

Early Childhood Development Program



Early Childhood Development (ECD) Approach



Investment for Tomorrow ?



ECD – Global Priority

“Widespread adoption of the integrated approach to early childhood is a precondition to meeting six of the eight *Millennium Development Goals*, including lowering child mortality, promoting gender equality, achieving universal primary education and eradicating extreme poverty.”

- UNICEF [2003]



Early Childhood Development

The *most rapid period of development in human life*, generally from pre-natal to eight years of age, during which children progress through an identifiable sequence of physical, cognitive, social and emotional development

*Opportunities
Missed*



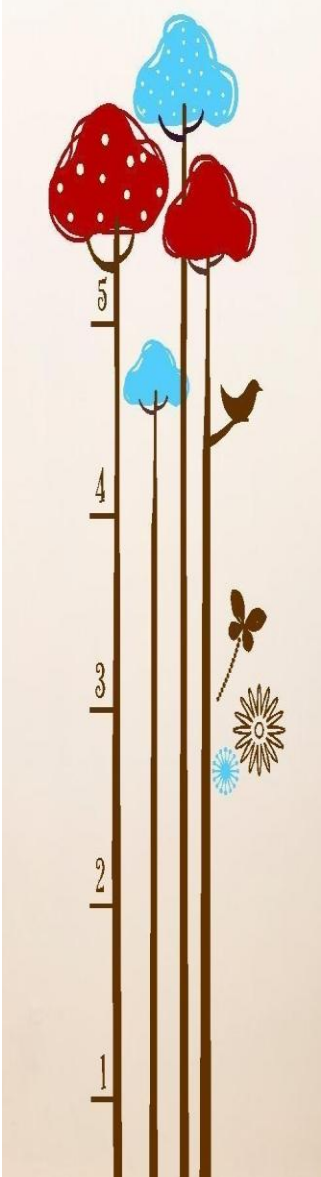
Early Childhood



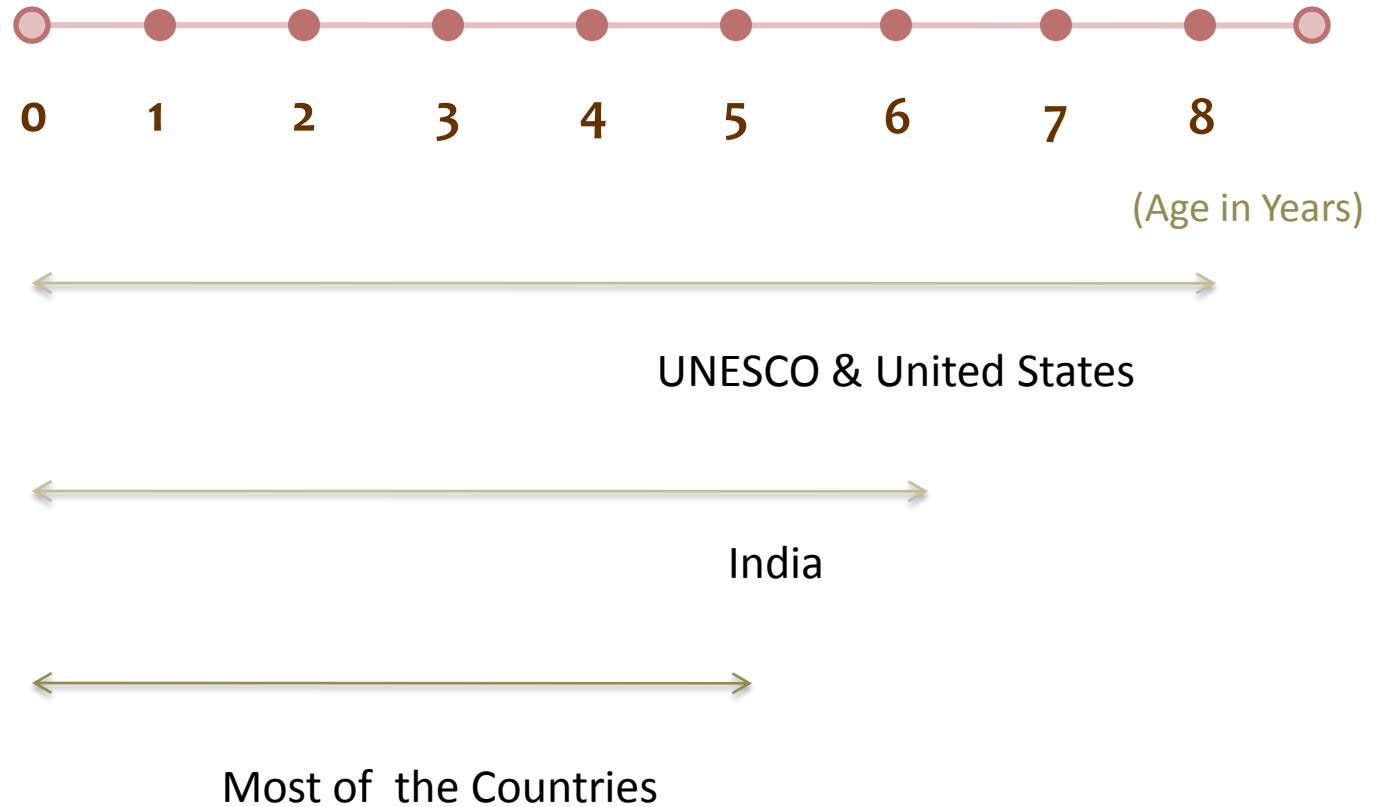
*Opportunities
Lost*



Early Childhood



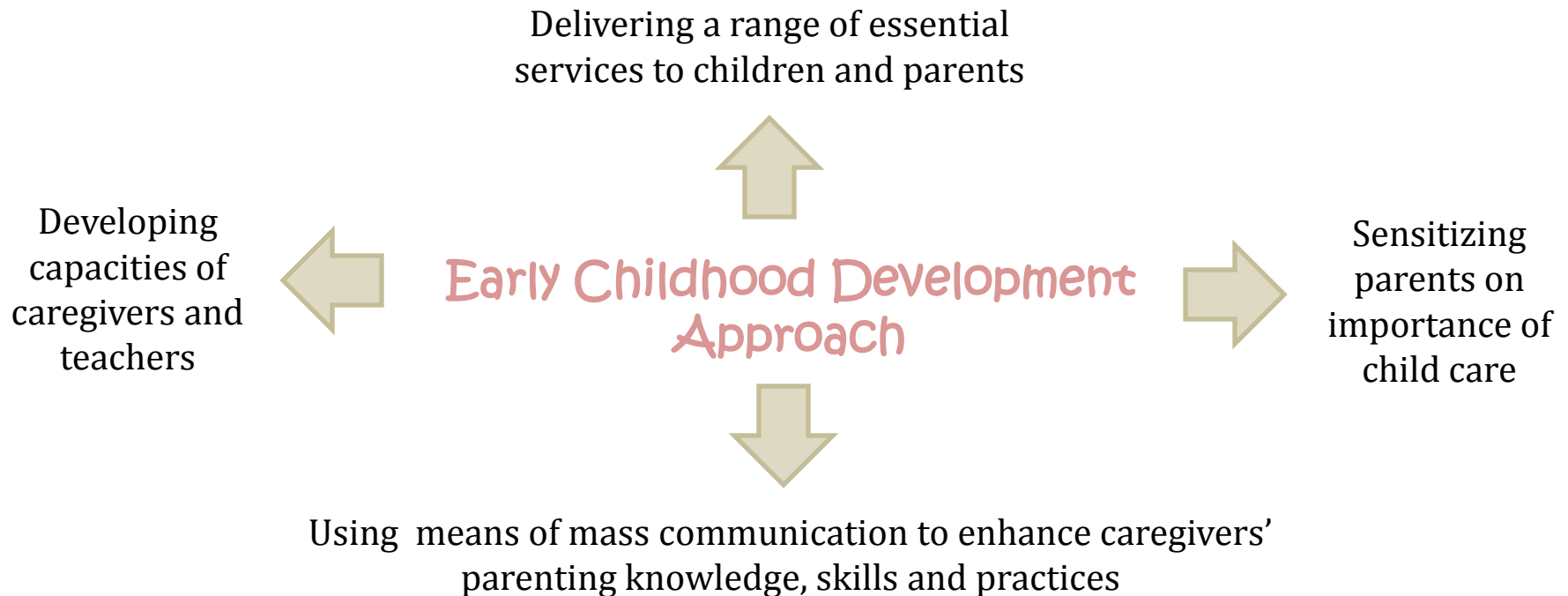
Age before the formal schooling begins for a child



Early Childhood Development Approach

The approach is based on an established fact that young children respond best to their environment when *caregivers use specific play techniques designed to encourage and stimulate progress to the next level of development*

- (The World Bank, 2011)



Importance of ECD Approach

- ■ Approach guides the caregivers to create the conducive environment for child development...
- ■ Interventions likely to be more effective and less costly when provided earlier in life rather than later...
- ■ High quality early intervention services could change a child's developmental trajectory and improve outcomes for children, families, and communities...
- ■ Early identification of developmental problems could lead to early interventions and referrals for a better and timely response...
- ■ Approach may help in reducing economic and social disparities in future, if implemented with socio-economically deprived communities...



