Situation Analysis

Early Childhood Care & Development in Multan, Vehari & Muzaffargarh
Situation Analysis:
Early Childhood Care and Development
in Multan, Vehari and Muzaffargarh

Children’s Global Network Pakistan (CGN-P) was initiated in 2002. CGN-P is a not-for-profit, nonpartisan and independent education institution registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan under Companies Ordinance 1984. CGN-P is an organization working on educational reforms at provincial, district and sub district level.
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<tr>
<td>CGN-PK</td>
<td>Children’s Global Network Pakistan</td>
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<tr>
<td>DFA</td>
<td>Dakar Framework for Action</td>
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<td>DSD</td>
<td>Department of Staff Development</td>
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<td>ECCE</td>
<td>Early Childhood Care and Education</td>
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<td>ECD</td>
<td>Early Childhood Development</td>
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<td>ECDC</td>
<td>Early Childhood Development and Care</td>
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<td>ECE</td>
<td>Early Childhood Education</td>
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<td>LEAPS</td>
<td>Learning and Educational Achievement in Punjab Schools</td>
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<td>NCHD</td>
<td>National Commission for Human Development</td>
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<td>NEP</td>
<td>National Education Policy</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>NPA</td>
<td>National Plan of Action</td>
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<td>NPA</td>
<td>National Rural Support Program</td>
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<td>PEIDAR</td>
<td>Pakistan Institute for Environment Development- Action Research</td>
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<td>PERSP</td>
<td>Punjab Education Reforms Sector Project</td>
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<td>PMIU</td>
<td>Program Monitoring and Implementation Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>RASTI</td>
<td>Research Advocacy and Social Training Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>TRC</td>
<td>Teachers Resource Center</td>
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<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund</td>
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# Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alim</td>
<td>Religious scholar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatwa (pl. ifta)</td>
<td>Non-binding religious opinion issued by a Mufti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hafiz</td>
<td>Someone who has memorized the Quran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hakeem</td>
<td>Doctor who uses traditional medication and treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hifz</td>
<td>Memorization of the Quran</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ijthad</td>
<td>Independent reasoning on religious matters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imam</td>
<td>The leader of prayers in a mosque</td>
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<tr>
<td>Imla</td>
<td>Dictation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kachi class</td>
<td>Literally, ‘raw’; an unofficially taught pre-primary class in public schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Madrassah (pl. madaris)</td>
<td>Muslim religious school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maulvi</td>
<td>Religious teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mufti</td>
<td>Islamic scholar who is an interpreter of Islamic law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muhtamim</td>
<td>The head of a madrassah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakki</td>
<td>Literally, ‘cooked’; an officially taught primary level class in public schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sadqa/Zakat</td>
<td>Types of charity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takhti</td>
<td>Notebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tehsil</td>
<td>Subdivision of a district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theka</td>
<td>Tenancy, usually for agricultural work</td>
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Executive Summary

The education, care and development of children in their early years have a lasting impact on a variety of outcomes in the later stages of the child’s life. Furthermore, investments in early childhood education, care and development have large returns in terms of improved health, education and employment outcomes for an economy.

This study begins by examining research on the importance of early childhood education and presents the findings of a series of qualitative situation analysis visits to rural and urban localities in Muzaffargarh, Multan and Vehari districts in South Punjab. Recent efforts by the Government of Punjab to launch a large-scale early childhood intervention are examined, and findings of the study with relevance to the formal education, health and behavior of children in the early age group are highlighted. We believe that the issues presented in this study are of the kind rarely considered by policymakers in Pakistan, and it is our hope that current and future interventions and investments in early childhood in Pakistan will take these findings into account and will commission further detailed studies of both a qualitative and quantitative nature with rigorous empirical evaluations of all serious interventions.

During our visits, we found the kachi class existent in all public schools albeit with very limited teacher time and often without a classroom or even a secluded open space. Very little attention is paid to the special learning needs of young children, and the best teachers are mostly allotted to higher primary grades with the kachi mostly an afterthought. Due to rolling admissions in the kachi class and the fact that many children in kachi class are ‘unregistered’ for extended periods of time, we observed large differentials in school readiness and learning levels among children sitting in the same kachi class, a reality the public schooling system fails to cater to.

Private schools are much newer in the field of ECCD than public schools, however, they seem to be quickly gaining traction, and outperform public schools. In private schools and in ECCD centers operated by NGOs, we observed adequate teacher time being devoted to early grades but there at the same time the teaching model used differed only slightly between the early grades and later primary grades. Despite this, several indicators suggest that the class load is too heavy on teachers in both public and private school systems.

Our interactions with households on the demand for early childhood education clearly suggests that parents predominantly send their children to school at an early age because they view pre-school as a necessary ingredient to a successful school education and not because of custodial reasons. We find that agricultural seasonality does affect the attendance and attention of children in early grades, but not to the extent that experts commonly assume.

Language is a significant issue in early schooling, particularly in the public sector. Children in rural areas are usually exposed exclusively to the Siraiki or Punjabi language at home and then move to schools where

1 For a definition of this and all other non-English terms, please see the glossary on page 3
We found a large variation in the visited communities in terms of access to health services for children. In communities where hospitals or clinics did not exist, people often relied on unqualified doctors or quacks. In no discussion did we come across parents who initiate regular medical check-ups for their children; they only access health professionals when their children fell sick.

We also present our findings on the perceptions of parents, communities and teachers regarding the cognitive behavior, learning levels and needs, personal relationships, and emotional lives of children. The responses received on each question in focus group discussions varied a great deal from other focus groups, and it is clear that parents are often unaware of very fundamental aspects of their children’s lives. We also observed a clear differential between fathers and mothers in terms of how aware they are of their own children’s emotional lives, with the fathers often withdrawn from the details of children’s life inside the house.

In terms of health, we find that communities struggle to provide healthy diets to children as they move beyond the breast-feeding stage, and this failure does not result from economic reasons. Awareness and practice of appropriate hygiene is dismally low in many of the localities we visited. A positive finding has been that teams from the Health Department visit all schools in our sample regularly to provide various vaccinations to children in the appropriate age groups and also to spray schools as a way of protecting children against the dengue fever. Communities mostly had positive views on vaccinations, and only in a couple of focus groups did we encounter individuals who held that vaccinations might have serious side effects.
Introduction

The motivation behind this situation analysis of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) stems from a decade of implementing interventions in this area. Since 2002, Children’s Global Network– Pakistan (CGN-PK) has been implementing its Interactive Teaching and Learning Methodology in public schools in several regions across Pakistan including Punjab, Sindh, Khyber-Pakhtoonkhwa and Islamabad. Similarly, a number of other organizations have been intervening in a number of ways in public and private schools attended by children in the early childhood age group.

While these interventions have been successful in terms of improving the quality of care and education available to children, and bringing ECCD into policy discussions, they also highlight the need for a greater understanding of how ECCD is practiced in the classroom. Little attention is usually paid to understanding exactly how ECCD is practiced in the public and private education sectors in both rural and urban areas.

CGN-PK thus decided to plan and conduct a situation analysis of early childhood education in three district of South Punjab – Muzaffargarh, Multan and Vehari. The objective of this study was to develop a clearer understanding of the care, development and education that children undergo from their birth till the age of 6 in these three districts.

The study was conducted in two parts. The first consisted of a series of discussions with teachers, parents and other knowledgeable people in the communities we visited to gain a rich understanding of the prevalent issues in ECCD. The second was a survey of ECCD centers and schools in our target districts. The survey questions were informed by certain observations made during our discussions in the first part of the study. Our sample was drawn from the three districts of Multan, Vehari and Muzaffargarh in South Punjab where our staff has already been conducting ECCD interventions.

This report details our findings from each of these studies. The first chapter outlines our theoretical framework and the conception of child care and development we designed this study with, provides a brief literature review in the field, and describes important ECCD developments globally, in Pakistan, and in Punjab. The second chapter describes the different set-ups of ECCD in government, private and NGO-sponsored schools, and presents the administrative problems we observed in our discussions with teachers and parents. The third and fourth chapters present our findings on two important corollary issues to ECCD: children’s health and affective needs. These findings were also informed by our discussions with parents. The fifth chapter presents the second part of our study, the survey exploring issues we discovered in the first part of our study, such as enrolment windows, school facilities, and family demographics.

Our concluding chapter synthesizes the qualitative and quantitative data from both parts of our study to examine pressing challenges to Pakistani Early Childhood Education.
What is Early Childhood Education?

Early childhood refers to the period between birth and 6 (sometimes 8) years of life. Every successive year within this period of a child’s life demands nutritional, emotional as well as cognitive care in order to enrich the child’s learning and social outcomes in late childhood, adolescence and as even into adulthood. Thus, educational programs designed for this age group involve a range of processes and mechanisms that sustain and support development during the early years of life: they encompass educational, physical, social and emotional care, intellectual stimulation, health care and nutrition. They also include the support a family and community need to promote children’s healthy development.

Several terms and definitions are used across the Asia-Pacific region to refer to education and care for children younger than 8 years – these include early childhood care and development (ECCD), early childhood development (ECD), early childhood education (ECCD), early childhood education and care and development (ECECD) and early childhood education and development (ECED). Though many of these programs are quite similar, the variation in names reflects the difference in each program’s emphasis.

Our study was focused primarily on ECCD, attempting to understand the quality and nature of care given to children in the age group of 0-6 years, and the various factors that impacted their social, cognitive and nutritional well-being.

Literature Review/Research

Research demonstrates that ECCD is far more important than most schools assume. Levine (2005) writes, “From birth to age 5, children rapidly acquire capabilities that form the building blocks of their subsequent development. In addition to making remarkable linguistic and cognitive gains at this stage, young children exhibit dramatic progress in constructing their emotional, social, regulatory, and moral capacities. The critical dimensions of early development are intertwined; each require focused attention.”

These findings are supported by a plethora of other research, the most important of which demonstrate that well-targeted and well-designed interventions can have lasting impacts on a child’s development. A longitudinal study on a Jamaican ECCD intervention for children between 9 and 18 months suggests a long-term sustained effect of early childhood stimulation and nutrition (Grantham-McGregor, et al 1991). The study, which followed up on the participants when they were 7-8, 11-12, and 17-18 years old, discovered that nutrition and stimulation interventions had lasting impacts on their cognitive development, and that the children who had received stimulation interventions had significantly better economic, cognitive and socio-emotional outcomes. Other studies suggest that these interventions especially impact cognitive development in younger children (see Janssens and Rosemberg, 2009).

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1 Levine 2005, p 197
2 A structured curriculum, designed by Grantham-McGregor and her colleagues, based on games, songs and a number of other activities centred on the interaction between mother and child.
Approaches to providing ECCD vary world wise. A UNESCO study by Chartier and Geneix (2006) finds that Sweden combines its preschool education with the 7 to 9 age group, while Denmark provides early childhood specialists training distinctly designed for the needs of the younger age group. Despite individual differences, however, the focus of all ECCD programs is on nurturing an environment conducive to thinking and working independently and creatively. Much of the literature on ECCD focuses on creating a classroom environment conducive to that aim.

Aims and Structure of ECCD Programs

ECCD programs seek to establish a student’s independence from teachers early on without compromising on their ability to follow their instructions to develop specific skills (Bennet 2004). This teaching philosophy promotes an approach that eschews traditional lecturing to children. Thus, Samuelsson and Carlsson (2008), suggest that ECCD classes incorporate play into their curriculum.

As with any age group, a child’s learning environment is critical to his learning potential. However, the learning environment in ECCD focuses on especially encouraging a child’s social, emotional, and cognitive development (Samuelsson, Carlsson, 2008), which for this age group, involves creating “an environment rich in educational and play materials.”

