



Early Childhood Care and Education Policy 2015



access equity quality inclusion

Education and Literacy Department,
Government of Sindh





EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE & EDUCATION (ECCE) POLICY SINDH | 2015



EDUCATION AND LITERACY DEPARTMENT, GOVERNMENT OF SINDH
1ST FLOOR, TUGHLAQ HOUSE, SECRETARIATE # 2, KAMAL ATATURK ROAD, KARACHI, PAKISTAN

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EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE & EDUCATION SINDH

Policy 2015

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ACRONYMS

ASER	Annual Status of Education Report
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
ECC	Early Childhood Care
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ECED	Early Childhood Education & Development
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
EFA	Education For All
EFA GMR	Education For All Global Monitoring Report
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Area
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrollment Rate/Ratio
GPI	Gender Parity Index
ICT	Islamabad Capital Territory
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NEP	National Education Policy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPA	National Plan of Action
OOSC	Out-Of-School Children
PCR	Pupil to Class Ratio
PEA	Pakistan Education Atlas
PTR	Pupil to Teacher Ratio
PSLM	Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey
PSR	Pupil to School Ratio
PTR	Pupil to Teacher Ratio
RSU	Reform Support Unit
RTE	Right to Education
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEMIS	Sindh Education Management Information System
SEP	Sindh Education Profile
SESP	Sindh Education Sector Plan
TCR	Teacher to Class Ratio
TOR	Terms of Reference
TSR	Teacher to School Ration
U5MR	Under-5 Mortality Rate
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children’s Fund
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Early Childhood Care and Education Policy (“the Policy”) is the first policy to be adopted by the Sindh Government of Pakistan that focuses on early childhood since the country’s independence in 1947 and subsequent provincial devolution of education via the 18th Constitutional Amendment in 2010.
- 1.2 The Government of Sindh was motivated to formulate policy and standards specific to early childhood for the following strategic reasons:
- To comprehensively engage with a vital sub-sector of education that is foundational to child survival, protection and development, to subsequent tiers of learning, socialization and economic growth and productivity; Addressing the challenges of access, quality, inclusion and equity matched with sustainable institutional resources.
 - To be cognizant that provision of and access to inclusive quality early childhood care and education directly correlates to enhanced holistic child development, enrollment, attendance, , learning outcomes, improved transition possibilities, parental/community awareness and engagement; child protection and security.
 - To forge a knowledgeable forward-looking inclusive Islamic society and education agenda by focusing efforts on expanding dimensions of early childhood care, education and development services and provisions in line with the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan; Article 25A; the National Education Policy 2009; International pledges of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Dakar Framework for Action Education for All (EFA) Goals EFA Muscat Agreement; Karachi ECED Consensus Statement, Incheon Declaration and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 and the upcoming Education Framework For Action (FFA).
 - To honour commitments to Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) 1989, its optional protocols, and commitment 7 on Child Rights in Early Childhood, Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006, along with its optional Protocol, 2008 and Salamanca Statement,
 - To address the new world order, respond to socio-economic and demographic transformations and prepare 21st century children for challenging requirements of knowledge-based economies.
- 1.3 Topics and themes addressed in this document will also be found in provincial, national and international policy and legislation documents representing various countries around the globe set in specific contexts to highlight status, challenges and priorities of the Sindh province.
- 1.4 The Policy is a platform for an expanded commitment to all modes of early childhood care and education within a lifecycle approach to health, nutrition, safety and dignity, learning and teaching, training, capacity building, research, assessment and community mobilization with adequate resource allocation for implementation, monitoring and quality assurance.
- 1.5 On governance, the policy supports a multi-sectoral approach with inter-tier responsibilities within respective roles and functions of the provincial-district-local governments to successfully implement early childhood care and education via a strategic framework and plan of action.
- 1.6 The Policy is a “living document” that will guide and influence early childhood care and education in Sindh and remain operational for an indefinite period of time.

- 1.7 The Policy will be formally reviewed after three years, at regular intervals, through a notified Steering Committees determined by the Government of Sindh, to consider and approve all relevant amendments that may be proposed.
- 1.8 Policy actions outlined may have already been initiated in reforms implemented during the policy development process, most notably in the domains of curriculum, teaching materials, assessment, teacher education and community engagement, by the provincial government, private sector and international development partners.
- 1.9 The Policy takes account of these ongoing reforms and integrates them into its recommendations.
- 1.10 The Policy is embedded within the Islamic ethos and inclusive principles as enshrined in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

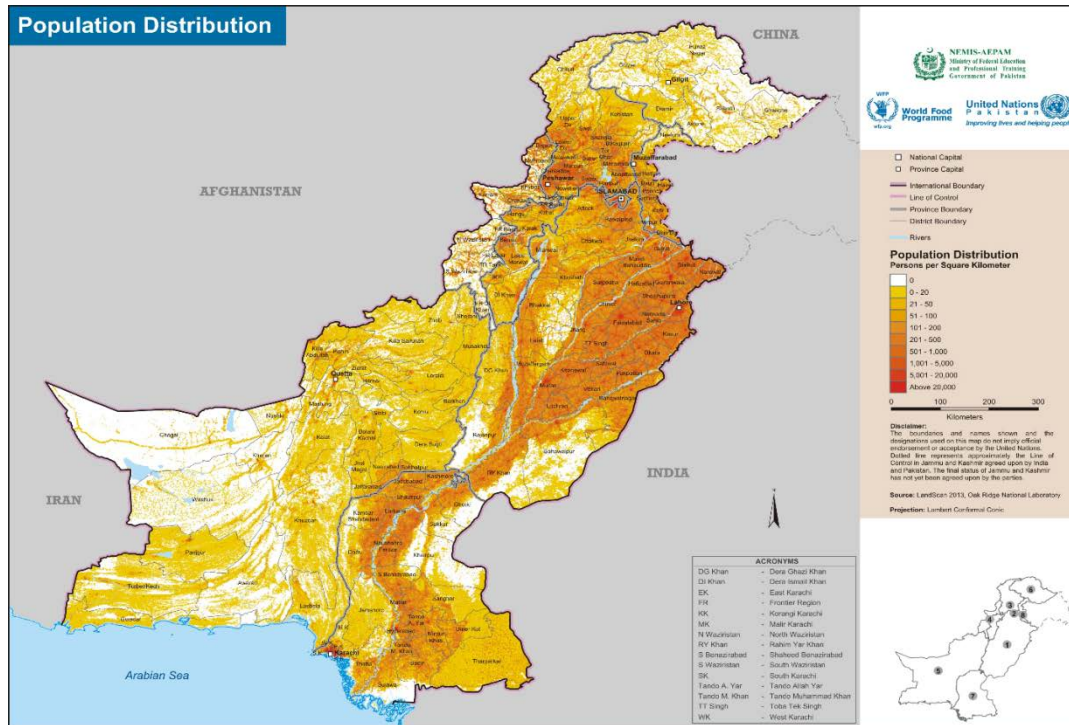
2. EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION (ECCE) IN PAKISTAN

- 2.1 Early Childhood Education (ECE) in Pakistan's public education sector can be traced back to the country's first Education Conference in November 1947. The terms of reference for the primary and secondary committee, then, included the provision of pre-primary education through a clause that the committee shall "recommend the lines on which pre-primary education may be run and to consider the part of the Central and Provincial governments in setting up Nursery schools (TEC, 1947)". The age bracket for early childhood mentioned in the 1947 proceedings was 3- 6 years.
- 2.2 In the 21st century, with every *step* forward, the Government of Pakistan and the province of Sindh fall back on the aims of education to align the *way* forward i.e. "To educate Pakistani's to be:
- ∞ Seekers of truth and knowledge who can apply both for the progress of society;
 - ∞ Creative, constructive, communicative and reflective individuals;
 - ∞ Disciplined, productive, moderate and enlightened citizens;
 - ∞ Capable of effectively participating in the highly competitive global, knowledge based economy and the information age; citizens committed to creating a just civil society that respects diversity of views, beliefs and faiths¹."
- 2.3 Aligned with these principles, in 2000, Pakistan endorsed the Millennium Declaration, adopted 16 targets and 41 indicators against which progress towards achieving the eight MDGs by 2015 was measured. Pakistan also endorsed and adopted the Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All (EFA) goals to meet the learning needs of children, youth and adults by 2015.
- 2.4 In 2001, the Education Sector Reforms Action Plan 2001-2005 established ECE as an innovative program in government schools of Pakistan. This was followed by the National Plan of Action (NPA) for Education for All (EFA) goals 2002-2015 setting a target to achieve 50% of children attending ECE within formal schools. This target was not achieved primarily due to a shortage of resources.

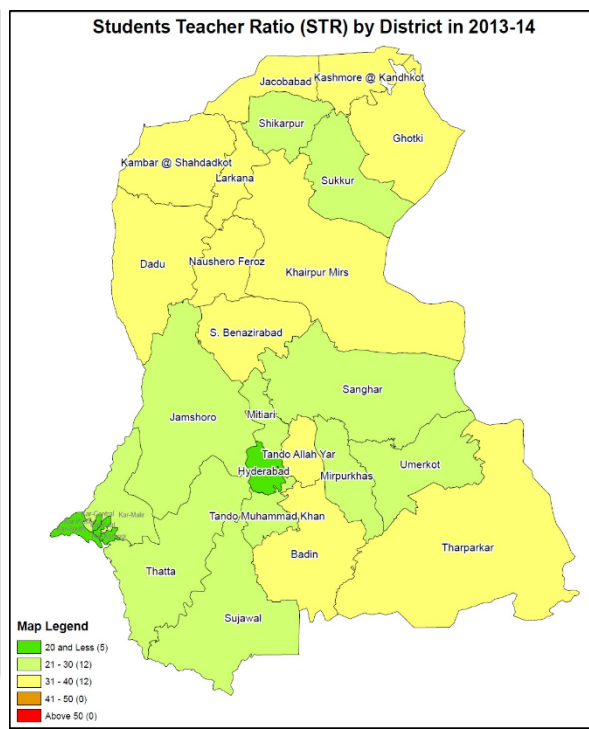
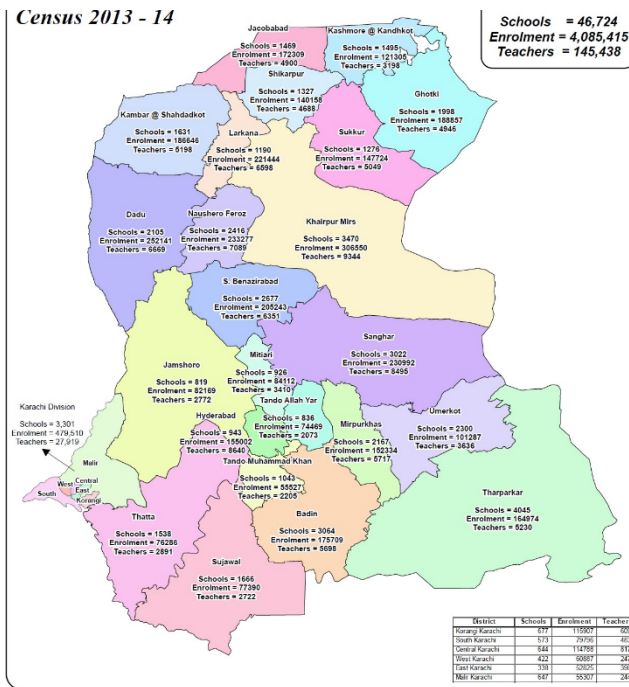
¹ Ministry of Education, Government of Pakistan, (2006).