Need for ECD Programs

The children grow, learn and develop rapidly, if they have more positive early experiences, especially *stable relationships with caring and responsive adults*, safe and supportive environment, appropriate nutrition and health care.

Early Childhood Development Programs



positive outcomes for children, families and communities in developed as well as developing countries



Benefits of ECD Programs

Improved cognitive development and scholastic achievements

Possibility of reduction in social inequality



Reduction in school dropout rates

Higher enrolments and less repetitions in school

Improved nutrition and health possibilities for children



Poverty and Negative ECD Outcomes

Review of the highest quality research evidence linking poverty to negative childhood outcomes by Greg J. Duncan and Katherine Magnuson

Economists



Higher incomes improve parents' psychological well-being and their ability to engage in positive family processes, in particular high-quality parental interactions with children.

The families with better economic resources are able to purchase or produce better resources necessary for young children's development such as nutritious meals, enriched home learning environments and child care settings outside the home, safe and stimulating neighborhood environments, and higher-quality schools and post-secondary education for older children.

Psychologists



Poverty and Negative ECD Outcomes

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Sociologists



The low-income parents are more likely than others to use an authoritarian and punitive parenting style and less likely to provide their children with stimulating learning experiences at home.

Early childhood period is the most critical in brain development and for establishing the neural functions and structures that shape future cognitive, social, emotional, and health outcomes, as the astonishingly rapid development of young children's brains leaves them sensitive (and vulnerable) to environmental conditions.



Neuroscientists



ECD Programs and Low-Income Communities

“But it would not be an exaggeration to say that ECCD programs in most of the developing countries *are not always planned and implemented with a clear understanding of the issues specific to the urban poor living in slums and peri-urban settlements*; with the result that a greater percentage of under fives in the poor urban areas still remain unreached by any early child development programs.”

- Nair M.K., Article ‘Early Childhood Development in Deprived Urban Settlements’, 2004



ECD Programs in Low-Income Communities



Children constantly exposed to social and environmental stressors such as addictions, violence or crime within or outside home.

Urban poverty impacts parent's capacity of providing daily necessities of life to one's children; sense of self as caregivers and their beliefs about relationships with their children; physical energy or emotional availability due to the competing demands of livelihood options



Involvement of Parents in ECD Programs

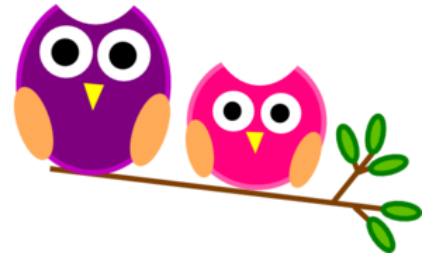
“Early childhood programs now recognize that *they alone cannot prepare children for kindergarten*. Instead, they need the support of families and communities. To acquire this support, they need to encourage the family involvement processes that research has shown to be effective in encouraging children’s learning and socio-emotional development.”

— Family Involvement in Early Childhood Education, Harvard Family Research Project, 2006



Involvement of Parents in ECD Programs

- The first and foremost social contact for a child
- The onus of parenting responsibility more on parents than any other family member
- Complete dependency of the newborns on parents during early years
- Sensitized parents - a source of spreading awareness at larger level through social peer sharing
- Ability to influence the child's growth and development in the most meaningful manner
 - Holistic understanding of parenthood is a long-term investment for the child's future years
 - Gradual weakening of traditional parenting knowledge and skills due to increasing migration and emergence of nuclear families



Early Childhood Development (ECD) Programs



Need of the Hour?



Early Childhood Development in South Asia

“While most developed countries endeavor to give children a better start in life *by providing universal early childhood education* – either through the public or private agencies, this has remained a neglected area in South Asia.”

– Dipankar Ghosal, Consultant, 2013



THE WORLD BANK



Legal Provision and Policies for ECD in India

Launch of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) program in 1975 for strengthening the foundation of holistic and integrated child development and building capacities of primary caregivers


National Policy for Children (1974)

The State shall endeavour to provide Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) for all children until they complete the age of six years.

