

Call for Application

Documentation of Noteworthy ECD Parenting Programmes for Holistic Child Development and Protection

ARNEC is launching a call for applications from programmes / practitioners who are interested in collaborating on documentation of noteworthy Early Childhood Development (ECD) Parenting programmes in support of caregivers' and young children's holistic development and protection.

Are you or your organization implementing interesting, unique approaches to conducting family and/or community-based ECD parenting interventions for caregivers and children at risk? Do any of these interventions address dimensions of peacebuilding and social cohesion? Are you committed to advancing the important principles of inclusion and equity in efforts with young children and families?

Then we would like to hear from you!

Background Information

Following the 2016 Lancet Series, the *Nurturing Care Framework for ECD: a framework for helping children survive and thrive to transform health and human potential* was recently launched highlighting how nurturing care not only promotes physical, emotional, social and cognitive development, but also protects young children from the worst effects of adversity (WHO, UNICEF, & World Bank Group, 2018). It produces lifelong and intergenerational benefits for health, productivity and social cohesion. The nurturing care framework has five components: (i) good health; (ii) adequate nutrition; (iii) responsive caregiving; (iv) opportunities for early learning; and (v) safety and security¹. The Framework emphasizes that investing in ECD is one of the best investments a country can make to boost economic growth, promote peaceful and sustainable societies, and eliminate extreme poverty and inequality. Equally important, investing in early childhood development is necessary to uphold the right of every child to survive and thrive.

Aligning with the Nurturing Care Framework for ECD (2018) and in support of the Asia Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood's (ARNEC) previous work on ECD and peacebuilding, ARNEC has initiated a process to document noteworthy interventions in the field of responsive caregiving and parenting, which contribute to holistic child development and protection, with a special focus on initiatives that promote peace-building and social cohesion. This initiative builds on the previous initiatives and work of the ARNEC ECD and Peacebuilding Working Group.

To effectively reduce acts of violence and advocate for peace, different approaches and ways to engage ECD in peacebuilding have been suggested by various stakeholders, with ideas going beyond enhancing children's holistic development, and focusing on the caregiver and communities.² A literature review commissioned by

¹ World Health Organization, United Nations Children's Fund, World Bank Group (2018) *Nurturing care for early childhood development: a framework for helping children survive and thrive to transform health and human potential*. Geneva: World Health Organization.

² ACEV (Mother Child Education Foundation) (2012). *Building a Generation of Reconciliation: The Role of Early Childhood Development in Peace Building*. Istanbul, Turkey: ACEV. <http://acev.org/en/kaynaklarimiz/arastirmalarimiz-ve-yayinlarimiz>

ARNEC and UNICEF EAPRO, “Early Childhood and Peacebuilding in the Asia-Pacific,” has also elaborated on the importance of parental, family and community engagement as essential network to promote peacebuilding (Ang, 2014).³

ARNEC has launched the documentation of noteworthy ECD practices looking at how holistic ECD parenting interventions have the potential to improve infant and young children’s holistic development outcomes; enhance parents/caregivers’ competencies for caring for their children across all components of nurturing care and caregivers’ own well-being; and contribute meaningfully to peacebuilding and social cohesion at all levels - community to national level.

The project aims to collect evidence that showcases examples of ECD parenting interventions that cater to young children (from conception to 8 years) by using case studies and videos in the different settings and contexts of the Asia Pacific region.

This will be through identification and documentation of the supporting and enabling structures, actions and processes at different levels of the child’s eco system (as defined below) which inform the design and implementation process of ECD parenting programmes that are found to be essential to understanding how such parenting programmes:

- ◆ *enhance caregivers’ competencies across the components of Nurturing Care;*
- ◆ *ensure that the caregiving environments at the household and community levels provide the necessary enabling conditions; ensure the above meets the needs of the child to promote optimal development, resilience, and to reduce developmental risks;*
- ◆ *are based on global or country-specific evidence of effectiveness and can further substantiate this evidence base;*
- ◆ *are monitored, measured, and evaluated using documented methods and Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks and related tools, as well as demonstrating utility of evidence for replicating and scaling;*
- ◆ *demonstrate sustainability plans; and*
- ◆ *identify emerging evidence that suggests the initiative was able to influence at the different systems’ levels (Macro to Micro) for promoting peacebuilding and cohesion – contributing to the evidence base supporting the link of ECD parenting and peacebuilding.*