This necessarily means that an ECCD classroom must be fixed to students in the appropriate age group. A study by the Teacher’s Resource Center (2005) demonstrates that teachers report varied age groups as a key challenge in the classroom, and recommend schools provide a space specifically for ECCD classrooms. They also recommend that ECCD classrooms have a separate budget specifically allocated to them.

Language policy is also found to play a critical role in development, especially in developing areas and former colonies where English is the preferred medium of instruction over the native language (Ige, 2011). This works heavily to the children’s disadvantage, given that comfort in the learning environment is critical to learning (Lasser and Fite, 2011). Instruction in a foreign language can significantly impede their learning progress.

While most research emphasizes ECCD curriculum to reflect the link between emotional and psychological needs to academic success, some academics insist this be included in teacher training as well. Bennet, for instance, recommends that staff have a strong understanding of child psychology and development. Samuelsson and Carlsson (2008) further suggest, “The teacher must also make an effort to listen to and observe children and be willing to see what the child sees and to interpret that. The teacher must also show respect for each child’s experiences, knowledge and competence from the child’s perspective.”

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1 Samuelsson, Carlsson, 2008, p 16
2 Ibid, p 633
Economic Benefits of ECCD

As observed by Grantham-McGregor, stimulation based ECCD interventions impact long-term economic and socio-emotional outcomes (see above). Heckman (2011) posits that ECCD intervention programs may help equalize or overturn the negative impacts of deficient genetic, parental and environmental resources. Importantly, and as stressed in earlier studies, these interventions must necessarily be staged in the very early periods of a child’s development:

Gaps in the capabilities that play important roles in determining diverse adult outcomes open up early across socioeconomic groups. The gaps originate before formal schooling begins and persist through childhood and into adulthood. Remediating the problems created by the gaps is not as cost effective as preventing them at the outset.

ECCD interventions are therefore not only imperative for children’s growth and development, but especially so for children of disadvantaged background.

Much research urges policymakers to apply the lessons learned from ECCD interventions in the developed world to the developing world. Levine, M. H. (2005) argues that emerging nations should be investing more into preschool education by demonstrating the importance of such education in future success and development. He argues that many child ‘survival’ programs that are designed to focus on reducing infant mortality rates, increasing immunization rates, improving nutrition, and providing clean water and sanitation services have produced long-term economic benefits. Considering the example of the U.S., “high-quality ECCD programs have produced significant benefits for low-income families in terms of increased achievement, decreased rates of grade retention, fewer special education referrals, and lower crime, delinquency, and dropout rates.” Such applications would require considerable sensitivity to cultural differences, yet some research suggests that not only is this possible, but has been successfully carried out in multiple countries.

Despite the evidence, however, Pakistani schools are found to rarely make ECCD a priority, and accordingly assign preschool classrooms the lowest qualified teachers and least resources. Juma (2004) finds this to be the case within Pakistan, as teachers are often provided insufficient resources, are poorly trained, and receive minimal support. This pattern holds true internationally as well. In Nigeria, Ige (2011) found that most teachers lack the recommended basic training for their positions and receive very little instruction specifically on how to lead an ECCD classroom. Often teachers have been trained to teach older children and are then assigned to the ECCD classroom without sufficient experience. Furthermore, since schools place such low priority on ECCD, school heads sometimes prefer low qualified teachers as a way of saving money.

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Heckman, James J. “The Economics of Inequality,” American Educator, Spring 2011
Levine, 2005, p 197
Important Developments in ECCD

ECCD began to attain prominence among policy-makers in developing countries after the commitment to early childhood care and development activities as one of the six goals of EFA at the World Education Conference (1990), also commonly referred to as the Jomtian Conference. The Conference clearly defined the basic learning needs of the child: the necessary learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy, and problem solving), as well as basic learning content (such as knowledge, skills, values and attitudes). The 1500 delegates at the conference adopted a Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs, which included a strong commitment to early childhood care and development. One of six ‘Action Points’ was the “expansion of early childhood care and development activities, including family and community interventions, especially for poor, disadvantaged and disabled children”.

The commitment was renewed a decade later at the World Education Forum Dakar in April, 2000. It is now identified as one of the important goals of the Dakar Framework for Action for Education for All (EFA) and the international community has committed itself to “expanding and improving comprehensively early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.”

The first-ever global conference that exclusively focused on early childhood care and education was held in Moscow in 2010. It was attended by a total of 1,000 participants from 101 states, including 67 Ministers and Vice-Ministers and representatives of UN agencies, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, foundations and other civil society institutions. ECCD was recognized as a high-return investment in sustainable development and the wealth of nations, impeded by the low levels of commitment to ECCD interventions in most parts of the developing world.

The action agenda called upon members to mobilize a stronger commitment to early childhood care and education by (i) developing appropriate legislations, policies and strategies, (ii) scaling up ECCD efforts, and (iii) investing in assessment, research and evaluation of ECCE interventions. It also included a focus on reinforcing effective ECCE program delivery by focusing on equity, quality, capacity building and partnerships with relevant stakeholders. The participants also called upon the donor community and UNESCO to play their role as committed at the World Education Conferences in Jomtian (1990) and Dakar (2000).

ECCD in Pakistan

Early Childhood Education is offered through classes at ECD centers sponsored by NGOs, and through the kachi (literally, raw) class, the rough equivalent to the Preparatory class offered at private schools, a pre-primary class with a minimum enrolment age of five years. It is set up opposed to pakki (literally, cooked)

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1 Dakar Framework for Action, UNESCO, 2000
2 Ibid
classes starting from class 1, which mark the beginning of formal schooling.

The *kachi* class in government school was an official part of government schools in the 1970s before it was officially discontinued in the 1980s (MoE, 2003). It was absent from policy discussions until the late 1990s, even though it existed in some form in many rural primary schools, allowing younger siblings of primary students to prepare for schools (UNESCO, 2007).

The National Education Policy (NEP) 1998-2010 called for the re-introduction of *kachi* as a formal class in primary school. The primary school program was extended to six years with the stated aim of ‘improving achievements of pupils.’ The 18th Amendment of 2010, which devolved the legislative and executive power over 47 policy areas including education to the provinces, effectively rendered the NEP obsolete. While many have encouraged the provinces to follow the NEP, it is not incumbent on them to do so. Meanwhile, the provinces have yet to develop their own education policies.

Due to financial constraints, the government has not been able to allocate additional resources for the improvement of the *kachi* class (UNESCO 2006). However, schools continue to offer the class despite the human resource and capital constraints.

The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the Teachers Resource Center (TRC) developed a national ECCD curriculum, which was revised in 2007 after its initial publication in 2002. The Punjab Textbook Board has developed textbooks for the *kachi* class in line with this curriculum, and they continue serve as one of the tools used in *kachi* classrooms.

The Pakistan National Plan of Action (NPA) for Education for All (2001-2015) lists ECCD as one of the three main areas of focus. The NPA identifies a set of key issues Pakistani ECCD faces:

i. A lack of awareness about the benefits of ECCD;
ii. An absence of well-defined policy for ECCD;
iii. Negligible budgetary allocations;
iv. A lack of coordination among various government departments and poor networking among various service providers such as public managers, private schools; and NGOs; and
v. A dearth of planning, implementation and monitoring abilities in provincial and district communities.

According to the NPA 2001-2015, over 40,000 ECCD centers were to be established in the country during the 15 year time period, and 3,000 teachers recruited and trained annually specifically for ECCD. The cost of this 15-year initiative was estimated to be Rs. 47.7 billion. However, no specific allocation was made for these plans in the provincial budgets, and therefore no change was seen at the ground level.

Despite the failure of the federal and provincial governments to implement the NPA 2001-2015, early childhood education is offered in the form of
The integration of ECCD in government schools in both rural and urban areas. Teacher hiring and allocation decisions often consider the *kachi* class, but it is very rare for government schools, especially in rural areas, to have six teachers for the six classes. As a result, children in the *kachi* class like children in other primary classes do not receive teacher time and attention for the whole school day, and often the time is divided disproportionately in favor of the higher primary classes.

**ECCD Developments in Punjab**

Recently, the Punjab Government has announced its intention to scale-up the provision of quality early childhood education in the province. The Department of Staff Development (DSD) is taking the lead in developing an implementation strategy for introducing quality ECCD in all government primary schools in the province, with the final phase ending in 2021.

The primary stated goals of this initiative include providing universal primary education to all children aged 4-5. The strategy states that the creation of a child-friendly teaching and learning environment will increase enrolment and ensure higher retention rates. According to the strategy document, providing a classroom environment that promotes such holistic development would involve significant investments in the following:

i. Teacher selection and recruitment
ii. Training teachers in the appropriate teaching methodologies, preferably through the integration of ECCD teacher training in on-going training programs
iii. Development and provision of teaching and learning material
iv. Improving the classroom environment either through the construction of separate ECCD classrooms or the refurbishment of existing classrooms
v. Improved ECCD organization and coordination, with the involvement of parents, community based organizations and government bodies

DSD proposes that the scaling-up process should be undertaken in three phases. Out of the 62,000 existing government schools in Punjab, ECCD would be integrated in 12,400 (20%) in the first phase (2011-2013), another 12,400 (20%) in the second phase (2014-2015) and the remaining 37,200 (60%) in the third phase (2016-2021).

In Phase 1, ECCD programs would be established in schools that have the facilities for ECCD classes. Although this criterion is not fixed, the strategy document proposes restricting the first phase only to schools that have at least five classrooms and two teachers. One teacher in each school included in Phase 1 would be provided training on ECCD by the DSD. Another important component of Phase 1 is the development and provision of teaching and learning material.

In Phase 2, while preference would still be given to schools that have at least five classrooms and two teachers, the program would gradually expand to schools that do not currently have enough space for
an ECCD classroom. Since the ECCD integration process would take place in an additional 12,400 schools in this phase, many of which would not even have two teachers by this point, additional contract or permanent teachers would have to be hired. In addition, an ECCD room and accompanying lavatory would also have to be built in schools. Continued support will need to be provided to the schools included in Phase 1.

In Phase 3, the final phase, the remaining 60% schools would be added to the program over a period of five years. For this phase to be successful, a significant number of new teachers would have to be hired either on a contract or permanent basis, and a significant amount of funding would have to be devoted towards building and furnishing ECCD rooms and lavatories. An important component of the final phase is the introduction of a mandatory periodic report card for each child that emphasizes the holistic development promoted in the ECCD program.

The strategy document also recognizes that a successful implementation of this program requires vast improvements in the current monitoring and evaluation mechanism. It proposes establishing district and tehsil committees for the purpose of monitoring variables such as ‘teacher performance, school learning outcomes, and community response and school upkeep’. Data will also be used at the macro level to assess ‘action plans, successes and weaknesses’ of the strategy. The Program Monitoring and Implementation Unit (PMIU) of the Punjab Education Sector Reforms Project (PERSP) currently manages most monitoring and evaluation activities in the public education sector in Punjab. The strategy document proposes that the PMIU continue to do so, albeit with significant communication and feedback links with the district and provincial education departments. It also recommends a third-party evaluation of the scaled-up ECCD program be conducted to measure the impact of the program on a wide range of variables.