Indian Constitution Act, Amendment to article 45, 2002

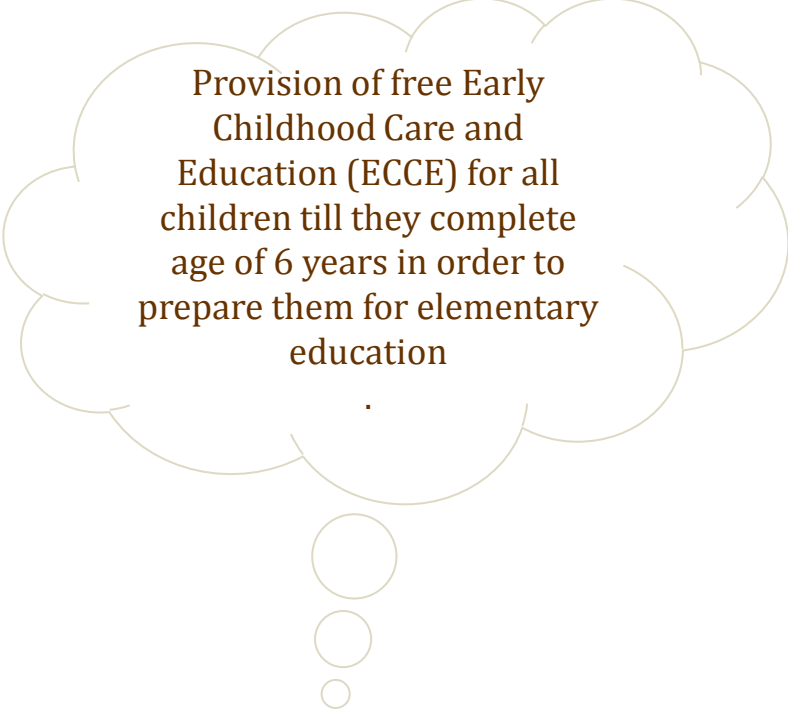


Legal Provision and Policies for ECD in India



Various recommendations for various supportive interventions for child care and development

National Policies for Health and Nutrition



Provision of free Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) for all children till they complete age of 6 years in order to prepare them for elementary education

Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE)



Bottlenecks in ECD Services in India

“Among the South Asian countries, India has the distinction of implementing the Integrated Child Development Services program for holistic early childhood development. The program, which seeks to benefit some 80 million children from birth to 6 years of age, includes early childhood education, but *the quality of the education provided is not very satisfactory.*”

- Regional conference organized by the World Bank and the Centre for Early Childhood Education and Development of the Ambedkar University - New Delhi, 2012



ECD Services in India

- Substandard and uneven quality of non-formal pre-school or early childhood care and education imparted through public, private and non-governmental channels...

- Inadequate institutional capacity and absence of standards, regulatory norms and mechanisms...

