

Challenges

- Malnutrition-caused stunting and underweight in children.
- Coordination and clarity of roles among ministries to make early childhood a priority.

Priorities⁴

- Development of an early childhood education policy.
- Development of early childhood curriculum.
- Deliver training for early childhood teachers in Teacher Training College and provide support in the district teacher education centers.

Noteworthy practices

Empowering mothers of preschool aged children (Implemented by War Child Afghanistan)

- Opportunities are provided to vulnerable women with preschool aged children to improve families' welfare, including childcare support and daily nutritious meal to the children. Preschool personnel are provided with training to develop a supportive environment for children's holistic development.
- Achievements: Since 2009, 1,504 children between 0 and 6 years of age have benefitted from early childhood education, nutrition, and psychosocial support.

Integrated preschool program with caregiver education sessions (Implemented by: World Vision Afghanistan)

- For 6 days a week, children between age 5 and 6 are engaged in preschool learning and socialization opportunities. Mothers and caregivers receive weekly caregiving trainings, including breastfeeding, vaccinations, health and hygiene, preparation of nutritious food, and First Aid.
- Achievements: Children are better equipped for formal schooling and demonstrate better social behaviors compared to children who did not attend the ECCD program.

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 **ARNEC**
Asia-Pacific Regional Network
for Early Childhood



Afghanistan Country Profile

Early Childhood Care and Development



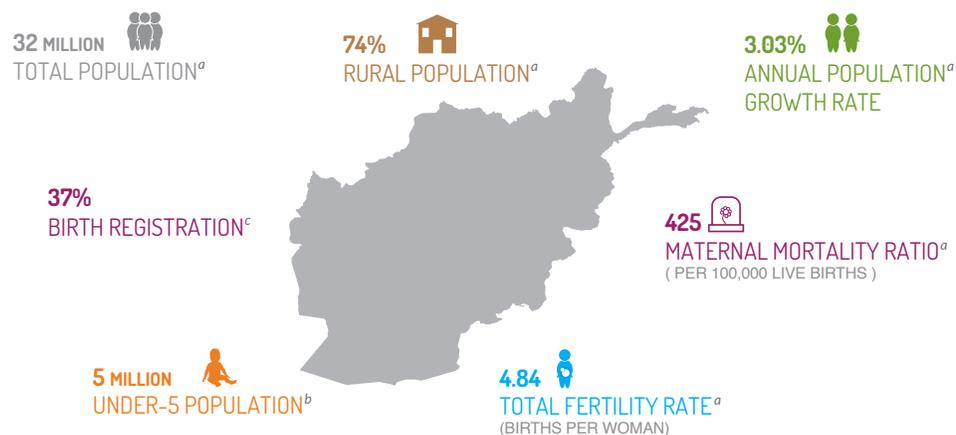
General information about ECCD in Afghanistan¹²

ECCD opportunities in Afghanistan is mostly limited with only 1% of children between 3 and below-5 years attending preschools³. However, there is a growing focus by the government to focus on improving provisions of health, education, and childcare programs for children as indicated within the draft National Education Strategic Plans III 2015-2020.

Various initiatives are encouraged by the government to boost attention on ECCD in country including the development of an integrated preschool education policy by the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MoLSAMD), development of an early childhood curriculum and teacher education preparation program. The government also welcomes involvement from development partners and private sectors to expand ECCD provisions.

Malnutrition is a serious threat to Afghanistan resulting in an estimated loss of 2-3% per year in GDP⁴. Infant mortality rates, stunting, and underweight in Afghanistan remain one of the highest in the world. Progress has been made in the recent years, especially in reducing infant- and under-5 mortality rates, although continued improvements will have to be made to maintain these rates of reduction.

DEMOGRAPHICS⁵ AND PRENATAL



BIRTH TO 5 YEARS



Sources (year)

^a World Bank (2014)	^b UN Population Division (2015 ⁶)	^c SWOC (2013)
^d UN IGME (2015 ⁷)	^e MICS (2010-2011 ⁸)	^f SWOC (2009-2013)
^g SWOC (2012)	^h SWOC (2005-2013)	ⁱ UIS (2003 ⁹)

Disclaimer: Numbers have been rounded except for fertility and population growth rate. Data is as of May 2016.

SCHOOL READINESS



62% FATHER'S SUPPORT^h FOR LEARNING

2% AVAILABILITY OF^h CHILDREN'S BOOKS

0.79 GENDER PARITY INDEX OFⁱ GROSS ENROLLMENT RATIO; FEMALE/MALE (%)

0.76% GROSS ENROLLMENT RATIOⁱ OR GER IN PRE-PRIMARY

Key policies

ECD national policy not currently available. In development in the form of integrated preschool education policy by MoLSAMD.

- Education Sector Strategy for the Afghanistan National Development Strategy
- National Education Strategic Plans III (draft) 2015-2020

Ministries in charge: Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs & Disabled (MoLSAMD) and Ministry of Education. Ministry of Public Health also provides ECD services in country.

References

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- ² Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ministry of Education. (2014). *Draft National Education Strategic Plan 2015-2015.*
- ³ World Bank. (2016). *Afghanistan country page* (accessed April 29, 2016).
- ⁴ Levitt, et al. (2011). *Malnutrition in Afghanistan: Scale, scope, causes, and potential response. Directions in Development; Human Development.* World Bank.
- ⁵ World Bank. (2015). *World Bank Open Data* (Accessed May 4, 2016).
- ⁶ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. (2015). *World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision, DVD Edition* (Accessed May 4, 2016).
- ⁷ United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME). (2015). *Level & trends in child mortality: Report 2015* (pp. 23). New York: UNICEF.
- ⁸ Central Statistics Organisation (CSO) and UNICEF. (2012). *Afghanistan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2010-2011: Final Report.* Kabul: CSO and UNICEF.
- ⁹ UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). (2016). *Education dataset* (Accessed May 4, 2016).