



NATION BUILDING FROM THE START

A POCKET GUIDE ON
EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Rwanda, June 2019





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PREFACE

Early Childhood Development (ECD) refers to a comprehensive approach to policies and programs for children from 0 to 6 years of age, their parents and caregivers. Lifetime behavior patterns are formed during this period when brain development is most active. As such, what happens or does not happen during these early years of a child's life, influences their growth and development outcomes as well as opportunities in adulthood. As children acquire the ability to speak, learn and reason in early years, cornerstones are laid and later affect their orientation to development and thriving in life. Investment in the early years of a child is therefore critical for both survival, growth and development of the child, community and a national due to the predictable gains and productivity in adulthood.

Considering the importance of ECD, the Government of Rwanda revised a comprehensive ECD Policy (2016) and other child development related policies, offering government orientation on interventions to support children's full physical, cognitive, language, social, emotional and psychological development. The policy is aligned with renewed government commitments under the National Strategy for Transformation (2017-2023) and the revised Vision 2020 targets.

In 2017, the Government of Rwanda commissioned the National ECD Program (NECDP) with the overall goal of reducing stunting through ECD. NECDP is also mandated to coordinate all programs related to ECD and nutrition to attain the desired child development outcomes on the premise that program integration is critical for holistic child survival, growth and development. A child needs to timely receive comprehensive quality early stimulation and learning, health, nutrition, WASH and protection services to grow and develop to full potential. NECDP envisage to increase children's (0-6 years) access to ECD services from the current 13% to 45% by 2024. Similarly, it intends to reduce stunting from 38% to 19% during the same period.

It is on this background that NECDP, with support from UNICEF, has developed this Pocket Guide of ECD Services to inform and guide policy makers, NGO's, districts officials, communities, parents and all development partners on why and how to provide integrated ECD services for holistic child development. Specifically, parents and other service providers will learn and know the available ECD services for optimal growth and development of Rwandan children. It is my wish that this pocket guide will be fully utilised by all stakeholders for the attainment of human development goals for the Government of Rwanda.

Dr Anita Asimwe

Coordinator, National ECD Programme



UNDERSTANDING
EARLY CHILDHOOD
DEVELOPMENT
in RWANDA



YOUNG CHILDREN IN RWANDA

EARLY LEARNING

- ✓ 13% of children aged 36 to 59 months attend organized early childhood education programme
- ✓ 49% of children are engaged with an adult household member in four or more activities that promote learning and school readiness
- ✓ Only 1% of children under age 5 have three or more children's books or books with pictures
- ✓ 35% of children under age 5 receive inadequate care
- ✓ 30% of children under age 5 play with 2 or more types of playthings
- ✓ 63% of children aged 36 to 59 months are developmentally on track
- ✓ 21% net early childhood education enrolment rate

NUTRITION

- ✓ 35% of children are stunted
- ✓ 87% of children under 6 months are exclusively breastfed
- ✓ 18% of children aged 6 to 23 months are fed in accordance with the recommended infant and young children feeding practices
- ✓ 74% of children aged 6 to 23 months consume food rich in vitamin A
- ✓ 64% of children aged 6 to 9 months receive complementary foods

WATER, SANITATION & HYGIENE

- ✓ 87% of households use an improved source of drinking water
- ✓ 15% of households in rural areas use drinking water from an unimproved source compared to 4% in urban areas
- ✓ 61% of households are able to reach water from an improved source below 14 minutes one-way trip;
- ✓ 86% of households have an improved sanitation facility and 66% of households have an improved sanitation facility which is not shared
- ✓ 12% of households have a place for hand washing and only 4% of households have water and soap.

HEALTH

- ✓ 13% of newborns have low birth weight (less than 2.5Kgs)
- ✓ 93% of children aged 12 to 23 months receive all basic vaccines
- ✓ 72% of children aged 5 to 14 years are covered by health insurance (for Rwandan population in general this is 74%)
- ✓ 50 children per 1,000 live births die before they reach 5 years of age
- ✓ 99% of women with a live birth receive at least one antenatal care from a skilled health provider
- ✓ 44% of women meet the recommended four to five antenatal care visits during pregnancy
- ✓ 92% delivery of live births happened at a health facility
- ✓ 68% of children under 5 sleep under insecticide-treated mosquito nets
- ✓ Only 0.4% of children under 2 years are HIV positive

SOCIAL PROTECTION

- ✓ 56% of children under the age of 5 are registered, but only 3% of children under the age of 5 have birth certificates
- ✓ 38% of children living in poverty (monetary poverty)
- ✓ 16% of children live in extreme poverty
- ✓ 89% of households benefit from direct support and public works have children



What is early childhood development?

ECD refers to the knowledge, abilities and important milestones that every child is expected to reach by the age of eight

One of the most effective ways to ensure that every child has a good start in life is through high-quality early childhood care especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children

The brain develops quickly in the first three years of life and the structure of the brain is shaped by the interaction between the child's genes and her/his experiences (stimulation, play, language, safety).

Early childhood is seen as the most opportune phase in human development for investment in human capital with significant returns on this investment in later years in life. It is also widely scientifically recognised that such investment is not in one singular intervention, but in a comprehensive package of quality interventions that integrates into the young child's prospects for survival, protection and development.

ECD is critical to a child's cognitive, social, emotional and physical development. Events in the first few years of life—and even before birth—play a vital role in shaping health, education, social and economic outcomes for the duration of the child's life. They also establish a foundation for building human capital, since healthy and socially adjusted children are more likely to grow into adults who are socially and economically productive. Evidence shows that it is almost impossible to compensate for the effects of denial of adequate nutrition, access to health care, early learning and education and psychosocial stimulation.

ECD programmes encompass a range of approaches for health, nutrition, care, development and early learning, including parenting support programmes, community-based childcare, centre-based programme provision and formal pre-primary education, often in schools. Investment in ECD yields high economic returns and offsets disadvantage and inequality, especially for children from poor families.



