



Ministry of Women
and Child Affairs

National Multi-sectoral Strategic Action Plan on Early Childhood Care and Development (NMSAP-ECCD) 2026-2030



**National Secretariat
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Development**

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Ministry of Women
and Child Affairs

**National Multi-sectoral Strategic Action Plan
on Early Childhood Care and Development
(NMSAP-ECCD)
2026-2030**



**National Secretariat
for Early Childhood
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Message from the Secretary to the Ministry

In Sri Lanka, early childhood encompasses the period from conception until the age of five, a stage widely recognized as the foundation of lifelong growth and development. Global scientific and neurological research indicates that approximately 90 per cent of a child's brain develops during these early years, making this the most influential period for cognitive, physical, emotional, and social development. Hence, children's ability to learn, adapt, acquire new skills, and develop positive values is most pronounced during this stage.

A nation's future is shaped by the quality of its youngest generation. A well-developed generation cannot be achieved without ensuring a strong foundation during early childhood. Children who receive adequate care, nutrition, protection, early learning opportunities, and responsive nurturing in their formative years are more likely to become healthy, confident, productive, and responsible citizens. Therefore, investing in early childhood is not merely an investment in children—it is an investment in the country's human capital, social wellbeing, and sustainable development.

Recognizing the importance of investing in children, the Government of Sri Lanka introduced the National Policy on Early Childhood Care and Development in 2004. Building upon this policy framework and taking into consideration the changing socioeconomic landscape, technological advancements, and emerging challenges affecting children

and families, the National Multi-sectoral Strategic Action Plan on Early Childhood Care and Development (2026–2030) has been developed to guide coordinated implementation across sectors by the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs with other stakeholders.

The Strategic Action Plan adopts a whole-of-government and multi-sectoral approach, recognizing that the healthy growth and development of every child require the collective commitment of government institutions, development partners, civil society organizations, the private sector, communities, and families. By strengthening collaboration and promoting equitable access to quality early childhood services, we aspire to ensure that every child in Sri Lanka is provided with a safe, secure, nurturing, inclusive, and stimulating environment in which to thrive.

The Ministry of Women and Child Affairs looks forward to the continued partnership and commitment of all stakeholders in implementing this Strategic Action Plan successfully. Together, we can create a strong foundation for a generation of healthy, resilient, and capable children who will grow up as responsible and productive citizens.

I extend my sincere appreciation to the National Coordinating Committee on Early Childhood Care and Development and the National Secretariat for Early Childhood Development for

their leadership and dedication in formulating this Strategic Action Plan. My gratitude is also extended to all representatives of government institutions, non-governmental organizations, academia, professional bodies, and other partner organizations whose expertise and commitment enriched this process and the United Nations Children's Fund for its valuable financial and technical assistance in facilitating the national advocacy process and supporting the successful development of this multi-sectoral Strategic Action Plan.

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Secretary

Ministry of Women and Child Affairs

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List of **Abbreviations and Acronyms**

ADB	Asian Development Bank	DS	District Secretariat
ADIC	Alcohol & Drug Information Centre	DSS	Department of Social Services
CBO	Community Based Organizations	E & OH	Environment & Occupational Health
CHDR	Child Health Development Record	ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
CPD	Continuous Professional Development	ECD	Early Childhood Development
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child	ECE	Early Childhood Education
CRPO	Child Rights Protection Officer	ERHMIS	Electronic Reproductive Health Management Information System
CSO	Civil Society Organizations	ET & R	Education, Training and Research
CWC	Child Welfare Clinics	EUH	Estate & Urban Health
DCC	District Coordinating Committee	FGD	Focus Group Discussion
DCS	Department of Census and Statistics	FHB	Family Health Bureau
DDG-PHS	Deputy Director General-Public Health Services	GDP	Gross Domestic Product
DMC	Disaster Management Centre	GP	General Practitioner
DPCCS	Department of Probation and Child Care Services	HIS	Health information Systems
DPRD	Disaster Preparedness and Response Division	HPB	Health Promotion Bureau
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction	HR	Human Resource

IEC	Information Education and Communication
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IYCF	Infant and Young Child Feeding
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LG	Local Governments
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MC	Municipal Council
MCH	Maternal & Child Health
MCN	Maternal & Child Nutrition
MDPU	Management, Development & Planning Unit
DMD	Disaster Management Division (Ministry of Defence)
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MOH	Medical Officer of Health
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoJ	Ministry of Justice

MoL	Ministry of Labour
MoPI	Ministry of Plantation Industries
MoRDSSCE	Ministry of Rural Development, Social Security and Community Empowerment
MRI	Medical Research Institute
MSG	Mother Support Groups
MWCA	Ministry of Women and Child Affairs
MWSEID	Ministry of Water Supply and Estate Infrastructure Development
NATA	National Authority on Tobacco and Alcohol
NCC	National Coordinating Committee
NCPA	National Child Protection Authority
NEC	National Education Commission
NIE	National Institute of Education
NIHS	National Institute of Health Sciences
NSECD	National Secretariat for Early Childhood Development
NMSAP-ECCD	National Multi-sectoral Strategic Action Plan on ECCD

NWSDB	National Water Supplies & Drainage Board	SS	Social Services
PC	Provincial Council	TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
PCC	Provincial Coordinating Committee	TOR	Terms of Reference
PDHS	Provincial Director of Health Services	TOT	Training of Trainers
PDPCCS	Provincial Department of Probation and Child Care Services	TVEC	Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission
PHDT	Plantation Human Development Trust	TWG	Technical Working Group
PHI	Public Health Inspector	UC	Urban Council
PHM	Public Health Midwife	UDA	Urban Development Authority
PHSRC	Private Health Sector Regulation Commission	UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
PMCU	Primary Medical Care Units	UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund
QS	Quality Secretariate	USDA	Urban Sector Development Authority
RDHS	Regional Director of Health Services	VCDC	Village Child Development Committee
RMNCAYH	Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, Adolescent, and Youth Health	VTA	Vocational Training Authority
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals	WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
SMEHCI	State Ministry of Estate Housing and Community Infrastructure	WB	World Bank
		WHO	World Health Organization

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01

BACKGROUND

Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) aims at the holistic development of children including physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional development. Early childhood is typically defined as the period from birth to 8 years of age.¹ However, for operational purposes, many countries including Sri Lanka, focuses on the period from birth up to primary school entry for their ECCD programmes, with special emphasis paid on the first 1,000 days (3 years) of life.

During early years of life, the brain is most sensitive to external influences and provides a critical window of opportunity for a child's development. This includes special sensitivity to risk factors, and at the same time, an opportunity for benefits of early interventions to be amplified, while reducing the negative effects of risk. The Lancet series on ECCD published in 2016 states that, in early years of life, the brain develops at a speed of more than one million new neural connections per second – a pace never again repeated.² Such rapid brain growth and development is most pronounced during the first 1,000 days and provides the foundation for lifelong physical, cognitive, emotional, and social functioning.

However, about 43% of children under the age of five—an estimated 250 million—living in low-and middle-income countries, are at risk of suboptimal development, mainly due to poverty and poor nutrition, even though ECCD is a fundamental right of every child.³

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) acknowledges the right of optimum early childhood development in enabling children to achieve their full growth and development potential¹. All countries that have ratified the 'Convention on the Rights of the Child' (CRC) including Sri Lanka, are bound to provide universal access to essential services for early survival, growth, and development, with particular focus on protecting the most vulnerable children.

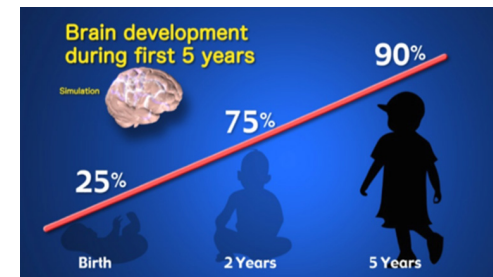


Figure 1.1: Brain development over the first 5 years of life
Source: Center on the Developing Child, "Brain Architecture," Harvard University, July 2, 2019. <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/brainarchitecture/>

Hence, the need for ECCD has been universally endorsed in the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through commitment to create optimal environment for child development. It further aims at ending poverty and inequality and ensure peace and prosperity through early childhood interventions. The figure 1.2 illustrates the link between SDGs and ECCD related targets.

¹ United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), General Comments No 7, (2005). Implementing Rights of the Child

² Lancet series (Oct. 2016). Advancing Early Childhood Development: from Science to Scale <https://www.thelancet.com/series/ECD2016>

³ UNICEF (2023). Early Childhood Development-UNICEF Vision for Every Child. <https://www.unicef.org/reports/early-childhood-development-unicef-vision-every-child>



Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Target 1.2: By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions

Investments in early childhood development improve child nutrition, health and learning, reduce drop-outs, contribute to better labour force performance and wage rates, and cut intergenerational poverty.



Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition

Target 2.2: By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age

Children who benefit from nutritious and safe diets, essential nutrition services and positive feeding, stimulation and care practices in early life have better nutrition, growth and developmental outcomes.



Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all

Target 3.2: By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births

Children who are protected from disease are less likely to die, become undernourished or suffer cognitive impairment.



Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Target 4.2: By 2030, ensure 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

Interventions to promote brain development, early learning (including social-emotional learning) and school readiness provide the foundation for school success and future productivity.



Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Target 5.4: Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate

Greater investment in family-friendly policies and affordable childcare is linked to greater opportunities for women and better outcomes for children.



Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Target 6.1: By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all

Target 6.2: By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all

Clean and safe water, adequate sanitation, and hygienic environments at home and in facilities are critical for optimal growth and development in young children.



Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Target 13.1: Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries

Investments in early childhood increase the resilience of children and families, contribute to climate change adaptability and are an equalizer to climate change inequities.



Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development

Target 16.2: End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against children

Interventions to end abuse and violence against children improve early childhood development and lead to greater social cohesion in communities.

Figure 1.2: ECCD related targets from SDGs

1.1 The life course perspective for ECCD actions



Figure 1.3: Nurturing care framework
Source: nurturing-care.org

Multiple factors influence the acquisition of competencies and skills in the life course, especially in the early childhood, when the brain is most sensitive. 'Nurturing care' refers to conditions created by public policies, programmes and services that enable communities and caregivers to ensure optimizing such factors, namely, **good health, adequate nutrition, protection from threats, opportunities for early learning and responsive caregiving**. These domains of 'Nurturing care framework'⁴ (Refer: figure 1.3) provides the road map for interventions in ECCD, especially in the first 3 years of life. In a Lancet series published in year 2016 on ECCD⁵, such life course interventions shown to have significant benefits for childhood development were summarised and organised into packages. Globally, these evidence-based interventions formed the basis for ECCD policies and strategies (Refer: figure 1.4), hence, formed the basis for this National Multi-sectoral Strategic Action Plan (NMSAP) too. Some of the examples of such interventions include parent support programmes, water, sanitation, and hygiene improvement (WASH), maternal health care and early learning support.

1.2 Multi-sectoral involvement in ECCD interventions

The evidence illustrates the importance of political prioritisation, legislation, policy, use of existing service systems and financing to scale up ECCD interventions.

Successfully scaled up ECCD programmes most often have following characteristics. They have a vision of comprehensive and integrated supportive services for children and families; founded by statute or other formally communicated government strategy and funded by the government. Further, they are led by a government department or agency working collaboratively with other departments and civil society organisations.

The ECCD policy in Sri Lanka and this NMSAP was developed with the aim of achieving this status successfully and more efficiently.



Figure 1.4: Nurturing care framework
Source: nurturing-care.org

⁴ World Health Organization, World Bank Group & UNICEF (2018). Nurturing Care for early childhood development <https://nurturing-care.org/nurturing-care-framework-executive-summary>

⁵ Lancet series (Oct. 2016). Advancing Early Childhood Development: from Science to Scale <https://www.thelancet.com/series/ECD2016>

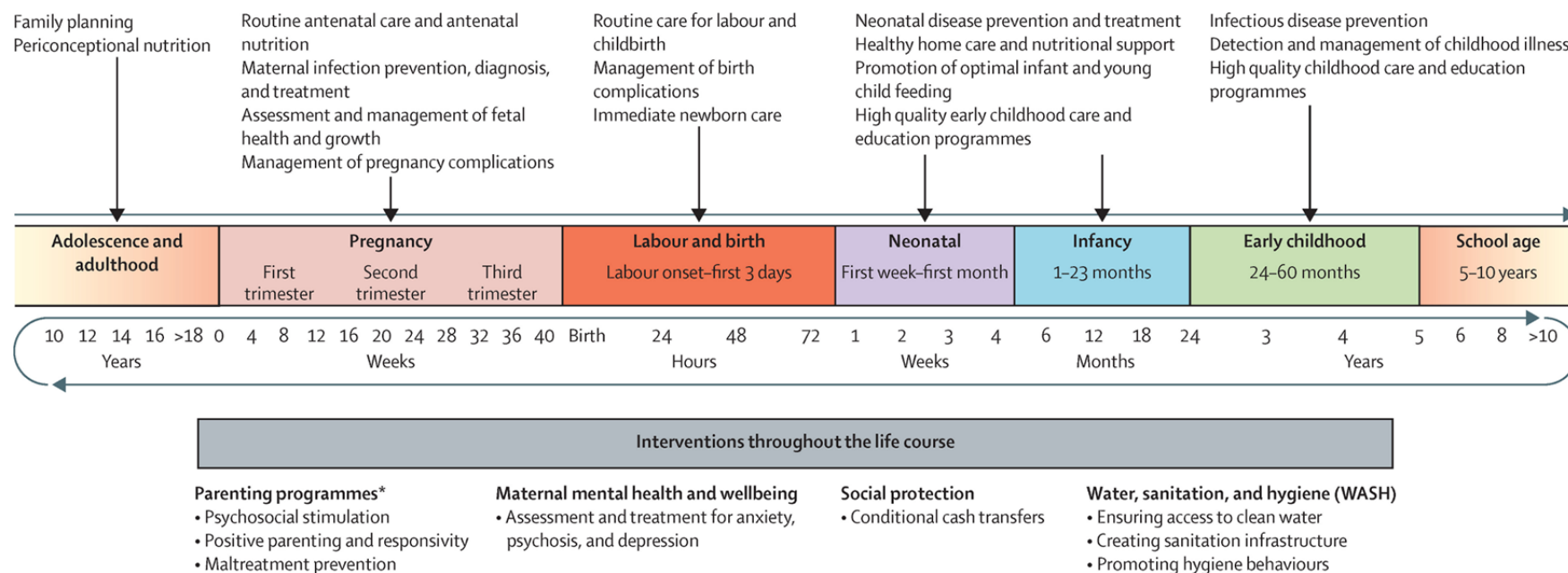


Figure 1.5: Evidence-based ECCD interventions
Source: Lancet Series Paper ECD 2-2016

1.3 Context of the NMSAP-ECCD

As per the Department of Census and Statistics (DCS), estimated mid-year population in Sri Lanka in the year 2022 is 22.18 million with a crude birth rate of 12.4 per 1000 population⁶. The Family Health Bureau (FHB) has reported that number of 'under 5 children under care' in the year 2022 is 1.48 million⁶. The overall survival standards of young Sri Lankan children are in par with countries with higher economic standards with an Infant mortality rate of 10.1 per 1000 live births, and 1–5-year child mortality rate of 1.9 per 1000 live births⁷. Further, FHB is in the final stages of establishing the baseline for Early Childhood Development Index (ECDI2030), which is the global tool recommended for the measurement of percentage of 24–59 month children who are developmentally on track.

Sri Lanka first introduced a National Policy for ECCD in the year 2004 to ensure support for all children from conception to school entry (0–5 years) to learn and develop in a nurturing environment that supports him/her to reach maximum potential in development. This, Government's commitment was reaffirmed in the updated National Policy, in 2018. The National Policy on ECCD, 2018⁸, defines the ECCD services as essential supports of health, nutrition, education, social services, care and protection provided to children in early childhood, especially to those most vulnerable and disadvantaged. It primarily focuses on all children in Sri Lanka from conception to admission age of grade one in the formal school.

The policy was formed with the view of supporting multi-sectoral action through integration of all services (health, nutrition, education, social services, care and protection, disability, financial) and all sectors including government organizations, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private sector organizations related to ECCD at National and provincial level, to optimize service delivery.

In line with global evidence, a lead government agency has been identified in the policy, which is the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs (MWCA), supported by other relevant key Central Ministries, Provincial Ministries, Departments and state and non-state institutions involved with children in early childhood.

This multi-sectoral approach will ensure that all children benefit from policies, programmes and practices implemented, everywhere. The National Coordinating Committee (NCC) on ECCD was established to strengthen and coordination of actions on ECCD. As of the current governance structure, the focal point within the MWCA responsible for child affairs to monitor the policy implementation is National Secretariat for Early Childhood Development (NSECD).

It was a long-felt need, of an implementation tool to plan, execute and monitor multi-sectoral action towards ECCD. To address that concern, this NMSAP-ECCD was developed based on the policy objectives and key action areas stated in the policy.

6 Department of Census and Statistics (2023). <http://www.statistics.gov.lk/Population/StaticalInformation/VitalStatistics>

7 Family Health Bureau (2022). Latest Statistics. <https://fhb.health.gov.lk/>

8 Ministry of Women and Child Affairs and Dry zone development (2018) National Policy on Early Childhood Care and Development.

1.4 Vision, Mission & Policy Objectives-National Policy on ECCD-2018

Vision

An enabling environment that ensures every child's right for optimal development.

Mission

Optimal survival, growth and development of all children in Sri Lanka in early childhood through a protective, caring and conducive environment in the home and other settings, well supported by a comprehensive and integrated system of early childhood care and development services.

Policy Objectives

1. To assure all children in early childhood, including the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, the best start in life by ensuring equitable access to quality ECCD services that promote a child's right to life, survival and development
2. To empower parents, families and communities to perform their roles and responsibilities effectively in bringing up their children and ensure their optimal involvement in ECCD services and programmes
3. To promote investments in ECCD programmes, including for most vulnerable and disadvantaged children, by ensuring mobilization, equitable allocation and effective utilization of financial and human resources
4. To establish an administrative mechanism for effective implementation of the Policy and for monitoring and evaluation
5. To promote research to enable evidence-based decision making and practice

Action areas and strategies

The strategies identified to achieve the above policy objectives have been aligned under 5 key action areas (Refer: Figure 1.6) supported by strategies aiming at overall quality improvement as follows.



Figure 1.6: Key action areas of the ECCD policy-2018

The key action areas identified in the Sri Lanka National ECCD policy 2018, is well in line with the 'Nurturing care framework'^{9,10} and SDGs, which highlights its comparability with global standards and similarly guides for multi-sectoral involvement in achieving its targets.

The National Multi-sectoral Strategic Action Plan on Early Childhood Care and Development (NMSAP-ECCD) 2026-2030 is developed to identify the actions that needs carrying out under the strategies identified in the National ECCD policy 2018, in the next five years. Careful consideration was given to the vulnerable economic situation in the country and the

impact of COVID-19 pandemic, when developing this action plan and prioritizing the activities.

There will be multiple challenges in the road map including financing, change of ECE governance proposed National Education Reforms Framework (NERF 2023-2028), human resource limitations, and low enrolment in Early Childhood Education (ECE) in the coming years, which this plan attempts to improve resilience for. Hence, a vigorous participatory approach from central as well as provincial and divisional levels was followed in the development of the plan as described in section 2 to appraise feasibility and acceptability.

Table 1.1: The integration of services and alignment with global recommendations and targets in ECCD policy

Outcome	ECCD					
Key Action areas in ECCD policy	 Health & Nutrition	 Early Childhood Education	 Care & Protection	 Parents, Family, Community	 Investment for ECCD	
Nurturing care framework	Good health Adequate nutrition	Opportunities for Early Education	Safety and security	Responsive care giving		
Relevant SDG Goals	 2 ZERO HUNGER	 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	 4 QUALITY EDUCATION	 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	 5 GENDER EQUALITY	 1 NO POVERTY  13 CLIMATE ACTION

Note: In accordance with the ECCD policy-2018, and Child Rights Convention (CRC), the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children are defined as follows for the purpose of this action plan.

Most vulnerable and disadvantaged children include children who are orphans, abused and neglected children, children without families, refugees, children with disabilities, children involved in harmful work, children with substance abuse, Sexual abuse and exploitation, children subjected to sale, trafficking and abduction, street children and children living in extreme poverty. Children in their early childhood who live in prisons with their mothers also belong to this category.

9 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, General Comments No 7, (2005). Implementing Child Rights in Early Childhood.

10 World Health Organization, World Bank Group & UNICEF (2018). Nurturing Care for early childhood development
<https://nurturing-care.org/nurturing-care-framework-executive-summary>



02

PROCESS OF FORMULATING THE NMSAP-ECCD (2026-2030)

Development of an action plan indicating the road map to implement the ECCD policy is stated as an essential requirement in the policy document itself.