Expected Project Outputs

- ◆ A set of written reports and videos that document approximately 3- 4 effective parenting interventions that address holistic child development and protection which include but not limited to parenting approaches for children in lower-middle income and/or humanitarian crises’ contexts, in especially difficult circumstances or at risk.
- ◆ A regional synthesis report analysing what constructs ‘protection’ ‘peacebuilding’ and ‘safety and security’ are conceptualized as the basis of and used in ECD parenting approaches, in line with multi-sectoral approach outlined in the Nurturing Care Framework for ECD and further effort areas identified through the Guidance Note (Landers, 2016) addressing children living in conflict zones, transitional or refugee contexts, as well as marginalised communities subject to structural violence and inequality.

For the purpose of this Call an ‘ECD parenting approach’ could include, but is not limited to the following:

³ Ang, L (2014). *Early Childhood and Peacebuilding in the Asia-Pacific Region: A Literature Review to Inform a Regional Research Agenda*. Singapore: ARNEC and UNICEF EAPRO.

- *An approach designed to increase parents' capacities to foster children's health, development, socio-emotional learning, protection from violence and safety and security.*
- *An approach designed to improve one or more of the aspects of caregiving, facilitating and extending children's wellbeing and protection in a specific social, cultural or physical context; development of socio-emotional learning competencies; protection from physical and psychological abuse; positive discipline; enhanced learning skills and early learning.*

Please see Annex 1 for the elaboration of these approaches.

Essential elements of ECD and peacebuilding programmes⁴ are those that:

- ❖ Provide opportunities for creative play and self expression, and social interaction among young children
- ❖ Focus on the creation of a healthy and positive self and group identity that originates from a point of commonality through cooperative activities
- ❖ Consciously create opportunities within home environments, care settings and communities for reflection, perspective taking, and critical thinking (both for young children and caregivers)
- ❖ Leverage the role of the media and technology in young people's lives.

Programme Context: We would like to capture diverse contexts in which such interventions occur within the region, including policy-level (EXO); programme-level or community-level interventions (MESO:), and parenting and family level interventions (MICRO). Case studies that are able to articulate one or several of the above components and how various components contribute to peacebuilding across these systems (macro to micro) based on the evidence resulting from the programs will be considered.

Chrono and Macro level: Interventions relate to the underlying and structural causes which may give rise to developmental risk by affecting the ability of caregivers to provide nurturing care to their children. Problems at this level, usually related to lack of equity, discrimination, exclusion, inequitable distribution of wealth and social services, poor access to information, lack of an enabling environment where policies for families and children is missing or inconsistently implemented across geographical contexts leading to instability, conflict, and trickle down, affecting communities. This level addresses the causes of structural violence and is concerned with ECD parenting through the creation of social capital/peacebuilding.