THE RWANDA WE WANT & ECD

Investment in ECD supports the development of our country, Africa and the world



NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR TRANSFORMATION
(2017-2023)

RWANDA

- Invest in ECD
- Human capital development
- Development of country



AFRICA

- Invest in ECD
- Human capital development
- Build a prosperous and united Africa based on shared values and a common destiny



THE WORLD

- Invest in ECD
- Goal 4, 1, 3, 6, 10
- Achieve all SDGs
- Better and more sustainable future for all



Rwanda's policies & young children

This pocket is guided by some of the key national policies, strategies and laws referenced in the development of this pocket guide:

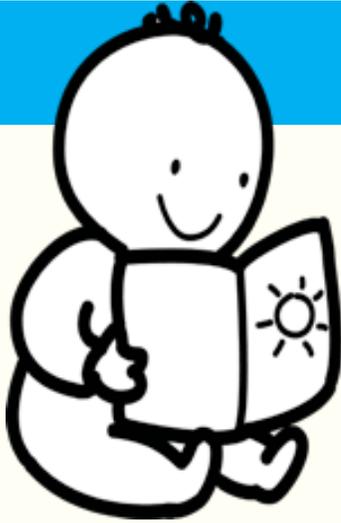


The Government of Rwanda has many policies and laws that apply to all its citizens, whether they are adults or children. There are many policies that apply to babies and young children from birth to six years. These policies and laws help to make sure that babies and young children are protected, healthy, have learning opportunities, receive good nutrition, have their births registered and are cared for by their parents and families. Below is a list of policies and laws that are important for young children.

- ☑ **Holistic child development:** The National ECD Policy 2016; The NECDP Strategy 2018-2023 and the National Strategy for Transformation 2018-2024; and National ECD Minimum Standards 2018.
- ☑ **Child rights:** The Rwandan Constitution and the Integrated Child Rights Policy.
- ☑ **Child health:** Health Sector Policy 2015; National Community Health Policy 2015 National Health Promotion Policy; and the Fourth Health Sector Strategic Plan–HSSPIV (2018-2024).
- ☑ **Child nutrition:** Food and Nutrition Policy (2013-2018); Emergency Plan to Eliminate Malnutrition (EPEM); Comprehensive Implementation Plan on Maternal, Infant and Young Child Nutrition (2012, which spells out six global indicators to be achieved by the year 2025); and Rwanda Vision 2050.
- ☑ **Child protection:** Child Protection Policy; Violence Against Children and Youth Survey 2018; Legal and Policy Framework for Children's Rights in Rwanda and the Justice for Children Policy; and Law n° 42/1988 of 27/10/1988, Civil Code First Book – Concerning People and Family (Article 117) which obliges parents or foster care parents to register a child within first 15 days from birth.
- ☑ **Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH):** National Sanitation Policy 2016; National Sanitation Implementation Strategy; and National Policy on Injection Safety, Prevention of Transmission of Nosocomial Infections and Health-Care Waste Management (2009).
- ☑ **Gender:** National Policy Against Gender Based Violence 2011; Girls Education Policy 2008 ; and the Sector Gender Mainstreaming Strategy and National Gender Policy 2010.
- ☑ **Inclusion:** Disability Mainstreaming Guidelines (2014); OVC strategic plan (MIGEPFOP); and Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children
- ☑ **Family values:** Family Planning Policy; and Law No. 427/2016 of 08/07/2016 Governing Matrimonial Regimes, Donations and Successions, Special Needs and Inclusive Policy 2018.
- ☑ **Early learning/education:** Education Sector Policy; Education Sector Implementation Plan; REB Curriculum for Pre-primary 2016; School Health and Nutrition Policy, National Parenting Curriculum 2019; and Law No 32/2016 of 28/08/2016 governing Persons and Family.
- ☑ **Nationality:** Birth Registration Policy; and Law n° 14/2008 of 4/6/2008 relating to the Registration of the Population and Identity Cards (Article 8)



The RIGHTS of young children



Very young children (0-3 years)

- Protection from physical danger.
- Adequate nutrition and health care.
- Appropriate immunisations.
- An adult with whom to form attachment.
- An adult who can understand and respond to their signals.
- Things to look at, touch, hear, smell, taste.
- Opportunities to explore their world.
- Appropriate language stimulation.
- Support in acquiring new motor, language and thinking skills.
- A chance to develop some independence.
- Help in learning how to control their own behaviour.
- Opportunities to begin to learn to care for themselves.
- Daily opportunities to play with a variety of objects.

Pre-school aged children (3-6 years)

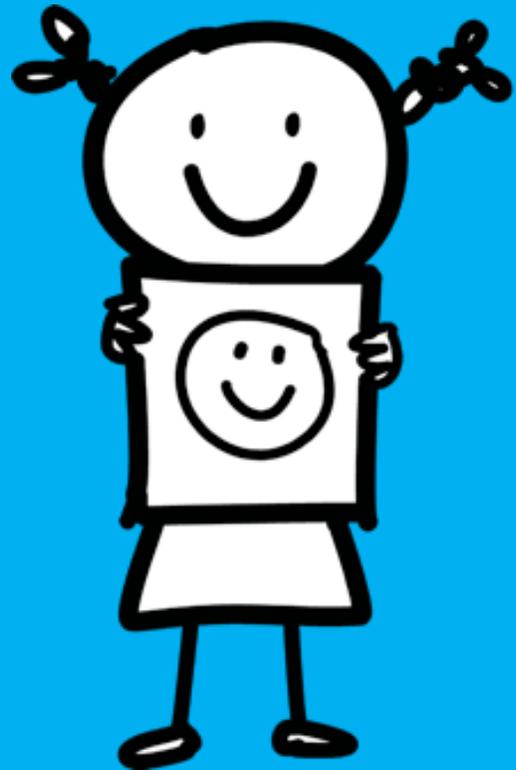
All of the above, plus:

- Opportunities to develop fine motor skills.
- Encouragement of language through talking, being read to, singing.
- Activities that will develop a sense of mastery.
- Experimentation with pre-writing and pre-reading skills.
- Hands-on exploration for learning through action.
- Opportunities for taking responsibility and making choices.
- Encouragement to develop self-control, cooperation and persistence in completing projects.
- Support for their sense of self-worth.
- Opportunities for self-expression.
- Encouragement of creativity.

The State of the World's Children 2001. Unicef

Rwanda's Integrated Child Rights Policy

- Every child matters.
- Children are priority.
- Children deserve the best.
- Children can and should participate.
- Abuse, exploitation and violence against children are intolerable.
- Government and duty bearers are accountable.
- Actions to implement the child rights policy will be well coordinated
- All human rights are children's rights too.
- Children will have all the rights as applicable.
- All children are free and equal in dignity and rights





KEY AREAS IN
EARLY CHILDHOOD
DEVELOPMENT
in RWANDA



HEALTHY MOTHERS

Mothers' health during pregnancy and after birth is important for the healthy growth and development of babies and young children.

