



# The impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable children

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Asia-Pacific Regional Network  
for Early Childhood

# COVID-19 is a real emergency

The lives of young children are being seriously disrupted

# 1.5B

**children are out of school**  
or 87%, according to  
UNESCO

**180 COUNTRIES**  
with **SCHOOL CLOSURES**  
for weeks or months

Disparity, exclusion and  
inequity to increase

COVID-19 will have a long-term and far-reaching  
impact on vulnerable, disadvantaged  
families and children.

Photo source: UNICEF, n.d.



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# The impact is greater on children already facing challenges of schooling and learning

- children with delays and disabilities
- children living in poverty
- children living in remote and rural areas
- children not fluent in the national language of instruction
- children of refugee and migrant families





# Children with delay and disabilities...

- 1 ...**will no longer have access to early learning services** with a set routine and teachers trained in disability-inclusive education
- 2 ...**may not have access to distance learning** and online courses adapted to their needs
- 3 ...**may live in families unable to provide needed special services** and lacking the skills (and patience) to do so
- 4 ...**will lose important interaction with other children** with disabilities and with their abled peers
- 5 ...**will therefore lose a strong, close-knit network** of people supporting their often multiple and complex needs



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# Children living in poverty...

1

...**are often in crowded urban contexts** with weak medical systems and more air pollution, leading to the greater likelihood of infection

2

...**will no longer have their ECD programme/school** as a place that can “make up” for the social and economic disadvantage of their families with few books, less educated caregivers, and a more stressful learning environment

3

...**will no longer benefit from non-academic programmes** targeted at children of poor families: health services and feeding and nutritional supplementation programmes, etc.

4

...**will likely not have adequate technological resources** – computers, internet services, etc. – required for online learning; the digital divide will therefore only increase



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# Children living in remote and rural villages will...

- 1 ...**also suffer from the digital divide** due to poverty and the lack of connectivity and access to online learning
- 2 ...**be less able to benefit from needed social interaction** found in ECD programmes and schools
- 3 ...**go to programmes with less money available** to mitigate against the disadvantages of remote schools – fewer materials, a lack of subsidies for trained teachers, the costs of transportation, etc.

# Children not using the language of instruction at home...

- 1 ... if they learn in contexts (in ECD programmes and primary schools) where early learning is able to be provided in their home language/mother tongue, **will no longer be exposed to mother tongue-based multi-lingual education** and to the benefits this provides in terms of learning
- 2 ... if they live in contexts where they are forced to learn in the national language (even in ECD programmes but more certainly in primary school), **will lose the opportunity to master the national language** in a structured setting



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# Children of migrant and refugee families...

1

...**may be forced to live in crowded migrant areas** or quarantine 'camps' and therefore will be more susceptible to infection

2

...**may face discrimination and stigma** if they are returning from places with COVID-19 infection

3

...**may have less access to the technology** required for online learning

4

... if returning to their villages with their migrant parents, **will face even greater interruption in their education and learning**

5

... if they have been "left behind" by migrant parents, **may find that their home environment is complicated by their parents' return** – which may also be marked by an increase in domestic violence

6

... **may find that their parents are not familiar with the curriculum or its language**, making managing home learning more difficult



# Other important issues

1

**Children lose important social interaction time** with others: virtual learning is no substitute for group play and stimulation; extensive screen time has negative effects on social skills, self regulation, and attention spans.

2

**Communities lose empathy for others** and fear outsiders, and stigma and stress increase.

3

**Domestic violence linked to lockdowns and greater poverty increases** and makes home environments more toxic for children

4

**Budgets of ministries involved in ECD will be diverted** to combat the pandemic, especially to the health sector; and health ministry funds will be diverted from other health needs, including for young children.



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# Possible mitigation strategies

1

Feeding programmes, nutritional supplementation, and family subsidies (e.g., CCT), and services in mother tongues

2

Special assistance to children with disabilities (e.g., home visits, adapted online materials)

3

‘Low tech’ and ‘no tech’ solutions to distance and learning (including printed materials and home learning kits)

4

Family support services to meet demands for distance/online learning and the risks of domestic violence

5

Future strategies for making up for lost teaching contact hours and to overcome disparities from the impact of the pandemic



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# Positives?

