningfully in early learning processes.

Play-Based Curriculum

An early learning instructional framework organized around guided and child-initiated play activities designed to foster imagination, problem-solving, socioemotional regulation, and holistic developmental readiness.

Also known as: play based curriculum

Play-Based Early Childhood Education

A pedagogical approach for young learners that leverages child-centered, guided, and spontaneous play to support holistic cognitive, physical, and socioemotional development in early learning environments.

Play-Based Interactions

Hands-on, purposeful, and guided exchanges between children and peers or educators that promote active learning, social connection, and discovery within safe environments.

Play-Based Interventions

Targeted and structured programs utilizing playful methodologies to support young children's mental health, resilience, psychosocial well-being, and developmental progress in community and crisis settings.

Play-Based Learning

A child-centred pedagogical approach that utilizes hands-on exploration, guided games, and joyful interaction to foster essential cognitive, linguistic, social, and emotional competencies in young learners.

Also known as: active, play based learning, play and learning, play based learning, play-based, play-based early learning, playful learning

Play-Based Pedagogy

An instructional approach that utilizes guided, active, and exploratory play to foster children's holistic development, critical thinking, and social engagement in early learning environments.

Also known as: play based approaches, play-based learning methodologies, play-based methodology, play-based methods, playful instruction

Play-Based Pre-Primary Education

Formal or non-formal instructional schooling for young children prior to primary school that organizes foundational learning and developmental goals around playful, experiential, and exploratory learning experiences.

Play-Based Teacher Professional Development

Training and capacity-building programs designed to equip educators with the instructional strategies, practical skills, and tools necessary to implement active, child-centred, play-based learning in early grade classrooms.

Also known as: play-based teacher training

Pop-Up Crèche

A temporary, flexible early childcare service established in community spaces, workplaces, or emergency contexts to provide safe supervision, nurturing care, and early learning opportunities for young children.

Positive Behaviour Management

A proactive, non-punitive instructional strategy that guides children toward self-regulation, social-emotional well-being, and constructive classroom engagement through supportive interactions, clear expectations, and structured routines.

Also known as: positive behavior guidance

Positive Caregiving Norms

Shared community standards, beliefs, and expectations that promote nurturing, responsive parenting practices, protect children from harm, and support healthy early childhood development.

Positive Discipline

A child-rearing and classroom guidance approach grounded in mutual respect, clear expectations, and constructive problem-solving that corrects behavior without relying on physical, verbal, or psychological punishment.

Positive Parent-Child Interaction

Nurturing, reciprocal, and supportive engagements between caregivers and young children that foster secure attachment, emotional security, language acquisition, and overall developmental well-being.

Also known as: positive parent-child interaction

Positive Parenting

An approach to child-rearing grounded in warmth, open communication, non-violent discipline, and responsive care that fosters a secure, nurturing environment for a child's holistic growth and emotional well-being.

Also known as: positive parenting practices

Post-Placement Monitoring

Ongoing oversight, assessment, and follow-up support provided to children and families following family reunification, foster care placement, or adoption to ensure child safety and well-being.

Practitioner Training and Professional Development

Structured educational opportunities, coaching, and capacity-building activities designed to enhance the knowledge, instructional skills, and professional capabilities of early childhood educators and care providers.

Also known as: practitioner development, practitioner training

Pre- and Post-Assessments

Evaluative tests administered before and after an educational intervention to establish baseline competency, identify learner needs, and measure progress or learning gains over time.

Also known as: pre- and post-literacy assessments, pre/post assessments

Pre-Literacy Games

Playful, interactive activities designed to build emergent reading and writing skills, such as letter recognition, phonological awareness, and oral vocabulary, in preparing young children for primary school.

Pre-Literacy Skills

Foundational language, auditory, and print-awareness capabilities that children develop before learning to read and write, essential for building future literacy and school readiness.

Also known as: pre-literacy

Pre-Mathematics

Foundational numeracy concepts and skills acquired before formal primary education, including counting, number recognition, shape identification, sorting, and pattern awareness.

Pre-Primary 1 (PP1)

The introductory level of formal pre-primary schooling, typically serving young children in early childhood education to build foundational developmental, socialization, and emergent learning competencies.

Also known as: PP1, Pre-Primary 1

Pre-Primary 2 (PP2)

The second or final grade of pre-primary education, designed to prepare young learners directly for primary school by consolidating foundational literacy, numeracy, and socioemotional readiness.

Also known as: PP2, Pre-Primary 2

Pre-Primary Curriculum

A structured educational framework outlining learning goals, developmental milestones, pedagogical approaches, and content standards designed for children enrolled in early schooling prior to entering Grade 1.

Also known as: pre primary curriculum, pre-school curriculum

Pre-Primary Education (PPE)

Structured early education and care delivered prior to formal primary schooling, designed to cultivate holistic cognitive, physical, and social-emotional readiness in young children through age-appropriate curricula.

Also known as: pre-kindergarten, pre-primary, pre-primary education, pre-school education, preschool education, préscolaire, éducation préscolaire

Pre-Primary Provision

The supply, structural organization, and delivery of early childhood educational services and facilities designated for young children prior to entering primary school.

Also known as: offre préscolaire

Pre-Primary School

An educational institution or structured learning centre that provides foundational care, play-based learning, and school readiness activities for young children prior to their entry into primary education.

Also known as: pre-primary schools, pre-school, preprimary school, preschool, preschools

Pre-Primary Sector

The collective system of formal and informal institutions, policies, and community-based services that deliver early childhood care and foundational education to children prior to entering primary school.

Pre-Reading Comprehension

An emergent literacy ability where young children understand, interpret, and derive meaning from spoken language, oral storytelling, or visual illustrations before they acquire formal reading proficiency.

Pre-Reading Skills

Foundational emergent literacy abilities, including print awareness, phonological sensitivity, and oral vocabulary, that prepare young children to learn formal reading and text decoding.