Pregnancy, Birth and Thereafter

1. If you think you are pregnant, visit a health facility to confirm the pregnancy. Once the pregnancy is confirmed, the mother and father should continue to go for regular check-ups at the clinic during the pregnancy to allow health care workers to treat and prevent potential health problems – this is called antenatal care.
2. Pregnant mothers need to get information about their pregnancy, what to expect and how to remain healthy while pregnant.
3. Pregnant mothers need to check whether their vaccinations are up to date and discuss this with their health care worker.
4. Pregnant mothers are encouraged to be tested for HIV when they visit their health care worker.
5. Pregnant mothers need to get information about their pregnancy, what to expect and how to remain healthy while pregnant
6. Mothers who are pregnant and/or breastfeeding must eat healthy food. This helps to keep the mother and the baby healthy.
7. Mothers who are pregnant should not drink alcohol, use drugs and/or smoke. This can cause serious harm to the foetus/ unborn child in womb.
8. Mothers who are pregnant and/or breastfeeding must discuss any medication, including traditional medication that they use with their health care worker. Certain medication can be harmful to the unborn child or young baby when breastfed.
9. Mothers who are pregnant and breastfeeding need encouragement and support from their husbands, family, friends, communities and employers.

Did you know?

A good start in life starts with a healthy mother from pregnancy



Support & Services

- At your local health centre/clinics
- At hospitals
- Ask your local Community Health Worker



WORDS & meanings

antenatal means during pregnancy/ before a woman gives birth.

vaccination means giving a child or adult special medication that helps to protect the body against certain illness and infections for a very long time.

foetus means unborn child.

traditional medication is medication prepared based on the beliefs and experiences indigenous to different cultures, whether explicable or not, used in the maintenance of health as well as in the prevention, diagnosis, improvement or treatment of physical and mental illness (WHO)

When Rwanda takes care of mothers' health, our children have a healthy start in life

For more information

If you want more information about Rwanda's policies and programme on **MOTHERS' HEALTH** please look at the following. (There is a link with each for you to download it):

Health Sector Policy: <https://bit.ly/2Jt9hvB>
Fourth Health Sector Strategic Plan: <https://bit.ly/2Vyzd0l>
Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health National Strategy: <https://bit.ly/2OqLm5Q>



a good idea healthy food is important for the health of the mother while pregnant and while she breastfeeds her child



BIRTH REGISTRATION

Every child has the right to be registered at birth so that they are part of our nation from the start.

The right to a name and nationality

1. Birth registration is the first step to the right to a nationality.
2. Birth registration is important to assist children to access a range of benefits.
3. Parents need to take responsibility to register the birth of their children.
4. A child's birth must be registered within 30 days after she or he was born.
5. A child's birth can be registered at health facilities, embassies and sectors.
6. Medical certificates and records must be presented by parent's or guardians when they register a child.

Did you know?

A birth certificate tells everybody that a child is a citizen of Rwanda



WORDS & meanings

birth registration is when a child born in Rwanda has her or his name and details are recorded by the government.

birth certificate is a form that is given to the children when her or his birth is registered or he is registered

nationality is the nation that you belong to, e.g. Rwanda.

A birth certificate opens doors for children and afford children their rights, including the right to ECD

Support & Services

- Sectors
- Health facilities
- Embassies



Remember register a baby's birth within 30 days after she or he was born

For more information

If you want more information about Rwanda's policies and programme on birth registration please look at the following.

Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems of Rwanda, National Strategic Plan:
<https://bit.ly/31ZdrFn>



CHILD HEALTH

Making sure that children are healthy is important for their survival and development.

1. Health for children starts in the womb during pregnancy. This is why the mother's health during pregnancy is very important (see The Health of Mothers).
2. Breastfeeding is very good for babies and young children and mothers should start to breastfeed immediately after birth. Breastmilk ensures that the child is healthy and boosts the immune system.
3. Immunisation at the right times helps to protect babies and young children against certain illnesses. Immunisations need to be up to date all the time.
4. Take your baby and/or young child for regular health checks.
5. The physical growth of a baby and young child need to be checked regularly. This helps to see whether her or his body developing properly. This involves checking the height and weight of the child according to her or his age.
6. Babies and young children need to receive vitamins as recommended by a health care worker.
7. As the young children grow they eat enough and healthy to support the growth of their body and development of their brains.
8. Young children need to be encouraged to be active through a variety of physical play activities. It helps with growing strong and healthy.
9. Hygiene is important to help to prevent illness. Handwashing and a clean environment will protect children against germs that cause illness. Teach children from a young age good hygiene habits.
10. When a baby or young child is sick, take them immediately to your nearest health care facility for a check-up.

Did you know?

Immunisation at the right times will help to protect your child against serious illness.



Support & Services

- At your local health centre/clinics
- At hospitals
- Ask your local Community Health Worker



WORDS & meanings

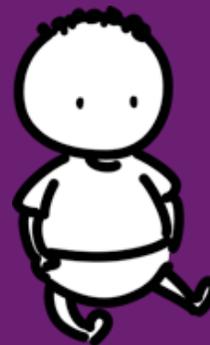
Immunisation means giving the baby or child special medication that helps to protect the body against certain illness and infections for a very long time.

hygiene means keeping yourself and your surroundings clean.

hygiene habit is something that you have learned and repeated and now always do, e.g. washing your hands before you eat.

environment means the location where a child is, for example the home, garden, community park, or ECD centre.

A healthy
Rwanda starts
with healthy
children



Remember
when your baby or
young child is sick, take
her or him immediately
to your health care
facility

For more information

If you want more information about Rwanda's policies and programme on **CHILD HEALTH** please look at the following.

Health Sector Policy: <https://bit.ly/2Jt9hvB> Fourth Health Sector Strategic Plan: <https://bit.ly/2Vyzd0l>



NUTRITION

Healthy food and good feeding practices are important for the growth and development of babies and young children.

Nutrition in the early years

1. Eating healthy and the right kinds of food are important for the health of the pregnant women and the unborn child.
2. Mothers need to continue to eat healthy during the period that they are breastfeeding (lactating mothers) as healthy eating makes the breastmilk even better.
3. Babies should exclusively be breastfed from birth until six months. Babies do not need anything else (not water, tea, porridge or any other food), not even water, as the milk from the mother's breast has everything the child needs.
4. When the baby turns six months, continue with breastfeeding until your child is 24 months, but start now to add some other more solid food such as mashed solid foods, for example mashed vegetables. The use of locally available complementary food is encouraged.
5. Mothers who breastfeed need encouragement and support from their husbands, family, friends, communities and employers.
6. Young children need a variety of food to help them grow healthy and strong. In this way you also help them to develop healthy eating habits for the rest of their life.
7. Young children need to eat regularly during the day for their bodies and minds to grow and develop.
8. Healthy eating habits also help to prevent children from getting sick quickly. It boosts their immune system.
9. When children do not get enough and/or the right food it may negatively impact on the development of their bodies and brains.
10. When babies older than six months and young children are sick, continue to feed them and also give them more fluids.

