



GOVERNMENT OF THE PUNJAB

School Education Department

Programme Monitoring & Implementation Unit (PMIU)

Punjab Education Sector Reform Programme (PESRP)





Message from the Chief Minister

The future of our nation needs creative and confident citizens which requires focused attention and investment in early childhood education and development.

We believe that interventions in early years provide a strong foundation for a successful and sustainable society. The learning experiences provided to young children have a significant influence on brain development since at this age neural connections are being established and the foundations for language learning, reasoning, problem solving, social skills, critical thinking, behaviour and emotional health are being laid.

The Government of Punjab recognizes that establishment of the appropriate environment for early childhood education is likely to be more beneficial and economical than dealing such issues at a later age. Thus, with the provision of diverse learning experiences in an encouraging learning environment for our young students, by trained teachers, we aim to foster the well-being of our future generations.

The formulation of the Punjab Early Childhood Education (ECE) Policy 2017 has been a great achievement of the Government of the Punjab, School Education Department. I appreciate the dedicated work of Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, Minister for School Education Department, and the stoic resolve and commitment of Dr. Allah Bakhsh Malik, UNESCO Confucius Laureate, Secretary School Education Department, and the School Education Department team tasked for the formulation of the Punjab Early Childhood Education (ECE) Policy 2017.

**Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif
Chief Minister Punjab**





Message from Minister for School Education

The education system in Punjab is becoming relevant and responsive to the demands of the 21st century. The Punjab Early Childhood Education (ECE) Policy 2017 developed by Government of the Punjab aims to fulfill the responsibility of education affairs in Punjab, and commitment of the State in the 18th Amendment in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. It gives a solid foundation for continuous improvement, starting with the ECE Policy, for lifelong learning established during a child's early years. It highlights the importance of raising children in an environment that is conducive to learning during pre-primary years, and its positive impacts on a child's future. Through such efforts, the Government is highly motivated and committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, with a particular focus on Goal 4. Therefore, this is the time when, in the quest for excellence, we provide the best opportunities for our young children to acquire knowledge and skills and build their character in ways that support lifelong learning and make them responsible citizens of Pakistan.

2. While it is indeed challenging to address the myriad of issues facing the education system in Punjab, this policy is one of the several initiatives of the School Education Department, Punjab, towards addressing such problems and improving the quality of education. I assure all stakeholders that will lead the implementation of the ECE Policy that the policy directives are firmly grounded in Punjab's educational context, setting out measures and actions that reflect best practices.

3. In the end, I would like to once again congratulate Dr. Allah Bakhsh Malik, Secretary, School Education Department, and his team for their involvement, dedication and hard work in formulating the Punjab Early Childhood Education (ECE) Policy 2017.

RANA MASHHOOD AHMAD KHAN
Minister for School Education





**GOVERNMENT OF THE PUNJAB
SCHOOL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**



FOREWORD

The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan recognizes the provision of education as a fundamental right of every citizen under Article 25-A, “*The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years in such manner as may be determined by law*”.

2. The Punjab Early Childhood Education (ECE) Policy 2017 is a major initiative and shows the firm commitment of Government of the Punjab, School Education Department, to bring reforms in the education system of the province. PMIU-PESRP was entrusted with the task to develop the required ECE Policy in collaboration with the Quaid-e-Azam Academy for Educational Development (QAED), Lahore. It is a matter of great satisfaction that the Policy has been formulated after consultation among all stakeholders.

3. The ECE Policy is a key milestone in the education sector of Punjab since education is a quintessential prerequisite to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Under SDG-4 i.e. ‘*Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*’, the Punjab Government is fully committed to the implementation of the ECE Policy and aims to achieve its objectives by providing affordable quality education to all children in their formative years. As part of SDG-4, the Government intends to ensure that by 2030 all girls and boys are guaranteed free and compulsory education, resulting in relevant and effective educational outcomes. The Government of the Punjab has already established 12,000 ECE rooms throughout the province and we plan to add ECE rooms in every primary school since the mental wiring and tapestries of minds are being formed during the early years of childhood. The research in this particular area has shown that ECE helps in better education and ensured retention of students.

4. I wish to personally thank and extend appreciation to all colleagues involved for their dedicated efforts in preparing the Punjab Early Childhood Education (ECE) Policy 2017, especially Mr. Asif Ali Farrukh, Programme Director PMIU, and Mrs. Saba Adil, Additional Programme Director PMIU. We hope that this Policy will definitely enhance the quality of education at primary level in the province of Punjab. I would like to appreciate all the experts and practitioners involved in the process of formulation and consultation for the Punjab ECE Policy 2017 and the esteemed input by all the stakeholders. On behalf of the School Education Department, we would like to thank Honourable Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif, Chief Minister Punjab and Honourable Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, Minister for School Education, for their constant support and guidance during the formulation of the Punjab ECE Policy 2017 and its implementation strategy.

DR. ALLAH BAKHSH MALIK

PhD, PAS, UNESCO Confucius Laureate
SECRETARY SCHOOL EDUCATION





List of Acronyms

AEO	Assistant Education Officer
ASC	Annual School Census
BOS	Bureau of Statistics Punjab
CGN	Children's Global Network
CTSC	Cluster Training and Support Center
DDEO	Deputy District Education Officer
DEO	District Education Officer
DSD	Directorate of Staff Development
DTE	District Teacher Educator
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EFA	Education for All
ELDS	Early Learning Development Standards
ITA	Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi
IYCF	Infant and Young Child Feeding
L&NFBE	Literacy and Non-Formal Basic Education
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEA	Monitoring and Evaluation Assistant
MELQO	Measuring Early Learning and Quality Outcomes
MICS	Multiple Indicator and Cluster Survey
NCC	National Curriculum Council
NEEC	National Educational Equipment Centre



NPA	National Plan of Action
NSB	Non-Salary Budget
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PBS	Pakistan Bureau of Statistics
PCTB	Punjab Curriculum & Textbook Board
P&DD	Planning & Development Department
PEC	Punjab Examination Commission
PEF	Punjab Education Foundation
PESRP	Punjab Education Sector Reform Programme
PESP	Punjab Education Sector Project
PMIU	Programme Monitoring & Implementation Unit
PSLM	Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement
QAED	Quaid-e-Azam Academy for Educational Development
SC	School Council
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SED	School Education Department
SHNS	School Health and Nutrition Supervisor
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WB	The World Bank



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**PUNJAB
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE) POLICY
2017**





1. Summary

The 2017 Early Childhood Education (ECE) Policy for Punjab strengthens and institutionalizes early learning province-wide and includes clear standards for equitable and quality ECE provision. The Government of Punjab recognizes that institutionalizing and investing in ECE can help achieve its 2018 Education Goals including improved access, equity, learning outcomes, and student retention and transition. Provision of quality ECE also fortifies the Government of Punjab's effort toward meeting Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, that is, *ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting life-long learning opportunities for all*. Target 4.2 of SDG4 is to ensure that by 2030, all boys and girls have access to quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.

The policy has been formulated following a bottom-up approach, combining iterative consultative sessions with relevant stakeholders between August 2016 and August 2017 and desk review of international best practices. The efforts of all participating members in the policy formulation process are duly acknowledged, including representatives from these government departments: School Education Department (SED); Programme Monitoring & Implementation Unit (PMIU); Quaid-e-Azam Academy for Educational Development (QAED); Planning and Development Department (P&DD); Punjab Education Foundation (PEF); Punjab Examination Commission (PEC); Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board (PCTB); and Literacy and Non Formal Basic Education (L&NFBE); as well as development partners: World Bank; UNICEF; Plan International Pakistan; Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA); CGN Pakistan; and Alif Laila Book Bus Society.

The policy is additionally based on lessons learned from current ECE programs in Punjab and a recent situation analysis of ECE in the province conducted by the World Bank (in press). The policy aims to:

- i) Establish a vision that enshrines the fundamental importance of early childhood education for children ages three to five in Punjab;
- ii) Define a comprehensive province-wide early childhood education program;
- iii) Identify the relevant institutions and their roles and responsibilities for the provision of



early childhood education services; and

- iv) Define quality standards for the provision of early childhood education and the corresponding quality assurance mechanism.

The policy directives are firmly grounded in Punjab's educational context, setting out measures and actions that reflect best practices but with a strategic focus on what is practical and achievable. It is a living document and applicable for an indefinite period, subject to revisions as and when required by the Government of Punjab in consultation with relevant stakeholders.



2. Policy Background

2.1 The Importance of Early Childhood Education (ECE)

Early childhood, the time between pregnancy and transition to primary school, is a period of significant physical and mental development. The most rapid growth occurs in the first 1,000 days of an individual's life. Exposure to a complex interplay of factors during this critical window – such as poor nutrition and health, stress, and lack of early stimulation – can disrupt the development of foundational brain capacities. Where appropriate stimulation is not provided during this period, scientific evidence suggests that it is very difficult for the brain to rewire itself at a later time, bearing lifetime consequences for adult functioning (Lancet, 2011). This indicates the importance of Early Childhood Development (ECD) programs that cater to the holistic development of a child, including the physical, cognitive, linguistic, and socio-emotional dimensions. Comprising several stages of mental and physical growth as well as a variety of contexts such as homes, schools, and the community, ECD activities range from childcare to nutrition for pregnant mothers and young children to parent education (World Bank, 2010).

Early Childhood Education (ECE) prepares children ages three to five for primary school entry. ECE refers globally to the branch of educational theory that caters to the nurturing, development and education of young children and may be viewed as part of the broader ECD agenda. The target group for ECE – children between ages three and five – falls within the ECD age range. ECE programs are distinct from holistic ECD interventions in that they focus on early learning gains as the key outcome. That said, the most effective ECE programs link with health and nutrition interventions. ECE programs generally entail the acquisition of concepts, skills, and attitudes that lay the foundation for school readiness, such as language skills, perception-motor skills required for learning to read and write, basic numeracy concepts and skills, problem-solving skills, and a love of learning. ECE activities allow children opportunities to learn through play and by taking part in a variety of learning experiences. The programs can be home-based, where an outreach service visits families to engage in early learning activities with young children at home. They can also be center-based, either community-driven or more formal, and conducted in rooms often attached to a school. Programs for children ages six to eight often involve the introduction of early-learning teaching techniques in Grade 1 - 3 classrooms.



Expansion of quality ECE has the potential to respond to a number of current Government of Punjab education priorities. A broad range of evidence has demonstrated that the quality of a child’s early learning experiences makes a significant difference to school preparation, participation, and completion. Increasing access to ECE can also have a positive impact on school participation and retention for older siblings, particularly girls, when they are freed from the responsibility of caring for younger children. ECE also has the potential to deliver significant returns for ECE-aged children and their siblings in terms of improved health and nutrition. This last benefit may be particularly critical for children below the age of two who are still within the window of the ‘first 1,000 days’, that is, the period when good nutrition and stimulation will have the strongest effect on cognitive and physical development. If an ECE program can provide parents with actionable information to promote healthy child development, it also has the potential to help address malnutrition and stunting.

Box 1. Early Childhood Development or Early Childhood Education?