Also known as: pre-reading

Pre-Service Teacher Training (PRESET)

Formal educational coursework and practical pedagogical preparation completed by aspiring educators at training institutions before they begin professional teaching in classrooms.

Also known as: pre-service course, pre-service programmes, pre-service training

Preparatory Year

A targeted stage of pre-primary education designed for young children immediately prior to primary school entry to facilitate foundational learning and ensure a smooth developmental transition to formal schooling.

Also known as: année préparatoire

Preschool Age

The developmental stage in early childhood, typically between the ages of three and six, preceding primary school entry and characterized by rapid physical, cognitive, linguistic, and socio-emotional growth.

Also known as: pre-primary school-age

Preschool Children

Young children, typically between the ages of three and six, who are in the crucial developmental stage prior to entering formal primary education.

Preschool Intervention

A targeted programmatic initiative designed to support early childhood development, foundational learning, and school readiness for children prior to entering primary education.

Preschool Teachers

Educators trained to facilitate early learning, cognitive development, socialization, and school readiness for young children enrolled in pre-primary education settings.

Primary Education

The first stage of formal, compulsory schooling that follows early childhood education, aimed at establishing fundamental competencies in reading, writing, mathematics, and basic subject knowledge.

Also known as: cycle primaire, primary school

Problem-Solving Skills

Cognitive and practical abilities that enable children to identify challenges, think critically, evaluate alternatives, and devise effective solutions through exploration, experimentation, and collaborative play.

Also known as: problem-solving

Process Quality

The nature of the interpersonal interactions, instructional practices, and daily educational activities that children directly experience with educators, caregivers, and peers within an early learning environment.

Professional Capacity

The collective pedagogical knowledge, technical skills, competencies, and practical resources that enable educators and practitioners to deliver high-quality instruction and improve learning outcomes.

Professional Standards

Formal competency frameworks and benchmarks that define the required knowledge, pedagogical skills, and ethical practices educators must demonstrate to ensure instructional quality and professional accountability across educational systems.

Professionalisation of the Early Childhood Development Sector

The systemic process of establishing formal qualification standards, accredited training, and regulatory frameworks to elevate the quality, competence, and recognition of early childhood educators and caregivers.

Also known as: professionalisation of the ECD sector

Programme de Renforcement des Équipes de Gestion Régionale des Ressources d'Apprentissage (PREGRRRA)

An institutional capacity-building and assessment initiative aimed at strengthening regional education teams to effectively manage, evaluate, and improve learning materials and curriculum implementation.

Also known as: PREGRRRA

Project-Based Learning (PBL)

A learner-centred pedagogical approach where students acquire knowledge and foundational skills by actively engaging in real-world investigations, collaborative problem-solving, and practical contextual projects.

Also known as: project-based learning

Protective Factors

Environmental, institutional, or relational conditions—such as supportive relationships, safe school climates, and active learner participation—that mitigate risk and foster resilience in children.

Protective School Cultures

School environments and institutional practices established collaboratively by educators, leaders, and communities that actively safeguard children's physical safety, emotional well-being, and rights, ensuring a secure and supportive learning atmosphere.

Proximity of Care

The physical accessibility and geographic closeness of essential caregiving infrastructures, such as early childhood centres, healthcare services, and safe play areas, to young children and their families.

Psychomotor Skills

Capabilities involving the coordinated integration of cognitive processes and physical movement, encompassing both gross and fine motor abilities essential for early physical development, play, and practical daily tasks.

Psychosocial Development

The progressive growth of a child's emotional wellbeing, identity, social skills, and capacity to form healthy interpersonal relationships within their family and broader community.

Psychosocial Skills

Interpersonal and emotional competencies that enable children to understand and manage emotions, build positive relationships, communicate effectively, resolve conflicts, and adapt constructively to their social and learning environments.

Psychosocial Support (PSS)

Interventions and continuous care designed to address emotional, psychological, and social well-being, helping vulnerable children and caregivers build resilience and cope with stress or trauma.

Also known as: psychological support, psychosocial support

Psychosocial Well-Being

A dynamic state of emotional and social health that enables individuals to cope with stress, form positive relationships, build resilience, and participate effectively in learning and community life.

Also known as: psychosocial wellbeing

Q

Quality Assurance (QA)

A systematic process of monitoring, assessing, and regulating early learning centres and programmes against established standards to guarantee consistent educational excellence and child wellbeing.

Also known as: quality assurance, quality assurance systems

Quality Early Childhood Development Outcomes

Holistic benchmarks of child well-being and growth, encompassing cognitive, linguistic, physical, and socio-emotional milestones achieved through high-standard care, responsive caregiving, and effective early education.

Also known as: quality ECD outcomes

Quality Early Learning

Age-appropriate educational provision for young children that integrates play-based pedagogy, nurturing care, and foundational skill development to foster holistic cognitive, social, and emotional growth during critical developmental years.

Quality Education

An inclusive and equitable learning process that provides safe environments, relevant curricula, and qualified teaching to ensure all children acquire foundational skills and reach their developmental potential.

Quality Standards

Established benchmarks and criteria that define the minimum requirements for learning environments, instructional materials, educator competencies, and institutional practices to ensure effective early childhood development and education delivery.

Also known as: quality benchmarks

R

REAL Parents Project

An evidence-based parenting intervention model designed to foster loving, engaged parent-child relationships while expanding access to essential health, development, and reproductive information and support services.

Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT)

An experimental research design that randomly assigns participants to an intervention or control group to measure the precise causal impact of an educational or developmental programme.

Also known as: randomized control trial, RCT

Reading Age

A developmental measure of a child's literacy competence expressed as the chronological age at which an average learner achieves that same level of reading ability.

Reading Clubs

Extracurricular or community-based learning groups where children gather to read, share stories, and engage in interactive literacy activities designed to foster comprehension and an enduring love of books.

Reading Comprehension

The ability of learners to actively process, interpret, and extract meaning from written text by integrating foundational decoding, vocabulary, and critical thinking skills.