Despite the fact that this strategy has been developed by an arm of the Government of Punjab in collaboration with UNICEF and has been endorsed by the Secretary Education Punjab, little is certain about the extent of funding that will be available for this initiative in the years to come. The strategy document presents 9 different financing options with varying parameters. Assuming that 6,200 schools would be inducted into the program for each of the 10 years from 2012-2021, the projection estimates a minimum first year cost of Rs. 105 million (remodeling of existing room, some supplies and teacher training but no new construction or new hiring of teachers) to Rs. 7,049 million (with newly constructed rooms and lavatories and new permanent teacher). The cost for the final year (with a project inflation of 10%) is Rs. 418 million for the option for no new construction or new hiring of teachers to Rs. 35,797 million for the option with new construction and new permanent teachers for all schools.

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Chapter 1

The Study

Background and Objective

The objective of this study is to develop a clearer understanding of the care, development and education that children undergo from their birth till the age of 6 in the three districts of Multan, Vehari, and Muzaffargarh. These districts were chosen for our familiarity with them from having developed and implemented multiple ECCD interventions over the past years.

In presenting a detailed picture of the care and education provided in these schools, we hope to stimulate discussions on the important but hitherto neglected issue of child development in ECCD. In assuming that ECCD outside the home is a natural need of the child, the current discussion focuses solely on how to make parents aware of the need of ECCD in a formal environment. In doing so, this discussion fails to consider that every child, regardless of whether he or she attends a formal ECCD center, does receive some form of training/education at the home in the social, physical, intellectual and emotional domains. This study’s prime concern is thus to discover the different kinds of ECCD that a child receives from different actors in different places.

Sample

Our sample for part one of our study was drawn from the three districts of Multan, Vehari and Muzaffargarh in South Punjab where CGN-PK is already established in its work on ECCD. Our experience with ECCD in these areas helped us select tehsils that were relevant for study based on population and the number of schools.

We chose 5 to 7 localities in each district, chosen based on criteria specific to each district. In Muzaffargarh, for example, we wanted to visit at least one locality in each of the four tehsils, while also visiting two of the major cities in the district, NCHD feeder schools which are common in the district and also visiting a rural community that has both a government school and a madrasah. Overall, our sample attempts to represent the diversity in availability, nature and quality of ECCD in these districts.

The district-wise list of localities is as follows:

Vehari
i. 187 EB in Burewala tehsil
ii. 8 WB in Vehari tehsil
iii. Nur Shah in Melsi tehsil
iv. Gujjarwala in Burewala tehsil
v. Muddi Behni in Melsi tehsil
vi. UC 911 in Vehari tehsil

Muzaffargarh
i. Maqwal Haider in Alipur tehsil
ii. Subhai Wala and Rampur in Jatoi tehsil
iii. Morian in Kot Addu tehsil
iv. Fatehpur Janobi in Alipur tehsil
Situation Analysis: Early Childhood Care and Development in Multan, Vehari and Muzaffargarh

Chapter 1

We wanted to study parents, caretakers, teachers of children between the ages of 0 and 6. We divided this group into two further groups (i) children aged 0-3, and (ii) children aged 4-6. This is because, firstly, children in these age groups undergo different social, environmental and thus developmental experiences. Children under 4 years old have typically not had any schooling, and primarily receive ECCD from their homes, while children between the ages of 4 and 6 receive the bulk of their ECCD from school.

Further, the children in either of these age groups have vastly different developmental needs. In the first age group (0-3 years), health, nutrition, immunization and hygiene remain the primary concerns while in the second age group (4-6) learning (in the social sense as well as the literacy/numeracy sense) also become the concerns of those responsible for the ECCD of the child. We focus on ECCD practices in both rural and urban areas of the three districts.

For the quantitative survey that formed part two of our study, a total of 317 schools in 79 villages in three districts of South Punjab were surveyed. This sample was arrived at in two steps. The first step was to select the tehsils in which the survey was to take place. Considering past academic practice and the nature of the measures in which we were interested, we decided to self-select the three tehsils in South Punjab which according to (i) previous qualitative data gathered by us and (ii) the latest available census of schools in Punjab (National Education Census (2005) seemed most representative of the population of South Punjab. This practice has past academic precedent in the Learning and Educational Achievement in Punjab Schools (LEAPS) study. Past data shows that variation in similar measures within a defined geographical area (district or tehsil) is generally much more drastic and hence important to capture than variation across several units of the geographical area. It is for this reason that we decided to draw our sample of schools and villages from three tehsils in South Punjab: Muzaffargarh, Vehari and Multan Saddar.

Methodology

For the methodology for part one of the study, all visits except the secondary visits listed above, the visit was made by a team of two or three CGN-PK staff members including at least one male and one female member. The typical visit comprised the following:

i. Visits to the government or private primary schools and any ECCD centers. A standard tool was used
to organize discussions with teachers based on the dimensions of ECCD we were focusing on, but with enough flexibility so as to allow any unusual practices to be captured.

ii. Conversations with schoolteachers, shopkeepers or other easily accessible persons regarding accessing knowledgeable people in the community who will be able to talk to us about standard practices and social norms in the community.

iii. Conversations with knowledgeable people in the community (which may include the accessible people in (b)) regarding dimensions of ECCD we were focusing on.

iv. After the level of comfort and trust achieved in (iii), having conversations with men and women in ordinary households regarding their own ECCD practices, their expressed ECCD demand, and other ECCD dimensions.

Discussion Guidelines

The structure of our discussions was informed by questions about the nature of the demand for ECCD, and the different sources of ECCD available to children.

Assessing the Demand for ECCD

We believed the following to influence the demand for ECCD:

i. Demand for childcare from the custodial point of view. Parents need someone to look after their children if they cannot do so themselves. This demand is met by some actor(s) other than the parents.

ii. Demand due to the growth and development needs of children. This demand comes from the parents and may be met by the parents themselves or some other actor or a combination.

iii. Demand due to the health, nutritional, hygiene and immunization needs of the child. This demand almost always needs outside intervention to be met. Social norms dictating the treatment of children between the ages 0-5.

Assessing the Sources of ECCD

We expected the following to be the primary sources of ECCD:

i. The Household: Our hypothesis prior to our field visits was that children in the first age group (0-3 years) receive most of their ECCD in their own household. For children in the second age group (4-5) years, we expect that the household still serves as an important supplier of their ECCD needs, but with more supplementation from the other institutions listed below.

ii. The Community: In addition to the household, we hypothesized that the community serves as an informal educator for children in this age group. This is probably truer for the second age group (4-5) years since they have more mobility. The community may be understood both in terms of terms of physical proximity and in terms of how close the household’s interaction with other households is. For example, this may involve extended family or biraderi that is
not based within the same household and not living in the exact same location but still visits often, the extended family or biraderi that is living in close proximity, and members of the community from outside the family or biraderi but living in close proximity or otherwise close to the child.

iii. The School / ECCD Center: We hypothesized that these institutions serve as suppliers of ECCD for only the second age group (4-6 years) except in cases where an older sibling is enrolled in the primary school and brings along his/her younger sibling because his parents are busy in work etc. There are three main types of this institution: (i) kachi class in government schools, (ii) Nursery and Prep class in private schools, and (iii) ECCD centers opened by NGOs dealing with children aged 4-6.

To explore the above, and additional issues and dimensions we discovered in the course of our pilots, we developed lists of issues and questions that were to be explored during field visits. These were discussed in detail amongst the team during pilots and prior to visits. The complete lists of questions are attached as an appendix at the end of this report. A summary of these issues is presented below:

i. Household Structure: Size of households, age distribution, occupation of household members, prevalence of joint family system, income levels, members time allocation, perceptions of adult members on the importance of ECCD, perceptions of adult members regarding preferred suppliers of ECCD at different age groups, education of household members, and other indicators to gauge quality of ECCD supply at household level.

ii. Cultural Practices (including agricultural seasonality and labor practices): seasonal labor practices (tied to the agricultural cycles), who takes custodial responsibility of children while mothers are engaged in agricultural work, culturally defined role of fathers and other male figures in ECCD, the extent to which agricultural seasonality is responsible for hypothesis (ii) above, what parental interest exists in child outcomes, nature of demand for custodial and educational ECCD at different age levels.

iii. Community Structure: How is the community defined, who becomes part of the ‘community’ for children in the two age-groups, the extent to which physical proximity of dwellings and family and biraderi linkages define community, level of trust in different conceptions of community, level of interaction between child and community for different age groups, nature of interaction given ECCD needs.

iv. Schools & ECCD Centers: Teacher time, teacher quality and other resources dedicated to kachi classes in government and primary schools, time division in ECCD classrooms, ECCD curriculum used, seasonal enrolment in kachi classes and the determinants of this enrolment, what happens to children who enroll in kachi at early age as opposed to those
who do not, perceived importance and perceived nature of ECCD from suppliers (teachers) in these centers, business model for ECCD centers, nature of ECCD provided in these centers, sustainablity of these ECCD centers, link between ECCD centers and demonstrated ECCD demand by households, do these schools and ECCD centers act as venues for nutrition, immunization and hygiene exercises, are any madraris serving as ECCD centers, the rationale behind ECCD interventions, and what are the thoughts of local NGOs regarding the ECCD market.

v. **Other:** Aggressive behavior displayed & how it is dealt with, response to child’s distress, how physically close child is to primary caregiver (mother usually) and other adults in the family, children’s emotional lives.

The methodology for the quantitative survey that formed **part two** of our situation analysis, we conducted a quantitative survey in ECD centers and schools in our target districts. This survey answers a number of the questions raised during the qualitative visits, as highlighted in the previous three chapters. It confirmed a few of the hypotheses developed during the qualitative visits while challenging our preconceived notions on other issues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total number of villages with at least one school</th>
<th>Surveyed villages</th>
<th>Sampled Schools</th>
<th>Surveyed Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multan</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>102 (86%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muzaffargarh</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>109 (89%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehari</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>106 (89%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>693</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>317 (88%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Our visits to classes in Multan, Vehari and Muzaffargarh sought to understand the variety of programs on offer and their problems. Part one of this chapter provides a comparison of ECCD programs and the schools they are provided in terms of i) school structure, ii) teacher assignments and iii) the ECCD program itself for government schools, private schools, and NGO-sponsored ECCD centers. Part two of this chapter will elaborate in detail how the differences in structure impact the nature of problems each type of ECCD program faces.

Government Schools

Government schools offer ECCD through their kachi class. A pre-primary class with a minimum enrolment age of five years, it is established in relation to the pakki class, which marks the beginning of formal schooling. The kachi class has a history of neglect, and remains ignored despite its recent formalized status (see Chapter 1 for detailed history, lacking teachers, textbooks, rooms and classroom space. The lack of funding has resulted in issues in terms of classroom space, syllabus development, and basic facilities.

School and Class Structure

Most schools appoint 2-3 teachers to teach 6 class classes, from kachi to class 5. This arrangement usually results in teachers dividing their time between each class.

In primary schools that have less than six teachers for the six classes from kachi to class 5, the kachi teacher divides his or her time between kachi and one or two other classes. To keep two or three classes engaged at the same time, the teacher usually alternates lessons with each class and asks the class to repeat or revise what he teaches them while he teaches the other class.

Usually, a ‘monitor’ is appointed from among the children in the class who are responsible for making sure the class maintains discipline and performs the tasks that the teacher has given. Monitors in kachi class naturally have a harder time than those in higher classes if only because younger children tend to give in to distractions more easily and find the idea of maintaining discipline less natural. There is no clear trend of whether teachers managing another class besides kachi give more time to kachi or the other class. Some say they give less time to kachi because the syllabus is not as demanding, while others say that they give more time to kachi because younger children require more supervision. It is also not uncommon to have the kachi and pakki class sit together in the same room or outdoor location in alternate rows, with teaching to the two classes going on more or less simultaneously.