The definitions of ECD and ECE vary among organizations, academics, and practitioners. Typically, ECD addresses children’s basic needs in health, nutrition, cognitive development, and social-emotional development and includes interventions under Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD), Early Childhood Education (ECE), or Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programs. ECE programs, however, are distinct from holistic ECD interventions in that they focus on early learning gains as the key outcome. The primary focus of the policy laid out in this document is ECE and not ECD, including interventions that provide opportunities for children to interact with responsive teachers, actively learn with peers, and prepare for primary school entry (Sayre et al., 2015).

2.2 Situational Analysis of ECE in Punjab

ECE has gained importance in both Pakistan’s and Punjab’s education reform agenda in recent years (see Annex 1). Recognizing the importance of early learning, the National Education Policy 2009 prioritized the provision of countrywide ECE for children ages three to



five. The policy declared universal access to ECE to be a policy target for the next 10 years. The Punjab Compulsory and Free Education Act 2014 emphasizes free preschool education and early childhood care for children above the age of three until they join a school.

The 2013-17 Punjab Education Sector Plan proposed the establishment of quality early childhood programs in all primary schools of the province, with key strategies to achieving the same being (i) institutionalizing pre-primary ECE through the development and notification of a policy; (ii) creating awareness and training education managers, head teachers, and teachers on ECE; and (iii) planning and implementing the expansion of pre-primary ECE programs to 5,000 primary schools.

More recently, the reforms in the 2016-21 Punjab Education Sector Project (PESP-III) have also prioritized access and quality improvements in ECE provision in Punjab. However, despite taking incremental steps toward formalizing ECE and improving quality, access to ECE remains significantly low. There are 7.4 million children ages three to five in the Punjab but only 37 percent of them attend preschool (BOS, 2014). It is estimated that 37 percent of those children who do enroll do not transition to primary school the following year (PESRP, 2015 and 2016). However, it is possible that some of those children repeat their year in preschool, especially if they first entered at too early an age, and that some of them transitioned to a different school upon graduation from preschool.

Currently, Early Childhood Education is being offered by both the public and private sectors in Punjab and is mostly center-based and formal. According to the 2016-17 Private School Census Data (PESRP, 2017), approximately 54,000 private schools offer early education in Punjab under different class categorizations such as Pre-Nursery, Nursery, and Prep. In the public sector, on the other hand, preschool comprises two types of services:

1. The traditional pre-primary or Katchi class, which is being offered in 51,155 out of the total 52,819 schools in Punjab. According to the latest Annual School Census Data (2016-17) (PESRP, 2017), Katchi enrollment in public schools is 2,246,358, compared to 684,564 in Pre-Nursery, 1,364,791 in Nursery, and 1,122,680 in Prep classes in private schools, respectively (total enrollment in private schools in these classes equals 3,172,035).



2. An ECE classroom or converted Katchi class – similar to formal center-based ECE – which encourages play-based learning in well-developed classrooms with trained ECE teachers and caregivers. This is currently offered in more than 3,000 selected primary schools across all 36 districts in Punjab. 900 of these classrooms have been established with support from UNICEF and 343 with support from Plan International Pakistan. Efforts are underway to reach a cumulative target of 10,000 ECE classrooms by April 2018. However, the shift from play-based learning in ECE to book-based learning in Grades 1-3 continues to be a difficult transition for children.

Box 2. Challenges in ECE Provision in Punjab

The quality and coverage of ECE services in Punjab is uneven and generally low owing to significant barriers at the service, institutional, and policy level of ECE delivery. As highlighted in a recent situation analysis by the World Bank (in press), these include:

- Low parental and community awareness and engagement;
- Absence of minimum quality standards and adequate monitoring mechanisms;
- Weak institutional capacity and implementation arrangements;
- Qualitative differences in public and private provision;
- Lack of financial resources; and
- School-level constraints such as overcrowding and multi-grading due to lack of space and shortage of adequately trained teachers.

While the Government of Punjab’s sustained efforts towards implementing ECE are encouraging, it is evident that several challenges in planning and implementation exist and that they persist due to lack of an overall policy directing ECE provision at scale (see Box 2). The appropriate reforms, measures, and corrective actions are set out in the 2017 ECE Policy for Punjab.



3. 2017 Early Childhood Education Policy for Punjab

3.1 Policy Vision, Objectives and Strategies

The policy enshrines the Government of Punjab’s recognition of the fundamental importance of the socio-emotional, physical, and cognitive development of the child. It provides a vision and a statement of associated commitments to develop an effective Early Childhood Education system founded on strong organizational and institutional structures, clear minimum quality standards, and adequate public funding. The policy provides actions for the provision of developmentally appropriate ECE classrooms that prepare children for transition to primary school. It is applicable to all public sector ECE programs in Punjab and also serves as a guiding tool for private sector provision. Consistent with the definition of ECE as stated in the National Education Policy 2009, the target group for this policy is children ages three to five.

3.1.1 Foundational Principles

The policy is guided by the following principles:

Principle 1: Being in the best interests of the child. All policy decisions and actions that impact the development and well-being of young children are based on their best interests.

Principle 2: Being holistic and play-based. Play is the principal means by which children learn and explore the world around them while developing cognitively, socially, emotionally, creatively, and physically. “Education” in early childhood means the opportunity to learn through play-based activities supported by caring adults rather than being “taught” in a formal sense. Play-based and child-centered pedagogy, well-trained and well-supported teachers, and developmentally appropriate curriculum and learning materials are the defining elements of an effective ECE program. Improvements in ECE quality are also based on the concept of a child’s holistic development, which provides a stimulating and interactive environment including play rather than a regime that requires rote learning and rigid achievement standards.

Principle 3: Being engaging and inclusive. All children have an equal right to quality Early Childhood Education under this policy. Special plans are encouraged to reach the most marginalized and geographically isolated children to ensure inclusive access to ECE. In areas



where access to formal ECE is not possible but community-based ECE learning provides a feasible alternative, the latter will be encouraged without obligation to meet ECE quality standards. Awareness and advocacy among parents and community members are cornerstones of improved access to early learning.

Principle 4: Being practical and achievable. It is imperative that policy directives be linkable to an achievable implementation plan. Therefore, preceding policy planning was a stocktaking exercise to estimate the number of existing and required ECE classrooms, the need for additional resources including trained staff, and other institutional and infrastructural requirements to scale-up equitable and quality ECE in Punjab.

Principle 5: Being evidence-based. Policy decisions regarding access and infrastructure requirements and minimum quality standards were guided by existing evidence on ECE in Punjab. This evidence includes: (i) a detailed situational analysis of ECE in Punjab; (ii) policy analysis and review of existing documents such as the 2013-17 Punjab Education Sector Plan and the 2013 Scaling-up Strategy for ECE in Punjab; (iii) policy suggestions from consultative sessions held with relevant stakeholders in 2016-17; and (iv) field visits to ECE classrooms, including classroom observations and interviews with teachers and monitoring officers.

Principle 6: Being based on existing knowledge, and forward looking. In addition to internal reviews, the policy borrows from international best practices on ECE. While ECE practices in developed economies such as Finland, Australia, and the United Kingdom were consulted to inspire ideal standards, other fundamentals such as learning standards were reviewed for less developed economies such as Indonesia to retain focus on what is practical and achievable in Punjab’s educational context.

3.1.2 Policy Vision and Objectives

Vision: All children ages three to five living in Punjab achieve their cognitive, linguistic, socio-emotional and physical potential, and transition to primary school successfully.

To achieve this vision, the Government of Punjab’s objectives are to:

- i) Provide opportunities to all children ages three to five to participate in a *two-year quality early learning program* designed to meet developmentally appropriate needs and ensure a



smooth transition to primary school;

- ii) Empower parents to lead and participate in the development of their young children's early learning and provide parents with access to quality ECE services to support them when required; and
- iii) Ensure adequate and effective leadership, coordinated planning, resources, implementation, standards for monitoring of progress, and on-going quality improvements for ECE in the province.

3.1.3 Policy Strategies and Actions

The following policy strategies and actions will be adopted in pursuit of the Government of Punjab's vision and objectives for ECE:

Policy Strategy Level 1, children ages three to five: Support the establishment of quality ECE classrooms in all schools by 2020 to prepare children ages three to five for the transition to primary school. The ECE classrooms are intended to replace the Katchi class or equivalent in given schools. While children from newborn to age three are not explicitly part of the strategy because it is school-based, the government will strive to encourage early learning and nutritional gains for children in that age range through informed parenting.

Policy Strategy Level 2, children ages six to eight: The switch from play-based learning in ECE to book-based learning in Grades 1-3 can be particularly challenging for young children. Therefore, in order to ensure the continued cognitive and socio-emotional development and successful transition to primary school of children ages three to five, the Government of Punjab will support the introduction of early learning teaching techniques and activities in these schools for Grades 1-3.

Policy Actions: Under these strategies, the Government of Punjab will take the following policy actions:

- Define and establish clear implementation arrangements and roles and responsibilities for government agencies and departments to support the expansion of ECE classrooms;
- Expand access to ECE through different modalities (public and private schools) and settings (single-grade and multi-grade classrooms);



- Establish quality standards for ECE classrooms in public and private schools; this includes standards for introducing early learning teaching techniques to Grades 1-3;
- Ensure the application and practice of quality standards in both the public and private sector through required support, training, and monitoring;
- Develop a comprehensive two-year curriculum for ECE that reflects relevant quality standards; and
- Establish an effective public financing mechanism to ensure consistent and adequate resources to support the expansion plans.

The policy expands on these actions in the following sections.

3.2 Implementation Arrangements

The Government of Punjab shall support the expansion of quality ECE through strengthened institutional capacity, clear roles and responsibilities, and formalized institutional arrangements for inter-tier and intra-tier coordination between different levels of government.

3.2.1 Institutional Roles and Responsibilities

The institutional roles and responsibilities for the School Education Department and its apex educational institutions – the Quaid-e-Azam Academy for Educational Development (formerly known as Directorate of Staff Development), Programme Monitoring & Implementation Unit, Punjab Education Foundation, and Punjab Curriculum & Textbook Board – are described below.

School Education Department (SED): The SED will be responsible for key functions of ECE service delivery, as is the case for all other levels of education in Punjab, such as overall legislation, policy planning and formulation, education standards, staff development, quality assurance and monitoring and evaluation (M&E). It will be responsible for preparing a detailed implementation plan for ECE, including key activities like new classroom construction, teacher recruitment, and budget and planning. This will require steps to ensure that ECE is established as a professional cadre in the government employment hierarchy, such as the appointment of ECE experts/personnel in various departments including the SED, the establishment of a formal ECE



teaching cadre, and human resource capacity building through the development of formal ECE qualifications, professional development programs and deployment strategies. The SED will also be responsible for coordinating with apex educational institutions and district governments that oversee a cadre of Assistant Education Officers (AEOs).

Quaid-e-Azam Academy for Educational Development (QAED): The QAED will be responsible for continuing its support to the SED for scaled-up implementation of ECE as well as developing, revising, and imparting training and professional development programs for ECE staff such as head teachers, teachers, and caregivers. It will also provide training to School Council members and arrange advocacy and awareness campaigns for parents and communities. The QAED will continue to procure teaching-learning materials for the ECE school kit through vendors/ government organizations having expertise in developing ECE learning materials, and be responsible for updating the list of items as and when necessary. Additionally, it will be responsible for the development/revision, procurement and distribution of three guides: a teaching guide for ECE teachers, a caregivers' manual for ECE caregivers, and an activity guide for parents, helping them engage their children in early learning activities at home.