- 2.4 The National Education Policy (NEP) 2009 was the first government document to formalize ECE in Pakistan as a Pre-Primary sub sector, termed as “*Katchi*”, focusing on children aged 3-5 years.
- 2.5 In 2010, the 18th Constitutional Amendment devolved the responsibility of education to the provinces and Right to Education Acts (RTA) were passed by Islamabad Capital Territory, Balochistan, Punjab and Sindh provinces mandating free and compulsory education for children aged 5-16 years (Article 25A) along with most having provisions for ECE. The Provincial Education Sector Plans 2014-18 then paved the early childhood movement to achieve universal access to equitable and inclusive early childhood care and education service delivery.
- 2.6 The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) has supported this shift through its grant as reflected in the Sindh and Balochistan Education Sector Plans 2014-18 where ECE is integrated in a sector-wide approach in both Sindh and Balochistan provinces.
- 2.7 Against this background, for the first time in the history of Sindh, ECE was included as a component in the Sindh Education Sector Reforms Programme and funding was provided to the provincial and district governments.
- 2.8 The Sindh Education Sector Plan (SESP) 2014-18 outlined implementation of ECE in Sindh, highlighting the development of an ECE policy and minimum standards as the first objective.
- 2.9 In 2014, the first South-Asian Conference on Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) and Right to Education was held in Karachi, Sindh to develop the Karachi Consensus Statement 2014 that agreed upon 9 principles and 48 recommendations across 5 themes of ECED namely policy and right to education; curriculum and standards; teacher/care giver preparation; assessment and research; and innovations. The 9th principle linked ECED to SDGs
- 2.10 Policy development structures were prepared for a comprehensive analysis of local and global early childhood initiatives to inform and support government efforts on the provision of ECCE for achieving 8 MDGs, 17 SDGs and 6 EFA targets by 2030.
- 2.11 In 2015 the MDGs expired and a review of national progress highlighted that Pakistan had lagged behind in its commitments with respect to all indicators. 2015 also signified the expiry of EFA goals and subsequently the EFA Global Monitoring Report was released. The way forward was a renewed commitment to the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals that begin in 2016 till 2030. The National Education Policy 2016 is under development and will integrate the SDG agenda along with provincial priorities.

3. SITUATION ANALYSIS



(Source: Pakistan Education Atlas, 2015)



(Source: SEMIS 2013-14)

3.1 FACTS & FIGURES

Sindh is the second largest province of Pakistan located in the south east region with a population of 42.4 million², representing around 23% of the population of Pakistan. As the second largest economy in Pakistan, Sindh houses the commercial capital of the country with highly diversified economic activity ranging from heavy industry and finance to a strong agricultural base. Sindh comprises of 5 regions, 29 districts and 121 talukas (towns)¹² with significant disparities across districts, urban/rural areas and genders. Sindh has a highly multi-cultural population, 52% of which is located in urban areas and 48% in rural areas.² The average household size is 6 with average births per women at 2. Sindh is endowed with coastal access and is therefore geographically susceptible to natural devastation caused by seasonal torrential floods and droughts. Other major deterrents to progress in Sindh have been the post-2007 national decline of economic and security conditions.

3.1.1 CHILD AND MATERNAL HEALTH

Mothers and children afflicted by health and environmental issues are at a greater risk for negative life trajectories, with poor educational outcomes for their children.

In 2013, the Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) of Pakistan was 276 per 100,000 live births³ while in Sindh, the most recent data available is from 2008-09 highlighting that MMR was estimated between 345 and 350. Iron and folic acid supplements during pregnancy can significantly reduce the risk of MMRs⁷.

Pakistan still lags behind in the provision of Skilled Birth Attendants (SBA), prenatal and neonatal care. The proportion of births attended by SBA rose from 28% in 2005 to 49% in 2011. Ante-natal care coverage in Sindh increased from 41% in 2005 to 58% in 2011⁷. In 2013-14, a mean of 2.1 number of children ever born to women aged 15-49 years and 72% of these mothers received pre-natal consultation in Pakistan.

In 2015, the Under-5 Mortality Rate (U5MR) in Pakistan is 81, with more male deaths than female deaths. The Under-5 Deaths amount to 432 with an Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) of 66 and a Neonatal Mortality Rate (NMR) of 46.⁴ The IMR in Sindh was last recorded in 2004 at 71 and no recent data has been collected since.⁷ In 2015, the Full Immunization Rate for children between 12-23 months was 76% in Pakistan and 61% in Sindh.¹⁰ Both Pakistan and Sindh slowly made progress towards MDGs but were unable to achieve targets identified.

In Pakistan, 1 child out of every 10 children dies before reaching the age of 5 and half of these die within the first month of life. More than 1/3 of deaths are caused by treatable illnesses. Malnutrition accounts for 35% of deaths under the age of 5 while 40% of children are either moderately or severely stunted.³ Pakistan leads the world in terms of acute malnutrition with the 3rd highest number of wasted and stunted children under the age of 5.

Malnourished children are less likely to be able to perform in a learning environment compared to healthier children and are more likely to incur physical and cognitive under development. Moderate to

² Population Welfare Department, Government of Sindh

³ UNICEF Pakistan Annual Report 2013

⁴ UN Report on Levels and Trends in Child Mortality 2015

severe stunting, wasting and below average weight are robust indicators of poor infant health in-utero and child malnutrition.

The overall stunting rate for South Asia is less than 40%.⁵ Figures on stunting in Pakistan taken in 2012 state, 2,254 children under-5 were affected by wasting and 9,661 children by stunting representing 45% of the under-5 population⁶. The prevalence of stunting can be directly correlated with wealth, highlighting that low to middle income households are at greater risk.

More than a third of the children in Sindh were underweight. The district of Thatta had the most underweight children under-5 years at 49.4% while Hyderabad had the least at 38.7%. Calorie Poverty in Sindh ranges from 72.4 in Tharparkar to 32 in Nawabshah but majority districts lie between 32 and 46.⁷ The proportion of children under-five suffering from diarrhea is 9% in Pakistan and 11% in Sindh respectively.¹⁰

In 2013, 1.3 million children under-5 and 478,000 pregnant and lactating women were screened for malnutrition, 400,000 children and over 182,000 women received nutritional treatment. More than 350,000 children and women received micronutrient supplements.³ Though statistics have improved over time, numbers are far from where they need to be for health factors to stop determining life outcomes.

3.1.2 LITERACY

The socio-economic impact of literacy on poverty is supported by empirical evidence and a shift towards access to and delivery of education is the solution to attain national and provincial equity.

Pakistan has a population of 184 million out of which, less than 60% of adults (15 years and above) today are able to read and right. Research has proven that literate adults, especially women, are more likely to educate their children and prioritize both provision and access to education. Only 49% of adult women in Pakistan are considered literate. With a Gender Parity Index (GPI) of 0.65, women have far limited access to education and those located in rural areas are at greater risk of sustained illiteracy.⁸

Sindh's adult literacy rate is 59% while the literacy rate for more than half of its districts is lower than 50%. Karachi is the highest performing district in terms of adult literacy at 81%. In 2014-15 students in Class 5 and 8 within government of Sindh performed below average on a standardized assessment of Mathematics, Science and Language, scoring 18%, 15% and 32% respectively in the Sindh Student Achievement Test.⁹

Only 60% of Pakistan's population aged 10 years and older has attended some form of school. Out of these individuals 72% are male compared to only 49% that are female.¹⁰ Only 56% of Sindh's population aged 10 years and older is literate out of which 67% are male and 43% are female¹⁰. Despite the male

⁵EFA Global Monitoring Report (EFA GMR) 2015

⁶ UNICEF/WHO/WB 2014

⁷ UNDP Report on the Status of MDGs in Sindh 2012

⁸ Pakistan Education Atlas (PEA) 2015

⁹ SAT 2014-15 Technical and Statistical Analysis

¹⁰ Pakistan Standards and Living Measurement (PSLM) 2013-14

population having more access to schooling, girls and women are seen as more likely to complete school and culturally have a far more significant role in the lives of their children.

3.1.3 OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN (OOSC), ENROLLMENT AND SCHOOL DROPOUT

Pakistan faces an emergent education crisis as a consequence of systemic illiteracy with 25 million out-of-school (OOSC) children, 55% of which are girls.¹¹ The Sindh province mirrors this crisis by ranking at number 2 and 3 for OOSC in rural and urban areas respectively. Sindh has 4.25 million children between the ages of 3-5 years¹⁰ and 12 million children between the ages of 5-16 years. 51% are OOSC i.e. 6.2 million. Girls represent 56% of OOSC. Children between the ages of 3 to 5 represent 63% of OOSC in rural areas and 40% in urban areas.^{11,12}

Enrollment is an effective indicator to measure school participation, universal access and progress towards education related MDGs. The Primary Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) including Katchi for Pakistan is 90%. Punjab has the highest GER while Balochistan has the lowest. The Primary school GER for Sindh is 76 while the Primary school NER is 48.

Total government school enrollment in Sindh is 4,085,415 out of which 2,802,824 children are enrolled in Primary schools (more than half the total enrollment) and 303,930 are enrolled in Secondary schools which is only 7.4% of the total enrollment illustrating a major gap in transition.

Katchi represents approximately 14% of school enrollment in both rural and urban areas of Sindh i.e. 565,713 children out of which 57% are boys and 43% are girls. Katchi enrollment figures have risen from around 500,000 in 2009 to approximately 600,000 in 2015. The significant number of Katchi students affords the Government of Sindh with a valuable opportunity to have a large scale impact on improving child retention and learning outcomes with a single well-resourced comprehensive ECCE effort.

Katchi formally represents the 4-5 age group however real-time representation is 4-10 years.^{12,17} This clearly indicates a need for early intervention that ensures timely development of children's potential.

3.1.4 SCHOOL NUMBERS, INFRASTRUCTURE, SANITATION AND FACILITIES

Even though enrollment percentages are relatively high in Sindh, there is an equally high rate of school dropouts after Primary due to poor facilities, crumbling infrastructure and lack of schools.

The shortage of schools is highlighted by the Primary-Middle school ratio at 18:1 for Sindh and the Primary-Secondary school ratio at 24:1¹³. A 100 page judgement by the Supreme Court of Pakistan (2012) states that non-functional and ghost schools account for at least 6164 schools in Sindh which means 3 out of every 4 ghost schools in Pakistan, are located in Sindh.

There are 46,724 schools in Sindh out of which 42,342 are Primary schools, 660 Middle/Elementary schools, 544 Secondary schools and 84 Higher Secondary schools. Schools run in either morning shifts (41,105 Primary), afternoon shifts (777 Primary) or both (64 Primary).

Out of the Primary schools:

¹¹ ASER 2014

¹² SEMIS 2013-14

¹³ Sindh Education Profile (SEP) 2013-14

- 11,055 are Boys schools, 6,066 are Girls schools and 25,271 are Mixed/Co-Education schools.
- 4,212 are temporarily closed and 1,704 are permanently closed. The reasons for temporary or permanent closure may vary from security, lack of resources and unstable/inadequate facilities/infrastructure to excess of schools in a particular taluka/tehsil (town) or district.
- 25% are in Satisfactory condition, 35% Need Repair, 15% are Without Shelter, 12% are Dangerous, 1,104 are Rented/Private Owned and 572 have no information.
- 9% are located in urban areas while 82% are situated in rural areas.
- 38,239 are Sindhi medium, 2,483 are Urdu medium, 1,526 are mixed mediums and 94 are English medium.
- 75,651 classrooms cater to an enrollment of 2,802,824 children out of which approximately 60% are boys and 40% are girls.
- 91% are without laboratories, 69% are missing play grounds and 90% have no library.
- Majority of basic classroom materials are insufficient to accommodate school enrollment.