Some schools, however, do staff at least 6 teachers. In primary schools that do have a minimum of six teachers, it is either the case that (i) a teacher is exclusively devoted to kachi class for the entire school day or it is the case that (ii) a teacher is appointed as the ‘class teacher’ for the kachi class while different teachers are responsible for teaching different subjects. In either of these cases, barring absenteeism or shirking on the teacher’s part, the kachi class
is being looked after and taught by a teacher for the entire school day. The first of these seems to be more common than the second. Only in Basti Munha in Muzaffargarh did we find that the kachi class regularly has different teachers for different subjects. It is common to have teachers substitute for each other at times, but to have specialist teachers for different subjects at this level seems to be rare.

**Teacher Appointments**

Teacher assignments to the kachi class in a particular year are made according to teacher availability. In one system a teacher is designated the same class from kachi to class 5. Many teachers told us that this arrangement works well because the teacher develops a strong relationship with the children and finds it easier to adjust to individual needs. For this to work, however, the school needs a stable allocation of teachers with very infrequent transfers.

Another approach is to simply have a staff meeting on the 1st of April (the first day of the new academic year), and decide based on mutual consent. The factors that are considered in such a meeting may include the following:

1. Whether a teacher is from the village or not. Teachers from the village are preferred for kachi class since they are more familiar with the children and their families. In the words of Maqbool, the primary school head teacher at the Government Boys Middle School in 187 EB, Vehari, teaching the kachi class goes well beyond school hours as the teacher is often consulted by parents for various kinds of issues related to the child’s development. It must be noted that this factor seems more important in communities that are very tightly knot due to family and biraderi linkages. The vast majority of households in 187 EB, for example, belonged to the same biraderi.

   ii. Whether a teacher has been teaching kachi class in the previous school year. Some rotation is usually observed, and it is rare for the same teacher to teach kachi several years running.

   iii. Whether a teacher’s personality is suited towards dealing with young children. This seems to be particularly important in case of girls’ schools.

   iv. Senior teachers’ preferences. More senior teachers get more of a say in which class they are going to teach.

**ECCD Program**

The activities undertaken by children in the kachi class naturally differ based on how much time their teacher accords them. While there are numerous ways of dividing the day, these may be divided into two general groups: first, the modern school day initiated with an assembly and divided by subject, and second, dividing the day by activity.

In the ‘modern’ set up, a morning assembly is followed by classes or ‘periods’ for the different subjects. Recess, in the middle of the day, is followed by more classes until the end of the school day. The second way, which according to some teachers is how the traditional
classroom functioned during their own childhood, divides the day according to the kind of education activity rather than by subject or language. In the first half of the day, the teacher writes letters or numbers on to a blackboard and students copy these on to their takhti (notebook). This gives the teacher the opportunity to provide individual attention to those who are facing problems recognizing and copying the symbols. After recess, in the second half of the day, the teacher conducts imla (dictation).

Private Schools

Private schools offer ECCD through Nursery, Play Group and Preparatory classes. We visited a number of schools in both urban and rural areas.

School and Class Structure

The number of pre-primary classes in a school ranged from one to three. Schools located in urban areas tended to have a higher number of pre-primary classes and a lower initial enrolment age compared to those in rural areas. It appears that private primary schools wishing to increase their enrolment and hence their revenues are expanding downwards into the pre-primary schooling space rather than upwards into the post-primary schooling space. Most private primary schools we visited are co-educational, with the exception of a few schools with very large enrolments and which were operating for a number of years.

The private schools used books from a number of publishers, including Oxford University Press, Little Angels, Vision & Success, Green Hills Child Publications and others. The school owners / principals usually make the decision of which publisher’s books must be used, after considering the different available options.

Teaching Appointments

Requirements for an ECCD teacher varied from school to school. The two main approaches to hiring differed in terms of policy on experience. In some schools, we were told that the ‘better’ teachers were given the higher primary classes because a higher level of proficiency and skill is required to teach math and science to classes 4 and 5. In others, however, we were told that the more experienced teachers were asked to teach pre-primary classes because experience is required to ‘handle’ children in the pre-primary age bracket. In one such school where a young girl was teaching a pre-primary grade, we were told that she underwent a training phase where she essentially shadowed a more experienced teacher in the class. The teachers for pre-primary classes in all co-educational schools were female. Regardless of this approach, however, schools tend to search for teachers with a kind-hearted or ‘motherly’ approach towards young children.

ECCD Program

The school day in private schools usually runs for about five hours, with the youngest class sometimes having a timetable that does not run the full five hours. These schools devise their daily schedules in a number of ways, and the urban private schools often integrate activities other than those
part of the government curriculum. In Rautaaz Public School in Shah Gardez, Multan, the ‘Play Group’ class has half the school day reserved for different games. In a number of schools, some time is devoted to drawing, classrooms games or poems etc.

NGO Sponsored ECCD Centers

We visited ECCD centers operated by two different organizations: National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) and Research Advocacy and Social Training Institute (RASTI). NCHD has an extensive network of ‘feeder schools’ in all three districts, especially Muzaffargarh. A feeder school is established in villages or settlements that do not have a government primary school within a 5 kilometer radius. We visited four NCHD feeder schools, three in Muzaffargarh and one in Vehari.

School and Classroom Structure

The NCHD feeder schools essentially serve as branches of the nearest government school with the children attending these schools officially enrolled in the nearest school’s register. A teacher from the government school conducts assessment in these schools. The government curriculum is followed, and the textbooks are provided free of cost by the Punjab government.

Officially, the feeder schools only cater for kachi and pakki. Since many children in school-less settlements end up never going to school because of the distance, these feeder schools provide education at the age when it is harder for children to walk or otherwise travel long distances.

During our visits, however, we saw that exceptions had been made for students of classes 2 and 3, mostly girls, who would not be allowed to go to a school in another settlement. The teacher thus sometimes has to accommodate between 2 and 4 classes in a school room or a single courtyard. While the schools follow a more or less typical government school timetable, some of them have one day per week reserved as ‘activity day’. Activity day involves small ceremonies in which some children recite the kalma Qur’anic verses, poems etc.

Teaching Appointments

These teachers were hired from the local community through an application process. While the expected factors such as education, availability of space etc. were important in decisions on which of the applicants was to be hired, we also found that NCHD had to be mindful of the religious sect of the applicants. In one case, a Shia teacher was hired to open a feeder school in a predominantly Sunni community with the result that most of the parents refused to send their children to school. These teachers are paid Rs. 2,500 per month for their services while no rent is paid for the premises on which the school is run.

ECCD Program

The most ‘non-educational’ of all schools/ECCD centers we visited was the ECCD Center established in 8WB
village in Vehari by RASTI with funding from Plan Pakistan. The center does have time in the daily schedule set aside for studying Urdu, English and Math but the methodology followed is very interactive and uses tools such as flash cards to engage the students. The school follows a curriculum for early childhood education developed by RASTI itself. The children are also involved in a number of structured games. In our interactions with the children, we found that they were quite confident and not shy of interacting with strangers unlike the vast majority of government school students we interacted with. The teacher in this center was an unmarried girl who was the daughter of the head teacher at the Government Boys Middle School in the village. She had recently taken the reins of the center from her elder sister who married and was unable to continue running the center.

Children were usually admitted into the center at the age of 4, and were admitted to the kachi class at the government school after attending the center for a year. The kachi and paki teacher at the government boys school told us that there was a marked difference in the level of confidence and the ease of transition between children who attended the center compared to those who did not. His own daughter was enrolled in the center and he proudly told us about the poems she could recite and how confident she had become at the age of 4. He went to the extent of saying that the center was a great blessing for the community, but that since there was an enrolment limit of 25-30 children, all children in the community could not be admitted to the center. Similar to the NCHD feeder schools, the biggest drawbacks of such interventions is the uncertainty with respect to the continuity of the establishment. Shifts in donor financing and priorities can, and do, take these facilities away from communities.

**The Religious Alternative: Madaris**

In some of the areas we visited, children are sent to religious educational establishments, a madrassah (pl. mararis), when they are as young as 3-4 years old. Some of these children are later also enrolled in school and they continue attending both kinds of educational institutions while others exclusively attend mararis. The reasons stated by parents and muhtamim (heads of the mararis) for sending children to mararis almost exclusively revolve around a desire from the parents for their children to receive religious education and a sense that religious education is at least as important as other kinds of education.

Sometimes, this is extended to a desire for the child to become a professional religious teacher/scholar. After studying at their madrassah for several years, children can become Hafiz (having memorized the Qur’an by heart), Qari (reciting the Qur’an with correct pronunciation and rhythm, being experts in the Qur’an’s phonology and hence being able to teach others how to read the Qur’an), Imam (being the prayer leader in a community mosque), Alim or religious scholar, and finally a Mufti who are entitled to ihtihad (independent reasoning on religious matters) and
can issue *ifta* or legal opinions. Some parents also state in their reasons for sending their child to *madrassah* that *Hifz* (memorizing the Qur’an) sharpens the memory of the child, which comes in handy when a school is required to memorize things in school.

We focused our visits to *madaris* in Muzaffargarh district where we felt that the phenomenon of young children attending *madaris* was a little more common than the other two districts. A significant proportion of the students enrolled in *madaris* in Muzaffargarh city were from poor families living in remote villages and towns in the vast geographic spread of Muzaffargarh district.

*Madaris* are not always able to cover the cost of food and clothing for students from institutional donations, donations from influential and wealthy locals, and endowments. Some *madaris* ask their students to visit assigned areas in groups where they collect their meals by knocking on doors. Sometimes, local families provide food on a rotation basis and even clothing items and cash as *sadqa* or *zakat* (types of charity) are donated.

Some of these schools provide vocational training in wood work, metal work, electronics and basic compute courses for older children, such as *Daar-ul-Hafeez Muhammadia –o- Daar-ul-Hadis* in Muzaffargarh city, which integrate religious education with basic literacy and numeracy at the pre-primary level. Others, however, such as one we encountered in basti Maqwal Hadair in Alipur *tehsil* in Muzaffargarh district, do not provide non-religious education. The head teacher at this madrassa told us that he focuses exclusively on teaching the children how to read the Qur’an, how to pray and fulfill other religious injunctions. Some of the children go on to do hifz. He only teaches the children how to read Urdu when they are ready to read advanced religious texts in the Urdu language. When asked about the absence of non-religious education, especially given that he was educated himself, he suggested it was not the school’s concern. There is a feeder school run by the National Commission Human Development (NCHD) within the basti itself, but close to none of the children attending the *madrassa* attend this school.
Chapter 2

Problems with ECCD

Unplanned Grouping Increases the Age Range in Any Given Classroom

Unregistered children and rolling admissions policies cause children of different age groups to be grouped in any single classroom, which in turn poses administrative and quality related issues to providing education.

In many cases, unregistered children are the younger siblings, relatives or neighbors of children enrolled in school, who are sent along with the older child to acclimate to the school environment until they are ready to enroll. Others are in a trial period of a few days, following which the teacher makes a final decision on enrollment based on emotional and environmental adjustment. Similarly, year-long and semi-year long enrollment windows contribute to the age diversity as well.

Given the vastly differing developing needs of children in these age groups, this unplanned grouping creates problems with tending to each individual child’s social, emotional, cognitive and physical needs effectively. Managing classroom discipline has also been reported to cause difficulties. This becomes even more of an issue with unregistered children because they tend to be younger and are often neglected.

Lack of Constitutional Recognition Prevents ECCD from Receiving Attention

According to the Punjab government’s regulations, children may only be admitted to school when they have reached the age of 5. This is noted in Article 25-A of the Constitution of Pakistan which states that the education of children aged 5 to 16 (and not those younger than 5) the responsibility of the state. This makes the state constitutionally obliged to provide education to children aged 5 to 16, but given resource constraints and the magnitude of the task at hand, enrolling children aged less than 5 becomes less of a priority.