Also known as: comprehension

Reading Corners

Designated, comfortable spaces within classrooms or community settings equipped with diverse, age-appropriate books and literacy materials to encourage independent reading and a love for literature.

Reading Development

The progressive, cumulative process through which a learner acquires emergent literacy, letter-sound recognition, decoding, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension skills necessary to interpret and engage with written text.

Reading Fluency

The ability to read text accurately, smoothly, and with appropriate speed and expression, allowing learners to focus on understanding the meaning of what they read.

Reading Habits

Regular, self-motivated behaviors and routines regarding how frequently, consistently, and willingly an individual engages with written texts for learning, personal enjoyment, and information.

Reading Level

An assessment metric or benchmark that indicates a learner's current literacy proficiency, decoding capability, and text comprehension relative to curriculum standards or age-appropriate developmental expectations.

Reading Materials

Age-appropriate print and digital texts, such as storybooks and decodable readers, used by children and educators to facilitate foundational literacy and language acquisition.

Reading Skills

Foundational abilities that enable learners to decode text, recognize words, comprehend written meaning, and develop fluency to engage effectively with books and other print materials.

Reading Support

Targeted instruction, remedial assistance, or guided practice provided to learners to help them overcome literacy difficulties, build reading fluency, and foster reading confidence.

Referral Pathways

Established protocols and communication channels used by educators and caregivers to connect children in need of specialized health, developmental, or protective services to appropriate external support systems.

Also known as: referral protocols, reporting and referral systems

Reflective Practice

A continuous professional process in which educators critically analyze their instructional decisions, beliefs, and classroom experiences to adapt their teaching methods and improve learning outcomes for young children.

Reflective Supervision

A collaborative, supportive mentoring approach in which practitioners regularly examine their professional experiences, classroom practices, and emotional responses with a supervisor to strengthen performance and continuous learning.

Rehabilitation Assistants

Paraprofessional healthcare and developmental workers trained to screen young children for early developmental red flags, provide essential therapeutic interventions, and guide families to appropriate support services.

Rehabilitation Services

Specialized interventions and therapies designed to improve, maintain, or restore physical, cognitive, and functional capabilities for children with disabilities, facilitating their independence, development, and transition into educational settings.

Remedial Education

Targeted instructional support and catch-up programs designed to assist learners experiencing academic gaps or developmental lags in mastering essential foundational literacy and numeracy competencies.

Also known as: remedial services

Responsive Care Training

Capacity-building programs designed to help parents and caregivers recognize, interpret, and respond promptly and supportively to young children's developmental, emotional, and physical needs to foster secure attachments and healthy development.

Responsive Caregiver

An adult who consistently observes, accurately interprets, and sensitively reacts to a young child's communicative, physical, and emotional cues to foster secure attachment and healthy development.

Responsive Caregiving

The practice of attentively observing, interpreting, and promptly responding to a young child's emotional, social, and developmental cues through warm, positive, and stimulating interactions.

Also known as: responsive and playful caregiving, responsive care, responsive care practices, responsive parenting

Right to Education (RTE)

A fundamental human entitlement guaranteeing every child equitable, inclusive, and non-discriminatory access to free, safe, and quality learning opportunities that enable personal development and active participation in society.

Also known as: right to education

Rights-Based Early Learning Systems

Pre-primary and early childhood frameworks grounded in human rights principles that prioritize equity, non-discrimination, holistic child well-being, and universal access to safe and inclusive educational environments.

Rote Learning

A traditional instructional method centered on memorization and repetitive drill rather than critical thinking, conceptual comprehension, or active, play-based engagement.

Also known as: rote instruction

S

Safe Learning Environments

Educational settings that are physically, socially, and emotionally secure, protecting children from harm and discrimination while fostering an inclusive, nurturing atmosphere conducive to active participation and foundational learning.

Also known as: safe and inclusive early learning environments, safe and inclusive environments, safe learning environment, safe learning spaces

Safe Spaces

Physically, emotionally, and socially secure environments where children and young people can learn, express themselves, play, and access protective services free from violence, exploitation, or discrimination.

Also known as: safe space

Safeguarding

The proactive measures, policies, and systemic practices designed to protect children from violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation, ensuring their overall safety, well-being, and rights within educational and community settings.

Also known as: safeguarding policies

Salone Pikin 4 Play en Lan

An outcomes-funded early childhood education program model designed to expand access to quality, play-based pre-primary learning for young children living in remote, low-income, and marginalized communities.

School Accountability Systems

Institutional policies, regulatory frameworks, and monitoring mechanisms established to evaluate performance, maintain professional standards, and ensure educational institutions and personnel fulfill their operational and pedagogical responsibilities.

School Accreditation

A formal quality assurance process that evaluates an educational institution against established national benchmarks and standards for learning environments, instructional quality, and administrative effectiveness.

Also known as: school accreditation framework

School Attendance

The regular, scheduled physical presence and ongoing participation of an enrolled student in educational activities and classroom instruction at a formal learning institution.

School Dropout

The premature withdrawal of a child from formal education before completing an academic cycle or grade, often driven by socioeconomic hardship, systemic barriers, or compounding vulnerabilities.

Also known as: dropout, dropout rates, dropping out

School Engagement

The degree of an enrolled learner's active, sustained emotional, cognitive, and behavioral involvement in academic activities, co-curricular programs, and the broader educational community.

School Enrollment

The formal administrative registration and official admission of eligible children into an educational institution, granting them legitimate access to organized instruction and school-based support services.

School Feeding Programme (SFP)

An institutional initiative that provides nutritious daily meals or snacks to children in educational centres to alleviate hunger, improve nutritional health, and boost attendance and school performance.

Also known as: school feeding, school feeding program, school feeding programme, school feeding programmes, school feeding programs, school meals

School Health and Nutrition (SHN)

Integrated school-based interventions, services, and educational strategies that address learners' physical well-being, dietary needs, disease prevention, and hygiene practices to support healthy development and effective learning.