1

The 'new normal': how to 'build back better' the education/ECD sectors?

2

Curriculum enhancement: the inclusion of resilience and coping with stress

3

Recognition of the greater engagement of parents/caregivers

4

Better and more inclusive access to, and use of, technology in learning and education

5

The opportunity to invest in family and community 'preparedness' for the next emergency/ pandemic



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# Photo references

Dora, C. 2019. Transforming the physical environment that shapes young children's health and development: the role of policies and partnerships. Presentation during the Asia-Pacific Regional ECD Conference, Ha Noi, 5 December 2019.

UNICEF. n.d. Photo essays. Available in [https://www.unicef.org/photoessays/index-pe\\_29939.html](https://www.unicef.org/photoessays/index-pe_29939.html), 10 April 2020.





# *Children with special needs amidst COVID-19*

**for**

**ARNEC**

**by**

**Dr. Yvonne Becher**

**CE of The Child Development Centre (CDC),  
Hong Kong**

**April 13, 2020**



# The CDC (HK)

- Group and individual services for children with special needs; centre-/home-based + community outreach
- Age group: predominantly under 8, counseling up to 12, and assessments up to 16
- Parenting support and early screening
- Partially government subvented
- Serve 450+ families/ year
- 40 staff (SEN Teacher, Special Child Care Worker, OT/PT, ST, Psychologist + Admin/ Support)

[www.cdchk.org](http://www.cdchk.org)



# Challenges for the preschool SEN population

*Very few have physical limitations, rather lively and active*

1. May have more fragile immune systems
2. Can be more impulsive – touching/ supervision issues
3. Delays in development, e.g. communication issue (receptive as well as expressive); extended mouthing period, etc.
4. Change in routine – most affecting young children with autism
5. Rely on adult help longer – more risk for cross-infection
6. Ongoing therapy input is crucial – regression even after school holidays



# Actions taken - Organisation (1)

## *Strategy 1: Continue services SAFELY*

- Suspend all group programmes and offer
  - Individual sessions, and
  - Home-activities-via-email

... at parents' discretion

*This requires: re-writing your schedules,  
getting ALL staff on side,  
informing parents,  
organise new sessions*

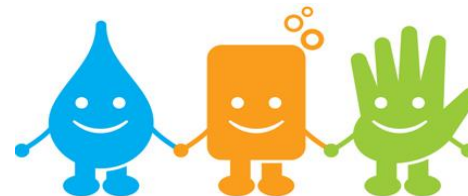




# Actions taken – Implementation(2)

## *Strategy 2: SAFELY implement adjusted services*

- Adhere to strict hygiene procedures - to protect children, families, staff, community
  - Hand washing +++
  - Masks (not all children)
  - Take temperature
  - Less physical/hand contact (no “High 5s”)
  - Don’t share materials (e.g. have 2 lumps of playdough)
  - Extra toy + room cleaning after every session



If at the centre, also:

- No more than 3 children in the centre, different rooms
- Allocate children needing routine first (same staff)
- Extra centre cleaning (door handles, bathroom, etc.)
- Work-from-home rotation

Keep adjusting



# Actions taken – Home activities/ Support (3)

## Strategy 3 – Alternative services and other support

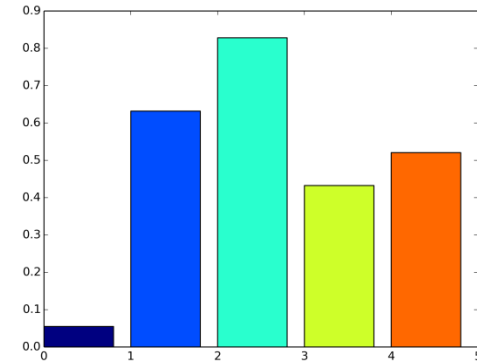
- Home-activity programmes
  - Individualised as much as possible 😊
  - Accessible world-wide, yet some local challenges 🤔
  - Parent availability and ability 🤔
- Parent Support and Resources – 2 grps/ language (e.g. whatsapp group; mask/sanitiser hand-outs)
- Online sessions??