Government schools find it hard to cater for children aged less than 5, especially given the fact that the number of teachers in government schools is often lower than the number of classes in the school and that kachi mostly has low priority and hence shares a teacher with one or two other classes.

Abid, the English teacher at the school, told us that since most of the teachers are from the local community and because there are a lot of private schools in the area which admit children at the age of 3-4, the school often feels pressured to admit younger children by local communities as a consequence of lower enrollment age in private schools.

The low cost private sector is driving the enrollment age lower with the result that enrollment at age 3-3.5 in private schools in urban areas and 4 in rural areas is common. In Nishtar Colony and Shah Gardez (both low-mid income urban localities) in Multan for example, most children between the ages of 3 and 4 were enrolled in private school. Taliri in Muzaffargarh city and UC 911 in Vehari city present a similar picture in this respect. Often the reason given for
 Situation Analysis: Early Childhood Care and Development in Multan, Vehari and Muzaffargarh

Early enrolment is linked to the children getting through school at an earlier age.

Lack of Support from Parents

Teachers commonly complain that parents do not follow up classwork with activities at home. We believe this may have much to do with parents’ conception of education and their role in their child’s development. While most parents send their children to schools for custodial rather than educational purposes, they do view these schools as primarily responsible for their child’s development once their schooling begins. This holds especially true for the vast majority of rural parents who are illiterate. When asked about the role that can be played by parents and relatives in the education of children, most parents tended to argue that education and other domains of development beyond the physical are the responsibility of the teachers, and that there is little that the parents can do in this regard.

This is problematic for teachers, as they struggle to not only teach children two languages and mathematical concepts at a fairly young age, but also mold their social habits and their mode of interaction with the outside world. The impact of this must be emphasized: not only do parents fail or neglect to help students with cognitive development through homework, but they also fail to provide a social setting that motivates a child to value what they experience at school.

Language of Instruction Impedes Learning in Multilingual Settings

Almost all children in rural and peri-urban areas, and a significant proportion in urban areas, speak Siraiki or Punjabi at home. Their first language is the one their parents and other adults they interact with are most comfortable with. When they are sent to school, they encounter a teacher who usually communicates in the Urdu language. While this change is hard to adjust to in itself, children usually do not have a very hard time understanding and communicating in basic Urdu because of exposure to media and because of similarities in the vocabulary, phonetics and syntax of Urdu and Punjabi and to a slightly less extent, Urdu and Siraiki.

Adjusting to school and learning becomes especially difficult for the child when the teacher attempts to use a somewhat alien language (Urdu) to teach an almost completely alien language (English).

This problem has been compounded by recent policy initiatives. In April 2010, the Government of Punjab declared all public primary schools as being ‘English-medium’. According to the School Education Department, Government of Punjab, this decision was aimed at ‘competing with the globalized world in the field of knowledge’. In order to implement this decision and ensure that government teachers are actually able to teach in an ‘English-medium’ school, the Government did the following:

With a view to enabling the teachers to teach English medium books, all the headmasters/ headmistresses...
and senior teachers have been designated "Master Trainers". The teachers have already undergone six-day training course in spoken English. The rest of the teachers would undergo spoken English 12-day course.¹⁴

Needless to say, the six-day and twelve-day training courses in spoken English have done little to make public school teachers better at teaching English. Most of these teachers have not been exposed to a lot of English during their own education, and it is a near impossible task for them to effectively teach a language to 5 year olds which they do not quite grasp themselves.

An overwhelming majority of the government teachers that we spoke to in the three districts felt that their job had become much harder and their teaching more ineffective since the introduction of this directive. Some went to the extent of saying that they find it hard to communicate with kachi children in Urdu, and that any introduction to the English language for these children is in the form of a few confusing symbols drawn on boards, sometimes associated with unfamiliar sounds, and having no context whatsoever. Most of them recommended that schools be made Urdu-medium again, at least for kachi and the early pre-primary classes so that the children learn the language but the language is not supposed to be a medium of instruction.

Parents’ Financial Difficulty Diverts Admissions Towards Madaris

Teachers and community members themselves stated that madrassah education is more frequently demanded by children of the poorest families. This suggests that in addition to a desire for religious education, an inability to bear the expenses of a school education or even food and clothing may lead parents to enroll their male children in madaris where they will be given proper food and clothing.

Children Face Difficulties Transitioning from Pre-Primary to Primary School

In government schools, perhaps the biggest challenge faced by both students and teachers is the gap in the curriculum of kachi and pakki classes. At the end of the kachi class, children are expected to have learnt the alphabet in both Urdu and English and to be able to count from one to one hundred. They are also expected to verbally say a word which starts with each letter. For example, when asked to say a word which starts with the letter A, they should be able to say ‘apple’, and so on.

In pakki class, children are expected to be able to read entire paragraphs in both English and Urdu. This jump in syllabus compounds the language problem highlighted above to make teaching pakki effectively very hard for teachers. They are under a lot of

pressure to complete the syllabus in a short amount of time, and in doing so, are often unable to provide individual attention to children’s learning needs.

When we asked government teachers how many children typically fail to progress from kachi to pakki they often responded by telling us that all of them did, since a government regulation prohibited them from making children repeat classes, or colloquially, ‘failing’ children. Only if a child has spent too little time in school (due to enrolment late in the academic year or excessive absenteeism) may the child be failed. Because of this practice, children in pakki class are at drastically different levels of language attainment, and teaching them as one unit becomes next to impossible. It is not only the government schools that are discouraged from failing children, private schools also have the incentives to avoid failing children because they fear that parents will take the child out of their school and enroll him in another school (or take him out of school altogether) if the child is failed.

In schools where a lot of children do fail, teachers usually cite ‘illiterate parents’ as the reason for why children fail to reach the minimum level of attainment required of kachi students. Often, this minimum level of attainment may be as low as the ability to conduct one’s self politely and to sit in a classroom without disturbing others. Teachers say that because of the dehati maho that is dominant in the children’s households, some of them fail to be properly acclimatized to school and hence are made to repeat kachi class.

The Government Boys Primary School in 8 West Branch in Vehari often faces such situations. The community in this village is a closely knit one, with most households belonging to the same biraderi, the if the teacher feels that the child is not yet ready for pakki class, then he does not have a particularly hard time convincing the parents to let him make the child repeat kachi class.

**Farming Seasons Affect Attendance Levels**

School routines are reportedly disturbed by the agricultural cycle. Children in the higher classes of primary school (class 4 or 5) are often required by their parents to work in the fields alongside them in the wheat cutting season in April and May. While this does not directly affect the attendance of children in pre-primary classes since children that age may be a burden in the field instead of being helpful, it does indirectly affect the attendance of pre-primary children in two ways.

One is that pre-primary children often rely on elder children to take them to school. This point has been highlighted above in the discussion on unregistered children in government schools. Another reason, for which we did not find strong evidence (see Chapter 5) but was considered important by some nonetheless, is that children in the ECCD bracket rely on their mothers to get them ready for school and actually to ensure that they do go to school. If the mother leaves early in the morning for the field, and if the replacement caretaker is not so careful about school or if there is no replacement caretaker for...
the day at all, then the child may spend the days roaming around instead of going to school. Community members in 187 East Branch in Vehari told us that this was quite common during wheat cutting.

In either case, it is apparent that attendance is significantly affected due to agricultural cycles. In 8 West Branch, the GBPS teachers told us that attendance in *kachi* class is halved in cotton picking season and reduced to a fifth in wheat cutting season. It is important to note that this effect is not limited to rural areas. Teachers at the Government Primary Schools in Neel Kot and Akhtarabad Colony, both low-income urban localities in Multan district, told us that a majority of parents moved to their villages with their families during the wheat cutting season to take advantage of the employment opportunities during that time. The parents and older children work in others’ fields as wheat cutters and receive payment for their labor in the form of wheat. According to the teachers, the going rate for this labor is 50 kilograms of wheat for cutting wheat in an acre of land. Because of this practice, report the teachers, the enrolment in *kachi* and *pakki* combined fell from 67 to 32 (52%) in GPS Neel Kot and from 111 to 67 (40%) in GPS Akhtarabad. Parents are very inflexible in this regard, understandably so because their continued livelihood depends on this move.
Research has shown that nutrition has a lasting impact on a child’s cognitive development and, further, his or her chances at socio-economic success later in life (see Literature Review). This chapter’s findings on nutrition and immunization in the three districts studied, gathered from our discussions with teachers, parents and administrators, thus attempt to understand an important facet of Pakistani ECCD.

The Situation: Nutrition

Our discussions on health with school-teachers and community members focused largely on breastfeeding for children aged 0-3 years, and food intake for children aged 3-6 years.

Breastfeeding

In every location visited, community members saw breast milk as important for the development and growth of their children, and agreed that it was best imperative for babies under sixth months. In three locations, Nishtar Colony Multan, Gujjarwala Vehari and UC 911 Vehari, community members’ religious beliefs seemed to influence their views on the matter. One father, for example, stated his belief that breast milk is the male child’s Islamic right until the age of 2 and the female child’s right until the age of 2½ (UC 911, Vehari).

In most communities people agreed that breast milk should be continued through the first two years of a child’s life. Many individuals in other communities seemed to feel strongly that formula should not be given to a child. In most communities, people also felt that purchasing formula milk was beyond their means and as such was not a viable alternative to breast milk. Apart from milk, children at this age are also fed soft foods such as biscuits soaked in milk, yogurt, porridge, bananas, khitcheri, eggs, and fruit.

Healthy Food Intake

Community members generally agreed that children from 3-6 years old could be integrated into the elder family members’ meals. The ideal diet for children of this age was said to be milk, fruit, vegetables, meat, butter, rice, and roti.

In most communities parents said that children rarely refused to eat. When this did occur, the general response was for parents to try to encourage their child to eat it, and if this did not work, they would try to exchange the food for something the child liked. In a few communities, parents might end up using violence or getting angry with children in order to make them eat the food. Generally, this was the father’s responsibility. For example, in Subhai Wala (Muzaffargarh) and Fatehpur Janobi (Muzaffargarh), fathers explained that if they were tired in such situations, then they would hit the child. As well, in Taliri (Muzaffargarh) mothers explained that they would at first try to change the food for something the child wanted, but if this was not possible, they would have the father scold the child.

Most students eat lunch at school

There were only two communities, Maqwal Haider (Muzaffargarh) and Taliri (Muzaffargarh) where children returned home for lunch. In most cases, it seems that both teachers
and parents prefer children to stay in the school for the entire school day. In situations where children did not bring anything for lunch (generally because they come from poor families and their parents cannot afford to give them anything), other children often share their food with them. Nishtar Colony (Multan) and 187 EB (Vehari) both provided examples of this. There was a range of responses on what foods parents prohibit their children from eating. The most frequent response was that parents discourage their children from eating food that causes sore throats or diarrhea. Parents also prohibited or discouraged unhealthy foods, packaged foods, and locally made foods. Specifically toffees, biscuits, ice cream, baraf gola, daal choran, khattayaalu, imli, papar, soft drinks, and chooran were cited. Mothers and fathers showed a stark difference in their knowledge of children’s diet. In both Nur Shah (Vehari) and in Muddi Behni (Vehari) men struggled to answer the questions about children’s diets and said that the questioners should turn to the mothers for answers. It is generally observed that fathers are involved in decisions about children’s diets to a very limited extent.