The National Coordinating Committee (NCC) on ECCD decided to develop a 5-year multi-sectoral strategic action plan to operationalize the policy. The objective of developing the plan was to identify the actions that needs carrying out to achieve the ECCD policy objectives under each key action area. The policy document has already identified the strategies to follow under key action areas.

The following steps were carried out in developing the plan, which was a multi-sectoral participatory process to identify the activities and sub-activities that needs to be done under each strategy by the relevant agencies. Some of the actions thus identified are already well in progress, some needed improvement and some were newly proposed. Collectively all these actions were identified as needing to create an enabling environment that ensures every child's right for optimal development as stated in the vision of ECCD policy, hence needs monitoring by the relevant authority.

1. **Establishment of Technical Working Group (TWG)**

A TWG representing the focal points of key organizations involved in ECCD service provision was established as the first step of the process. The members of the TWG are stated in page iii. The TWG then identified a comprehensive list of stakeholders involved in ECCD service delivery in Sri Lanka to be consulted in the subsequent steps of planning.

The next task was to map the existing and proposed activities under the given strategies of the ECCD policy. The policy has already listed strategies under five key action areas and under the theme of overall quality improvement. Hence, it was agreed to develop the action plan based on this framework and data collection tools were developed accordingly.

2. **Two-day multi-sectoral workshop to identify gaps and actions to address gaps under each key action area**

A wider group of governmental (National and provincial level), non-governmental, private sector, academia and professional organizations worked together in groups during a two-day workshop to identify the activities, responsible agencies to carry out the activities, priority status as well as evaluation criteria. The organizations represented in this forum are stated in annexure 1.

3. Formation of action groups

The stakeholders were grouped into key action areas and continuous communication was carried out through online communication methods until the activities under each key action area are finalized.

4. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

Identified cross cutting action areas were discussed in detail with the relevant stakeholders as separate FGDs (CSO partners (INGO's, NGO's & CBO's), NSECD staff, UNICEF Technical staff, Provincial ECE units) or as KIIs with relevant experts.

5. Desk review-Policy, strategy, and resource material mapping

A comprehensive desk review was conducted to identify other policies, strategic plans and action plans from other agencies related to ECCD, in view of mapping with this action plan to avoid duplication and maintain coherence. The same exercise was expanded to collect resource material related to ECCD services again to avoid duplication and support the execution of activities.

6. Data Triangulation and development of action plan

The information gathered through the above methods was triangulated through a series of workshops with the technical staff from NSECD and UNICEF to develop a draft action plan.

7. Validation of draft action plan

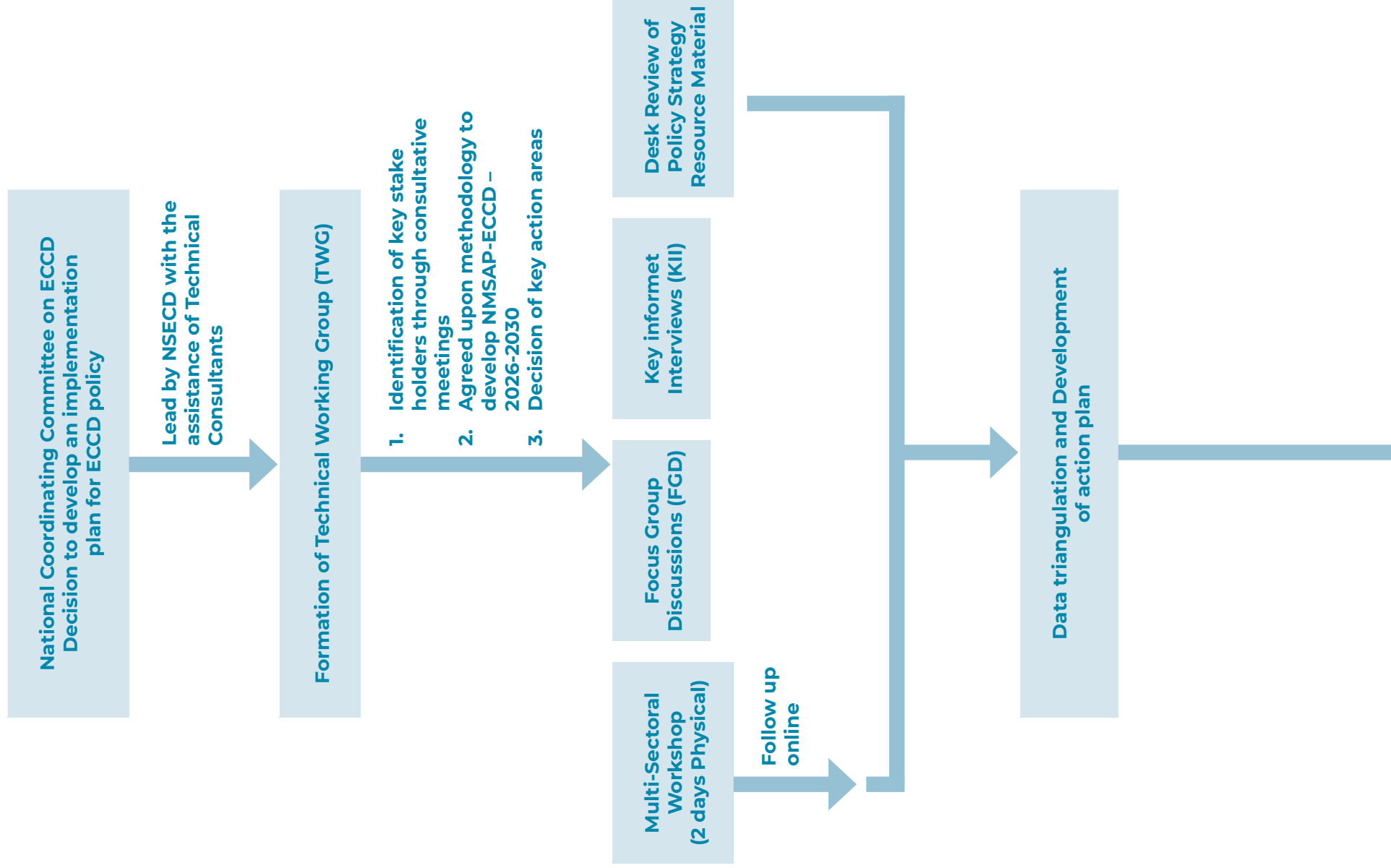
Round 1: The draft action plan was circulated among the TWG members in advance and first round of validation was conducted at a half day workshop. The comments thus made were incorporated and the updated version was circulated among the other stakeholders for the second round of validation.

Round 2: Second round of validation was conducted in a full day workshop with the participation of all stakeholders at National and Provincial level. The stakeholders were given the opportunity to get feedback from their respective organizations through a feedback period.

8. National Multi-sectoral Strategic Action Plan on Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD)-2026-2030-Final version

The final action plan is presented under 6 key action areas. It includes the responsible agencies (primary and secondary) to carry out each activity and the time frame that the activity should be carried out. Further, the process indicators to ensure that actions are in progress have been identified and included in the action plan itself with means of verification. The document also contains a monitoring and an evaluation framework with selected key performance indicators in line with the SDG indicators.

Process on Development of NMSAP – ECCD – 2026-2030



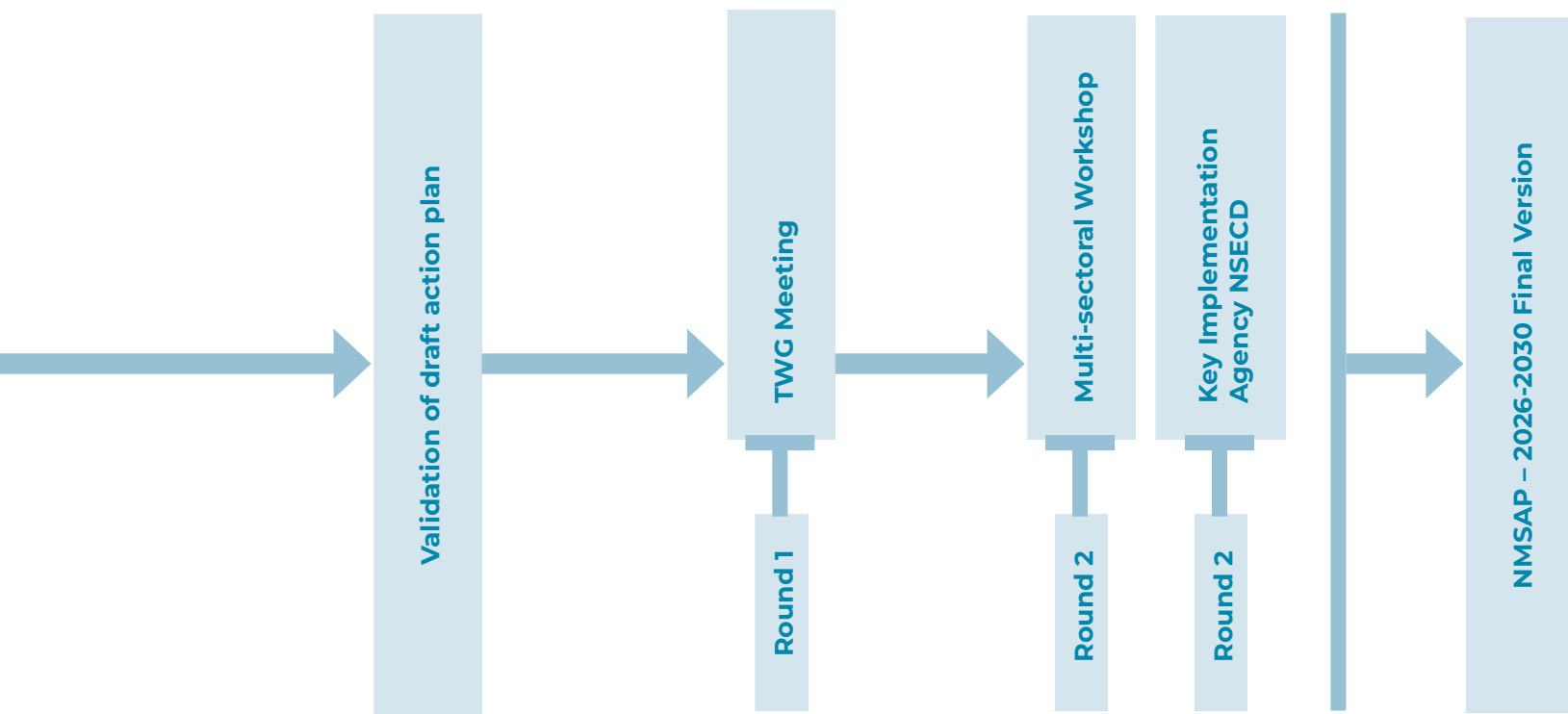
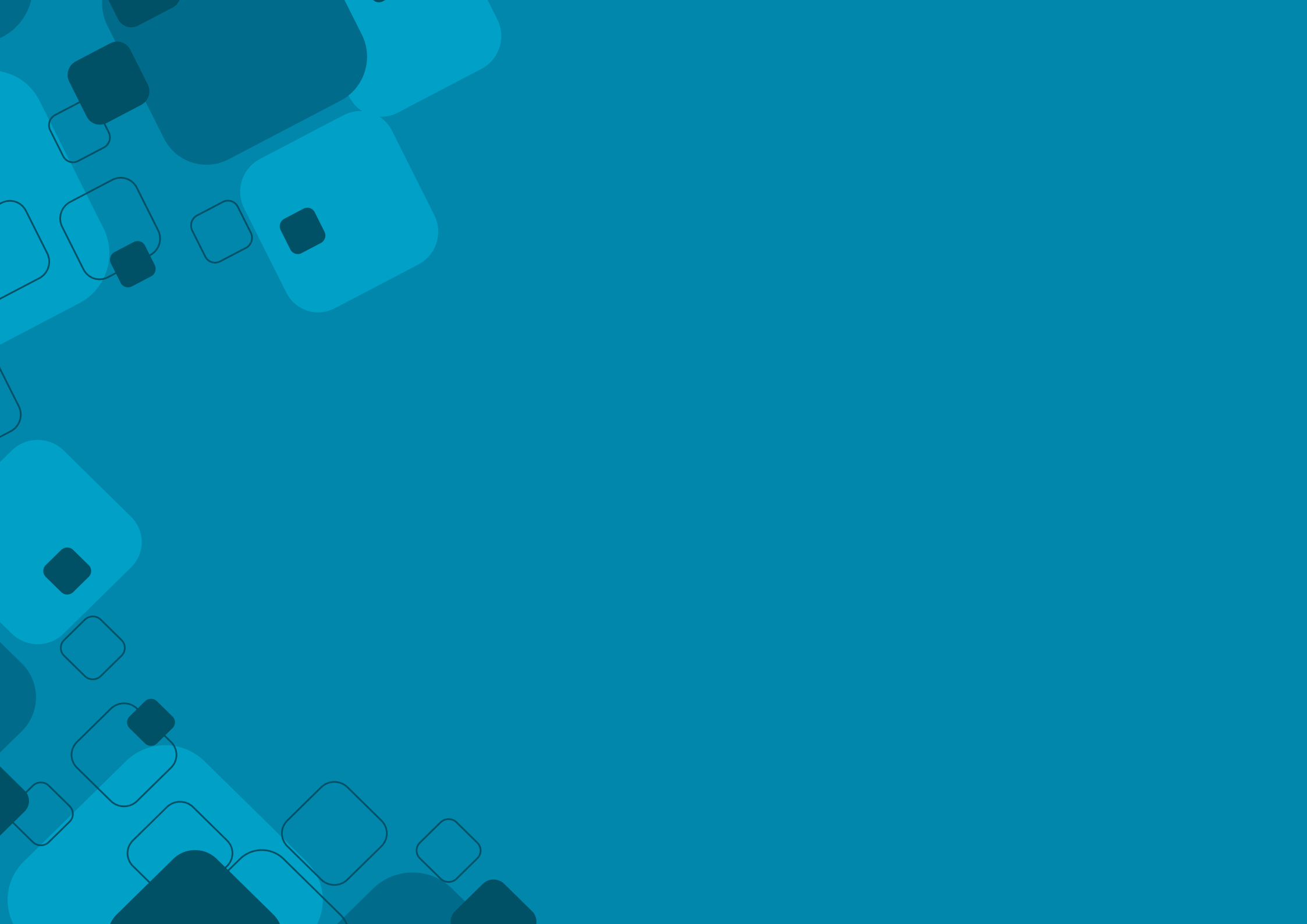


Figure 2.1: Process of NMSAP-ECCD development
Source: Lancet Series Paper ECD 2-2016



03

NATIONAL MULTI-SECTORAL STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN ON ECCD NMSAP-ECCD (2026-2030)



STRATEGIC ACTION AREA 01:

Health and Nutrition

OVERALL OBJECTIVE:

Assure all children in early childhood, including the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, equitable access to quality health and nutritional services.

Baseline Analysis

The scope of the ECCD policy extends from conception to the age of primary school entry. Hence, the strategic actions to improve health and nutrition were planned to cover the pregnant mothers as well as the under 5 children. The reported number of births in the year 2022 in Sri Lanka is 275,321 and the number of under 5 children under care is reported as 1,406,157¹¹.

Sri Lanka has a comprehensive Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, Adolescent, and Youth Health (RMNCAYH) programme run by the Ministry of Health (MoH), which has made an overwhelming progress in the provision of health and nutrition services over the years. Hence, the implementation of Health and Nutrition action area of ECCD policy is amply supported by the National Maternal and Child Health Policy¹² and National Nutrition Policy 2021-2030¹³.

¹¹ Family Health Bureau (2022). Latest Statistics. <https://fhb.health.gov.lk/>

¹² Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka (2012). National Maternal and Child Health Policy <https://extranet.who.int/nutrition/gina/en/node/8226>

¹³ Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka (2022). National Nutrition Policy 2021-2030. <https://nutrition.health.gov.lk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/NNP-English.pdf>

As of now, nearly all births (99%) in Sri Lanka take place in a hospital or a maternity home and are assisted by a physician or a Public Health Midwife (PHM), of which 94% is in a public health facility¹⁴. The new NMSAP-ECCD has the challenge of identifying activities to sustain these services amidst the economic crisis.

Further, Sri Lanka is maintaining very good overall neonatal, infant and young child outcomes in terms of mortality standards compared to its GDP. The neonatal, infant and under 5 mortality rates for the year 2022 are in the range of 4,10 & 7 per 1000 live births¹⁵.

However, one of the main challenges that Sri Lanka is facing, is to optimize the nutrition levels of children which is an essential element of ECCD. As of the most recent survey by Medical Research Institute (MRI)-Sri Lanka, among the children aged 6-59 months, the prevalence of underweight, wasting, and stunting remains as high as 22.7%, 19.5% and 13.7% respectively¹⁶.

Prevalence of malnutrition (wasting, stunting, underweight, overweight, or more than one condition) in children aged 6-59 months, was an alarming high value of 69.2%. This age group also had a 14.6% prevalence of anaemia too¹⁷.

Hence, it is imperative that, this action plan identifies appropriate activities to alleviate this, as optimum nutrition is one of the essential elements to reach full potential in ECCD.

This is further complicated by the fact that, an estimated 17% of the population is food-insecure according to the Food and Agriculture Organization & World Food Programme (FAO-WFP) Crop and Food Security Assessment mission report, 2023¹⁸. However, this is an improvement from the year 2022 when 28% of households were noted as food insecure. Nearly two-thirds of the population are adopting livelihood-based coping strategies, such as borrowing money or dipping into their hard-earned savings to feed their families. As per the NSECD data, 86,168 preschool children are now receiving a meal at the preschool, but it is only 17.8% of the total preschool population¹⁹. Hence, there is a need of scaling up social assistance and empowerment to achieve health and nutrition outcomes in the next 5 years.