# Results

- Uptake of individual sessions: 20%  
(Representative sample)

- Home activities: ??



- Parent Support Grp: 20 sign-ups; sporadic involvement

- Withdrawals for financial reasons, yet growing parent concern for therapy input



# Lessons Learned

- Inform parents but don't bombard – they too are adjusting, and working, and coping...
- Cannot please everyone but be empathetic and keep re-assuring families AND staff
- Find new routines but stay flexible
  - service mode, hygiene procedures, withdrawal policies, fee adjustments, etc.

...you will continue to keep adjusting







# Way Forward

Motivation: Children's need for ongoing therapy

Pledge to continue to serve the children with special needs and their families in ways that are

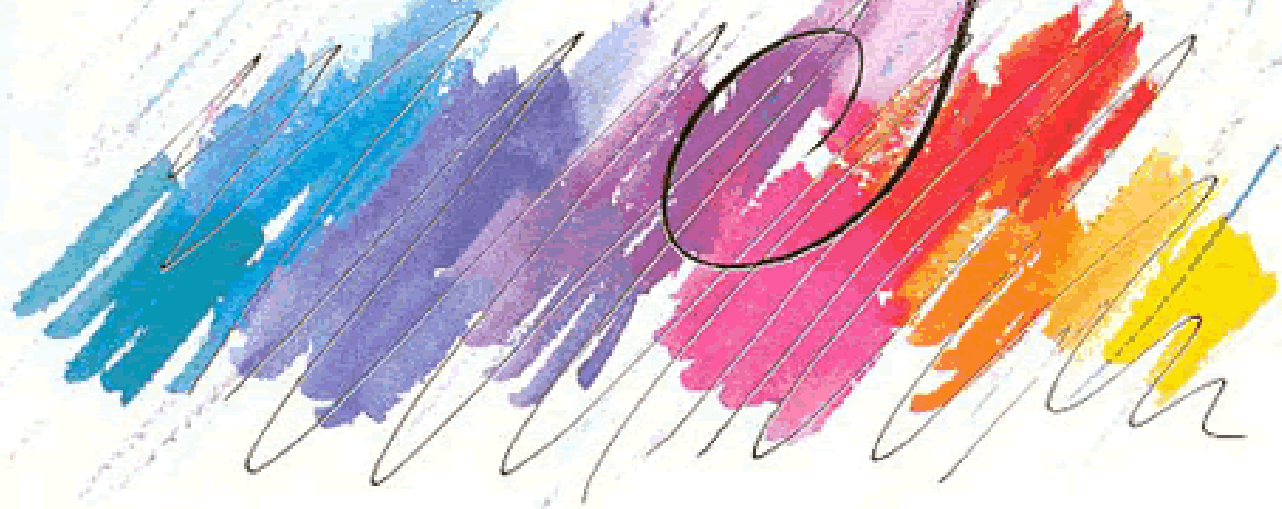
SAFE

INDIVIDUAL-NEEDS-BASED

SUPPORTIVE



Thank You!



CHILD  
DEVELOPMENT  
CENTRE  
明德兒童啟育中心





*THE FUTURE OF THE YOUNG  
CHILD MUST BE BUILT TODAY*

Mobile Creches

MC

Nurturing Childhood Sowing Change





Migrant workers and their young children during  
COVID19

Response by Mobile Creches



# INDIA EFFECT

Millions on the road to home. Except there is no home COVID19



# SHELTER – FOOD – HEALTH - SAFETY



Millions trapped in camps, slums, sites, shelters



Approximately 56 million young children affected



# MC 3 STEP EMERGENCY RESPONSE



# COMMUNITY CONTACT

Direct phone contact with families

Activated community leaders, local suppliers, security guards, parents



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# COMMUNITY CONTACT

Precaution and prevention messages around COVID19

Basic food provisions

Care, protection, health and early nutrition support

Awareness about government relief measures

भारत का प्रमुख निकाय  
सर्वोच्च न्यायालय

Help us to help you

नोवल कोरोनावायरस (COVID-19)