The Situation: Immunization and Health

Immunization

It is clear from our conversations that teams from the Health Department visit most schools to provide polio drops on a regular basis (ranging from monthly to once every 3-4 months). Health teams also visit some schools for health campaigns about polio, dengue fever, tetanus and to spray for Dengue. There were a few schools where health teams provided more than polio drops and health campaigns. For example, in at the Government Boys Middle School in 187 EB (Vehari), a mobile health team visits frequently to perform routine medical checkups and to raise awareness about polio, dengue, and tetanus. In 8 WB (Vehari) a team came in the past year for de-worming and a team from PEIDAR visited the ECCD center to conduct a session on

health and hygiene.

In almost all of the communities, teacher and parents said that children were vaccinated for Polio, and in a number of communities TT vaccinations were also provided. In Ahmadabad (Multan), Maqwal Haider (Muzaffargarh), 8 WB (Vehari) and Muddi Behni (Vehari) community members and teachers also reported that other vaccinations were given, but they could not identify what these vaccinations were. These vaccinations were all provided either by health teams or by Lady Health Workers.

Most parents felt that vaccinations were important for children’s health, explaining that they stopped the spread of disease. Some parents had less information, but still had their children get vaccinated. For example,
parents in Muddi Behni (Vehari) said that they knew vaccines were important but weren’t sure why and parents in Morian (Muzaffargarh) knew that vaccinations stopped diseases from spreading, but did not know what type of diseases they stopped.

Health Facilities

Most parents reported that if their child is sick or hurt, they try remedies at home first, and if those do not work, they take their child to the nearest doctor or hospital. The accessibility of professional medical attention varied from community to community. For some, such as those in Shah Gardez (Multan) the hospital is only 1 km away, and thus easily accessible. For others, such as those in Muddi Behni (Vehari) there is no doctor within the village, and so children are taken to a hospital in a neighboring town.

For communities where there is no qualified doctor in the village, many parents depend on private chemists (as is the case in Morian, Muzaffargarh), basic health units (as was reported in Munha, Muzaffargarh), or hakims that are reported to fix broken bones (Muddi Behni, Vehari reported having one). There was only one community where individuals cited the cost of a hospital visit as preventing them from using it. In 187 EB (Vehari) community members reported that the cost of the hospital was prohibitively expensive, and so they relied on ‘desitotkay’ or Hakeems for alternative medicine before resorting to the hospitals.

Lady Health Workers seemed to be a central aspect in the health of most communities. They visited almost all of the communities with some regularity, either going to the schools, to people’s homes, or to both. They generally provide polio drops, checkups for babies and pregnant women, and health tips for mothers. The only community where individuals said that Lady Health Workers did not visit was the area surrounding Cherry Tree School in Multan city. This is not surprising considering this locality was relatively more affluent in comparison to all the other localities we visited.

Schools generally responded that if a child is hurt or ill at school they use their first aid kit and inform the parents. Some of the government schools we visited had government-issue first aid children available, while others did not. Teachers generally said that they tried to prevent disease and ensure good health in their students by emphasizing the importance of health, diet, and hygiene.

In order to prevent their children from becoming sick, parents generally pointed to keeping their children warm in winter, spraying for dengue, feeding them sufficiently and getting them vaccinated. A few communities, such as Subhai Wala (Muzaffargarh) and Fatehpur Janobi (Muzaffargarh) also identified herbal healers and folk wisdom as being a central tool in ensuring good health in their children.

Medical Checkups

In no communities did researchers find parents who initiated regular medical check-ups for their children. There were a few communities though where community members...
noted that Lady Health Workers visited homes regularly to provide check-ups for newborn babies and very young children. The frequency of these visits varied from community to community, from places such as Muddi Behni (Vehari) where community members reported that she visited rarely, to Nur Shah (Vehari) where she visits schools and homes frequently and regularly for checkups.

Apart from check-ups provided by the Lady Health Workers, teachers at the government boys school in 187 EB (Vehari) reported that a mobile health team visits the school frequently to provide checkups, and teachers in 8 WB (Vehari) said that in the past Plan Pakistan used to send doctors to the school every two weeks for basic health checkups, but it seems that this project has been discontinued.

Common Diseases

In most communities the common diseases prevalent in children reported included the flu, fever, typhoid, stomach problems, cough, skin diseases, sore throats, and asthma. A number of communities including Basti Hamrot (Multan), Nishtar Colony and Jinnah Town (Multan), Shujaabad (Multan), Ahmabad (Multan), Morian (Muzaffargarh), Munha (Muzaffargarh) and Gujjarwala (Vehari) reported malaria as a common disease.

One community, 187 EB (Vehari) identified malnutrition as a common disease, although a few other communities identified inadequate diet as a cause for other diseases. UC 911 (Vehari), which was a dense urban community, was the only community to list Hepatitis B & C as a common infection among young children.

Community members generally identified three key causes of diseases among young children: inadequate diet, improper hygiene, and unclean water. Contaminated water was especially noted as a result of the flood in communities such as Morian (Muzaffargarh) and Munha (Muzaffargarh). In UCC 911 (Vehari) community members also pointed to the fact that there was no clean water facility in the area and the oil depots in the city made the water unsuitable for drinking.

Teachers were the ones who mostly noted unhygienic conditions as a cause for health problems, primarily blaming parents for not doing enough to ensure good hygiene. Teachers in Nishtar Colony (Multan) argued that children were weak due to improper and inadequate diet and that this was a key cause for children regularly getting sick.

Barriers to Health

Breastfeeding – Lack of Access

While all communities agreed that breast milk was the best option, many also said that it was not the most accessible due to the mother’s failing health or work schedule (often
agricultural). In these situations, cow or buffalo milk is used as a substitute. Only one community (8 WB, Vehari) said that they sometimes use formula as a substitute for breast milk, and only as a last resort.

High Cost of Healthy Food

When asked whether or not children ate the ideal diet that community members had described, there was a mix of responses. When the answer was no, the reason cited was almost always cost, explaining that many families cannot afford to buy healthy food for their children, or cannot afford to buy separate food for young children, and thus children end up eating adult food before the ideal age. The prevalence of this problem ranged from community to community. For example, in 187 EB Vehari the men from the focus group discussion explained that 75% of people could not afford a healthy diet for their children and that malnutrition was a problem. On the other hand, in 8 WB Vehari, mothers explained that most families tried to feed their children healthy food and only some families were unable to because of costs.

Limited Awareness Amongst Parents and Children About Diet and Immunization

Another clear issue that emerges is the awareness among parents on issues of diet and immunization. They often lacked consensus on what a balanced diet for children between the ages of 2 and 6 consists of. This is a pattern with children as well: another reason cited for children’s poor diet was that children spend their allowance on junk food. In UC 911 Vehari, parents often knew that children were buying unhealthy food, but did not feel that they could stop their children from doing so.

Parents also displayed limited awareness about immunization. Most parents felt that vaccinations were important for children’s health, but many could not explain why. For example, parents in Muddi Behni (Vehari) said that they knew vaccines were important but were not sure why, and parents in Morian (Muzaffargarh) knew that vaccinations stopped diseases from spreading, but did not know what types of diseases they stopped. Only in three communities did researchers encounter people who had heard that vaccinations could have side effects. In Fatehpur Janobi (Muzaffargarh) teachers responded that if vaccinations were of good quality there were no side effects, but that there were a number of cases where people had died as a result of expired vaccinations.

This lack of knowledge becomes dangerous when parents are unable to identify the potential risks associated with health interventions. In UC 911 (Vehari) one person reported that her 8-month-old daughter got epilepsy as a result of a vaccination, but she still vaccinated her children because she thought they were important for protecting a child’s health.

Failure to Monitor Children’s Diets and Sanitation

The key time that children seem to buy unhealthy food is when they are at school, generally purchasing...
biscuits, chocolates, candies, chips, or toffees. While these purchases sometimes supplement the lunch that children bring, they also sometimes replace it. Schools sometimes felt that parents were either unaware of what their children were buying with the money they gave them, or did not realize that the food these children were buying was unhealthy. For example, in Nur Shah (Vehari) the caregiver at the ECDC said that parents did not realize the food their children were buying was unhealthy, and that while she tried to stop the children from eating it, neither the children nor the parents listened to her. When speaking with the mothers of this community, they explained that they knew this food was unhealthy for their children, but did not know how to stop them from purchasing it.

Many mothers cited peer pressure as the central reason that their children requested money to take to school. Children sometimes felt that if they did not have money to buy snacks they would be laughed at. Schools, such as the principal in Cherry Tree (Multan) sometimes try to prevent children from buying unhealthy or packaged food.

While only one community’s parents Maqwal Haider (Muzaffargarh) said they did not discourage their children from eating any unhealthy food, most parents found it difficult to prevent their children from eating what they wanted, saying that children ‘always get what they want.’

Teachers were frequently concerned that parents did not practice good hygiene at home. For example in Basti Hamrot (Multan) teachers complained that they were trying to teach their students cleanliness but that these efforts were ineffective because there was no follow up at home. These sentiments were seconded in Shah Gardez (Multan) where a teacher said that children often came to school dirty and that this caused them to become sick.

**Religious Resistance to Health Interventions**

In Nur Shah, community members said the *maulvis* (religious leaders) in the community opposed previously initiated polio campaigns, and were spreading rumors that the vaccinations were dangerous for the health of the children and would make them impotent. These messages were supposedly announced at mosques, and *ifta* (non-binding legal opinion) were issued against the campaigns. The community members interviewed said that they did not believe these rumors, and only the illiterate parents believed them and discouraged their children from receiving the vaccinations. Other community members expressed fears that the vaccinations were an attempt to control the population and were in fact for family planning.

**Lack of Health Facilities**

Community members in Subhai Wala and Rampur (Muzaffargarh) said that they wanted a health facility within the community rather than just visits from the health teams as they thought the progress made by these health teams was poor. Health facilities are especially critical to schools and parents that may ultimately rely on uncertified doctors for help.
Consistent with ECCD research, our conversations with teachers, parents and other community members suggest a child’s home and classroom environment and upbringing impact the level of knowledge a child enters with, his or her cognitive ability, and, in turn, learning potential. The following chapter presents the typical child’s cognitive and social competencies, and the factors found to impact a child’s development in the three districts. The findings suggest a significant variation in each child’s learning level at the time of admission, and that this due to variations in home and class environment and family demographics. Our findings are based on our discussions with school-teachers, parents and other knowledgeable people in the community.

Speech and Reading

The average child’s ability to speak varied from community to community. For example, in Basti Hamrot (Multan) many students could express themselves but could not communicate in proper words and sentences until the end of kachi and/or beginning of pakki. On the other hand, in the area surrounding Cherry Tree School in Multan city children can speak comfortably in Urdu almost right away.

Most respondents said that children begin speaking full sentences with relative fluency between the age of 2 and 4. In Shah Gardez (Multan) a mother reported that her child began speaking complete sentences at the age of 1½.

Most respondents said that children begin conveying basic messages between the age of 1 and 1.5 years. However, community members in Nur Shah in Mehsi (Vehari) responded that children did not begin conveying basic messages until the age of 2-2.5 years. Others within Nur Shah reported younger ages more in line with the responses from other communities.