14 Family Health Bureau (2022). Latest Statistics. <https://fhb.health.gov.lk/>

15 UNICEF (2023). Early Childhood Development-UNICEF Vision for Every Child. <https://www.unicef.org/reports/early-childhood-development-unicef-vision-every-child>

16 Medical Research Institute (2022). National Nutrition and Micronutrient Survey in Sri Lanka.

17 Medical Research Institute (2022). National Nutrition and Micronutrient Survey in Sri Lanka.

18 Food and Agriculture Organization and World Food Programme (2023) Special Report FAO/WFP Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM) to the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka-25 May 2023 https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000151993/download/?_ga=2.168281889.1864452308.1701162258-2111559015.1700372107

19 National Secretariat for Early Childhood Development (2022). Preschool statistics.

SECTOR BUDGET TOTAL 2026-2030 | Rs Mn 29, 267.3
**Strategy
01**

Strengthen relevant national and provincial authorities to ensure all children in early childhood have equitable access to all health and nutrition services in both field and institutional contexts

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
1.1 Ensure equitable access for field Maternal & Child Health (MCH) care services to all children under 5 years with special attention to vulnerable and disadvantaged	Introduce and monitor the delivery of standard 'Early Childcare & Development Package' through field MCH care services in ALL districts	FHB	HPB, PDHS, RDHS, MOHs, MWSEID-PHDT, E&UH-MoH,	X	X	X	X	X	3.5 Mn	% of infants, 1-2-year-olds & 2-5 year olds under care out of estimated	MCH return FHB
	Conduct a national survey on the accessibility and utilization of field MCH care services by children under 5 years and their mothers (National ECCD survey)	FHB & NSECD	MRI, PDHS, RDHS, MOHs, DCS, DS, NSECD			X			6 Mn	% under 5 children using field MCH services	DHS-survey report
	Monitor the conduct of home visits by PHMs especially for vulnerable and disadvantaged children	MOH	FHB, PDHS, RDHS	X	X	X	X	X	0 Mn	% of ECCD home visits made out of scheduled	MCH return
	Enrol a regular intake of Public Health Midwives (PHM) to fill vacant PHM positions in all provinces	MoH-ET & R division	FHB, NIHS, PDHS, RDHS, MOHs, MWCA			X	X	X	45 Mn	% of vacant PHM carder positions	FHB-annual report
	Provision of transport facilities to all field health workers to reach difficult terrains	MoH	MoH, FHB, MoF, PDHS, INGOs			X	X		40 Mn	% of PHM s with transport facilities	MoH-annual report
	Construct new field health centres/clinics and upgrade existing centres in underserved areas including WASH facilities	MoH	PDHS, RDHS, MoF, MWCA, INGO, NGOs, CBOs, PHDT			X	X	X	245 Mn	Number of new field health centres/clinics established per year	Health facility survey, Medical statistics unit-MoH
	Expand and facilitate the nutrition clinic services provided at MOH offices	PDHS	FHB, Nutrition division-MoH, MWCA, INGOs		X	X			20 Mn	% of MOH areas running nutrition clinics	PDHS

1.2 Provide basic curative health services to all children under 5 years within accessible distance	Conduct a review of resource allocation and utilization patterns of curative child health care services in different areas with special emphasis on municipal council areas and estates	MoH	MDPU-MoH, E&UH-MoH, MWCA, PDHS, MWSEID-PHDT, MCs		X				0.15 Mn	Availability of resource map	Health facility survey, Medical statistics unit-MoH
	Advocate for developing a human resource reallocation policy to ensure equity in HR distribution	PDHS	MoH-MDPU, MWCA, MWSEID-PHDT		X	X			0.7 Mn	Staff/ population ratio	MoH-annual report
	Promote Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) in all provinces including private sector	FHB	PDHSs, MoF, UNICEF, WHO	X	X	X			13 Mn	Number of Baby Friendly Hospitals per province	FHB-annual report
	Capacity building of health care workers to provide child health related information in local languages	MoH	MWCA, PDHS, MWSEID-PHDT, Dep.of official languages		X	X	X		1.5 Mn	Number of programmes conducted	-
	Advocate for rational distribution of specialist services in Paediatrics across the island	PDHS	MoH, MWSEID-PHDT, CSOs	X	X	X	X	X	0 Mn	Paediatrician /population ratio in each province	HR data base-MoH
	Create referral links between MOH-nutrition clinics and specialist paediatric/nutritionist clinics	PDHS	MoH			X	X	X	3.9 Mn	Number of children referred	Nutrition month data

1.3 Offer alternate service delivery methods to address the needs of working mothers	Pilot and evaluate the efficiency of offering of state clinic services (antenatal, paediatric, nutrition, developmental, child development clinics) after work hours, weekends etc.	PDHS	MOHs, PMCUs		X	X			8 Mn	Number of clinics functioning on weekends per district	Planning unit data / PDHS
	Promotion of good ECCD practices at antenatal and child welfare settings in private sector	Directorate of private health-MoH	FHB, Private sector hospitals, College of Paediatrics, PHSRC		X	X			0.2 Mn	Number of baby friendly hospitals in pvt sector	M & E unit-FHB
1.4 Continue support systems to ensure good nutrition among pregnant and lactating mothers and under 5 children	Expand the mid-day meal program to cover all needy preschools to support proper nutrition of all preschool children	NSECD	MoF, MoE, MWSEID-PHDT, Provincial Secretaries, INGOs, Pvt Sector, CSOs	X	X	X	X	X	2,500 Mn	% of needy preschools with mid-day meal programs	MoE preschool census
	Continue nutrition support allowances for pregnant and lactating mothers	NSECD	PDHS, RDHS, MOH, DS, INGOs, Pvt Sector, CSOs	X	X	X			7,500 Mn	% of pregnant and lactating mothers receiving nutrition allowance	NSECD
	Strengthen Thripasha supply chain to ensure regular supply to all needy children and mothers	MoF	MoH, PDHS, RDHS, MWSEID-PHDT,	X	X	X	X	X	15,000 Mn	% of underweight under 5 children receiving Thripasha	Survey report (MRI)

Strategy 02

Facilitate and strengthen the quality of health and nutritional services provided by relevant national and provincial authorities

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
2.1 Ensure regular supervision of field staff providing health and nutrition services at divisional, district, provincial and national level	Training of supervisors on supportive supervision of field staff who provide health and nutrition services	MoH / NSECD	MoH-Quality Secretariat/ FHB/ EUH-MoH RDHs, NSECD, MWSEID-PHDT		X	X	X	X	18.5 Mn	Number of supervisors trained	FHB-annual report
	Revisit / develop supervision tools for ECCD service assessment	MoH / MWCA-NSECD	FHB, MWCA-NSECD		X				0.75 Mn	Number of supervision tools updated	FHB-Web repository
2.2 Strengthen institutional level quality appraisal mechanism in institutions providing MCH care	Develop/ update quality standards and quality assessment tools to be used in institutions providing MCH care (eg: SL National MCN quality assessment tools)	MoH-Quality Secretariat	MoH-FHB, PDHs, College of Paediatricians, College of Obstetrics and Gynaecologists			X			1.5 Mn	Availability of quality standards	RHMIS
	Establish a regular system of quality assessment via quality reviews/ clinical audits in institutions providing MCH care	MoH-Quality secretariat	MoH-FHB, PDHs,		X	X			6 Mn	Number of hospitals using the quality assessment tools	District audit
	Launching an incentive mechanism for quality ECCD service performance	MoH-Quality secretariat	MoH-FHB, MoF				X	X	5 Mn	Launched incentive mechanism	-

2.3 Conduct regular review of provision of MCH services through multiple sectors	Joint review of delivery of 'Early Childcare & Development Package' in all districts	FHB/ MWCA	HPB, PDHS, RDHS, MOHs, DPCCS, Provincial ECE units	X	X	X	X	X	15 Mn	Number of reviews conducted	FHB annual report
	Evaluate effectiveness of existing nutritional interventions (e.g. Thripasha, Multiple micronutrients, mid-day meal programme)	Nutrition division-MoH	MRI, FHB, NSECD		X	X			10 Mn	Availability of Evaluation report	Evaluation report
2.4 Analysis of client satisfaction and worker satisfaction at all levels	Develop and validate client and worker satisfaction assessment tools	MoH	MoH-Quality secretariat			X	X		0.6 Mn	Developed tool	QS-Website
	Conduct regular client/ worker satisfaction surveys at MCH clinic settings, hospital settings (E.g.: postnatal wards)	MoH	MoH-Quality secretariat				X	X	4 Mn	% of clients satisfied	QS-Website
Strategy 03 Promote advocacy and awareness to bring the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children into mainstream health and nutrition services											
Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
3.1 Identify the burden of health and nutrition issues among vulnerable and disadvantaged children and map the services available to those	Organize and conduct National ECCD survey to identify the burden of vulnerable and disadvantaged children including children with special needs	FHB & NSECD	DPCCS, NCPA, MoH, DCS, INGOs, CBOs		X	X			8 Mn	% of vulnerable/ disadvantaged among all under 5 children	Survey report
	Conduct a mapping exercise to identify all stakeholders involved in care for vulnerable and disadvantaged	NSECD	MoH, DPCCS, NCPA, MoH, DCS, INGOs, CBOs, Academia		X				0.15 Mn	Stakeholder map	-

3.2 Promote rights-based approach in providing health and nutrition services to vulnerable and disadvantaged	Develop advocacy tools to promote stakeholders for provision of mainstream health and nutrition services to vulnerable and disadvantaged children	HPB	FHB, NSECD, NCPA, DPCCS	X	X				1.5 Mn	Availability of advocacy tools	-
	Conduct advocacy programs to all stake holders about rights of the vulnerable and disadvantaged children	FHB	HPB, PDHS, RDHS, NSECD, NCPA, DPCCS, MWSEID-PHDT		X	X			3.5 Mn	Number of advocacy campaigns conducted	-
	Advocate regional plantation companies, estate community leaders & politicians to expand the service delivery points in the estates to provide the mainstream services	MWSEID-PHDT	EUH-MoH, PDHS, MoPI		X				1 Mn	Number of advocacy programs conducted	PHDT database
3.3 Conduct outreach health awareness program for families/ communities with vulnerable and disadvantaged children to promote mainstream health & nutrition services	Develop IEC materials in local languages to improve health literacy of families with vulnerable and disadvantaged children	HPB	FHB, NSECD, DPCCS, INGOs	X	X				3 Mn	Availability of IEC materials	HPB database
	Conduct health awareness program for families/ communities with vulnerable and disadvantaged children to promote mainstream health & nutrition services	PDHS	FHB, NSECD, DPCCS, INGOs		X				2.5 Mn	Number of awareness programs conducted	Planning unit data / PDHS
	Capacity building of health care workers to supply services for vulnerable and disadvantaged children and children with special needs	FHB	NSECD, PDHS, DPCCS, NCPA, INGOs, CBOs, CSOs		X	X	X		3.25 Mn	Number of health care workers trained	FHB-annual report

Strategy 04

Strengthen and facilitate relevant authorities to ensure that parents, families, youth groups, adolescence and communities are aware of available child care services, nutritional programmes and referrals

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
4.1 Facilitate health and non-health authorities with clear guidance for awareness programmes on the health and nutrition services.	Development of a plan with clear roles for ECCD related health and nutrition communication	HPB	MoH-Nutrition division, EUH-MoH, FHB, NSECD			X	X	X	5 Mn	Availability of the communication plan	HPB website
	Development of Information Education and Communication (IEC) material on available MCH services and service points	HPB	MoH-Nutrition division, MWCA-NSECD	X	X				2 Mn	Number of IEC material developed	HPB website
	Collaborative workshops for non-health stakeholders to make aware of available MCH services, nutritional programmes and referral systems	PDHS	HPB, FHB, NSECD, MoE, Provincial ECE units, CBOs, CSOs, INGOs, NGOs		X				0.9 Mn	Number of workshops conducted	Planning unit data / PDHS
4.2 Aware community networks with the knowledge on available MCH services, nutritional programmes and referral systems through provincial health staff	Empower existing networks to disseminate messages on health and nutrition programmes e.g.: preschool settings, mother support groups, social media groups of young parents etc	PDHS	HPB, FHB, RDHS, MOH, ECCD officers (NSECD), CBOs CSOs	X	X				0 Mn	Number of community-based programmes conducted	Planning unit data / PDHS
	Develop and disseminate social media messages on the services available through existing community groups	HPB	PDHS, NSECD, FHB		X	X	X	X	7 Mn	Number of social media messages delivered	Social media page-HPB

Strategy 05

Facilitate national and provincial authorities as well as non-governmental agencies to expand childcare services to underserved areas and communities especially focusing on those most vulnerable and disadvantaged

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
5.1 Identify and share information on the underserved areas for health and nutrition services with vulnerable and disadvantaged children	Consolidate national survey data on health services distribution and vulnerability mapping	FHB & NSECD	MoH, DPCCS, NCPA, INGOs, NGOs, CBOs, MWSEID-PHDT			X			0.5 Mn	Availability of child vulnerability map	-
	Sharing of information to service providers at provincial level and non-governmental agencies to expand childcare services to reach the needy	NSECD	PDHS, RDHS, MOH, DS office, INGOs, NGOs, CBOs, MWSEID-PHDT		X	X	X	X	0 Mn	Availability of information sharing platform	NCC minutes
5.2 Facilitate Delivery of alternate health and nutrition services for children in vulnerable settings through governmental and non-governmental agencies	Deploy health care staff to conduct special outreach programs for children in underserved areas/ vulnerable settings eg: estate sector, orphanages,	PDHS	MOH, Provincial secretary, SS Dept, MWCA, MWSEID-PHDT,		X	X	X	X	15.5 Mn	Number of special outreach programs conducted	PCC minutes
	Establish alternative service points to provide health and nutrition services in underserved settings eg: wellness centres in urban settlements, care homes for teenage mothers	MoH	Mo State affairs, MoH-EUH, MC/UC, INGOs, NGOs, CSOs		X	X			125 mn	Number of alternate service points established per district	Planning unit data / PDHS

Strategy 06 Promote the provision of safe drinking water, sex and age-appropriate sanitation and hygiene services, especially in under-served and un-served areas

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
6.1 Identify the un-served and under-served areas in terms of availability WASH facilities	Mapping of availability of household level WASH facilities (drinking water source, toilet type, waste disposal methods) based on PHI survey data	MoH-E &OH unit	PDHS/ RDHS	X					0.5 Mn	% of households with poor WASH standards	Monthly return by PHIs
	Provision of financial aid to improve sanitation facilities for low-income families	Divisional Secretariat	PDHS/ RDHS/ MOH/ PC	X	X	X	X		1,950 Mn	% of households with water sealed toilets	Monthly return by PHIs
6.2 Promote preschools to maintain WASH standards	Expand the school health and sanitary survey by PHIs to preschools	MoH-E &OH unit	MoH-PDHS/ RDHS, MoE, MWCA-NSECD			X			10 Mn	% of preschools covered by sanitary survey	Monthly return by PHIs
	Conduct annual review at divisional level to monitor minimum standards for ECCD centres, based on national WASH standards for ECD centres	MWCA-NSECD	Provincial ECE authorities, PDHS, RDHS, MOHs, NWSDB			X	X	X	52.5 Mn	Number of annual reviews conducted	Meeting minutes
6.3 Promote the establishment of community water projects in areas with water scarcity	Promote the establishment of community water projects in identified areas with water scarcity	NWSDB	NGOs, CBOs		X	X	X	X	1,500 Mn	Number of new community water projects established	Monthly return by PHIs

Strategy 07 Promote and facilitate relevant national and provincial authorities to ensure adequate childcare services including nutrition during emergency situations

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
7.1 Train & Prepare primary health care workforce to maintain health & Nutrition services during emergency	Develop national guidelines on maintaining emergency and essential childcare during emergency	MoH-DPRD	MoD-DMC, Provincial secretary, PDHS		X	X			0.5 Mn	Availability of national guidelines	DMHIS
	Capacity building of health staff and institutions on disaster preparedness and response	MoH-DPRD	MoD-DMC, Provincial secretary, PDHS		X	X			5 mn	Number of staff trained	DMHIS
	Facilitate preparation of disaster management plans at MOH level	MoH-DPRD	PDHS, RDHS, MOH			X			1 Mn	Number of MOH offices/ PMCUs with a disaster preparedness plan	DMHIS
	Ensure referral pathways are established for emergency childcare at disaster	MoH-DPRD	MoH, MoD-DMC, NSECD		X	X			0.025 Mn	Availability of DRR manual with referral pathways	DMHIS
	Communicate the actions of disaster management plan to relevant stakeholders	District DMCC	SL Police, Mo Local gov., DS offices, PDHS/ RDHS, DSS		X	X			3.5 Mn	Number of meetings held	DMCC minutes
7.2 Develop mechanisms to ensure psychosocial health of children in the aftermath of disaster	Develop a plan to ensure psychosocial health of children in the aftermath of disaster	MoH-DPRD	MoH-Mental health directorate/ FHB, College of child psychiatrists		X	X			1.5 Mn	Availability of a plan	DM-HIS

Strategy 08

Facilitate capacity building of personnel involved in health and nutrition to deliver quality health and nutrition services for all children

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
8.1 Capacity building of health and nutrition service providers to offer better quality services	Organize in-service capacity building programmes for district level officers (TOT) and field MCH staff on 'Early Child Care & Development Package' on regular basis (eg: IYCF/ Breast feeding etc)	FHB / RDHS	HPB, PDHS, RDHS, MOHs, MWCA	X	X	X	X	X	27.5 Mn	Number of district level ToT programmes held	FHB-annual report
	Integrate new additions of ECCD packages to pre-service training curricular of PHM/ MOHs/ ECD officers	MoH-ET & R division	NIHS, University Academia, NSE CD		X	X			0.4 Mn	Changed curricular	-
	Establishment of efficient mechanisms (eg:m-health) to communicate technical decisions to ECCD practitioners.	HPB	FHB, Nutrition division, Academia, researchers, NSECD		X	X	X	X	6 Mn	Number of functional platforms created	HPB Website
	Review and update of knowledge and skills on health and nutrition among estate field workers (PHMS, Crèche attendants, ECD officers etc.)	MWSEID-PHDT	FHB, PDHS, RDHS, MWCA		X	X			3.5 Mn	Number of capacity building programmes conducted	PHDT returns
8.2 Conduct multi-sectoral knowledge update programmes and facilitate knowledge sharing platforms	Conduct collaborative knowledge update workshops on the scientific aspects of ECCD interventions to all non-health partners promoting ECCD services including nutrition	Nutrition division-MoH	NSECD, HPB, MWSEID-PHDT, NGOs, CSOs		X	X	X		2.5 Mn	Number of workshops conducted	Nutrition division-annual report
	Establishment of a ECCD Network for sharing of knowledge and professional development	NSECD	MoH, MWSEID-PHDT		X				1 Mn	Availability of a network	NCC minutes
	Ensure funding for international exposure and continuous professional development through postgraduate studies for ECCD service providers.	NSECD	MWCA. MoH-DDG-PHS, International health unit, INGOs		X	X			15 Mn	Number of officers trained	NCC minutes

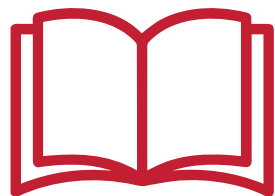
Strategy 09

Facilitate participation of development partners (NGO & private sector) in delivering quality services for children in early childhood

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
9.1 Facilitate participation of development partners (NGO & private sector) at National and sub-national level ECCD service planning forums	Engagement of development partners in multi-sectoral planning forums at National level e.g.: National nutrition steering committee, MCN subcommittee, National coordinating committee on ECCD	NSECD	NCC-ECCD, MoH-DDG-PHS11/ Nutrition division/ FHB, MWCA, MoF, Dep. of National Planning	X	X	X	X	X	0 Mn	Number of projects agreed to be supported	NCC minutes
	Engagement of developmental partners at provincial and district level planning e.g.: Provincial coordinating committee on ECCD	PDHS	Provincial secretary, PDHS	X	X	X	X	X	0 Mn	Number of projects supported at provincial level	PCC Minutes
9.2 Advocate development partners to provide support for review of quality standards in ECCD care	Encourage technical and financial support by development partners in development / update of quality standards in ECCD care	NSECD	MoH-DDG-PHS11/ Nutrition division/ FHB, MWCA, MoF,	X	X	X	X	X	0 Mn	Number of projects agreed to be supported	NCC minutes
9.3 Facilitate development partners to support provision of health and nutrition services in unserved / underserved areas in accordance with government policy	Share information with development partners on the unserved/ underserved areas & vulnerable children	NSECD	MoH-DDG-PHS11/ Nutrition division/ FHB, MWCA, MoF, MWSEID-PHDT	X	X	X	X	X	0 Mn	Number of projects agreed to be supported	NCC minutes
	Promote collaborative action with development partners to expand health and nutrition services to vulnerable children	MoH	NSECD, MoF, MWSEID-PHDT, INGOs, NGOs	X	X	X	X	X	10.5 Mn	Number of projects agreed to be supported	NCC minutes

9.4 Facilitate development partners to support capacity building in ECCD care	Needs assessment of capacity building in ECCD services and convey to development partners	MoH/ NSECD	MWCA, MWSEID-PHDT, INGOs, NGOs		X	X				2.25 Mn	Number of staff trained	MoH-annual report
Strategy 10 Facilitate Implementation of appropriate mechanisms for early identification of disability and other special needs, with a system of referrals												
Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification	
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn			
10.1 Implementation of the guidelines on care pathways for early detection of children with disabilities in all Districts	Training of primary healthcare workers on early identification of disabilities and other special needs	FHB	PDHS,RDHS, MOH, College of paediatricians, College of child & adolescent psychiatrists		X	X				10 Mn	Number of primary healthcare workers trained	FHB-annual report
	Continue developmental screening of all children by field health staff (PHM) at prescribed intervals.	FHB	PDHS, RDHS, MOH	X	X	X	X	X		0 Mn	Number of children referred	MCH returns
	Train developmental screening of children by General Practitioners and, family physicians at routine health check ups	FHB	PDHS, RDHS, MOH, College of paediatricians, College of GPs			X	X			3 Mn	Number of doctors trained	FHB-annual report
	Establishment of secondary care level Child Development Centres (CDCs) with community paediatricians for referral in all districts	MoH-DDG-PHS II	FHB, PDHS, RDHS, MOH		X	X	X			50 Mn	Number of functioning CDCs	MoH-annual report

10.2 Development of the skills of preschool teachers/ ECCD officers for early identification and referral of disability and other special needs	Training of preschool teachers and ECCD officers on early identification of disabilities and other special needs	FHB	PDHS, RDHS, NSECD, DSS, DS office		X	X			5 Mn	Number of preschool teachers/ ECCD officers trained	FHB-annual report
10.3 Development of skills of parents/ care givers on early identification of children with disabilities	Promote use of CHDR for early identification of disability by parents	PDHS	FHB, PDHS, RDHS, MOH	X	X	X	X	X	0 Mn	Number of disabilities identified and referred by parents	MCH returns
	Training of facilitators to train care givers on family level care of children with developmental problems	FHB	FHB, NSECD		X	X			5 Mn	Number of facilitators trained	FHB-Annual report
	Training of care givers to provide home care for children with disabilities	PDHS	PDHS, RDHS, MOH		X	X	X	X	8.1 Mn	Number of care givers trained	MCH returns



STRATEGIC ACTION AREA 02:

Early childhood Education

OVERALL OBJECTIVE:

Assure all children in early childhood, especially the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, have equitable access to quality early childhood education.