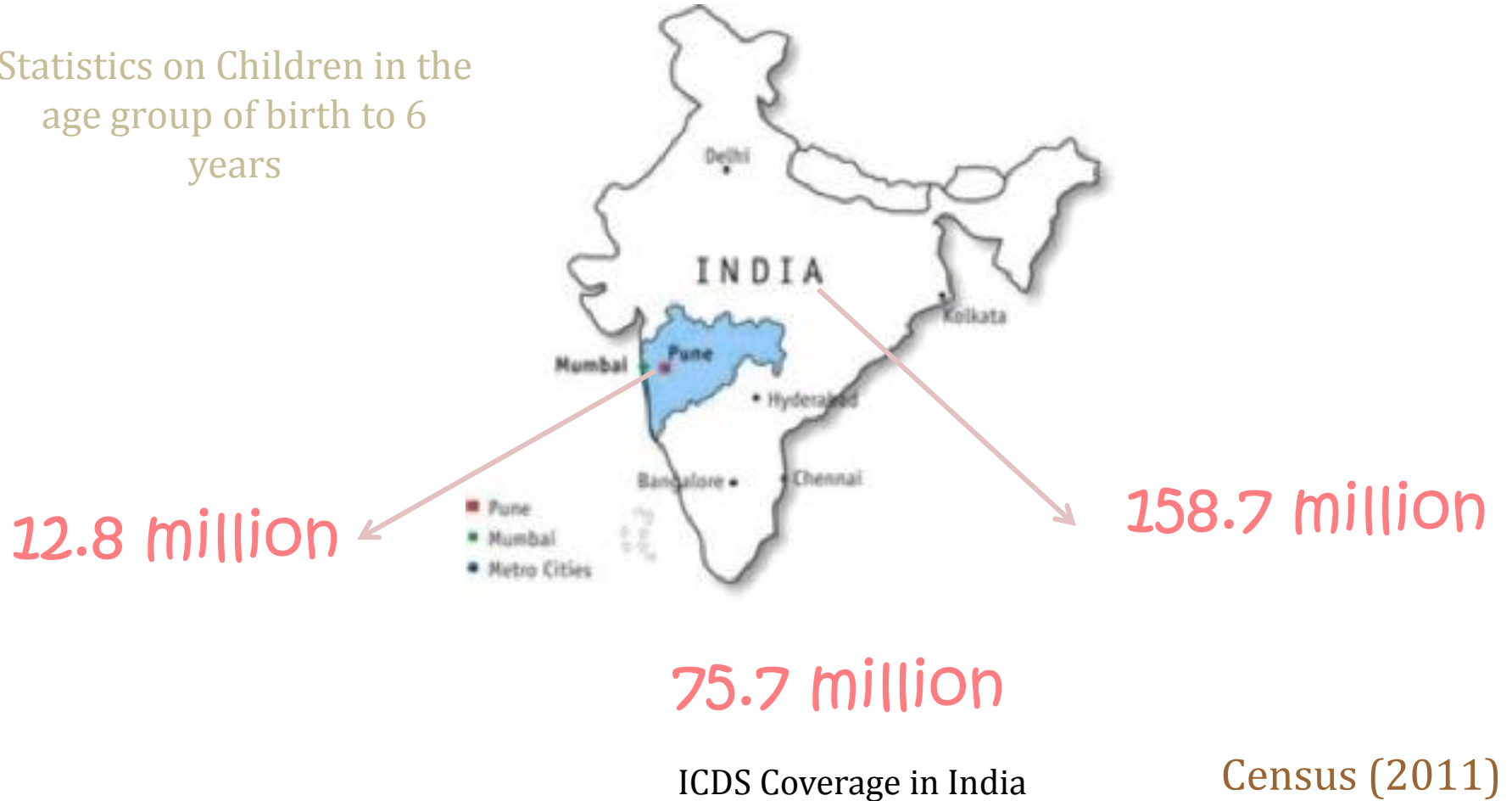
- Ineffective ICDS program due to gaps in implementation, outreach and quality of services such as inadequately trained staff, lack of resources, absence of integrated approach, focus on services rather than capacity building of caregivers...

Draft - National Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Policy (2011)



ICDS Services Coverage in India

Statistics on Children in the age group of birth to 6 years



Bottlenecks – ICDS Services in India

- Lack of reliable data on actual number of children attending ECCE provisions and their breakup as per delivery of services/ type of services

- Poor functioning of non-formal pre-school, nutrition and health education for caregivers

- Need for much work and strengthening of infrastructure, basic amenities and training components

- Greater focus and emphasis on providing services only related to health and nutrition

- Least attention to the education of mothers on early childhood due to limitation of space in the urban settings, low honorarium and competition from private pre-schools

- Insufficient training and community mobilization skills among staff necessary for conducting nutrition and health education sessions for mothers

- Non-existent services for children below 3 years in urban poor settings due to primary focus on 3 to 6 years age group



Early Childhood Development (ECD) Programs at Pune



Journey of Last 10 Years ?



Evolution of Inter Aide's ECD Program

Family Development Program (FDP)

Any development work with underprivileged families and slum communities must include social guidance for their capacity building and future sustainability



NEED

Capacity Building of the families, especially of the parents, in identifying and responding to the needs of the children in the early childhood development stage



Early Childhood Development (ECD) Program

To create a nurturing and stimulating environment for developing sustainable and healthy parenting practices among parents of children coming from economically disadvantaged backgrounds through sustained attention and efforts



Inter Aide's ECD Program at Pune

2004

Launch in Pune by Inter aide in collaboration with the local NGO, Swabhimaan

- Initial launch with FDP program, but later on evolved as an independent initiative
- Implementation in slum communities in Pune by Inter Aide and Swabhimaan in collaboration with various community-based partner organizations
- Training and technical inputs support by Swabhimaan and field implementation by partner organizations
- Specific focus on mothers or other primary female caregivers having children between birth to 3 years of age group
- Emphasis on evolving improved knowledge and best practices in the field of child development



Key Program Focus

Sensitizing the caregivers to respond to the needs of children between birth to 3 years of age

Motivating parents for responsible and enjoyable parenting

Providing the caregivers focused guidance on importance of play and use of healthy parenting practices

Creating opportunities for children essential for their holistic development



Program Objectives

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To promote a healthy and conducive environment for holistic development of the children from birth to 3 years of age group in urban slum families

To evolve the ECD program to match to the participant's needs

To increase awareness and sensitization levels of parents about early child development

To equip parents with necessary skills for effective parenthood

To help parents in applying the acquired knowledge and skills related to parenting in day-to-day practice

To ensure a long-term and sustained positive behaviour change related to parenting



Target Age Group – Birth to 3 Years

The most crucial but the most ignored period due to the most caregiver's general impression that school is the place where a child's actual learning begins.