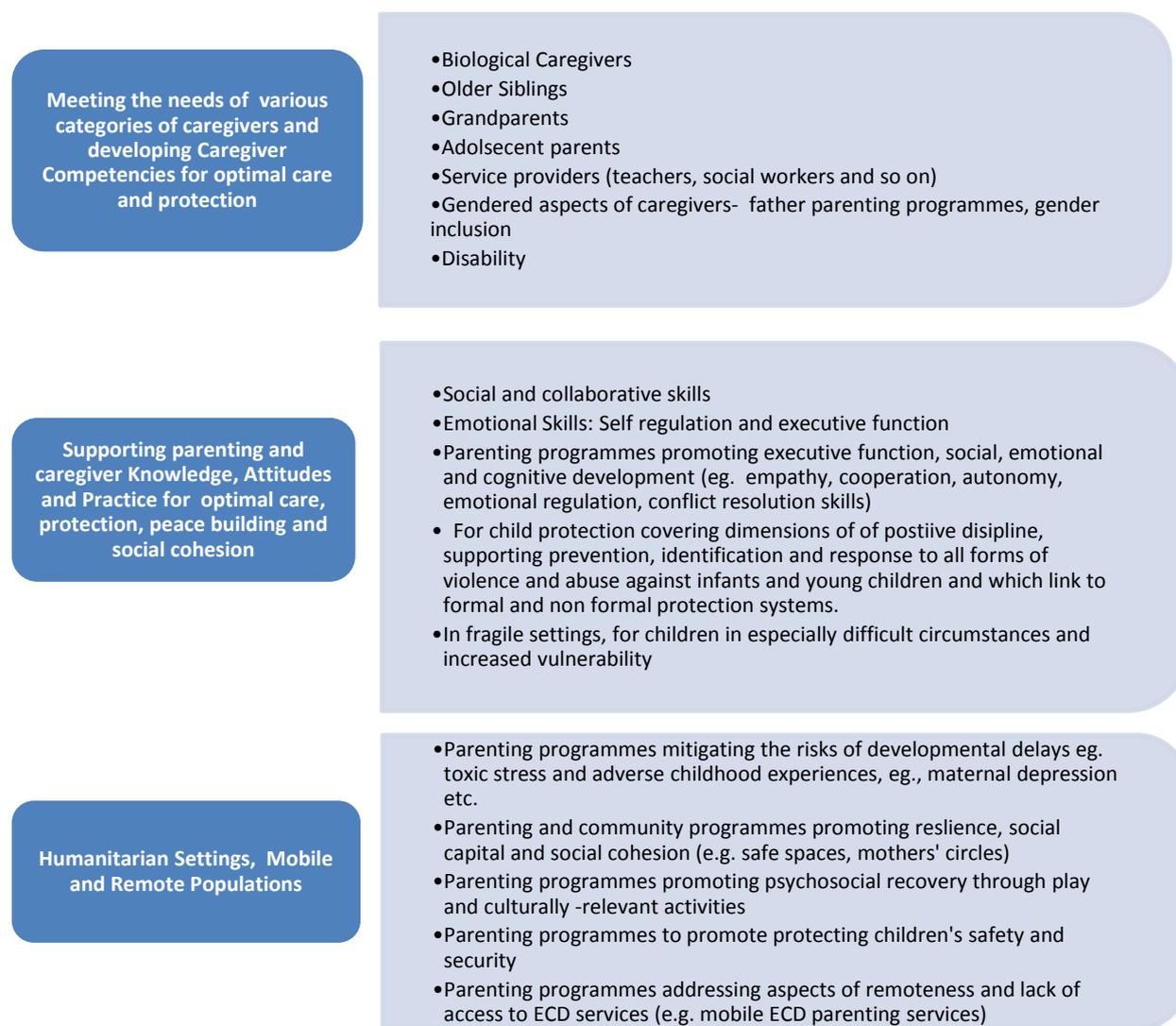
Exo Level: Interventions operating at the community level. This level is connected to aspects of group dynamics, inequality, discrimination, and other factors such as ethnicity, gender, disability, geographic disparities for some communities due to remote locations contributing to the lack of publicly provided services, and other inclusion issues which may create an impoverished environment. This level may relate to circumstances and conditions which affect caregivers' ability to care for their children due to war, humanitarian crises, displacement, and other environmental risk factors which adversely impact both caregivers and children by disrupting the ability of parents to care for their children.

Meso level: Interventions at the family and household level. This level relates to interventions addressing high levels of poverty, social and material disadvantage, low income, high mobility, single parent households, children without adequate parental care, gender norms, disability, and other inclusion issues such as ethnicity or geographical disparities due to poor access to publicly provided services.

⁴ UNICEF (unpublished) *Peacebuilding through Early Childhood Development: A Guidance Note*

Micro level: Interventions at the level of individual family members (primary caregivers) and their capacity to provide nurturing care in the early years. This refers to the capacity to cope with stress and other factors which may affect parents' ability to provide care through nurturing close bonds and through adequate child care practices. Family members and significant others play a major role in helping children interpret, "process," and adjust to, or overcome, difficult life experiences. Acting as mentors, adults can provide models of and reinforcement for problem solving, motivation, and other coping skills.

