



COMPETENCY FRAMEWORKS FOR EARLY EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE STAFF

Regional Systematization

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**EDUCATION PROGRAM REPORT
JUNE 2021**

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INTRODUCTION

The path towards establishing Early Childhood (EC) public policies as State policies varies across countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. In light of this, a *Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education* has been proposed to countries in the region. The agenda considers a broad and relevant view of quality for early childhood, which includes the link between learning and comprehensive development while emphasizing both structural and process factors.¹

The agenda highlights some **non-negotiable** principles of quality early childhood education:

1. Ensure **caring, loving and protective relationships** in education spaces. This entails the presence of **sensitive, loving and attentive** childcare staff who are **able to listen to children's needs**; the opportunity for children to **develop a sense of belonging**; and experiences that enable children to **explore and express their emotions**.
2. Having childcare staff who are **trained to lead and sustain pedagogical interactions that promote** children's **curiosity, creativity, imagination, and learning**.
3. Recognizing the importance of **learning through play for comprehensive development**. In learning through play, children are active agents who develop skills through **social interactions** characterized by **joy, active engagement, exploration and meaning-making**.

The IIN-OAS was asked to collaborate in this study based on its experience in regional coordination with States. Its contributions facilitate the dissemination of this work and technical collaboration for the governmental network, thus contributing to consolidating the Early Childhood regional agenda.

The following are the study's objectives:

- Conduct a review to identify the most salient training offers in countries in the region. These are related to childcare staff with scarce educational background, unsystematic and non-formal education paths.
- Analyze the general and specific competencies required for Early Childhood education and childcare staff, based on the experiences of five countries. Special attention is placed on the degree of approximation and appropriation of the “non-negotiable” principles of quality Early Childhood education.
- Propose a framework of basic and universal competencies to be included in future training/certification offers in a curriculum for the region. The framework is based on a review and analysis of training modalities for Early Childhood education and childcare staff.

In this study, the term “Early Childhood education and childcare staff” captures the different names given to these group of personnel in different countries: *educational agents, caretakers, educators, community parents, early childhood operators, assistants, caretaker mothers and community actors*.

Focus on non-formal aspects. For guidance purposes, the study applies a “non-formal” approach, understood as “the organized services for Early Childhood care that take place, fundamentally, outside the formal school system.”² Within the “non-formal” sector there is a *heterogeneous, fragmented and unequal set of programs and/or institutions* established through multiple historical paths that have arisen in different contexts, based on the organization and implementation of discourses, identities, public policies, laws, administrative measures, and struggles for the distribution of human and financial resources. This is in addition to scientific, pedagogical and curricular statements, as well as philosophical, political, moral and philanthropic notions; both explicit and implicit (Waldman and Cardarelli, 2010).³

According to Colom Cañellas (2005),⁴ the most decisive difference between “formal” and “non-formal” education is its legal and non-pedagogical nature. “Formal” education concludes with the granting of recognized degrees according to the educational laws enacted by the State. In contrast, the responsibility of “non-formal” education

does not fall directly on the traditional legal systems of the educational “sector.”

Regional Situation

Within UNESCO’s framework, “Regional Strategic Project on Teachers for Latin America and the Caribbean,” it is stated that early childhood education has come to be considered a **central public good** and as the first stage of the education system (OECD, 2006; UNESCO, 2007). This, due to its enshrinement as a right from birth in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and in the World Declaration on Education for All (United Nations, 1989; Secretariat of the International Consultative Forum on Education for All, 1990). Currently, there are **no unanimously accepted criteria to define its quality**, emphasizing, among other factors, the training and working conditions of Early Childhood education and childcare staff (UNESCO, 2007).⁵

For years, it has been recognized that, “education and training levels in many countries are insufficient and inadequate to guarantee quality care and education for the diversity of contexts and social groups, especially in the case of non-conventional or alternative modalities” (UNESCO, 2010). This issue perpetuates the **cycle of exclusion of cultural minorities** living in the region and violates their right to quality education.⁶ In Latin American countries a high concentration of poverty in marginal urban areas and remote rural areas, and the presence of socially marginalized ethnic minorities and people with disabilities, create barriers for children’s and educator’s learning and development (UNICEF, 2014).

While countries in the region have made significant efforts to expand coverage and improve access for children in the last decade, it is crucial to understand that this is not enough to generate quality and equity.⁷

The increase in coverage, in most cases, has been coupled with precarious conditions for service provision: low number of teachers for large groups of students, the incorporation of insufficiently trained human resources (community agents), as well as a low ratio of qualified teachers per children in both the public and private sectors. Available evidence identifies common aspects that hinder quality Early Childhood education, such as staff qualifications and hiring processes and dynamics pertaining early education and childcare staff. There are various initiatives aimed at training childcare staff, which have been established by social organizations

either autonomously or in partnership with governments. However, many have been low scale, while others were interrupted or left unfinished.⁸

It is also crucial to consider working conditions in terms of salary standards, informality and work-life balance, among other factors as the vast majority of childcare staff are women, a large proportion of whom live in conditions of socioeconomic vulnerability.

At the regional level, a vast group of childcare staff and educators are recognized as public providers, involved in national, sub-national and local early childhood care systems, as well as in non-governmental settings. A historical debt in their recognition implies the formal certification of their previous knowledge, skills and competencies, incorporating new skills and theoretical developments that allow for greater qualification, which, on the other hand, is their main claim.⁹

In the current socioeconomic scenario, recognizing the role of early childhood in human development and in building future societies is fundamental. Promoting a comprehensive developmental approach by ensuring young children have access to a set of services and benefits, is a task that requires even greater efforts. The set of services needed for children’s development from birth is intended to ensure well-being through responsive, protective and stable care (UNICEF 2019). The basic and universal competencies framework provided by this systematization can contribute to this goal.

Methodology

This is a primarily qualitative report that describes early education and childcare proposals and processes, and the training profiles of early education and childcare staff in different countries of the Latin American & Caribbean region. This exploratory and descriptive study presents information from the review of secondary sources (documents, legislation and previous studies), in addition to interviews with key actors in early childhood (see annex A) from the countries included in this study.

The countries selected for the study were Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. Due to circumstances related to, among others, the state of progress of various modalities, Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Uruguay were included in the review. In these countries, socio-demographic records are

similar, with the exception of Uruguay. The data matrix is presented in annex B.