Maximum and fastest brain development occurs from birth to 5 years

Infant's height is 50% greater at the end of first year and 75% greater at the end of two years than it was at birth

Maximum psychological development happens between birth and first year

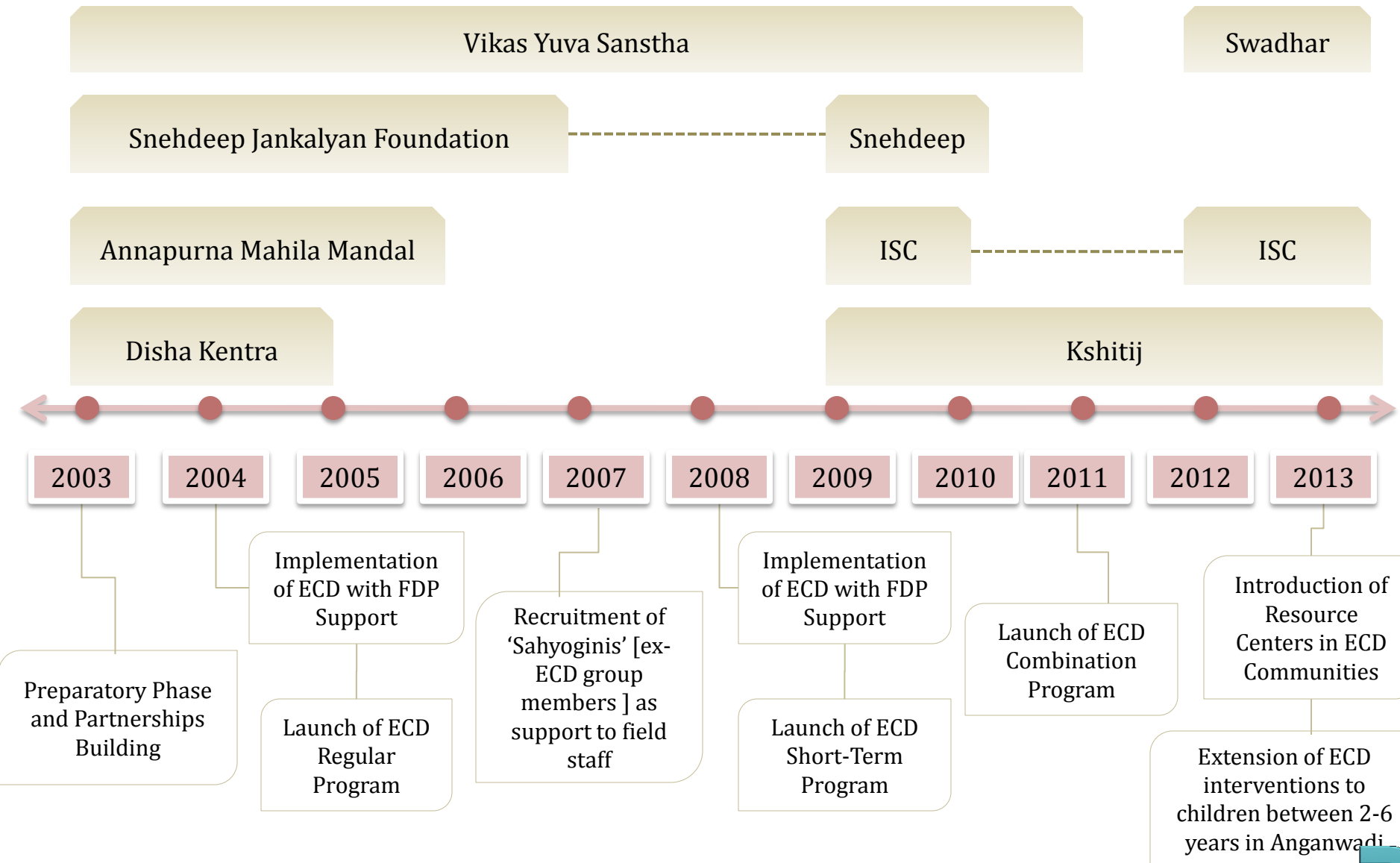
Why to FOCUS on Birth to 3 Years?

