



## LEARNING ROOTS

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (AGES 3-6)

### PREPARING YOUNG CHILDREN FOR THE TRANSITION TO SCHOOL

World Vision's aspiration for all children is for them to be "educated for life," from birth all the way through and beyond adolescence. This life-cycle approach, at the heart of World Vision's education strategy, enhances learning outcomes by integrating physical, cognitive, social, and emotional support across each phase of a child's development—especially for the most vulnerable.

The earliest years of a child's life are a window of opportunity to support the emergence of literacy, numeracy, and socio-emotional and life skills that will form the foundation for a lifetime of learning and fulfilment. Early Childhood Development (ECD) programmes are powerful equalisers for children who live in resource-poor settings, and they play an important role in breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty.

However, access to pre-primary learning opportunities is very low in many settings, with only 17 per cent

of children in low-income countries enrolled in ECD programmes. These programmes are markedly underfunded compared with higher education.

World Vision's ECD programming covers the period from pregnancy to age six to enhance young children's well-being and early learning skills in secure, stimulating, play-based environments. Based on decades of field experience in thousands of communities, World Vision knows this requires holistic, integrated approaches. Our long-term, community-level presence gives us insight into existing local strengths, resources and positive practices, as well as participatory methods suitable to each unique setting in which we work.

The **Learning Roots** programme is designed to meet the development and learning needs of children, from ages three through six, preparing them for a successful transition to primary school. All components of Learning Roots offer support for the most vulnerable children with special attention given to inclusion.

ONLY  
**17%**  
OF **CHILDREN**  
in low-income  
countries are enrolled  
in pre-school.<sup>1</sup>



Pre-primary education is under-  
prioritised and underfunded,  
*receiving only*  
**1.15% OF TOTAL AID  
TO EDUCATION**  
in 2014,  
whereas **higher education received**  
**MORE THAN 40%.**  
This distribution is in opposition to  
the evidence that greatest economic  
and equity returns in education are  
made early.<sup>2</sup>

**THE COST OF  
COLLECTIVE INACTION  
ON ECD IS VERY HIGH.**  
A poor start in the early years is  
estimated to result in a loss of about a  
quarter of average adult income  
per year.<sup>3</sup>

As young children actively develop, a continuum of actors—including parents, caregivers, teachers, schools, community members, and policy makers—hold influence. Therefore, our interventions are underpinned by a view of the complete environment of the child, to include and empower family, community and society, and strengthen these systems to establish the strongest foundation for their children's futures.

Learning Roots:

**Engages parents and caregivers, who are children's first educators and protectors, by:**

- Raising their awareness on the importance of development in the early years
- Enhancing their competencies to support the social and emotional development of their young children, as well as early reading and numeracy skills through play
- Empowering them to be involved in community-based efforts to ensure better local services for learning

**Strengthens local Early Childhood Development centres by:**

- Training teachers on effective nurturing and inclusive practices for child development
- Enhancing professional development systems that support teachers' continuous learning and improvement in play-based learning practices
- Creating safe, play-based, stimulating environments with age- and context-appropriate activities and materials

**Works to strengthen local and government systems, by:**

- Fostering links and partnerships between the formal sector and the community
- Supporting the design and implementation of policies that enable quality pre-primary education.
- Promoting the integration of services to provide holistic support for children in the early years



Pilots for **Learning Roots** are underway in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ethiopia, and Thailand.

**EDUCATING**  
CHILDREN *for life*

**World Vision**

For more information, please visit [wvi.org/education](http://wvi.org/education)

<sup>1</sup> Theirworld. (2016) Pre-primary scorecard. Retrieved from theirworld.org.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Richter, Linda et al. (2016). Investing in the foundation of sustainable development: pathways to scale up for early childhood development. The Lancet.