To review the primary sources “during a pandemic,” virtual exchanges were held, with an average of 3 meetings per country. In many cases, former officials were used as informants given their exhaustive knowledge on the topics under study. First, information was gathered on Early Childhood (EC) public policies, programs and plans. The second stage was aimed at collecting information pertaining to the quality of actions for comprehensive Early Childhood Development (ECD), and interventions’ strengths and weaknesses. Through this phase systematic difficulties appeared in the training and qualification of staff. Lastly, consultations were made regarding training programs for educational agents.

Regarding secondary sources, numerous documents were reviewed because, with few exceptions, there is little systematization of experiences of training programs. As such, information on the issue of the quality of human

resources is scattered among different sources. This analysis focused on national government’s policies, programs and services in each country. What has been implemented in recent years was used as a reference, with a focus on institutional characteristics that can be considered structural for the sustainability of training modalities. Through this review the political commitment to Early Childhood Development (ECD) became evident, and also that the public policies of these countries have followed international trends by adopting comprehensive frameworks and approaches to address childhood.

Moreover, as a final methodological stage, a preliminary version of the study was submitted to a regional workshop to analyze, discuss and validate the proposal. In addition to the countries included in the study, Chile, Mexico and Paraguay were also included in this workshop, and their contributions are included in this document.¹⁰



COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TRAINING SYSTEMS

This section presents the results of a comparative analysis of the training processes for educational agents. Similarities and differences across countries are highlighted, with the recognition that even documents from the same country present very different models and formulations. As a result is difficult to compare different categories between countries. Annex C presents a synthesis of the education processes or programs in each country.

From a systemic perspective, the educational experience is the result of a series of interdependent processes. The confluence of a set of crucial and interrelated components will enable early education to offer basic conditions that are aligned with children's, families' and contexts' characteristics and with history, language and culture. No single component by itself will lead to quality early childhood educational experiences if the others are underfunded or not properly implemented (UNICEF 2019).

In this vein, Early Childhood education and childcare staff are a key element both in early childhood programs and in the training and accompaniment of families, since staff's attitudes and knowledge will have an important impact on families' child-rearing habits. To a large extent, families' attitudes will depend on the help they receive to strengthen their care and nurturing and social leadership capacities.

In different country documents, there are descriptions of both initial and ongoing training processes for early education and childcare staff. Each country included in the study is carrying out training processes, some more systematically than others. In some countries (for example, Colombia, Ecuador and Uruguay) training is promoted through technical courses, bachelor's degrees and higher academic degrees.

Expected Learning Results from the Training Process

Competencies are understood as a series of abilities, knowledge, skills and personal qualities that contribute to personal and professional performance, and enable people to navigate the work setting. Competencies are achieved through a set of meaningful and useful learning experiences that not only include instruction, but also, various life experiences and specific work situations. A competency comes not only from completing a formal school curriculum, but also by appropriately applying knowledge.

Developing a profile of competencies needed for Early Childhood education and care, based on the definition of the specific functions and roles of EC education and childcare staff, will make it possible to structure training systems that are aligned with the job's characteristics and needs. Using *Recommendation 6 of the Declaration of the Regional Forum*¹¹ as a reference, countries in the region are urged to develop a **competency framework** for people who work in the early childhood realm. This framework should promote a continuous and flexible training system, along with a system to certify the competencies that strengthen job performance. In the countries reviewed, the training processes derived from the development of competency frameworks are very heterogeneous.

Expected educational goals are sometimes stated as training purposes, learning objectives or results (Argentina). In other countries, goals appear as general competencies with a description of units or elements per competency (Colombia, Uruguay), as performance criteria (Ecuador), or a combination of formats (Peru).

The following are examples of statements from different countries.

Argentina

General objective of the course: *Promote, through training strategies that tie together theory and practice, the development of actions that recognize children 0 to 4 years old as subjects of rights, in accordance with the ethical and democratic framework, and with updated legal frameworks within the Comprehensive Protection System.*

Specific objectives:

- Identify important aspects of the policy framework of the new paradigm regarding the role of child development centers (CDI) in the Comprehensive Protection System.
- Recognize children as subjects of rights and citizens since early childhood.
- Recognize the importance of the attachment bond as a foundation for early child growth and development.
- Identify and re-evaluate the role of educators and families in care and upbringing processes.
- Provide tools for the organization and daily tasks of EC care spaces.

Colombia

There are different profiles, training and certification requirements in Colombia, in addition to the skills needed to be a pedagogical assistant, community parent or teacher. These profiles are described for each Early Childhood education service and modality established in the country within the framework of comprehensive care. Each profile includes a description of the competencies required to perform the role. The following are the general competencies that community mothers and educational agents must have per the operating manuals for early education services issued by the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (ICBF): leadership and teamwork skills; creativity, resourcefulness and innovation in pedagogical processes; ability to work with groups of children, pregnant women and their families in the framework of diversity; observation, listening and documentation skills; willingness to accompany and work for social and community mobilization.

Ecuador

General competency: *Manage actions that promote the protection, care and comprehensive development of*

children 0 to 36 months old in child development centers, while complying with current regulations.

Units of competency:

- Monitor the comprehensive health of children in the care unit following the established protocol and complying with current regulations.
- Provide guidance and support to the families of children in the care unit, strengthening co-responsibility to improve levels of comprehensive child development.

Peru

The competencies are included in a curriculum organized by training modules in which the objectives, results and topics are also detailed.

Example of competence. Module 5 - Part 1: Service Provision:

- Plan activities related to the operation of the service (within the area of action) to ensure compliance with the program's objectives.
- Promote the provision of safe environments for children's development and care.

Uruguay

Examples of functional technical competencies established for the role of the educator:

- Develop actions that foster children's comprehensive development in different contexts.
- Implement strategies to facilitate children's comprehensive development, addressing child's own needs and characteristics.
- Actively participate in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of pedagogical projects, as well as the operational planning of the Timely Experiences Program and the project implemented by the Center.
- Encourage families' integration in different actions implemented by the Center.
- Encourage family participation in the Center's educational proposal.
- Contribute to the strengthening of parental ties and capacities.

- Work jointly with community services and networks (educational, sports, cultural, health and other institutions) to coordinate actions in favor of children and their families, in accordance with the team.
- Contribute from the role of educator to strengthening the Child and Family Care Center (CAIF) team.
- Implement the established early childhood policy in the territory.
- Guide the team and contribute with an integrative view to the Center's project (institutional project).
- Contribute to collective decision making in critical situations, within the scope of the responsibility of the Center's team.

