



Radio Stations	:	<b>All Community Radio Stations</b>
Subject	:	<b>Early Childhood Development</b>
Audience	:	<b>Parents, caregivers and educators</b>
Program topic	:	<b>Why Early Childhood Development (LOVE)</b>

#### **Guidelines to the presenter**

- Presenter – please familiarize yourself with the brief and the use the facts effectively by referring to them from time to time during the show.
- You should be seen as a peer rather than an authority.
- Offer guidance or opinion rather than telling people what to do.
- Encourage people to seek further information
- Always keep the objectives and outcomes in mind and drive these.

#### **Topic:**

Why early childhood development?

#### **Objectives**

- To build the understanding of what children need in order to get the best start in life.
- To motivate parents and caregivers to focus on the development of even the youngest member of the family and not just those of school going or working age - because children's early experiences impacts on their later achievement.
- To develop the understanding that parents/caregivers are the first providers of ECD - not schools, government or others.

#### **Introduction**

On this show, we celebrate the fact that you are the most important person in your child' life. You have the power to give your child the best possible start in life and it doesn't have to cost you a cent. All it takes is your love, play and talk.

When we talk of Early childhood development, we sometimes think that such a term belongs to experts and that it is the work of academics. However ECD begins at home with you as parents/caregivers. In fact it starts even before the child is born. If a child doesn't have proper development during the early years, then the child's ability to achieve in the future will be

affected negatively. We place a large emphasis on going to school and then maybe to university. It is every parents dream to have children with degrees who are working and earning. However, the potential of that child to achieve at school and in the workplace depends very much on ECD. Research shows that children with proper ECD grow up to earn considerably more. So what then is ECD and what is our responsibility as parents/caregivers in ECD?

Questions	Facts
<p>1. <i>What is early childhood development?</i></p>	<p>This is the focus on the development of children from conception (before birth) to the age of five, that includes physical, emotional and intellectual development. Therefore it includes a focus on health and nutrition, early learning and psychological care and development.</p>
<p>2. <i>Why is this so important?</i></p>	<p>The first few years of a child’s life determine her development and success in the future. Poor nutrition and health and inadequate intellectual stimulation can severely restrict her potential for life. Early childhood is the most important phase for overall development throughout the lifespan. Brain and biological development during the first years of life is highly influenced by an infant’s environment. During early childhood (from the prenatal period to five years of age), children undergo rapid growth that is highly influenced by their environment. Many problems, such as mental health issues, obesity, heart disease, criminality, and poor literacy and numeracy, can be traced back to early childhood.</p>
<p>3. <i>Why are the first five years so important? What impact does it have on our later life/ achievement?</i></p>	<p>Early experiences determine health, education and employability for the rest of life. Every year, more than 200 million children across the world under five years old fail to reach their full mental and social potential. There are simple and effective ways for families and caregivers to ensure optimal child development.</p>

<p>4. <i>What can I do to support my child's development? What can be done to support children reaching their full potential?</i></p>	<p>Provide safe environments, attentive care, learning opportunities and good nutrition.</p> <p>Early childhood development is a multi-faceted process, Supporting intellectual development is not enough if the physical development of the young child is compromised. Healthy physical, cognitive, linguistic and socio-emotional development needs a combination of opportunities for growth in all areas at the same time.</p> <p>For physical development, children need to eat healthy food and drink clean water, live in a clean, safe environment, get medical help when they are sick, get enough rest, move their bodies (play games etc), use their hands (drawing, painting)</p> <p>For socio-emotional development – they need adults who they trust to help them feel safe and secure, feel proud of what they can do, try things on their own, stay out of danger, learn about themselves and for mental development - communicate their thoughts and feelings, learn about the world they live in, find out how things work, solve problems (e.g. how to open the door), learn about similarities and differences (size, shape, colour), enjoy stories.</p> <p>Different aspects of development need to work together for the child to have the best possible chance. Research also suggests that the health and wellbeing of the mother may have a major impact on the early development of the child.</p>
<p>5. <i>What are some of the risks to a child's optimal development?</i></p>	<p>Many factors can disrupt early childhood development. Four risk factors affect at least 20–25% of infants and young children in developing countries:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. malnutrition that is chronic and severe enough to cause growth stunting</li> <li>2. inadequate stimulation or learning opportunities</li> <li>3. iodine deficiency</li> <li>4. iron deficiency anaemia.</li> </ol> <p>Other important risk factors are malaria,</p>

<p>6. <i>So we've said that one of the biggest risks to optimal development is malnutrition. How is it that children become malnourished and what can one do about it?</i></p>	<p>intrauterine growth restriction, maternal depression, exposure to violence, and exposure to heavy metals.</p> <p>One in four of the world's children are chronically malnourished, also known as stunted. These are children who have not gotten the essential nutrients they need, and their bodies and brains have not developed properly.</p> <p>Malnutrition weakens young children's immune systems and leaves them vulnerable to death from common illnesses such as pneumonia, diarrhea and malaria. In contrast, well-nourished children perform better in school and grow up to earn considerably more on average than those who were malnourished as children. Recent evidence suggests nutritional interventions can increase adult earnings by as much as 46 percent. An estimated 450 million children will be affected by stunting in the next 15 years if current trends continue.</p> <p>Exclusive breastfeeding is one of the most important ways that one can support nutritional development, ensuring that children have a balanced diet, eat healthy food and get the necessary minerals and vitamins. Weighing your baby regularly also helps with identifying when there is an issue.</p>
<p>7. <i>So part of this development is intellectual? How does one support this?</i></p>	<p>Early childhood is the most intensive period of brain development during the lifespan. Good stimulation and nutrition are essential for development during the first three years of life. It is during these years that a child's brain is most sensitive to the influences of the external environment. Rapid brain development affects cognitive, social and emotional growth. Such development helps to ensure that each child reaches his or her potential and is a productive part of a rapidly changing, global society.</p> <p>Brains are built over time, from the bottom up. The brain is constructed through an ongoing process that begins <b>before</b> birth and</p>

	<p>continues into adulthood. Early experiences affect brain since 85% of the brain is formed in the early years. It is very difficult to alter the original structure of the brain later in life. Early development sets the foundation for later physical and mental health and achievement. Small disturbances in early development can have long-term, lasting effects on the brain's structure and the way it functions.</p>
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<b>Conclusion</b>
<p>We've now been introduced to ECD. The terms used can make it sound complicated, but it is in fact something that begins at home with us as parents/caregivers. There are things that we need to be aware of so that we can begin to practise these at home with our children. As this show goes on we'll discuss in more detail what you can do and how to do it as well as what services you can access. What we should all know at this point is that proper ECD affects our children's ability to achieve and be healthy in the future - before they even get to school.</p>

<b>Learning outcomes</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parents understand that every child has potential and to achieve, they need to provide them with healthy environments, attentive care, learning opportunities and good nutrition.</li><li>• Understand the importance of their role in supporting the development of their children</li></ul>