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# A systems-based approach to promoting early childhood development through health and nutrition services in Ethiopia and Kenya

Global Initiative to Support Parents

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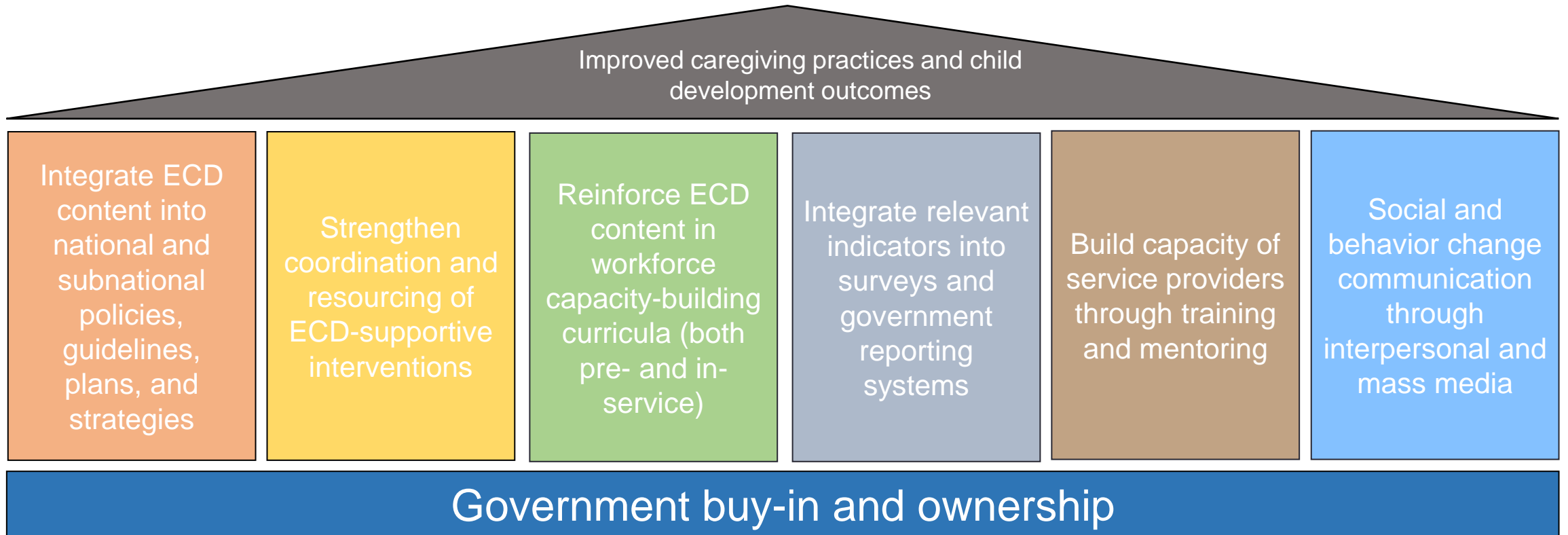
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# The conceptual framework

Promoting early childhood development (ECD) through health and nutrition services requires a systems-based approach that emphasizes government ownership and long-term sustainability



# Integrate ECD content into national and subnational policies, guidelines, plans, and strategies

- Key health and nutrition guidelines, and tools have modified to integrate previously missing ECD content—e.g., the **National Guideline for Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition** in Kenya, **Integrated Management of Newborn and Childhood Illness (IMNCI)** booklet and training modules in Ethiopia, and the implementation guideline on the **Expanded Program on Immunization** in Ethiopia
- Foundational policy documents have been developed or revised to include ECD promotion as a core policy pillar—e.g., the **Early Childhood Care and Education** policy framework, the **National Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Development**, and the National Child Survival and Development Strategy in Ethiopia; and the **Neonatal, Child, and Adolescent Health Policy** in Kenya
- In Kenya, the **Integrated ECD Policy** is being revised to incorporate meaningful content on ECD for children 0–3 years and the role of the health sector in delivering such services
- The **Mother & Child Health Booklet** in Kenya has been revised to incorporate developmental monitoring and counseling as a key component of routine well-baby services

# Strengthen coordination and resourcing of ECD-supportive interventions

- ECD **technical working groups** have been established at national (Ethiopia and Kenya) and subnational (Kenya) levels
- Promotion of developmental monitoring and counseling as part of routine health and nutrition services has been **included in government budgets and work plans** at national and subnational levels
- In Kenya's Siaya County, Smart Start Siaya—an innovative **multisectoral effort led by the Governor and First Lady**—has brought together relevant ministries and implementing partners to harmonize planning, coordination, implementation, and monitoring of services that promote ECD
- The **County First Ladies Association** in Kenya has identified ECD as a priority area and individual county first ladies are spearheading efforts to promote ECD through health, nutrition, and other services in their respective counties

# Reinforce ECD content in workforce capacity-building curricula (both pre- and in-service)

- Developmental monitoring and counseling has been included in the **Integrated Refresher Training materials for health extension workers** in Ethiopia
- In Kenya, a new child development module has been incorporated into the standard **pre-service/in-service training curriculum for community health volunteers (CHVs)**
- In Kenya, efforts are underway to develop and pilot child development module(s) for inclusion in **pre-service training curricula for facility-level health service providers**



Photo: Conrad N. Hilton Foundation/Joop Rubens

# Integrate relevant indicators into surveys and government reporting systems

- In Kenya, a new indicator—number of children with suspected developmental delays—has been **integrated into several standard government reporting tools**, thereby ensuring that child development is tracked as part of health management information systems
- In Ethiopia, **data reporting registers** for antenatal care, postnatal care, immunization, HIV, IMNCI, nutrition, and neonatal intensive care have been **revised to include ECD content**
- In Ethiopia, for the first time, the ongoing **Demographic & Health Survey** will include ECD content—e.g., portion of children with playthings at home, portion of children experiencing violent discipline, portion of children receiving adequate care, etc.



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# Build capacity of service providers through training and mentoring

- A **training of trainers approach** is used to strengthen capacity locally and promote ECD through routine facility- and community-level health and nutrition services
- ECD content integrated into each service area typically includes: **monitoring** child development, **counseling** the caregiver on responsive caregiving and age-appropriate stimulation, making a **referral** in case of any suspected developmental delay, and (optionally) screening and counseling for **caregiver mental health**
- In addition, **playbox sessions in health facility waiting areas** make them more child-friendly and provide an additional opportunity to counsel caregivers



# Developmental monitoring and counseling through routine health facility services

Photo: Conrad N. Hilton Foundation/Joop Rubens





# Developmental monitoring and counseling integrated into home visits

Photo: Conrad N. Hilton Foundation/Joop Rubens



Play sessions in health facility waiting areas

Photo: PATH

All health facilities and CHVs  
in Kenya's Siaya County and  
half of all health facilities in  
Addis Ababa are providing  
integrated ECD services—  
reaching an unprecedented  
level of scale



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# A pyramid approach ensures appropriate dosage and targeting of ECD support at different touch-points