Moreover, the following **attitudinal competencies** were proposed as required skills for all team members of the Centers:

1. Establish bonds with children and their families to promote education.
2. Act with an ethical commitment to children, families and the community.
3. Respond to problematic situations affecting children and families.
4. Act in changing scenarios.
5. Develop professionalism.
6. Work with diversity.

An insufficient number of programs mention cross-cutting competencies, including: teamwork, leadership, creativity, planning and organization, initiative and proactivity, assertive communication, conflict resolution, stress management, self-care, among others. In cases where they are present, it is necessary to further explore how they are tied to training to verify if they are skills, qualities or personal characteristics rather than competences to be developed or learned.

Regardless of the diversity of formats in which learning outcomes of educational processes are stated, some documents contain general guidelines or recommendations that provide orientation and propose what these processes and their outcomes should be.

For example, the Inter-American Children's Institute (IIN) proposes¹² that to provide childhood care for children and their families within a rights-based approach and a differential perspective, educators must have a respectful

and friendly attitude towards families, their practices and conditions. They must understand conditions of vulnerability as issues that can be overcome by families with support and use of their own resources. This implies understanding that families act in response to different factors and that, at times, they do so in an inappropriate manner because they believe that what they are doing is correct and they have not had the opportunity to learn alternative parenting practices. Secondly, educators must have an open attitude towards families' cultures, knowledge, beliefs and experiences, in order to be able to have real dialogue and create reflective and constructive processes, through which the educator also learns. Lastly, they must trust that each family will carry out transformations conducive to the best care, following their own path and in their own time. This entails recognizing that changes in families are not homogeneous, and that it may be necessary to support some families more than others. Moreover, it must be recognized that EC education and childcare staff have personal beliefs and knowledge related to family and upbringing, based on both their training and their own experiences as children and members of a specific family. These will influence their attitudes towards the work they do and the way they provide education or accompaniment. It is important that they are aware of this to not impose their ideas and experiences in relationships with other people, and to be able to differentiate the singularities of these experiences.

Therefore, it is necessary to carry out continuous training processes that should follow the same principles proposed for educating children and their families. That is, that they are active, participatory and playful, so that early education and childcare staff learn from these educational strategies not only from a theoretical approach, but also because they have experienced them and understand their power. The topics for these training sessions can be developed to address the following aspects taken from a study by Isaza, Midaglia, & Rodríguez (2011): personal growth that strengthens the educational agent's capacity for empathy and having warm relationships with children and family members; the capacity to reflect on their own life experience to facilitate empathy and separate their own experience from the topics related to family development and early childhood development.

Contents or Topics

In the different countries studied, the contents or topics of *initial training*¹³ have many similarities. Topics systematically refer to:

Children's rights; child upbringing and care practices; healthy habits, child nutrition; early childhood development, life cycles, progressive autonomy; interactions, child-adult relationships; pedagogical planning and environments; guiding activities for early education; artistic and body expressions, exploration of the environment, play and literature. Some curricula propose topics that are related to preventing accidents, first aid and, in the most updated curricula, preventive measures related to Covid-19 (Colombia and Peru). Inclusion and diversity appear as specific training topics in several countries. In others, specific aspects of Early Childhood policies or programs management and implementation are included, such as: tools for recording and managing information, administrative procedures, and technical standards (Ecuador, Uruguay).

*Continuous education*¹⁴ also includes topics related to: violence, abuse, gender, interculturality, neurosciences, play, and emotional development. In Colombia, the assessment and monitoring of children's development, through the Revised Qualitative Assessment Scale of Child Development (EVCDI-R) is included as relevant information for educational planning, identifying developmental alerts and family guidance.

Interventions aimed at *accompanying families* include topics related to pregnancy and breastfeeding, gender, proper treatment, reading, vaccination, healthy eating, the environment, among others. Topics related to social intervention do not always consider forming local networks and community engagement, as essential tools for local approaches linked to mapping actors that accompany families in the development of their fundamental role.¹⁵

All countries have developed *materials* for educators (printed materials, videos and audios) that aid training on different topics, many of which include developing strategies to work with children and/or their families.

Methodology of Training Processes

Most of the countries studied conceive training based on developing theoretical and practical components, with the largest number of hours dedicated to the latter (for example, in Argentina: *Theoretical contents are developed in conjunction with experiential practices and the incorporation, for analysis and reflection, of the practices taught in the classroom*).

Of the countries examined, the one that best represents *in-service education* is Colombia, which has implemented the Situated Accompaniment Model (MÁS +) for community mothers. This proposal is guided towards the recognition, strengthening and resignification of community mothers' pedagogical practices with accompaniment from a pedagogical peer; understanding that exchanging experiences among peers provides enrichment for both, as experiences are shared and analyzed jointly.

There are experiences that combine face-to-face and virtual modalities (Uruguay) or blended learning (Argentina). Despite the above, courses and training programs are currently being migrated to virtual environments, with some even providing tools for working with children and/or families through non-presential means of exchange and communication (Peru, Module 3 of initial training: *Planning and implementation of non-presential family support*).

FRAMEWORK OF BASIC AND UNIVERSAL COMPETENCIES

A competent person is one who possesses a series of skills, knowledge, capacities and personal qualities that contribute to their personal and professional performance and enable them to thrive in the job environment. If the training of early education and childcare staff is viewed in terms of competencies, it is necessary to agree that the competencies to be developed in initial training should consider the fundamental principles of early childhood education as a right. These include the comprehensive development of children, play, and the work with families, which have been widely supported and identified by literature (Brooker et al. 2014; Rebello Britto et al. 2013; Saracho and Spodek 2005).¹⁶

Connected to the above, the Declaration of the Regional Forum¹⁷ stated that among the core competencies of the early childhood development framework, the following should be highlighted: (1) emotional and social development; (2) knowledge of children's neurological, emotional and physical development processes; (3) adaptive leadership; (4) use of tools focused on generating positive interactions; (5) collaborative relationships with parents and adults; and (6) development of safe and stimulating environments, with cross-cutting themes of creativity, communication and assertiveness in order to provide quality education.