Programme Monitoring and Implementation Unit (PMIU): The PMIU will assist with the following tasks relating to ECE implementation: (i) ongoing policy research defining the rationale, tools, and techniques for institutionalizing ECE in Punjab; (ii) developing and providing monitoring and support systems that emphasize performance-based accountability measures for ECE in all districts; (iii) identifying gaps in student achievement through rigorous data analysis and developing policy solutions to improve school performance; and (iv) liaising with cooperative partners such as the World Bank and other donor organizations to ensure delivery of targets.

Punjab Education Foundation (PEF): The PEF will support the SED in improving access and enrollment in the early years by engaging partnered private schools for the provision of ECE. It will be responsible for clearly communicating policy guidelines and quality standards to private schools as well as reporting back challenges and weaknesses in private provision.

Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board (PCTB): The PCTB will work closely with the QAED to develop and revise ECE curriculum content and supportive learning materials for a two-year program. Additionally, to ensure a smooth and successful transition to primary school, the PCTB



will be responsible for revising the curricula for Grades 1-3 to align them with early learning techniques and activities for children ages six to eight.

Department of Health: The SED is scheduled to begin a pilot in 2018-19, in which at least 50 School Health and Nutrition Supervisors (SHNSs) will receive training in early childhood development to provide information on health and nutrition to ECE classes and identify malnourished children to refer to district health centers. The Department of Health will be expected to cooperate closely in the implementation of the pilot. It will also help ensure that best practices for health and nutrition are effectively incorporated in teacher training and will assist in developing linkages between schools with ECE and Basic Health Units.

Table 1 provides a detailed list of key activities for implementing ECE at scale in Punjab. At the provincial level, the primary institutional responsibility for planning and executing a detailed and scaled-up ECE implementation plan will rest with the SED, with transitional support from the QAED. At the district level of government, M&E activities for ECE will follow the same chain of command as for elementary and higher school education.

Table 1. List of Key ECE Activities and Responsible Authorities

ECE Activity	Responsible Authority
Program Implementation and Coordination	
Development of a detailed implementation plan, including selection of schools, targets, and costs for establishing ECE classrooms over a clear timeline	SED and QAED
Overall responsibility for program implementation	SED and QAED
Overall responsibility for program monitoring	SED
Coordination with sub departments involved in delivery of the ECE program, specifically the PMIU, QAED, and PEF	SED
Establishment of ECE Classrooms	
Coordination with district governments and disbursement of funds for existing and new classroom construction for establishment of ECE in public schools	SED and QAED
Recruitment or ECE appointment of existing teachers	SED



Coordination with the district government on the establishment of ECE classrooms	SED and QAED
Coordination with schools on the establishment of ECE classrooms	District Government
Recruitment of caregivers	School Heads
Development of revised TOR for caregivers and ECE staff, if necessary	SED and QAED
Development of ECE classrooms in PEF schools	PEF
Training for ECE	
Revision of training modules for head teachers, ECE teachers, caregivers, Grade 1-3 teachers, and School Council members to broadly align them with the prescribed Quality Standards, if necessary	QAED
Nomination of teachers and School Council members to receive training	Head Teacher
Ensuring that all relevant ECE staff – that is, the head teacher, ECE teacher, caregiver, and School Council members – receive ECE training from the QAED	District Government
Training of Master Trainers for public schools	QAED
Training for head teachers, ECE teachers, caregivers, and School Council members in public schools	QAED
Training of Master Trainers for PEF schools	PEF (with support from QAED)
Training and supervision of PEF M&E Officers	PEF
Training of AEOs on monitoring ECE and providing constructive feedback to ECE teachers and caregivers	QAED
Procurement and distribution of <i>Teachers' Guide</i>	QAED
Development, procurement and distribution of <i>Caregivers' Manual</i>	QAED
Teaching and Learning Materials	
Revision of ECE curriculum content	PCTB
Development of supportive learning materials for classroom activities	PCTB and QAED



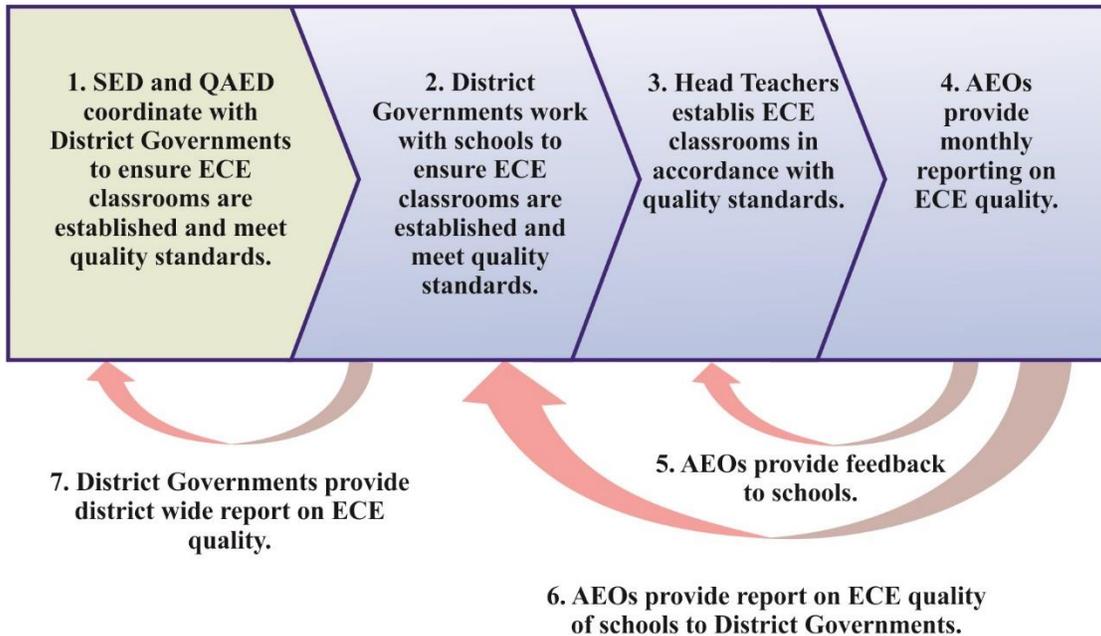
Procurement and distribution of teaching-learning materials	QAED
Monitoring and Feedback	
Overall responsibility for ensuring that ECE classrooms meet minimum quality standards	SED
Development and launch of AEO monitoring system for ECE	SED
Coordination with district governments on supervision of AEOs	SED
Supervision of AEOs	District Government
Data collection at the school level and provision of feedback to ECE teachers and caregivers	AEOs
Collection and synthesis of data collected by the AEOs at the district level	District Government
Collection and synthesis of data collected by AEOs at the provincial level	SED
Data analysis and identification of implementation gaps	PMIU and SED
Coordination with district government to address implementation gaps identified in AEO data	SED
Coordination with schools to address implementation gaps identified in AEO data	District Government
Feedback on, and improvement in, monitoring and data collection mechanisms based on experiences of AEOs	PMIU
Development of feedback mechanisms eliciting information from teachers and schools	PMIU
Revision of Monitoring and Evaluation Assistant school surveys to include performance-based ECE indicators	PMIU
Research on policy reform based on feedback from stakeholders and data analysis, and development of policy solutions to address implementation challenges	PMIU
Community Engagement	
Information campaigns for parents	QAED
Development of activity guide for parents	QAED
Procurement and distribution of parent activity guides	QAED



3.2.2 Steps to Establish an ECE Classroom

To further clarify implementation arrangements, a step-by-step account has been developed to institutionally streamline the ECE initiative. Figure 1 also illustrates this account.

Figure 1. Steps to Establish an ECE Classroom



1. **The SED will coordinate with district governments to establish ECE classrooms.** The SED will prepare and share lists of schools for developing ECE classrooms under different phases of implementation with the district governments. Where required, new teachers will be appointed according to the latest Teacher Recruitment Policy, which at the time of formulating the current ECE policy is the 2016 Teacher Recruitment Policy. SED will provide support and feedback to district governments to ensure that established ECE classrooms meet quality standards.
2. **District governments will work with schools to ensure that ECE classrooms are established and meet quality standards.** District governments will contact the respective head teachers regarding the establishment of an ECE classroom in their schools and provide instructions and support. The SED will ensure that the head teacher, ECE teacher, caregiver,



and School Council members at the selected schools receive training. The district governments will also provide support and feedback to schools for ensuring quality standards.

3. **Head teachers will set up ECE classrooms according to prescribed guidelines.** Head teachers will establish ECE classrooms in accordance with the quality standards set out under Quality Area 1 and the additional guidance provided in Annex 2. They will also be responsible for recruiting a suitable ECE caregiver. A teacher will be nominated to become the ECE teacher and receive training alongside the caregiver and School Council members at the QAED.
4. **AEOs will provide monthly reporting on ECE classrooms to their respective Deputy District Education Officers (DDEOs).** The AEOs will be responsible for monthly reporting on ECE activities, including multi-grading and overcrowding.
5. **AEOs will provide feedback and advice to head teachers.** The AEOs will provide mentoring and support to head teachers and ECE teachers to improve the delivery of ECE.
6. **The district governments will take action for quality assurance.** The district governments will take necessary action where AEOs report that the established quality standards for ECE are threatened or compromised.
7. **District governments will provide consolidated reports of all ECE schools' performance to SED.** Where there is a pattern of compromised quality standards for ECE classrooms district-wide, SED will support district governments to address quality issues.

3.3 Access Modalities and Settings for ECE Classrooms

The government shall take the following measures to ensure access to ECE classrooms:

1. ECE classrooms shall replace the Katchi in public schools. All public schools with ECE will have a boundary wall and offer toilet and clean drinking water facilities.
2. ECE classrooms shall ideally replace the equivalent of the Katchi in private schools.
3. Where possible, schools shall provide a room for the ECE classroom. However, where there are no rooms available, ECE classrooms may be established in multi-graded classrooms.



4. As much as possible, classrooms shall be constructed in schools that do not have a room available for ECE classrooms.
5. Children turning four or five years of age in the given school year will be able to access ECE classrooms. Where registration exceeds a student-teacher ratio of 40:1, enrollment preference will be given to near-five-year-old children.
6. All ECE classrooms, in both public and private schools, shall meet quality standards set out in Section 3.4 of this policy.
7. Special plans shall be developed to reach the most marginalized and geographically isolated children to ensure inclusive access to ECE. In areas where access to formal ECE is not possible and community-based ECE learning provides a feasible alternative, the following Quality Standards may not apply.

3.4 Quality Standards

The Government of Punjab has specified the following minimum quality standards that schools with ECE classrooms must meet in order to be considered in operation. The teaching and learning standards also broadly cover the main domains of early childhood education and development determined in the Ministry of Education's (unpublished) 2010 Early Learning Development Standards (ELDS). The learning standards are categorized as follows:

1. Physical environment
2. Teacher qualifications and professional support
3. Educational program and practice
4. Parental and community engagement
5. Health and nutrition
6. Transition to primary school

The standards are applicable to both public and private providers of ECE for children ages three to five, and schools are expected to exceed compliance with minimum standards. Where they lack the capacity to meet all quality standards at once, a phased implementation approach will be adopted in consultation with the district government. The quality standards are presented below, under each quality area, and detailed guidelines for their practical implementation are included in Annex 3.