— स्वद रहें सुरक्षित, दूसरों को रखें सुरक्षित —

क्या करें  क्या करें और क्या ना करें

- बार-बार हाथ धोएं। जब आपके हाथ स्पष्ट रूप से धुने न हों, उन भी अपने हाथों को अल्कोहल - आधारित हैंड सैनिटाइजर या साबुन और पानी से साफ करें।
- छींकते और खांसेते समय, अपना मुँह व नाक टिश्यू/स्पात से ढकें।
- प्रयोग के तुरंत बाद टिश्यू को फिन्नी बंद डिब्बे में फेंक दें।
- अगर आपको बुखार, खांसी और सांस लेने में कठिनाई है तो डॉक्टर से संपर्क करें। डॉक्टर से मिलने के दौरान अपने मुँह और नाक को ढकने के लिए मास्क/छाट्टे का प्रयोग करें।
- अगर आप में कोरोना वायरस के लक्षण हैं, तो कृपया राज्य हेल्थलाइन नंबर या स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय की 24x7 हेल्पलाइन नंबर 011-23978046 पर संपर्क करें।
- बीड़-माइ वाली जगहों पर जाने से बचें।



# COLLABORATIONS

*Email/whatsapp groups with government, networks, CSOs – local, state administration*

**Alerting government** about hunger spots

**Collaborative relief measures** on ground – food distribution, violence against women and children, immunisation and pregnant women linkages

**Shared learning** about other response mechanism, sharing data





## ADVOCACY WITH GOVERNMENT

*Part of networks – critical to work on overlapping issues*

*Evidence – situation tracking and analysis, rapid studies*

**Women and children invisible** in relief response  
(limited to welfare-ish measures)

**Childcare is non existent** even amongst networks

**ECD workforce** – are they essential workers?



# A WORD ABOUT MC INTERNAL RESPONSE MECHANISM



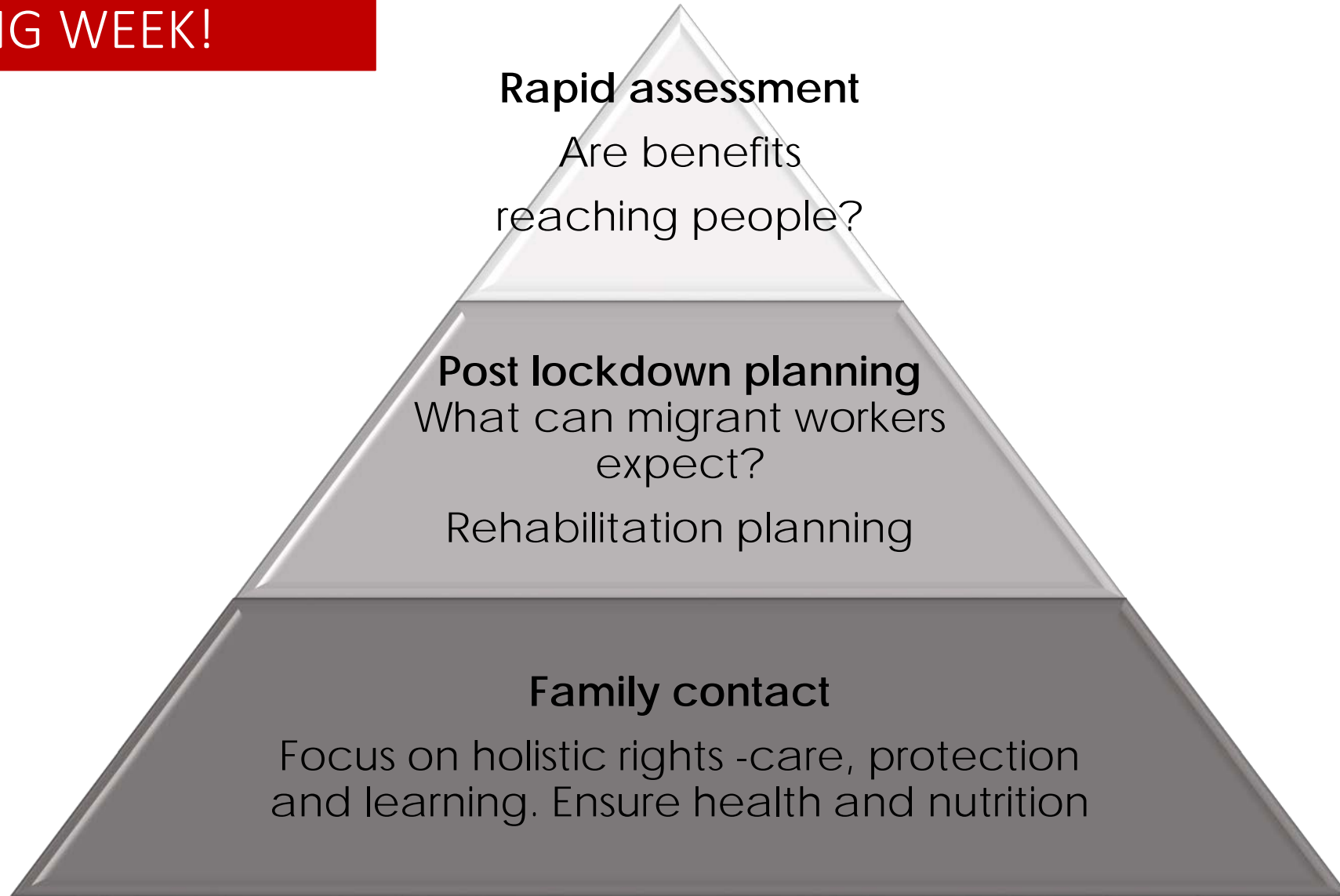
**All feet off the ground, all hands on deck!**

