

} EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (ECD)

WHY ENGAGE IN ECD?

Early childhood development has a critical impact on children's health as well as their educational and economic outcomes. During the early years, young people develop the transferable skills (or "soft skills") of cooperation, teamwork, and problem-solving that many employers say are missing in today's workforce. Demand for these "soft skills" will only continue to increase for the new labor market of the future.



The [Global Business Coalition for Education](#) (GBC-Education) envisions a world where all children meet their full developmental potential to become productive workers and responsible citizens. As part of our work in ECD, GBC-Education aims to empower business leaders to become champions of the early years. Our efforts concentrate on implementing corporate policies that improve early learning, child and maternal health, childcare, protection, play, and nutrition.

HOW ARE WE HELPING ECD?

GBC-Education's ECD Task Force brought together business and foundation leaders interested in developing the workforce of tomorrow by prioritizing the early years of development. This Task Force produced a report on the business case for ECD, highlighting the substantial benefits of business investments in ECD from economic, scientific, and equity standpoints.

The Task Force demonstrated the value that businesses attach to investing in young children by using its collective power to influence global discussions, policies, and practice.

Today, GBC-Education's work in ECD focuses on providing business leaders with engagement roadmaps, as well as messaging and communication tools, to promote and implement corporate policies in support of early childhood development.

Through our strategic partnerships, we focus our efforts on making the case for pre-primary education, early learning, and early childhood development at large – particularly for marginalized populations, including young children with disabilities and those affected by emergencies, crisis situations, or HIV/AIDS. We provide data and evidence to identify gaps in finance and delivery and where the business community can make an impact.

FOUR WAYS BUSINESSES CAN ENGAGE WITH ECD

GBC-Education's Initiative has also committed to larger activations for the coming years:

- ➔ **Invest:** provide financial support and in-kind resources – time, volunteers, expertise
- ➔ **Enable:** implement ECD-friendly policies like childcare, parental leave, flexible work, healthcare benefits, and more
- ➔ **Empower:** promote healthy choices by educating employees on the importance of ECD
- ➔ **Champion:** use your influence as a business leader to advocate for the significance of ECD to both policy makers and community stakeholders



DID YOU KNOW?

- ➔ By the time children reach five years of age, 90% of their brain has already developed.
- ➔ A girl from a low-income country who begins pre-school in 2017 will have lifetime income nearly 5x that of her parents and 12x greater than her cost of education.
- ➔ The most rapid brain development takes place in the first 1000 days of a child's life, when the brain develops 700 neural connections per second.¹
- ➔ Children who attend quality ECD programs tend to stay in primary school longer, have higher academic achievement, and are less likely to repeat a grade or drop out.²
- ➔ In developing countries more than 200 million children are at risk of not reaching their full developmental potential due to poverty, malnutrition, and inadequate learning opportunities.³



For more information on GBC-Education's efforts in Early Childhood Development or to find out how businesses can get involved, contact info@gbc-education.org.

¹ Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. The Science of Early Childhood Development.

² Myers, Robert and Cassie Landers. (1989). Preparing Children for Schools and Schools for Children. (Paper commissioned for the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development meeting in UNESCO Paris).

³ UNESCO (2015). EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015. Education for all 2000-2015: Achievements and challenges.