Also known as: school health and nutrition

School Improvement Plan (SIP)

A collaborative, strategic roadmap formulated by school leaders, educators, and community stakeholders that identifies educational priorities, targets resource allocation, and outlines targeted actions to enhance institutional performance and student learning.

Also known as: school improvement plans

School Leadership

The collaborative practice and institutional authority responsible for guiding school governance, managing instructional quality, supporting teacher professional development, and cultivating safe, effective environments for foundational learning.

School Management Committee (SMC)

A community-based governance body comprising parents, teachers, and local leaders responsible for overseeing school operations, implementing improvement plans, and fostering institutional accountability and sustainability.

Also known as: school management committees

School Management System (SMS)

An organized institutional or digital framework designed to manage school operations, administrative processes, resource allocation, and decision-making to support effective educational leadership and delivery.

Also known as: school management systems

School Performance

The measurable academic achievement, learning progress, and developmental outcomes of students within primary and foundational education grades.

School Quality

The overall effectiveness of an educational environment, encompassing teacher competence, safety, physical infrastructure, governance, and institutional capacity to foster foundational learning and holistic child development.

School Readiness

The stage of cognitive, social, emotional, and physical maturity that equips a young child to transition smoothly into formal primary schooling and participate effectively in learning environments.

Also known as: academic readiness, primary school readiness, readiness, readiness for learning, readiness to learn, ready to learn, school-ready

School Readiness Indicators

Measurable benchmarks used to evaluate a young child's cognitive, physical, emotional, and social competencies to determine their preparedness for entering formal primary education.

Also known as: school-readiness indicators

School Readiness Outcomes

Measurable indicators of a young child's cognitive, social-emotional, physical, and linguistic preparedness to successfully transition into and engage with formal primary education.

School Readiness Skills

The foundational cognitive, social-emotional, physical, and early literacy and numeracy competencies that prepare young children to successfully transition into and participate in formal primary education.

School-Based Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Services

Specialized communication supports, strategies, and assistive technologies delivered directly within educational settings to help young children with severe speech or language impairments communicate and participate in learning.

Also known as: school-based AAC services

School-Based Management Committees (SBMC)

Collaborative governance bodies composed of community members, parents, and educators that oversee school administration, promote safe and inclusive learning environments, and strengthen community support for education.

Also known as: school-based management committees

School-Based Mentoring

A professional development approach providing continuous, on-site instructional coaching, feedback, and peer guidance to teachers within their own educational settings to improve pedagogical quality and learning outcomes.

School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV)

Acts or threats of sexual, physical, or psychological violence occurring in and around educational settings, driven by unequal gender norms and power dynamics that undermine learners' safety, well-being, and educational access.

Also known as: school-related gender-based violence, SRGBV

Science of Early Childhood Development (SECD) Facilitator

A trained specialist who delivers evidence-based educational content and guidance on early child development research to practitioners, caregivers, and stakeholders working across the early childhood sector.

Also known as: SECD facilitator

Science of Reading

An evidence-based body of interdisciplinary research that explains how individuals learn to read and informs structured instructional practices to build foundational literacy skills.

Screening Tools

Standardized instruments, checklists, or assessment questionnaires used to systematically evaluate children's developmental progress and detect potential delays, disabilities, or learning difficulties.

Screening and Identification

The systematic process of assessing young children to detect developmental delays, disabilities, or special learning needs early, facilitating timely referrals and targeted intervention services.

Secondary Education

The intermediate level of formal schooling following primary school, designed to equip adolescent learners with advanced academic, technical, and life skills essential for higher education or the workforce.

Secure Attachment Figures

Consistent and emotionally responsive caregivers who provide young children with safety, emotional stability, and reassurance, fostering trust, positive socio-emotional development, and confident exploration of their environment.

Segregated Practices

Educational methods and arrangements that isolate or separate learners with disabilities or specific learning needs from mainstream classrooms, contrasting with inclusive pedagogies that integrate all children.

Self-Directed Learning

An educational approach in which children take initiative, make choices, and guide their own exploration and discovery through hands-on activities, fostering autonomy, curiosity, and intrinsic motivation.

Self-Regulation

The psychological capacity to monitor, manage, and adapt one's thoughts, emotional reactions, and behaviors to navigate challenges, maintain attention, and interact constructively with others.

Sensory Integration

The neurological process by which the brain receives, organizes, and responds to sensory information from the body and the environment, supporting functional development and purposeful learning activities in early childhood.

Sensory Stimulation

The provision of diverse sensory experiences through sight, sound, touch, and movement within learning environments to actively engage a young child's senses and support overall brain development.

Sequencing Stories

An early literacy skill and activity where learners identify and arrange narrative events or illustrations in logical, chronological order, strengthening comprehension, storytelling ability, and critical thinking.

Serious Gaming

The use of digital or interactive games intentionally designed for educational purposes, curriculum delivery, and skill development rather than purely for entertainment.

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)

The comprehensive framework encompassing physical, emotional, and social well-being related to human sexuality and reproduction, including access to healthcare services, accurate information, and the freedom to make informed personal choices.

Also known as: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, SRHR

Shared Reading

An interactive literacy activity where an adult and child, or peers, read and discuss a book together to stimulate brain development, vocabulary acquisition, and a love for reading.

Sign Language

A visual-gestural system of communication used primarily by deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals, essential for promoting inclusive education, foundational language acquisition, and equitable participation in learning environments.

Sign Language Interpreting Training

Structured educational instruction that equips individuals with the linguistic fluency, practical skills, and professional ethics needed to facilitate effective, accurate communication between spoken and sign languages.

Sign Language Promotion

Advocacy, policy, and educational efforts aimed at increasing awareness, wider institutional adoption, teaching, and formal recognition of sign language to ensure accessible communication for deaf and hard-of-hearing learners.