In 2015, 64% of the population in Pakistan now has access to sanitation compared to 24% in 1990¹⁴. However, a national to provincial comparison of sanitation, facilities and infrastructure in Primary schools highlights⁸¹²:

- Drinking water is available in only 61% of primary schools in Pakistan and 44% in Sindh
- Toilet facilities are present in only 65% of primary schools in Pakistan and 49% in Sindh
- Electricity is available in only 46% of primary schools in Pakistan and 43% in Sindh
- Boundary walls are present in 66% of primary schools in Pakistan and 52% in Sindh

An inadequate school environment negatively impacts school performance for children in the early years.

3.1.5 TEACHERS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

The quality of education imparted in government schools is at question due to poor learning outcomes. More than 50% of children in Class 5 have trouble completing simple reading and writing exercises. The proxy indicator Survival Rate (completing a particular education level) indicates that learners are receiving adequate knowledge and are therefore progressing towards the next level. Survival Rate to Class 5 is 62% for Pakistan and 45% for Sindh out of which 47% are males and 43% are females. Majority districts in Sindh have Survival Rates that range between 26% and 50%.

Ideally Primary schools have 6 classrooms, 5 for Primary and 1 for Katchi. The average Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) for Pakistan is 37:1 and the Teacher-School Ratio (TSR) is 2:1. In Sindh, the PTR is 30:1, the Pupil-Classroom Ratio (PCR) is 34:1, the Pupil-School Ratio (PSR) is 63:1 and the TSR is 2:1. As there are more classrooms than teachers and each class consists of at least 40 students, a single teacher is often expected to manage several classrooms in a school and improve learning outcomes for over 40 students.

In Sindh there are 145,438 teachers catering to 46,724 government schools. 76% of all teachers have graduate and postgraduate qualifications while 67% of all teachers have received professional certification in Primary and General Education.

Out of the total number of teachers teaching in government schools:

- 92,521 teachers cater to 42,342 primary schools
- 74% are male and 26% are female teaching staff for primary schools

¹⁴WHO and UNICEF Joint Monitoring Program Report 2015

- Teaching staff for primary schools encompass Head Masters (HM), Primary school teachers (PST), Junior school teachers (JST) and Non-government teachers. Therefore, in many cases Head Masters are also classroom teachers in accordance with school requirements and more often male teachers are teaching in Girls schools, contrary to religious and cultural norms.

Ghost teachers are teachers that do not attend school but continue to draw salaries and at least 40,000 have been identified in 2015¹⁵. The Sindh Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS) is addressing this issue by tracking teacher attendance and 20,000 employees have thus far been verified.¹⁵

3.1.9 EDUCATION BUDGET AND NON-STATE PROVIDERS

The 2015-16 provincial budget for Sindh is approximately PKR 739 billion.¹⁶ The education sector was allotted over PKR 149 billion, which is 10 billion more than the budget for 2013-14 and forms 22% of the overall budget. However, majority of this budget is spent on salaries within the education sector.

A majority of PKR 106 billion in the education budget was earmarked under the non-development head with PKR 2.5 billion spared for the education secretariat and PKR 2 billion for unforeseen expenditure. The development budget has been allotted PKR 15 billion, a 12% decrease from 2013-14 while the amount unspent in 2013-14 of the Non-Salary Budget was 53% and of the Development Budget was 67%. These figures highlight the need to rationalize and prioritize resource allocation and ensure utilization in Sindh.

The government provides education access through 91% primary schools, 5% middle and 3% secondary schools¹⁷. This however does not match the need of the province and as such a rise of non-state providers is evident from 10% in 2013 to 17% in 2014 highlighting the public desire and willingness to adopt alternatives to government schooling. To support this conclusion, the following is noted in Sindh:

- In urban areas, primary enrollment in government school is 33% and private schools is 65%¹⁰
- In rural areas, primary enrollment in government school is 82% and private schools is 14%¹⁰
- The GER for Katchi is 36% in government schools and 64% in out-of-government schools¹⁷
- A socio-economic comparison of poverty gradients with availability and utilization of public and private schooling in Sindh indicates that the poorest households majorly utilize government schools while the richest households utilize both government and private schools with 43% and 56% children enrolled respectively.

¹⁵ Education & Literacy Department, Government of Sindh

¹⁶ Sindh Budget 2015-16

¹⁷ SESP 2014-18

3.2 CHALLENGES

3.2.1 Early childhood care, education and development in Sindh shares many of its concerns and problems with the global climate in relation to early childhood care, awareness, access to early learning opportunities, improving child outcomes, establishing standards, maintaining process continuity, streamlining sector policies, sustaining and scaling implementation.

3.2.2 The following highlights major stumbling blocks on the road to provision and sustenance of universal access to ECCE:

1. Lack of political will and vision:

- a. The ideology and practice of educating the early years has existed from the inception of Pakistan however the Government of Sindh has failed to recognize and act on formalizing early childhood education as an education reform initiative until the 21st century.

2. Absence of a comprehensive early childhood policy:

- a. The Government of Sindh has no identifiable goal, objective or path to establishing ECCE in Sindh. As such a guiding strategy must be developed to drive the holistic evolution of ECCE institutions, programs and services in Sindh.

3. Inability to select an early childhood age group and education stream to adopt:

- a. There are many local and international definitions of early childhood care, development and education along with their relevant age groups i.e. ECE (0-6 & 3-5), ECD (0-6 & 0-3), ECC (0-6, 3-6 & 3-8), ECCE (0-6, 3-5 & 0-8) or ECED (0-3 & 0-6).
- b. Government of Sindh policies, plans and curricula are not aligned on the early childhood age group to be targeted. Contradictory data leaves room for considerable debate and requires harmonizing opinions with ground realities.
- c. Early childhood education stream and age group must be rationalized with government capacity and international commitments.

4. Absence of ECCE regulations and legislation to implement them:

- a. Until laws and rules clearly identify and ensure the parameters of child interaction, care, education and development there will be no legal basis for mechanisms to ensure safety, survival, access and quality of ECCE.

5. Absence of formalized and standardized ECCE curriculum, materials, programs, institutions, instruction, delivery and assessment:

- a. The plethora of unregulated early childhood models currently in practice within Sindh have not enhanced literacy rates within the early years.
- b. Piecemeal measures had no significant successful outcomes to impact provincial early childhood development and literacy.
- c. Public and private sectors often collide in efforts to implement a singular form schooling in the province and run parallel programs that are not aligned with education goals and international commitments.
- d. The National ECE Curriculum 2007 is available and is being randomly implemented leading to a weak 'buy in' of the excellent document but it needs to be reviewed after 8 years of weak implementation.
- e. The National ECE Curriculum 2007 was developed to cater to one year of ECE and therefore needs to be expanded in content and scope catering to a wider proposed age group.

- 6. Scarcity or absence of ECCE materials, personnel, facilities, resources and developmentally appropriate learning spaces at schools:**
 - a. Limited resources were allocated to Katchi classes which then consequently failed to cultivate an appropriate learning environment with teaching, teaching learning materials to achieve positive child outcomes.
 - b. Children in rural and urban areas are not addressed according to diverse learning needs, differentiated strategies and/or flexible approaches.
- 7. Absence of formal ECCE teaching cadre, education programs, training curricula, qualifications, professional development programs and deployment strategies:**
 - a. ECCE has not been established as a professional cadre in the government employment hierarchy.
 - b. There are no standardized and cost-effective accredited ECCE teacher education, training and development institutes, programs, policies and mechanisms to cater to the overwhelming need of the pre-primary population.
 - c. The private sector has initialized numerous programs on teacher education however these are unregulated by Government of Sindh.
- 8. Absence of ECCE administrative department in the Government of Sindh:**
 - a. ECCE has not been provided an administrative structure in the government education mechanism and as such issues with governance are foreseeable.
- 9. Absence of ECE monitoring and evaluation mechanisms:**
 - a. Without ECCE policies, institutions, curriculum or teachers in place, a system of supervision, research and evaluation cannot follow for ECCE administration.
- 10. Limited understanding of inclusive practices to cater to a diverse child population including those with special needs, considered at risk or from disadvantaged groups:**
 - a. Inclusion and differentiated practices are understood in a variety of ways both locally and internationally therefore giving rise to the need of a common-understanding.
 - b. Current public perception of inclusion is majorly connected with Special Education and therefore there is resistance as special needs is considered a separate arena from general education. This is evidenced by separation of the Special Education Department from the Education & Literacy Department.
 - c. The introduction and assimilation of students with special needs within the classroom is a foreign concept requiring a change in mindsets followed by a push for resources to build pilot programs, develop training modules and run inclusive and integrated approaches to education and teaching.
- 11. Shortage of financial and human resources:**
 - a. Budgetary allocation and utilization for the education sector is not rationalized.
 - b. As ECCE is not integrated into the government organization structures, no budgetary allocations for ECCE can be made directly.
 - c. The dearth of human capital is significant and occurs across the board.
 - d. Employing new teachers will only be possible once an ECCE teaching cadre is established with necessary leeway in terms of qualification requirements as there is a lack of provincial ECCE teacher education programs.
 - e. ECCE requires highly educated, trained, aware and responsive professionals and therefore transition existing teachers will be a challenge.
- 12. Lack of community awareness:**
 - a. Majority of government personnel and the provincial public are unaware of the importance of ECCE and related factors that contribute to its success.

- b. ECCE will need to be championed for programs and services to be adopted when initiated.

13. Multi-sectoral nature of ECCE:

- a. ECCE requires inter-departmental and intra-departmental assimilation and coordination to align efforts and achieve tangible outcomes but significant gaps in communication and collaboration already exist.

14. Transitioning Katchi and ECCE students to higher grades:

- a. The ECCE age group will have to be aligned with Primary enrollment criteria requiring students of age 6.
- b. Interim steps will have to be identified for children who have completed one year of ECCE but do not meet age requirement for enrollment into Primary.

15. Catering to Katchi enrollment of 600,000 students:

- a. Demand for ECCE will be higher than supply of classes or schools.
- b. Enrollment will have to be formalized with proper General Register (GR) numbers assigned to enrolled students to ensure quality, scalability and transition.

16. Absence of data on current home environment for evidence-based school interventions:

- a. Extensive information from the household will need to be collected to understand the ECCE population that government schools will need to prepare and provide for.

17. Identifying and aligning experts, committees, communities and partnerships on ECCE:

- a. Historically Government of Sindh has partnered with various agencies on ECCE but on an ad hoc basis, without defined provincial goals and a comprehensive provincial strategy.
- b. Concurrently, the government will have to identify and utilize ECCE experts and professionals to form committees and forums for the development and execution of ECCE in Sindh.
- c. The government is currently disconnected from the global community on ECCE and therefore must reach out and develop international community ties for mutual support and better alignment.
- d. Partnerships will have to be revised, rationalized and aligned with provincial ECCE agenda.
- e. Inconsistent and disparate measures will need to be challenged to counter vested interests and prioritize sustainable provincial outcomes.