Baseline Analysis

Research evidence confirms that children enrolled in at least one year of preschool education are more likely to develop the critical skills they need to succeed in school, less likely to repeat grades or drop out of school and contribute to peaceful and prosperous societies and economies when they reach adulthood²⁰. Hence, the government has expressed its intention of making one year of preschool education compulsory for Sri Lankan children with new educational reforms.

As of the current governance structure, the NSECD, as a statutory agency of the Ministry for children's affairs, is responsible for overall ECCD policy and programme formulation, coordination and evaluation, in Sri Lanka. Hence, National Policy on ECCD developed by the same Ministry and updated in the year 2018²¹, contains 18 strategic actions to assure all children in early childhood, especially the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, have equitable access to quality early childhood education. This multi-sectoral action plan is based on the said strategies, of which the responsibility of execution lies within various ministries.

20 Lancet series (Oct. 2016). Advancing Early Childhood Development: from Science to Scale <https://www.thelancet.com/series/ECD2016>

21 Ministry of Women and Child Affairs and Dry zone development (2018) National Policy on Early Childhood Care and Development – 2018

Under the 13th Amendment of 1987 to the Constitution of Sri Lanka, the authority for registration, supervision and management of preschools has been devolved to the Provincial governments. To exercise this mandate, Provincial Councils have set up provincial authorities, bureaus, or units for ECD or preschools (“Provincial Regulatory Authorities”) guided by provincial statutes. As described in the policy background, the Line Ministries have retained the responsibility of inspecting and monitoring the preschools with a view to making sure whether the schools function up to the proper standards.

In Sri Lanka, preschools operate as commercial businesses, or run as not-for-profit organisations. According to the National Census of ECE centres conducted in the year 2016 in Sri Lanka¹³, there were 19,668 preschools across the country. Of these, 71% were managed by private organisations or individuals, 19.8% were managed by public institutions and local government authorities, such as municipal and urban councils, 6.8% by religious organisations and 3% by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). In total, 88.2% of these preschools were charging fees.

A total of 578,160 children from ages two to five years were enrolled in preschools with an enrolment rate of 55.6% for three to five-year-old as per 2016 census²³. Enrolment rates

by sector illustrate that there is a noticeable disparity among urban (67.6%), rural (47.5%) and estate (43.9%) sectors. However, as per the current NSECD data (2021), number of functioning preschools has reduced to 19,216 and the number of preschool children reduced to 474,406²².

The government sets standards and regulates the preschool sector. Considering the teacher population, 2016 census found out that 59.9% of 28, 449 teachers who work in preschools have passed the GCE (Advanced Level) Examination²³.

Even though 83% of teachers have completed a professional training of one year or more, 9.5% of current teachers did not have any such qualification. There are only 63 diploma awarding institutions registered under NSECD. There is no proper fee regulation structure or a teacher remuneration structure for preschools. Currently, 15,600 teachers are receiving the teacher allowance from government²⁴.

The National standards for ECD centres have been published by NSECD in 2019²⁵ and a preschool teacher guide is also published by the NSECD and National Institute of Education in the year 2022²⁶. Development assessment standards are also available for the 4-year-olds and 5-year-olds^{27,28,29}.

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- 22 Statistical Handbook , October 2021, State Ministry of Women and Child Development, Preschools & Primary Education, School infrastructure & Education Services
 - 23 Ministry of Women and Child Affairs (2016). National Census on Early Childhood Development Centres in Sri Lanka, 2016
 - 24 Ministry of Women and Child Affairs (2016). National Census on Early Childhood Development Centres in Sri Lanka, 2016
 - 25 National Secretariat for Early Childhood Development (2019). National standards for Early Childhood Development centres
 - 26 National Secretariat for Early Childhood Development & National Institute of Education (2022). Preschool teachers guide. First edition.
 - 27 National Secretariat for Early Childhood Development (2015-2022). Early Childhood Assessment-Guidance for assessors-Age-4 years.
 - 28 National Secretariat for Early Childhood Development (2015-2022). Early Childhood Assessment-Guidance for assessors-Age-5 years.
 - 29 National Secretariat for Early Childhood Development (2015-2022). Child Assessment-Additional material-Age-4-5 years.



It is also noteworthy, that SL education system is currently in a transition stage, with new educational reforms are in the horizon. The main challenges identified in the ECE sector needing reforms included lack of coordination among agencies, lack of consistency in quality appraisal, lack of legal power and inequality in access etc. Hence, the changes are expected in the national and provincial governance as well as curriculum structure in the future. However, the overall policy directions to optimize development through ECE will remain the same, hence, the validity of actions. After the introduction of reforms, it is suggested that this action area is revisited to ensure coherence.

SECTOR BUDGET TOTAL 2026-2030 | Rs Mn 13,071.2

Strategy 01 Facilitate expanding spaces and procedures with essential facilities in un-served and under-served areas, to improve equitable access to quality, centre-based early childhood education (ECE)

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
1.1 Situational analysis of preschools in terms of geographical distribution, essential facilities and support needed for vulnerable children	Conduct a comprehensive 'National Preschool census' including an assessment of the geographical distribution, existing facilities, support services for vulnerable children (e.g.: preschool meal, disability access), staff and student characteristics	MoE	NEC, NSECD, Provincial ECE authorities, DCS, MWSEID-PHDT, MoPI, INGOs		X				20 Mn	Number of preschools/ per 4–5-year Population in each province, Enrolment ratios	MoE website
1.2 Uplift the minimum standards of preschools in unserved and underserved areas of all provinces	Conduct needs assessment through regular dialogue with provincial authorities	MoE	NSECD, Provincial ECE authorities MWSEID-PHDT, MoPI	X	X	X	X	X	4 Mn	% of preschools meeting minimum standards for centre quality	Provincial ECE database
	Advocacy to developmental partners/ CSOs/ private sector to support uplifting the essential facilities in preschools based on the needs assessment and develop new CDCs	MoE	NSECD, Provincial ECE authorities, MWSEID-PHDT, MoPI		X	X	X	X	2,250.5 Mn	Number of preschools and CDCs supported by external agencies	Provincial ECE database
	Provide support to minimum of 10 needy preschools per district per year to uplift the facilities as model preschools	MoE, Provincial ECE authorities	NSECD			X	X	X	37.5 Mn	Number of preschools upgraded/ year	Provincial ECE database

1.3 Improve affordability of ECE to ensure equitable access	Advocate local government bodies to mobilize existing underutilized buildings including that of schools to expand non-fee levying preschools in unserved areas	MoE	NSECD, Provincial ECE authorities, Ministry of local governments- MCs/UCs/ Pradeshiya sabha, CSOs		X	X			200 Mn	Number of underutilized buildings utilized to expand ECE centres	PCC minutes
	Introduce regulations to standardise fee structure of pre schools	MoE	MoF, Finance Commission, Ministry of local government, NEC, Provincial Councils, NSECD		X				0.5 Mn	Availability of regulations	NCC minutes/ provincial statute
1.4 Enhance the teacher benefits to attract and maintain the human resource in underserved areas	Advocate to revise the preschool teacher payments to match the economic standards	MoE, NSECD	MoF, Finance Commission, Ministry of local government, NEC, Provincial Councils, NSECD		X				0 Mn	Teacher/ student ratio in preschools in each education division	Preschool census
	Establish minimum payment standards for preschool teachers in all provinces	MoE, NSECD	Finance Commission, Ministry of local government, MoF, Provincial Councils	X	X	X	X	X	10,000 Mn	Availability of minimum payment standards for preschool teachers	Budget report/ provincial statute

Strategy 02 Promote expansion of ECE services, focused on essential support needed for most vulnerable and disadvantaged children, through infrastructure development and positive discrimination measures

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
2.1 Identify the vulnerable, and disadvantaged groups requiring essential support for ECE	Conduct a vulnerable profiling of preschool aged children at divisional level	NSECD	MoH, MWCA, DS, DPCCS, CSOs MWSEID-PHDT, MoPI, NCPA, DSS		X				30 Mn	Availability of vulnerable profile at divisional level	Divisional CC meeting minutes
2.2 Expand preschool spaces with essential facilities for children with special needs	Introduce national norms on essential facilities required for or children with special needs at regular preschools	MoE	NSECD, MoH, Ministry of local government, Private sector, INGOs Provincial ECE authorities			X	X	X	1.7 Mn	Availability of list of national norms	-
	Establish model preschools with inclusive practice	MoE	NSECD, MoH, Ministry of local government, Private sector, INGOs Provincial ECE authorities		X	X	X		125 Mn	Number of divisions with at least one inclusive preschool	Provincial ECE data base
	Provision of ECE services to vulnerable and disadvantaged children who cannot be enrolled in mainstream ECE centres (children in probation care, children in prison with mothers, children hospitalized for long term illness etc)	Provincial ECE authority	PDPCCS/DSS/ MoH, PDHS, MoE,		X	X	X	X	81 Mn	Number of ECE service expansions per province	DPCCS data

2.3 Capacity building of preschool teachers to handle vulnerable and disadvantaged children	Conduct teacher training on handling disadvantaged children in non-discriminatory manner	MoE, NSECD	FHB, College of Paediatricians, College of Child psychiatrists, Provincial ECE authorities, Universities, NCPA, DPCCS		X	X	X		3 Mn	Number of teacher training programmes conducted	NIE annual report
Strategy 03 Promote awareness of policy makers, officials, and the public of the importance of ECE for optimal development of the child and the impact of ECE on the development of human capital											
Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
3.1 Improve awareness of policy makers and officials on the importance of ECE	Conduct advocacy campaigns on the importance of ECE to policy makers and other officials	MoE	NSECD, FHB, Researchers, Academia, MWSEID-PHDT, MoPI	X	X	X			1.5 Mn	Number of advocacy meetings/ campaigns conducted	NCC minutes
	Organize multi-sectoral workshops/ conference to introduce the novel research evidence on ECE and its impact on development	MoE	NSECD, FHB, Researchers, Academia, INGOs		X				3 Mn	Number of participants updated	MoE-annual report
3.2 Improve public awareness on the importance of centre based ECE	Improve awareness of public on the importance of ECE through mass and social media campaigns	MoE, NSECD	NSECD, FHB, HPB, DSS, Provincial ECE authorities	X	X			X	4.5 Mn	Number of media campaigns conducted	MoE-annual report
	Conduct awareness campaigns for antenatal mothers and mothers with young children at clinic centres, creche centres	MoH	Provincial ECE authorities, PDHS, RDHS, MOH, MWSEID-PHDT	X	X	X	X	X	22.5 Mn	Number of awareness campaigns conducted at clinic centres	MCH returns

Strategy 04 Promote and facilitate collaboration among public, NGOs and private sector organizations to expand centre-based ECE

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
4.1 Facilitate collaboration among public, NGOs and private sector on expansion of centre based ECEs	Establish a central level stakeholder network for collaboration between multiple agencies interested in ECE	MoE, NSECD	MoH, INGOs, CBOs, Private sector, CSOs, MWSEID-PHDT		X				0.5 Mn	Availability of an ECE forum	NCC minutes
	Establish a central mechanism to direct multisector support to the needy areas through NCC	MoE, NSECD	Provincial ECE authorities, MoF		X	X	X	X	0 Mn	Availability of a funding priority plan	NCC minutes
	Organize provincial level ECE workshops to facilitate collaboration between multiple partners	Provincial ECE authorities	MoE, NSECD, NIE, INGOs, CBOs, Private sector, CSOs, MWSEID-PHDT			X	X		0.9 Mn	Number of workshops conducted	PCC minutes

Strategy 05 Strengthen relevant national and provincial authorities to ensure the quality of centre based ECE, to foster the physical, social, emotional and cognitive development of children, and their smooth transition to the primary school through implementing developmentally-appropriate (age appropriate as well as individually appropriate) practices

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
5.1 Introduce legislative reforms to ensure the quality of centre based ECE	Introduce laws to compulsory registration, monitoring of standards and terminate services upon non-compliance through provincial statutes to ensure quality of preschools	Provincial Councils	Ministry of Local Government, MoE, Provincial ECE authorities, Legal draftsman Dep., MoJ,		X				0.75 Mn	% of preschools registered with Provincial ECE authority	Pre-school census
5.2 Increase human resource capacity at national and provincial level for monitoring of quality standards at preschools	Increase the human resource capacity at national and provincial level for monitoring and reviews of functioning of preschools	MoE, Provincial Chief Secretary, Provincial ECE authorities	NSECD, MoF		X	X			25 Mn	Number of supervisory staff at national and provincial level	IMS
	Promote collaborative monitoring at provincial level by pooling of human resource with ECE authority, ECCD officers and health officials	Provincial ECE authorities	MoE, MoH, PDHS, PDPCCS		X	X			5 Mn	% of preschools reviewed / year	Preschool census
5.3 Introduce provincial ECE reviews	Introduce provincial level ECE reviews annually	MoE	NEC, MWCA-NSECD, MoH,		X	X			1.35 Mn	Number of reviews conducted per year	NCC minutes

Strategy 06 Facilitate development of a National Core Curriculum/ National Curriculum guide for ECE												
Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification	
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn			
6.1 Revisit the current ECE Core-curriculum to appraise the coherence with new reforms	Establish a committee to review the current teacher guide and make recommendations for update	MoE	NIE, NEC, NSECD, MoH, Academia, Development paediatricians			X			0.05 Mn	Availability of updated guide	-	
6.2 Introduction of national preschool curriculum guide to all provinces	Conduct preschool teacher training programmes in all provinces to introduce national preschool teacher curriculum guide	NIE/ Provincial ECE authorities	MoE, NSECD, NEC	X	X				0.72 Mn	Number of training programmes conducted	PCC minutes	
	Facilitate provincial ECE authorities to prepare activity guides in line with National teacher guide to suit the local context	MoE /Provincial ECE authorities	MoE, NSECD, INGOs		X	X			2.7 Mn	Availability of activity guides	-	
6.3 Review existing preschool teacher guides every three years	Establish a committee to review the teacher guides every three years and make recommendations for update	MoE	NIE, NEC, NSECD, MoH, Academia, Development paediatricians			X			0.05 Mn	Review report	-	
6.4 Evaluate the coherence of other supplementary ECE curricular with national guidelines	Establish a mechanism to review other supplementary curricular taught at preschools: E.g.: AMI	NIE	MoE, NEC, NSECD			X			0.075 Mn	Report on evaluation	-	

Strategy 07 Facilitate all national and provincial authorities to promote ECE centres to comply with standards related to structural and process features of centre-based ECE as well as early childhood development standards

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
7.1 Introduce the new National standards for Early Childhood Development Centres to all national and provincial authorities	Introduce the National standards for Early Childhood Development Centres to all stake holders at National level	MoE, NSECD	NIE, NEC, MoH, MWSEID-PHDT	X	X				1 Mn	Number of stakeholders participated	NCC minutes
	Introduce the National standards for Early Childhood Development Centres to all provinces through TOT programmes	MoE, NSECD	NIE, NEC, MoE, Provincial ECE authorities, PDHS, MWSEID-PHDT	X	X				2.7 Mn	Number of trainings conducted	PCC Minutes
	Train all preschool teachers and managers on National standards for Early Childhood Development Centres	Provincial ECE authorities	INGOs MWSEID-PHDT	X	X				9 Mn	Number of trainings conducted	Provincial ECE data base
	Include National standards for Early Childhood Development Centres to the curriculum of all preschool teacher training programmes	MoE, NIE	TVC, NSECD, MoE,	X	X				4 Mn	Number of curricular updated	TVC data
7.2 Promote & Facilitate ECE centres to comply with minimal standards	Develop monitoring tools for monitoring of minimum standards in ECD centres	MoE, NSECD, Provincial ECE authorities	PDHS, RDHS, MOH, MWSEID-PHDT, MoPI		X	X	X	X	0.2 Mn	Number of preschools complying with minimal standards	Preschool census report
	Monitor minimum standards including for water and sanitation in pre schools	Provincial ECE authorities	MoE, NSECD, PDHS, RDHS, MOH, MWSEID-PHDT, MoPI		X	X	X	X	1.8 Mn	Number of preschools complying with minimal standards	Preschool census report
	Introduce a grading system for preschools for promotion of complying with standards	MoE	Provincial ECE authorities, PDHS, MWSEID-PHDT			X			0.675 Mn	Availability of a grading system	-

**Strategy
08**

Promote and facilitate capacity building and career development of personnel involved in ECE (Early Childhood Development Officers/Assistants, other relevant officers and preschool teachers).

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
8.1 Promote career development of preschool teachers	Define minimum qualifications for ECE centre teachers (A/L, Diploma, NVQ level)	MoE	TVEC, NIE, NSECD		X	X	X	X	0 Mn	Availability of defined minimal qualifications	NCC minutes
	Regular in-service capacity building of preschool teachers with development of CPD point scheme	Provincial ECE authorities	NIE, MoE, NSECD,		X	X	X	X	2.75 Mn	Number of CPD programmes conducted in each province	Provincial ECE data base
	Encourage uptake of graduate and postgraduate study schemes on ECCD for preschool teachers	MoE	NSECD, INGOs, Universities	X	X	X	X		14 Mn	Number of teachers with graduate/ PG qualifications I ECCD	Provincial ECE data base
8.2 Ensuring the ECCD officers / Assistant Child Development officers get regular training opportunities in ECE/ECCD	Regular training need assessment and refresher training programs on ECE	Provincial ECE authorities	MoE, NSECD, PHDT		X	X	X	X	29.8 Mn	Number of refresher training programs conducted	Needs assessment Report
	Encourage uptake of graduate and postgraduate study schemes on ECCD for ECCD officers. And Diplomas by CDOs	NSECD	Universities, INGOs, PHDT	X	X	X	X		40 Mn	Number of ECCD officers with graduate/ PG qualifications in ECCD	NSECD database

Strategy 09 Promote and facilitate capacity building of personnel involved in centre-based ECE to adopt inclusive practices in centres.

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
9.1 Prepare guidelines on handling children with special and inclusive educational needs	Prepare supplementary guidelines on identification, treatment, assessing development of children with special and inclusive education needs	MoE-NIE	NSECD, MoH-FHB, DSS, AYATI centre			X			0.275 Mn	Availability of guidelines	MoE-annual report
9.2 Conduct ToT programs on inclusive practices in the ECE	TOT programmes for provincial ECE authorities on inclusive practice	MoE-NIE	NSECD, MoH-FHB, DSS, AYATI centre	X	X				0.6 Mn	Number of ToT programs conducted on inclusive practices	Provincial ECE data base
	Training of preschool teachers on inclusive educational practice	Provincial ECE authorities	NSECD, MoH-FHB, PDHS, DSS,		X	X			1.8 Mn	Number of training programmes continued	Provincial ECE data base

Strategy 10 Promote and facilitate systematic use of valid assessment techniques to gauge children's learning, development, and readiness for schooling.

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
10.1 Promote the use of Early Childhood Assessment standards to assess children at 4 years and 5 years	Promotion of the use of Early Childhood Assessment-guidance for assessors for developmental assessment by preschool teachers	NIE	MoE, NSECD, Provincial ECE authorities		X				0.1 Mn	Awareness on valid tools for developmental assessment	Preschool census
	Conduct Teacher training programs on child assessment tools and additional assessment techniques	NIE	MoE, NSECD, Provincial ECE authorities, INGOs		X	X	X		2.1 Mn	Number of teachers trained	NCC minutes
10.2 Develop and validate school readiness assessment tools	Develop and validate school readiness assessment tools for Sri Lanka	NIE	MoE, NSECD, Academia, Universities, INGOs		X				1.1 Mn	Availability of a validated school readiness assessment tools	Printed tools

Strategy 11 Promote mechanisms to safeguard the quality of professional development programmes offered to preschool teachers and other care givers.

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
11.1 Develop affordable high quality training facilities for pre school teachers	Increase the availability of training facilities for pre school teachers through government and private sector institutions	NIE, TVEC	MoE, NIE, Ministry of Employment-VTA, Universities, INGOs		X	X	X		60 Mn	Number of preschool teacher training schools in each province	Provincial ECE data base
	Establish incentive systems for training uptake	Provincial ECE authority	MoE, MoF, INGOs			X	X		30 Mn	Availability of an incentive scheme	PCC minutes
	Introduce a licensing system for trained teachers with regular updating	MoE, NEC, NSECD	NIE, Dpt. Examination, TVEC				X		1.125 Mn	Availability of licensing scheme	-
11.2 Ensure quality control/ accreditation of training programs	Establish a mechanism for the quality control/ accreditation of training programs	MoE, NEC, NSECD	NIE, TVEC, MoE		X	X	X		1 Mn	Availability of an accreditation mechanism of training programs	TVEC webpage

Strategy 12 Facilitate measures for early detection of children at risk of developmental delays at preschool to ensure early interventions.