Sign Language Training

Structured instructional programs designed to teach visual-gestural communication skills to learners, educators, and community members to facilitate inclusive education and effective communication with deaf individuals.

Skills Development

The provision of practical training and capacity-building opportunities designed to enhance individuals' capabilities, improve livelihood prospects, and facilitate access to income-generating activities.

Small-Group Work

An instructional strategy where learners are divided into smaller clusters to collaborate, engage in targeted activities, and receive focused teacher interaction, particularly useful for managing large classrooms.

Smart Start

An integrated early childhood development model aimed at improving the survival, growth, and holistic developmental outcomes of young children through coordinated health, nutrition, and early stimulation services.

Smart Tablet for Early Learning Assessment (STELA)

A digital, tablet-based tool designed to conduct continuous assessments of young children's holistic developmental progress and foundational learning outcomes in early education environments.

Also known as: Smart Tablet for Early Learning Assessment, STELA

Social Cohesion

The strength of relationships, mutual trust, and sense of solidarity among diverse groups within a community, often fostered through shared learning and inclusive play experiences.

Social Development

The progressive process through which children learn to interact with others, form secure relationships, regulate behaviors, collaborate, and adapt to social and cultural norms within their communities.

Social Inclusion

The process of ensuring that marginalized, vulnerable, or excluded groups have equitable access to essential services, resources, and opportunities, enabling them to participate fully and meaningfully in society.

Social Protection

Public and community-based policies and initiatives designed to shield vulnerable households and children from poverty, social exclusion, and economic shocks to support holistic development and wellbeing.

Social Protection Systems

Integrated public policies, welfare programs, and social safety nets designed to shield vulnerable households and children from poverty, economic shocks, and structural marginalization.

Also known as: social protection system

Social Skills

Learned behavioral capacities that enable children to interact positively with peers and adults, communicate effectively, collaborate, and navigate interpersonal relationships in early learning environments and everyday life.

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

The educational process through which children acquire essential competencies to recognize and manage emotions, practice empathy, establish positive relationships, self-regulate, and make constructive decisions.

Also known as: emotional and social learning, SEL, social-emotional, social-emotional learning, socio-emotional learning

Social-Emotional Competencies

The foundational abilities and behavioral skills that enable children to understand and manage emotions, build healthy relationships, show empathy, and make responsible decisions within learning environments.

Social-Emotional Development

The gradual process through which young children learn to recognize and manage their emotions, form positive interpersonal relationships, develop empathy, and build self-confidence and behavioral regulation necessary for thriving in society.

Also known as: social and emotional development, socio-emotional development

Social-Emotional Knowledge

A child's understanding of emotions, social rules, and interpersonal dynamics necessary to navigate peer interactions, self-regulate, and participate effectively in early learning and school environments.

Also known as: socioemotional knowledge

Social-Emotional Milestones

Key developmental benchmarks that mark a child's expanding capacity to regulate emotions, build secure relationships, collaborate with peers, and navigate social environments effectively.

Also known as: social and emotional learning milestones

Social-Emotional Needs

A child's essential requirements for psychological security, emotional expression, positive relationships, and a sense of belonging that support overall well-being and learning readiness.

Also known as: social and emotional needs

Social-Emotional Skills

The interrelated competencies needed to understand and manage emotions, establish positive relationships, demonstrate empathy, make responsible decisions, and regulate behavior to support holistic development and school readiness.

Also known as: social and emotional skills, socio-emotional skills

Social-Emotional Support

Guidance, nurturing practices, and structured interactions designed to help children recognize and regulate emotions, build positive relationships, develop empathy, and navigate social environments.

Sound-Based Manipulatives

Hands-on learning tools and play materials designed to produce auditory feedback, supporting young learners' sensory development, phonological awareness, and interactive exploration through sound.

Sounding Letters

The foundational literacy practice of pronouncing the individual phonetic sounds associated with specific written letters to bridge letter recognition and early word decoding.

South-South Learning

The reciprocal exchange of technical knowledge, successful practices, and policy solutions among low- and middle-income countries to address shared developmental and educational challenges collaboratively.

Spatial Agency

The capacity of individuals, particularly young children, to actively navigate, influence, transform, and engage with the physical and built spaces in which they live and learn.

Special Education Strategies

Specialized instructional techniques, classroom accommodations, and individualized interventions designed to meet the unique learning and developmental needs of children with disabilities or specific learning difficulties.

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Individual learning, cognitive, physical, sensory, or emotional requirements that require specialized instructional strategies, adapted resources, or additional support services beyond standard educational provisions to enable full learning participation.

Also known as: SEN, special educational needs, special needs

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Physical, sensory, cognitive, or learning challenges that require specialized accommodations, tailored instruction, and adaptive resources to ensure equitable access to early childhood care and education.

Also known as: SEND

Specific Learning Needs

Distinct cognitive, developmental, or instructional requirements that necessitate tailored pedagogical approaches, adapted curricula, or individualized pacing to help a child progress academically and functionally.

Speech and Language Therapy (SLT)

A specialized clinical and educational intervention that diagnoses and treats communication, language comprehension, expressive speech, and oral motor difficulties in young children.

Also known as: speech and language therapy, speech therapy

Sport-Based Learning

An active pedagogical approach that integrates physical activities, movement, and structured games into educational programming to promote foundational cognitive skills, inclusion, and positive social development.

Stage-Based Curriculum

An educational framework structured around developmental levels and mastery of specific milestones rather than rigid chronological age or standardized academic grades, accommodating diverse learner capabilities.

Standard One

The first formal grade of primary school education, marking the critical transition point where children apply foundational early childhood skills to formal academic learning.

Standardized Screening Tools

Systematic, validated assessment instruments used to identify developmental delays or track progress in children across motor, cognitive, language, and socio-emotional developmental domains.

Standards-Based Curriculum

An instructional framework organized around clear, explicitly defined learning outcomes and developmental benchmarks that specify what young learners are expected to know and demonstrate at each level.