3.3 PRIORITIES

- 3.3.1 Education is central to achieving all 17 SDGs between now and 2030. In accordance with the Education Priorities of the UN Special Summit 2015 where SDGs were formally adopted by the global community, the 2015 Incheon Declaration, the upcoming Framework for Action (FFA) for SDG 4 and its targets in November 2015 and indicators for SDG 4 and SDG 4.2 in March 2016, Sindh will prioritize holistic education from pre-school to higher education thereby ensuring in 2030 all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes. Following this target is to ensure by 2030 that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education. The priority is leaving no one behind, focusing primarily on educational access for girls and women, persons with disabilities, disadvantaged ethnic groups, and other marginalized populations.
- 3.3.2 A sound recognition is required of the multidimensional impact of early childhood education to alleviate poverty, uplift economy and spiral growth towards improved quality of life for all. As the gap increases between those with means and those without, inequalities in child development become blatant. These inequalities often begin before birth and expand during the early years. As a result children entering primary school illustrate significant gaps in their development.
- 3.3.3 Investments in early childhood address inequalities and lead to improved cognitive development, stable socio-emotional maturity, positive school outcomes and productive life trajectories. Research has proven that potential returns significantly exceed costs.
- 3.3.4 Children need to be cared for in a manner that is harmonized with their experiences. An inclusive early childhood environment is therefore essential in this endeavor catering to early experiences and consolidating the macro and micro context of children's lives. The macro context refers to the external environment and opportunities for young children and their families while the micro context refers to the home environment and personal experiences of the child and family.
- 3.3.5 Influencing holistic learning and development of young children requires taking advantage of diverse entry points utilizing multiple stakeholders. This process is both multidimensional and sequential in nature. Early experiences shape neural architecture and wiring of the brain. Progress is both interrelated and interdependent as enhancing potential in one area directly affects one or more developmental areas.
- 3.3.6 Priority must be given to establishing an enabling early childhood environment with support structures to ensure both its sustainability and scalability for improved child outcomes.

4. ECCE POLICY FOR SINDH

4.1 BACKGROUND

The ECCE policy framework was commissioned in 2013 by the Reform Support Unit (RSU), Education and Literacy Department, Government of Sindh. An ECE Task Force was formed comprising of relevant ministries, departments, NGOs, INGOs and early childhood specialists, practitioners, researchers, academicians, and development partners. This Task Force was then notified by the Education and Literacy Department, Government of Sindh and consultative workshops were conducted to develop the early childhood policy framework. The following five focus groups were formed to direct policy efforts on key areas of early childhood care and education:

1. Policy and Advocacy
2. Curriculum and Textbooks
3. Learning Standards and Assessments
4. Teachers Education and Training
5. Parents and Community

Recommendations were aggregated and policy development was initiated.

The policy has aimed to capture the most up-to-date information available. For this purpose it draws on the following sources:

- The most recent national government reports on various aspects of ECE, ECC and ECD;
- Communication with civil servants in provincial departments and experts for feedback and to ensure that the most recent and accurate information has been collated;
- National and international statistical references providing macro-level data;
- Relevant publications providing analyses of ECE, ECC and ECD policies, practices and standards
- Academic literature for broader background information.

Sindh is committed to achieving the SDG post-2015 agenda as it supports the holistic development of children and society within Sindh.

The following goals synchronize with the ECCE policy agenda¹⁸ as illustrated by Figure 1.

- **Goal 3:** Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
- **Goal 4:** Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning
- **Goal 5:** Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

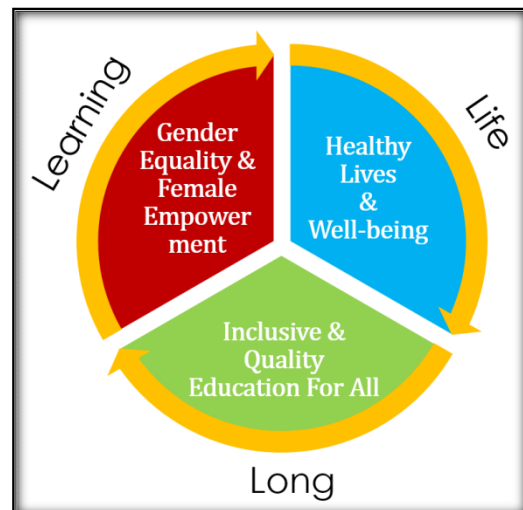


FIGURE 1 : THE RELATIONSHIP OF POST-2015 SDG GOALS 3, 4 & 5 AS PER SINDH ECCE POLICY

¹⁸ UN General Assembly draft outcome document of the UN Summit for adoption of post-2015 development agenda

4.2 ECCE POLICY FRAMEWORK

4.2.1 DEFINITIONS

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) refers to programs, services and provisions for the nurture, development and education of children, from 0-8 years, in the physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional domains. ECCE will also support synergy between health, nutrition, safety, learning, culture, creativity, artistry, musical appreciation and technology for children and their families.

Early Childhood Development (ECD) refers to programs and provisions that support children, from 0-3 years, to reach their full developmental potential through provision of early intervention, neonatal care, maternal healthcare, nutrition, early learning, social protection and child protection. ECD is embedded in family and community support and engagement to directly impact child life trajectories and outcomes. ECD is a crucial component of the Policy but not the primary focus.

4.2.2 POLICY BRIEF

The ECCE Policy is focused towards establishing developmentally appropriate Pre-Primary ECCE that will support transition towards Primary school preparation to improve child outcomes in Sindh.

In 2015, the Government of Sindh will initiate implementation of ECCE prioritizing children aged 4-5 years by launching ECE classes in Sindh as the first phase. Phase-wise implementation will support the Government to ensure scalability and quality assurance of ECCE service delivery.

By 2030, it is foreseen that early childhood initiatives will expand to include the 0-3 and 6-8 age groups in to meet SDGs and international standards of early childhood care, development and education.

The Policy is applicable to all ECCE settings, programs and services in public, private and voluntary sectors catering to the early childhood population in Sindh.

4.2.3 POLICY VISION

The vision of ECCE proposed by the Government of Sindh is as follows:

“The provision of responsive, high-quality, accessible and inclusive early childhood care and education for all children and families living in Sindh with trained and qualified early childhood personnel in a developmentally appropriate environment.”

To realize this vision, the Government of Sindh will be guided by the ECCE policy goals and objectives.

4.2.4 POLICY GOALS

The following policy goals will ensure all children 0-8 years are able to equally access quality early childhood care and education in an inclusive manner within Sindh.

- 1) Establish an enabling ECCE environment for all children aged 0-8 years.
- 2) Establish comprehensive standards for ECCE institutions, personnel, programs and services;
- 3) Develop and enhance human capacity and financial capital to execute, sustain and scale ECCE;
- 4) Establish, maintain and scale partnerships between all ECCE stakeholders;
- 5) Establish mechanisms for governance, implementation, coordination, monitoring, evaluation and research in ECCE;
- 6) Recognize, understand and advocate the importance of ECCE;
- 7) Support the development of early childhood legislation.

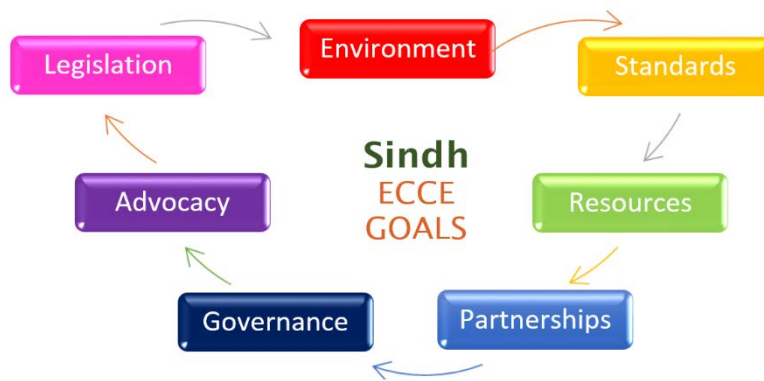


FIGURE 2 SINDH ECCE POLICY GOALS 2015

4.2.5 POLICY OBJECTIVES

The policy objectives were developed by the Government of Sindh with input from the early childhood sector and academia, incorporating feedback via a consultative process that included provincial workshops, consultation forums and focus groups.

GOALS	OBJECTIVES
<p>1 Establish an enabling ECCE environment for children aged 0-8 years.</p>	<p>1.1 Analyze existing school infrastructures and facilities, evaluate feasibility for ECCE implementation and establish ECCE institutions.</p> <p>1.2 Identify, record and analyze existing home environment and capacities of children 0-8 years.</p> <p>1.3 Ensure provision of education, support and early interventions on health, hygiene, nutrition, child care and sound parenting practices for early years.</p> <p>1.4 Establish ECCE programs and services aligned with ECCE Standards.</p> <p>1.5 Employ new personnel and evaluate existing personnel for capacity to serve ECCE programs and services.</p> <p>1.6 Identify and analyze existing ECCE teacher education programs to develop provincial ECCE teacher education programs.</p>

GOALS	OBJECTIVES
	<p>1.7 Evaluate and upgrade existing teacher training institutions in terms of resources and capacity.</p> <p>1.8 Establish Learning Resource Centers for teacher support.</p> <p>1.9 Evaluate ECCE Curriculum for implementation.</p> <p>1.10 Acquire and arrange ECCE teaching learning materials ensuring alignment with ECCE Standards.</p> <p>1.11 Engage and educate parents, families, communities and youth in the ECCE governance, organization, implementation, accountability and evaluation processes.</p> <p>1.12 Support transition and continuity of care for ECCE age group at every developmental stage from 0-8.</p> <p>1.13 Ensure support is available for children with special needs, from disadvantaged groups or children deemed at risk.</p> <p>1.14 Ensure all processes are equitable and inclusive in nature.</p>
<p>2 Establish comprehensive standards for ECCE institutions, personnel, programs and services</p>	<p>2.1 Identify and analyze ECCE areas that require standards.</p> <p>2.2 Develop and disseminate ECCE Standards to all ECCE stakeholders.</p> <p>2.3 Periodically conduct orientation of ECCE Standards with ECCE personnel.</p> <p>2.4 Manage and conduct procurement of ECCE materials as per government standards.</p> <p>2.5 Establish support mechanisms for ECCE personnel during establishment of ECCE classes/schools to ensure adherence to standards.</p> <p>2.6 Establish mechanism for periodic evaluation and standards maintenance of ECCE institutions, personnel, programs and services.</p> <p>2.7 Ensuring stakeholder compliance with ECCE Standards.</p>
<p>3 Identify, record and enhance human and financial capital to execute, sustain and scale ECCE</p>	<p>3.1 Utilize ECCE experts in all stages of establishing ECCE in Sindh.</p> <p>3.2 Generate and utilize data in all aspects of establishing ECCE in Sindh for evidence-based ECCE intervention.</p> <p>3.3 Establish an ECCE Cadre.</p> <p>3.4 Establish career ladder in ECCE cadre with opportunities for advancement and competitive salary packages.</p> <p>3.5 Employ new government personnel with relevant ECCE qualifications</p> <p>3.6 Develop teacher education programs in ECCE.</p> <p>3.7 Provide continuous professional development in ECCE and utilize Learning Resource Centers accordingly.</p> <p>3.8 Incentivize career transition into ECCE.</p> <p>3.9 Identify and analyze financial requirements and constraints to execute, sustain and scale ECCE with government resources.</p> <p>3.10 Explore, identify and engage ECCE funding streams apart from regular government budget for allocation of fiscal resources.</p> <p>3.11 Ensure all ECCE implementation issues are connected to resources.</p> <p>3.12 Enroll children from 0-8 into ECCE institutions, programs and services in a phased manner.</p> <p>3.13 Engage parents/families and communities within ECCE institutions, programs and services in a phased manner.</p>