Did you know?

Healthy & enough food provides fuel for the brain to grow and work.



Support & Services

If you need support or information about how to eat right while pregnant, breastfeeding and/or healthy food for your young child ask:

- The community health worker in your village.
- A community nutrition support volunteer in your area.
- The nurse or nutritionist at the health facility.



WORDS & meanings

complementary feeding is when we add other food to the baby's feeding with the breast milk.

exclusive breastfeeding means nothing else is fed in addition to breast milk.

Immune system means how the body protects itself against viruses and germs that may cause illnesses.

lactating refers to the way in which a person's body is producing breast milk. That is why we refer to women who breast feed as lactating mothers.

nutrition is how food helps your body and brain to be healthy.

When Rwanda's young children eat healthy, Rwanda will be a healthy nation

For more information

If you want more information about Rwanda's policies and programme on **Nutrition** please look at the following.

Rwanda National Food and Nutrition Policy. Download through this link:

http://moh.gov.rw/fileadmin/templates/policies/National_Food_and_Nutrition_Policy_.pdf Maternal, Infant and Young Child Nutrition. Download through this link: http://moh.gov.rw/fileadmin/templates/policies/National_Food_and_Nutrition_Policy_.pdf



A good idea

Start your own family vegetable garden at your homestead. Vegetables are good for everybody - and help young children grow healthy and strong.



WASH

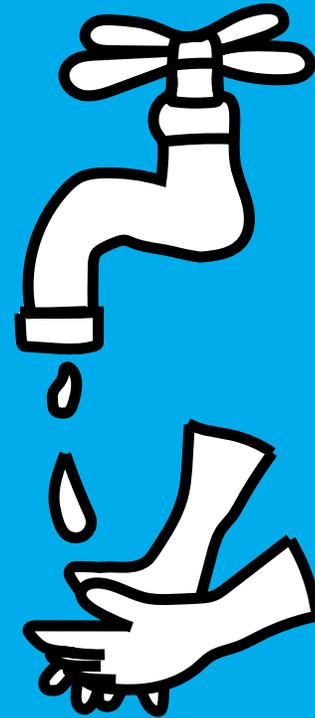
Clean water, proper sanitation and hygiene practices is important for the survival and development of babies and young children.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

1. Babies and young children need to be raised in clean environments and with practices that prevent infections and other health risks.
2. Clean water is important for babies and young children's health and survival.
3. When there is any doubt about the safety (whether it is clean) of water, it needs to be boiled before it is used in cooking or for drinking.
4. Hygiene practices such as handwashing, cleaning of surfaces and rooms, flushing of toilets, amongst others, are important to protect babies and young children against infections and illness in their homes, communities and in ECD programmes.
5. Babies and young children need to be taught hygiene habits from a very early age.
6. Latrines need to be clean and safe. Special measures need to be put in place where pit latrines are used to make sure that it poses no danger for a young child.
7. Municipalities/ local governments as well as private water providers need to ensure that all households have access to clean water and proper waste disposal.
8. All feeding utensils used for babies and young children need to be cleaned thoroughly before it is reused.
9. Environments where babies and young children live, play and learn must be clean and safe.

Did you know?

Regular handwashing prevents illness and save lives



Support & Services

- At your local health centre/clinics
- At hospitals
- Ask your local Community Health Worker

Remember

Teaching your child good hygiene habits starts at birth



WORDS & meanings

hygiene means keeping yourself and your surroundings clean

hygiene habit is something that you have learned and repeated and now always do, e.g. washing your hands before you eat.

environment means the location where a child is, for example the home, garden, community park, ECD centre

WASH is the short word people use that means Water, Sanitation and Hygiene.

Healthy habits, clean water, proper sanitation and good hygiene are everybody's responsibility and important for the Rwanda's youngest citizens to survive and thrive.

For more information

If you want more information about Rwanda's policies and programme on WASH please look at the following.

National Sanitation Policy: <https://bit.ly/2ooFvTX>

National Sanitation Policy Implementation Strategy: <https://bit.ly/2nthuL3>



PLAY

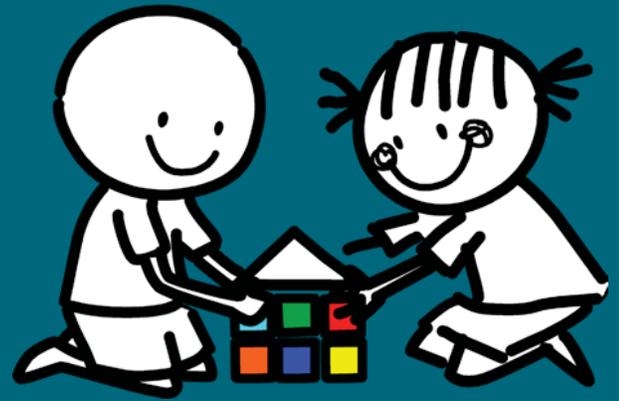
Play is very important to babies and young children's intellectual, physical, social, creative and emotional development

Children learn and develop from the start

1. Play is fun and leads to positive emotions that are important for children's physical and mental well-being, health and quality of life.
2. Play provides children with a way of coping with real life challenges.
3. Play offers the opportunity for every parent to engage with her/his child and build healthy relationships.
4. Play is the way in which babies and young children learn and develop. Therefore learning through play is a key part of all ECD and pre-school programmes in Rwanda.
5. Learning through play starts with parents in the home where children play, learn and develop with the support of parents, caregivers, older siblings and family members.
6. Play allows children to explore, discover, negotiate, take risks, create meaning and solve problems, which are the important foundations for developing literacy, numeracy and social skills.
7. Play is a foundational principle in learning and development for children with disabilities. Play is an important "tool" to ensure that children with disabilities participate fully in an inclusive and rights-respecting society.
8. The foundations of mathematics is rooted in playing with puzzles, blocks and construction toys.
9. Language development is fast-tracked when parents, educators and practitioners talk to children when they are playing; describing and sharing new words that leads to forming concepts needed for formal learning.

Did you know?

Play stimulates healthy brain development.