PRIORITIES FOR SELECTION OF CASE STUDIES TO BE DOCUMENTED (depending on the context and nature of each intervention):



Cross-cutting principles:

Programmes to be documented should also foster one or more of the following principles:

- ◆ **Child-centred** (child as a competent, active learner): Learning involves culturally-relevant, negotiated, respectful communication and interactions between children and caregivers;
- ◆ **Holistic development:** Incorporates a focus on linkages between socio-emotional; physical; cognitive; and protective domains and bi-directional influences at the individual, interpersonal, family; community and structural levels within the child's eco system

- ◆ **Equity:** ECD services and parenting programmes are available to all children without discrimination, especially those from marginalized groups
- ◆ **Inclusiveness:** Parenting and parenting support responds to the diversity of needs among all young children (minorities, disabled, etc); programs should also demonstrate they are on a continuum of being gender responsive to gender transformative.
- ◆ **Sustainability:** (i) The programme presented is coherent with other activities of the programme and has potential for continued utilisation, and (ii) builds children’s skills to affect social change for now and in the future.
- ◆ **Cultural reflection/relevance:** Parenting is rooted in the socio-cultural context and reflects traditional/indigenous knowledge that supports children’s development and learning.

METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS OF DOCUMENTATION

The following steps will be taken in the Documentation process:

- Applications received will be assessed according to the criteria laid out (refer to the above and to Annex 1 of this document).
- Selection of 3 to 4 cases by an ARNEC Advisory Panel, composed of experts from the different organisations.
- Documentation of 3 to 4 selected case studies: ARNEC will engage national representatives or local researchers to work with the selected program partners for additional information and for the narrative write-up of the cases.
- ARNEC will also engage videographers to work with the selected program partners on video documentation.
- Preparation of an overview report that will summarize the effective responsive caregiving/parenting programmes, as well as processes of implementation that have been found to be effective.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

Any individual, organisation or institution (including government ministries, local and international NGOs and the private sector) implementing a noteworthy ECD parenting programme in the Asia and Pacific region that fits the selection criteria outlined above is encouraged to apply. We especially seek applicants with a strong commitment to ECD for young children, whose work has not been widely known in the past, in order to showcase new or effective parenting approaches which have shown demonstrable impacts.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS FOR YOU AS A COLLABORATOR/PARTICIPANT TO THIS INITIATIVE?

If your proposed case/approach is chosen as part of this initiative, you will have the opportunity to:

- ❖ Highlight your work on the project collaborators’ website managed by ARNEC and in the ARNEC newsletter, ARNEC Connections and other publications;
- ❖ Highlight your work at the international level, through possible presentations in regional and international events (e.g. forum, conferences, workshops);
- ❖ Contribute to the body of knowledge on ECD parenting and peacebuilding approaches in the region.

WHAT IS MY ROLE AS A COLLABORATOR / APPLICANT ONCE SELECTED?

You will need to be prepared to:

- ❖ Participate (or find a member of the programme / site to participate) in the collection of all information required for documentation;

- ❖ Share detailed information, data, reports and other readings with the national researcher as needed to help the documentation process;
- ❖ Support identification of local video documenters and provide them access to day-to-day activities / relevant aspects of the innovations;
- ❖ Host visits and support data collection by the video documentation team during the period of November 2018 – January 2019;
- ❖ Follow ethical procedures in gathering information (obtain written consent from parents or guardians and children, to ensure understanding and agreement to be included in photographs and video footage once practitioners have explained/disclosed why the photographs and footage are being taken);
- ❖ Grant or obtain permission for the use of reports, images and audio/video recordings, in line with UNICEF's Open Access Policy and its adoption of the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 IGO (CC BY 3.0 IGO) license;
- ❖ Collaborate with the documentation review team through finalization of the documentation, providing feedback or comments as necessary;
- ❖ Take part in the dissemination of the case studies; this may involve presenting your programmes at regional and international ECCD events.

HOW DO I APPLY?

Applications must be submitted in English using the standard application form attached separately. Applications should be emailed to the ARNEC Secretariat at: secretariat@arnec.net by **28 November 2018**.

Selection Process

Applications will be assessed by a panel of experts (organised by ARNEC into an advisory group) according to the criteria above. Selected initiatives will be notified before **10 December 2018**.