In this sense, a preliminary document with a proposed *Competency Framework* was prepared and shared for consultation and validation with representatives from the different countries included in this study. Representatives from Chile, Mexico and Paraguay participated in these efforts.

The following proposal for a framework of basic and universal competencies incorporates comments and suggestions from a consultation workshop where it was presented. The proposal represents a common starting point, that each country can use to incorporate their own contextual differences and broaden perspectives based on:

- Institutional possibilities and capacities (what exist, what can be offered).
- Coordination or specific link between the formal and informal sectors in each country.
- Children's specific needs early childhood.
- Diversity in education levels.

Meet these standards without imposing standardization, without creating rigid orthodoxies, while taking into consideration the social, geographic, cultural and ethnic diversity in the region.

It is understood that having a regional competency framework is a starting point, the beginning of a path rather than a goal. The frameworks will not guarantee access to greater conditions of rights for young children if they are not put into practice with a methodology suitable for each scenario coupled with adequate profiles of early education and childcare staff. Another challenge for the regional competency framework is establishing State policies to prevent its implementation and actions from being stopped.

Based on recommendations from different participants in the validation workshop, the proposal is organized into 6 prioritized central themes, structured through general competencies and examples of units of for each competency. Another contribution from the workshop was the incorporation of pedagogical skills among the prioritized central themes. This theme includes the acquisition of "teaching skills" as a necessary requirement for the promotion of comprehensive early childhood development. Other competencies were added to make the proposal more flexible for its adaptation to the different countries.

Rights

Perform educational and childhood care practices incorporating the perspective of rights in the role, promoting the appropriation of rights by children and families based on the best interests of the child.

- Plan childhood care and education practices in advance and in a timely manner, and from an inclusive and differential approach¹⁸ that highlights and recognizes children's developmental differences, acknowledging the cultural patterns of the context in which they live.
- Promote children's expression of affection, thoughts and perceptions, through appropriate forms of communication for each developmental stage, considering children's opinions on issues that involve them from the earliest stages.
- Work with children and their families, applying tools that favor dialogue and a sound understanding, promoting spaces of care and learning that foster the prevention and eradication of violence in all its forms.
- Apply/develop protocols to identify signs of violence, physical or psychological mistreatment or abuse towards children that may occur in childcare institutions and/or family environments.
- Include and integrate children with disabilities, recognizing them as full subjects of rights in their family, community and childhood care and educational institutions. Propose experiences, games and activities in safe environments that foster their maximum potential.

Child Development

Develop actions and experiences in safe and stimulating environments in accordance with children's interests and developmental stages, prioritizing quality and positive interpersonal interactions, and play.

- Carry out scheduled activities that promote early childhood development in institutional care and educational settings for children, their families, other adult role models, and their communities. Actions should consider factors that influence childhood development.

- Design activities that stimulate, in the first thousand days, secure attachment and the acquisition of the mother tongue as ways to develop and build subjectivity, considering the contributions of neuroscience.
- Propose play experiences and other expressive early childhood languages (music, literature, photography, art, body expression and exploration of the environment) that stimulate development, socialization and progressive autonomy.
- Invite kids to read children's books as a daily activity that promotes diverse expressions linked to language, emotions, thought and contextual perceptions.
- Offer all kinds of materials, toys, games, books and proposals, appropriate for their age, that invite exploration of new roles and emotions, and reflection on gender stereotypes in families and the education and childcare staff.
- Incorporate proposals related to games, toys, stories, lullabies from different ethnic groups, reevaluating prior knowledge, identity and the interculturality of children and their families.
- Monitor children's development using institutional tools at the local level to detect alarming situations and activate mechanisms to guide families or adjust the pedagogical program.

Family and Community

Share guidelines and strengthen families' "positive or enriched" parenting practices, enhancing children's comprehensive development, involving the community in early childhood care.

- Deliver and assess individual and group family counseling or home visits. Guide families on caring and learning practices, promoting language, play and interaction between adults and children in a loving and responsive manner.
- Establish relationships with families taking into account family, social and cultural diversity, and promoting the exchange of knowledge about development and upbringing to guarantee children's well-being and full exercise of their rights.
- Build healthy environments (institutional, family and community) by sharing knowledge on parenting,

nutrition, hygiene, health and accident prevention while respecting cultural identities.

- Carry out caring, development promotion and learning activities in environments that guarantee safe conditions in spaces where children stay and move around. Identify risk factors related to age, interests and level of development.
- Apply basic first aid rules in case of accidents or emergency situations, acknowledging families' and community's procedures and protocols to address different situations.

Health and Nutrition

Perform personal care and education activities for children, promoting the development of healthy habits and progressive autonomy while considering the physical and mental health needs during growth and development.

- Plan and have meetings with children's families to share knowledge and practices for health promotion and disease prevention.
- Implement measures to prevent diseases prevalent in early childhood based on the timely identification of signs and symptoms and by applying basic hygiene measures.
- Monitor the fulfillment of rights pertaining to civil registration, vaccinations, and growth and development check-ups through joint work with other sectors or areas related to early childhood well-being.
- Mobilize inter-institutional resources using comprehensive early childhood care protocols.

Diversity and Gender

Propose childhood care and education experiences that consider diversity, understanding that it is in early socialization processes where attributes, appearances, behaviors and social roles are established.

- Include the gender perspective in the planning and development of pedagogical practices, avoiding the reproduction of stereotypes by developing inclusive and diverse initiatives.
- Use the gender approach to revise behaviors and attitudes "recommended for boys and girls" by tracking

the reproduction of stereotypes in daily attention, caring and educational tasks both at home and at institutions.

- Develop integration strategies for migrant families, identifying children's capacities, environments, and specific problems and vulnerabilities to adapt the pedagogical approach to the intercultural history of each child.
- Intervene in situations against children and their families based on their migrant status (or different circumstances). Develop interdisciplinary strategies for problem solving, and propose activities that contribute to the appreciation of human diversity.

Pedagogical Skills and Capacities

Observe, listen, and respect others' opinion in social interactions, understanding learning as an open co-construction process (between the institution, family, community and children) that ensures social inclusion and scaffolds the development-learning process.

