



EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT NETWORK FOR KENYA (ECDNeK) NEWSLETTER

“Building Strong Foundations for Every Child”

2025 ISSUE

Admin

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Editor's Note

As we come to the close of 2025, I am deeply encouraged by the remarkable strides we have made together in strengthening Kenya's Early Childhood Development (ECD) ecosystem. This year has been a season of renewed energy, strategic engagement, and collective action

toward advancing nurturing care for all children.

Among the defining moments of the year was the **6th National ECD Stakeholders' Conference**, which brought together leaders and practitioners from across the country and beyond to reflect, share, and shape the future of ECD in Kenya. The **Principal Secretary's Stakeholders Breakfast Meeting** and our participation in the **Council of Governors' Devolution Conference** further reinforced the growing recognition of ECD as a national development priority. Likewise, the **Hilton Foundation East and Southern Africa ECD Partners' Convening** provided a valuable platform to deepen regional collaboration and learning in advancing locally led ECD systems.

These engagements have not only strengthened partnerships but also reaffirmed our shared responsibility in ensuring that every child has access to quality care, protection, and early learning opportunities. As a network, we remain committed to supporting evidence-driven advocacy, multisectoral collaboration, and stronger county and national systems that prioritize young children and families.

As we look ahead to 2026, may we continue to build on this momentum guided by unity of purpose, innovation, and compassion to create a more equitable and nurturing environment for every child in Kenya.

Warm regards,
Prof. Teresa Mwoma
National Coordinator, ECD Network for Kenya

Consultative Meeting of the Council of Governors (CoG) – Committee on Resource Mobilization and Development Partners Held at the Council of Governors Delta House

The Council of Governors (CoG) Committee on Resource Mobilization convened a high-level consultative meeting on 9th December 2025 at Delta House, chaired by H.E. Simba Arati, Governor of Kisii County. The meeting brought together representatives from development partners, the CoG Secretariat, civil society organizations, the ECD Network for Kenya, and technical institutions. Its overarching objective was to strengthen collaboration on resource mobilization, evidence-based budgeting, partner coordination, and institutional support for devolution. Deliberations were enriched by insights from development partners, presentations by the CoG Maarifa Centre, and UNICEF's evidence-based planning analysis, which highlighted key trends in poverty, child wellbeing, public financial management reforms, and the growing value of data-driven decision-making. Development partners commended counties for progress made in advancing devolution and reaffirmed their commitment to supporting CoG's high-level advocacy, particularly around costing devolved functions and safeguarding counties' fiscal space for effective service delivery. Participants agreed on the need to operationalize regular coordination forums between CoG and development partners, finalize the Partner Coordination Policy, and adopt co-creation as a guiding principle for development interventions. Counties further committed to promoting results-based financing, diversifying funding sources, and establishing standardized templates for capturing off-budget support. Strengthening evidence and data systems emerged as a central priority, with counties pledging to accelerate the rollout of County Statistical Abstracts, digitize systems, and deepen engagement with the Maarifa Centre.

Stakeholder's meeting with Principal Secretary State Department of Children Services.

On 8th July 2025, the ECD Network for Kenya (ECDNeK), in collaboration with the State Department for Children Services, Echidna Giving, Kidogo Early Years, Global Schools Forum, The Action Foundation, National Council for Children Services (NCCS), NurtureFirst and APHRC convened a Stakeholders' Meeting on Strengthening Early Childhood Care and Development at Fairview Hotel, Nairobi. The meeting brought together 53 participants from government, development partners, and civil society to share ongoing efforts, identify collaboration opportunities, and align priorities for enhancing childcare systems in Kenya. Discussions emphasized the need for a dedicated ECD



department within government structures, a centralized data system for real-time monitoring, and

increased investment in quality and affordable childcare services. The Principal Secretary recommended forming a Technical Working Group (TWG) composed of key ministries, county representatives, and ECDNeK to review policies, strengthen coordination, and develop a roadmap for childcare and early learning. The convening concluded with a shared commitment to establishing a national coordination framework, improving caregiver training, and advancing safeguarding standards to ensure every child in Kenya enjoys quality care and early learning opportunities.