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
12.1 Review the need of updating the existing tools used for developmental assessment of children by teachers	Revisit existing tools used on developmental assessment by teachers at 4 years and 5 years and update if necessary	MoE	NSECD, NIE FHB, Academia		X				0.5 Mn	Availability of updated tools on developmental assessment	Published document
12.2 Build the capacity of teachers to identify development delays and other special needs of children	Conduct capacity building programmes for the preschool teachers	Provincial ECE authorities	MoE, FHB, NSECD, NIE, Development specialists		X	X			1.8 Mn	Number of teachers trained	Annual Report-MWCA
12.2 Ensure early interventions through proper referral	Establish referral pathways in collaboration with health sector at district level (Child development centres at district hospitals)	FHB	NSECD, MoE, Provincial ECE authorities, PDHS, RDHS, MOH, DSS		X				1.8 Mn	Referral pathways documented and communicated	Published document

Strategy 13 Promote and facilitate quality assurance mechanisms for the quality of educational materials and toys, to ensure that they are developmentally appropriate, and nurture children's learning and development.

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
13.1 Ensure current ECD centre guideline and standards are aligned with global standards for learning materials, equipment, and furniture	Re-visit the guideline and standards aligned to global standards for learning materials, equipment, and furniture	MoE	NSECD, NIE, NEC		X	X			0.7 Mn	Availability of guideline and standards aligned to ELDS	Published document
13.2 Monitor the use of developmentally appropriate learning material at preschools	Include quality standards of learning materials to the monitoring tools used in assessing preschool standards	MoE	NSECD, NIE, NEC		X	X			2.5 Mn	% of preschools using proper learning materials	Preschool survey
13.3 Advocate to establish a central mechanism to market level regulation and approval of educational materials	Advocate to establish a central mechanism to market level regulation and approval of educational materials and toys, to ensure that they are developmentally appropriate	Consumer Affairs Authority	MoE, NSECD, NIE, NEC			X			2 Mn	Availability of regulations	Gazette notification

Strategy 14 Promote and facilitate interactions in each child's mother tongue in centre-based learning environments.

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
14.1 Develop a language policy on preschool education in line with National policies	Mapping and Monitoring of preschools based on language standards	MoE	NIE, NSECD, Provincial ECE authorities, NEC		X				0.125 Mn	Availability of a mapping of preschools based on language	Published document
	Develop guidelines on language use in pre schools	MoE	NIE, NSECD, Provincial ECE authorities, NEC		X				0.125 Mn	Availability of guidelines on language use in pre schools	Published document
14.2 Ensure availability of quality learning materials in child's mother tongue	Develop age-appropriate learning materials in Sinhala and Tamil languages	MoE	NIE, NSECD, Provincial ECE authorities, NEC		X	X			2.4 Mn	Availability of learning material in mother tongue	PECE Database-
14.3 Capacity building of preschool teachers on appropriate use of mother tongue	Capacity building of preschool teachers on appropriate use of mother tongue	MoE	NIE, NSECD, Provincial ECE authorities, NEC		X	X			0.95 Mn	Number of capacity building programmes conducted	PECE Database

Strategy 15 Promoting Community involvement in centre-based ECE.

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
15.1 Encourage community governance on pre schools	Revisit existing national guidelines for the preschool management committee	MoE	NSECD, Provincial ECE authorities,		X	X			0.375 Mn	Revised guidelines for the preschool management committee	Published document
	Strengthen the existing preschool management committees	Provincial ECE authorities,	MoE, CBOs, NSECD,		X	X			0.9 Mn	Number of active preschool management committees	PECE Database
15.2 Encourage community support systems in the running of preschools	Linking mother support groups with preschools	Provincial ECE authorities	CBOs, MOHs		X	X	X		0 Mn	Number of preschools linked with a MSG in an MOH area	PECE data/ PHM data
	Encourage all preschools to participate in provincial ECE forum to identify potential support systems	Provincial ECE authorities	CBOs, INGO, NGO, Pvt Sector, well wishers			X	X	X	1.35 Mn	Number of preschools linked to a support system	Preschool census

Strategy 16 Promote and facilitate initiatives in capacity building of parents and families to improve home-based learning environments.

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
16.1 Capacity Building of relevant officers to empower parents and families on improving home-based learning environments	Capacity building of relevant officers (ECCD officers, PHMs, preschool teachers) on 'promoting inclusive child development through parental empowerment	NSECD	MoH, Provincial ECE, MWSEID-PHDT,		X				1.8 Mn	Number of officers (ECCD officers, PHMs) trained	NSECD database
	TOT for PHMs to introduce 'Health promotion approach' to build a conducive environment for home-based learning	HPB	MoE, NSECD, FHB, Researchers, Academia		X	X	X		10 Mn	Number of facilitators trained	HPB database
16.2 Improving skills, understanding and enthusiasm among families and community members on home based ECE through trained officers	Encourage male participation in Home based ECE activities	NSECD	Provincial ECE units, DPBCCS, MOH-PHMs/ PHIs		X				0.45 Mn	Number of programmes conducted to encourage male participation	NSECD data
	Conduct awareness campaigns on optimizing home environment through discourage of alcohol and other substance use	PDHS	NSECD-ECCD officers, NATA, ADIC, MOH-PHMs/ PHIs, MWSEID-PHDT		X				0.45 Mn	Number of awareness campaigns conducted	PDHS data systems
	Promote creation of active "community nurturing care groups" through new/existing community groups, for building supportive environments to improve home based learning.	NSECD	ECCD officers, MOH-PHMs/ PHIs, CBOs		X	X	X	X	0 Mn	Number of active "community nurturing care groups" created per year	NSECD data

Strategy 17 Promote and Facilitate programs and services targeting families of children at risk due to multiple reasons (socio-economic conditions, illiteracy, migration, separation, disability etc.) to ensure favourable home environment

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
17.1 Collaborative mapping of children identified as at risk due to multiple reasons	Identify the children with high-risk score for home risk factors through screening via CHDR by PHMs	MOH	-		X				0 Mn	Number of at-risk children per MOH area	MCH return
	Identify the children at risk via other field officers including ECCD officers, probation officers, social service officers etc	PDPCCS	DSS, NSECD, NCPA, Police		X				0 Mn	Number of at-risk children per DS area	DS office data
17.2. Awareness programs to create favourable home environment for children at risk aged 0-5 years	Awareness programs to ensure arrangements made for favourable home environments for children of migrated parents before authorizing migration	NSECD	Foreign employment bureau, DSS, MOH, PDPCCS, INGO	X	X				1.8 Mn	Number of families made aware of the necessity of pre-arrangements	Annual report
	Conduct awareness sessions at child welfare clinics on the importance of ensuring favourable home environment for children	MOH	NSECD, PDPCCS, NCPA	X	X	X			5.25 Mn	Number of awareness sessions conducted	MCH review
17.3. Monitoring of at-risk children in their home environments and provide essential services	Establish a multi-disciplinary team at divisional level for home-based monitoring of at-risk children	PDPCCS	NCPA, NSECD, PDHS, Police	X	X				6.5 Mn	Availability of a multidisciplinary team	MCH review

Strategy 18 Facilitate relevant national and provincial authorities, to ensure that children in early childhood continue their education in emergency and disaster situations.

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
18.1 Incorporate plans to continue ECE when developing emergency preparedness plans	All provincial ECE authorities to develop disaster deployment plans including provision of essential resources to continue ECE	Provincial ECE authorities	MoD-DMC, MoE, MWCA. DPCCS	X	X				0.45 Mn	Availability of Disaster preparedness plans for all Preschools	PCC minutes
	Creating awareness among teachers and parents on the importance of continuation of ECE during emergency and disaster situations	Provincial ECE authorities	MoD-DMC, DPCCS		X				0.9 Mn	Number of teachers trained	PCC minutes
18.2 Establishment of an emergency ECE fund to be utilized in disaster situations at provincial level	Advocate provincial governance to establish an emergency ECE fund	Provincial ECE authorities	Provincial Council, MoE		X	X			0.4 Mn	Availability of an emergency fund	PCC minutes



STRATEGIC ACTION AREA 03:

Care and Protection

OVERALL OBJECTIVE:

Assure all children in early childhood especially those who need care and protection from violence, abuse and neglect, equitable access to quality care and protection.

Baseline Analysis

Sri Lankan government showed its commitment to the care and protection of children by signing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN-CRC) in the year 1990, and ratifying it on July 12, 1991³⁰. As a supplement to the UN-CRC, the Government of Sri Lanka drafted the 'Children's Charter' in 1992, 'Alternative Protocol on Joining Children in Armed Conflict' was signed and approved in year 2000 and 'Alternative Protocol on Child Trafficking, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography' was signed and approved in 2002³¹. The Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MWCA) is the pioneer in implementing all the above conventions. The Department of Probation and Childcare Service (DPCCS) under the MWCA is the agency responsible for implementing the rights with its provincial counterparts and Child Rights Promotion Officers (CRPO) at the ground level.

The National Child Protection Authority (NCPA), the National monitoring committee on CRC and NSECD are the other divisions in the MWCA, responsible for enforcing child rights and protection. As per the powers vested with National Child Protection Authority act No. 50 of 1998, NCPA has formulated a 'National Policy on Child Protection'³².

30 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, General Assembly resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989

31 Department of Probation and Child Care Services, Ministry of Women, Child Affairs and Social Empowerment. <http://www.probation.gov.lk/>

32 National Child Protection Authority (2019). National Policy on Child Protection

As agreed by all the stakeholders, the actions implemented for child protection through NMSAP on ECCD were aligned to intensify the contents of this policy framework, not to violate them. Further two other policies developed by the same Ministry, i.e. National Alternative Care Policy³³ and National Policy for Child Day Care Centres³⁴ compliment the planning of care and protection interventions and were considered in development of this action plan.

Sri Lanka has an extreme challenge in ensuring the care and protection of children irrespective of their residential status. The NCPA maintain a database of child abuse and other related complaints in Sri Lanka. As of 31-10-2023, there has been 7973 complains of child maltreatment received by all districts for the current year³⁵. From 2015 to 2020, every year, the highest number of incidents was reported in the Colombo district. A report by United Nations released in 2018 has also stated concerns related to child sex trafficking and forced labour related to Sri Lankan context³⁶.

Although many Sri Lankans value the Importance of raising children in their homes in familiar surroundings, there are multiple reasons that lead to children being removed from their homes. Census of Children in Childcare Institutions conducted in year 2019 by DCS and DPCCS revealed that 31% of children in residential care have both parents, 50% have one parent and only 18% are orphans. Most have resorted to enrolling children in residential care settings due to economic hardships, inability

to provide education, disabilities, domestic violence, physical or mental illness, second marriages, and labour migration³⁷.

According to data, there are 379 Childcare Institutions in Sri Lanka, out of which 331 (87.3%) are Voluntary Children's Homes. A majority of Childcare Institutions are funded by sources other than the government. 229 Childcare Institutions reported their major source of funding as non-government local funds. There was a total of 10,632 children in these institutions of which, 5.5% were children under 5 years. The care and protection plans had to give special emphasis to these vulnerable children³⁸.

Another concern that SL is facing now, is the availability and quality of Child Day Care Services while making such services more affordable and accessible. According to a 2017 World Bank Report, having a child under the age of five in the household makes women 7.4% less likely to join the labour force than women without young children³⁹. The Government of Sri Lanka introduced the National Guidelines for Child Day Care Centres in 2017, to provide a framework for the regulation of the 1,200 such Day Care Centres in operation in the country providing services for up to 24,000 children.

This NMSAP-ECCD 2026-2030 attempted to address the concerns of childcare and protection within families and communities by encouraging the preventive networking, while ensuring the availability, accessibility and quality of alternative care services.

33 Department of Probation and Child Care Services (n.d.). National alternative care policy

34 Ministry of Women and Child Affairs & Dry Zone Development (2019). National Day care centre policy-Final Draft.

35 National Child Protection Authority (2023). Statistics. <https://childprotection.gov.lk/images/lem-statistics/Statistical-data-as-at-20231031.pdf>

36 United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (2018) Promoting the Rule of Law and Countering Drugs and Crime in South Asia. https://www.unodc.org/documents/southasia/Promoting_the_Rule_of_Law_Final_Rev.pdf

37 Department of Census and Statistics & Department of Probation and Child Care services (2019) Census of Children in Childcare Institutions

38 Department of Census and Statistics & Department of Probation and Child Care services (2019) Census of Children in Childcare Institutions

39 World Bank Group (2017). Getting to Work: Unlocking Women's Potential in Sri Lanka's Labor Force. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstreams/ddd89d0f-ff97-50b4-87df-e4efebecad5a/download>

SECTOR BUDGET TOTAL 2026-2030 | Rs Mn 1,493.5

Strategy 01 Promote and facilitate nationally and provincially available care and protection services and interventions specific for children in early childhood, to ensure equitable access.

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
1.1 Streamline the care and protection services at National and provincial level to ensure equitable access.	Conduct regular steering/ coordinating committee meetings of care and protection service providers at national and provincial level	MWCA	DPCCS, NCPA, NSECD Provincial ECE authorities, Police, PDHS	X	X	X	X	X	6 Mn	Availability of well-coordinated service structure	NSC and PCC minutes
	Establish and activate Village Child Development Committees (VCDC) in all GN divisions	DPCCS	PDPCCS, NCPA, PDHS, DS, MOH	X	X	X	X	X	8.1 Mn	% of GN divisions with active VDCDs	DPCCS data
	Ensure registration of all day care centres at PDPCCS and Divisional secretariat (business registration)	PDPCCS	NCPA, DS	X	X				6 Mn	% of day care centres registered	DPCCS Database
	Ensure registration of all child development centres (CDCs) at PDPCCS	PDPCCS	NCPA, DS, MWSEID-PHDT	X	X				5 Mn	% of CDCs registered	DPCCS Database
1.2 Increase visibility of existing care and protection services	Develop a web-based data base of registered care and protection services	DPCCS	NCPA, NSECD, INGOs, Private sector		X	X			7.5 Mn	Availability of a database	DPCCS website
	Conduct media publicity programmes/ advertisements on child rights and available care and protection services especially aiming early childhood	NCPA	NSECD, Ministry of Mass media, INGOs, Private sector		X				4 Mn	Number of media programmes conducted	Media

Strategy 02 Promote and facilitate referral pathways specific to care and protection services and interventions tailored to children in early childhood and their families.

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
2.1 Promote awareness on referral pathways among general public	Conduct awareness programmes on referral pathways for care and protection services among public for direct referrals	NCPA	NSECD, DPCCS, MOH clinics, Mass media, MoPI, Dep. of Police		X	X			4.6 Mn	Number of awareness programs conducted	NCPA data base
	Promote hotline services to notify any abuse/ exploitation by children/ public or other authorities	NCPA	Mass media, MOH clinics		X				1 Mn	Number of complaints received per month	NCPA data base
	Encourage VDCs to refer cases for further management using standard forms	DPCCS	PDPCCS	X					2.7 Mn	Number of referrals made by VDC per year	PDPCCS data
2.2 Promote awareness on identification of danger signs and referral pathways among preschool teachers/ PHMs	Teacher training on early identification of signs of poor care and protection and appropriate referral	DPCCS	MoE, NSECD, NCPA, DPCCS, Provincial ECE authorities, MoH, Police Dep., MoPI	X	X	X			5.4 Mn	Number of teachers trained	DoP Annual report
	Encourage PHMs to use home risk factor screening tool in CHDR on all children in early childhood and appropriate referral	FHB	PDHS/ RDHS/ MOH	X	X				0 Mn	% of children with high risk score	MCH return

**Strategy
03**

Promote and facilitate expansion of existing care and protection services initiated by national and provincial authorities to reach children who have no voice (children in early childhood are too small to protest) and pregnant mothers.

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
3.1 Expand services for children and pregnant mothers in need through multi-sectoral involvement	Establish safe shelters and care services for pregnant mothers needing special care (teenage mothers, rape cases, destitute mothers) with multi-sectoral involvement	DSS	MOHs, DPCCS, INGOs, CSOs, Pvt Sector, Dep. of Police, MWSEI-PHDT		X	X	X		50 Mn	Number of new shelters established	NCC minutes
	Provide home based of care and protection services for children with disability to address risk of violence/ neglect or other form of abuse	PDPCCS	NSECD, MOHs, DSS, INGOs, CSOs, Pvt Sector, Disability secretariat		X	X	X	X	10.8 Mn	Number of children under care	PDPCCS data
	Conduct programmes to mitigate protection risks and provision of care for street children	DSS	DPCCS, INGOs, CSOs, Pvt Sector, Dep. of Police,		X	X			10 Mn	Number of projects conducted	-
3.2 Expansion of 'mithuru piyasa' support service to reach children who have no voice and pregnant mothers	Expand 'mithuru piyasa'; centres to cover all primary and secondary care hospitals	FHB	PDHS, Hosp. administrators, DPCCS	X	X				50 Mn	Number of cases/clients attending to mithuru piyasa	mithuru piyasa return to FHB
3.3 Facilitate NGOs and CBOs to initiate care and protection services	Address bureaucratic and legal barriers to facilitate NGOs and CBOs to initiate care and protection services	DPCCS	DPCCS, NCPA		X	X			0 Mn	Number of new service points established	PDPCCS Data

Strategy 04 Promote and facilitate alternative child care mechanisms such as family-based day care centres and neighbourhood play groups, that enable parents to leave their young children especially the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, in safe environments.

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
4.1 Establish community settings with trained carers for parents to leave their children	Promote existing village level bodies e.g.: mother support groups/ elderly associations to plan and execute alternate childcare mechanisms at village level.	DS	FHB, HPB, MoPI, MWSEI-PHDT, DSS	X	X	X	X	X	0 Mn	Number of village level bodies executing alternate childcare mechanisms	DS office data
4.2 Promote affordable home-based child day care services	Conduct a short-term training programme & registration at Divisional Secretaries of women willing to establish home-based day care services	PDPCCS	DS/ MCs/ UCs/ Pradeshiya Sabha, DSS, PDHS, NSECD NCPA, INGOs, CBOs,		X	X	X	X	11.2 Mn	Number of registered home-based day care services	DS office data
	Encouraging existing micro-credit scheme for the provisions of funds to start home-based day care services as self-employment projects	DSS	Ministry of local governments/ MCs/ UCs/ Pradeshiya Sabha, INGOs, CBOs		X	X	X	X	225 Mn	Number of home-based day care services established through microcredit	DS office data
4.3 Encourage employers to provide day care services for children of their employees	Ensure financial support for employers (through subsidies, tax deductions, etc.) who provide childcare support to their employees	MoL	Ministry of Trade, Inland Revenue Dep., Labour Dep.		X	X			0 Mn	Number of employers with registered day care services	Inland revenue dep. data
4.4 Promote schools and preschools to open day care services	Implementing an incentive scheme to encourage school authorities and teachers to obtain training to provide care at after-school care and activity centres.	MoE	NSECD, MoH, Pvt Sector			X	X	X	450 Mn	Number of schools/ preschools with day care facilities	School census

Strategy 05 Strengthen relevant national and provincial authorities, to ensure the quality of care and protection services offered to children in early childhood, including the most vulnerable and disadvantaged.

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
5.1 Implement the minimal standards of day care centres and CDCs	Increase awareness on the National guidelines on minimal standards for day care centres and child development centres among national and provincial officers monitoring care and protection services	NCPA	NSECD, DPCCS	X	X				3.6 Mn	Number of awareness programs conducted	NCPA data
	Ensure minimal standards of day care centres/ CDCs are being complied according to the guidelines at registration	DPCCS	DPCCS, NSECD, NCPA, MWSEI-PHDT		X	X			0 Mn	% of day care centres meeting standards at registration	DPCCS data
5.2 Collaborative monitoring of day care centres/ CDCs to ensure maintenance of minimum standards	Conduct regular team inspections of day care centres/ CDCs to ensure maintenance of minimum standards	NCPA	MOH staff, NSECD, DPCCS, MWSEI-PHDT	X	X	X	X	X	54 Mn	Number of inspections made per year	DPCCS data
	Develop/ update monitoring tools based on the minimum standards at provincial level Eg.: Inspection Check List on Child Day Care Centres, Annual / Quarterly Evaluation Form	DPCCS/ NCPA	NSECD, PDHS		X				1.5 Mn	Number of monitoring tools developed/	PCC Minutes
	Introduce a grading system for day care centres	NCPA	DPCCS, NSECD, MoH, MoE			X			0.2 Mn	Availability of a grading system	Published document

5.3 Establish information management system of all day care centres and CDCs	Develop an information management system for all day care centres and CDCs at provincial level	PDPCCS	DPCCS, NCPA, NSECD, INGOs, MWSEI-PHDT			X	X		15 Mn	Availability of an IMS	Web data
	Carry out a gap analysis on care and protection services based on IMS	DPCCS	NCPA, PDHS, NSECD, DSS			X			0.5 Mn	Identified list of gaps for action on care and protection services	Published document
5.4 Establish feedback mechanism by the registrants of day care and CDCs to provincial authorities	Establish a system by which the Registrant receive complaints from children, parents and any other concerned party regarding the functioning of the Centre	DPCCS	NSECD, NCPA, MOH	X					1.5 Mn	Number of complaints received per month	DPCCS data

Strategy 06 Promote and facilitate prevention networks to protect children in early childhood from violence, abuse and exploitation.

