

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ENCYCLOPEDIA ON EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT



“The first few years of life are important because what happens in early childhood can matter for a lifetime.”
Shonkoff, 2009

Between the ages of 0 and 5, children experience a phase of accelerated growth. The education, care and attention they receive during this crucial period of development have a decisive effect on their future. Healthy child development provides a foundation for a prosperous and sustainable society. Supporting child development and providing children and their families high-quality services must be a global priority.

The *Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development* provides access to the latest scientific knowledge on early childhood development and intervention from renowned international experts (more than 300 contributions). It is a reliable and credible source of information built on a strong international network. The *Encyclopedia* has the unique ability to offer its users multidimensional and interdisciplinary information on numerous topics (42 at this point in time), which is essential to thoroughly understand the complexity of early childhood development. It is a unique online tool that is free to use, presented in three levels of language (experts' articles, synthesis and key-messages) and available in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese, making it accessible to a vast audience worldwide.

This document presents some highlights from the *Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development*. We trust this will make you eager to learn more about it and use it as a reference tool to support your actions.



■ IMPORTANCE OF ECD

“Stable, responsive, nurturing relationships and rich learning experiences in the earliest years provide lifelong benefits for learning, behaviour, and both physical and mental health.”

Early experiences affect the quality of the basic brain architecture “by establishing either a sturdy or a fragile foundation for all of the learning, health, and behaviour that follow.”

Shonkoff JP. *Investment in early childhood development lays the foundation for a prosperous and sustainable society.* [Click here.](#)

■ CULTURE

“Research in other countries documented the importance of cultural adaptations of early intervention programs. Success in early childhood programs is critically dependent on adapting content and policies to local needs and practices.”

Harkness S., Super CM. *Culture and policy in early childhood development.* [Click here.](#)

“Those concerned with leveraging the power of culture to promote learning should take care to pay as much attention to the cultural enrichment of children as to their health and physical well-being, all of which play an especially important role during this period of extraordinarily rapid developmental change.”

Cole M., Hakkarainen P., Bredikyte M. *Culture and early childhood learning.* [Click here.](#)

■ CHILD CARE (0-5)

“Countries that integrate their services under one ministry or agency generally achieve more co-ordinated and goal-oriented services of a higher quality. In the child care sector, the quality of the learning environment is often poor because of weak state guidance and low staff qualifications and work conditions.”

Synthesis on Child care (0-5). [Click here.](#)

Key messages on High-quality child care services: A stimulating and caring environment for children. [Click here.](#)

Bennett J. Early childhood education and care systems in the OECD countries: The issue of tradition and governance. [Click here.](#)

■ HOME VISITING PROGRAMS

“Better outcomes are achieved when home visiting programs are based on theories of development and behaviour change, target empirically derived risk factors, employ more highly trained visitors (such as nurses) and follow a well-constructed curriculum across the series of visits.”

“The effects of home visiting programs can extend beyond child outcomes. Positive outcomes have been shown in family planning, prenatal health behaviour, maternal functioning, family self-sufficiency, parenting, and child safety.”

Synthesis on Home visiting programs. [Click here.](#)

■ INJURY PREVENTION

While drowning and burns are the leading causes of injury-related death and impairment in all countries, it takes its greatest toll in low and middle income countries.

“A coordinated and multifaceted public health approach [towards prevention of injuries] is needed linking primary, secondary and tertiary prevention. The health and economic benefits for children, families and society are significant.”

Brenner RA., Taneja G. *Injury prevention: Drowning.* [Click here.](#)

Watson MC., Mulvaney CA. *Injury prevention: Burns.* [Click here.](#)

■ PLAY

“Almost all children play, except those who are malnourished, deprived, or have severe disabilities. If play is associated with children’s academic and social development, educators and parents are encouraged to create play environments that will stimulate and foster children’s learning.”

Synthesis on Play. [Click here.](#)

Key messages on Child’s play: Learning that comes naturally. [Click here.](#)





■ AGGRESSION

“Rather than learning to use physical aggression from their environment, human children learn not to use physical aggression through various forms of interaction with their environment.”

“Developing appropriate and effective national policies is necessary and will require collaboration among medical, educational and social service providers. The costs associated with early intervention pale in comparison to the costs and consequences of aggressive children who develop into aggressive, violent adults.”

Synthesis on Aggression. [Click here.](#)

Key messages on Aggressive behaviours: Better management through understanding. [Click here.](#)

■ PREVENTION OF CHILD MALTREATMENT

“The most effective approaches to preventing child maltreatment will address the multilevel root causes of maltreatment by tackling, with the general population as well as at-risk and clinical populations, issues of poverty, housing, employment, schools, health care and other community systems, and supporting parents in raising young children.”

Synthesis on Prevention of child maltreatment. [Click here.](#)

Nelson G. *The prevention of child maltreatment: Comments on Eckenrode, MacMillan and Wolfe.* [Click here.](#)



Other topics of interest:

■ Low income and pregnancy

■ Parenting skills

■ Stress (prenatal and perinatal)

The *Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development* is a work in progress. Our goal is to offer the latest scientific knowledge on issues related to early childhood development that is relevant to countries around the world.

This Encyclopedia is developed thanks to the generous contribution of many [funders](#).

With the support and collaboration of the Bernard van Leer Foundation, we are currently working on a new entry in the *Encyclopedia* that will address social violence. This topic will be available soon. Look for it!



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