Quality Area 1: Physical Environment

1.1	The size of the premises is appropriate for the operation of an ECE classroom. The classroom arrangement is developmentally appropriate and encourages interaction and play.	
	1.1.1	The children have mats or age-appropriate furniture to sit on.
	1.1.2	The classroom size and arrangement encourages child-child interaction, group activities, and play. There is space for the teacher and children to move around and for children to sit in groups, including at least enough space for the full class gathering in a circle on a mat.
	1.1.3	Play and learning materials are located where children can access them freely.
1.2	The ECE teacher and school have sourced/purchased play and learning materials.	
	1.2.1	The ECE teacher has made or sourced no-cost learning materials.
	1.2.2	In public schools, the School Council may use the Non-Salary Budget to purchase appropriate learning and play materials for the ECE classroom in consultation with the head teacher and ECE teacher.
1.3	Play and learning materials are sufficient, varied, and challenging.	
	1.3.1	The children have materials that allow them to draw shapes and letters.
	1.3.2	The children have objects that they can count and sort.
	1.3.3	The children have access to materials that they can manipulate and explore.
	1.3.4	There are learning aids and posters on the classroom walls.
	1.3.5	Materials are developmentally appropriate, open-ended, safe, and in good condition.
	1.3.6	There are enough learning materials for all children to use, either independently or in groups.



Quality Area 2: Teacher Qualifications and Professional Support for ECE Classrooms

2.1	Every ECE classroom has a qualified ECE teacher.	
	2.1.1	The ECE teacher has received specialized training in ECE.
	2.1.2	ECE teachers should have graduated from high school. In public schools, ECE teachers should meet the qualifications outlined in the Teacher Recruitment Policy.
	2.1.3	The ECE teacher has an age-appropriate teachers' guide to support ECE lesson planning and teaching, which reflects the 2007 ECE curriculum.
	2.1.4	After receiving specialized training, ECE teachers remain in the ECE classroom without rotation for a minimum of 3 years.
	2.1.5	Professional development program with ongoing coaching and mentoring is provided for ECE teachers.
2.2	Every ECE classroom in a public school has a qualified caregiver.	
	2.2.1	The caregiver has clear terms of reference (TOR) that clearly outline his or her role and tasks.
	2.2.2	The caregiver is recruited from the district by the head teacher.
	2.2.3	The caregiver has completed middle school with preference to Matriculates.
	2.2.4	The caregiver is provided a stipend.
	2.2.5	The caregiver receives basic training in ECE.
	2.2.6	Professional development program with ongoing coaching and mentoring is provided for ECE caregivers.
2.3	The student-to-teacher ratio in ECE classrooms is kept as small as possible.	
	2.3.1	Student-to-teacher ratio in ECE classrooms ideally does not exceed 40:1 in public schools and 35:1 in private schools.
2.4	Head teachers provide supervision, feedback, and support to the ECE teacher and caregiver.	



	2.4.1	The head teacher receives specialized training in ECE.
	2.4.2	The head teacher regularly observes ECE classrooms and ensures that they meet minimum quality standards.
	2.4.3	The head teacher provides feedback to ECE teachers and caregivers and mentors them to meet quality standards.
2.5	The School Council receives guidance in provision of support to the ECE classroom.	
	2.5.1	One or two members of the School Council, or equivalent, receive specialized training in ECE.

Quality Area 3: Educational Program and Practice in ECE Classrooms

3.1	The daily program promotes child-directed learning, group activities, free play, and predictability.	
	3.1.1	The ECE program is conducted between 08:00 AM and 1:00 PM every day.
	3.1.2	Children have opportunities to engage in free play.
	3.1.3	Children have opportunities to engage in group activities and play.
	3.1.4	The ECE teacher interacts with children to facilitate free play and group activities.
	3.1.5	The ECE teacher follows a daily schedule that balances teacher-directed and child-directed activities and incorporates time for group activities and free play.
3.2	The ECE teacher seeks to encourage the linguistic and cognitive development of children through child-centered pedagogy and play-based learning.	
	3.2.1	The ECE teacher uses Urdu or other local languages for interaction within the classroom.
	3.2.2	The ECE teacher develops early literacy and language skills through rich teacher talk, reading stories, singing, and supporting emergent writing.



	3.2.3	Children are given opportunities to speak with the teacher and with each other.
	3.2.4	Children are given the opportunity to develop basic understanding of mathematics through sorting, counting, and numerical exploration.
	3.2.5	Children are given the opportunity to engage in activities that enhance their cognitive development.
3.3	There are regular positive interactions between children and teachers and between children and their peers.	
	3.3.1	The ECE teacher smiles and/or verbally praises the children.
	3.3.2	The ECE teacher maintains order and discipline without being overly aggressive or engaging in corporal punishment.
	3.3.3	The ECE teacher patiently coaches children who struggle to learn a new concept.
	3.3.4	The ECE teacher encourages positive social interaction among children.
	3.3.5	The ECE teacher uses activities and games to encourage cooperation and sharing.

Quality Area 4: Parental and Community Engagement in ECE

4.1	Parents and community are encouraged to engage in the child’s Early Childhood Education.	
	4.1.1	The ECE teacher meets with parents at least once a month to discuss their child’s progress.
	4.1.2	The School Council meets regularly with parents to encourage engagement in their child’s education and communicates comments and concerns back to the head teacher.
	4.1.3	Current information is available to families about community services and resources to support parenting, child development, and family well-being.



Quality Area 5: Health and Nutrition

5.1	Each child's health and nutrition is promoted.	
	5.1.1	Effective hygiene practices are promoted and implemented and every child is taught how to wash their hands.
	5.1.2	There are appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest, and relaxation.
	5.1.3	The ECE teacher provides information about benefits of healthy food and living.
	5.1.4	The ECE teacher knows how to refer a child to the closest Basic Health Unit.

Quality Area 6: Transition to Primary School

6.1	Teachers for Grades 1-3 are supported to introduce child development activities and teaching techniques to their classroom.	
	6.1.1	Teachers for Grades 1-3 have received training in child development.
	6.1.2	Professional development program with ongoing coaching and mentoring is provided for teachers.
	6.1.3	Current information is available to families about community services and resources to support parenting, child development, and family wellbeing.
6.2	The teacher uses early learning techniques to teach concepts in Grades 1-3.	
	6.2.1	Children have opportunities to engage in group activities and play.
	6.2.2	Children have the opportunity to engage in child directed activities.
	6.2.3	Children have access to learning materials which help them to learn new concepts.
	6.2.4	There are learning aids and posters on the walls.



3.5 Quality Assurance

A robust quality assurance system is critical in ensuring that ECE classrooms meet the prescribed quality standards. Punjab already has a highly functioning monitoring system, which conducts spot visits to schools and is in the process of building a second with the aim of collecting more in-depth data on classroom quality. Better use of these systems to promote quality improvements for ECE presents a real opportunity to improve classroom quality using existing systems at limited additional cost.

The SED is currently developing a monitoring system to track school quality and enrollment, in which AEOs will replace the defunct District Teacher Educators. The SED will oversee the design and implementation of the AEO program, currently employing 2,933 AEOs and intending to increase their number to almost 5,000 in the coming year. The AEOs will visit schools and classrooms regularly, observing classes and providing feedback to teachers. Additionally, they will track the enrollment of students and monitor the use of the Non-Salary Budget. The minimum quality standards for ECE will be used to develop a monitoring form and accordingly guide the AEOs in providing feedback on ECE to teachers. The data collected will also be used by the SED to verify whether a school is meeting the minimum quality standards, identify implementation gaps, and adjust policy and programs. Thus, a provincial ECE database will be developed over time which will include area-wise statistics on ECE provision, infrastructure, enrollment, and human resources. ECE enrollment data will also be reflected in the Annual School Census to conduct an ECE needs assessment and establish a baseline.

While the AEOs will be responsible for monitoring teacher practice and classroom quality, ECE teachers will keep track of the development and progress of children's early learning competencies. There will be no formal assessment for individual children to be promoted to the next grade. However, teachers can note children's development using the Early Learning Competency areas in Table 2 and adapt their teaching techniques accordingly. These Early Learning Competency areas are initial and will be revised over time.

In addition to the AEOs and teachers, a parallel ongoing monitoring system comprising over 950 monitoring officers or MEAs will report data from all 36 districts to the PMIU. MEAs act as an independent school monitoring layer for the government and are tasked with making spot visits



to its 52,819 public schools each month. During the spot visits, data is collected on teacher presence, student enrollment, and attendance as well as availability of facilities such as clean drinking water, electricity, and toilets. In an effort to maintain fairness and discourage collusion, district monitoring officers and PMIU re-assign and shuffle schools to be visited by each MEA during different months. PMIU also regularly communicates with its field staff to ensure adherence to assigned schedules. The data collected by MEAs on ECE rooms and Katchi will be revised to better reflect the minimum quality standards prescribed in this policy. Additionally, the PMIU will lead on measuring children’s school readiness using the Measuring Early Learning and Quality Outcomes (MELQO) in a sample of schools. MELQO aims to measure both child development, and learning and quality of early childhood education.

Table 2. Early Learning Competencies for 5-Year Old Children

<p>Teachers may use the following list of early learning competencies to keep track of children’s development and identify areas for improvement in teaching-learning practices. These early learning competencies apply to 5-year-old children.</p>		
	Indicator	Guiding Evidence/Instruction
1	The child shows consideration for others’ feelings.	When engaging in group work or free play, the child demonstrates empathy for others. For example, s/he may recognize when another child is upset and try to help him/her.
2	The child is able to get along with other children s/he plays with.	The child interacts respectfully with others in group work or free play, listens to others, compromises, and shares things.
3	The child is able to sit still and concentrate on a task for a short period of time.	
4	The child can communicate his/her own needs and what s/he wants in a way that is understandable to adults and peers.	This can be assessed through teacher observation or by asking: “Can you name some things to eat that you buy at the market?” or “Can you tell me the names of some animals you know?”
5	The child can name 10 letters of the alphabet.	



6	The child can count 10 objects.	This can be assessed through teacher observation or by asking: “Please give me 3 stones. Now please give me 6 stones. Now please give me 10 stones.”
7	The child can identify largest/smallest or longest/shortest of three objects.	
8	When asked to do several things, the child is usually able to remember instructions.	This can be assessed through teacher observation or by asking: “Please do the opposite of what I say, when I say touch your head, you touch your toes instead”.
9	The child can write his/her name.	
10	When taken somewhere new, the child explores the environment freely.	

3.6 Curriculum Development

The PCTB will develop a developmentally appropriate two-year ECE curriculum for public and private schools. The curriculum will be play-based and reflect the quality standards and early learning competencies set out in this policy. Learning materials – including the teachers’ guide and activity guide for parents designed by the QAED – will be accordingly revised and developed. The curriculum and materials will be regularly reviewed and evaluated for effectiveness.