Rarely were children able to read or write except in a few locations (Jalalpur Pirwala, Multan; Morian, Muzaffargarh)

Differentiation Between Objects

From the responses of parents and communities, it seems that children are generally able to differentiate between currency notes of different denominations around the age of 3 to 4 years. In Shah Gardez (Multan) and Taliri (Muzaffargarh) two mothers reported that their children could identify currencies at the age of 1½. Some mothers reported higher than average ages in response to this question. In Shujaabad (Multan) a mother reported her child could differentiate currencies at the age of 5-6. The general trend seems to be that children are able to comprehend the relative buying power of different currency notes, and therefore
situation analysis:

Early Childhood Care and Development in Multan, Vehari and Muzaffargarh

understand the concept of numbers to some degree, at a relatively early age. Children can generally identify objects in their surroundings and can communicate at a basic level.

Cognitive and Social Competencies, and Behavioral Patterns: A Profile

Family’s Literacy and Numeracy

Children were observed to have benefited from parents’ and siblings’ reading, writing and numerical skills. Teachers in Munha (Muzaffargarh) noted that children are more likely to feel comfortable with numbers if they are accustomed to seeing their parents and older siblings consistently using money. Similarly, in Jalalpur Pirwala (Multan), and Morian (Muzaffargarh), community members and teachers said that some children had basic knowledge of the alphabet or some experience with reading and/or writing before attending school, either because they had learned at the mosque, or because they had older siblings or parents who taught them.

By contrast, respondents in other communities such as Subhai Wala, (Muzaffargarh), and Fatehpur Janobi (Muzaffargarh) said that because most adults in the community were illiterate, it was very rare for parents to be able to teach their children. This suggests that parental illiteracy not only impacts a child’s pre-school learning, but also impedes a student’s academic performance once he or she begins schooling.

Language used in Class

The level of familiarity with the language used in the classroom was described to impact a child’s comfort in the school environment, and ability to adjust and learn in turn (see Literature Review). In Jalalpur Pirwala (Multan) respondents noted that a child’s level of comfort in the classroom depends on the teacher’s ability to relate to him or her in the mother tongue and then to gradually introduce him or her to new languages (Urdu).

Familiarity and Comfort with the Teacher

Children were reported to be most comfortable with their own teachers, especially at the time of admission. Parental interaction with teachers and staff members were described to positively impact a child’s ability to adjust. In Munha (Muzaffargarh), for instance, a respondent noted that when a father dropped his child off at school and interacted with the teacher, it helped the child adjust because seeing this relationship between his/her father and the teacher made the child feel comfortable with the teacher.
Family Environment

In our visits, we often came across teachers who felt that some children in their early childhood classes struggle to grasp even very basic concepts, keeping them significantly below the rest of the class in terms of learning. Teachers and school principals reported that these students either had ‘cognitive problems’ or came from home environments that were either not conducive or not supportive of educational achievement. While they claimed that they paid extra attention to these students to try to help them, it was also observed that there was a sense of resignation on the part of teachers in some cases. The owner of the Abassi Public School (Taliri, Muzaffargarh) reported that these students were rare, but that they generally showed no interest in their studies and were unlikely to complete their education.

Almost all respondents said that children pick up these habits from watching adults at home (their parents fighting etc) or from watching older children playing in the street. Two respondents (Cherry Tree School, Multan; Taliri, Muzaffargarh) also said the media was teaching children such behavior. In UC 911 (Vehari) one father explained that due to small houses in their congested urban neighborhood, parents could not avoid fighting in front of their children, but they did try to avoid calling each other names so as not to expose their children to such language.
Survey of ECCD Centers

School Characteristics
Public and Private Schools Far Outnumber NGO Sponsored Schools
Table 5.1 shows the number of private, public and NGO sponsored schools by district, and illustrates that almost 96% were either government or privately owned. Only 9 NGO/Trust Schools, 2 NRSP feeder schools and 1 madrassah were established in the 79 villages we visited. Significantly, this demonstrates the prevalence of madaris and NGO schools is much lower than is commonly assumed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Multan</th>
<th>Muzaffargarh</th>
<th>Vehari</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private School</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government School</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRSP Feeder School</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO/Trust School</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madrassah</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Government Schools are Very Well Situated in Each Village
Only 3 (4%) of all villages lack a government school, while 34 (43%) of villages do not have any private schools. This implies that while the government has done an excellent job of situating at least one school in each village, the private sector has not been able to achieve the same degree of prominence.

Private Schools are Relatively New to the Market
The vast majority of public schools in our sample (94%) were established more than 10 years ago, while only 37% of the private schools are that old. Table 5.3 confirms our intuitions that while the government had established the majority of its schools much earlier, the private sector has only recently begun to make a notable impact on the education market, and resultanty, the ECCD market. More than half of the private schools were opened in the last five years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>More than 10 years old</th>
<th>Between 5 and 10 years old</th>
<th>Less than 5 years old</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Schools</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Schools</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 5

Private Schools are Better Staffed

More than half of the private schools in our sample have 6 teachers or more while only a quarter of the public schools have 6 teachers or more. In fact, an astounding 55% of public schools have 3 teachers or less while 41% have 2 teachers or less. Private schools in comparison do much better on this count. Only 29% of private schools have 3 teachers or less. This shows that while private schools are outnumbered by public schools in our target districts, they are better staffed than public schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Teachers</th>
<th>Private Schools</th>
<th>Public Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11+</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Private School Teachers Far Outnumber Public School Teachers

While our sample has 110 private schools compared to 195 public schools, these 110 private schools have a total of 913 teachers while the 195 public schools only have 893 teachers. Despite the larger number of schools then, there are more private school teachers teaching in our target districts compared to public school teachers.

More Private Schools Offer ECCD, Most Government Schools Do Not

All schools offer at least one ECCD class (the one private school that does not offer Preparatory offers a Nursery class). A greater proportion of private schools compared to public schools offer Play Group and Nursery classes.
Enrolment

Average Play Group and Nursery Enrolment is Higher in Private Schools

Private school Play Group classes have an average of 6.9 students per class, compared to an average of 1.5 students in public schools. Private schools have an average of 29.6 students per Nursery class, against an average of 5.7 students in public schools.

Significantly, the situation is reversed at Preparatory class level: public schools have an average of 44.4 students per class, against 30.1 students in private schools. Class strength jumps by almost 68% between Nursery and Preparatory classes in public schools, against a little over 1% in private schools. This is because, as described above, most public schools do not offer a Nursery or Play Group class.

Average Enrollment in ECE Classes

![Graph showing average enrollment in ECE classes]
Many *Kachi* Classes are Severely Overcrowded

In each of the three districts, more than 25-30% of public schools have more than 50 children in the *kachi* class, troubling fact given many of these schools do not even have a dedicated teacher for the *kachi* class. The shaded ‘box’ for each *tehsil* shows the middle 50% of schools while the ‘whiskers’ at the end of the line signify the 5th and the 95th percentile respectively.

**Distribution of Kachi Enrollment in Public Schools**

![Box plot showing distribution of kachi enrollment in public schools across Multansadder, Muzaffargarh, and Vehari districts.](image-url)
Public Schools Have a Higher Number of Unregistered Students

In public schools, almost 1/5 of all ECCD children are unregistered while in private schools the proportion is lower than 1/8. This may be attributed to differences in profit structures for private and public schools.

Average Unregistered Enrollment in ECE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unregistered Enrollment in ECE</th>
<th>Total ECE Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private School</td>
<td>7.7766</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public School</td>
<td>10.3548</td>
<td>51.7846</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Little Difference in Play Group Age at Entry in Public and Private Schools

At the Play Group level, children are between 3.6 years and 4.7 years old in private schools, and 3.4 and 4.9 years old in public schools.

Average Ages of Play Group Kids at Entry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Private School</th>
<th>Public School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age of Youngest Kid</td>
<td>3.57588</td>
<td>3.97304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of Median Kid</td>
<td>4.70588</td>
<td>4.30888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of Oldest Kid</td>
<td>4.70588</td>
<td>3.76852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal Age According to Teacher</td>
<td>3.43519</td>
<td>4.96296</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average Ages of Nursery Kids at Entry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Private School</th>
<th>Public School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age of Youngest Kid</td>
<td>4.17287</td>
<td>4.60106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of Median Kid</td>
<td>5.63741</td>
<td>4.32801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of Oldest Kid</td>
<td>4.32801</td>
<td>4.01613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal Age According to Teacher</td>
<td>4.01613</td>
<td>6.15591</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend:
- **Red**: Age of Youngest Kid
- **Green**: Age of Median Kid
- **Gray**: Age of Oldest Kid
- **Light Green**: Ideal Age According to Teacher
Chapter 5

Situation Analysis:
Early Childhood Care and Development in Multan, Vehari and Muzaffargarh

This indicates parental demand for ECCD and that the schools are forced to respond to this demand despite the official age. Another interesting point is that while the average age for children in public school kachi class is 4.7 years, the oldest age is much higher (6.3 years). This further suggests that there are some children who enroll in school much later than most of the other children. This trend continues on in older classes.

Despite Policy to Admit Children at 5 Years, the Average Age for Kachi Students is 4.7 Years

This indicates parental demand for ECCD and that the schools are forced to respond to this demand despite the official age. Another interesting point is that while the average age for children in public school kachi class is 4.7 years, the oldest age is much higher (6.3 years). This further suggests that there are some children who enroll in school much later than most of the other children. This trend continues on in older classes.

Some Children are Out of School

In 75% of villages, at least 17% children aged 4-6 are out of school. It must be noted that this figure is an underestimate of the enrolment rate because some children who are not going to school in the 4-6 year age group do end up going to school once they are 6 years old.

We did ask schools what proportion of the currently out of school children in this age group would end up going to school, and the median response was 30%. The entire distribution is shown below. This implies that the median proportion of out-of-school children is around 17-18% once we take into account the fact that some currently out of school children will end up going to school at a later stage.

Proportion of Children Aged 4-6 who are out of school

Excludes outside values
Chapter 5

More Schools Have Rolling Admissions in Play Group and Nursery Throughout the Year

Only a quarter restrict the enrolment window to one month. It is important to note that the vast majority of Play Groups are in private schools. The situation in Nursery classes is a little better. As shown in Figure 7, half of all schools surveyed still allow for admissions throughout the school year, but this proportion is significantly lower than that for Play Group classes. This may be because a lot of schools only take Nursery students who have already passed a Play Group class.

How long are admissions in Play Group open?

How long are admissions in Prep/Kachi open (Private Schools)?
**Family Structures and Professions**

**Most Heads of Household Farm on Their Own Land or Leased Land**

According to schools’ estimates, the second most prevalent profession is unskilled laboring, and farming on daily wages following that. Self-employment, salaried work, livestock rearing and skilled labor work are other common professions. Only 0.3% of all schools believed parents were unemployed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>%age of schools reporting as most common profession</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farming on own land or theka</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled labor</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming on daily wages</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed/trader</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salaried job</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livestock rearing</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled labor</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Most Mothers are Housewives or Farm Laborers**

The majority of mothers (56%) are housewives. Slightly less than a third farm for daily wages which, interestingly, is much higher than the proportion of fathers who farm on daily wages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>%age of schools reporting as most common profession</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housewife/Housekeeping</td>
<td>55.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming on daily wages</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled labor</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livestock rearing</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming on own land or theka</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salaried job</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Many Students live in Joint Family Households
In 75% of the schools, at least 17-18% of the children live in joint family households. Half of our schools (as represented by the blue graph to the right of the line in the middle of the box) have more than 37% of the ECCD children in joint family households. In a quarter of our schools (as represented by the line to the right of the blue box), more than two-thirds of the ECCD children live in joint family households.

ECE Children's Family Characteristics

Mothers are Typically the Sole Female Caretakers
In 75% of the schools, 16% or less of the ECCD children have female caretakers in addition to their mothers. This is a surprising response in many ways since the assumption about rural settings is that due to the close familial networks, most children have more than one female caretaker in the form of grandmothers or aunts, etc. At least according to the schools, this is not the case.