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
6.1 Mobilize communities as a preventive network for children	Reactivation of 'Janapawura' community-based child protection program collaborating with VCDCs	NCPA	NSECD, Provincial ECE units, DPCCS, DS, PDHS			X	X		9 Mn	Number of GN divisions enrolled	NCPA annual report
	Reactivation of community-based child protection program in estate sector	NCPA/ MWSEI-PHDT	DPCCS, DS, PDHS			X	X		6 Mn	Number of estates covered	NCPA annual report

6.2 Promote zero tolerance culture towards negative treatment of children in communities	Conduct programmes to promote behavioural change and changes in social and cultural norms towards corporal punishment, gender inequity/ inequality, and to foster non-violent relationships	NCPA	NSECD, DPCCS, Mass media			X	X	X	6 Mn	BCC campaigns conducted	NCPA annual report
6.3 Promote safety and resilience life skills in early childhood	Aware parents on life skills training since early stage of development at antenatal/ post-natal/ child welfare clinic sessions	MoH	FHB, PDHS, RDHS, MoE, NIE	X	X	X	X	X	0 Mn	Life skills training incorporated in early childcare package	MCH returns
	Conduct awareness sessions for parents on topics like domestic violence, road safety and home safety at preschool parent sessions	Provincial ECE authorities	NCPA, MOHs, Police Dep., Women's Bureau		X	X	X	X	10.8 Mn	Number of programmes conducted	Provincial ECE returns

Strategy 07 Promote and facilitate regulatory measures to protect children in early childhood from all forms of exploitation.

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
7.1 Conduct regular review and revision of regulatory framework on child protection in Sri Lanka	Compile International and local laws and regulations pertaining to all forms of exploitation, violence, neglect and publicize	NCPA	MWCA, Ministry of Justice, Legal draftsman, AG department		X				0.5 Mn	Compiled repository	Published database
	Conduct periodical review and revision of regulatory framework on child protection	NCPA	DPCCS, Ministry of Justice			X			1.5 Mn	Number of regulatory reforms	Published gazette

7.2 Strengthen the regulatory structure for monitoring the minimum standards of care centres	Strengthen the regulatory structure for monitoring the minimum standards of CDCs	DPCCS	NCPA, NSECD, PDHS/RDHS/ MOH, MWSEI-PHDT		X				0.8 Mn	Revised regulatory structure	NCC
	Strengthen the regulatory structure for monitoring the minimum standards of day care centres	DPCCS	NCPA, NSECD, PDHS/RDHS/ MOH, MWSEI-PHDT		X				0.8 Mn	Revised regulatory structure	NCC
	Strengthen the regulatory structure for monitoring the minimum standards of preschools	Provincial ECE authorities	NCPA, NSECD, PDHS/RDHS/ MOH, MWSEI-PHDT		X	X			0.8 Mn	Revised regulatory structure	NCC
7.3 Ensure reporting of any serious occurrence at child day care centres through relevant form	Ensure reporting of serious occurrence at child day care centres using appropriate form	NCPA	DPCCS, MWSEI-PHDT	X	X	X	X	X	3.6 Mn	Number of reported occurrences	Annual report-NCPA
7.4 Strengthen the regulatory structure of reporting by media	Educate journalists on Laws and acts related to media in reporting child abuse	NCPA	MWCA, MoJ		X				1.2 Mn	Updated manual	Published document
7.5 Strengthen the regulatory measures for care and protection in vulnerable settings	Strengthen the regulatory measure in vulnerable settings including all forms of child labour, tourism industry, children with disability and street children	NCPA	MWCA, Ministry of Justice, Legal draftsman, AG department		X	X	X		3.2 Mn	Re-visited legal framework	NCC minutes

Strategy 08 Strengthen relevant authorities to provide care and protection to children in early childhood during disaster situations

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
8.1 Incorporate childcare and protection mechanisms in district and divisional disaster preparedness plans	Child protection officers to work collaboratively with disaster preparedness teams to make sure plans are available for safe spaces, essential facilities etc in disaster planning	DPCCS	DMC, DPRD units in districts, NCPA	X	X	X	X	X	4.5 Mn	Availability of care and protection aspects of disaster preparedness plans	Disaster plans
8.2 Creating awareness on child safety in disaster	Educating children and parents about child safety in disaster situations & Minimize child abuse in emergencies	DPCCS	DMC, DPRD units in districts, NCPA	X	X	X	X	X	14.4 Mn	Number of awareness programmes conducted.	Annual report

Strategy 09 Facilitate national and provincial authorities to professionalise child care and protection services, through capacity building of personnel involved in care and protection services.

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
9.1 Professionalize care and protection services through capacity Building of personnel involved	Needs assessment on capacity building of officers in care and protection services and carers	MWCA	MWCA-NSECD, DPCCS, NCPA, Police Dep.	X					1.5 Mn	Capacity building needs identified	Published document
	Develop a resource pool of trainers	MCWA	MWCA-NSECD/ DPCCS/ NCPA, MoE, MoH, Academia, ECCD experts	X		X			4.5 Mn	Availability of a resource pool of trainers	NCC minutes

9.2 Capacity building of all officers working with children Under	Capacity building of care and protection officers on areas of CRC, child protection policy, minimum standards of day care/ CDC, child abuse, trafficking, psychological first aid etc	NCPA	MoH, DPCCS, NSECD, DPCCS, MoH, College of child psychiatrists, Legal bodies, NATA		X	X	X		10.5 Mn	Number of officers trained	NCPA annual report
	Development of training manuals for training	NCPA	DPCCS, NSECD		X	X	X		5.8 Mn	Availability of manuals	Published document
	Provide the opportunity for furthering the knowledge through local and international resource	MWCA	Universities, Development partners		X	X	X		17.5 Mn	Number of officers trained per year	MWCA data
9.3 Develop a Performance appraisal/ promotion scheme for care and protection officers	Develop a Performance appraisal/ promotion scheme for care and protection officers	MWCA	DPCCS, NCPA					X	1.5 Mn	Number of officers promoted	Annual reports DoP/ NCPA
9.4 Capacity building of care givers involved in care centres	Development of NVQ level courses, Safeguarding course-Level 1, general care through multi-sectoral collaboration	NCPA	MoH, Academia, Developmental paediatricians		X	X			10 Mn	Number of courses developed	Web data
	Implementation of courses at provincial level through the trainer pool	DPCCS	NSECD, NCPA, MoE, MoH, Police Dep., Academia, ECCD experts			X	X	X	22.5 Mn	Number of care centre workers trained	DPCCS data

Strategy 10 Facilitate all programs implemented for care and protection of children in early childhood to comply with National Guidelines for Child Protection.

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
10.1 Re-visit the care and protection programmes aimed for children in early childhood to appraise coherence with National child protection policy	Ensure the care and protection programmes in ECCD are in line with National action plan on child protection through desk review	NCPA	NSECD, DPCCS	X					0.3 Mn	Reviewed and updated programme plans	NCPA database
	Annual review of care and protection programmes at provincial level	DPCCS	PDCCS, NCPA, PDHS, Provincial ECE units		X	X	X	X	10.8 Mn	Number of reviews conducted	PCC minutes

Strategy 11 Strengthen and facilitate strategies adopted by relevant authorities to promote safety and resilience in children in early childhood.

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
11.1 Strengthen the strategies adopted to ensure safety & resilience of child victims	Expand the National child – centred – psycho-social support –service ‘SITH SAVIYA’ to all districts to cater children in need	NCPA	NCPA, DPCCS, PDHS/RDHS/ MOH	X	X	X	X	X	42 Mn	Number of districts with sith saviya service	NCPA data base
	Scale up the digital surveillance system for all child protection centres	NCPA	DPCCS, PDCCS, DS	X	X				45 Mn	Number of centres covered	Media review
11.2 Inclusion of care and protection knowledge in preschool teacher guides	Training of teachers on protection and care messages	NCPA	NIE, MoE, DPCCS, provincial ECE units		X	X	X	X	11.5 Mn	Availability of updated teacher guide	Published document

11.3 Use of special events to aware community on children's safety	Community based events during the children's month to disseminate knowledge in the community	NCPA	NSECD, DPCCS	X	X	X	X	X	57.5 Mn	Number of events conducted	NCPA database
Strategy 12 Promote and facilitate planning, developing and operating child-friendly spaces in emergencies and special circumstances.											
Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
12.1 Ensure swift and smooth arrangements for alternative care in emergencies and special circumstances	Develop guidelines to offer alternative care arrangements for children in emergencies	DPCCS	MWCA-NSECD/ NCPA	X					0.75 Mn	Availability of alternate care guidelines	Dep. of Probation-publication
	Keep child friendly transportation facilities ready to be used in emergencies	PDPCCS	DS, Local authority	X					45 Mn	Availability of a transport plan	DPCCS document
	Plan for swift operationalizing of placement committees	PDPCCS	PDHS, DS, NCPA	X					0.25 Mn	Plan of call	DPCCS document
12.2 Advocate INGOs and well-wishers to invest on alternate care facilities/ drop-in centres	Promote the investments and development of child friendly spaces to be used in emergencies	DPCCS	INGOs, Pvt Sector, Local authorities		X	X			200 Mn	Number of organizations agreed to invest	Annual report
	Training of care givers to offer prompt psychological and physical support in such spaces (Refer psychological first aid for children by NCPA)	MoH	DPCCS, NCPA, Psychologists, INGOs,			X			7 Mn	Number of care givers trained	DPCCS document



STRATEGIC ACTION AREA 04:

Parents, Family and Community

OVERALL OBJECTIVE:

Support parents, families and communities to perform their roles and responsibilities effectively, in bringing up their children and ensure their optimal involvement in ECCD services and programmes.

Baseline Analysis

In the Lancet series recommendations on evidence-based interventions for ECCD, 'Family support and strengthening package' assumes an important place⁴⁰. Three elements of family strengthening are highlighted in this package including: access to quality services (eg, antenatal care, immunisation, nutrition); skills building (eg, nurturing care and reduction of harsh discipline); and support (eg, social protection, safety networks, and family support policies). Among the three, the second and third are addressed mainly under the action area of 'Parent, Family and Community' in ECCD policy. Skills building and support through parenting programmes addressing psychosocial stimulation, positive parenting and responsivity with maltreatment prevention are the main interventions proposed through the life course in the global evidence base⁴⁰.

Further much improvement is required for effective implementation of MSGs, as studies conducted at different districts does not indicate effective implementation yet⁴¹.

⁴⁰ Lancet series (Oct. 2016). Advancing Early Childhood Development: from Science to Scale <https://www.thelancet.com/series/ECD2016>

⁴¹ Gamagedara, N., Mendis, E., Mendis, D.G.N.G., Wijesinghe, (2020) Effectiveness of 'Mother Supportive Group' intervention on childhood nutrition improvement in Monaragala District of Sri Lanka. Journal of the College of Community Physicians of Sri Lanka 26(2):94

However, it is encouraging to note that the development partners have pledged support towards building up capacity in this area.

The new challenges that need emphasis on current action plan includes the increasing number of single-parent households. In Sri Lanka, there were 209,839 single parent families in 2001, and in 2012 it was doubled to 501,460⁴². According to 2012 census in Sri Lanka, women have headed 23% of all households and majority of these women were over 40-years-old (80%) and were widowed or seperated (64.3%)⁴³.

The field-based health worker, PHM, plays a very important role in strengthening the family level responsive care giving in a wholistic package. Beyond the family level, the PHMs are vested with the responsibility of getting the community supportive networks activated, especially through the Mother Support Groups (MSGs). Each PHM is given the target to have at least one active MSG, for which guidelines are available and monitoring is done through the Ministry of Health⁴⁴.

Other field-based workers are also expected to utilize mother support groups to deliver their interventions on ECCD collaboratively.

One of the main challenges is the capacity building of these field officers especially on 'parenting', since their traditional training curricular have minimal inputs on such.

Learning through play is an essential element in ECCD. The 2016 preschool census revealed that only 72.9% of preschools had a free play area. i.e one in four preschools there was no adequate play area and the percentages of having recommended outdoor equipment is even lesser.

Hence this NMSAP-ECCD 2026-2030 attempted to address these challenges while optimizing the contribution of parents, families and communities towards ECCD.

42 Department of Census and Statistics (2012). http://www.statistics.gov.lk/Resource/en/Population/CPH_2011/CPH_2012_5Per_Rpt.pdf

43 <https://nisd.ac.lk/images/Downloads/sljsd/sljsd2022-1/SLJSD2022-1articles.pdf>

44 Health Promotion Bureau, Ministry of Health (2018). Guideline for Mother support group activities. New edition.

SECTOR BUDGET TOTAL 2026-2030 | Rs Mn 608.1

Strategy 01 Facilitate capacity building of Parents and families to adopt best practices of child rearing, that promote care and protection and psychosocial stimulation for all children, including the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in the home environment.

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
1.1 Capacity building of parents on 'parenting' through field maternity and child health care services	Counselling of pre-marital and newly married couples on 'Parenting' under Family Health Program	FHB	PDHS, RDHS, MOHs, NSECD	X	X	X	X	X	*costed under strategic area 5 section 3.2	% of newly married couples registered with PHM	RHMIS
	Include 'Parenting and childcare' in antenatal session topics	FHB,	PDHS, RDHS, MOHs, NSECD, MWSEID-PHDT	X	X	X	X	X		Number of Antenatal sessions conducted	Quarterly return MCH
	Educate parents to use CHDR as a tool for psychosocial stimulation.	FHB	PDHS, RDHS, MOHs, NSECD, MWSEID-PHDT	X	X	X	X	X		% of PHMs using CHDR to educate mothers	MRI survey
	Train of parents to empower children with self-care and safety knowledge at child welfare clinics	NCPA	DPCCS, MOH	X	X	X	X	X		Number of education sessions conducted at CWC	Monthly conference MOH
	Introduction of proper family planning to ensure optimal gap between children	FHB	PDHS, RDHS, MOHs, NGOs, Pvt sector	X	X	X	X	X		Family planning coverage in the MOH areas	RHMIS

1.2 Preschool based capacity building of parents and families on 'parenting'	Organize programs on parenting at preschools	NSECD	MoE, Provincial ECE authorities, Private sector, PDHS, RDHS, MOH, MWSEID-PHDT		X	X	X	X	25 Mn	Number of parental awareness programs organized	Divisional CC minutes
	Conduct preschool teacher awareness on child rearing and care and protection practices at in-service sessions	NSECD	Provincial ECE authorities, PDPCCS, ECCD officers, MOHs, MWSEID-PHDT		X	X	X	X	36 Mn	Number of preschool teacher awareness programs conducted	PCC minutes
1.3 CDC Based capacity building for parents and families in the estate sector on 'parenting'	Conduct child development centre based parental awareness sessions	MWSEID-PHDT	PDPCCS, MoH-EUH, NSECD, MOHs, INGOs		X	X	X	X	22.5 Mn	Number of parental awareness sessions conducted	PHDT
	Conduct home visits to educate parents and families by CDOs, EMAs and PFWOs.	MWSEID-PHDT	PDPCCS, MWCA-NSECD, MoH-EUH unit, MOH-PHMs	X	X	X	X	X	10 Mn	Number of Home visits conducted in each estate	Return to PHDT
1.4 Capacity building on childcare for families in foreign employment on 'parenting'	Empower families with migrating mothers to support the optimum development of children	Foreign Employment Bureau	NSECD, FHB, PDHS, RDHS, MOH, NCPA		X	X	X	X	18 Mn	% of migrating mothers participated at orientation programs	Foreign Employment Bureau

1.5 Community-based capacity building on 'parenting'	Use health promotion settings for community awareness; HP preschool, Happy family and MSG's, Happy village setting etc.	HPB	FHB, EUH, PDHS, RDHS, MOH, NSECD, NCPA, INGOs		X	X	X	X	10 Mn	Number of Health Promotion community settings established	MIS-HPB
	Use social media and mass media for capacity building	HPB	FHB, Ministry of Mass media, Media partners, NSECD, NCPA, INGOs, CBOs	X	X				11 Mn	Number of programs conducted through social media and mass media	Media survey/ HPB
1.6 Developing and streamlining a package of Behaviour change strategies to use in parental capacity building	Develop an early childhood health promotion strategy and social and behaviour change communication plan	HPB	Academia, MoE, NSECD, INGOs, College of child psychiatrists, Developmental paediatricians	X	X				3 Mn	Availability of National Strategy and action plan	NCC Meeting minutes
	Implement health promotion strategy to empower, aware and mobilize parents, families and communities for optimal child development.	HPB	PDHS, RDHS, MOHs, Provincial ECE authorities, NSECD, MWSEID-PHDT			X	X	X	11 Mn	Number of BCC programs implemented	HPB
	Develop a uniform parental skills development package based on the expected child outcomes	NSECD	HPB, FHB, Academia, MoE, INGOs		X				2.5 Mn	Availability of a uniform Parental skills development package	NCC minutes
1.7 Facilitate self-Monitoring the outcome of capacity building programmes	Develop self-evaluating tools to be used by the parents on their parental behaviours-behaviour assessment tools	HPB	FHB, Academia, NSECD			X			1 Mn	Availability of self-evaluating tools	Published document
	Measure parental literacy on childcare with periodical surveys	NSECD	FHB, HPB, PDHS, RDHS		X			X	9 Mn	Parental literacy level on childcare	Survey/ research
1.8 Engage private sector actively for investing and facilitate capacity building through advocacy	Encourage and engage private sector to invest and facilitate for capacity building	NSECD	PDHS, RDHS, Provincial ECE authorities	X	X	X	X	X	100 Mn	Number of capacity building programs supported by private sector on ECCD	PCC minutes

Strategy 02 Promote advocacy and social mobilization to ensure safe environments free of violence and negligence and child's right to play, recreation and cultural participation for all children in early childhood, including the most vulnerable and disadvantaged.

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
2.1 Mobilize communities to ensure safe environment for children through 'Health Promotion' settings	Expand the network of health promotion community settings; HP preschool, Happy family and MSG's, Happy village setting etc.	HPB	NSECD, INGOs, PDHS, RDHS, Provincial ECE authorities		X	X	X	X	15 Mn	Number of new Health Promoting settings established	HPB-Data base
	Advocacy for key stakeholders of pre school health promotion program to ensure sustenance	PDHS	Provincial ECE authorities, HPB, RDHS, MOHs, MWSEID-PHDT INGOs		X	X	X	X	3.6 Mn	Number of advocacy programs conducted	DCC-Meeting minutes
2.2 Create a zero-tolerance environment for parents and children through empowerment	Establish parental support and information desk to reach out for support at DS office	DS Office	NCPA, Dep. of Police, NSECD, Provincial ECE, HPB, FHB, PDHS, RDHS, MOH		X	X			4 Mn	Number of information desks established	DCC-Meeting minutes
	Empowering child groups to report any abuse/ violence through hotline number	NCPA	NSECD, PDPCCS, MoE, Provincial ECE, MOH		X				0 Mn	Number of child groups/clubs educated	NCPA-feed back to NCC
	Age-appropriate sexuality education during early childhood	NCPA	MoE, HPB, FHB, PDHS, RDHS, MOHs, NIE, Provincial ECE		X	X	X	X	25 Mn	Number of programs conducted	NCPA-feed back to NCC
2.3 Ensure availability of safe spaces for street children	Creation of child friendly spaces/ locations for street children	DSS	Provincial Councils, local authorities, PDPCCS, INGOs, Private sector			X	X		55 Mn	Number of available child friendly spaces	-

Strategy 03 Promote and facilitate programs to create awareness among parents, families, and communities on a child's right to play, recreation and cultural participation.

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
3.1 Conduct preschool based parental awareness	Promote parents' awareness programmes on child's rights coupled with sports and cultural events at preschools.	MoE	NSECD, Provincial ECE, NIE,		X	X			4 Mn	Number of awareness programmes conducted	Preschool survey
3.2 Conduct programmes to create community awareness on the child's rights	Conduct mass media programmes on child rights based on CRC	NCPA	NSECD, DPCCS	X	X				8 Mn	Number of programmes conducted	NCPA-annual report
	Facilitate creation of 'community gardens' with locally made physical play equipment by empowering local communities on child's rights	NSECD	INGOs, Private sector, MC and UC, Pradeshiya Sabha, CBOs, Community groups		X	X			18 Mn	Number of community gardens established	NSECD data
	Develop IEC materials in local languages to educate parents and families on child's rights	NCPA	NSECD, DPCCS	X					2 Mn	Number of IEC materials developed	NCPA website
	Facilitate dissemination of IEC materials on child's rights at field health clinics	MOH	NCPA, DPCCS, NSECD		X	X			1 Mn	% of mothers aware of child's rights	Survey data

Strategy 04 Promote and facilitate community-based disaster risk reduction planning through capacity building of communities and local authorities on disaster prevention and preparedness activities.