6th National ECD Stakeholders Conference

The **6th National Early Childhood Development (ECD) Stakeholders' Conference** was held from **15th to 17th July 2025** at **Palm Oasis Resort, Garissa County**, under the theme *"Promoting Transformative Systemic Change in a Child's Ecosystem."* The conference served as a premier platform for ECD stakeholders to exchange knowledge, share best practices, and showcase innovative, culturally relevant, and climate-resilient models that drive transformative systemic change in the early years. The event was hosted by the **County Government of Garissa** in collaboration with the **ECD Network for Kenya (ECDNeK)** and brought together **1,165 participants** representing **25 counties in Kenya, 6 countries, and over 56 organizations** across government, civil society, academia, and research.

The conference was organized through a joint planning committee composed of four subcommittees: **communications, scientific, logistics, 10-year anniversary, and finance**. ECDNeK played a key coordinating role, facilitating planning meetings, mobilizing stakeholders, and ensuring visibility



through media engagement and information materials. The communications subcommittee enhanced conference visibility, while the scientific subcommittee reviewed abstracts, selected keynote speakers, and ensured the theme and subthemes aligned with National ECD priorities. The logistics subcommittee oversaw

venue preparation and participant welfare, while the finance team coordinated resource mobilization to meet conference needs.

A key outcome of the conference was the adoption of the **2025 Garissa County Communiqué**, which presented actionable recommendations to strengthen ECD systems across Kenya:

- County governments must uphold their duty to deliver integrated ECD services, aligned with national policies, to ensure that every child in Kenya has a good start in life.
- Build political will and invest in children by leveraging government systems, participatory processes, and First Spouses as ECD champions.
- Focus on community-level, culturally contextualized interventions and invest in the capacity of families to provide nurturing care, positive discipline, and early interventions.
- Strengthen food systems by increasing county-level investments in high-impact nutrition programs—maternal and child services, supplementation, treatment of malnutrition, and

school meals. Currently, only 10.5% of nutrition spending and 1.1% of county budgets go to these proven interventions (UNICEF, 2025).

- Align child protection with the multisectoral ECD approach by strengthening protection systems and institutionalizing safeguarding across communities and institutions.
- Strengthen early learning systems and structures through integration of play-based learning, curriculum implementation, and domestication of policies by counties.
- Strengthen data and technology use to guide investments, track performance, and improve ECD outcomes.
- Institutionalize citizen-led scorecards, County Nutrition Investment Scorecards, and feedback mechanisms to track delivery gaps, foster transparency, and promote citizen engagement.
- Facilitate adoption of Ministry of Education models that integrate cultural early learning practices with formal ECDE to eliminate delayed school entry and transition for children in pastoral communities. Ground interventions in the science of ECD, maximizing child development during the critical first 1,000 days and the subsequent 3,000 days (ages 0–8).
- Strengthen the ECD workforce by building capacity of teachers, parents, and caregivers for early detection, screening, and support of children with disabilities and extraordinary talents.
- Build resilient systems that prioritize children and pregnant mothers during climate shocks by strengthening behavior change, early warning systems, and climate-resilient infrastructure. Promote community-led climate action to safeguard child development.
- Train children and facilitate their participation in climate-smart practices, including ECD interventions in climate funding and in the financing of locally led climate action (FLOCA).

Moving forward, participants agreed that all ECD stakeholders and practitioners would be **sensitized on the Call to Action** arising from the communiqué and that **implementation progress** would be tracked through **webinars, sensitization forums, and biannual convenings**. The next **National ECD Stakeholders' Conference** will be held in **2027 in Embu County**, where partners will review progress made and renew their collective commitment to ensuring that every child in Kenya thrives in a nurturing, inclusive, and resilient environment.