ANNEX 1:

WHAT IS AN ECD PARENTING PROGRAMME IN SUPPORT OF HOLISTIC CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND PROTECTION?

Parenting programmes may be conceived as those which are intended to reduce the number of risk factors while strengthening and building on protective factors which may cause short and long term developmental delays. They may be defined as a set of resources or services designed to increase parents' capacities to foster children's health, development and or education. Optimal parenting includes a wide range of activities to ensure that children are cared for physically (providing nutritious food, health care, and adequate sleep routines), cognitively (offering opportunities to learn and use language), socially (responding to the child with consistent, loving care), and emotionally (supporting the child's sense of self-worth). Because these are key challenges in parents' ability to provide optimal care for their children, parenting programmes are designed to improve one or more of these aspects of caregiving. For the purposes of this exercise, there is an emphasis on protection needs of infants and young children, hence on parenting programmes which support protective and responsive caregiving.

Positive outcomes may relate to (1) child protection in terms of safety and injury prevention, (2) child protection in terms of freedom from violence and the effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences which cause toxic stress, (3) psychosocial stimulation and responsiveness, (4) responsive feeding and integrated health and development approaches, (5) improve family and community level social cohesion through promoting inclusive, equitable approaches which promote social justice and the formation of social capital.

Outcomes for children may include greater child physical well being through improved nutrition and growth; reductions in early morbidity; improved child cognition; improved socio emotional outcomes⁵, and decreased rates of child abuse and neglect.⁶

Outcomes for parents/caregivers may include increased parental knowledge of child development and parenting skills; improved parent- child communication; more effective parental monitoring; effective rule setting and positive discipline; reduction in parental stress; and promotion of caregiver well being.⁷

In particular, parenting programmes that engage both parents by including fathers and mothers in child rearing or parenting programmes targeting fathers or indeed all members of the family will be important to document due to the lack of examples of such parenting programmes.

Parenting approaches and parenting education programmes are used to cover both *parent* education and parent *support* programmes. *Parent education* is any training or learning activity provided for parents (broadly defined) which may include parent education. Other content might be related to literacy, skill development, etc. that is being provided to increase parental skills to increase family income and well being. *Parent support* provides those engaged in parenting with information on how to give children the kinds of

⁵ UNICEF (2015) *A Systematic review of ECD Parenting in LMICs*. New York: UNICEF.

https://www.unicef.org/earlychildhood/files/P_Shanker_final_Systematic_Review_of_Parenting_ECD_Dec_15_copy.pdf

⁶ Bunting, L (2004) Parenting Programmes: The best available evidence. *Child Care in Practice*, 10 (4);32-43.

⁷ Layzer, J., Goodson, B., Bernstein, P., & Price, C. (2001) *National evaluation of family support programmes, final report Volume A: The meta-analysis*. Cambridge, MA: Abt Associates.

parenting they require to maximize their potential.⁸ They may include informal interactions such as mothers' groups, family support, or counseling (such as the WHO Care for Child Development Programme). They may be targeted or broad-based. Additionally, they may be couple-based programmes, parenting group-based programmes, or fatherhood parenting programmes.

Parents or caregivers refer to any guardian or individual providing consistent care to an infant or child. Caregivers may extend beyond biological parents to include the individual or individuals who look after the infant and young child and/or who provide the bulk of the care in a home or family context. This may include foster or adoptive parents, grandparents, stepparents, elder sibling or other proximal adults, such as child care providers who play a significant role in caring for infants and young children.⁹

This project is underpinned by the following theory of change and its components. Applicants will need to demonstrate how parenting interventions demonstrate these underpinnings in the parenting intervention that will be documented.

The linkages between ECD parenting programmes and peacebuilding have been demonstrated in the empirical literature base on evidence that emotions and emotional intelligence can play a role in violence and conflict (e.g. Ecology of Peace Conceptual Framework). ECD parenting programs can contribute, in the long-term, to peaceful societal interactions by teaching young children critical emotional skills, referred to as Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL) that will impact their future behavior and foster more peaceful communities.