Language development starts much before the infant starts speaking

Brains of children are 2.5 times more active than those of adults by the age of three



Journey (2003 - 2013)



Urban Slum Communities

- Lack of appropriate basic amenities – sanitation, housing, etc.

- Lack of formal (crèche, Anganwadi) or informal (Family) parenting support services

- Low priority for parenting due to other critical issues such as poverty, relationships

- Low confidence and exposure resulting in less opportunities for accessing information and resources for healthy parenthood

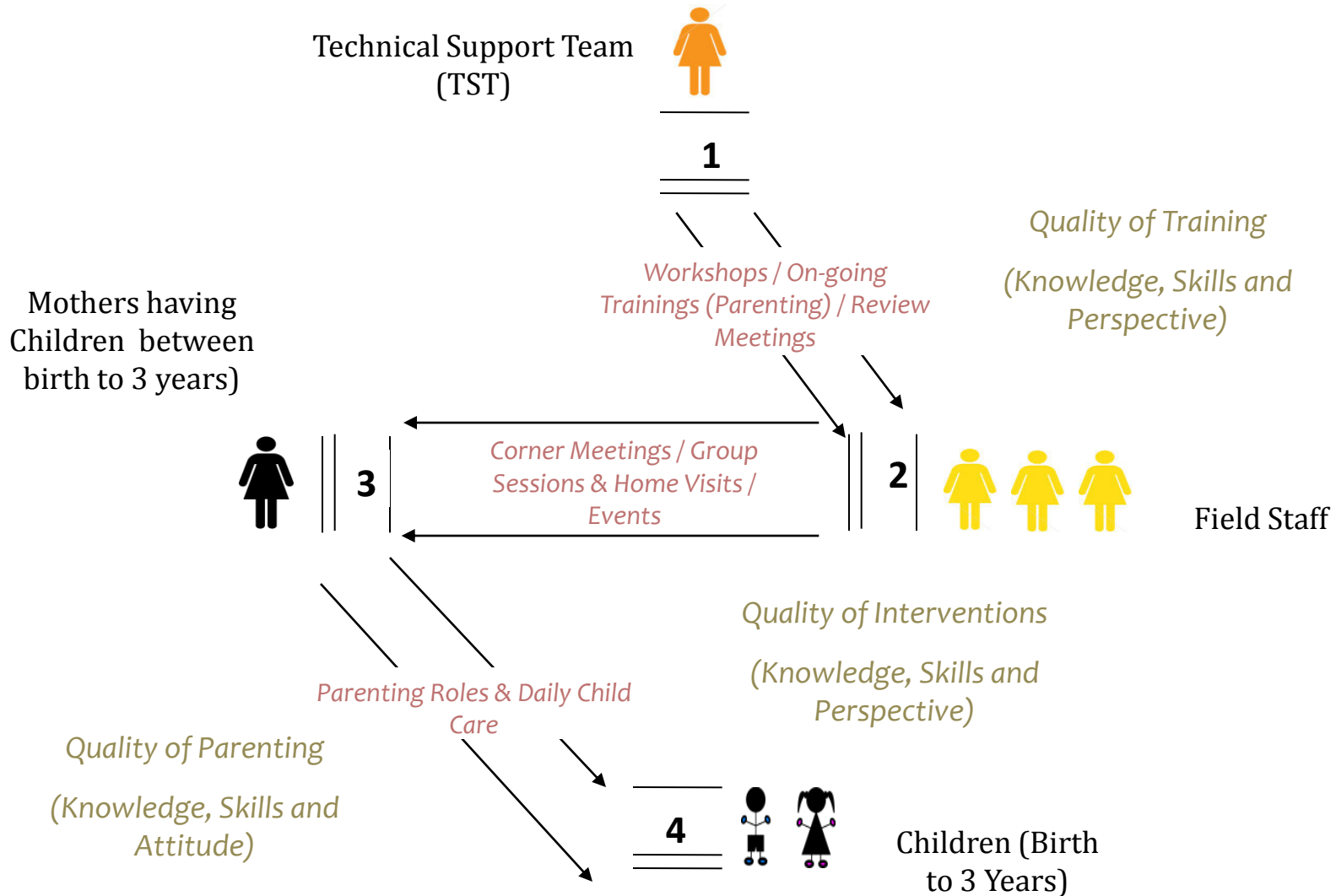
- Gender Inequalities

- Low control of women over sexual and reproductive health

- Misconceptions / superstitions related to parenting



Key Participants



Target Audience



Mothers having children
between birth to 3 years

Grandmothers, aunts or
elder sisters along with
mothers if interested

Preference to first-time mothers
or those with more than 1 child
in the birth to 3 years age group
or mothers lacking adequate
formal or informal means of
support for parenting