GOALS	OBJECTIVES
<p>4 Establish, maintain and scale partnerships between all ECCE stakeholders</p>	<p>4.1 Identify ECCE stakeholders. 4.2 Develop and implement a multi-sectorial collaboration and leadership strategy for comprehensive and quality delivery of early childhood care and education as a diverse and inter-disciplinary field. 4.3 Transition parents, families and communities as partners in the process of establishing ECCE in Sindh. 4.4 Identify and synchronize overlapping targets and activities with existing partner agencies. 4.5 Generate, manage and utilize data on ECCE in Sindh to align and scale partnerships with existing development partners. 4.6 Establish research partnerships to conduct analyze data generated. 4.7 Utilize partnership forums and stakeholders to change public perception of government schools.</p>
<p>5 Establish mechanisms for governance, Implementation, coordination, monitoring, evaluation and research in ECCE</p>	<p>5.1 Analyze existing governance structures and adapt or improve for ECCE. 5.2 Identify and communicate relevant institutional and departmental ECCE roles and responsibilities 5.3 Develop and implement communication mechanism and strategies for inter-departmental and intra-departmental coordination on ECCE institutions, personnel, programs and services. 5.4 Develop and implement monitoring, evaluation, accountability and quality assurance mechanisms and strategies for each phase of ECCE implementation. 5.5 Identify and track indicators for all mechanisms to measure outcomes. 5.6 Utilize grass root communities to facilitate evaluation of ECCE structures, mechanisms and services. 5.7 Identify areas of research and establish mechanism to conduct and report research findings in ECCE.</p>
<p>6 Recognize, understand and advocate the importance of ECCE</p>	<p>6.1 Identify ECCE advocacy goals for 2030 6.2 Utilize provincial data to inform and drive advocacy for ECCE. 6.3 Identify, align and scale existing ECCE advocacy initiatives. 6.4 Identify and establish government sponsored advocacy programs to address ECCE challenges 6.5 Utilize partnerships to re-inforce advocacy goals and objectives for ECCE 6.6 Campaign government initiatives in ECCE 6.7 Expand existing communication systems to provide feedback on ECCE programs and services 6.8 Develop and implement self-financing mechanisms to sustain advocacy initiatives 6.9 Establish mechanism for volunteer work and youth involvement.</p>
<p>7 Support the development of early childhood legislation</p>	<p>7.1 Identify and review existing legislation that applies to ECCE age group. 7.2 Identify, document and analyze issues and cases on child rights, protection and security. 7.3 Utilize data generated to support legal interventions and outcomes. 7.4 Develop legal framework for child security and protection congruent with areas afflicted by civil unrest, gang violence, war and natural disasters. 7.5 Establish mechanism for periodic review and amendment of ECCE rules and regulations.</p>

4.2.6 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

EDUCATION AND LITERACY DEPARTMENT, GOVERNMENT OF SINDH

THE CHILD

1. Every child has an inherent right to an education that will enable them to reach their full potential regardless of gender, differently abled, ethnicity, economic, social or religious disparity or status.

ETHICS

2. Ethics, values and morality are central to the holistic development of an individual and fundamental constructs such as “fairness”, “justice”, “respect”, “kindness”, “equality”, “tolerance”; “peace” “dignity” “love”, “honesty” and “sensitivity” are major determinants of survival within our multicultural society.

PARENTS

3. The parent and the home have a major responsibility towards the welfare of the child.
4. The creation and retention of partnerships with parents is a positive and important element in the provision of early childhood education.
5. The well-being of the child can best be served by strong partnerships between communities and schools.

SYSTEM OF EDUCATION & ECCE

6. Pre-primary education must be an integral part of early childhood care and education, offered by a high quality and adequately resourced system of public education and services.
7. Adequate levels of high quality early childhood education and care should be provided for younger children to meet the needs of children, family and community.
8. The educational system must provide bias free curricular arrangements and opportunities to ensure aspects of culture, gender, diversity, ethnicity, and wealth are appropriately addressed.
9. Early childhood care and education must recognize and affirm the cultural knowledge, language and values of young children and children from culturally diverse backgrounds.
10. The links and coordination between early childhood services must be developed and supported to provide a more seamless continuum of education from 3-5 years.
11. The Education and Literacy Department, Government of Sindh must work in partnership with relevant government and all stakeholders to review and upgrade the shared Education Sector Plan 2014-18 for early childhood education and care, focused on the educational needs and rights of every child.

QUALITY OF ECCE

12. Quality early childhood care and education ensures lasting benefits for the holistic development of children and their future outcomes.

ACCESS TO ECCE-(EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION) ?

13. All children should have guaranteed access to high quality, free pre-primary education for a minimum of 20 hours per week, for two years prior to school.
14. The Government of Sindh, in partnership with the civil society and private communities must take responsibility for planning and funding the provision of and accessibility to preschool education for all children in Sindh.

GENDER ISSUES

15. All efforts must be made to address gender disparities in access, quality and relevance of education for boys and especially girls.

SPECIAL EDUCATION/DIFFERENTLY ABLED AND NEEDS OF THE DISADVANTAGED

16. Differently-abled and Children with special needs and from disadvantaged backgrounds must be provided with equitable access to high quality, properly resourced early childhood education that meets the needs of every child.

CAREGIVERS AND EDUCATORS

17. All caregivers and teachers in early childhood education have the right to appropriate recognition, remuneration, career paths and status.
18. Early childhood education, including preschool education, must be delivered by qualified early childhood teachers and practitioners. Appropriate registration and accreditation procedures must be adopted.

THE NATIONAL ECE CURRICULUM 2007¹⁹

1. The whole child is important.
2. Learning is holistic and for the young child is not compartmentalized under subject headings.
3. Intrinsic motivation is valuable because it results in child-initiated learning.
4. The child's sense of dignity, autonomy and self-discipline are of critical importance.

¹⁹Ministry of Education, Government of Sindh, (2007). *National Curriculum for Early Childhood Education 2007*, pp.8. Islamabad

5. ECCE POLICY ACTIONS

The Education and Literacy Department, Government of Sindh will enact the following policy actions that clearly define parameters of ECCE in Sindh as per the National Education Policy 2009, Sindh Education Sector Plan 2014-2018, ECE Task Force 2014 and ECCE Standards 2015. Policies are categorized according to key areas within the early childhood spectrum.

5.1 THE CHILD

1. Children from 0-8 years of age will qualify to receive ECCE in Sindh and will be supported to acquire an education in stress free environments that will enable them to reach their full potential regardless of gender, different-abilities, ethnicity, economic, social or religious disparity or status.
2. Children in the ECCE age group will be identified, educated and protected as per ECCE policies, standards, programs and guidelines defined and established for ECCE classes, schools, personnel and institutions.

5.2 PARENTS, FAMILY, COMMUNITY& THE HOME

1. Parents will be provided the following conducive to their participation:
 - a. Voluntary, evidence-based, home visiting programs for new and expectant families at risk for poor child outcomes;
 - b. Parent education and parent-child interaction programs that are linguistically and culturally appropriate and support development and nurturing of infants and toddlers;
 - c. Home-based or institution-specific support to adopt and follow early childhood development guidelines;
 - d. Access to child care assistance for eligible families with provisions for quality and continuity of care;
 - e. Effective outreach and enrollment in programs that promote family economic stability and parent participation in higher education;
 - f. Prevention programs and services for children deemed at risk and their families;
 - g. Access to family engagement programs and services;
 - h. Opportunities to be involved in aspects of early childhood program design and governance and to develop skills necessary to actively and effectively participate in the governance process;
2. Access will be provided to healthcare and education programs for children cared for by grandparents and other relative caregivers;
3. Government of Sindh will establish benchmarks of success for family engagement in targeted populations and will monitor progress; and
4. ECCE programs will actively encourage and support child, family and community engagement with emphasis on resilience, tolerance, social cohesion and peace.

5.3 HEALTH, NUTRITION, SAFETY & PHYSICAL EDUCATION

1. Health and Nutrition:
 - a. ECCE personnel in community based centres and schools will be provided information to share with parents on early interventions along with pre and post-natal care for expecting mothers in collaboration with the Health Department/LHWs;
 - b. Government of Sindh through inter-departmental initiative will support timely and ongoing prenatal, pediatric, and oral health care for mothers and children;
 - c. Government of Sindh will support access to affordable healthcare for children and families with linkages to local basic and tertiary referral facilities;
 - d. Partnerships will be utilized to coordinate the identification and delivery of healthcare services with ECCE programs;
 - e. Community-based programs will be established targeting sources of toxic stress such as violence, crime, substance abuse, and mental illness, combined with supports for parents and caregivers who need them;
 - f. Early childhood nutrition guidelines must be developed for ECCE teachers and parents in accordance with ECCE Standards;
 - g. ECCE classes/schools should provide children with a nutritious and healthy environment following ECCE Standards and guidelines;
 - h. ECCE teachers and students will be taught about food and nutrition, food preparation, storage, safety and hygiene and their role in achieving and maintaining health in accordance with the ECCE Curriculum; and
 - i. ECCE classes/schools will be encouraged to provide an eating environment that promotes family and multicultural values;
 - j. Government of Sindh will ensure maximum participation of families, providers, schools and communities in provincial nutrition and assistance programs.
2. Safety:
 - a. Corporal punishment of children admitted in all ECCE classes/schools is strictly prohibited and will be penalized as per relevant rules and regulation prescribed by Government of Sindh.
 - b. ECCE classes/schools must maintain confidentiality and privacy with regard to family and student information, development and progress in accordance with ECCE Standards.
 - c. ECCE classes/schools must employ safety measures and precautionary actions in accordance with ECCE Standards.
3. Physical Education:
 - a. ECCE teachers should provide a wide range of concrete, developmentally appropriate, indoor and outdoor experiences to assist in the development of each child, including planned and spontaneous interactions, promoting healthy habits/life skills that enhance lifelong well-being in accordance with ECCE Standards.

5.4 LANGUAGE, CULTURE & DIVERSITY

1. The early childhood program design must ensure recognition and respect for language, culture, self-expression, contextual creativity and diversity.
2. ECCE content, teaching practices, learning environment and materials will reflect the characteristics, values, and practices of diverse cultural groups.

3. Language, culture, traditions and religious practices represented in the preschool and community are to be acknowledged, communicated and respected throughout the school year as part of the early childhood program in place.
4. The unique identity, composition, structure and characteristics of each family unit will be recognized and respected by all members of the school in accordance with ECCE Standards.
5. In terms of language, Urdu is recognized as the national language, Sindhi as the provincial language and English as a foreign language.
6. Medium of instruction in ECCE classes/schools may be in Sindhi as the first language, Urdu as the second language and English as the foreign language where feasible. Government of Sindh must ensure support to address those students whose spoken language /mother tongue is other than the languages stated above in an early childhood classroom in any particular locality (urban/rural) in the Sindh province.
7. Early literacy standards should be established that articulate with primary and secondary education and reflect consistency and continuity with overall education goals.
8. Standards for early childhood personnel should require teachers and administrators to meet early literacy instructional standards.
9. Support should be specified and provided in the home language and Sindhi, Urdu and/or English for second and third language learners where feasible in accordance with ECCE Standards. Very basic level of support may be provided when student enrollment is low or insufficient resources are available.
10. Multilingual education must be provided by ECCE teachers who qualify as multilingual personnel.