Support & Services

- ECD centres
- Pre-primary schools
- Parenting groups



WORDS & meanings

disability means a physical or mental condition that makes it difficult or impossible for a person to walk, see, hear, speak, learn, or do other important things

formal learning is the way in which older children (and adults) learn in primary and secondary school.

literacy means the ability to understand the meaning of words and sentences, and also to read and write when older.

numeracy means the ability to understand and work with numbers.

Play is learning
and learning is
play in the world
of the child.



For more information

If you want more information about Rwanda's policies and programme on PLAY please look at the following.

Minimum Standards and Norms for ECD Services in Rwanda:

<https://bit.ly/2VlgxBQ> National ECD Policy: <https://bit.ly/2QgPFOy> REB Curriculum: <https://bit.ly/2VoCOhl>

Remember

Spontaneity, wonder, creativity, imagination, and trust are qualities that develop best when babies and young children play



EARLY LEARNING

Children's early learning experiences begin at birth and continue through listening to stories, looking at their surroundings and playful activities.

Children learn and develop from the start

1. The early learning of a child starts the day that she or he is born. Every moment from then on is a learning opportunity.
2. Babies and young children learn best through play. Play forms the building blocks that help children's development of language, problem solving, to communicate, ability to work with others, and many other skills that form the foundations for lifelong learning.
3. Early learning happens in children's home through interaction, stimulation and loving support of their parents.
4. Parents and family members must produce and provide as many playful early learning opportunities for their children from the start in a safe and supportive environment. This is how young children learn best.
5. ECD centres provides early learning programmes that are specifically designed for young children based on standards required by the Government.
6. All children, including children living with a disability, are able to learn through safe, playful and active early learning opportunities.
7. Girls and boys must receive the same opportunities to learn and develop in the early years.
8. Early learning materials can be found in every home and community. We can count coffee beans with children, learn what names we give to animals and plants, play games that help children to learn about colour, shape and size, and use our imagination. Early learning opportunities are all around us.

Did you know?

Our brains are ready to learn from the start.



Support & Services

- Early learning services in communities are provided by ECD centres, day care centres, play groups, crèches and pre-primary schools.
- Community child care workers, community health workers, and nurses at local clinics will also be able to provide basic information about the simulation and early learning of babies and young children.



WORDS & meanings

environment means the location where a child is, for example the home, garden, community park, early childhood development centre

interaction means the communication with a child. It can be with words, facial expressions or gestures with or hands.

safe means there is nothing that will harm the child, cause any injury or is dangerous for a child.

standards are written down agreements on what to be expected from a good service and apply to all services, no matter where it is delivered.

stimulation is the activities that need to be done with young children from birth that helps them to develop, grow and learn new abilities.

Providing early learning opportunities to our young children lays the foundation for the Rwanda we want.

For more information

If you want more information about Rwanda's policies and programme on EARLY LEARNING please look at the following.

Minimum Standards and Norms for ECD Services in Rwanda: <https://bit.ly/2VlgxB0>
REB Curriculum: <https://bit.ly/2VoCOhl> *National ECD Policy:* <https://bit.ly/2OqPFOy>



Remember

babies and young children learn through play.



PARENTS & FAMILY

The foundations of child development are laid by families.

Young children and their families

1. Families provide a safe and secure environment for children to grow-up in, learn and develop.
2. In families children learn from the start about values, culture, healthy practices and family life.
3. Families should provide caring, responsive and stimulating environments that supports children's development.
4. Mothers and fathers play an equal and important role in the care and development of their baby and young child.
5. Grandparents, uncles and aunts as well as other extended family members can play a very supportive role in upbringing and development of babies and young children.
6. Parents should be supported to use positive and non-violent approaches that are not harmful when they discipline their children.
7. Families should protect children from abuse in their homes and surrounding communities.
8. Parents need to take responsibility for family planning.
9. Parents and other primary caregivers are the first teachers and role models for their children.
10. A socially supportive, safe and secure family environment is essential for good child development.

Did you know?

Playing with your child from birth is one way to build healthy relationships.



Support & Services

- NGO's and Faith-based organisations
- Health care facilities provides familyplanning services



Remember

Parents and other family members are all important to the growth and development of a child



WORDS & meanings

abuse is any form of physical, emotional, or sexual harm to a child.

environment means the location where a child is, for example the home, garden, community park, ECD centre.

discipline means guiding children in a positive and supportive way to correct behaviour.

responsive means watching and tuning into your child's cues, thinking about what they might mean, and then responding to them in a sensitive way.

stimulate means the activities that need to be done with young children from birth that helps them to develop, grow and learn new abilities through sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell – often in a playful manner.

Families supporting the growth and development of our young children lay the foundations of the Rwandan nation

For more information

If you want more information about Rwanda's policies and programme on **PARENTS & FAMILY** please look at the following.

Family Planning Policy: <https://bit.ly/2LZ8F4Q> National Gender Policy: <https://bit.ly/2Mn6es2>
National Strategic Plan for Fighting Against Gender-based Violence: <https://bit.ly/30Vb8ld>
Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda; Official Gazette n° Special of 24/12/2015
<https://bit.ly/35hNDGt>



SAFETY & PROTECTION

Babies and young children have the right to be safe and be protected from all forms violence and harm

Protect our youngest citizens

1. Babies and young children need to grow-up in environments (home Community, service points) that are safe.
2. Safe practices in the home to avoid injuries due to electricity, gas, paraffin, charcoal stoves, fires or other dangers need to be practiced all the time.
3. Children need to be taught from an early age in an appropriate manner about risk and dangers.
4. Any form of abuse of babies and young children need to be reported immediately to the police or local authorities.
5. Orphans and vulnerable children need to receive protection and support.
6. Vulnerable families need to have access to cash transfers.
7. Awareness raising in communities is required about child safety and protection.
8. Children should be protected from child labor, exploitation, neglect and abuse.

Did you know?

When a baby or young child experience stress, it slows down the development of the brain.



WORDS & meanings

environment is the location where a child is, for example the home, garden, community park, ECD centre, prison and rehabilitation centers

child abuse is any form of physical, emotional, or sexual harm to a child

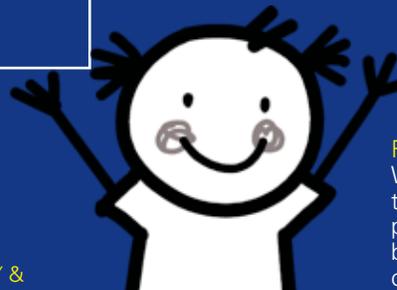
Make Rwanda a safe and caring place for children of all ages.

Support & Services

- Friends of the family (INZU)
- Community health workers
- ECD caregivers

For more information

If you want more information about Rwanda's policies and programme on SAFETY & PROTECTION please look at the following.