Singular purpose across organisation – remain in touch with families

Workforce support, motivation, security, recognition



COMING WEEK!



STAY ALIVE TO TELL THE STORY!!



Coronavirus Cases:

**7,600**

Deaths:

**249**

Recovered:

**774**

11 April 2020

MC

Nurturing Childhood Sowing Change



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## Mobile Creches

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New Delhi- 110001

T: +91-11-2334 7635, 2334 7281

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# iMulat

## Leveraging Technology in Low Resource Settings



# WHAT WE WANT FOR CHILDREN

## SAVE THE CHILDREN'S GLOBAL STRATEGY, AMBITION FOR CHILDREN 2030

We will do whatever it takes to ensure by 2030 all children survive, learn and are protected.

### OUR THREE GLOBAL BREAKTHROUGHS FOR 2030:

#### SURVIVE

**NO CHILD DIES** FROM PREVENTABLE CAUSES BEFORE THEIR FIFTH BIRTHDAY

#### LEARN

ALL CHILDREN LEARN FROM A QUALITY BASIC **EDUCATION**

#### BE PROTECTED

**VIOLENCE** AGAINST CHILDREN IS **NO LONGER TOLERATED**

***BREAKTHROUGH:** a remarkable and sustainable shift from the current trend in the way the world treats children.*

We won't inspire breakthroughs for children on our own.

We will work hand-in-hand with children and their communities, our partners and our donors.

Only then will we transform the lives and children and make a real difference.

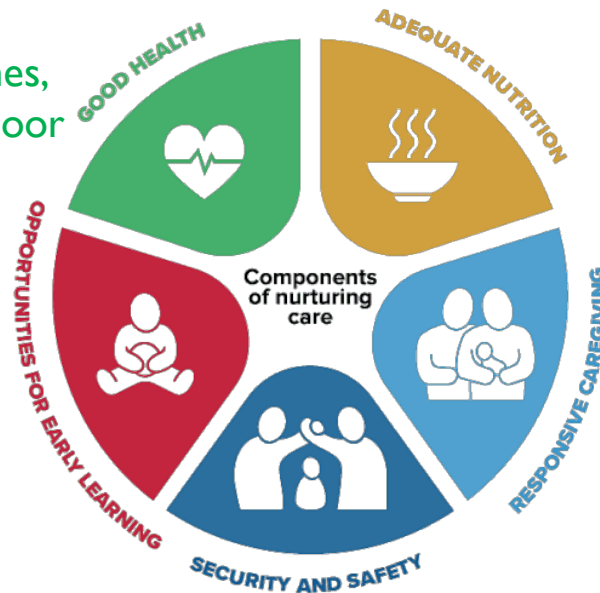


# Our Context

Limited resources are diverted to respond to COVID-19; GIDA with little to no access to health services; info on preventive measures limited to social media and TV, limited supply of medicines, face masks and disinfectant materials; poor access to hand washing facilities