- Propose experiences based on children's interests, adopting a differential approach, centered on the child, who is recognized as unique, competent, active and the protagonist of their own development.
- Foster quality interactions between children and significant adults, promoting asking questions as a means of building knowledge.
- Document each child's developmental processes, to be shared with them, their family and teachers of other educational levels to ensure a harmonious transition between educational environments, detecting developmental alerts, and activating mechanisms in the event of possible rights violations or abuse.
- Design, systematize and share with the team, pedagogical practices and experiences that promote reflection, co-construction of knowledge and of evidence of their practices.
- Use virtual strategies and tools to support remote or distance communication and education with children and their families, adjusting them to access and availability reality condition in their community.

Other Competencies

Environment

Plan pedagogical experiences around the exploration of the surrounding environment and natural settings guided towards environmental care, protection and sustainability.

- Provide children and families with opportunities to create didactic materials, games and toys from disposable materials.
- Monitor the presence of sources of contamination, waste and/or toxic materials to which children may be exposed in family, community and institutional settings.

Catastrophes and Covid-19

Is present, as a sensitive and receptive adult, in accompanying children in understanding the situation, and being aware of diverse reactions to a traumatic event; pandemic or catastrophes, by supporting children in overcoming adversity.

- Support children by introducing into daily routines positive and hopeful narratives and stories related to the situation. These provide a sense of security and reduce fears and stress.
- Connect with children in a loving, warm and frequent manner using creative approaches and tools appropriate for their development level and access to technology.
- Implement the necessary preventive measures to avoid the infection and contagion of Covid-19, by identifying the mechanisms through which the virus spreads and its symptoms, considering recommendations issued by health authorities.

Lastly, the consensus on a framework of basic and universal competencies can be used as a reference for training processes in the region, guiding a basic and common initial professional education curriculum. Establishing a competency framework is a necessary input for the design of professional certification processes for early education and childcare staff.

“We have an obligation to raise the standards for the sake of improvement and reform, but we must avoid creating rigid orthodoxies. We must achieve standards without imposing standardization. We must be careful that the knowledge-based approach does not create an excessively technical image of teaching, a scientific initiative that has lost its spirit.”

(Shulman 2005)

FINDINGS AND CHALLENGES

Throughout the exploration of various documents and interviews with key informants, a significant set of findings on the process was documented. This section groups the findings with the aim of focusing the reading and promoting reflection on the current state of the art, gaps and pending issues.

Regarding the institutional conditions and governmental early childhood ecosystems

- All the interviewees recognized the importance of their country being included in a regional selection of educational experiences and in their systematization. They indicated that this would enable them to see themselves through a perspective of their strengths and weaknesses and would help them identify aspects to incorporate and modify. Those who had not yet developed the experience hope that it can serve as a road map.
- We refer to early childhood care services, within social ministries and often, in tension with the formal education system. These include private initiatives and alternatives to what the official education system offers. This occurs in a continent that is so affected by inequality, and in local contexts of poverty, where children's care needs are connected to parent's work demands.
- Regarding the selected countries' comprehensive policy efforts, there are some common elements that are important to note.¹⁹ First, their national Early Childhood Development (ECD) frameworks were created around the same time. These were supported by current regulations and have essentially involved two intervention models; Early Childhood care centers and home visits to support and strengthen positive parenting practices. There are training courses for the implementation of both modalities.
- Since the ratification of the CRC more than three decades ago, significant progress has been made in all the countries examined. These efforts are tied to General Comment No. 7/2005 on the realization

of children's rights in early childhood, "to strengthen understanding of the human rights of all young children and to draw States parties' attention to their obligations towards young children."

- The frameworks identified are based on the concept that Early Childhood development and well-being require a comprehensive approach, which helps to position ECD on the political agenda of different government agencies, as well as increase coordination of actions between the public and private sectors.

Regarding the generation of evidence, records and information

- The changes of public policy in several of the countries indicate the scarcity of records, a failure to update information on impacts, weakness in monitoring and evaluation processes, as well as the discontinuance of early childhood public policies.
- Regarding access to information, there is a certain degree of under-reporting of experiences, a lack of systematization, and discontinued monitoring systems. There is also an abundance of stories and information based on the memory of former officials.
- The lack of information hinders decision-making that would redirect planned courses, making the monitoring and evaluation of training plans more complex.
- This study fills a gap in comparative experiences between countries in the same region. It has systematized different educational paths to identify and develop competence frameworks.

Regarding the definition of specific competencies

- From the literature review, documents referring to the proposal's mission, management reports, regulations, and decrees stand out. More

specifically, documents describing the design of the formative paths, curricula, and study plans are fundamental.

- The review shows the difficulty in identifying specific competencies defined for the training of early education and childcare staff. These competencies are referred to as objectives, contents or themes, skills, abilities, priority learning nucleus, and conceptual frameworks. The task will be identifying them in different training paths in order to establish a framework of basic and universal competencies at the country level.
- The curricula refer to the topic of play, but it is expressed more as content than as a playful experience related to child development and a means to facilitate multiple learning, or as a way to approach the world and a key element for brain development. Often, challenges and needs of covering health and nutrition have shifted the focus from comprehensiveness to basic coverage. This shift results in losing focus on the playful perspective as a developmental factor that requires specific pedagogical skills, such as understanding of learning, developmental scaffolding strategies, meaningful interactions, etc.²⁰
- The analysis of the countries highlights the distinction between early education and childcare. In programs predominately focused on education, the presence of professional teachers tends to prevail, while in programs focused on care, the role of other actors, linked to community, municipal and social organizations, is more salient.
- There is a significant challenge on how to propose educational guidelines for early education and childcare staff that focus on quality and recovering prior knowledge, and that are oriented towards performance in diverse educational contexts (multiculturalism and rurality, among others). This is in addition to establishing contextualized policies for continuous training.
- Having a regional and national competency framework is understood as a starting point; the beginning of a path rather than a goal. The frameworks will not guarantee access to greater conditions for young children if they are not put into practice with a methodology appropriate to each scenario and the profiles of the early education and childcare staff.
- Therefore, it is essential that governments continue to pursue actions to meet the challenge

of professionalization, training and strengthening of educators' and caretakers' competencies. This challenge can be addressed jointly by governments, social organizations, universities and teacher training institutes.