Stimulating Learning Environments

Physical and social settings intentionally designed with engaging, age-appropriate play and educational materials that foster curiosity, exploration, creativity, and active cognitive development in young children.

Also known as: stimulating environments, stimulating learning environment

Stimulation

Engaging, age-appropriate sensory, cognitive, and communicative interactions provided to young children by caregivers and educators to actively foster healthy brain development and foundational learning.

Storytelling

An instructional and cultural practice that uses spoken or written narratives to stimulate imagination, foster language and literacy skills, and introduce themes of identity, empathy, and diversity.

Strengths-Based Approach

An educational strategy that focuses on identifying, valuing, and building upon learners' inherent abilities and existing competencies rather than concentrating solely on deficits or developmental challenges.

Also known as: strength-based approach

Structural Quality

Tangible, input-level aspects of an early childhood learning environment, including physical infrastructure, teacher-child ratios, classroom safety, material resources, and educator qualifications.

Structured Curriculum

A systematic, step-by-step instructional framework providing clear lesson plans, learning objectives, and pedagogical guidance to help educators deliver organized, consistent, and developmentally appropriate learning experiences.

Structured Early Learning

Organized, developmentally appropriate educational programs that utilize planned routines, intentional play-based pedagogy, and purposeful instruction to foster holistic development and foundational competencies in young children.

Structured Learning Resources

Systematically organized educational materials, guides, and learning aids designed to support instructional delivery and scaffold progressive skill development in foundational literacy and numeracy.

Structured Lesson Delivery

A systematic instructional approach where teachers follow clear, sequential pedagogical routines and lesson plans to engage students effectively, introduce content systematically, and monitor understanding in real time.

Also known as: student-centered lesson delivery

Structured Lesson Planning

The systematic design of step-by-step teaching plans that organize learning objectives, instructional activities, timing, and assessment strategies to ensure coherent curriculum delivery in the classroom.

Structured Lesson Tools

Instructional materials, such as scripted guides and activity plans, designed to provide educators with explicit, step-by-step support for delivering targeted foundational learning activities.

Structured Literacy

An evidence-based, explicit, and systematic approach to reading instruction grounded in the science of reading, focusing sequentially on phonological awareness, decoding, phonics, and language comprehension.

Structured Literacy Instruction

An explicit, systematic, and sequential approach to teaching foundational reading and language skills, including phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension, often adapted to early childhood learning contexts.

Structured Literacy Programmes

Coordinated educational interventions that deliver systematic, evidence-based reading instruction and engaging practice activities to develop foundational reading skills and foster positive reading habits.

Structured Pedagogy

A coherent instructional approach that combines aligned curriculum materials, detailed lesson plans or teacher guides, continuous teacher training, and monitoring to systematically improve foundational classroom teaching and learning.

Structured Phonics Instruction

A systematic, explicit method of teaching reading that guides learners through the relationship between letters and sounds to develop foundational decoding, blending, and literacy skills.

Structured Play

Purposeful, educator- or caregiver-guided play activities organized around specific developmental objectives and rules, designed to foster cognitive, social, creative, and foundational motor skills in young children.

Structured Play-Based Learning

An intentional educational approach combining guided play with specific developmental learning objectives, allowing young children to explore and acquire foundational skills in an engaging, supportive environment.

Structured Professional Development

An organized, ongoing system of formal training, coaching, and capacity-building designed to continuously strengthen educators' pedagogical knowledge, instructional techniques, and classroom management skills after initial qualification.

Structured Reading Activities

Guided, sequenced instructional exercises and literacy tasks designed to systematically build children's reading comprehension, fluency, and foundational literacy skills through active engagement with texts.

Struggling Readers

Learners who encounter persistent difficulties in acquiring foundational literacy skills, such as decoding, fluency, or comprehension, and require differentiated instructional support to reach grade-level reading proficiency.

Student Workbooks

Curriculum-aligned consumable learning materials containing targeted exercises, activities, and practice tasks designed for children to complete independently or with guidance to reinforce foundational concepts.

Student-to-Teacher Ratio (STR)

The quantitative proportion of enrolled learners to instructional staff in an educational setting, serving as a key indicator of classroom resource allocation, individual attention, and learning environment quality.

Also known as: student-to-teacher ratios, teacher-to-child ratios

Stunting

A form of chronic undernutrition characterized by low height-for-age, resulting from prolonged nutritional deficiency, recurrent infections, or lack of psychosocial stimulation, which severely impedes physical and cognitive development.

Support Visits

Periodic on-site monitoring and mentoring sessions conducted by trainers or instructional leaders to observe classroom practices, provide actionable feedback, and reinforce newly acquired teaching skills.

Supportive Supervision

A collaborative and continuous mentoring approach in which education officials or supervisors offer constructive feedback, hands-on guidance, and problem-solving assistance to educators in their classrooms.

Also known as: support supervision

Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4)

A global development target established by the United Nations aimed at ensuring inclusive, equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all, including universal access to quality early childhood care and pre-primary education.

Also known as: SDG 4, Sustainable Development Goal 4

Synthetic Phonics

A structured method of literacy instruction that teaches learners to link individual letters or letter groups to specific speech sounds and blend them sequentially to pronounce and decode written words.

Systemic Reform

Comprehensive transformation of an education sector that simultaneously aligns governance, institutional policies, curriculum, and pedagogical practices to achieve sustainable, sector-wide improvements in learning outcomes.

Also known as: réforme systémique

Systems Strengthening

The process of improving institutional capacities, policies, governance structures, and resource allocation to ensure sustainable, equitable, and quality service delivery across an education ecosystem.

T

Targeted Interventions

Specific, evidence-based instructional strategies or remediation programs implemented to address identified learning gaps and meet the unique academic needs of particular groups of learners.

Taux Brut de Préscolarisation (TBP)

The total number of children enrolled in pre-primary education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population corresponding to that level.