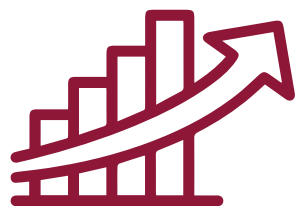
Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
4.1 Advocate to activate the Sri Lanka Children's Declaration on Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation document	Advocate all stake holders in disaster planning to abide by the 'Sri Lanka Children's Declaration on Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation'	DPCCS	MoD-DMC, MoH, NSECD	X	X				0 Mn	Number of advocacy programmes conducted	DPCCS data
4.2 Capacity Building of local authorities on disaster prevention and preparedness activities	Capacity building of local authority staff on disaster reduction planning	DMC	DPCCS, MoH-DPRD, Provincial /District/ Divisional secretaries/ Local authorities		X	X			4.5 Mn	Number of training programs conducted	District Disaster Management Coordinating Units data
	Capacity building on establishment of early warning system for multiple disasters (RIMES) at village level	DMC	MoD, DPCCS, MoH, Provincial /District/ Divisional secretaries/ Local authority		X	X			18 Mn	Number of villages with RIMES	District Disaster Management Coordinating Units data
4.2 Promote disaster preparedness plans to make available at village level	Child sensitive disaster preparedness and planning at village level through capacity building of village coordinating committee	DMC	MoD-DMC, MoH-DPRD, DPCCS, NSECD		X	X			18 Mn	Number of VCCs with Disaster preparedness plans	District Disaster Management Coordinating Units data

Strategy 05 Promote and facilitate Community-driven ECCD programs that uphold cultural values and meaningful involvement of all sections of the community.

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
5.1 Establishment of a Community Engagement platform (e.g.: People's forum) for planning and sustaining community action for ECCD at national level	Establishment of Community arm of ECCD forum including for plantation sector	NSECD	CSOs, INGOs, CBOs, religious leaders, PHDT			X	X		8 Mn	Availability of ECCD forum	NCC minutes
5.2 Strengthening Village Child Development Committee (VCDC) to facilitate community-based recreation and care	Home based ECCD program to be strengthened through Village Child Development Committee (VCDC)-'Senehe Thataka' programme	NSECD	PDPCCS, PDHS, DS,		X	X	X		27 Mn	Number of active Village Child Development Committee (VCDC)-	DS office data
5.3 Establishment of Parent committees in estate sector CDCs	Establish and empower parent committees to organize ECCD programs at community level	MWSEID-PHDT	Provincial ECE authorities, PDPCCS, MoPI		X	X			10 Mn	Number of parent committees established	PHDT data

Strategy 06 Facilitate community to establish well-equipped outdoor spaces to promote children's physical wellbeing, social interactions as well as learning through play.

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
6.1 Promote outdoor play areas in preschools and CDCs with the help of parent committees	Grade/brand preschools according to the availability and usage of play area	MoE	MoE, Provincial ECE authorities, NSECD		X	X	X	X	1.25 Mn	Revised criteria for preschool grading in all provinces	NCC Meeting minutes
	Play area to be included in minimal standards for CDC/ECE centre registration	Provincial ECE authorities/ PDPCCS	MoE, NIE, NSECD		X				0 Mn	Revised criteria for preschool registration	PCC minutes
	Encourage learning through play to be incorporated in preschool teacher trainings	NIE	Provincial ECE authorities, MoE, NSECD		X	X	X	X	1.5 Mn	Revised teacher curriculum	NIE Curriculum guide
	Establish learning corners/circles in ECE centres for activity based informal learning	Provincial ECE authorities	CSOs, Parent committees, MSGs, INGOs, Pvt sector		X	X	X	X	30 Mn	% of ECE centres with learning corners/ circles	ECE Survey
6.2 Establishment of child friendly outdoor spaces at urban settlements	Allocate a compulsory play area in the city development projects under the MC and UC especially in urban settlements	USDA	UDA, Ministry of Local governments, MC & UCs		X	X	X	X	0 Mn	Availability of standards for housing projects on play area	USDA
6.3 Establishment of Child friendly and safe outdoor spaces at village settings	Ensure maintenance of play areas through VCDC	VCDC	MC & UCs & Pradeshiya Sabhas, Divisional Secretary, CSOs, Pvt sector, INGO		X	X	X	X	54 Mn	Number of play areas established	Local authority data



STRATEGIC ACTION AREA 05:

Investments for ECCD

OVERALL OBJECTIVE:

Promote investments in ECCD services and programmes, and assure equitable allocation and effective utilization of financial resources.

Baseline Analysis

The multi-sectoral approach of ECCD services has prevented from carrying out a wholistic cost-effective analysis of investing on ECCD. Hence, allocation of funds for ECCD has become compartmentalized with certain areas possibly being overlooked. One example is Early childhood education. Though, Sri Lanka has become a party to World Declaration for 'Education for All' Goals (1990)⁴⁵, which was reaffirmed with commitment to SDGs, preschool education is mostly run by the private sector while primary to tertiary education is free for all Sri Lankans. Research evidence indicates that ECE interventions have high benefit-cost ratios as well as the best rate of return of any human capital investment⁴⁶.

Sri Lanka's expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP has been lower than that of regional peers over the years and was born through domestic funding mostly⁴⁷.

Investing on the health and nutrition of under 5 children is extremely important as it is one of the critical factors deciding the achievement of full potential in development. Ministry of Health as the leading agency looking after the health of

⁴⁵ World Declaration on Education for All (1990) Adopted by the World Conference on Education for All, Jomtien, Thailand, 5-9 March 1990

⁴⁶ World Bank group (2014). Investing Early, Investing Smartly, and Investing for All. Laying the Foundation for Early Childhood Education in Sri Lanka. http://wbgfiles.worldbank.org/documents/hdn/ed/saber/supporting_doc/CountryReports/ECD/ECD_Sri_Lanka_Report.pdf

⁴⁷ UNICEF (2021). BUDGET BRIEF: EDUCATION SECTOR SRI LANKA 2021

0–5-year children and has a separate budget line for Maternal and Child Health care as well as nutrition.

However, some of the programmes are solely dependent on development partner support (eg: MMN supplements). The Ministry of Women & Child affairs also gets funding for identified projects. Preschool meal programme is an example. Current coverage of preschool meal programme is only about 17% of preschool children⁵⁰.

Due to the severe inflation of food prices and high food insecurity levels in early 2022, development partners helped with emergency relief packages specially for mothers with young children.

However, due sustained government commitment is extremely important to ensure proper nutrition of mother and the baby in the long run. It is worthy to note 2023 budget has pledged to allocate 1,450 million rupees for preschool meal programme. Additional 500 million rupees is also allocated to provide nutrition supplements for malnourished children in this budget⁴⁸. Further, 188,174 mothers received nutrition allowance in pregnancy in year 2021 through MWCA.

Another important infrastructure facility that needs optimizing for ECCD is Water and sanitation standards (WASH). In the period between 2015 and 2019, actual budgetary expenditure

in the WASH sector had increased significantly at an annual average growth rate of 14.9% in nominal terms⁴⁹.

The WASH sector depends heavily on foreign financing too. Access to safe drinking water for the Sri Lankan population has increased from 76% in 2006 to 93.2% in 2020⁴⁹. Similarly, safe sanitation coverage increased from 91.2% in 2016 to 92.1% in 2019⁵¹. However, 2016 preschool census showed a wide disparity of availability of drinking water in preschools (36.1% to 95%) among districts. It also revealed that 9.4% of preschools operated without toilet facilities⁵². Hence this action plan has attempted to address these equity issues.

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- 48 DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA (2022) BUDGET ESTIMATES – 2022 (Draft) (2022-2024 MEDIUM TERM)
49 UNICEF (2021). BUDGET BRIEF: WATER SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH) SECTOR SRI LANKA 2021\
50 National Secretariat for Early Childhood Development (2022). Preschool statistics.
51 National Water Supply and Drainage Board Corporate Plan 2020-2025 (2020), p. 40
52 Ministry of Women and Child Affairs (2016). National Census on Early Childhood Development Centres in Sri Lanka, 2016.

SECTOR BUDGET TOTAL 2026-2030 | Rs Mn 42,982.4

Strategy 01 Strengthen public investments at national and provincial level, to promote equitable access to quality ECCD programmes for all children, including the most vulnerable and disadvantaged.

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
1.1 Mapping of financial flow from all sources for ECCD	Identify and mapping of the funding sources at National and provincial level through multiple stakeholders	MWCA-NSECD	Dep. of public finance- MoF, Finance commission, Provincial Councils, INGOs, Pvt sector		X				0.2 Mn	Availability of a mapping at National and provincial level	Annual review
1.2 Ensure adequate public funding via capital and recurrent budgets at national and provincial level for ECCD activities	Allocation of ear-marked capital funding on ECCD sector for Central institutions and Provincial Councils	MoF (Dep. of National budget)	Finance Commission, Provincial Councils, MWCA, MoE, MoH, DSS			X	X	X	0 Mn	Availability of an ear-marked capital budget vote at Central and Provincial level	Annual report-FC, +MWCA
	Allocation of recurrent budget for the Central institutions & Provincial Councils for the ECCD activities	MoF (Dep. of National budget)	Finance Commission, Provincial Councils, MWCA, MoE, MoH, DSS		X	X	X	X	0 Mn	Availability of recurrent budget for the Central I & Provincial level	Annual report-FC, +MWCA

1.3 Strengthen investments on programs for delivering quality ECCD services with a wider access at low cost	Strengthen investments on child friendly villages initiative through 'Adarsha gammana' (model villages) concept	NSECD	MoH-HPB, MoF, Provincial Councils, INGOs, CBOs, Pvt sector			X	X	X	200 Mn	Number of new model villages established per province per year	PCC-Meeting minutes
	Strengthen investments to enhance the facilities of children parks to support child development	Provincial Councils and local authorities	Dep of National planning-MoF, UDA, USDA, FOA-Moratuwa University, MWSEID-PHDT, MoPI, INGOs, CBOs, Pvt sector			X	X	X	270 Mn	Number of children parks upgraded per year in each province	PCC-Meeting minutes
1.4 Establishment of ECCD emergency response fund at Provincial level	Advocate for establishment of ECCD emergency response fund at Provincial level	NSECD	MoF, Finance commission, Provincial Councils,			X	X	X	0 Mn	Availability of ECCD emergency response fund at Provincial level	PCC-Meeting minutes
	Develop guidelines to utilize the established ECCD emergency response fund	MoF	Finance commission, Provincial Councils, MWCA-NSECD			X			0.5 Mn	Availability of ECCD emergency response fund guidelines	PCC-Meeting minutes

Strategy 02

Facilitate investments in poverty reduction programs that target quality water, sanitary and health interventions and housing facilities, to make a positive change in the lives of children in early childhood.

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
2.1 Improve the water and sanitary facilities of needy preschools/ CDCs	Publish and disseminate the WASH standards for preschools/ CDCs	NSECD	MoE , MoH, Plan Sri Lanka, MWSEID-PHDT, MoPI, INGO, Pvt sect	X	X				2 Mn	Number of preschools received WASH standards	-
	Situation analysis of WASH facilities at preschools/ CDCs	MWCA-NSECD	MoE, Provincial ECE, MoH-PDHS/ RDHS/MOH, MWSEID-PHDT		X				3 Mn	% of preschools with satisfactory WASH	Preschool census
	Provision of funds for improvement of WASH at preschools through public-private partnership	Provincial ECE authority	MoE, MoH, INGOs, Private sector, MWSEID-PHDT, MoPI		X	X	X	X	500 Mn	Number of ECEs received funds	PCC-Meeting minutes
2.2 Facilitate investments to improve the water and sanitary facilities at household level	Include WASH indicators in selecting household for social assistance program	DSS	MoF, NSWB, MoH (MOHs)	X	X	X			0 Mn	WASH indicators considered for social assistance	
	Continue toilet aid program for families having children with disabilities through DS office	DSS	MoF, MoH, DS Office, INGOs, Pvt sector	X	X	X	X	X	750 Mn	Number receiving toilet aid	DS office
2.3 Facilitate investments to improve WASH facilities at Community level	Recognition of CSR projects of private sector partners on improving WASH facilities for tax concession through amendment to inland revenue act	MoF-Dept. of Inland revenue	MoH, MWCA, Private sector, INGO			X			0 Mn	Amended inland revenue act	Annual report-FC, +MWCA
	Advocate INGOs to support improvement of WASH facilities at community level	MoH	MoF, MWCA-NSECD, NSWB		X	X	X	X	0 Mn	Number of projects conducted	Development partners forum

Strategy 03 Promote and facilitate more investments for health and nutrition programs providing continuum of care from pregnancy, childbirth through to age 5+ years.

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
3.1 Allocate for ear-marked funding for nutritional interventions for vulnerable and disadvantaged children	Ensure investments to continue Food voucher program for pregnant mothers	MWCA	MoF, Ministry of public administration-DS Office, PDHS/RDHS/MOH	X	X	X	X	X	costed under action area 1	% of Pregnant women received food voucher	DS office
	Ensure investments to continue supply of nutrient supplements for children, pregnant and post-partum mothers through field health services	MoF	MoH, PDHS/RDHS/MOH	X	X	X	X	X	27,000 Mn	% of Pregnant mothers receiving Thripasha	RHMIS, MRI survey
	Ensure investments to Continue the financial aid for children with disability	MoRDSSCE	MoH, MWCA, DSS, Disability Secretariat	X	X	X	X	X	4,600 Mn	Amount of money allocated for children with disability	DSS. data
	Ensure investments to Continue and expand preschool mid-day-meal programme	MWCA	MoE, MWCA-NSECD, MoH, INGOs, Private sector	X	X	X	X	X	costed under action area 1	% of preschools receiving meal	preschool census

3.2 Allocate ear-marked funding for Maternal and child health interventions	Ensure continuous funding for maternal and child health services including pre-pregnancy care, pregnancy care, child health and nutrition programme	MoH	MoF, MWCA, INGOs	X	X	X	X	X	1,550 Mn	Availability of a separate budget vote for MCH care	Budget report
	Secure a beneficiary programme for MCH interventions	MoH	MoF, MoH, INGOs	X	X	X	X	X	0 Mn	Availability of a beneficiary programme for MCH care	Budget report
	Ensure continuous funding for Expanded programme of immunization	MoH	MoF, MoH, INGOs	X	X	X	X	X	4,900 Mn	Availability of a separate budget vote for MCH care	Budget report
	Funding for improvement of working conditions of field health care workers-quarters, payments, and transport especially in unserved and underserved areas	MoH	MoF, MoH, Mo Public administration, PCs, PDHS, RDHS, MWSEID-PHDT, MoPI			X	X	X	900 Mn	Amount of special fund allocated	Budget report
3.3 Facilitate responsible private-public partnership	Develop guidelines on public-private partnership for investment on ECCD E.g.: sponsorship from tobacco, milk food etc.	NSECD	MoF, Finance commission, PCs, MoH			X			0.2 Mn	Availability of guidelines on public-private partnership	NCC-Meeting minutes

Strategy 04

Facilitate community mobilization as well as mobilization of resources in communities to promote ECE for all children in early childhood, including those most vulnerable and disadvantaged.

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
4.1 Offer free/ low-cost preschools by mobilizing community resources at local authority level	Identify and list resources at local authority level that could be used for ECE services e.g.: underutilized buildings, human resource	Provincial ECE authority	Provincial Councils, District Secretary, local authorities	X	X				0 Mn	Availability of list	PCC-Meeting minutes
	Encourage community resources (e.g., retired teachers) to support preschools at local level	Provincial ECE authority	Provincial Councils, DS, MoE	X	X	X			30 Mn	Percentage of ECE services that are supported by local community	ECE Survey
4.2 Continue providing with re-visiting, the financial incentives for pre-school teachers-"Guru abimani"	Continue providing financial incentives for pre-school teachers-"Guru abimani"	NSECD	Provincial Councils, MoE, INGOs		X	X	X	X	1,700 Mn	Amount of funds allocated	Budget report
4.3 Promote enrolment of children in ECE in the estate sector through provision of educational aids	Provision of educational aids to children to promote enrolment in ECE	MWSEID-PHDT	MoPI, MoF, INGOs, CBOs		X	X	X	X	120 Mn	Amount of funds allocated	Budget report

Strategy 05 Promote equitable allocation of sufficient human and financial resources to all administrative areas, with special attention to areas with un-served and under-served regions.

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
5.1 Mapping of Human resource for ECCD in all administration areas	Mapping of all relevant HR in ECCD care provision at central and provincial level	NSECD	PDHS, DPCCS, Provincial ECE authorities, Academia/ MoE/ MoH/ MoF		X				0.2 Mn	Availability of maps of Human resource	NCC-Meeting minutes
5.2 Promote allocation of special service schemes for unserved/ underserved areas	Establish free/ low cost ECE teacher training programs for unserved/ underserved areas	MoE	INGOs, Private sector, Provincial Council			X	X	X	55 Mn	Number of teachers offered free training	Annual Report MoE
	Advocate for a special allowance for field workers in unserved / underserved areas including estate sector	MoF	Provincial Councils, MWSEID-PHDT, MoPI			X			300 Mn	Approval of a Special allowance for field workers	Annual Report-Finance commission

Strategy 06 Promote investments in national and provincial level research related to ECCD.

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
6.1 Identify research needs in ECCD through a National multi-sectoral forum	Identify and listing of research needs in ECCD through consultation of a National multi-sectoral forum	NSECD	Academia, MoE, MoH, Information Technology and Digital Infrastructure Ministry		X				1.5 Mn	List of research needs in ECCD	NSECD Web
6.2 Linking of donor agencies including INGOs and private sector to ensure funding for research	Meeting with donor agencies to secure funding for the identified research areas	NSECD	INGOs, Private sector, Academia, MoE, MoH, Mo Défense		X	X			0.5 Mn	Number of meetings held	NCC minutes
6.3 Research development and training for ECCD officers	Research skills development workshop and funding for training for ECCD officers	NSECD	INGOs, Universities,			X			100 Mn	Number of ECCD officers trained	NCC minutes
6.4 Development of a bibliography of available evidence on ECCD	Collection and compiling of a bibliography of existing research on ECCD	NSECD	Universities/ Academia, MoE, MoH, INGOs		X				2 Mn	Availability of a bibliography of local evidence	NSECD Web repository



STRATEGIC ACTION AREA 06:

Governance and quality improvement

SECTOR BUDGET TOTAL 2026-2030 | Rs Mn 171.55
Strategy 01 Strengthen the implementation mechanism of National policy on ECCD.

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
1.1 Strengthen the national coordinating committee on ECCD	To revisit the composition of NCC to include secretaries or nominated higher official from all relevant stake holders and provincial representation	MWCA	Presidential secretariat, MoE, MoH, MoF, MoD, Ministry of mass media, Mo information technology, MoPI, SMEHCI	X					0 Mn	New profile of NCC members	NCC minutes
	Develop a terms of reference document for NCC	MWCA	All members of NCC	X					0 Mn	Availability of TOR	NCC minutes
	Establishment of technical subcommittees under NCC for main action areas of ECCD	MWCA, NCC	All members of NCC	X					0.3 Mn	Availability of TSCs	NCC minutes
	Revise NCC agenda to table provincial level ECCD activities	MWCA, NCC	All members of NCC	X					0 Mn	Revised agenda	NCC minutes
1.2 Establish and strengthen provincial coordinating committees	Establishment of PCC with multi-sectoral representation, chaired by governor, convened by provincial ECE unit	Provincial ECE unit	Provincial Council, Provincial secretary, Provincial ECE authority, PDHS, PDPCCS, provincial ECCD officers	X					0.45 Mn	Active PCC established	PCC minutes
	Develop a Terms of reference document for PCC	Provincial ECE unit	All members of PCC	X					0 Mn	Availability of TOR	PCC minutes

1.3 Re-orient and strengthen district and divisional coordinating committees	To expand the scope of district CRC committees to cover all ECCD activities	District secretary	RDHS, MOHs DS, Provincial ECCD officers, CRC officers		X				0 Mn	Multi-sectoral District CC established	-
	To expand the scope of Divisional CRC committees to cover all ECCD activities	Divisional secretary	MOH, Divisional ECCD officers, CRC officers		X				0 Mn	Multi-sectoral Divisional CC established	-
1.4 Empowering village level CC	To strengthen village level coordinating committees	Divisional secretary	ECCD officers at DS office, PHI, PHM, GN		X				3 Mn	Number of active village CCs	-
Strategy 02 Strengthen the multi-sectoral collaboration for ECCD services.											
Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
2.1 Strengthen the collaboration between different levels of implementation of ECCD action plan	All PCC convenors to attend NCC and update on new developments at provincial level	NSECD NCC	Provincial secretaries/ Provincial ECE units		X	X	X	X	2 Mn	PCC representation at NCC	NCC minutes
	Representation from NSECD staff at PCCs for to and pro collaborations	NSECD			X	X	X	X	4.8 Mn	NSECD representation at PCC	PCC minutes
	All DCC convenors to attend PCC and update on new developments at district level	PCC	Provincial Council, Provincial secretary	X	X	X	X	X	9 Mn	DCC representation at PCC	PCC minutes

Strategy 03

Strengthen the technical capacity of NSECD and its officers for planning and monitoring of ECCD activities.

Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
3.1 To strengthen NSECD at central level by creating a technical carder with ECCD specialization	Establish technical carder positions at NSECD with ECCD specialists	MWCA	MoF, Presidential secretariat		X	X	X	X	80 Mn	Number of technical positions established	MWCA annual report
3.2 Improve the capacity of ECCD officers	Provide the opportunity for furthering the knowledge on ECCD	MWCA	MoE, FHB		X	X	X		6 Mn	No. of officers trained	MWCA annual report
	Develop a Performance appraisal/ promotion scheme for ECCD officers	MWCA	MWCA			X			0.5 Mn	Establishment of an appraisal system	-

Strategy 04 Strengthen the monitoring and evaluation processes.											
Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
4.1 To conduct annual reviews of ECCD activities	To conduct annual reviews of ECCD activities in an all provinces	NSECD	MoE, MoH	X	X	X	X	X	9 Mn	Annual review at provincial level	NCC minutes
	To conduct biannual reviews of ECCD activities of all districts	NSECD	Provincial Council, Provincial secretary, District secretary	X	X	X	X	X	12.5 Mn	Annual review at district level	NCC minutes
4.2 To conduct national level forum to update on new developments in ECCD	To conduct national level forum to update on new developments in ECCD including all provincial stakeholders	NSECD	MoE, NIE, MoH, DPCCS, NCPA	X		X		X	9 Mn	National forum on ECCD	-

Strategy 05 Strengthen the information management system of ECCD.											
Activity	Sub activities	Main Responsible Institution	Other Responsible institutions	Time frame and Budget						Indicators	Means of verification
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	SLR Mn		
5.1 Develop a M & E framework for the national multi-sectoral action plan	Develop a M & E framework for the national multi-sectoral action plan	MWCA	MoE, NIE, MoH, DPCCS, NCPA, Provincial ECE authorities, PDHS	X	X				3 Mn	-	-
5.2 Develop an information management system linking provincial and central level ECCD service points	Introduction of a common registration format for all provincial ECE focal points	MoE	NEC, MWCA-NSECD, Provincial ECE authorities		X				0.5 Mn	Number of provinces using common registration format	Provincial ECE authorities
	Develop a data entry format required for continuous monitoring through information management system of all registered preschools	MoE	MWCA-NSECD, Provincial ECE authorities, DCS, INGOs		X	X			1.5 Mn	Availability of common data management formats	MoE reporting to NCC
	Introduction of the information management system to all registered pre-schools	MoE	MWCA-NSECD, Provincial ECE authorities			X	X		10 Mn	Percentage of pre schools sending returns	MoE reporting to NCC
	Digitalization of the information management system	MoE	MWCA-NSECD, Provincial ECE authorities, INGOs			X	X		40 Mn	Availability of a digitalized IMS	MoE reporting to NCC



04

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Key performance indicators to evaluate the outcome of implementation of National Multi-sectoral Strategic Action Plan on Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) 2026-2030



HEALTH & NUTRITION

Assure all children in early childhood, including the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, equitable access to quality health and nutritional services

Desired outcome	Selected Indicator/s	Baseline	Data source	Target (by 2029)
All pregnant mothers are provided with timely antenatal care services	Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel	99%	FHB statistics	100%
Ensure optimal nutrition for all pregnant mothers	Percentage of Low-Birth-Weight deliveries	14.6% (FHB, 2022)	FHB Statistics	10%
Ensure optimal nutrition for all children under 5 years	Percentage of under 5 children with underweight	15.3% (FHB, 2022)	FHB Statistics	40% reduction
	Percentage of under 5 children with stunting	9.2% (FHB, 2022)	FHB Statistics	40% reduction
	Percentage of under 5 children with wasting	10.1% (FHB, 2022)	FHB Statistics	40% reduction
	Percentage of under 5 children with anaemia	14.6% (MRI, 2022)	MRI Survey	<10% (NNP target)
Ensure optimal delivery of other health services to children under 5 years	Immunization coverage at 1 year- MMR vaccine	99% (2022)	WHO, Immunization data portal	100%
	Percentage of children received Vitamin A mega dose at 18 months	83.5% (FHB, 2022)	FHB Statistics	95%
Ensure equitable access of all health services to antenatal mothers and under 5 children	Neonatal mortality rate	4.2% (FHB, 2020)	FHB Statistics	<2.2%
	Infant mortality rate	8.4% (FHB, 2020)	FHB Statistics	<5%
	Under 5 mortality rate	9.8% (FHB, 2020)	FHB Statistics	<6%
	Percentage of Developmentally on-Track children aged 2-5 years	85.7%	National baseline survey for the SDG indicator 4.2.1	>95%



EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Assure all children in early childhood, especially the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, have equitable access to quality early childhood education.

Desired outcome	Selected Indicator/s	Baseline	Data source	Target (by 2029)
All children have access to quality centre based ECE	National enrolment rate in ECE-3-5 years	55.6% (2016)	ECD census	75%
	Gross enrolment ratio-Pre-primary education (4-5 years)	86.56% (2022)	Estimates by DCS	90%
	Percentage of government operated ECE centres	19.8% (2016)	ECD census	25%
	Total number of children 3–5 years enrolled in CDCs in plantation sector	42% (2018)	AHR (PHDT)	60%
	Percentage of preschools registered with provincial ECE authority	N/A	PECE database	95%
	Percentage of preschools meeting government stipulated centre minimum standards	N/A	PECE database	90%
	% of pre schools with 1:20 teacher: student ratio per province	N/A	PECE database	90%
	% of preschool teachers with minimum qualifications (1 year diploma)	N/A	ECD census	75%
	% of preschools adhering to the National curriculum guide by NIE	N/A	ECD census	75%

All children have stimulating home environment for optimal development	Children aged 24–59 months who have three or more children's books at home	77.1% (2016)	DHS	90%
	Children aged 24–59 months who play with two or more playthings at home	69.4% (2016)	DHS	85%
	Percentage of preschools conducting regular parent awareness sessions	N/A	PECE data base	
Sufficient government investment is ensured for ECE	Expenditure on ECCE services (public and private) as a percentage of GDP	0.0001 (2014)	WB	50% increase
	Availability of a functioning information management system	N/A	NSECD	Available



CARE AND PROTECTION

Assure all children in early childhood especially those who need care and protection from violence, abuse and neglect, equitable access to quality care and protection.

Desired outcome	Selected Indicator/s	Baseline	Data source	Target (by 2029)
All children have access to care & protection services	% of complains attended out of the reported to NCPA involving under 5 children	N/A	NCPA database	100%
	Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority (%)	98.9% (2019)	Dept. of Census & Stat	100%
	Reported crimes and offenses against children	3594 (2020)	SL Police	50% reduction
A safe home environment is available for all children to nurture	Number of children referred for intervention through home risk factors screening by PHM	N/A	RHMIS	-
	Percentage of 'ever-married' women experiencing intimate partner violence (IPV) in the previous year	20% (2016)	DHS	<10%
	Cause specific mortality rates of children under 5 years	N/A	DHS	-



PARENTS, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

Support parents, families and communities to perform their roles and responsibilities effectively, in bringing up their children and ensure their optimal involvement in ECCD services and programmes.

Desired outcome	Selected Indicator/s	Baseline	Data source	Target (by 2029)
Supportive community network for optimal delivery of ECCD services	Percentage of MOH divisions with $\geq 50\%$ of PHMM facilitating at least one MSG	N/A	Quarterly Summary Report on MSG activities	100%
Availability of adequate child friendly spaces	Average share of the built-up area in cities providing open space for public use for all ages, sex and disabilities	N/A	UDA	20%



INVESTMENTS IN ECCD

Promote investments in ECCD services and programmes, and assure equitable allocation and effective utilization of financial resources

Desired outcome	Selected Indicator/s	Baseline	Data source	Target (by 2029)
Adequate investments are made for satisfactory ECCD care	Percentage of Households with improved source of drinking water by residence	90% (2016)	DHS	98%
	% of funds received out of estimated for ECCD activities at provincial level	N/A	PC	100%



05

COORDINATION MECHANISM FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION PLAN

The implementation mechanism of the National ECCD policy 2018 is clearly stated in the policy document itself. Accordingly, the multi-sectoral actions are to be rolled out and coordinated through coordinating committees at National (National Coordinating Committee on ECCD), Provincial (Provincial Coordinating Committee on ECCD), District (District Coordinating Committee on ECCD), Divisional (Divisional Coordinating Committee on ECCD) and Village (Village Child Development Committee) level through separate coordinating committees (see figure 5.2). Of those, the district level and divisional level coordinating committees are extensions of existing CRC committees to avoid duplication of work.

This action plan specifically proposes a few actions to strengthen this implementation mechanism. One of the main actions suggested is to ensure the representation of Secretaries or similar higher-level officials at NCC from the key ministries and empower the committee to be the main key decision making body on ECCD at National level.

Further, to aid this activity, it is proposed to establish five key Technical Advisory Committees on the five action areas of ECCD. The technical committees are to play an advisory role and propose recommendations to improve overall service provision of ECCD under respective action areas. Further, these technical committees will consider the issues raised at district and provincial level coordinating committees and propose recommendations to the NCC. The NSECD will facilitate the Technical Advisory Committees to receive concerns of PCC and DCCs. This is expected to ensure the vertical coordination between the district, provincial and national coordinating committees

and lead to efficient decision making at NCC. The technical committees will also look at the monitoring indicators of respective action areas, and report on the progress of actions to NCC.

The ECCD policy 2018 has identified the responsibilities and functions of each coordinating committee (ECCD Policy-2018-page 24-28), which needs to be re-visited and converted to Terms of Reference (ToR). The Technical Advisory Committees will also have the ToR documents to streamline the work.

Strengthening of the Information management system plays a key role in supporting the smooth functioning of above bodies, hence, identified as a priority action area. Further, the above mentioned bodies should have bottom up as well as top bottom approach for delivering feedback on the decisions made at NCC level to reach grass root level, which needs to be incorporated in respective ToRs.

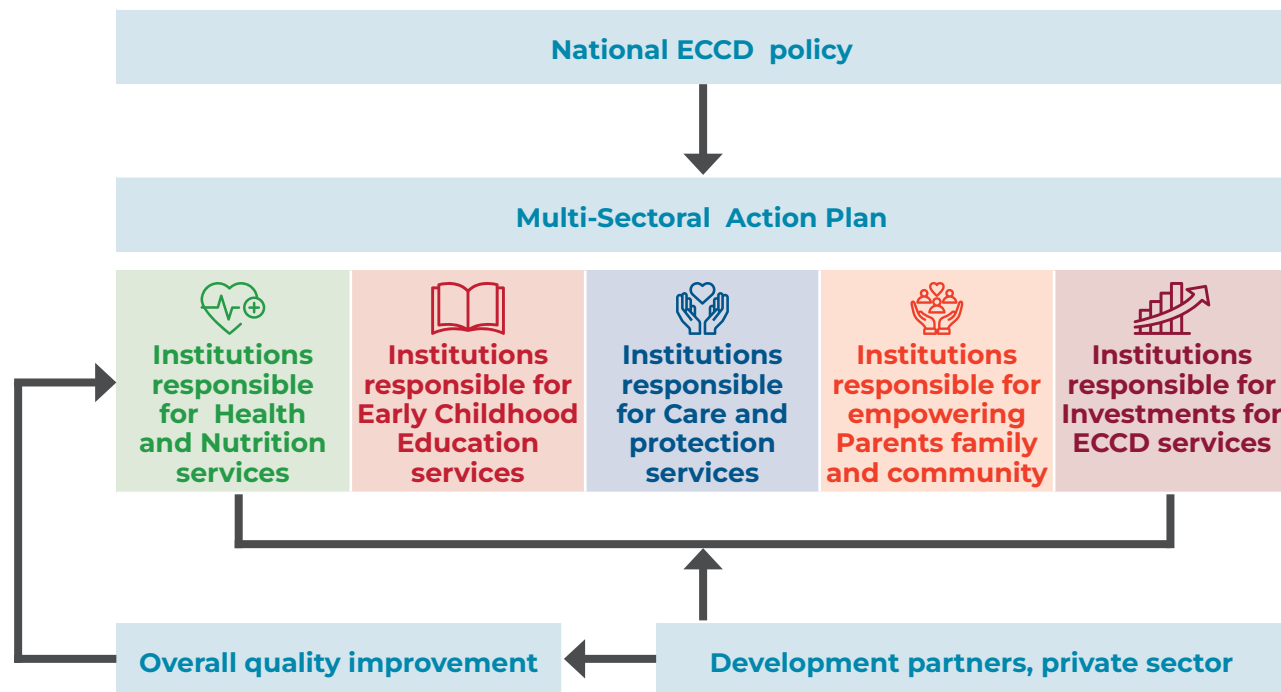


Figure 5.1: The Implementation of Multi-sectoral action plan-Key players

As illustrated in this picture, the implementation of this multi-sectoral action plan is the collective responsibility of multiple key institutions responsible for provision of ECCD services under different action areas. Some of the institutions may provide services in more than one action area. The development partners and private sector may offer support to these identified institutions at National and provincial level aiming overall quality improvement of services.

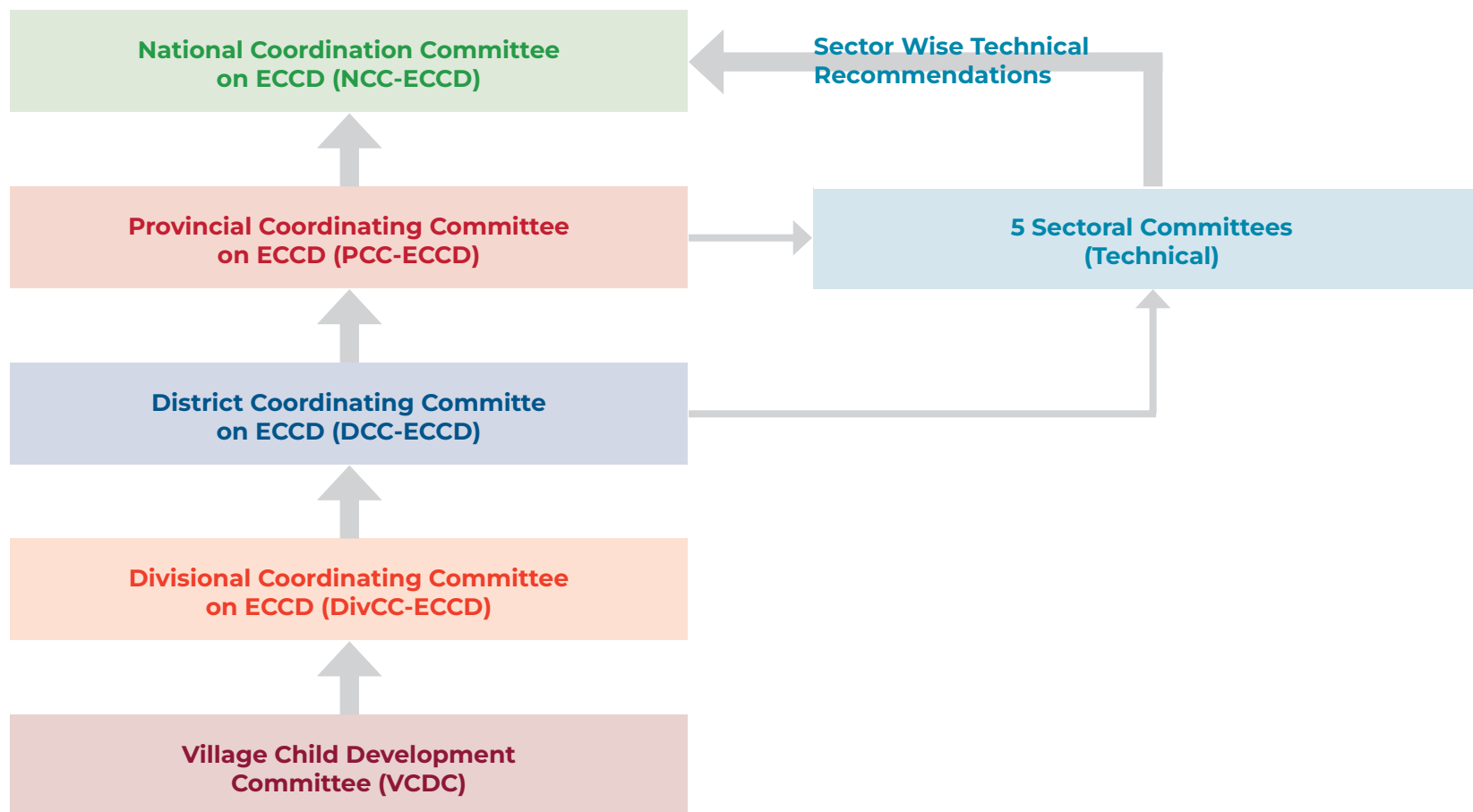


Figure 5.2: The Linkage between Coordinating committees and technical committees

Annexure 1:

The agencies represented in the development of National Multi-sectoral Strategic Action Plan on Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD)-2026-2030

Government Agencies-Central

Ministry of Women and Child Affairs

- National Secretariat for Early Childhood Development (NSECD)
- National Child Protection Authority (NCPA)
- Department of Probation and Childcare Services (DPCCS)
- Department of Social Services (DSS)
- National Secretariat for Persons with Disabilities
- Department of Samurdhi Development

Ministry of Education

- Primary Education Branch
- Education for All Unit
- National Institute of Education (NIE)

Ministry of Urban Development & Housing

- Urban Development Authority

Ministry of Water Supply and Estate Infrastructure Development

- Plantation Human Development Trust

Ministry of Defence

- National Disaster Relief Services Centre

Ministry of Health

- Family Health Bureau (FHB)
- Nutrition Division
- Health Promotion Bureau (HPB)

Sri Lanka Police Department

National Education Commission

Finance Commission

Ministry of Finance

- Department of National planning
- National Budget Department

Ministry of Justice

Ministry of Mass Media

Government Agencies-Provincial / Divisional

- Provincial ECE units-Uva, Central, Southern, Western, Northern, Eastern, North-Western, Sabaragamuwa, North-central
- Provincial/ Zonal Education units
- Provincial secretaries
- Provincial Director of Health services units
- Provincial probation units-PDPCCS
- Divisional secretariats

Professional Organizations / Academia / Experts

- College of Paediatricians
- Consultant Community Paediatrician-Dr. Dilini Vipulaguna
- Consultant Clinical Nutritionist-Dr. Manoji Gamage

UN / INGO / NGO / Private Sector

- UNICEF
- World Health Organization
- Save the Children
- World Food Programme
- Room to Read Sri Lanka
- Unilever company
- Child Fund-Sri Lanka
- Sarvodaya-Child development Unit
- LEADS
- HEMAS outreach foundation
- DP education
- Atlas Company

Annexure 2:

Direct ECCD service providers at multiple levels

1. National Level

Secretary – Ministry of Women and Child Affairs
 Secretary – Ministry of Education
 Secretary – Ministry of Health
 Director – National Secretariat for Early Childhood Development
 Probation Commissioner
 Chairman – National Child Protection Authority

2. Provincial Level

Secretary – Ministry of Education
 Secretary – Ministry of Health
 Provincial Director of Health Services
 Probation Commissioner
 Director – Education, Health, Social Service
 Director – ECCD/ Pre School Unit

3. District Level

Early Childhood Development Officer
 Child Rights Promotion Officer
 Councillor
 Regional Director of Health Services
 Medical Officer – Maternal and Child Health
 Child Protection Officer
 Social Services Officer
 PO – Provincial Probation Officer

4. Divisional Level

Early Childhood Development Officer
 Child Rights Promotion Officer
 Councillor
 Child Protection Officer
 Social services Officer
 Samurdhi Social Development Officer
 Non Formal Project Officer
 Medical Officer of Health
 Public Health Nursing sister

5. Village / Grass Root Level

Public Health Inspector
 Public Health Midwife
 Grama Niladari
 Economic Development Officer