3.7 Financing

To translate Punjab’s ECE policy into action, the following financial sources will be utilized:

- i) *Development budget.* All expenditures pertaining to infrastructure requirements, including new classroom construction and establishment of an ECE classroom, such as expenditures for paint, teaching-learning materials, and furniture, will be met through the development budget. The SED will be responsible for maintaining a regular flow of finances to district governments and schools in this regard.



- ii) *Non-development budget*. The non-development budget will also be handled by the SED and be utilized for remuneration of ECE teachers.
- iii) *Non-Salary Budget (NSB)*. Schools will utilize the NSB to pay for caregivers' salaries as well as meet repair and maintenance costs for the ECE classroom. This includes the cost of replacement for teaching-learning materials lost, broken or misplaced during an academic year. The cost of any additional resource (such as an *Aaya*) considered necessary by the head teacher may also be borne from the NSB.

Additionally, the Government of Punjab may utilize dedicated funds from donor agencies and cooperative partners for the delivery of ECE services. A detailed costing and budgeting exercise, including estimates of both one-off expenses (such as for new classroom construction) and recurrent expenses (such as for teachers' salaries), will be included in the implementation plan following this policy. The implementation plan will also provide a year-wise account of financial requirements to meet the prescribed goal of expanding access to all public schools by 2020 as well as describe financial sources from where all expenditures will be met.



4. Annexures

Annexure 1: ECE in Pakistan and Punjab

ECE in Pakistan

Table 3 provides a chronological summary of Pakistan's developments in ECE. Pre-primary education existed in Pakistan informally until the 1970s, but it was only after the 1990 EFA and 2000 Dakar Framework for Action that it gained renewed emphasis in the country's education policy. The National Education Policy 1998-2010 called for a reintroduction of Katchi/pre-primary class as a formal class in public schools, extending primary education to a six-year program. Katchi, in general, is a highly informal space for children ages 3 to 5 in which younger siblings of older children attend school in order to make their transition into school more likely. The 2001-2015 National Plan of Action identified key issues in the implementation of Early Childhood Education including (i) lack of realization and awareness about the benefits of ECE; (ii) absence of a well-defined policy for ECE; (iii) negligible financial allocations; (iv) lack of coordination among various government departments as well as poor networking among various service providers such as public managers, private schools, and NGOs; and (v) the lack of capacity in provincial and district communities to plan, implement, and monitor ECE programs.

However, the NPA had subscribed to ambitious plans for countrywide ECE provision that could not be implemented due to lack of financial support. A welcome development nonetheless was the formulation of the national ECE curriculum soon after, in 2002, although it was not until 2007 that a revised and detailed version of the same was implemented by the Federal Ministry of Education. More recently, the National Education Policy 2009 placed renewed emphasis on Early Childhood Education, arguing for at least three improvements in provision: wider participation, better quality, and improved governance. The ECE age group was recognized to be 3 to 5 years and qualitative improvements such as more stimulating and interactive learning environments and teachers with specialized ECE training were proposed. In 2010, the Federal Ministry of Education, in collaboration with UNICEF and UNESCO, also prepared detailed Early Learning Development Standards (ELDS) to measure children's progress in seven key areas of development, namely, personal, social, and emotional development, language development, cognitive development, moral and spiritual development, physical development, health, hygiene and safety, and creative arts. The standards were recently revised by the National Curriculum Council (NCC) for the Minimum Standards for Quality Education but are not yet published.



Table 3. Pakistan’s Commitment to Early Childhood Education

Year	Policy/Framework/ Plan of Action	Focus
1990	Education for All (EFA)	Expansion of early childhood care and development activities, including family and community interventions, especially for poor, disadvantaged, and disabled children.
1998-2010	National Education Policy	Introduction of Katchi class at primary level as part of the effort to improve achievements of pupils, and institutionalization of the Katchi class in the primary cycle gradually and progressively.
2000	Dakar Framework for Action, World Education Forum	Expanding and improving comprehensively early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged.
2001-2015	National Plan of Action	Early childhood education prioritized after primary education and adult literacy, with first priority for children age 4 and above.
2002	National ECE Curriculum	
2007	Revised National ECE Curriculum	
2009	National Education Policy	Attached the provision of ECE to primary schools, recognized the ECE age group as 3-5 years, and argued for at least 3 improvements in provision: wider participation, better quality, and improved governance.
2010	Early Learning and Development Standards (unpublished)	Student learning standards, teacher standards, learning activities and indicators listed for competencies in 7 areas of development: personal, social and emotional development, language development, cognitive development, moral and spiritual development, physical development, health, hygiene and safety; and creative arts.



ECE in Punjab

The Government of Punjab is committed to strengthening education and bringing transformative change in the province through education reforms as well as new education initiatives. Since the proposed establishment of quality early childhood programs in all of the province's primary schools in the 2013-17 Punjab Education Sector Plan, the Government of Punjab has undertaken keen efforts to meet this objective in selected primary schools across all its districts.

Table 4 summarizes the planned and implemented ECE classrooms in Punjab so far. It shows that 1,225 ECE classrooms were established in 2013-15 and an additional 900 classrooms were established in 2015-16 with support from UNICEF. The selection of schools for the introduction of ECE followed certain criteria, 50 percent of schools were consolidated schools, 30 percent were those with the highest enrollment, and 20 percent were community model schools. Efforts are currently underway to provide 1,400 more ECE classrooms, and the government is targeting

Table 4. Planned and Implemented ECE Classrooms in Punjab (2013-2018)

Year	ECE Classrooms
2013-15	1,225
2015-16	900
2016-17	1,400
2017 (Target)	5,000 (cumulative)
April 2018 (Target)	10,000 (cumulative)

5,000 ECE classrooms (cumulatively) in schools across Punjab by 2017. Of the total ECE classrooms established thus far, 343 have also been set up by Plan International Pakistan, a development partner that is currently also supporting the distribution of teacher guides to new ECE classrooms. The government aims to double the number of ECE classrooms by next year, that is, it aims to reach a cumulative target of 10,000 classrooms by April 2018.



The ECE classroom offers a different learning experience from the traditional Katchi class. The latter has no specialized curriculum, and the teachers teach from textbooks called ‘Primers’ to children. In Katchi classes, students typically learn the alphabet, numbers, some *surahs* and *duas* from the Quran, and a few poems and rhymes. In most cases, the methodology is still rote-based learning.

ECE classrooms, on the other hand, essentially differ from the traditional Katchi class in three ways: (i) they have a theme-based, decorated classroom with different activity corners; (ii) they involve play-based learning through the use of fun and interactive teaching-learning materials provided in an ECE kit; and (iii) they are managed by an ECE teacher who has received a 4-day ECE training along with a part-time caregiver who has also received ECE training and supports the teacher in ECE activities. The ECE class activities are expected to match learning competencies listed in the 2007 National ECE curriculum, whereas children in the traditional Katchi class follow a book-based curriculum better suited for Grade 1.

Punjab’s ECE projects are currently implemented by the Directorate of Staff Development, now known as Quaid-e-Azam Academy for Educational Development (QAED), which is responsible for all related activities such as the preparation of teachers’ guides, teacher, head teacher, school council members and caregiver training, the development of learning materials, finalization of the ECE kit, and so on.

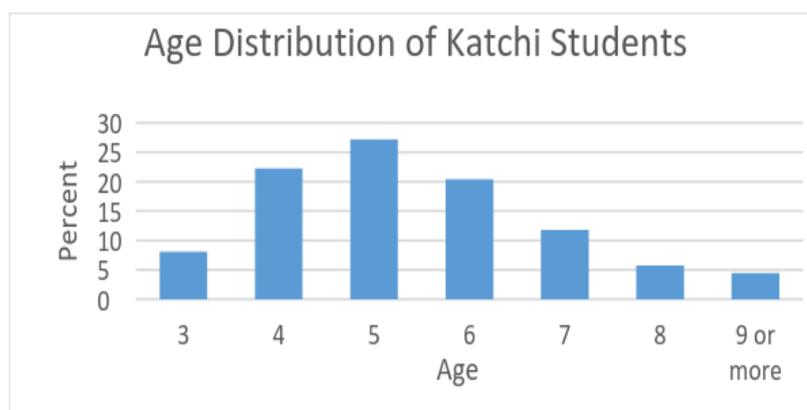
The ECE pilot in 2013-15 has been successful in creating an awareness of and interest in ECE at the School Education Department (SED) and in the public schools. Being a first step toward actual implementation of the ECE curriculum and guidelines in Punjab, the pilot mapped Early Childhood Education onto provincial educational priorities and encouraged other public schools to adopt a similar play-based environment and classroom layout to the furthest extent possible. At the same time, implementation of the pilot has been uneven, as it faces significant barriers at the service, institutional, and policy level of delivery of ECE. Given the Government of Punjab’s commitment to bringing ECE to scale, it is important to reflect on these bottlenecks and impediments. The issues in implementing ECE identified below are lessons learned from the 2013-15 ECE pilot as well as a recent World Bank situation analysis (in press).



Access and Enrollment

Access to pre-primary education needs to be improved. According to the SED, almost 7.4 million children fall within the ECE age bracket (3–5 years) in the Punjab but only 30 percent of these children attend preschool, and nearly 43 percent of those enrolled do not transition to Grade 1 (BOS, 2014). An analysis of the MICS (2014) data shows that actual enrollment in preschool may be higher than estimates, since about 43 percent of students in preschool are above the age of 5. Thus, alongside access, a pressing concern is the issue of multi-age pre-primary class enrollment as indicated in the age representation for Katchi students provided in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Age Distribution of Katchi Students



Source: BOS, 2014

Enrollment across the various districts of Punjab is also non-homogenous, the central region depicting a much higher rate than the southern or northern regions. Roughly, the central divisions of Punjab constitute half the enrollment in pre-primary or Katchi. Urban-rural differentials also exist – the percentage of ECE-age children attending an organized ECE program in urban areas is 36 percent compared to 21 percent in rural areas (MICS, 2014). Additionally, ECE enrollment is not equitable in terms of income distribution, as the ratio of enrollment in the highest income quintile to that in the lowest is 2.4. On the other hand, there is relatively equitable distribution in terms of gender with a ratio of 1.08 (BOS, 2014).