Review and Harmonization of Cabinet Feedback on the IECD Policy

The **ECD Network for Kenya (ECDNeK)** participated in a two-day meeting on **5th and 6th August 2024** at **Sarova Panafric Hotel**, focused on reviewing and incorporating feedback on the **Integrated Early Childhood Development (IECD) Policy** following its submission to the Senate. The meeting was organized by the **National Council for Children's Services (NCCS)** and brought together **27 representatives** (10 men and 17 women) from key institutions including **ECDNeK**, the **State Department for Children Services (DCS)**, the **National Council for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD)**, the **Ministry of Health (MoH)**, the **Ministry of Education (MoE)**, **UNICEF**, **WHO**, **Amref Health Africa**, **Catholic Relief Services (CRS)**, **Kidogo**, **Mathematica**, and **PATH**.



The primary objective of the meeting was to review the Cabinet's feedback, strengthen the policy language, and ensure that the final version of the IECD Policy reflects a **comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach** to child development that is practical and implementable at both **national and county levels**. In his opening remarks, **Mr. Abidinoor Mohamed**, CEO of NCCS, emphasized the importance of **collective ownership** in finalizing the policy, describing it as a crucial step in aligning national priorities with **constitutional mandates** and

Cabinet guidance. Speaking on behalf of the **Principal Secretary**, a representative from the DCS reaffirmed the government's commitment to child protection and called upon all stakeholders to view the policy as a **shared national agenda**. The **Ministry of Health** highlighted the central role of child health and nutrition, urging for intentional integration of health interventions to achieve holistic child development. The **Ministry of Education** echoed the need for collaboration, cautioning against siloed approaches and emphasizing teamwork for sustainable impact. Development partners such as **UNICEF** and **WHO** reiterated their support and encouraged Kenya to align the policy with **global nurturing care frameworks** and **best practices**.

In conclusion, the review process marked a **significant milestone** in Kenya's journey toward safeguarding the rights and well-being of young children. Once adopted, the IECD Policy will serve as a **comprehensive national framework** to coordinate and guide multi-sectoral actions that promote holistic early childhood development. For **ECDNeK**, participation in this process was particularly meaningful, providing a platform to ensure that **community voices and lived realities** are reflected in the policy. The engagement also reinforced ECDNeK's role as a **key national partner** in influencing policy, fostering collaboration between government and non-state actors, and driving the vision of **nurturing care for every child in Kenya**.

Devolution Conference 2025 – Strengthening County-Level Action for Early Childhood Development

The **ECD Network for Kenya (ECDNeK)** participated in the **Devolution Conference 2025**, held from **12th to 15th August 2025** at **Homa Bay Boys High School, Homa Bay County**, organized by the **Council of Governors (CoG)**. In collaboration with partners including the **Frontier Counties Development Council (FCDC)**, **Aga Khan University-Institute for Human Development (AKU-IHD)**, **Catholic Relief Services (CRS)**, **NurtureFirst**, and **Kidogo Early Years**, ECDNeK hosted a side event and an exhibition booth under the theme *“Advancing Inclusive, Accessible, and Quality ECD Services through County-Level Coordination and Investment.”* The main objectives were to sensitize county governments on the need for universal, quality, and affordable childcare services in Kenya; share findings on county-level ECD financing and budgeting; promote multisectoral coordination among state and non-state actors; and enhance the visibility of the network by showcasing its vision, mission, and strategic focus areas.