Regarding feminization of care

- Community mothers in the countries studied (with the exception of Uruguay) represent a social group that has been well recognized since the 1980s (almost 50 years of experience). However, their integration to State decisions has had disruptive characteristics. They were grassroots movements that performed dialogue regarding public policy and narrowed the gaps between governmental benefits and basic needs at the local level. That said, they also brought a feminization of care with little systematic education. Apart from their suitability, they adopted a "maternal" role, which led to them being called community mothers. Being affectionate or a woman is not enough to exercise this role. To build subjectivity, it is necessary to have a professional care relationship. It is not possible to care without education, nor educate without caring
- These reflections can be expanded, particularly by indicating that 50 years later, efforts are still being made to demand training and the need to establish basic and universal competency frameworks for these women who implement public policies, and overall, earn low salaries compared to those in the formal education sector, and do not have social security or health insurance. Only in one case these women achieved some degree of union organization. Currently, this very large group is responsible for the care of the region's impoverished and vulnerable young children. In this context, there is a contradiction between their high social value in their communities and the lack of recognition they receive at a general level.

Regarding the infantilization of poverty

- Eradicating poverty is one of the most important challenges that governments in the region face. The poverty rate in Latin America and the Caribbean stands at more than 30%. These rates have been relatively stable over the last decade, with a marked increase in recent years. The most shocking aspect of these indexes is that almost half of children live in poverty. Therefore, reference is made to

the infantilization of poverty or in other words, the face of poverty is a child's face. There have been significant increases in the number of people living in poverty and extreme poverty, reaching 47% and 17.2%, respectively, according to ECLAC 2018.

- Numerous studies estimate that in developing countries many children under 5 years old do not reach their full potential due to poverty, a lack of access to health, nutrition, care and education, as well as local inequalities. The regional agenda cannot hide from these scenarios.

Regarding the formalization of labor conditions

- The formalization of a source of employment should be accompanied by labor legislation and salary policies. The salary compensation of different actors who perform the same functions in the institutions and have similar education must be revised.

- The systematic training and certification of work competencies of these educational agents must match a salary structure appropriate for a "teaching career."

These findings and challenges represent a set of reflections that emerged from interviews, the secondary sources and the validation workshop. Their aim is not to exhaust the discussion, but rather establish a roadmap that can provide possible direction for new paths of inquiry or to implement national and sub-national actions regarding the training of early education and childcare staff in the region.

The development team would like to thank everybody who was interviewed, and the participants in the consultation workshop for their willingness to share their experiences and for their valuable contributions to this study.

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Annex A. Matrix of Interviews and Documents Reviewed

ARGENTINA

COMPILERS	Javier Quesada , Former Undersecretary of Early Childhood. SENNAF.
	Claudia Castro , Former Director of Strengthening and Training the SSPIN.
SECONDARY SOURCES: DOCUMENTS REVIEWED	SITEAL. Information System on Educational Trends in Latin America. (2020). Country Profile: Argentina. https://www.siteal.iiep.unesco.org/pais/argentina
	Law No. 26.061/2006. Comprehensive Protection of the Rights of Children and Adolescents. https://www.siteal.iiep.unesco.org/bdnp/6/ley-26061-proteccion-integral-derechos-ninas-ninos-adolescentes
	Decree 574/2016. National Early Childhood Plan. https://www.argentina.gob.ar/normativa/nacional/decreto-574-2016-260280
	Decree 750/19. National Early Childhood First Strategy. https://www.argentina.gob.ar/normativa/nacional/decreto-750-2019-330991
	Quesada J Castro C. 2019. Certification of Early Education and Childcare Staff in Argentina. Systematization of Experience.
	Systematization of Experience. Early Childhood. We Accompany the Upbringing. https://www.argentina.gob.ar/politicassociales/primerosanos
	Educational Materials for Early Childhood. Booklets for training educators of child development centers (CDI). 2019. https://www.argentina.gob.ar/desarrollosocial/primerainfancia/materiales/cuadernillos
	Early Childhood Guide – Better Beginnings Toolkit for Educators of Child Development Centers. https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/primerainfancia_mejores_comienzos_-_guia.pdf
	Baby Booklet 45 Days to 12 Months. https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/primerainfancia_mejores_comienzos_-_cuadernillo_bebes.pdf
	Toddlers 12 to 24 Months. https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/primerainfancia_mejores_comienzos_-_cuadernillo_1.pdf
	Children from 2 Years old 24 to 36 Months. https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/primerainfancia_mejores_comienzos_-_cuadernillo_2.pdf
	Children 3 Years Old 36 to 48 Months. https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/primerainfancia_mejores_comienzos_-_cuadernillo_3.pdf
	4-Year-Old Children. https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/primerainfancia_mejores_comienzos_-_cuadernillo_4.pdf
	Emotional Development 0 to 3 years. https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/desarrollo_emocional.pdf
	Child Development Center Management Manual. https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/manual_de_gestion_de_centros_de_desarrollo_infantil.pdf
	Play in Child Development Centers. https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/juego_en_los_centros_de_desarrollo_infantil.pdf
	Videos with content for educators. https://www.argentina.gob.ar/desarrollosocial/primerainfancia/materiales/videos
Materials for First Years Program Facilitators. 2019. https://www.argentina.gob.ar/politicassociales/primerosanos/materiales	
International Labour Organization. 2015. MTEySS. Training Path. Care and Attention of Children. Support Material for Training Child Carers. 2015 (Currently being revised and updated). https://www.ilo.org/buenosaires/publicaciones/WCMS_430628/lang-en/index.htm	