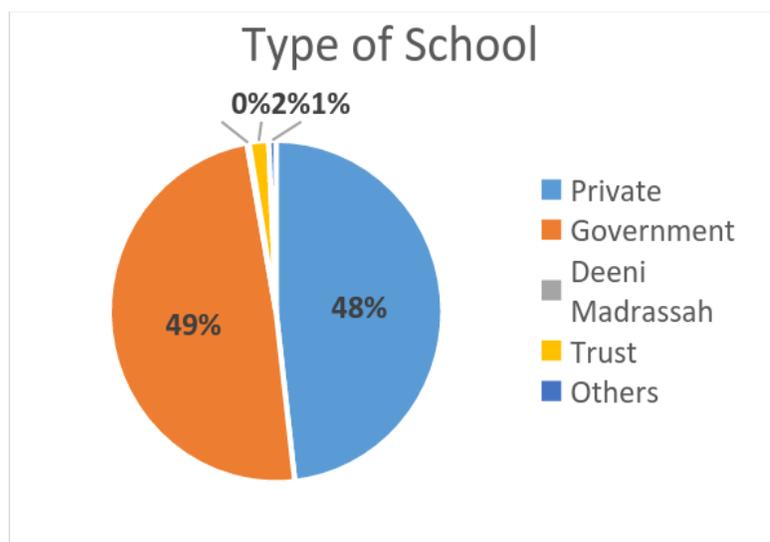
Public-Private Divide

In recent years, there has been significant growth in the number of low-cost private schools in Punjab which equally share the burden of educating young children. In the case of pre-primary



education, nearly half the enrollment consists of private schools. About 0.2 percent of the children are enrolled in Madrassas while the remaining few are enrolled in Trust or nonprofit schools, as shown in Figure 3. Currently, 51,155 public schools (primary, elementary, and high school) offer Katchi or pre-primary education in Punjab. However, the divide in public-private enrollment raises equity concerns, since there are substantial qualitative differences in the characteristics of the preschool education offered by public and private schools, such as the age, qualification and training of teachers, the curriculum and materials used for early learning, the classroom environment, and so on, hinting at the need for standardization of preschool education across the province.

Figure 3. Pre-Primary Enrollment Distribution by Type of School



Source: PBS, 2014-15

Low Parental Engagement

Low enrollment and transition rates are likely exacerbated by low engagement of parents in children’s education. The MICS (2014) data showed that only 35 percent of the children were engaged by an adult household member in four or more learning activities three days prior to the survey. Parental engagement is even lower, as only 3 percent of these children were engaged by fathers and 12 percent by mothers, the remaining children interacting with other adult members of the household. Differentials also exist in terms of locality (53 percent in urban vs. 27 percent in rural), socio-economic status (65 percent for highest quintile vs. 10 percent for lowest) and



maternal education (71 percent for mothers with higher education vs. 18 percent for mother without education). Similarly, only 8 percent of the children 0-4 years of age in Punjab live in households where at least three children's books are available. The proportion of children with access to 10 or more books in the household declines to only less than 1 percent.

Head teachers and teachers at schools where ECE classrooms have been implemented also identify lack of parental interest and engagement as a significant impediment to children's learning. For poorer households, ECE or katchi classes merely serve as a free daycare where parents pick up and drop children at their own convenience, without conforming to official school timings. Mostly lacking education or unable to value the benefits of ECE, such parents do not engage their children in learning activities at home. As a result, teachers in ECE classes have to repeat activities and lesson plans several times before children are able to learn the expected outcomes. Moreover, poorer parents are also more likely to withdraw their children from school before or immediately after completing primary education (especially girls), as they expect them to lend a hand with household chores or income-generating activities for the household. At the same time, focus group discussions conducted as part of the World Bank's situational analysis revealed that parents frequently cited poor-quality schooling as a reason for drop-outs. Issues relating to the quality of service delivery are discussed in the next section.

Service Delivery

ECE and Katchi have been implemented unevenly in Punjab, partly due to an absence of minimum quality standards. Several issues continue to plague both types of pre-primary education in public schools – for instance, multi-grading is common in schools that lack space and adequate trained teachers, and very few schools follow the stipulated, briefer school timings for pre-primary. Moreover, whereas ECE classrooms were introduced in schools with the intention of replacing the traditional Katchi classes, it was observed that Katchi continued to exist in parallel to ECE. Often, head teachers attributed the retention of Katchi to the challenges children would otherwise experience in transitioning from ECE to Grade 1. Since the curriculum in Grade 1 is book-based and more demanding in terms of expecting children to read and write sentences in English and Urdu, head teachers and other teachers find it useful to retain Katchi as a 'preparatory' class. However, this poses an additional challenge for data collection, since all students from ECE and Katchi are reported to be in the Katchi class. The teacher recruitment



policy in public schools is also not Katchi-specific, so they are likely to lack a dedicated teacher or a dedicated classroom for the Katchi class. Teachers traditionally rotate between all classes of primary on a yearly basis with little or no training for ECE, because in-service training only focuses on Grades 3-5.

Monitoring

Currently, Katchi and ECE rooms have not been properly integrated into the SED and QAED monitoring system, although District Education Officers (DEOs) and AEOs visit the schools on a regular basis. Activities conducted during these visits include an assessment of children's learning, teacher attendance, cleanliness at school and the syllabus covered. The AEOs are also expected to mentor teachers and advise on classroom activities, gradually acquiring the role from District Teacher Educators (DTEs).

Institutional Challenges

ECE is currently housed within QAED. At the provincial level, the overall responsibility for implementation and monitoring of education policy and programs rests with the SED. The QAED is one of the several apex institutions that support the SED. In the past, the QAED has been responsible for in-service and specialized training of public school teachers and has been a focal point for capacity-building needs of school teachers in Punjab. It runs 30 elementary colleges for specialized teacher education and an elaborate network of district-based and Cluster Training and Support Center (CTSC) in-service training. More recently, the DSD was also entrusted with the responsibility for implementing ECE, although ECE was not specifically within its mandate. Thus, while there is a highly functional team of staff who are committed to ECE, the QAED will need to develop long-term institutional capacity to scale up ECE provision province wide and ensure quality in service delivery.

In the absence of an overall policy planning process, financial commitment to ECE also remains low. While national-level commitments have been made for the public provision of ECE, no significant resources have been allocated by the government to improve service delivery. Apart from allocation for the ECE pilot in 2013-15, a cumulative budget is provided to the SED by the Finance Department. However, with the current monitoring system, it is not possible to identify what portion of the budget is to be spent on the Katchi class. Furthermore, Katchi class



enrollment is not a factor in the provision of Non-Salary Budget (NSB) to schools, whereas field evidence suggests that schools may spend up to 5 percent of their NSB for the Katchi class. Monitoring for Katchi and ECE classrooms is also poor, particularly in the absence of clear quality standards for the implementation of an ECE program, nor is there a quality assurance mechanism to ensure that ECE classrooms meet minimum standards.

Lastly, there is no explicitly stated multi-sector ECD strategy, nor is there a designated institution to coordinate ECD across sectors. With the exception of the nascent Punjab Stunting Reduction Framework, there is currently minimal coordination between the education and health sectors on the delivery of interventions. There are no coordinated efforts across ministries to decide on the ECD budget and there is no reporting on the cumulative spending on ECD programs. The rate of stunting is 40 percent among children under age five in Punjab, a slight increase from the same survey in 2007. Also, only 29.3 percent of non-breast-fed children ages 6 to 22 months are given the appropriately diverse diet according to the Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) standards.¹

¹Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (2013-2014).



Annexure 2: Guidelines for Head Teachers for Establishing an ECE Classroom

Step 1: Recruit a caregiver for the ECE classroom.

Step 2: Nominate a teacher to be an ECE teacher and an SC member to receive ECE training. Provide the names of the ECE teacher, caregiver, and SC member to a concerned district official.

Step 3: Select a room for ECE, guided by the following criteria:

- In schools where there is a room already available, the room selected for ECE shall be at least 18 ft. by 28 ft. or as close as possible to this size.
- If the student-teacher ratio is expected to exceed 40:1 and there are additional rooms available, the class can be split along age groups. In this scenario, the head teacher must nominate an additional teacher to receive ECE training.
- In schools where there is no spare classroom and the introduction of an ECE room will lead to multi-grading, the higher grades should be multi-graded before the ECE classroom. If enrollment in higher grades is expected to be lower than ECE, multi-grade the higher grades.
- In schools where there is no spare classroom and multi-grading the ECE room is unavoidable, the student-teacher ratio should not exceed 40:1. If it exceeds 40:1, an ECE room should not be introduced.

Step 4: Commence enrollment campaign for children ages 3-5. If registration exceeds a student-teacher ratio of 40:1, prioritize the enrollment of near-5-year-old children.

Step 5: Paint walls of the classroom according to the competencies described in the 2007 National Curriculum to enhance students' interest and learning.

Step 6: Fill the ECE classroom with age-appropriate learning materials and toys consistent with those noted in Quality Area 1. Quality Area 1 provides a list of possible materials that can be used. The learning materials should foster exploration and be concrete and relevant to a child's own life experiences. If space permits, set up learning corners consistent with the National Curriculum 2007.

Step 7: Maintain a flow of traffic that makes sense. Arrange furniture in such a way that it is easy for kids and parents to enter the room, hang their bags, move from center to center and walk to the bathroom.

Step 8: Place child-size furniture or mats inside the ECE classroom, as children will need a place to sit, eat and carry out their daily activities. An area rug may be used to define the space that will be used for large group activities.



Annexure 3: Quality Standards with Practical Implementation Guidance

Quality Area 1: Physical Environment

Well-defined spaces and boundaries are associated with more positive classroom interactions and increased time spent on exploring learning environments. Early childhood education advocates a play-based pedagogy, and a high-quality early childhood education program requires a stimulating environment that offers choices to children, invites them to engage in a number of activities and encourages child-to-child interaction through group activity. According to the Reggio Emilia approach to preschools, a well-designed environment is like ‘the third teacher’ in the classroom. At the very least, spaces for ECE must be adequate to allow enrolled children to engage in group play and be safe, secure, and clean – that is, they should have access to clean water, a toilet and a boundary wall.

Additionally, children should have access to a wide array of learning materials that are malleable, support learning and encourage interaction and creativity. Classrooms and materials should also be organized in a way that encourages activities, exploration and group play. In this regard, designated learning corners for specific activities and storage of classroom equipment is an efficient and effective way of organizing a classroom to optimize children’s learning experiences. Given the current infrastructural and resource limitations of schools in Punjab, the following minimum standards for physical environment and infrastructure are prescribed for ECE:

1.1	The size of the premises is appropriate for the operation of an ECE classroom. The classroom arrangement is developmentally appropriate and encourages interaction and play.		
		Indicator	Practical Implementation Guidance
	1.1.1	The children have mats or age appropriate furniture to sit on.	In many cases, mats are actually preferable to furniture as they take up less room and allow for more free flow of activity. However, when using mats, special effort must be made to keep them clean.