Through these engagements, the network reached over **120 visitors** at its exhibition booth and **323 participants** in its side event (**97 in-person** and **226 virtual via YouTube**). The discussions emphasized the importance of strengthening coordination and investment in ECD at the county level, leading to the development of a **communiqué reaffirming collective commitment** to advancing Early Childhood Development through innovative financing,



collaboration, and evidence-based models that ensure every child in Kenya thrives from the earliest years. The event also brought together senior national leaders, including the **Principal Secretary, State Department for Children Services**, representatives from **NCCS**, policymakers, and partners, who jointly underscored the urgency of developing a **harmonized national ECD financing framework** and strengthening the **regulation of childcare services**. ECDNeK's active role in co-convening, moderating, and exhibiting at the conference greatly enhanced its visibility and positioned it as a key player in national ECD advocacy. Going forward, the network will continue to operationalize the commitments made by translating them into actionable interventions, policies, and collaborative initiatives at both national and county levels, building on the communiqué and government commitments to advocate for **ring-fenced ECD financing, integration of childcare into national systems**, and the establishment of a **robust, inclusive framework for childcare and early learning services** across Kenya.

Hilton Foundation East & Southern Africa ECD Partners' convening

The **Conrad N. Hilton Foundation East and Southern Africa ECD Partners' Convening**, held from **8th to 10th October 2025** at **Mövenpick Hotel, Nairobi**, brought together partners from **Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, and Zanzibar** to reimagine Early Childhood Development (ECD) within a shifting global and regional context. The 2.5-day convening, themed “**Advancing Locally Led ECD Systems**,” provided a rich platform for reflection, learning, and collaboration among governments, development partners, civil society, and private sector actors working to strengthen ECD systems across the region. Through a blend of plenary sessions, country roundtables, and marketplace exchanges, participants explored how to position ECD as a national development priority, align investments to local needs, and track progress through meaningful and context-driven indicators. The meeting brought together over 100 participants representing a wide array of partners.



National and Regional Perspectives

The convening was officially opened by remarks from the **Principal Secretary, State Department for Children's Services**, delivered by Ms. Esther, who reaffirmed the government's commitment to child well-being, emphasizing the need for **locally led, county-driven ECD systems** that integrate positive parenting, health, nutrition, and early

learning. She highlighted the importance of building **safe and inclusive spaces** for adolescent girls and strengthening childcare systems as a foundation for national growth.

Country Reflections and Shared Learning

Country-level discussions from Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, and Zanzibar revealed both progress and persistent challenges. Kenya highlighted advances in **multisectoral coordination**, policy development, and political goodwill under the **Children Act 2022** and the soon-to-be-launched **Integrated ECD Policy**. However, challenges such as **fragmented coordination, limited funding, and slow policy implementation** persist. Tanzania showcased strides in policy formulation and the establishment of **workplace childcare spaces**, while Zanzibar stood out for assigning ECD a **specific budget code** and integrating it into its national planning processes. Mozambique emphasized the need for greater coverage and stronger partnerships to improve service quality and sustainability. Across the region, partners agreed that **ECD must be recognized as a multi-layered national priority**, requiring sustained investment, innovation, and evidence-based planning. There was a strong call to develop a **National Plan of Action on Childcare**, strengthen **public-private partnerships (PPPs)**, and establish **innovative financing mechanisms** to ensure sustainable ECD investments.

Reframing ECD as a National Development Priority

Kenya's country team developed an **elevator pitch** positioning ECD as the foundation of the **Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA)** and **Vision 2030**, emphasizing that **"ECD is the engine that powers national ambitions."** The team called for doubling national and county ECD investments, integrating ECD outcomes across all development pillars, and strengthening coordination between sectors for greater impact.



Hilton Foundation Updates and Commitments

The **Hilton Foundation** reaffirmed its dedication to collaborative learning and systems strengthening across the region. Currently funding initiatives in **Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, and Los Angeles**, the Foundation emphasized the need for advocacy directed at the highest

government levels Presidents, Prime Ministers, and Ministers of Finance to ensure that ECD remains central to national development agendas. The Foundation also announced continued **grant-making to governments through implementing partners**, including direct support to the **Council of Governors (CoG)** in Kenya, while encouraging partners to leverage shared resources and comparative strengths to maximize collective impact.