COLOMBIA

INTERVIEWS	Sandra Liliana Pinzón Duarte , Specialized Professional of the Deputy Directorate of Technical Management for Early Childhood Care. Early Childhood Directorate of the ICBF.
	Laura Ochoa , Former Deputy Director of Technical Management for Early Childhood Care. Early Childhood Directorate of the ICBF.
	Carlos del Castillo , Key informant.
	Juan Carlos Reyes , Key informant.
SECONDARY SOURCES: DOCUMENTS REVIEWED	Law No. 1.098/2006. Childhood and Adolescence Code. https://www.siteal.iiep.unesco.org/bdnp/633/ley-ndeg-10982006-codigo-infancia-adolescencia
	From Zero to Forever. Comprehensive Care: Prosperity for Early Childhood. http://www.deceroasiempre.gov.co/QuienesSomos/Documents/Cartilla-Atencion-Integral-prosperidad-para-primera-infancia.pdf
	From Zero to Forever. Comprehensive Early Childhood Care Strategy. Political, Technical and Management Foundations. http://www.deceroasiempre.gov.co/QuienesSomos/Documents/Fundamentos-politicos-tecnicos-gestion-de-cero-a-siempre.pdf
	Ministry of Education. From Zero to Forever. 2014. Series of Pedagogical Guidelines for Early Education in the Framework of Comprehensive Care.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document N° 20. Meaning of Early Education. http://www.deceroasiempre.gov.co/Prensa/CDocumentacionDocs/Documento-N20-sentido-educacion-inicial.pdf Guide N° 50. Modalities and Quality Conditions for Early Education. https://www.mineduccion.gov.co/1759/w3-article-341863.html?_noredirect=1 Guide No. 54. Institutional Strengthening for Early Education Modalities. https://www.mineduccion.gov.co/1759/w3-article-341872.html?_noredirect=1 Inter-Sectoral Commission for The Integral Care of Early Children (CIP). 2020. Report on the Implementation of the State Policy for the Comprehensive Development of Early Childhood from Zero to Forever. http://www.deceroasiempre.gov.co/Prensa/CDocumentacionDocs/Informe-Politica-DIPI-2019.pdf National Planning Department. 2018. From Zero to Forever. Evaluation Results Report and Third Delivery of the Evaluation Database Documentation. https://colaboracion.dnp.gov.co/CDT/Sinergia/Documentos/Evaluacion_De_Cero_a_siempre_Documento.pdf Ministry of Education. 2017. National Qualifications Framework. http://aprende.colombiaaprende.edu.co/es/node/89211 Ministry of Education. 2017. National Qualifications Framework. Introduction. https://www.mineduccion.gov.co/1759/articles-362828_recurso.pdf Ministry of Education. 2017. National Qualifications Framework. Education Sector. Subsector Initial Education. https://www.mineduccion.gov.co/1759/articles-362823_recurso.pdf Ministry of Education and OEI. 2018. Care and Upbringing Practices. https://redes.colombiaaprende.edu.co/ntg/men/pdf/Practicas_de_Cuidado.pdf SITEAL. Information System on Educational Trends in Latin America. (2020). Country Profile: Colombia. https://www.siteal.iiep.unesco.org/pais/colombia#Pol%C3%ADtica%20P%C3%BAblica
	MATERIALS OF THE ACCOMPANIMENT MODEL LOCATED. MORE +
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Booklet. 2018. Development Follow-Up: Strengthening Pedagogical Practices in Early Childhood Education. https://es.scribd.com/document/378499933/Guia-seguimiento Primer. 2018. Care Practices. Strengthening Pedagogical Practices in Early Childhood Education. https://es.scribd.com/document/419932139/6-Cartilla-Practicas-de-Cuidado Workbook. 2018. Interactions. Strengthening Pedagogical Practices in Early Childhood Education. https://es.calameo.com/books/00651807229be59a988f9 Booklet. 2018. Linking Families to Pedagogical Practices. Strengthening Pedagogical Practices in Early Childhood Education. https://es.scribd.com/document/425006415/1-Cartilla-Vinculacion-de-Familias-a-La-Practica-Pedagogica Primer. 2018. Pedagogical Planning. Strengthening Pedagogical Practices in Early Childhood Education. https://es.scribd.com/document/459553821/3-4-Planeacion Primer. 2018. Pedagogical Environments. Strengthening Pedagogical Practices in Early Childhood Education. https://es.scribd.com/document/371101662/Guia-ambientes Primer. 2018. Introduction Toolbox. Strengthening Pedagogical Practices in Early Childhood Education. https://es.scribd.com/document/407713297/1-Introduccion-Caja-de-Herramientas
	ICBF. Portfolio of Training Programs for Human Talent in Early Childhood Care Services. Operational Manual. Validity 2021.
	ICBF. Institutional Modality for Early Childhood Care. Operational Manual. 2020. https://www.icbf.gov.co/manual-operativo-modalidad-institucional-v5

ECUADOR

INTERVIEWS	Berenice Cordero , Minister MIES 2019.
	Tatiana León , Former Undersecretary of Early Childhood 2019.
SECONDARY SOURCES: DOCUMENTS REVIEWED	Approximately 20 PowerPoint presentations sent by the interviewees on different aspects related to early childhood were reviewed.
	Law No. 2002-100. Childhood and Adolescence Code. https://www.siteal.iiep.unesco.org/bdnp/260/ley-2002-100-codigo-ninez-adolescencia
	Early Childhood Workforce Initiative. March 2019. Briefing Summary. Professionalization of Staff Working with Infants and Toddlers from Birth to Age 3.
	Continuous Education. 2014. Module Public Policy for Comprehensive Child Development.
	Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion. 2019. Technical Standard. Mission Tenderness. Modality Child Development Centers CDI. https://www.inclusion.gob.ec/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Reforma-Norma-T%C3%A9cnica-MT-CNH_compressed.pdf
	Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion. 2019. Reformed Technical Standard. Mission Tenderness. Growing with Our Children Modality. https://www.inclusion.gob.ec/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Reforma-Norma-T%C3%A9cnica-MT-CNH_compressed.pdf
	MIES – University of Cuenca. Evaluation of the Quality of Public Services for Comprehensive Child Development.
Information System on Educational Trends in Latin America. SITEAL. 2020. Country Profile: Ecuador. https://www.siteal.iiep.unesco.org/pais/ecuador	

PERU

INTERVIEWS	Carmen Lourdes Sevilla Carnero, Executive Director, Cuna Más National Program.
	Mabel Milagros Herrera Castañeda, Technical Coordinator of the Executive Directorate. Cuna Más National Program.
SECONDARY SOURCES: DOCUMENTS REVIEWED	SITEAL. Information System on Educational Trends in Latin America. 2020. Country Profile: Peru. https://www.siteal.iiep.unesco.org/pais/peru#Pol%C3%ADtica%20P%C3%ABlica
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	Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion. 2020. Resolution N° 681-2020. Curricula for Initial and Continuous Training of Community Actors. https://cdn.www.gob.pe/uploads/document/file/1484814/RDE_681-2020-MIDIS-PNCM.pdf.pdf
	Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion. 2016. Systematization of the Cuna Más National Program. Evaluation Report. http://evidencia.midis.gob.pe/sistematizacion-del-programa-nacional-cuna-mas/
	Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion. 2020. Resolution No. 456-2020-MIDIS/PNCM. Approve the Evaluation and Certification Plan of the Communal Actors of the National Program Cuna Más. https://www.gob.pe/institucion/cunamas/normas-legales/1201317-456-2020-midis-pncm