These basic competencies (figure 1), which are learned through the earliest interaction with caring adults, are essential building blocks that lay the foundation for lifelong learning, physical and mental health, and to peaceful, cohesive societies. Exposure to risks, including violence, during this period can adversely affect the social and emotional development of young children, increase the risk of behavioural problems, and reduce young children's ability to regulate their own emotions.¹⁰

Figure 1: Socio-Emotional Learning along 3 Development Domains

Social Development 	Emotional Development 	Cognitive Development 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying social rules • Empathizing with others • Conflict resolution • Respect for diversity • Harmony with nature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naming feelings • Positive self-regard • Feeling gratitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Function (EF): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inhibitory control, ○ Cognitive flexibility, ○ Working memory • Perspective taking

Source: UNICEF (Draft, 2017)¹¹

⁸ Evans, J.L. (2006). Parenting programmes: an important ECD intervention strategy. Background paper prepared for the *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2007. Strong Foundations: early childhood care and education*. Paris, France: UNESCO.

⁹ UNICEF (2017). *Standards for ECD Parenting Programs in Low- and Middle-Income Countries*. https://www.unicef.org/earlychildhood/files/UNICEF-Standards_for_Parenting_Programs_6-8-17_pg.pdf

¹⁰ Walker, S. P. et al. (2011). 'Inequality in early childhood: risk and protective factors for early child development', *The Lancet*, Vol. 378, issue. 9799, pp. 1325 – 1338;

Wang Q, Pomerantz EM, Chen H. (2007). The role of parents' control in early adolescents' psychological functioning: A longitudinal investigation in the United States and China. *Child Development*. Vol.78, pp. 1592–1610.;

Kithakye, M., Morris, A. S., Terranova, A. M., & Myers, S. S. (2010). The Kenyan political conflict and children's adjustment. *Child Development*, vol. 81, pp. 1113–1127

¹¹ UNICEF & ARNEC (Draft, 2017). *Socio Emotional Learning to promote Social Cohesion in the Early Years (3-5): Regional Curriculum Guidance Asia Pacific*. Bangkok, Thailand: UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO).

An ECD parenting approach could include, but is not limited to, the following:

An approach designed to increase parents' capacities to foster children's health, development, socio-emotional learning, protection from violence and safety and security. This may cover:

- ❖ children who are the exposed to physical or emotional abuse, discrimination and rejection,
- ❖ neglect through poor caregiver's unrecognized or willful failure to provide the basic requirements of a child's development and survival,
- ❖ sexual abuse or exploitation such as through trafficking and child labour,
- ❖ refugees and internally displaced children, stateless children, and children affected by migration- commonly referred to as 'children on the move',
- ❖ children affected by humanitarian crises which include natural disasters and armed conflicts,
- ❖ Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVCs), such as those in especially difficult circumstances, in alterative care settings, with disabilities, from minority groups or who are otherwise affected by exclusion such as through geographical remoteness

An approach designed to improve one or more of these aspects of caregiving facilitating and extending children's wellbeing and protection in a specific social, cultural or physical context; development of socio-emotional learning competencies; protection from physical and psychological abuse; positive discipline; enhanced learning skills and early learning;

- ❖ An approach designed to improve **caregiver wellbeing** through the elimination of toxic stress, and addressing parental risks to children's well being, such as addressing **anxiety and depression**.¹²
- ❖ An approach designed to improve child protection which may include elements of **social protection**, generally understood as a set of public actions that address poverty, vulnerability and exclusion as well as provide means to cope with major "shocks" throughout the life cycle and relate more to the notion of structural violence.
- ❖ An approach whose implementation can strengthen the capacity of caregivers for **responsive caregiving**,¹³
- ❖ An approach which contributes to social cohesion, resilience, and peace building
- ❖ An approach whose process of implementation can be documented in order to inform others about how to incorporate/adapt such approaches in their own contexts.