Cancelled preschool classes; Unable to play outdoors with friends; Early childhood educators as frontliners in repacking and distribution of relief goods; Uncertainty on school opening; Less engaged caregivers; limited learning materials available

Increased children's screen time; higher risks of domestic or community violence due to lack of social protection system in place; children whose family are frontliners/infected are discriminated



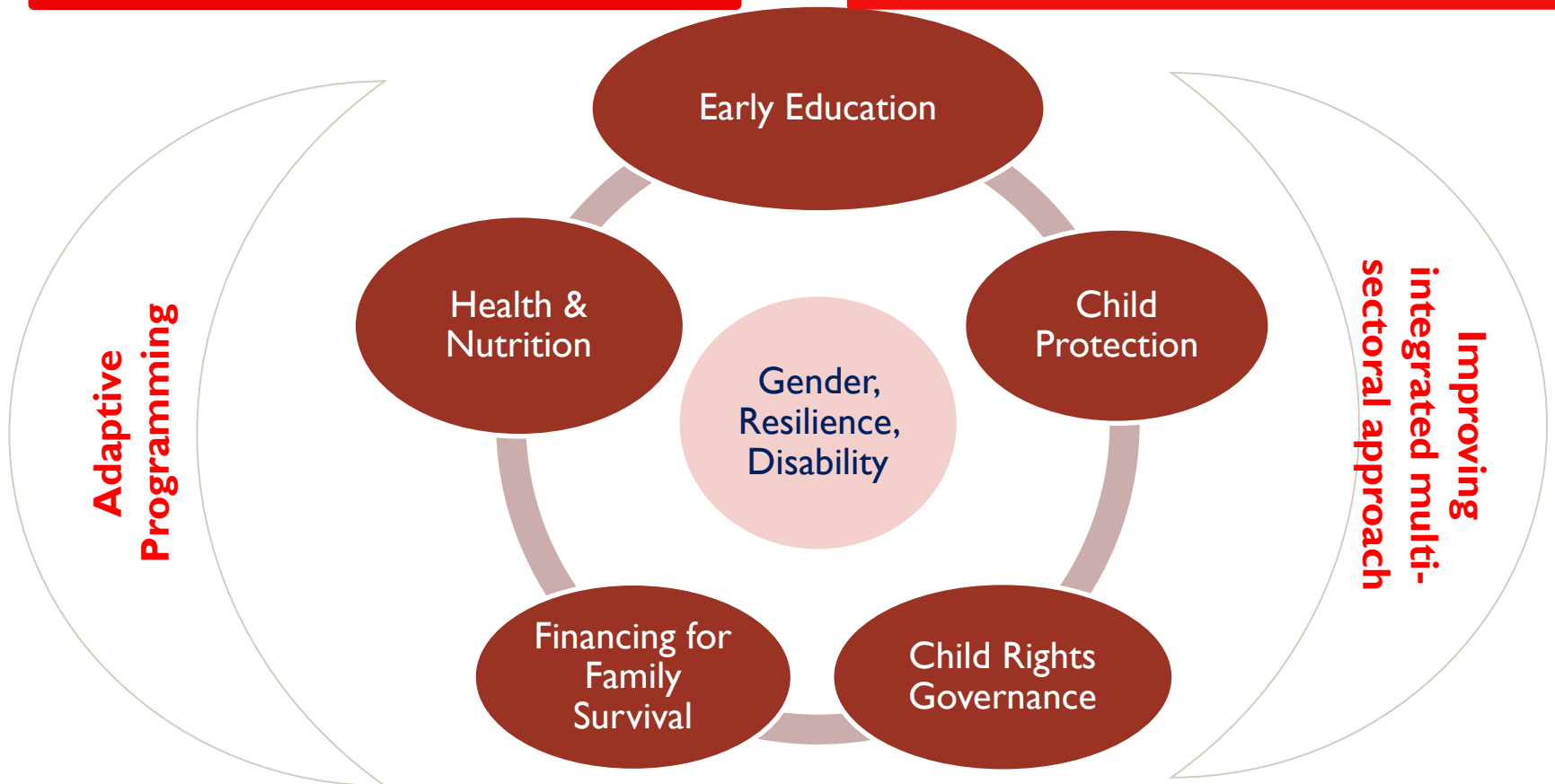
Distribution of instant noodles/canned sardines/formula milk, poor access to fresh and healthy food due to lockdown or loss of family income; malnourished children are at increased risk for severe Covid-19 infection.