Remember
We are all responsible to ensure the safety and protection of Rwanda's babies and young children

Social Protection Strategy: <https://bit.ly/2n5BLG3>
National Integrated Child Rights Policy: <https://bit.ly/31XXxel>
Strategic Plan for the Integrated Child Rights Policy: <https://bit.ly/2M2CdyR>



EMERGENCIES

Interventions to promote physical, intellectual and emotional development in early childhood are particularly important in times of emergency.

ECD Responses in Emergencies

1. Any in-country emergency plan should include ECD.
2. Family tracing and reintegration must be done for all children separated from other members of the family.
3. A safe and inclusive space must be availed in-camp for young children and their caregivers.
4. All agencies providing services to young children must work in cooperation.
5. Children in emergencies should have access to integrated services including early learning and stimulation, health, nutrition hygiene and sanitation, safety and protection.
6. All service providers should organize referrals to other social services for young children in emergencies.
7. Providing opportunity to play is essential to any ECD programme including in emergencies.
8. Parents and caregivers of young children must be engaged to take part in ECD activities as much as they can.
9. ECD activities in refugee camps give children and families opportunities to have fun and express themselves.
10. ECD programmes in emergencies should be culturally relevant and designed to reintegrate children into healthy communities and families.
11. ECD in emergencies provides opportunities for adults to work as volunteers and acquire valuable child-caring experience.
12. Services in emergencies should be inclusive and holistic reaching all children, including children living with disabilities and from minorities.

Did you know?

No one should deny children in emergency chance to access ECD services



Support & Services

- Integrated ECD services in refugee camps in Rwanda are provided by ECD centres established through cooperation between the Ministry in charge of Emergency Management (MINEMA), UNHCR, Civil Society Organizations and other development partners.
- The government of Rwanda encourages ECD initiatives that bring together the refugee communities and their host communities.
- Home-based ECD initiatives run by trained parents ensure ownership and sustainability of ECD services by refugee communities

Remember

Children in emergency are entitled to the same rights as other children.



WORDS & meanings

emergency is a serious crisis or situation threatening the lives and well-being of groups of people, which is beyond their control. It can be natural for example an earthquake or flood or caused by humans,

for example a war.

integrated is when all the necessary services are delivered together as one package.

holistic means that looking at all areas of development together, for example the physical, emotional, intellectual and social development of a young child.

For more information

If you want more information about Rwanda's policies and programme on **EMERGENCIES** please look at the following.

Minimum Standards and Norms for ECD Services in Rwanda: <https://bit.ly/2VlgxB0> National ECD Policy: <https://bit.ly/2QqPFOy>



INCLUSION

Every child, including children with disabilities or any other vulnerabilities, has the right to access quality ECD services.

All child access ECD services from the start

1. All children, including children with disabilities or any other vulnerabilities, should be treated the same and receive the same quality care and support in their homes, communities and in ECD services.
2. Children with disabilities are able to learn and develop, but may need some extra support.
3. All ECD services must be accessible for children with disabilities.
4. Parents/guardians of children with disabilities must be provided with the right information that will help them to support the development and learning of their children.
5. Buildings, play parks and other areas must be accessible for young children with disabilities.
6. Early screening and assessment of all babies and young children to detect any form of disability or developmental delay are important.
7. Parents, community members and service providers must receive capacity development that will enable them to support and work with young children with disabilities and other vulnerabilities.
8. Children with all forms of disabilities, children from historically marginalized people, children from poor families, children affected and infected by HIV and AIDS, orphans, children of incarcerated mothers and those with other vulnerabilities should have access to integrated ECD services

Did you know?

No-one is allowed to discriminate against a child with a disability.



Support & Services

- Early learning services in communities are provided by ECD centres, day care centres, play groups, crèches and pre-primary schools. These centers provide platforms for early screening and detection.
- Health facilities, clinics and rehabilitation centers.



WORDS & meanings

accessible -

assessment -

disability means a physical or mental condition that makes it difficult or impossible for a person to walk, see, hear, speak, learn, or do other important things

inclusion means that regardless of their abilities, disabilities, or health care needs, young children all have the same right to quality early childhood development services.

screening is a way to find out if a child has a disability or whether there is a delay in the child's normal development.

vulnerable is when circumstances in the home or community or wider society place children's safety and development at risk

All children, regardless of ability or background, matter in Rwanda



A good idea children with disabilities are able to learn and need to be included in all ECD programmes.

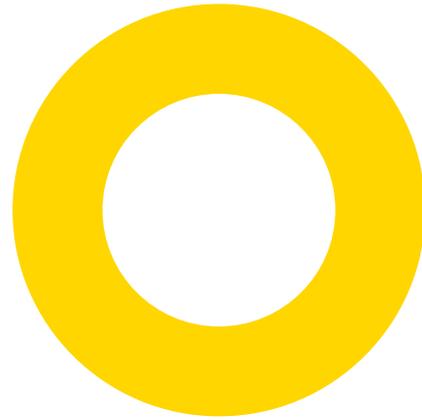
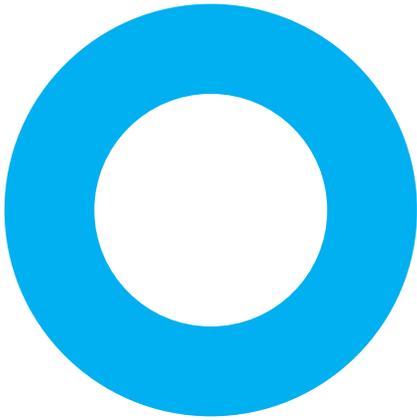
For more information

If you want more information about Rwanda's policies and programme on **INCLUSION** please look at the following. There is also a link with each for you to download it):

Revised Special Needs and Inclusive Education Policy: <https://bit.ly/30TQfHe>



WHO'S WHO IN
EARLY CHILDHOOD
DEVELOPMENT
in RWANDA



Many people in our communities have an important role to play in the ECD of Rwanda's youngest citizens. Some work as volunteers, others work at NGOs, some are employed by government and many are supporting families in our communities. In this section you will be introduced to a few of these people that have a responsibility to implement policies and programmes that help babies and young children to survive, thrive, develop, growth and learn.



Hallo! My name is **Ganza**

I am an **ECD PRACTITIONER**.

Rwanda's ECD programme is an important part of my responsibilities, therefore I take responsibility for:

- Providing information and capacity development to parents on the care, early learning and development of their babies and young children;
- Raising awareness in the community with leaders and other influential people on the importance of ECD; and
- Mobilise resources to invest in ECD programmes.