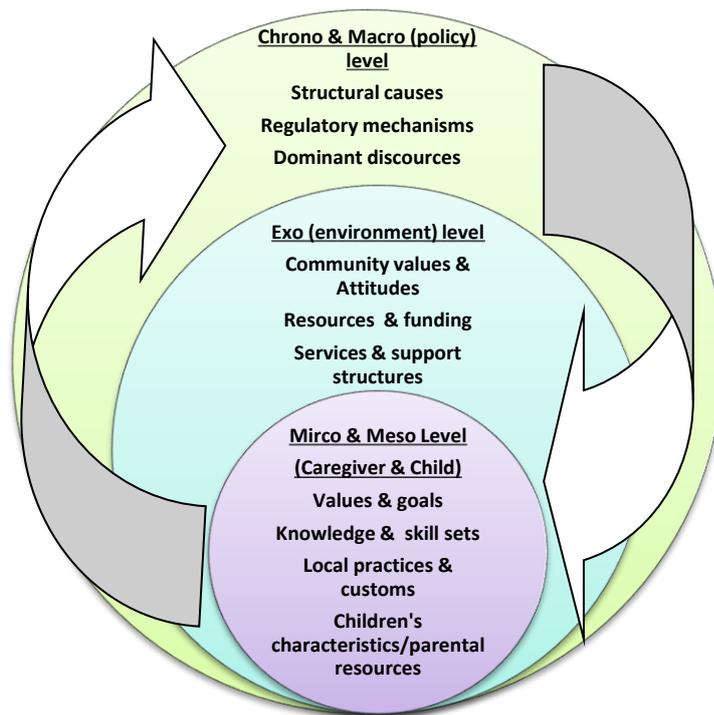
ECOSYSTEMIC CONTEXTS AND SETTINGS WHERE ECD PARENTING INTERVENTIONS TAKE PLACE: The theory of change which underpins parenting programmes is an ecological model in which bidirectional effects operate at different levels of the child's ecosystem. These include policy-level (EXO); programme-level community-level (MESO:), and parenting and family level interventions (MICRO) - see figure 2.

Chrono and Macro level: Interventions relate to the underlying and structural causes which may give rise to developmental risk by affecting the ability of caregivers to provide nurturing care to their children. Problems at this level, usually related to lack of equity, discrimination, exclusion, inequitable distribution of wealth and social services, poor access to information, lack of an enabling environment where policies for families and children is missing or inconsistently implemented across geographical contexts leading to instability, conflict, and trickle down, affecting communities. This level addresses the causes of structural violence and is concerned with ECD parenting through the creation of social capital/peacebuilding.

¹² Munsell, Kilmer, Cook, & Reeve. (2012). "The Effects of Caregiver Social Connections on Caregiver, Child, and Family Well-Being". As published in the *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3345204/>

¹³ **The prompt response to a child's behavior that is appropriate to the child's needs, rights and developmental phase.**¹³ A responsive caregiver has skills to provide prompt, safe and attentive care due to their knowledge of infant and child development, nutrition, health, and early learning/stimulation.¹³ For the purposes of this model, there is an emphasis on protection needs of infants and young children, hence the phrase "protective and responsive caregiving."

Figure 2: Documenting ECD Parenting Programmes



Exo Level: Interventions operating at the community level. This level is connected to aspects of group dynamics, inequality, discrimination, and other factors such as ethnicity, gender, disability, geographic disparities for some communities due to remote locations contributing to the lack of publicly provided services, and other inclusion issues which may create an impoverished environment. This level may relate to circumstances and conditions which affect caregivers’ ability to care for their children due to war, humanitarian crises, displacement, and other environmental risk factors which adversely impact both caregivers and children by disrupting the ability of parents to care for their children.

Meso level: Interventions at the family and household level. This level relates to interventions addressing high levels of poverty, social and material disadvantage, low income, high mobility, single parent households, children without adequate parental care, gender norms, disability, and other inclusion issues such as ethnicity or geographical disparities due to poor access to publicly provided services.

Micro level: Interventions at the level of individual family members (primary caregivers) and their capacity to provide nurturing care in the early years. This refers to the capacity to cope with stress and other factors which may affect parents’ ability to provide care through nurturing close bonds and through adequate child care practices. Family members and significant others play a major role in helping children interpret, “process,” and adjust to, or overcome, difficult life experiences. Acting as mentors, adults can provide models of and reinforcement for problem solving, motivation, and other coping skills.

Examples of settings include:

1. Family or home-based settings
2. Community-based settings
3. Remote, hard-to-access, emergency or conflict settings
4. Low-resourced settings
5. Formalized early childhood education centres