5.5 ETHICS, VALUES & MORALITY

1. ECCE policies, standards, programs and practices must recognize ethics, values, and morality as central to the holistic development of a child in the fundamental constructs of honesty, fairness, justice, respect, tolerance, kindness, equality, love, family values, social sensitivity, harmony and peace building; and
2. ECCE policies, standards and guidelines must enforce implementation of, bias and corruption free and ethically sound practices, in the implementation and administration of early childhood care and education.

5.6 QUALITY

1. ECCE programs must be comprehensive in nature, developmentally appropriate for children so that both age-specific and individual characteristics are addressed and designed to meet the needs of children and families served;
2. ECCE program planning and implementation must recognize the integrated nature of care and education for young children;
3. ECCE should be coordinated and delivered by qualified early childhood teachers in developmentally appropriate, educationally sound and culturally inclusive learning environments;
4. All ECCE program administration personnel must receive experiential training and/or qualifications and opportunities for continuing education relevant to the ages and needs of children served through flexible certified diplomas/ degree programs.

5. All ECCE program teaching personnel must have a range of compulsory options for Pre-service or In-service training, qualifications and opportunities for certified continuing education relevant to the ages and needs of children served;
6. Personnel with early childhood expertise (including specialized training and/or relevant work experience with the age group) must be employed throughout all stages of program design, administration, and implementation;
7. Compensation must be equivalent to government Basic Pay Scales, from entry scale to higher grade to attract and retain qualified personnel to work with children and reduce high rates of turnover detrimental to children. Salaries and benefits should be competitive to market professionals with equivalent training and responsibilities;
8. All schools/institutions offering ECCE must be accredited and adequately resourced to provide ECCE, employ appropriately trained personnel for each group of children accessing ECCE, meet ECCE Standards;
9. Quality safeguards:
 - a. The Government of Sindh is responsible for establishing and implementing high-quality standards for all ECCE programs, facilities, services and institutions;
 - b. E&LD will ensure that in ECCE there is a strong linkage of learning standards for literacy and numeracy across 3-8 years up to lower primary or grades 1-3- in all programs/projects. .
 - c. A system for implementing standards that includes monitoring and inspection must be ensured;
 - d. ECCE Standards should be regularly reviewed and evaluated for their effectiveness in collaboration with stakeholders and departments of health, nutrition, population, social welfare, women development, youth and social safety nets (BISP). .
 - e. Efforts must be made to ensure continuity for children receiving ECCE services. This requires attention to factors that foster policy and reforms continuity and personnel continuity within programs, between programs and between home and the program;
 - f. Procurement of ECCE goods and services should be conducted within regulated rules and procedures;
 - g. Parents must be actively engaged in expanding development of their children, acknowledging their critical role, rights and needs in managing, caring for and educating their children;
 - h. Quality early childhood care and education is strengthened by providing integrated learning between grades for quality transitions; and
 - i. Quality early childhood care and education reflects a belief in the uniqueness of childhood by respecting children as they are, in how they evolve and for who they may become;

5.7 EQUITY, ACCESS & INCLUSION

1. Public ECCE must be free and equitably accessible to all children in Sindh from 3-8 years of age;
2. Capacity to afford ECCE must not be a barrier to access ECCE;
3. Parental contribution and/or fundraising for basic school resources by government institutions is not permitted;
4. A five year ECCE Implementation Plan should be developed and implemented to provide guaranteed access for children from 0-8 in Sindh;

5. Priority must be given to providing access to two years of high quality, culturally appropriate, free ECCE to all children of Sindh aged 4 to 5 years;
6. Children with special needs and/or from disadvantaged backgrounds should be given priority when phasing in universal access to two years of ECCE and clear adaptations for their individual needs must be implemented;
7. A provincial ECCE database must be developed identifying ECCE programs, services and institutions. This database must record issues of access for children with special needs, from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds or disadvantaged groups;
8. The Government of Sindh, in funding partnership with the federal government and/or other funding agencies, will ensure that ECCE programs and resources address children with special needs and from disadvantaged backgrounds;
9. Mechanisms must be implemented for equitably providing families/guardians the information they need to make informed choices with regard to their children; and
10. Government policies or directives resulting in segregation within ECCE classes on the basis of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or special need, including at risk status should be prevented or rectified where required.

5.8 ENROLLMENT

1. All children will be admitted into ECCE classes/schools of Sindh that meet ECCE standards and criteria for enrollment;
2. Admitted children will be afforded all the rights and privileges as well as access to GR numbers, programs, and activities associated to ECCE as defined by the ECCE Standards;
3. ECCE School enrollment, education policies and standards will be free from all forms of discrimination such as gender, special needs/differently-abled, race, color, national/ethnic origin, religion, or social/financial status etc.;
4. ECCE enrollment will begin with conversion of Katchi classes within consolidated schools however, wherever there are Katchi students enrolled they will be counted formally in the SEMIS data. ECCE network to be further expanded as per the ECCE Implementation Plan;
5. Katchi class enrollment data should be formalized and reflected in the Annual School Census for conducting ECCE need assessments and establishing a baseline;
6. Government of Sindh will establish and implement measures to document, support and enhance ECCE enrollment;
7. Government of Sindh will include ECCE enrollment in existing school enrollment drives; and
8. Government of Sindh will strategically accommodate increase in enrollment formally without compromising ECCE Standards.

5.9 INFRASTRUCTURE – CENTER, CLASSROOM, SCHOOL, AND TEACHING LEARNING MATERIALS

1. All Katchi classes will be converted into ECCE classes and considered ECCE schools meant for further expansion as defined by the ECCE Implementation Plan;
2. ECCE centers, classrooms, schools, materials and arrangements must meet ECCE Standards and be provided with recurring budgets for meeting continuous needs in accordance with rules and regulations;

3. ECCE facilities will be established in all public sector schools in Sindh to cater to the ECCE age group 0-8;
4. ECCE Learning Resource Centers must be established in every Taluka of Sindh and must meet ECCE Standards; and
5. ECCE classrooms/schools will be equipped with necessary teaching learning materials, equipment, furniture and fixtures that meet ECCE Standards.

5.10 LEARNING DOMAINS & ENVIRONMENT

1. Create and/or strengthen a warm, encouraging, clean, healthy, safe and secure early childhood learning environments for all children attending ECCE classes/schools;
2. ECCE environment must address, support and enhance ideal development for all children across all learning domains, identified as physical/motor (fine and gross), cognitive, language, social and emotional;
3. Establish and maintain environment that promotes the development of children's critical thinking skills; raises awareness about diversity and multiculturalism; and supports student enthusiasm and engagement;
4. ECCE learning environment should be conducive to emergent experiential learning for achieving specific learning outcomes;
5. ECCE classroom environment should comprise of adequate and age-appropriate learning corners and/or materials that must be acquired, organized, displayed and utilized as per ECCE Standards; and
6. ECCE environment should offer individualized adaptation and modifications for children with special needs and from disadvantaged groups.

5.11 CLASSROOM RATIO

1. A qualified ECCE teacher will be present in the classroom to perform all duties in accordance with ECCE Standards;
2. The teacher-student ratio will be in accordance with ECCE Standards and should be rationalized as per classroom size with number of student per class not exceeding 30;
3. Student group sizes and teacher-student ratio must be adjusted where necessary to ensure that the needs of all children are addressed including children with disabilities or having special education needs; and
4. Government of Sindh will provide teaching support; teaching assistants personnel in ECCE classes/schools as per ECCE Standards.

5.12 SPECIAL EDUCATION/DIFFERENTLY-ABLED AND NEEDS OF THE DISADVANTAGED

1. Children with special needs, from disadvantaged backgrounds and/or who are living in at risk situations must be provided with equitable access to high quality, properly resourced early childhood care and education that meets the needs of every child and is in accordance with the ECCE Standards. Where students can be mainstreamed, those who are mild to moderate differently-abled into schools efforts will be ensured, to do so

5.13 STUDENT TRANSITION

1. Students will be supported through periods of transition i.e. from home to ECCE classes/schools and onwards to Lower and Upper Primary, as per their developmental level, in accordance with early childhood care and development practices and ECCE Standards while maintaining focus on their ability to reach their best potential; and
2. The Government of Sindh will address gaps and support systems between ECCE enrollment and Primary enrollment in accordance with relevant age criteria necessary to ensure smooth transition between classes.

5.14 CURRICULUM

1. Government of Sindh will develop and implement an ECCE Curriculum for all ECCE classes/schools of Sindh as a provincially and developmentally appropriate curriculum embedded in experiential and local contexts to support the holistic development and education of the child 0-8 years;
2. Government of Sindh will adapt/modify ECCE Curriculum as and where necessary to meet the diverse needs of the early childhood population;
3. ECCE curriculum will be reviewed at regular intervals as determined by the Government of Sindh;
4. The ECCE and Primary Curriculum will be reviewed for systemic linkages, establishing continuity, ensuring it is developmentally appropriate, contextually relevant and culturally sensitive;
5. Technology, sustainable development practices, visual and performing arts will be introduced, adopted and/or integrated as and where appropriate/necessary in accordance with ECCE Curriculum and ECCE Standards in all ECCE classes/schools of Sindh up to lower primary grades ;
6. Dissemination of and access to curriculum, resource guides and teaching learning materials in relevant languages to stakeholders will be ensured and in a timely manner;
7. ECCE programs will have strong and inclusive literacy components; and
8. Early literacy curricula, teaching learning materials and teaching practices should be evidence-based, integrated with all domains of learning, and understandable to personnel up to lower primary grades. .

5.15 STANDARDS

1. ECCE Standards will be aligned with the ECCE Policy;
2. ECCE learning standards and Primary to Higher Secondary standards will be aligned and equated across the major domains of development and foundational skill areas;
3. ECCE Standards for learning will be developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate reflecting the major domains of development (physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional) and foundational skill areas (literacy, math, science, social studies, arts and technology);
4. ECCE Standards will address all key areas of the early childhood spectrum, be evidence-based and utilized to guide enactment of policy actions;
5. Standards should include but not be limited to ECCE professional qualifications, ongoing training requirements, parent roles, group size, teacher-child ratios, discipline, health and safety aspects, developmentally appropriate curriculum, early learning capacities and should be rationalized and compatible with all ECCE institutions within the province;
6. Core competencies for ECCE teachers will be aligned to ECCE standards and desired outcomes;

7. ECCE Standards must be developed and reviewed regularly through informed and inclusive processes as and when determined by the Government of Sindh;
8. ECCE standards will be implemented in teacher preparation, training, curricula and assessment, with review of results for vulnerable children up to lower primary or grades 1-3;
9. Government of Sindh will establish quality rating and improvement systems according to ECCE standards that will serve to advance ECCE programs to higher quality ratings and improved child outcomes; and
10. ECCE Standards will require a foundation of support from early childhood programs, professionals, and families.