Greater stress for parents who lost livelihood; Parents work from home while caring for their children; Poor access to information, services and resources as group parenting sessions are cancelled; greater burden on female caregivers linked to gender stereotypical household responsibilities.

# Our Strategy

contribute to the reduction of COVID-19 and delay its transmission

mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on children's health, learning and protection







**iMulat**

**iMulat is a parenting application of Save the Children Philippines for parents and other caregivers with 0 to 6 years old children.**

**It encourages parent engagement in their children's development and provide a strong foundation for health, learning, and behavior that follow for a lifetime.**



# Key Features

Search lesson name

**Firm, Fair, and Fun Parenting**  
This covers health, reading, playing, disciplining, counting – lots of different topics. In each session, you will be given active practice with your child, this m...

**Child Development**  
KNOW THE DEVELOPMENT OF EACH CHILD. Each child is unique. Some may be more advanced than others while some may delay. As a parent, you...

**Positive Discipline**  
DO NOT SHOUT, HIT, OR HURRY. RESPOND MORE POSITIVELY. CHILDREN UNWANTED BEHAVIOR. A child will show unwanted behavior when...

**Playing with your child**  
BABIES LOVE SURPRISES WHEN PLAY INVOLVES LEARNING. Know th...

## 1 KILALANIN ANG IBA'T IBANG KATANGIAN NG MGA BATA

**Singing with your child**  
SING SONGS WITH RHYME AND REPETITION TOGETHER: For young children, singing is playing with words. It allows them to learn and remember the concepts when they play with w...

**Health and Nutrition**  
PRACTICE EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING: As soon as your baby is born encourage to breastfeed, respond to your child's need milk by breastfeeding on-demand. Exc...

**Risk Reduction**  
BE INFORMED AND INFORM OTHERS: BE informed of the dangers and its source as how to prevent them and how to respond when they happen, caregivers will...

**2 PANGALANGAN NG KALUSOGAN SA PANG-UNLAD NG BATA NG PILIPINO**



**2 PANGALANGAN NG KALUSOGAN SA PANG-UNLAD NG BATA NG PILIPINO**



**3 PANGALANGAN NG KALUSOGAN NG BATA**



**Ako bilang magulang**  
LAGYAN NG CHECK ANG SAGOT NA GUSTO MO.

1  
Ang ama o mga lalaking miyembro ng tahanan ay kailangang tumulong sa mga gawaing bahay (hal. paglalaba at pagluluto).