Most Fathers Live at Home
In half of our schools, 5% or less of the fathers live outside the village. Only in a quarter of the schools is this proportion more than 20%. We suggest historical and cultural reasons underlie this.
Most Parents Do Not Believe Their Children Need Custodial Care

In half of our schools, the proportion of parents claiming to need custodial care is 20% or less. In 25% of schools, it is between 20% and 50% while for the remaining 25%, it is more than 50%.

Most Children Do Not Help Their Parents With Their Agricultural Work

We felt this was important to ask because of widely held conceptions that children are often required to help with household and agricultural work from an early age. In our data, we find scant evidence in support for such claims. We show the results separately for boys and girls to test whether the effects are different for boys and girls, but there is no evidence for differential treatment for boys and girls in this respect either, with the caveat that a slightly smaller proportion of females help out with agricultural work. In all four cases, 75% or more of our schools state that a maximum of 20% of ECD children help with household chores or agricultural work.
Children’s Education Prospects

Drop-out Projections are Similar for Boys and Girls

According to teachers surveyed drop out rates for boys and girls are very similar.

Many Children are Expected to Drop Out Throughout Primary School

About 10-15% of children are expected to drop out before or during Grade 1, while an additional 15-17% of children are expected to drop out during primary school. Of the remaining children, about 20% are expected to drop out during secondary school, while 40% are expected to finish secondary school.

Educational Future of ECD Children (Boys)
Chapter 5

Situation Analysis:
Early Childhood Care and Development in Multan, Vehari and Muzaffargarh

Chapter 5

Educational Future of ECD Children (Girls)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Before starting Grade 1</th>
<th>During Grades 2-5</th>
<th>During Grade 1</th>
<th>During Grades 6-10</th>
<th>Will complete Grade 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total percentage</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* The chart illustrates the educational future of girls who have undergone early childhood care and development in Multan, Vehari, and Muzaffargarh. It shows the percentage of children who will complete each grade and the percentage who will complete Grade 10.
Children in Multan and Muzaffargarh Spend More Time Walking to School than in Vehari.

A potential cause of absenteeism and drop outs, 30-32 % of boys and 31-32% of girls walk for more than 15 minutes in Multan and Muzaffargarh. By contrast, only 16% of boys and 11% of girls must walk more than 15 minutes.
Some Children Face Threats to their Safety Walking to School

Although specifics were not discussed, 37% of schools indicated that some children faced some form of threat to their safety during the walk to school.

Teacher Profiles

Most Teachers are Responsible for Multiple Classes

In private schools, 74% of ECCD teachers are responsible for spending time on other classes, while in public schools, 93% of ECCD teachers are responsible for teaching other classes.

Most Teachers are Unable to Spend Much Time With their Students

More than half (54%) of our schools only have one teacher designated to ECCD, while 27% have two ECCD teachers, 11% have three ECCD teachers and only 8% have four or more teachers. This underscores the near impossibility of any single ECCD teacher giving regular attention to their students.

Public Schools Hire More Male Teachers than Private Schools

Slightly less than a third (32%) of ECCD teachers in private schools are male while more than two thirds are female. In the public sector, close to half (47%) of ECCD teachers are male.
In virtually all the schools surveyed, the entire alphabet is taught to children before Grade 1. About three-fourths of schools teach children how to say words in English and Urdu orally. As for saying sentences, about half the schools teach this in the Urdu language while only 40% teach this in the English language. About 80% of schools teach their students how to write words in both the languages. More than half of schools teach writing sentences while between 30% and 40% teach their children poems in the English and Urdu languages.
All schools teach counting from 1-10, more than three-fourths teach counting from 11-50 while 40% teach counting from 51-100. About 80% teach simple addition, more than 40% teach simple subtraction while about 50% teach (or rote-memorize) multiplication tables.

**What is taught to children before they start Grade 1 (Math)?**

- Alphabets
- Saying Words Orally
- Saying Sentences
- Writing Words
- Writing Sentences
- Poems
Most Classes Use Textbooks

Around 60% of Play Group classes, 80% of Nursery Classes, and 83% of kachi classes use textbooks.

Many Schools Feel that School Syllabus is Not Suitable for the Age Group

44% of government schools responded by saying that they felt the syllabus was not appropriate. For the schools who indicated the syllabus was not appropriate, we asked what the main problems were in their opinion. Almost two-thirds of these schools indicated that the main problem with the kachi syllabus is that it is too difficult for the kachi class children to understand and that the length and difficulty of the syllabus ought to be reduced. Twenty eight percent said that the main problem was the inability of the children to learn in the English language while only 7% said that the main problem was the inability of the teachers to teach properly in the English language.

Most Schools Believe Their Staff Adequately Addresses Their Students’ Development Needs

Almost all schools (97%) of schools asserted that children learn at different paces. The surprising result is that 71% claim that teachers in fact do have enough time to be able to address the different developmental needs of children. This assessment the other evidence on teacher numbers and number of classes taught etc. presented earlier. One possible explanation for this apparent discord is that the schools did not wish to admit to their inability to deal with their children’s needs.

For the 29% that did admit that it is difficult for teachers to address the different learning speeds of children, we asked them what can be done to improve the situation. The most commonly proposed solution was to hire additional teachers (the first solution of 45% of respondents), followed by training existing teachers (19%), training / educating parents (18%) and providing more materials / facilities to school (16%).
Chapter 5

Diet, Immunization and Hygiene

Most Students Bring Lunches from Home

Seventy eight per cent of schools said that most students brought some food from home, another 8% said that most students go home during recess to eat, 5% said that most students buy food from a canteen or vendor while another 8% said that most students eat nothing during school hours.

Most Schools Have Bathrooms, But Some Do Not Have Soap

While the vast majority of schools have toilet facilities and running water, only 71% have soap available for hand washing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>%age of schools answering ‘Yes’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is there a toilet facility in the school for children?</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a facility to wash hands in the school for children?</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do students typically wash hands after using the toilet facility?</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do students typically wash hands before eating?</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there soap available for washing hands?</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most Schools Have Been Visited by a Vaccination Team

Eighty Seven percent of all schools had been visited by a vaccination team at least once while 13% had received a single visit. The median number of visits per school was three.

Some Schools Face Resistance to Vaccinating Children

An eighth of schools said that they had faced some resistance to vaccinating their students from parents and communities.
Chapter 5

The Flu and Typhoid are Common Hygiene Related Maladies

The Flu was cited by more than 90% of all schools as a common problem. A little more than half reported that typhoid was common. Other health problems included stomach issues, skin disease and asthma.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Issue</th>
<th>%age of schools citing this as a common problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flu</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typhoid</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stomach Problems</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skin Disease</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asthma</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some Schools Rely on External Sources for Emergency Treatment and First Aid

Forty Four percent of schools respond to illness by sending the child home, while 30% of schools rely on a nearby government health unit or private clinic for treatment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%age of schools that respond</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Send them home</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send to nearby government health unit</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send to nearby private clinic</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give medicine ourselves</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More than Half of Schools Lack Adequate Health Facilities, Most Rely on Uncertified Doctors

Of course, the ability to send children to health care facilities depends upon the availability of health facilities in the village. Forty-four percent reported that a government health facility was available to their village. Private clinics operated by certified doctors were reported by 35% of the schools while private clinics operated by uncertified doctors or hakeems were reported to be a choice of 76% of the schools.
Schools’ Approach to Punishment

While it is a difficult task to measure subjective opinions of the care received by children and the risks they face in their lives, we attempted to ask some questions that begin to give us an assessment of the environment children live in with respect to their care, violence and protection.

Most Schools Endorse Scolding and Punishment

Perhaps in line with our cultural practices, two-thirds (66%) of our schools said that scolding children does in fact have a positive effect on them while only one-thirds felt that there is a negative effect. An even higher proportion (74%) felt that it is sometimes necessary to punish children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kind of Punishment</th>
<th>% of schools reporting as common in their district</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extra Studies</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work such as cleaning</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Exercise</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporal Punishment</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most Schools Endorse Scolding and Punishment

Schools cited instead extra studies, work, and exercise as appropriate punishments. Only 12% of all schools surveyed approved of corporal punishment.

Schools Believe Quality of ECCD Would Positively Impact Enrolment

The most common solution is to open a better ECD center, followed by providing more facilities and materials to existing schools and ECD centers. Providing cash stipends to parents, which is being practiced in a couple of pilot projects in Pakistan already for primary school, is also a popular option. Only a few schools thought that teaching in the child’s primary language or changing curriculum would be the most effective solution.
Conclusion: Taking ECCD Forward

As signatory to the DFA formulated at the World Education Forum 2000, Pakistan has shown efforts to progress towards developing the appropriate legislation, scaling up ECCD efforts, and investing in research and evaluation. Despite the elaborate plans developed by the government in collaboration with UNICEF, nothing can definitively be said about the future of ECCD where its provision is still in its most rudimentary stages. Although the government’s steps are paving an encouraging path forward, future policy needs to consider the difficulties posed to efficiently providing ECCD.

While Pakistan has made strides towards aligning itself with international initiatives, it has yet to constitutionally recognize education for children younger than 5 years old, posing the question of its sincerity towards prioritizing education for age groups preceding this.

A number of administrative challenges are posed to efficiently managing ECCD as well. Government school policies regarding rolling admissions and unregistered children pose problems to keeping record of them and managing their needs. Other problems include seasonal migration’s impact on enrolment, communication issues resulting from language diversity, and poorly sustained government and private health initiatives. Policy must recognize these issues so as to better counter them.

Further, children are reported to face significant difficulties in progressing from ECCD classes to primary school. The gap in curriculum between these two stages of education fails to properly transition children from one environment to the next, which also poses significant problems to teachers.

Another important hindrance to effectively providing ECCD is parents’ own awareness of the different facets of their children’s developmental needs and how these differ from primary schooling in terms of learning ability, health and emotional needs. This often results in a lack of involvement in a child’s development, and impedes on children’s performance at school and learning potential.

One key finding pertaining to teachers suggests a route for further policy scrutiny. Public schools are reported to allot teachers to ECCD classes according to preference, or rotation system. They currently do not hire teachers and staff specifically for ECCD, although, as we have shown, there is a clear demand for it. This seems to be a direct consequence of provincial policy’s failure to adequately address ECCD.

Further, although the quality of education and facilities in private schools is superior to those of public schools, the teaching burden on staff members in both types of school system seems to be too heavy. Most teachers in both systems are responsible for teaching more than one class and often split their time between them. It is thus not surprising that many of them report that they feel the amount of time they spend with their students is inadequate. If this is indeed the case (and follow up research may study this in further detail), policy makers...
should consider ways to increase staff strength and the number of schools. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) should be considered as well.

An important issue to explore further is the mother’s role in ECCD. Mothers are largely reported to be the sole caretakers of their children, and yet 44% spend most of their day at work (mostly as agricultural workers). This raises questions about children’s caretakers (if any—our discussions suggest that children might not have any in their parents’ absence) in their mother’s absence. Further research should investigate this, and the impact this might have on children’s development, and how this might be resolved.

Further studies on ECCD are clearly necessary to account for the problems we have raised in this report. Meanwhile, policy makers must consider the multitude of issues presented here to continue the progress they have made. Further, while this report has attempted to provide an understanding of basic structure and features of ECCD programs in their current form in Pakistanis schools, future research efforts must focus on quality, efficiency and improvement.
VISION
No child denied quality education

MISSION
To introduce child centered reforms in education, in the educational institutions and communities for facilitating children to become more productive and active citizens.