5.16 TECHNOLOGY

1. Technology and/or interactive media will be integrated into the ECCE curriculum to support learning goals established for individual children within the framework of developmentally appropriate practices in accordance with ECCE standards;
2. ECCE teachers intentionally utilizing technology and/or interactive media and blended learning must be adequately informed on the nature of the tools, implications of using these tools and must comply with ECCE Standards;
3. To ensure quality, digital media utilization will be rationalized and will safeguard the health, well-being and overall development of young children;
4. Digital literacy for the ECCE population will be contextually imparted ensuring internet/digital security standards;
5. ECCE personnel along with parents/community will be supported to develop relevant skill sets in the technology sector, to become responsible digital citizens and to maintain awareness of technological advancements/innovations in education.

5.17 PERSONNEL

1. All ECCE personnel must be provided appropriate recognition, remuneration, professional growth opportunities, career paths and status;
2. All ECCE personnel must acquire and retain relevant qualifications as per their designation from accredited programs and institutions in accordance with ECCE Standards;
 - a. Government personnel transferred to ECCE profession must acquire relevant training and qualification in accordance with designation within a specified time period with flexible programs to retain position;
 - b. Government personnel receiving ECCE training and qualifications must remain in ECCE profession for a given time period specified in the ECCE Implementation Plan;
3. All ECCE personnel must adopt, practice, develop, review and enhance core competencies in early childhood care, development and education as per ECCE Standards;
4. ECCE continuous professional development and pre-service certified programs must be delivered by qualified ECCE personnel;
5. ECCE teachers must practice, adapt, differentiate and/or vary teaching methodologies according to the needs of their ECCE school population, resources available and proven success rate to achieve learning outcomes as defined by the curriculum;
6. ECCE teachers must identify, analyze and assess the diverse approaches/paths to learning taken by students and learning outcomes achieved by students to inform their teaching practices; and

7. All ECCE personnel will be provided opportunities to be involved in aspects of early childhood program design and governance and to develop skills necessary to actively and effectively participate in the governance process.

5.18 TEACHER TRAINING, DEVELOPMENT & QUALIFICATIONS

1. A separate cadre and career ladder with specific qualifications for ECCE teachers will be developed within the public services framework with minimum pay scales;
2. A cadre of ECCE teacher educators will be developed to disseminate further training at different levels;
3. ECCE teacher educators will design, manage, supervise, maintain, utilize and monitor Learning Resource Centers, teachers and teaching practices;
4. ECCE Learning Resource Centers will be established with appropriate provisions for teacher development;
5. Career promotions within ECCE cadres will be based on qualifications and performance reviews.
6. Teachers having qualifications/diplomas/certification in early childhood care, education or development should be appointed to deliver ECCE;
7. A teacher education curriculum will be designed and implemented for ECCE teachers to prepare them to meet ECCE and professional development standards;
8. ECCE teacher education programs should be reviewed and approved by the Government of Sindh
9. Teacher training institutions offering approved ECCE teacher education programs should be registered with the Government of Sindh;
10. All Pre-service and In-Service teacher education programs should prepare teachers to meet the ECCE Standards up to lower primary level or grades 1-3;
11. All ECCE teacher training institutes must assign and supervise student teachers enrolled in ECCE teacher education programs to ECCE classes/schools for ECCE training to fulfill teaching practicum component requirements of the program. Priority of student teacher placement will be given within the TTI district and then to surrounding districts;
12. All ECCE teachers will receive training and ongoing professional development services in the fields of early childhood, care, development, education in accordance with ECCE Standards. Area of training will be inclusive of but not limited to content knowledge, assessment, technology, documentation, research, utilization of resources, hygiene, attire, professionalism, self-development, ethical and appropriate communication and interaction, community engagement, natural disaster management and conflict resolution;
13. All ECCE teachers will be provided training on security protocols and procedures;
14. Teacher qualifications/certifications must address and support multilingual education, and teachers may attain multilingual status before imparting ECCE; and
15. Multilingual education must be provided by ECCE teachers who qualify as multilingual-this will be a preferred skill;
16. A portal must be developed to share best practices/ teaching and teaching learning materials for ECCE teachers/parents/guardians with maximum electronic access.

5.19 CAPACITY

1. The Government of Sindh will develop capacity to implement ECCE in terms of infrastructure, human and financial resources to adequately accommodate the targeted early childhood population;
2. The Government of Sindh will develop capacity to deliver ECCE in the province in terms of policies, standards, program, services, training and education; and
3. Capacity building initiatives and outcomes will be identified in the ECCE Implementation Plan and will be in accordance with ECCE Standards.

5.20 STAKEHOLDERS

1. The Policy applies to all stakeholders of early childhood i.e. children of Sindh, their parents/family/community, all government and privately owned ECCE classes/schools/centers, owners, administrators, ECCE teachers, INGOs, NGOs, persons appointed by the Government of Sindh or any authorized agency to interact with the early childhood education providers.

5.21 LEADERSHIP & ADMINISTRATION

1. An Early Childhood Directorate (ECD) will be established in the Education and Literacy Department, Government of Sindh, Karachi;
2. In lieu of an ECD, in the interim an ECCE unit must be established at the Education and Literacy Department, Government of Sindh, Karachi to perform all duties stated for ECD and serve to initiate development of ECD till the ECD is established;-t
3. The ECD, under the purview of the Education and Literacy Department, Government of Sindh, Karachi, will initiate, inform, analyze, implement, support, address, manage, maintain, review, monitor, research, approve and/or disapprove all initiatives, programs and issues relevant to early childhood care, education and development with the support of stakeholders as defined by the ECCE Policy and Standards;
4. The ECD organization structure will comprise of the following:
 - a. Director of Early Childhood Care, Development and Education as head of the Early Childhood Directorate (or Special Section of E&LD) to oversee the program, planning, budgets, governance and implementation
 - b. Additional Directors 3; of ECCE
 - i. Additional Director ECCE –Establishment- administration, collaboration
 - ii. Additional Director ECCE – Curriculum , Teacher Education; Teaching learning materials and Assessment
 - iii. Additional Director ECCE - M&E, MIS and Research and Innovations
 - c. ECCE management system will be strengthened from school to district level.
5. The Director or an Additional Director will serve as a member on the Curriculum Council adhering to roles and responsibilities as defined by the Sindh School Education Standards and Curriculum Act 2015;
6. The Provincial Institute of Teacher Education will oversee, supervise and collaborate with ECCE Coordinators;

7. ECCE Coordinators will manage and maintain Learning Resource Centers established at talukas and coordinate with and between ECCE classes/schools in associated districts;
8. An ECCE Steering Committee on early childhood care, education and development will be notified to review progress and address challenges pertaining to ECCE in Sindh; and
9. The provincial ECCE Task Force-Sindh will report bi-annually to the ECCE Steering Committee.

5.22 IMPLEMENTATION & DOCUMENTATION

1. An ECCE Implementation Plan will be developed to implement policy actions, establish early childhood initiatives with clear roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders, timelines and budget;
2. The Sindh Curriculum Implementation Framework 2014 will be utilized to implement the ECCE Curriculum and inform ECCE program implementation across Sindh;
3. Key policy and guideline documents will be prepared in accordance with ECCE policy and standards to guide and strengthen service delivery in the early childhood sector;
4. A system for implementing ECCE Standards will be developed with monitoring and inspection components;
5. A system for conducting early childhood assessment will be developed with monitoring and inspection components to ensure compliance with ECCE Standards;
6. A system for reporting early childhood progress/developmental portfolios will be developed with monitoring and inspection components to ensure compliance with ECCE Standards;
7. Need based assessments for service delivery should be executed prior to and at regular intervals during program implementation;
8. A recurrent budget will be developed, rationalized and allocated to the Early Childhood Directorate/ECCE Section with timely releases to ensure quality implementation;
9. Inter-sectoral and intra-sectoral strategies will be developed to ensure implementation of ECCE in Sindh;
10. Identification and utilization of service providers must be criterion-based;
11. All schools offering ECCE programs must have a valid SEMIS ID or be registered with Directorate of Private Registration Institutions; and
12. All teacher education institutions offering ECCE programs must be accredited by relevant competent authorities.

5.23 COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATION

1. A comprehensive communication strategy will be developed to reach all stakeholders;
2. Sustainable linkages and coordinating mechanisms will be fostered among federal, provincial, and local levels, as well as within each of these levels;
3. Mechanisms for inter-sectoral and intra-sectoral collaboration will be developed and roles and responsibilities will be identified to implement ECCE;
4. Collaboration among agencies whose programs focus on the ECCE age group and their families must be ensured;
5. Mechanisms must be developed for collaboration among services, including education, social, economic development, etc. in the community and the province;
6. Collaboration, alignment and rationalization of early childhood programs within the community will be ensured;

7. New ECCE programs must contribute to overall provision of existing services for ECCE age group and families and avoid duplication of existing public and private programs;
8. The ECCE program design must provide a two-way system of communication that is open and easily accessible in which parents and community representatives are valued as resources and decision makers;
9. Connectivity with local and international ECCE networks of thinkers, practitioners and activists will be established; and
10. All ECCE programs running in Sindh through PPP, MOU, NGO, Donor or other private agencies must be reviewed for alignment with ECCE Policy and Standards, approved by government of Sindh and registered with the competent authority.

5.24 SCREENING, ASSESSMENT & RESEARCH

1. Developmental screenings for children will be undertaken and viewed as just one component in a comprehensive ECCE assessment system. Assessment will be tailored to a specific purpose, only utilized for that purpose, and utilized when results are both consistent and reliable;
2. Screenings and assessments are to be administered on children for hearing, vision, metabolic disorders, and developmental delays, with appropriate follow-up, in collaboration with the Health Department;
3. Results of screening measures will be kept confidential and specifically utilized to determine the need for further comprehensive diagnostic assessment;
4. Information received from a single assessment or screening will not serve as the basis for major decisions affecting student placement or enrollment;
5. Appropriate behavior and mental health identification assessments will be implemented in a timely manner along with resulting interventions including the needs of children from disadvantaged backgrounds;
6. Screening, referral, and enrollment into early childhood development and prevention programs will be ensured in a timely and appropriate manner;
7. ECCE classes/schools will maintain all health related records and developmental profiles of students;
8. Standardized, age-appropriate outcome indicators with relevant assessment tools and mechanisms must be developed to assess all ECCE domains;
9. Assessment tools will be formative; developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate; and administered using child-centered approaches;
10. Provincial Kindergarten entry assessments will be administered to assess school readiness and inform initial instruction;
11. ECCE programs will be assessed using multiple indicators, identified through a consultative process;
12. Assessment instruments and procedures will be used only for the purpose for which they were intended and congruent with the goals of the ECCE program;
13. Assessments from Pre-Primary to Primary will be aligned;
14. Placement of at risk children will not be stigmatizing or segregating in nature;
15. Integrated, multi-disciplinary research on ECCE will be conducted to demonstrate links between individuals, the community and society to all provincial development sectors;
16. ECCE Curriculum competencies will be used to frame research on learning and assessment benchmarks for different ECCE age groups;

17. Relevant, valid and reliable data, especially for children with special needs, in at risk situations and from disadvantaged groups will be generated, in collusion with data from provincial sources;
18. ECCE assessment, research forums and networking will be encouraged between local and international ECCE experts and agencies;
19. Budgets to be ensured for assessment and research (action/longitudinal studies);
20. All research and assessment findings must be disseminated to ECCE stakeholders to inform policy and practice; and
21. ECCE curriculums may be researched on methodologies that foster developmentally appropriate, integrated, interactive and explorative learning processes.