If you want more information or assistance on the importance of ECD and how to access services for babies and young children, you can find me at the ECD Centre.



Hallo! My name is **Gatesi**

I am a **NUTRITIONIST**.

Rwanda's ECD programme is an important part of my responsibilities, therefore I take responsibility for:

- Home visits to pregnant women and to households where there are children under the age of five to support them with information and guidance on nutrition;
- Screening of babies and young children's growth to check whether they are developing and growing up healthy; and
- Identifying and treating children who are malnourished.

If you want more information or assistance on healthy food for your baby and young child, how to prepare food correctly, kitchen gardens, treatment and prevention of malnutrition and healthy eating habits you can find me at the nearest Health Centre



Hallo! My name is **Mugisha**

am a **COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER**.

Rwanda's ECD programme is an important part of my responsibilities, therefore I take responsibility for:

Visiting families to follow-up on pregnant mothers and/or mothers who are breastfeeding for support and information sharing on child care;

- Monitoring the growth of babies and young children, which including checking their nutrition status; and
- Providing treatment to children and mothers when they are sick.

If you want more information or assistance on community health care, or treatment and management of illness, you can find me at the health post/village office.



Hallo! My name is **Mucyo**

I am an **ECD TEACHER**.

Rwanda's ECD programme is an important part of my responsibilities, therefore I take responsibility for:

- Developing and implementing early learning programmes using play-based learning based on the REB Curriculum;
- Assessing young children's development and progress in their early learning and skills development; and
- Engaging with parents of babies and young children to provide them with information on the importance of their children's early learning and development and how they can support it.

If you want more information or assistance on how early learning happens through play, the early learning curriculum or programmes or how to support young children's early learning you can find me at a community ECD Centre or pre-primary school.



Hallo! My name is **Muhire**

I am a **COMMUNITY CHILD CARE WORKER**.

Rwanda's ECD programme is an important part of my responsibilities, therefore I take responsibility for:

- Sensitising parents, families and communities on how to take care babies and young children;
- Sensitising local authorities on laws that protect young children;
- Providing information on the rights of young children.

If you want more information or assistance on child rights and child care programmes you can find me at my house or call me.



Hallo! My name is **Ntwali**

I am an **ELECTED COUNSELLOR** in the local government.

Rwanda's ECD programme is an important part of my responsibilities, therefore I take responsibility for:

- Providing information to parents and families on the importance of ECD for babies and young children.
- Advocating and mobilising resources (funding) from government and other partners to support quality ECD programmes in our communities; and
- Overseeing the service providers that provide ECD services in our communities to ensure that the services are of good quality.

If you want more information or assistance on any of the above or want to share something with me, you can find me at the sector office.



Hallo! My name is **Kayiranga**

I am the **DISTRICT MAYOR**

Rwanda's ECD programme is an important part of my responsibilities, therefore I take responsibility for:

- Including ECD in the district plans and budgets;
- Coordinating the interventions of all ECD partners in my district; and
- Mobilising all leaders and institutions to include early childhood development in their priorities.

If you want more information or assistance ECD priorities, partners and priorities in our district you can find me at district office.



Hallo! My name is **Ineza**

I am an **EECD CAREGIVER**.

Rwanda's ECD programme is an important part of my responsibilities, therefore I take responsibility for:

- Looking after babies and young children while their parents are at work;
- Assisting children with their early learning through play; and
- Organising community meetings on parenting education and support.

If you want more information or assistance on how to take care of babies and young children, making play materials or parenting education you can find me at the ECD centre.



Hallo! My name is **Mwiza**

I am a **LIBRARIAN**.

Rwanda's ECD programme is an important part of my responsibilities, therefore I take responsibility for:

- Making sure that the library where I am working has books for young children;
- Ensuring there is space at the library for young children and their parents to read books; and
- Providing guidance to parents on how to support their young children to read books.

If you want more information or assistance on what books are appropriate for children of certain ages you can find me at the school library.



Hallo! My name is [Munyaneza](#)

I am the [VILLAGE LEADER](#).

Rwanda's ECD programme is an important part of my responsibilities, therefore I take responsibility for:

- Mobilising community members on ECD services;
- Ensuring that all new born children in my village are registered; and
- Supporting and monitoring all ECD intervention in my village.

If you want more information or assistance on key ECD services and birth registration you can find me at the village office



Hallo! My name is [Mukashyaka](#)

I am a [FRIEND OF THE FAMILY](#).

Rwanda's ECD programme is an important part of my responsibilities, therefore I take responsibility for:

- Home visits to families in conflict;
- Visiting foster families of orphans and vulnerable children; and
- Advocate for and referring children neglected and or abused.

If you want more information or assistance on child protection and services available for children you can find me in the village.



Hallo! My name is [Kalisa](#)

I am the [IMAM](#) at the local Mosque.

Rwanda's ECD programme is an important part of my responsibilities, therefore I take responsibility for:

- Daily management of our madrasa based ECD programme;
- Passing messages on early childhood development during religious teachings; and
- Helping communities to understand their responsibilities to support ECD programmes.

If you want more information or assistance on the importance of ECD and how to start a community ECD programme you can find me at the local Mosque.



Hallo! My name is **Byiringiro**

I am the **PRIEST** at the local Church

Rwanda's ECD programme is an important part of my responsibilities, therefore I take responsibility for:

- Providing guidance to parents on how to raise their young children;
- Sunday schools for young children; and
- Delivering messages on ECD during my sermons.

If you want more information or assistance on raising young children, Sunday school and service provided by ECD programme, you can find me at the local Church.



Hallo! My name is **Umuhoza**

I am a **POLICE WOMAN**.

Rwanda's ECD programme is an important part of my responsibilities, therefore I take responsibility for:

- Responding to cases of child abuse;
- Protecting the community.

If you want more information or assistance on child protection or want to report abuse you can find me at the sector office.



Hallo! My name is **Sgt Gatabazi**

I am a **SECURITY OFFICER**.

Rwanda's ECD programme is an important part of my responsibilities, therefore I take responsibility for:

- Respond to case of abuse of children;
- Children's safety and security on the way to and from ECD centres; and
- Raising community awareness on the protection of children and child rights.

If you want more information or assistance on the types of child abuse and how to report it, security and safety of children, child protection and child rights you can find me at your nearest police station.



Hallo! My name is **Kazuba**

I am a **MEDICAL DOCTOR** working in the local area.