	1.1.2	The classroom size and arrangement encourages child-child interaction, group activities and play. There is space for the teacher and children to move around and for children to sit in groups, including at least enough space for a full class gathering in a circle on a mat.	Arrange furniture such that it is easy for children and parents to enter the room, hang their bags, and move from center to center. Leave enough open floor space for kids to comfortably participate in circle time activities. An additional rug may be used to define the space that will be used for large group activities. Space permitting, learning corners may be arranged according to the competencies mentioned in the 2007 National Curriculum. A sample floor plan of the ideal classroom is also provided in Annex 4.
	1.1.3	Play and learning materials are located where children can access them freely.	For learning materials to be beneficial, children must be able to interact easily and regularly with them. For example, posters should be put on walls at a level appropriate for children's height. Materials should be placed on low, reachable shelves or containers. Fostering independence in children is important, so having shelves or containers that enable them to reach their own learning materials without assistance will be beneficial.
1.2	The ECE teacher and school have sourced/purchased play and learning materials.		
	1.2.1	The ECE teacher has made or sourced no-cost learning materials.	<i>See examples provided under standard 1.3.</i>
	1.2.2	In public schools, the School Council uses the Non-Salary Budget to purchase appropriate learning and play materials for the ECE classroom in consultation with the head teacher and ECE teacher.	<i>See examples provided under standard 1.3.</i>



1.3	Play and learning materials are sufficient, varied and challenging.		
	1.3.1	The children have materials that allow them to draw shapes and letters.	Children may be provided materials like paper, pencils, crayons, paint, markers, sand in buckets, chalk and blackboard, cardboard boxes, newspaper, etc.
	1.3.2	The children have objects that they can count and sort.	Children may be provided materials like pebbles, bottle tops, buttons, marbles, twigs that are different lengths, wooden blocks, and blocks made from different sized cardboard boxes – whatever is locally available, appropriate, and safe.
	1.3.3	The children have access to materials that they can manipulate and explore.	Children may be provided materials like home-made clay, twigs, fallen leaves, boxes, bottles, cans and jars of different shapes and sizes, sand in large tubs, objects that will float/sink, handmade flash cards, etc.
	1.3.4	There are learning aids and posters on the classroom walls.	Classroom posters may be made by the teacher using cardboard and markers, and may include the alphabet or stick figures to convey meaning. Cut-outs of pictures from magazines and newspapers can also be used.
	1.3.5	Materials are developmentally appropriate, open-ended, safe, and in good condition.	For example, materials with sharp edges must be avoided to ensure the safety of children.
	1.3.6	There are enough learning materials for all children to use, either independently or in groups.	-

Quality Area 2: Teacher Qualifications and Professional Support for ECE Classrooms

A qualified teacher is the cornerstone of a high quality ECE classroom. Evidence from OECD countries suggests that teachers with a Bachelor’s degree and specialized ECE training tend to



deliver better quality ECE than others. Additionally, a low student-teacher ratio or presence of an adequate number of qualified and experienced educators has consistently been linked with quality interactions and positive learning experiences for children. It is also important that supervision arrangements are sensitive to the particular demands and management issues presented by ECE and provide support and feedback to the teacher. The following standards are prescribed for teacher qualifications and professional support:

2.1	Every ECE classroom has a qualified ECE teacher.		
		Indicator	Practical Implementation Guidance
	2.1.1	The ECE teacher has received specialized training in ECE.	This may include a 4-day training in child-centered pedagogy.
	2.1.2	ECE teachers should have graduated from high school. In public schools, ECE teachers should meet the qualifications outlined in the Teacher Recruitment Policy, (which at the time of policy formulation was the 2016 Teacher Recruitment Policy).	For more information on teacher recruitment in government schools, refer to the latest Recruitment Policy.
	2.1.3	The ECE teacher has an age-appropriate teachers' guide to support ECE lesson planning and teaching, which reflects the 2007 ECE curriculum.	-
	2.1.4	After receiving specialized training, ECE teachers remain in the ECE classrooms without rotation for a minimum of 3 years.	-



	2.1.5	Professional development program with ongoing coaching and mentoring is provided for ECE teachers.	Effective approaches to early childhood education are often a significant departure from typical teaching techniques. Consequently, a 4-day training is unlikely to be sufficient for teachers to develop the skills necessary to consistently deliver quality ECE, and continuous professional development is critical. This may involve AEOs or their equivalent receiving training on ECE and then providing monthly mentoring sessions to ECE teachers. Alternatively, annual refresher trainings or monthly district meetings where ECE teachers come together to exchange experiences and best practices may be arranged.
2.2	Every ECE classroom in a public school has a qualified caregiver.		
	2.2.1	The caregiver has clear terms of reference (TOR) that clearly outline his or her role and tasks.	This will be standard for all government schools. TOR for nongovernment school caregivers may include assisting the teacher to facilitate group play, assisting the children to use the bathroom, etc.
	2.2.2	The caregiver is recruited from the district by the head teacher.	-
	2.2.3	The caregiver has completed middle school with preference to Matriculates.	It is preferable that the caregiver has completed Matric. However, if the labor pool in a particular area is limited, completion of middle school is sufficient.
	2.2.4	The caregiver is provided a stipend.	The caregiver must be paid a monthly stipend of suitable amount as deemed appropriate by the SED. Head teachers may also pay a small additional sum to ECE caregivers from the Non-Salary Budget to attract or retain quality workers.



	2.2.5	The caregiver receives basic training in ECE.	Similar to the ECE teacher, the caregiver should receive basic training in ECE. This may consist of a shortened version of the ECE teacher training.
	2.2.6	Professional development program with ongoing coaching and mentoring is provided for ECE caregivers.	The caregiver will also need ongoing opportunities for professional development in order to deliver quality ECE training consistently. This may be in the form of monthly refresher training or mentoring from head teachers and AEOs.
2.3	The student-teacher ratio in ECE classrooms is kept as small as possible.		
	2.3.1	Student-teacher ratio in ECE classrooms ideally does not exceed 40:1 in public schools and 35:1 in private schools.	-
2.4	Head teachers provide supervision, feedback, and support to the ECE teacher and caregiver.		
	2.4.1	The head teacher receives specialized training in ECE.	In order to provide, manage, and support ECE classrooms, it is important that the head teacher receives specialized training in the ECE approach.
	2.4.2	The head teacher regularly observes ECE classrooms and ensures that they meet minimum quality standards.	The head teacher may observe the classroom at least once a week, initially, and then less so once the ECE teacher is more confident and competent at managing his or her role. The prescribed minimum standards (especially Quality Areas 1 and 3) may help with classroom observations.



	2.4.3	The head teacher provides feedback to ECE teachers and caregivers and mentors them to meet quality standards.	The role of the head teacher is critical in terms of ensuring quality ECE classroom. S/he may provide support and advice when setting up the ECE room, making sure it meets the criteria set out in Quality Area 1. Additionally, s/he could provide regular feedback to the teacher and caregiver following classroom observations, including suggestions on how to improve performance.
2.5	The School Council (SC) receives guidance in provision of support to the ECE classroom.		
	2.5.1	One or two members of the School Council, or equivalent, receive specialized training in ECE.	In order to support the ECE classrooms, either through the provision of materials or through outreach to parents, it is important that SC members receive some form of training in the ECE approach. This may be a shortened version of the training that the ECE teacher receives.

Quality Area 3: Educational Program and Practice in ECE Classrooms

In ensuring effective learning, process quality is just as important as structural quality in provision. In fact, research suggests that process quality is more strongly associated with improved child development outcomes. This implies that in addition to the quality of educational inputs such as school and classroom environment, teachers, and so on, the quality of teaching-learning processes and the nature of child-teacher, child-child, and teacher-parent interactions is crucial in determining learning outcomes. The following minimum standards have been developed for educational program and practice in ECE in Punjab:

3.1	The daily program promotes child-directed learning, group activities, free play and predictability.		
	3.1.1	The ECE program is conducted between 08:00 AM and 1:00 PM every day.	See Annex 4.



	3.1.2	Children have opportunities to engage in free play.	Children should be able to learn social, conceptual, and creative skills through free play as well as increase their knowledge and understanding of the world around them.
	3.1.3	Children have opportunities to engage in group activities and play.	These may include class or smaller group activities. In the latter case, for instance, the ECE teacher may show a picture of/tell a story about the mountains in northern Pakistan and then encourage small groups of children to use sand, clay, pebbles, sticks and leaves or other materials to build their own 'mountains'. Learning corners also provide good opportunity for small group activities. Small groups can be used to pre-teach concepts that may be needed for children to participate fully in upcoming whole-group activities, and to reinforce ideas and skills with which children may be struggling. Small-group time is also ideal for ECE teachers to assess where children are in their learning process. For whole-group activities, the ECE teacher may read a story or children may sing songs. Whole-group activities can also be used to develop concepts learned in small groups, such as parts of the body or counting.
	3.1.4	The ECE teacher interacts with children to facilitate free play and group activities.	ECE teacher interaction with children during free play should be minimal. The two should only interact if children have a problem or need help with something. During small-group activities, the ECE teacher should begin with clear and direct instructions. After that, facilitation and direction must only be provided where necessary.



	3.1.5	The ECE teacher follows a daily schedule that balances teacher-directed and child-directed activities and incorporates time for group activities and free play.	Daily schedules help ECE teachers organize time effectively and ensure that children have interesting activities to do. Additionally, children benefit from the predictability and consistency created by a schedule, adding to a safe and familiar environment for children to learn in. Ideally, the daily schedule should be on display in the classroom. ECE teachers should spend time sensitizing children to the schedule by beginning the day by going through the schedule as a group, modeling the schedule and providing positive reinforcement when a child follows the schedule. A sample daily schedule is provided in Annex 4.
3.2	The ECE teacher seeks to encourage the linguistic and cognitive development of children through child-centered pedagogy and play-based learning.		
	3.2.1	The ECE teacher uses Urdu or other local languages for interaction within the classroom.	-
	3.2.2	The ECE teacher develops early literacy and language skills through rich teacher talk, reading stories, singing, and supporting emergent writing.	An example of such activities includes the ECE teacher engaging children in a discussion about going to the market. They can be asked how often they visit the market, who they go with, and what they buy. When talking with children, the ECE teacher should use words they might not hear normally and extend children's comments into more descriptive, grammatically mature statements. The ECE teacher should listen and respond to what children say as well as encourage them to use emergent forms of writing such as scribble writing, random letter strings, and invented spelling by providing materials and opportunities in group activities.



	3.2.3	Children are given opportunities to speak with the teacher and with each other.	In developing linguistic skills, it is critical that children have the opportunity to speak with the ECE teacher and each other. Small-group activities are particularly well suited for encouraging child-to-child interaction. The ECE teacher may use large group activities to ask children questions directly.
	3.2.4	Children are given the opportunity to develop basic understanding of mathematics through sorting, counting, and numerical exploration.	The ECE teacher must encourage children to explore mathematical ideas and processes in play and daily activities. Pebbles can be used for counting in small groups, children can compare heights in whole class activities, they can draw shapes in buckets filled with sand, and they can sort and order different leaves or sticks.
	3.2.5	Children are given the opportunity to engage in activities that enhance their cognitive development.	Thinking, understanding, and problem solving are all part of cognitive development. The ECE teacher can encourage cognitive development through class activities. For example, the ECE teacher may fill plastic tubs with water and set out a number of light and heavy objects. She may then ask children to put objects in one by one, asking them each time if they think the object will float or sink. Another example involves asking children quiz questions, like which animals have 4 legs and what appears in the sky when it rains.
3.3	There are regular positive interactions between children and teachers and between children and their peers.		
	3.3.1	The ECE teacher smiles and/or verbally praises children.	Positive reinforcement is critical for encouraging learning and good behavior.