Conclusion

The **Hilton Foundation East and Southern Africa ECD Partners' Convening** was a powerful reminder that achieving meaningful and sustainable progress for young children requires **joint ownership, innovation, and accountability**. The convening reaffirmed ECD as a cross-cutting national development priority, calling for **stronger political commitment, sustainable financing, inclusive data systems, and coordinated implementation**. For ECDNeK, participation in this landmark convening strengthened its role as a **national convener and advocate** for multisectoral collaboration, aligning Kenya's efforts with regional and global momentum toward locally led ECD systems. The collective pledge to **think and act differently** signals a bold step forward one where every child across East and Southern Africa has the opportunity not only to survive, but to thrive.

Capacity Building Workshop for select sectoral committee from the Council of Governors on ECD

To support ongoing efforts to strengthen county-level leadership and coordination in early childhood development, the **Council of Governors (CoG)** convened an **internal sectoral committee meeting on Early Childhood Development (ECD)** from **21st to 25th October 2025** in **Naivasha, Nakuru County**. The meeting brought together representatives from key county departments to deepen their understanding of ECD as a multisectoral priority that requires integrated planning, coordinated financing, and aligned implementation across sectors. During the meeting, the **ECD Network for Kenya (ECDNeK)**, through its **National Coordinator**, facilitated a **sensitization session** that provided participants with insights into the **Nurturing Care Framework (NCF)** and its application within county systems. The session highlighted the five interconnected domains of nurturing care; good health, adequate nutrition, responsive caregiving, safety and security, and opportunities for early learning emphasizing the need for counties to approach ECD holistically rather than through isolated sectoral interventions.



In addition, the presentation shared findings from the **ECD System Measurement Study**, which assessed county performance in implementing nurturing care. It revealed varying levels of progress, with counties performing better in areas of health and nutrition but needing greater focus on responsive caregiving, stimulation, and early learning. Discussions also touched on the importance of **data-driven coordination**, equitable financing, and the role of county assemblies in ensuring effective oversight and accountability in ECD implementation. Participants recognized the need to harmonize county and national frameworks, strengthen interdepartmental collaboration, and build sustainable financing mechanisms to support quality ECD services.

The session concluded with a call to action for counties to prioritize the development of **county-specific ECD policies** aligned with national standards and the Nurturing Care Framework, and to institutionalize ECD coordination structures within county governments. ECDNeK's contribution to the workshop underscored its role in **capacity strengthening, technical support, and policy advocacy**, positioning it as a trusted national partner in advancing integrated and equitable early childhood development across Kenya.

Implementation of National Commitments to End Violence Against Children: The Bogota Commitments (To Review Progress on the Bogota Commitments and prepare For Arise Africa)

The **ECD Network for Kenya (ECDNeK)**, in collaboration with the **State Department for Children Services (SDCS)** and the **National Council for Children's Services (NCCS)**, took part in a strategic consultative meeting focused on the **Implementation of National Commitments to End Violence Against Children**. The meeting brought together key government agencies, civil society actors, and development partners to review progress, identify gaps, and develop actionable strategies to strengthen the protection of children from all forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. The engagement aligned with Kenya's ongoing efforts to operationalize national commitments under the



Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, while reinforcing inter-agency coordination and accountability mechanisms at both national and county levels. ECDNeK contributed to the discussions by highlighting the critical link between **early childhood development and child protection**, emphasizing that preventing violence must begin in the early years through nurturing care, positive parenting, and supportive community

systems. Participants reaffirmed their shared commitment to implementing the national action plan, strengthening safeguarding structures within schools and childcare facilities, and ensuring the inclusion of violence prevention measures in county child protection frameworks. The meeting also emphasized the need for sustainable financing and data-driven monitoring systems to track progress and inform policy decisions. ECDNeK's participation underscored its continued leadership in advancing child well-being through collaboration, policy engagement, and evidence generation ensuring that every child in Kenya grows up in a safe, nurturing, and protective environment.