Rwanda's ECD programme is an important part of my responsibilities, therefore I take responsibility for:

- Examining and treating young children that are sick;
- Advising parents on the prevention of diseases; and
- Advising communities to contribute to community health insurance.

If you want more information or assistance on child health care services and the management of illnesses you can ask for me at the local health facility.



Hallo! My name is **Mutesi**

I am a **NURSE**.

Rwanda's ECD programme is an important part of my responsibilities, therefore I take responsibility for:

- Weighing of children;
- Vaccination of babies and young children; and
- Treating young children when they are ill.

If you want more information or assistance on whether a child is growing healthy (weight and height), when to vaccinate babies and young children and treatment of sick children you can find me at your nearest health post.



Hallo! My name is **Uwera**

I am a **COMMUNITY SANITATION AND HYGIENE WORKER**.

Rwanda's ECD programme is an important part of my responsibilities, therefore I take responsibility for:

- Educating the community on how to keep their homes and surrounding areas clean; and
- Teaching the community about safe waste disposal.

If you want more information or assistance on how to keep your home and surroundings clean you can find me at the cell office.



Hallo! My name is **Umwari**

I am a **SOCIAL WORKER**.

Rwanda's ECD programme is an important part of my responsibilities, therefore I take responsibility for:

- Providing psychosocial support to parents caregivers and young children.
- Child protection services when children are being harmed or at risk of being harmed; and
- Supporting babies and young children living with disabilities and ensuring that they receive services.

If you want more information or assistance on child protection, responding and preventing child abuse, psychosocial support services, social welfare services or services for children with disabilities you can find me at the District Office.



Hallo! My name is **Teta**

I am a **COMMUNITY NUTRITION VOLUNTEER**.

Rwanda's ECD programme is an important part of my responsibilities, therefore I take responsibility for:

- Monitoring the growth of babies and young children on a monthly basis
- Sensitising the local community on the importance of good nutrition; and
- Supporting parents and members of the community through demonstrations of food preparation and cooking.

If you want more information or assistance on healthy nutrition and how to create a food/ kitchen garden you can find me at the village office or at the village kitchen.

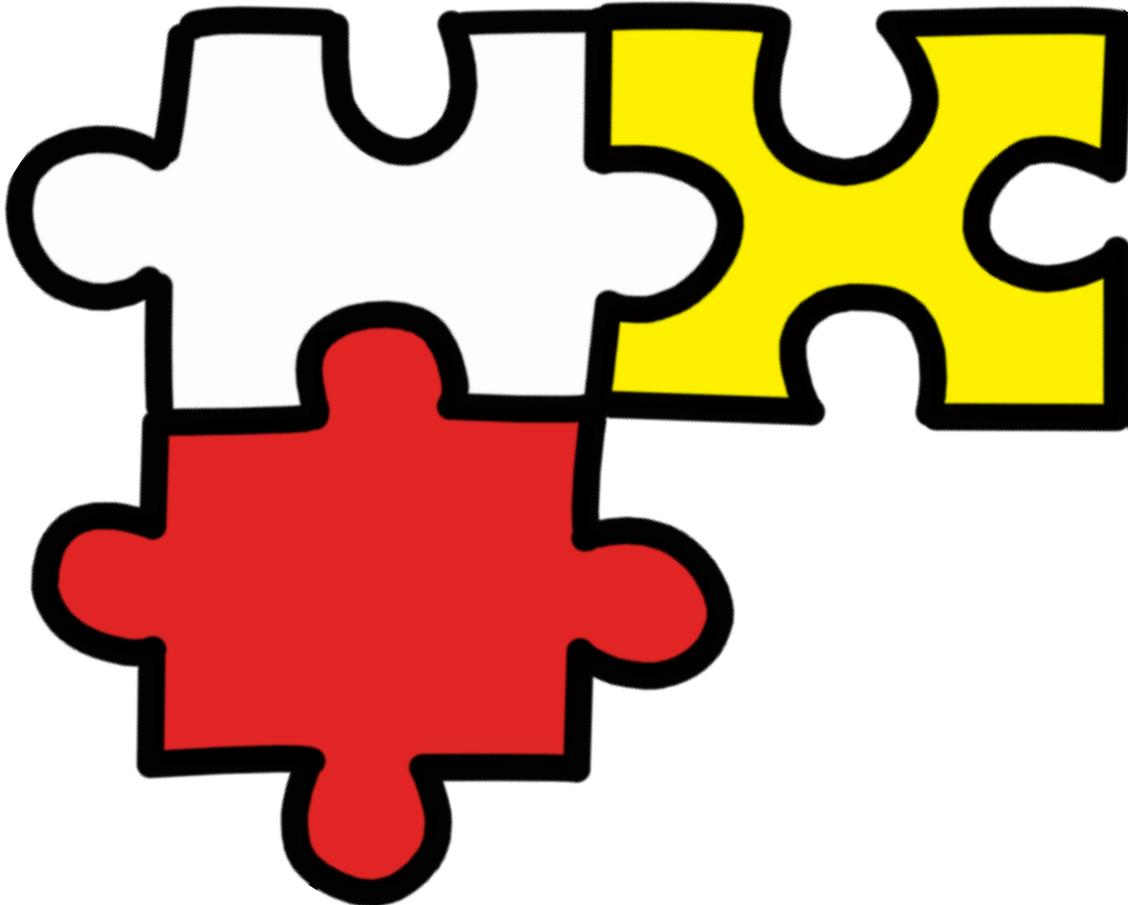


WORKING TOGETHER
EARLY CHILDHOOD
DEVELOPMENT
in RWANDA



Rwanda's Early Childhood Development Policy states that

'the purpose of coordination is to ensure harmony amongst stakeholder activities so that ECD related assignments can be jointly executed and desired objectives collectively achieved without duplication of effort'



In October 2017, the Government of Rwanda established the NECDP to further improve the quality and coverage of its early childhood care and education, and in particular:

1. Scale up the investment and implementation of the ECD Policy and Strategic Plan, and ensure that ECD is provided in a holistic manner that includes overall child development, nutrition, health care, stimulation and early learning and the strengthening of parental capacity and participation in positive parenting;
2. Strengthen effective coordination among all Ministries to ensure that ECD programmes and services are integrated and harmonised, and that such services meet quality standards, are affordable and accessible for all children, including children in vulnerable situations; and
3. Accelerate reduction of stunting for children under 5 years of age through the multi-sectorial approach of ECD interventions (including Nutrition, Hygiene and WASH) at village level.



NATION BUILDING FROM THE START

A POCKET GUIDE ON
EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Rwanda, June 2019