Tama  
 Mali

2  
Ang mga rules sa inyong bahay ay maaaring magingpabago-bago

Mali

**Add an entry**

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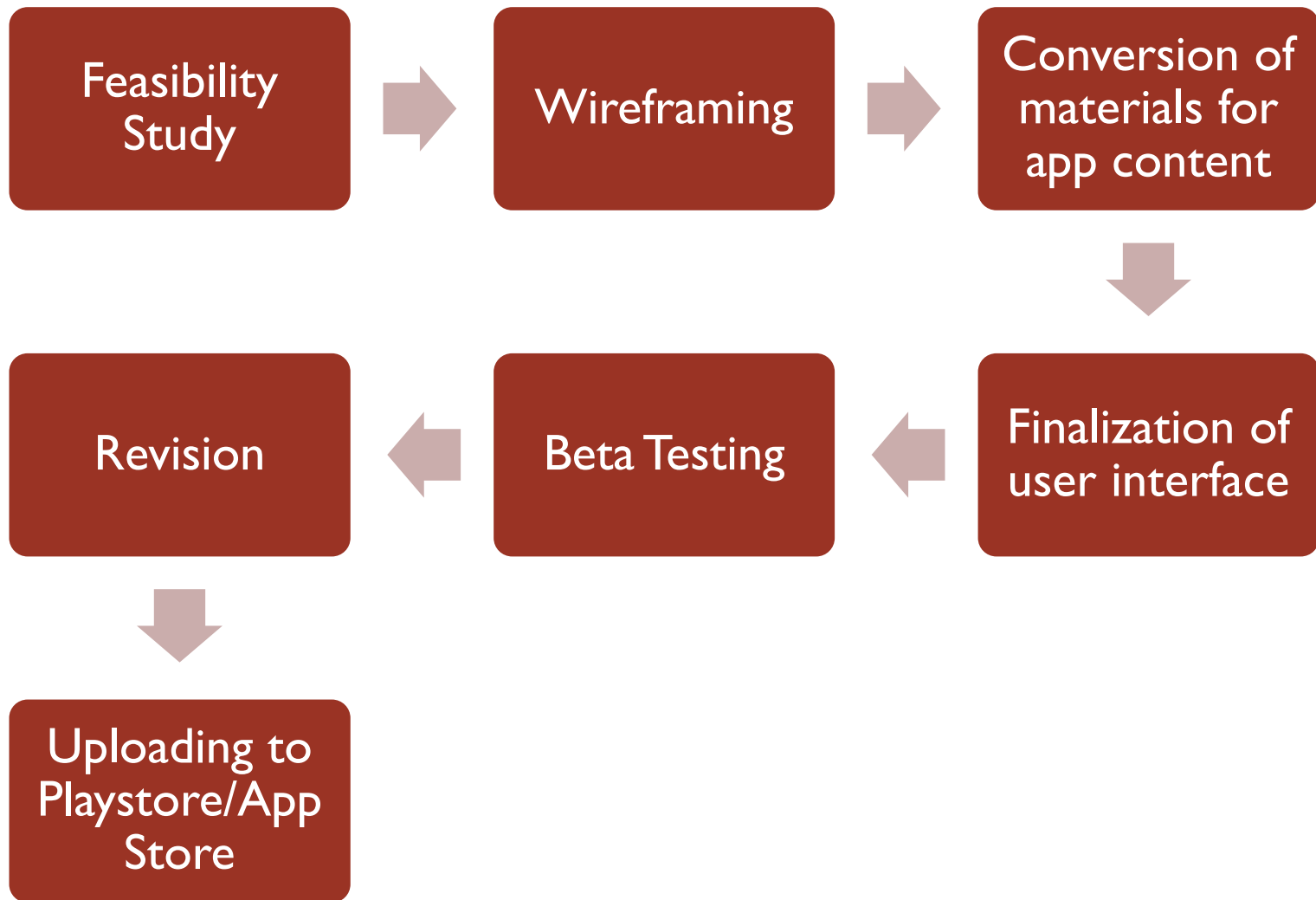
**ADD ENTRY**

Key Messages and How to videos

Quiz

Calendar Log

# Application Development Process



# Ways to reach the most deprived families

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- Deciding on an Android-based application
- Limiting the size of the application
- Ensuring that contents are available offline
- Provision of internet connection for the purpose of downloading the application
- Use of P2P sharing application to further disseminate the application



# Imulat and COVID-19

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- Promote iMulat to caregivers as a resource pack of activities that they can do with their children while on lockdown/community quarantine
- Constant communication with the community is important, the app can have a chat option for caregivers to ask questions/clarifications or provide suggestions/comments
- Additional resources on COVID-19 can be included in the application
- Enlist ECCD facilitators to provide follow up support



**THANK YOU**



**Save the Children**