First Meeting of the East African Community Early Childhood Development (ECD) Technical Working Group

The **ECD Network for Kenya (ECDNeK)** participated in the **First East African Community (EAC) Early Childhood Development (ECD) Technical Working Group Meeting**, held from **6th to 8th May 2025** at the **DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel, Nairobi**. The meeting brought together ECD focal points from across the EAC Partner States including Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Somalia alongside representatives from the



African Union, AfECN, UNICEF, and other development partners. The objective was to review and validate the **Regional ECD Guidelines** and Work Plan, fostering a harmonized and sustainable approach to ECD across East Africa. ECDNeK actively contributed to discussions on policy alignment, regional coordination, and resource mobilization, underscoring the need for coherent national frameworks that strengthen early

childhood systems through multi-sectoral collaboration. Notably, ECDNeK featured in a **childcare panel discussion** alongside representatives from Tanzania and Uganda, where it presented Kenya's experiences and insights from the **Childcare Dialogue Campaign**, conducted in partnership with AfECN and other stakeholders. The campaign, themed *"Universal Access to Quality Childcare and Protection for Children 0–5 Years,"* highlighted progress, challenges, and opportunities in advancing childcare within national and county systems. The meeting concluded with a call to integrate regional ECD guidelines into national policies, strengthen technical working groups, and enhance monitoring, evaluation, and accountability mechanisms. Through its active participation, **ECDNeK reinforced Kenya's leadership in shaping regional ECD priorities** and reaffirmed its commitment to promoting inclusive, evidence-based approaches that ensure every child in East Africa thrives within nurturing and protective environments.

Disability-Inclusive ECD, Inclusive Education, and Rehabilitative Services Stakeholders Meeting

The ECD Network for Kenya (ECDNeK) participated in the **Disability-Inclusive Early Childhood Development (DIECD), Inclusive Education, and Rehabilitative Services Stakeholders Meeting**,



held on **9th October 2025** at the **Radisson Blu Hotel, Nairobi**. The convening, organized by **The Action Foundation (TAF)**, brought together **49 stakeholders** from government ministries, development partners, civil society organizations, organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), and caregivers to promote a shared commitment toward building inclusive systems that meet the needs of children with disabilities. The meeting aimed to foster dialogue, reflection, and collaboration around the **Disability-Inclusive Early Childhood Development (DIECD)**

Strategy 2025–2030, which envisions a Kenya where every child regardless of ability has equitable access to nurturing care, early identification, inclusive learning, and rehabilitative services.

ECD Network for Kenya joined stakeholders in emphasizing the need for a **multi-sectoral approach** to inclusion, noting that meaningful change requires strong partnerships between government, development partners, caregivers, and community-based organizations. The meeting provided a platform to unpack the DIECD Strategy, which takes a **systems-change approach** to address the root causes of exclusion and delay in identifying and supporting children with disabilities, particularly within the first 1,000 days of life. It also highlighted systemic barriers such as limited access to affordable rehabilitation, insufficient training for teachers, and gaps in assistive technology and disability data. Through discussions, stakeholders acknowledged caregivers as central to the inclusion agenda and celebrated the creation of the **CARE Conference**, a platform to empower and amplify caregivers' voices in policy and practice.

Participants were commended for their commitment to co-creation and collective action, moving from conceptual frameworks to practical implementation. The meeting outlined a phased plan to

operationalize the DIECD Strategy starting with governance and alignment, accessibility audits, evidence generation, and policy advisory processes to ensure sustainability. Testimonies from caregivers of children with autism and cerebral palsy provided a human perspective, emphasizing the daily realities of caregiving and the transformative power of community empathy and support. The meeting culminated in the **official launch of the DIECD Strategy 2025–2030**, a landmark framework aimed at advancing inclusive early childhood development, education, and rehabilitation across Kenya. The strategy calls for strengthened systems, data integration, and increased investment to ensure no child is left behind, reaffirming ECDNeK's commitment to championing inclusive policies and partnerships that create equitable opportunities for all children to thrive.