	3.3.2	The ECE teacher maintains order and discipline without being overly aggressive or engaging in corporal punishment.	-
	3.3.3	The ECE teacher patiently coaches children who struggle to learn a new concept.	Most of the children attending the ECE classroom will be learning concepts taught for the first time. Therefore, it is important that ECE teachers be patient and prepared to teach the same concept multiple times before children are able to understand them. ECE teachers should work with caregivers to identify children who are falling behind and ensure that they get additional attention and support in class.
	3.3.4	The ECE teacher encourages positive social interaction among children.	<p>Children who are able to engage in positive social interaction and caring behavior are more likely to achieve school readiness. Some examples to encourage positive social interaction are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model positive social interaction, for example greet all children by their names, tune into children’s daily emotional needs, and encourage them to notice one another’s feelings. • Encourage positive social interaction and praise it when it is observed. For example: “I like how Ali asked Asma nicely for the spoon. Well done, Ali. This is good and respectful behavior.” • Establish routines, songs, and activities that help children learn and use each other’s names. • Plan activities that teach children to identify and express their own feelings and their peers’, for example by showing a picture of a smiling person and asking them to identify the emotion. • Plan activities that encourage children to reflect on how their actions impact others. For example: “If Ali shares his candies with Shan, how do you think Shan would feel?”



	3.3.5	The ECE teacher uses activities and games to encourage cooperation and sharing.	Small group activities provide good opportunities to encourage cooperation and sharing. For example, if there is a group of children using one learning tool, they have to take turns. ECE teachers can encourage cooperation and sharing by positively reinforcing good behavior by children. They can also use role-play and guiding questions to help children work together through the steps of problem solving.
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Quality Area 4: Parental and Community Engagement in ECE

Strengthening parental understanding of early childhood development can enhance outcomes for young children. International evidence from a range of contexts suggests that parents who better understand the need to provide appropriate nourishment and stimulation to their young ones are likely to contribute better to their children’s development. Recognizing the critical role parents can play in children’s lives to promote healthy learning and development, the following minimum standards include activities related to parental education and engagement. They are expected to benefit children of ECE age as well as their siblings and other children in the household:

4.1	Parents and community are encouraged to engage in the child’s Early Childhood Education.		
		Indicator	Practical Implementation Guidance
	4.1.1	The ECE teacher meets with parents at least once a month to discuss their child’s progress.	Meetings with parents can provide an opportunity to discuss children’s progress and suggestions for early education activities performed at home, as well as to share information on nutrition and sanitation. Individual meetings with parents may be conducted at school or through home visits, and monthly group meetings with parents may be held at the school or a community center.



	4.1.2	The School Council meets regularly with parents to encourage engagement in their child’s education and communicates comments and concerns back to the head teacher.	As a bridge between the school and community, the SC is well positioned to directly engage with parents and encourage them to participate in their child’s education. The SC can also help parents address any concerns they may have with the school.
	4.1.3	Current information is available to families about community services and resources to support parenting, child development, and family well-being.	Meetings with parents may be used as an opportunity to share information about community services. Additionally, an activity manual on early stimulation activities may be developed and distributed for parents to follow at home.

Quality Area 5: Health and Nutrition

Center-based ECE has the potential to deliver significant returns for ECE-aged children and their siblings. If ECE teachers can provide children and parents with actionable information to promote healthy child development, there is the potential to address health and nutrition concerns in Punjab, such as the high levels of child stunting and malnutrition, it currently experiences. The following minimum standards concern health and nutrition aspects in ECE provision:

5.1	Each child’s health and nutrition is promoted.		
		Indicator	Practical Implementation Guidance
	5.1.1	Effective hygiene practices are promoted and implemented and every child is taught how to wash their hands.	Children should wash their hands daily. This involves wetting both hands with water, rubbing soap on hands, between fingers, and around nails for 20 seconds, rinsing hands with water, and drying hands with a clean towel. Teachers should also encourage children to avoid sneezing and coughing near food, to brush their teeth twice a day, and to wear clean clothes.



	5.1.2	There are appropriate opportunities to meet each child’s need for sleep, rest, and relaxation.	-
	5.1.3	The ECE teacher provides information about benefits of healthy food and living.	Teachers should make time during class to explain what constitutes a healthy diet, including the importance of covering food and washing vegetables and fruit. Keeping the home environment clean and burying garbage instead of burning should also be emphasized.
	5.1.4	The ECE teacher knows how to refer a child to the closest Basic Health Unit.	All teachers should have basic familiarity with developmental delays and common childhood diseases and be able to refer a sick child to a Basic Health Unit. Ideally, a teacher should be able to screen children for malnutrition and alert the district health and nutrition officer/lady health worker/Basic Health Unit if they find a child to be malnourished.

Quality Area 6: Transition to Primary School

To ensure a smooth transition from the ECE classroom to primary school, schools with ECE classrooms will be expected to meet the following minimum standards:

6.1	Teachers for Grades 1-3 are supported to introduce child development activities and teaching techniques to their classroom.		
		Indicator	Practical Implementation Guidance
	6.1.1	Teachers for Grades 1-3 have received training in child development.	This may include a 4-day training in child-centered pedagogy to help teachers introduce such teaching techniques in classrooms. The QAED may develop dedicated teachers’ guides for Grade 1-3 teachers to help them undertake concept-based teaching and learning approaches in the classroom.

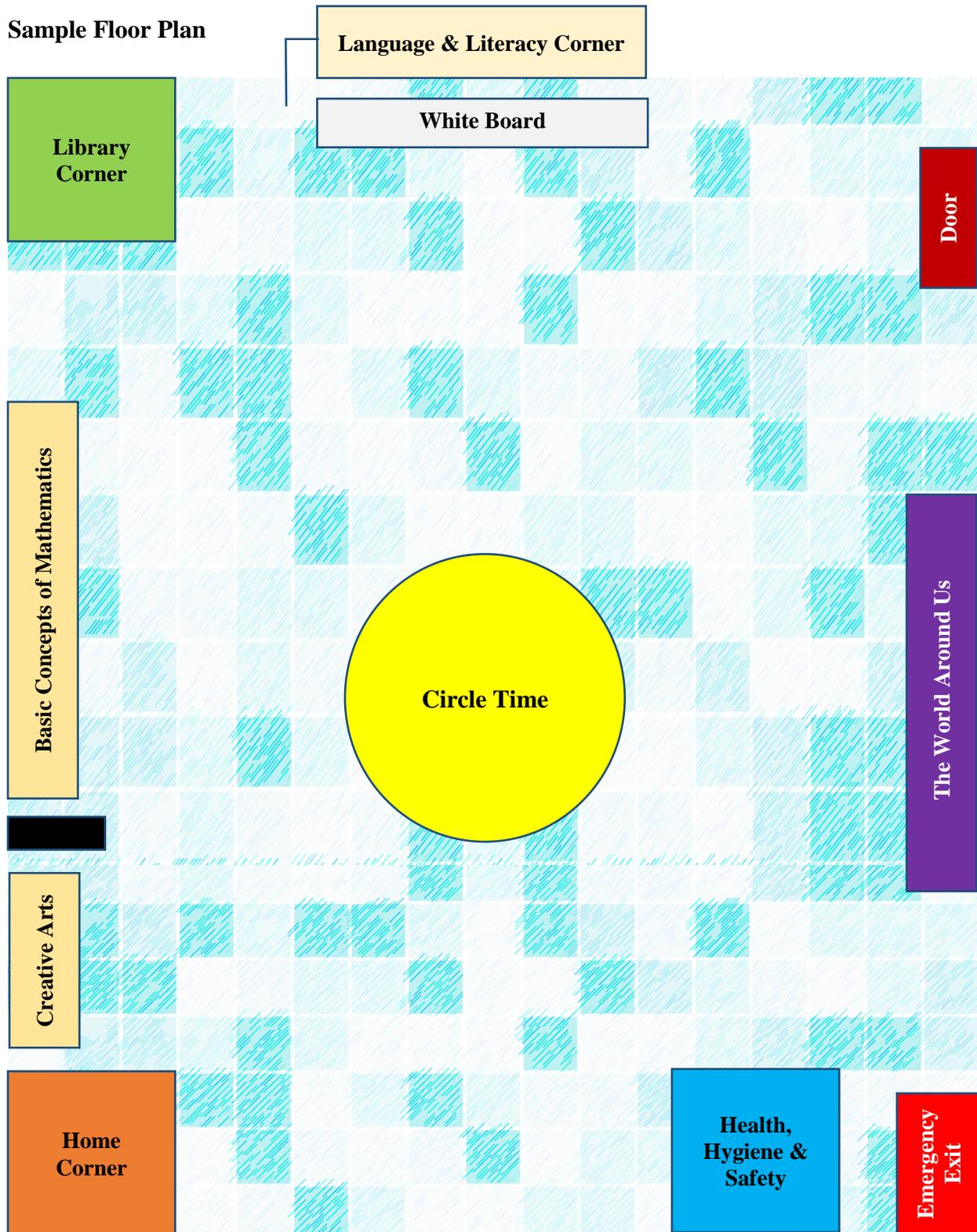


	6.1.2	Professional development program with ongoing coaching and mentoring is provided for teachers.	This may involve AEOs or their equivalent receiving training and then providing monthly mentoring sessions to teachers. Alternatively, annual refresher trainings or monthly district meetings where Grade 1-3 teachers come together to exchange experiences and best practices may be arranged.
	6.1.3	Current information is available to families about community services and resources to support parenting, child development, and family wellbeing.	Meetings with parents may be used as an opportunity to share information about community services. Additionally, an activity manual on early stimulation activities may be developed and distributed for parents to follow at home.
6.2	The teacher uses early learning techniques to teach concepts in Grades 1-3.		
	6.2.1	Children have opportunities to engage in group activities and play.	These may include class or smaller group activities. Small groups can be used to pre-teach concepts that may be needed for children to participate fully in upcoming whole-group activities, and to reinforce ideas and skills with which children may be struggling. Small-group time is also ideal for teachers to assess where children are in their learning process. For whole-group activities, the teacher may read a story or children may sing songs. Whole-group activities can also be used to develop concepts learned in small groups, such as parts of the body or counting.
	6.2.2	Children have the opportunity to engage in child directed activities.	-
	6.2.3	Children have access to learning materials which help them to learn new concepts.	Children may be provided materials like home-made clay, twigs, fallen leaves, boxes, bottles, cans and jars of different shapes and sizes, sand in large tubs, objects that will float/sink, handmade flash cards, etc.
	6.2.4	There are learning aids and posters on the walls.	Classroom posters may be made by the teacher using cardboard and markers. Cut-outs of pictures from magazines and newspapers can also be used.



Annexure 4: Sample Floor Plan and Daily Schedule for ECE Classroom

Sample Floor Plan





Sample Daily Schedule

8:00 AM - 8:15 AM: Arrival and morning routine activities.

Morning routine activities may include the teacher greeting students at the door by name, hanging bags or placing them in the corner, prayers, and talking through the daily schedule.

8:15 AM - 09:30 AM: Whole-group activity

Children should come together for a featured whole-group activity like reading aloud, singing songs, and/or learning the alphabet.

09:30 AM - 10:50 AM: Outdoor free play

Children should enjoy structured and unstructured play outdoors.

10:50 AM - 11:00 AM: Wash hands

11:00AM - 11:15AM: Snack time

11: 15 AM - 12:30 PM: Learning centers and small-group activities

Children choose from learning center activities in these learning centers: blocks, creative arts, dramatic play, library, math and manipulatives, science and sensory, and writing. This often includes small-group activities.

12:30 PM - 12:45 PM: Clean-up time

12:45 PM - 1:00 PM: Review time



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