Also known as: taux brut de préscolarisation

Teacher Capacity Building

Systematic professional development, coaching, and training initiatives designed to strengthen educators' instructional competencies, pedagogical confidence, and classroom management techniques to enhance instructional quality and student outcomes.

Also known as: teacher capacity, teacher capacity development

Teacher Coaches

Specialized instructional mentors who provide educators with direct, ongoing professional development, pedagogical guidance, and classroom-based modeling to improve teaching practices and learning outcomes.

Teacher Coaching

An ongoing, individualized professional development process where experienced mentors provide educators with observation, instructional modeling, and constructive real-time feedback to enhance classroom pedagogical practices and foundational learning outcomes.

Teacher Competencies

The specific set of professional knowledge, pedagogical skills, and personal attributes that educators need to effectively facilitate child development and foundational learning.

Teacher Education

Formal policies, coursework, and practical training programmes designed to equip prospective and practicing educators with the professional knowledge and pedagogical skills necessary for classroom teaching.

Teacher Effectiveness

The extent to which an educator's instructional practices, pedagogical competence, and classroom management directly promote student engagement, retention, and measurable gains in foundational learning outcomes.

Teacher Guides

Instructional manuals that provide educators with structured, step-by-step lesson plans, pedagogical strategies, and curriculum-aligned guidance to streamline classroom planning and ensure effective teaching delivery.

Also known as: teaching manuals

Teacher Licensing

A formal regulatory process that certifies educators have met established professional standards, instructional competencies, and pedagogical qualifications required to teach effectively in early childhood and primary classrooms.

Teacher Modeling

An explicit instructional technique where an educator directly demonstrates a task, thought process, or learning behavior to scaffold understanding before students attempt it independently.

Teacher Preparation

The pre-service training, academic coursework, and practical field experiences designed to qualify and equip candidate educators before they assume full professional teaching responsibilities.

Teacher Professional Development (TPD)

Structured training, mentoring, and continuous learning opportunities designed to enhance educators' pedagogical knowledge, classroom instructional practices, and competencies to improve learner outcomes.

Also known as: teacher development, teacher professional development

Teacher Quality

A measure of educator effectiveness encompassing academic qualifications, subject mastery, pedagogical competence, and professional classroom practices that drive meaningful student learning and development.

Teacher Support

Continuous institutional, professional, and pedagogical assistance provided to educators through mentoring, coaching, instructional feedback, and resources to strengthen their classroom performance and well-being.

Teacher Training

Formal instructional and professional development activities that equip educators with pedagogical knowledge, practical skills, and inclusive methodologies necessary to effectively support children's learning and developmental needs.

Teacher Training Curriculum

A formal framework specifying the learning objectives, pedagogical competencies, instructional content, and assessment criteria designed to prepare or upskill educators in professional teaching practices.

Teacher Training Institutions (TTI)

Accredited higher education or specialized post-secondary colleges responsible for equipping prospective and practicing educators with pedagogical knowledge, instructional competencies, and professional certifications aligned with national standards.

Also known as: teacher training institutions

Teacher-Directed Instruction

A pedagogical model where the educator primarily controls the classroom dynamic through direct instruction and structured tasks, offering limited opportunities for learner-led exploration or decision-making.

Also known as: teacher-centered instruction

Teacher-Made Materials

Low-cost, locally sourced educational aids and learning manipulatives crafted directly by educators to supplement standard kits and make classroom instruction more contextually relevant.

Also known as: teacher made materials

Teaching Approaches

The pedagogical methods, strategies, and conceptual frameworks educators employ to deliver curriculum content, engage students, and support holistic child development.

Teaching Methodologies

The structured pedagogical principles, instructional techniques, and classroom strategies employed by educators to deliver curricula and support children's cognitive, physical, and socio-emotional development in an inclusive manner.

Also known as: teaching methods

Teaching Practice

The concrete instructional methods, classroom management strategies, and nurturing interactions that educators implement during daily classroom routines to support holistic child development and student engagement.

Also known as: teaching practices

Teaching Quality

The overall standard and effectiveness of instructional delivery, educator-child interactions, and learning environment management that directly influence children's school readiness, well-being, and academic progress.

Teaching Skills

The practical pedagogical abilities, instructional techniques, and classroom management competencies that educators apply to foster positive learning environments and deliver effective instruction.

Teaching Strategies

Purposeful instructional methods, plans, and pedagogical approaches adopted by educators to facilitate comprehension, engage learners, and achieve defined learning and developmental outcomes.

Teaching and Learning

The reciprocal educational process encompassing pedagogical instruction delivered by educators and the active acquisition of knowledge, behaviors, and foundational competencies by students.

Teaching and Learning Activities

Structured instructional tasks, guided play, and interactive exercises facilitated by educators to help children acquire, practice, and master foundational knowledge, skills, and competencies.

Also known as: activités d'enseignements et d'apprentissages

Teaching and Learning Materials (TLM)

Educational aids, tactile objects, texts, and manipulative resources utilized jointly by educators and learners to facilitate inclusive, interactive instruction and reinforce foundational concept mastery.

Also known as: teaching aids, teaching and learning materials, teaching and learning resources, teaching materials, teaching resources, TLRs

Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL)

An instructional approach that groups learners according to their actual learning levels rather than age or grade, delivering targeted, tailored instruction to rapidly build foundational literacy and numeracy skills.

Also known as: TaRL, Teaching at the Right Level

Technical Assistance (TA)

Specialized professional expertise, advisory support, and capacity-building services provided to educational institutions, governments, or practitioners to enhance the design, implementation, and quality of learning systems and programs.

Also known as: technical assistance

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

An educational pathway that equips youth and adult learners with practical, technical, and occupational skills, alongside life skills and foundational competencies, to enhance employability, self-reliance, and sustainable livelihoods.

Also known as: TVET, vocational programs, vocational skills training, vocational training

Therapeutic Interventions

Targeted support strategies and clinical practices designed to help learners overcome emotional, behavioral, developmental, or psychological difficulties and foster positive well-being.

