

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
UN-STARRED QUESTION NO. 1335
TO BE ANSWERED ON 06.02.2026

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT

1335. DR. D RAVI KUMAR:

Will the Minister of Women and Child Development be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has prioritised any specific long-term strategy for Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) as a core component of human capital formation, rather than treating it as a welfare measure;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has articulated any concrete, time-bound road map for systematic investment in ECCD to ensure child's life during the first 3,000 days critical for brain development, physical health and cognitive ability, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (d) whether infrastructure, manufacturing, digital innovation/ease of doing business receive substantial policy attention and funding whereas comparatively limited/fragmented investment is made in ECCD, which underpins future productivity and economic growth; and
- (e) the details of the steps being taken to ensure convergence between health, nutrition, education and social protection schemes during this period considering the fact that the World Health Organization and UNICEF recognise the first 1,000 days as a crucial 'window of opportunity'?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
(SHRIMATI ANNPURNA DEVI)

(a) to (d): The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is one of the six services provided in an integrated manner under Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 (Poshan 2.0).

National Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Policy, 2013 emphasises the need to accord priority attention to ECCE as it is an indispensable foundation for lifelong development and learning, and has lasting impact on early childhood development. It recognises ECCE as most cost-effective way to break the intergenerational cycle of multiple disadvantages and remove inequity, leading to long term social and economic benefits. National Education Policy

(NEP), 2020 also stresses the need for appropriate stimulation in the early years of a child's growth, recognizing that adequate care is necessary to build a strong foundation for life.

In line with NEP, 2020 focus, Government of India launched in October 2022, the National Curricular Framework for Foundational Stage (NCF-FS) providing a structure for the syllabus, Training of Teachers, Learning Teaching Material (LTM), etc. It is the first ever integrated Curriculum Framework for children between ages 3-8 in India.

Key initiatives taken by the Ministry, for strengthening ECCE in the country for ensuring holistic development of children up to the age of 6 years, are mentioned as under:

- i. Navchetana, which is a National Framework for Early Childhood Stimulation for children up to 3 years of age, was launched in March 2024. It aims to fill the conceptual and practical gaps in the understanding and implementing care and stimulation of child's growth. The framework empowers caregiver and Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) for holistic early stimulation of children through responsive caregiving.
- ii. Aadharshila, which is a National Curriculum for ECCE for children of age 3 to 6 years, was launched in March 2024 to ensure holistic development across physical, cognitive, social and emotional domains. Aadharshila improves the quality of early childhood education transacted at the Anganwadi Centre by prioritizing competency based lesson plans and activities, covering all learning domains.
- iii. Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi (PBPB) initiative was launched on 10th May, 2023 for upgrading skills of all Anganwadi workers to strengthen their capacity to provide ECCE and nutrition service to children below six years of age, including divyang children. In the first round of training programme, 41,645 State Level Master Trainers (SLMTs) and 10,05,756 AWWs have been trained as on 3rd February 2026.
- iv. Nutrition Support through Supplementary Nutrition Programme (SNP) is provided for Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers (PWLM) and children (6 months–6 years).
- v. Annual provision of Rs. 3,000 per Anganwadi Centre have been made for Pre-School Education (PSE) Kits comprising culturally relevant and low/no-cost toys.
- vi. Daily learning prompts through Poshan Tracker, including over 249 videos, 190 voice notes and 1000+ activity PDFs for children aged 3–6 years, are digitally provided to AWWs.
- vii. For children aged 0–3 years, 14 videos comprising 140 activities have been developed to support structured home visits and caregiver engagement.
- viii. 'Vidyarambh' ECCE Certificate for smooth transition from Anganwadi to Grade I has been introduced.
- ix. ECCE Days are being celebrated at Anganwadis every month to stimulate parental engagement and encourage community participation.

(e) Ministry has strengthened convergence with the Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSEL), Ministry of Education. Guidelines for Co-locating Anganwadi Centers within Government Primary Schools were released on 3rd September 2025. Presently, about 2.9 lakh Anganwadi Centers are co-located within Government schools across the country.

DoSEL also supports creation of infrastructure and basic facilities for pre-primary students in Government Schools, under the Centrally sponsored Samagra Shiksha Scheme in which funds are provided to States / UTs for child friendly furniture, BaLA (Building as Learning Aids) features, and outdoor play activities. Funds are also provisioned for items like teachers' capacity building, Teaching Learning Material (TLM) student wise etc.

The provision for creation of Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry (APAAR) for 3-6 years children has been enabled on the Poshan Tracker (mobile based application). Similarly, provision for creation of Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA) ID for children aged 0–6 years has also been enabled on the Poshan Tracker.

Under Home Based New-born Care (HBNC) and Home-Based Care of Young Children (HBYC) program, ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activist) performs structured home visits in the community to improve the child rearing practices focused on promotion of health, nutrition and early childhood development.