Development of Joint workplan on Childcare Standards

On 27th August 2025, a meeting was held at the National Council for Children's Services (NCCS) Boardroom to co-create a national joint workplan for the development of Childcare Standards for Early Childhood Development (ECD) in Kenya. The session, convened by the State Department for Children Services (SDCS) and NCCS, invited the Early Childhood Development Network for Kenya (ECDNeK), NurtureFirst, and the Global Schools Forum. The purpose was to ensure the workplan aligned with the Children Act 2022 and other national frameworks, guiding the development, piloting, and implementation of childcare standards. ECDNeK contributed technical expertise by providing advocacy insights, sharing evidence from the Childcare Dialogue Campaign, and offering input on budgeting processes for the planned activities. The meeting culminated in the development of a comprehensive joint work plan that outlined key budgeted activities and defined the roles and responsibilities of each organization, including NCCS, SDCS, the Council of Governors (COG), ECDNeK, NurtureFirst, and the Global Schools Forum. The agreed next step was for the workplan to be formally submitted for signing by all participating organizations.

Validation of the Foundational Learning Guidelines by the Ministry of Education (MOE)

On 11th September 2025, the Ministry of Education (MOE), in partnership with Education Development Trust (EDT), convened a validation meeting for the Foundation Learning Guidelines at Centre for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education in Africa (CEMASTEa), Nairobi. The meeting brought together 33 participants (17 men, 16 women) from a wide range of stakeholders including ECDNeK, UNICEF, Global Partnership for Education, APHRC, World Vision, Zizi Afrique, and others. The purpose was to consolidate views from stakeholders to strengthen the guidelines for pre-Primary education. Partners reviewed sections on situation analysis, commitments, strategies, principles, and stakeholder roles, with ECDNeK contributing specifically to the roles of stakeholders while advocating for integration of Nurturing Care and inclusive services. A key outcome was the agreement that the Kenya School Readiness Assessment Tool would be finalized and annexed to the guidelines. The next step was to incorporate stakeholder feedback and present the revised guidelines to MOE senior management for final approval.

Nurturing Care for ECD Technical Working Group meeting

On 28th August 2025, the Nurturing Care for Early Childhood Development (NCfECD) Technical Working Group (TWG) meeting was held at the Trade Mark Hotel in Nairobi, hosted by the Ministry of Health and supported by UNICEF. The meeting brought together 24 participants (6 men and 18



women) representing government, development partners, CSOs, and county officials. Key discussions focused on updates of NCfECD programs, review of the Care for Child Development (CCD) package, and an overview of the Care for the Caregiver (CFC) module. Partners emphasized the need to adapt the CCD package to Kenya's context, ensure training materials highlight caregiver-child interaction, early stimulation, and inclusion of children with special needs, and align policy updates with practical realities at national and county levels. The CFC module was noted as a priority, with

partners encouraged to explore UNICEF's AGORA platform and broaden engagement to include mental health, community health, and child protection actors. The Ministry of Health committed to share its Annual Work Plan with partners and to develop a plan for learning opportunities. ECDNeK contributed by sensitizing participants on calls to action from recent national ECD forums and committed to align these with the MOH work plan, remain actively engaged in TWG meetings, and support the finalization and rollout of the CCD and CFC packages.

Celebration of the Day of the African Child 2025

The 2025 national celebrations of the Day of the African Child (DAC) were held at Unoa Primary School in Makueni County under the theme "Planning and Budgeting for Children's Rights: Progress Since 2010." The day began with a symbolic march through Wote Town, followed by vibrant



performances of songs, dances, and poems by children advocating for their rights. Exhibitions showcased child-centered programs from government, civil society, and partners, while dignitaries led by H.E. First Lady Rachel Ruto emphasized the importance of inclusive planning and resource allocation for children's well-being. A key milestone of the celebration was the launch of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the

National Care Reform Strategy for Children (2022–2032), aimed at strengthening coordination and accountability in child protection. In her keynote address, the First Lady reaffirmed the government's dedication to child-sensitive budgeting, calling for stronger partnerships across sectors. Leaders also

highlighted progress made under the Children Act 2022 and the historic inclusion of children in the national budgeting process. These proceedings underscored Kenya's ongoing progress while acknowledging the gaps that remain in ensuring every child grows up in a safe, nurturing, and empowering environment.

