

Early childhood development (ECD) in terms of health, learning and psychosocial well-being, disaggregated by sex (children aged 24 to 59 months)



**EVERY WOMAN
EVERY CHILD**

FOR HEALTHY AND EMPOWERED WOMEN,
CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Definitions

Children 24 to 59 months with adequate development in terms of health, learning and psychosocial well-being. This indicator is currently measured through percentage of children aged 36 to 59 months showing adequate development in at least three of four domains: literacy–numerical, physical, socio-emotional and learning aptitude.

Domains included in the indicator that are used to report SDG indicator 4.2.1 are operationally defined as follows. Children are considered to have adequate development in the domain if:

1. Literacy and numerical aptitude. At least two of the following can be done: identify and name at least 10 letters of the alphabet; read at least 4 simple and popular words; recognize symbols and name all the numbers from 1 to 10.
2. Physical. Can pick up a small object with two fingers, such as a stick or rock from the ground, and the primary caregiver does not indicate that the child has sometimes felt too sick to play.
3. Social-emotional. At least two of the following are true: the boy or girl gets along well with other children; does not kick, bite, or hit other children or adults; the child is not easily distracted.
4. Learning. Follow simple instructions on how to do something correctly or when given something to do are able to do it independently.

Numerator

Number of children between 36 and 59 months of age meeting at least 3 of the 4 domains * 100.

Denominator

Total number of children between 36 and 59 months of age.

Measuring unit

X percent (%).

Considerations for indicator quality

UNICEF maintains the global database on this indicator that is part of the SDGs (Indicator 4.2.1) and other official reports. Before any data point is included in the database, focal points at UNICEF headquarters examine it to verify data consistency and overall quality. This review is based on a set of objective criteria to ensure that only the most recent and reliable information is included in the databases: data sources must include appropriate documentation; data values must be representative at national population level; data is collected using appropriate methodology (i.e. sampling); data values are based on a large enough sample; data conforming to the indicator standard definition, including age group and concepts, as far as possible; the data is plausible based on trends and consistency with previously published/reported estimates for the indicator.

Interpretation implications

Early childhood development (ECD) is essential for a healthy life course. Investing in ECD is one of the most cost-effective investments a country can make to improve adult health, education, and productivity to build human capital and promote sustainable development. Applying population strategies that promote ECD fosters equity from the beginning of life. Efforts to improve ECD can achieve improvements in human, social, and economic development for both individuals and populations.

Context indicator

It is considered appropriate to use the proxy “percentage of children 36 to 59 months showing adequate development in at least three of four domains” as long as the indicator operationalization is published, was classified as a Tier indicator II in the March 2020 review.

ODS framework

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



EWEC-LAC framework	Dimension	Monitoring framework	Suggested stratifier for inequality analysis
Survive	Woman	Input	Sex ✓
Thrive ✓	Childhood ✓	Output	Ethnicity ✓
Transform	Adolescence	Results	Mother's education ✓
		Impact ✓	Socioeconomic level (quintiles of national wealth) ✓
		Product	Place of residence (urban / rural, or geographic location) ✓

Preferred data source

Countries collect data on state of children's development through household surveys, such as MICS (UNICEF), or demographic and health surveys (DHS). Some of the individual elements included in IPR measurement can be collected through other mechanisms (such as other surveys or administrative records) in high-income countries.

Alternative data sources

N/A

Inter-agency group estimates

UNICEF conducts a comprehensive consultative process to collect and evaluate data from national sources to update its global databases on situation of children. Starting in 2018, UNICEF launched a new country consultation process with national authorities. The consultation process requested comments directly from National Statistical Offices, as well as from other government agencies responsible for official statistics, on indicator compilation, including data sources used, and the application of internationally agreed definitions, classifications and methodologies for data from that source.

Global monitoring frameworks

- [Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health.](#)

For more information

- UNICEF. <http://data.unicef.org/ecd/development-status.html>

References

- SDG metadata repository. <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/>
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