5.25 DATA, MONITORING & ACCOUNTABILITY

1. Evaluate the quality of learning environments, ECCE teacher-child interaction, and teaching strategies by collecting early childhood data that can be analyzed at the level of children, ECCE personnel, ECCE programs and ECCE institutions;
2. Clear indicators of child, family, and program effectiveness that include health, family support, and learning objectives will be established;
3. Longitudinal, linked data systems between programs, agencies and provincial institutions, disaggregated by risk factors, will be established to inform strategies for improving program quality and child outcomes;
4. Early warning systems will be established to identify problems such as chronic absence and allow for timely intervention;
5. Professional development will be provided for data users (parents, families, community, ECCE personnel, ECCE institutions etc.) to support the correct interpretation and use of data;
6. Monitoring and evaluation of ECCE Policy, programs and models will be based on clear definitions, standards, indicators and measures for quality programming, accreditation and implementation regulated by public and private representatives;
7. A monitoring and supervision system will be established to ensure adherence to ECCE Policy and Standards;
8. Technology, personnel and innovative strategies will be employed to monitor ECCE in Sindh;
9. Capacity building for ECCE monitoring personnel will be provided;
10. Monitoring personnel support for ECCE teachers will be ensured;
11. ECCE institutions will undergo periodic inspections;
12. ECCE monitoring reports will be generated and disseminated to stakeholders;
13. The ECCE Steering Committee will advise the Early Childhood Directorate if and when to review and/or amend ECCE Policy or Standards;
14. The Steering Committee and ECCE Task Force Sindh shall support the Early Childhood Directorate to maintain and upgrade ECCE initiatives in Sindh; and
15. All operations will fall under the purview of acts, policies, rules, regulations, standards and any other protocols of the Government of Sindh deemed relevant.

5.26 FUNDING

1. Substantial consolidated funds will be provided to meet the compelling and immediate need for ECCE in Sindh in the current budget on a yearly basis;

2. Provision of funds must be tied to continued efforts to meet and improve standards and their enforcement;
3. Rationalized increased funding will be provided to geographical areas and groups that are assessed as having the greatest need, with periodic reviews and updates of funding eligibility;
4. Funding for ECCE must support economic constraints of marginalized groups through social safety nets like community supports;
5. Existing sub-detailed function under Charter of Accounts of Pre-primary will be used for ECCE or may be renamed as ECCE; and
6. ECCE must have a substantial portion of Development Schemes/Projects of Education Sector (Sub-sector Pre-primary education).

5.27 ADVOCACY

1. ECCE advocacy and awareness strategies will be implemented in Sindh;
2. ECCE advocacy initiatives will utilize multiple forms of media to connect and communicate with parents and the ECCE community;
3. Parent, community and youth outreach programs will be strengthened to promote advocacy and awareness; and
4. Partnerships will be leveraged to support and sustain advocacy efforts.

5.28 LEGISLATION

1. The Government of Sindh will develop a legal framework for ECCE assuring the right of the child to holistic ECCE and addressing issues of child safety and security; and
2. The Government of Sindh will develop and introduce legislative regulations and guidelines, based on minimum standards to support the effective delivery of ECCE.

6. THE WAY FORWARD

The Sindh Education Sector Plan 2014-18, broadly defines the way forward with the following objectives:

- Develop ECE policy and minimum standards.
- Transform 8000 Katchi into ECE classes.
- Establish ECE teacher cadre.
- Recruit and train 8121 teachers.
- Establish ECE Resource Centers, in a phased manner, focusing initially on the most vulnerable populations across the province.
- Review and revise ECE curriculum
- Ensure provision of teaching learning materials, as prescribed in the ECE-curriculum.
- Support learner transition from home to school and from ECE to Primary.

The ECCE Policy proposes the following initiatives:

- Approve and notify ECCE Policy
- Establish government administrative and funding structures for ECCE
- Integrate the agreed SDGs and SDG 4 with targets, and the upcoming Framework for Action (FFA) and Indicators as the latter two are finalized in November 2015 and February 2016
- Prepare ECCE Implementation Plan 2015-2020 with stakeholders
- Establish a Steering Committee for ECCE with representatives from other departments, CSOs, technical organization and donors Approve ECCE Standards and disseminate
- Establish comprehensive provincial guidelines for children, parents, ECCE institutions, ECCE personnel, ECCE programs, ECCE services and on transition ECCE classes/schools/Katchi to Primary.
- Transition existing Primary personnel onto ECCE cadre and employ new personnel with on the job training/diploma opportunities
- Develop teacher education programs and identify teacher education institutions for ECCE
- Develop continuous professional development programs
- Develop community awareness campaigns and activities
- Develop a central repository of ECCE teaching learning materials including technology enabled digital materials, developed in Sindh, across Pakistan and the region that may be referenced and adapted
- Identify and partner with partners and their contributions towards ECCE from all spheres of service delivery, TLMs, assessment, teacher education programs, digital learning platforms, MIS and research
- Develop a donor directory (local, provincial, national and international) for ECCE as an iterative annual exercise
- Create a learning incubators for ECCE innovations as a comprehensive social enterprise in Pakistan

7. CONCLUSION

The Policy sets out a provincial vision of early childhood care and education as the foundation of human resource development and social capital for 2030. Through this policy, the Government of Sindh is putting into practice its constitutional obligation after the 18th amendment to support fundamental human rights and freedom of citizens, promote provincial legislation as well as reaffirm international Conventions and Agreements concerning children. The Government shall therefore, take measures to expand access and improve quality of ECCE to all children of Sindh. Quality of outcomes, equity in delivery, resourceful partnerships, holistic approaches and school-parent-community involvement will be guiding principles. ECCE will stimulate provincial growth, systemic sustenance and resource mobilization. The policy should be seen as both a challenge and an opportunity to continue to develop ourselves and the community for now and the future. Its successful initiation and evolution, thus, depends on the collective responsibilities of all stakeholders who share a clear view that early childhood care and education has the potential to lay strong foundations for the holistic development of individuals, our society, and the nation.

8. GLOSSARY

Agencies

Development Partners, NGOs, INGOs and private organizations serving the ECCE population.

Antenatal Care Coverage

Proportion of women who delivered during the last 3 years and who made at least one antenatal care visit to either a public or private health practitioner

At risk children

Children exposed to low socio-economic backgrounds, family instability and/or dysfunction, abuse, neglect, exploitation, domestic/gang violence, criminal activity, natural disasters, civil unrest, acts of terrorism and war. Characteristics of at risk students include emotional or behavioral problems, truancy, low academic performance, lack of interest for academics and express disconnection from the school environment.

Caloric Poverty

Proportion of population consuming less than 2350 calories per adult equivalent per day

Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP)

It is an approach to teaching grounded in the research on how young children develop and learn and in what is known about effective early education. Its framework is designed to promote young children's optimal learning and development.

Disadvantaged groups/backgrounds

Children lacking in the basic resources or conditions (as standard housing, medical and educational facilities, and civil rights) believed to be necessary for an equal position in society

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

Refers to all education and child care programs, services, projects, initiatives and that serve children birth to age eight.

Early intervention

It is a system of coordinated services that promotes the child's age-appropriate growth and development and supports families during the critical early years. Early intervention services are provincially funded evaluation and supports made available for children birth to age three who show signs of developmental, physical, communication, and social/emotional or adaptive delays.

ECCE administrators

Refers to managers, practitioners, professionals, coordinators, directors, additional directors and officers serving the ECCE population.

ECCE facilities

Structures relating to public health, especially the provision of clean drinking water and adequate sewage disposal.

ECCE institutions

Schools, centers, camps and settings serving the ECCE population.

ECCE learning resource centers

A center that provides professional development services and experiences for ECCE personnel, to address their issues and challenges within ECCE institutions and augment their knowledge on best practices within the field of ECCE.

ECCE programs and services

A planned, coordinated group of activities, procedures, products and tasks for the specific purpose of serving the early childhood population from birth to age eight. Developmental, Reggio Emilia, Progressive and Montessori are among the leading educational philosophies incorporated by early education programs.

ECCE student teacher

A student of ECCE teacher education program, studying to be an ECCE teacher and as part of the training, observes classroom instruction and/or practices closely supervised teaching as part of a practicum in an ECCE class/school.

ECCE personnel

Teachers and administrators serving the ECCE population.

ECCE staff

Officials and staff members employed for menial work to serve the ECCE population.

ECCE teachers

Caregivers, educators, teacher educators, assistant teachers and student teachers serving the ECCE population.

Full Immunization Rate

Proportion of children from 12 to 23 months of age who are fully vaccinated against the Expanded Program of Immunization (EPI) target diseases

Gender Parity Index

Proportion of girls to boys in any given category or group

Inclusion

Inclusion is a process of identifying, understanding and breaking down barriers to participation and belonging.

Inclusive education

Inclusive education means that all students attend and are welcomed by their schools in age-appropriate, regular classes and are supported to learn, contribute and participate in all aspects of life at the school.

Infant Mortality Rate

No. of deaths of children under 1 year of age per 1000 live births

Maternal Mortality Rate

No. of mothers dying due to complications of pregnancy and delivery per 100,000 live births

Needs assessment

An analysis that studies the needs of a specific group (e.g., child care workers, low-income families, specific neighborhoods), presents the results in a written statement detailing those needs (such as training, health services, etc.), and identifies the actions required to fulfill these needs, for the purpose of program development and implementation.

Net Primary Enrolment Ratio

Number of children aged 5 to 9 attending primary level classes, divided by the total number of children in this age cohort

Practicum placement

A formal program to provide practical experience for beginners in an occupation or profession (often completed as part of a degree program including clinical supervision)

Prevalence of Underweight Children

Proportion of children under 5 years who are underweight for their age

Primary Completion/Survival Rate

Proportion of students who complete Class 5

Professional development

Opportunities for ECCE personnel to acquire and/or receive ongoing training to increase their preparation and skill for serving the ECCE population. These include mentoring programs, credentialing programs, in-service training, and degree programs.

School readiness

The state of early development that enables an individual child to engage in and benefit from early learning experiences for optimal development in five arenas: health and physical development; social and emotional development; approaches toward learning; language development and communication; and, cognition and general knowledge.

Social safety net

A collection of services provided by the government such as welfare, unemployment benefits, universal healthcare, homeless shelters, and sometimes subsidized services

Special needs

Mild to moderate disabilities pertaining to physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional developmental domains.

Special needs child

A child under the age of eight who requires a level of care over and above the norm for his or her age.

Stunting

Low height relative to age

Subsidy

Private or public assistance that reduces the cost of a service for its user.

Quality

Quality ECCE is where children are safe, healthy, and receive appropriately stimulation. Quality ECCE settings are responsive, allow children to form secure attachments to nurturing adults. Quality ECCE programs offer engaging, appropriate activities in settings that facilitate healthy growth and development, and prepare children for or promote their success in school.

Under-5 Mortality Rate

No. of deaths of children under 5 years of age per 1000 live births

Universal access

Universal access to education is the ability of all people to have equal opportunity in education, regardless of their social class, gender, ethnicity background or physical and mental disabilities.

Wasting

Low weight relative to height