Focus on Mothers

Breadwinners / Providers

Engaged in out-of-home work for almost 8 to 12 hours a day



Caregivers

Preference to stay at home for child care, at least during early years



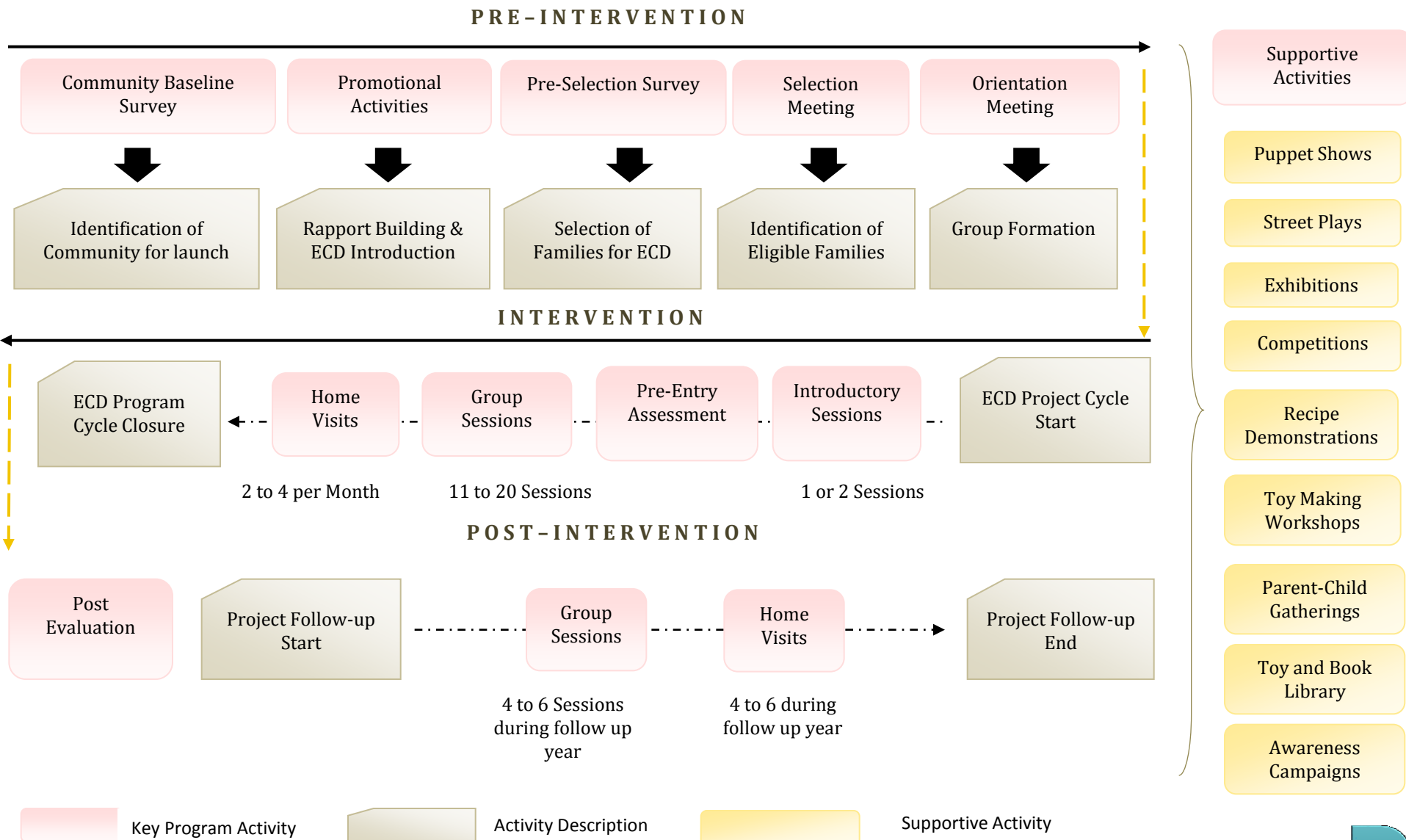
Continuously available with and for the child

More willingness to engage in the program activities due to preconceived notions about 'good' motherhood

Easy to enroll and retain in the program due to availability



Program Procedure



An illustration of a tree with brown branches and pink blossoms. Three pink birds are depicted: one is flying on the left, and two are perched on the branches. The background is a light pink gradient.

Thank You