Thinking Skills

The cognitive processes and mental strategies that enable children to process information, reason, solve problems, make decisions, and reflect critically on their learning.

Three-Tier Mentoring Model

A multi-level professional support framework that cascades coaching and instructional guidance across three distinct tiers, such as master trainers, school-based coaches, and classroom teachers, to systematically reinforce pedagogical skills.

Thrive by Five Index

A population-level assessment tool and monitoring framework designed to track early childhood developmental outcomes across multiple domains and evaluate whether preschool-aged children are on track for school readiness.

Toy Library

A community resource center or lending service that provides children, caregivers, and early childhood educators with shared access to developmentally appropriate toys, games, and learning materials to promote play-based development.

Toy-Based Pedagogy

An active educational approach that utilizes physical toys and concrete objects to stimulate cognitive development, creativity, and foundational literacy and numeracy through hands-on play.

Also known as: toy-based learning

Traditional Number Games

Culturally rooted or indigenous play-based activities and counting games that leverage local traditions to foster foundational numeracy, logical reasoning, and social-emotional skills in young children.

Training of Trainers (ToT)

A cascading capacity-building model where experienced specialists equip a cadre of local educators or community facilitators with the skills and knowledge necessary to train and mentor others sustainably.

Also known as: ToT, train-the-trainer model, training of trainers, training-of-trainers

Transition Management

The coordinated planning, policy guidelines, and support processes designed to ensure young children experience smooth, continuous, and developmentally appropriate progression between early childhood care centers and formal primary schooling.

Transition Mechanisms

Structured institutional processes, curricular alignments, and collaborative practices established between early childhood centers and primary schools to support continuous learning, readiness, and successful student adjustment.

Transition to Primary Education

The developmental and institutional process of young children advancing from home or early childhood learning settings into formal primary schooling, supported by readiness preparation and curriculum continuity.

Also known as: transition from pre-primary to primary education, transition into primary school, transitions into formal schooling

Transitional Learning Centres (TLCs)

Temporary, safe educational spaces established in crisis-affected, displaced, or marginalized communities to restore routine and ensure continuous access to foundational education and psychosocial support.

Also known as: transitional learning centres

Trauma-Informed Approaches

Educational and care practices that recognize the developmental impacts of adverse experiences, prioritizing emotional safety, responsive relationships, and psychosocial support to foster resilience and healthy learning.

Also known as: trauma-aware, trauma-informed care, trauma-responsive, trauma-sensitive approaches

Tuition-Free Education

An educational provision policy or initiative that eliminates direct enrollment and instructional fees, enabling all children, particularly those from marginalized or vulnerable backgrounds, to access foundational schooling without financial barriers.

Also known as: tuition-free schooling

Tuseme Clubs

School-based empowerment groups that provide safe spaces for girls to voice concerns, build self-confidence, develop leadership capabilities, and address social barriers impeding their educational progress.

U

Ubuntu Pedagogy

An African philosophical approach to teaching and learning rooted in interconnectedness, communal values, and mutual respect, which fosters inclusive, relational, and culturally responsive early learning environments.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

An instructional framework that provides flexible approaches to curriculum design, offering diverse means of engagement, representation, and expression to meet the needs of all learners.

Also known as: UDL, Universal Design for Learning

Unstructured Play

Child-directed, open-ended play that lacks adult-imposed rules or prescribed outcomes, allowing young learners to freely explore their environment, exercise autonomy, and cultivate creativity and problem-solving skills.

V

Violence Against Children (VAC)

All forms of physical, sexual, and emotional ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or exploitation directed at individuals under eighteen years of age, which harm their health, survival, development, or dignity.

Also known as: violence against children

Visual Teaching Aids

Instructional resources such as charts, posters, flashcards, diagrams, and realia that use visual stimuli to reinforce foundational concepts, stimulate language development, and enhance comprehension in early childhood classrooms.

Visual-Motor Integration (VMI)

The ability to coordinate visual perception with fine motor movements, enabling children to translate visual information into physical actions such as drawing, writing, and manipulating objects.

Also known as: visual motor integration

Vocabulary Development

The ongoing process by which children acquire, comprehend, and actively use a growing repository of words, forming a foundational component of oral language proficiency and reading comprehension.

Also known as: vocabulary

Vulnerable Children

Young people at heightened risk of social, educational, or physical harm due to conditions such as extreme poverty, chronic illness, orphanhood, exploitation, or systemic marginalisation.

W**Washington Group Child Functioning Module (CFM)**

A standardised screening questionnaire designed to identify children experiencing functional difficulties across multiple developmental domains, including vision, hearing, mobility, communication, learning, and social interaction.

Also known as: Washington Group Child Functioning Module

Wasting

A severe form of acute malnutrition characterized by a rapid, dangerous loss of weight relative to height, typically resulting from acute food shortages or recurrent illness.

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)

A foundational cluster of public health provisions that ensures access to safe drinking water, adequate latrines, and handwashing practices to protect child health, nutrition, and early learning attendance.

Also known as: WASH, WASH practices

Welcome Sesame

A targeted early childhood initiative designed to deliver playful learning, educational media, and essential social support services to vulnerable young children and caregivers in crisis-affected, displaced, or marginalized communities.

Well-Being

The holistic state of a child's physical, social, emotional, and psychological health, which provides the essential foundation for safety, resilience, and successful learning engagement.

Also known as: wellbeing outcomes

Whole Child Approach

An educational philosophy that nurtures all dimensions of a learner's development—including physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and creative growth—ensuring children are healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged.

Also known as: whole child

Workforce Development

The systematic enhancement of professional capacity, skills, and institutional competencies among frontline education and care personnel through structured training, mentorship, and continuous learning systems to improve service quality.

Z

Zambian Sign Language (ZSL)

A visual-gestural language utilized by deaf and hard-of-hearing learners and their communities to facilitate daily communication, language acquisition, and inclusive foundational learning.

Also known as: Zambian Sign Language