Editing and development of training manuals of the Child Caregiver III curriculum By National Industrial Training Authority (NITA)

The National Industrial Training Authority (NITA), with support from the Africa Early Childhood Network (AfECN), convened a childcare trainee resources development workshop from 4th–8th August 2025 at DoubleTree by Hilton, Nairobi.



The workshop brought together 30 participants ((8 male; 22 female) from key institutions and organizations, including the State Department of Children Services (SDCS), the National Council for Children Services (NCCS), Nairobi City County, the Early Childhood Development Network for Kenya (ECDNeK), the Action Foundation (TAF), Community Initiatives Agenda (CIA), Kidogo Early Years, Tiny Totos, Nurture First, the House Managers Agencies

Association (HMAA), and Uthabiti Africa. The main focus was on simplifying the Trainee Resource Book, integrating stakeholder feedback, and ensuring its alignment with practical caregiving realities and national standards. Key outcomes included restructuring complex modules into accessible formats, incorporating visual aids and real-life examples, and emphasizing inclusivity, emotional development, and caregiver empowerment. Participants also recommended participatory teaching methods such as role-playing, the development of supplementary materials like flashcards and audio guides, piloting the revised resource with trainees, and training trainers to deliver content effectively.

ACT Knowledge Exchange Forum on Transforming the Paid Childcare Sector

The ECD Network for Kenya was delighted to join stakeholders from Kenya and Malawi for a two-day ACT Knowledge Exchange Forum held in Nairobi. As a strong advocate for universal, quality,



affordable, and inclusive childcare in Kenya, ECDNeK's participation in the forum further reinforced its commitment to advancing childcare advocacy, gender equality, and women's economic empowerment. The Exchange Forum was organized by WUSC, with the ACT program being implemented by COVAW in Kenya and WOLREC in Malawi. Participants underscored that childcare must be recognized as a national development

priority, the foundation of inclusive growth and progress. A recurring theme throughout the sessions was the need for reliable data to quantify and demonstrate the value of childcare, as the sector



remains undervalued and under-recognized. The forum highlighted the importance of strengthening evidence-based advocacy and improving data collection to better inform policies and investments. Discussions also emphasized that childcare is not the responsibility of a single actor but rather a shared agenda requiring collaboration across sectors, including government, civil society, and the private sector. Participants noted that men's involvement is vital in transforming the childcare ecosystem and promoting shared responsibility within families and communities. Further, the forum explored the economic dimensions of childcare, noting that a productive and well-supported childcare sector can unlock women's economic participation, stimulate national economic growth, and yield long-term social dividends. Financing, self-organization, and

stronger structures were identified as critical to ensuring women's access to capital and encouraging private-sector investment in childcare. The need to present a strong business case for childcare was also highlighted, emphasizing the sector's potential to drive women's economic empowerment, increase workforce productivity, and contribute to national economic growth. Participants noted that positioning childcare as both a social and economic investment would help attract greater support from government and private-sector actors.

Season's Greetings from the ECD Network for Kenya (ECDNeK)

As the year draws to a close, we take a moment to reflect with gratitude on the incredible milestones achieved through partnership, collaboration, and shared commitment to advancing Early Childhood Development in Kenya and beyond.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to all our members, partners, and supporters for walking this journey with us your dedication continues to inspire change and build brighter futures for our youngest learners.

May this festive season bring you **joy, peace, and renewed hope** for the year ahead. Together, let's step into **2026** with the same passion, purpose, and promise ensuring that every child has the opportunity to grow, learn, and thrive.

Happy Holidays and a Prosperous New Year!

🎄 *With love and appreciation,
The ECDNeK Secretariat*

Join us in spreading the word! Share this newsletter with your contacts and network. We look forward to connecting with you!

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