URUGUAY

INTERVIEWS	Yolanda Oyarbide , Early Childhood Educator Training Program Director.
	Sara Penco , Educator and Social Communicator, CENFORES Teacher.
	Javier Allaume , Teacher Specialist in Early Childhood and Training of Trainers in Early Childhood.
	Jorge Ferrando , Former INAU Early Childhood Director.
SECONDARY SOURCES: DOCUMENTS REVIEWED	Law N° 17.823. Childhood and Adolescence Code. https://www.oas.org/dil/esp/codigo_ninez_adolescencia_uruguay.pdf
	National Strategy for Children and Adolescents 2010-2030. https://www.siteal.iiep.unesco.org/bdnp/2458/estrategia-nacional-infancia-adolescencia-2010-2030
	National Plan for Early Childhood, Childhood and Adolescence 2016-2020. https://www.siteal.iiep.unesco.org/bdnp/1174/plan-nacional-primera-infancia-infancia-adolescencia-2016-2020
	SITEAL. Information System on Educational Trends in Latin America. 2020. Country Profile: Uruguay. https://www.siteal.iiep.unesco.org/pais/uruguay
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	Center for Training and Studies (CENFORES) INAU. 2019. Basic Training for Early Childhood Educators Course: “Education and Care I: Functions, Role and Tasks.”
	Center for Training and Studies (CENFORES) INAU. 2019. Basic Training for Early Childhood Educators Course: “Education and Care II: Educational Action in Early Childhood, Methodology and Techniques.”
	Center for Training and Studies (CENFORES) INAU. Uruguay Institute for Children and Adolescents Training and Study Center on Subjects of Childhood, Adolescence and Families.
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Institute for Children and Adolescents of Uruguay Training and Studies Center (INAU). 2019. Implementation of Community Care Homes. A Look at Services, Caregivers, Families, Children, and the Community. https://www.gub.uy/sistema-cuidados/sites/sistemacuidados/files/documentos/publicaciones/231219_Implementaci%C3%B3n%20de%20las%20Casas%20Comunitarias%20de%20Cuidados.pdf	

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- CEPI (Center for Early Childhood Studies). October 2020. Compendium of Initiatives with Positive Results for Quality Early Childhood Education. <https://cepinfanzia.cl/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Compendio-final-oct-2020.pdf>
- Public policies for child development in Latin America. 2015. Overview and analysis of experiences. <https://www.thedialogue.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/FINAL-Politicasy-publicas-de-desarrollo-infantil-en-AL-2.pdf>

Annex B. Sociodemographic Data

The following table presents key sociodemographic data for the countries included in the study.²¹

COUNTRY		COLOMBIA	PERU	ARGENTINA	URUGUAY	ECUADOR	SOURCE
GENERAL DATA							
Population (2018)		49,661,000	31,989,000	44,361,000	3,449,000	17,084,000	UNICEF
Nominal GDP per capita (2018)	USD/year	6,508	7,046	9,887	17,029	6,249	IMF
	Global ranking out of 187 countries	86	84	67	50	89	
Life expectancy at birth (years) (2018)		77	77	77	78	77	UNICEF
Urban population (%) (2018)		81	78	92	95	64	ECLAC
Poverty (% of pop.) (2018)		27.00	20.5	40.90	8.10	23.20	ECLAC (official country estimates); Argentina: INDEC
Poverty (% of pop.) (2018)	Urban	26	11.70	37.50	9.40	24.2	ECLAC
	Rural	43.40	34.80	No data	2.20	33.8	
Extreme poverty (% of pop.) (2018)		7.20	2.80	6.70	0.10	8.40	ECLAC (official country estimates)
Extreme poverty (% of pop.) (2018)	Urban	7.30	1.50	No data	0.1	3.7	ECLAC
	Rural	22.70	11.60	No data	0.1	12.8	
Indigenous population	Total	1,378,884 (2005)	7,231,000 (2007)	955,032 (2010)	No data	1,018,176 (2010)	Official census
	%	3.40	24.00	2.38	No data	7.3	
Fertility (live births/woman) (2018)		1.8	2.3	2.3	2	2.4	UNICEF
Migrants outside national territory (accumulated through 2019)		2,869,032	1,512,920	1,013,414	633,439	1,183,685	ECLAC
Immigrants in national territory (accumulated through 2019)		1,142,000	782,000	2,212,879	81,482	381,507	ECLAC
Births attended by qualified staff (%) (2018)		99.2	93.1	93.9	99.7	96.4	ECLAC

COUNTRY		COLOMBIA	PERU	ARGENTINA	URUGUAY	ECUADOR	SOURCE
CHILDHOOD DATA							
Population < age 18		14,032,000	9,782,000	13,103,000	860,000	5,724,000	UNICEF
Population < age 5		3,730,000	2,757,000	3,748,000	239,000	1,653,000	UNICEF
% of children < age 5		8	9	8.45	6.93	9.68	UNICEF
Child poverty (% of children) (2017)		40.9	31.8	56.3 (< age 15)	17.2 (< age 6)	34.5	Argentina: INDEC; Colombia, Peru and Ecuador: World Bank; Uruguay: INE
Extreme child poverty (% of children) (2017)		6.7	4.5	15.6 (< age 15)	No data	4.9	World Bank
% of children < age 18 of total immigrants received (2019)		26.0	15.0	12.0	20.0	30.0	UNICEF
< age 5 mortality rate (1990)		35 per 1,000	81 per 1,000	29 per 1,000	23 per 1,000	54 per 1,000	UNICEF
< age 5 mortality rate (2018)		14 per 1,000	14 per 1,000	10 per 1,000	8 per 1,000	14 per 1,000	UNICEF
< age 5 mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	Boys	16	16	11	8	16	UNICEF
	Girls	13	13	9	7	13	
Neonatal death as % of < age 5 deaths (%) (2018)		55.0	52.0	64.0	60.0	51.0	UNICEF
Low birthweight (%) (2015)		10	9	7.30	8.0	11.0	UNICEF
Malnutrition among preschoolers (age 0–4) (%) (2013–18) ^a	Delayed growth	13	13	7	11	24	UNICEF
	Overweight	5	8	10	7	8	
	Underweight	1	1	1.60	< 1	2	
% of children age 2–4 subjected to violent methods of discipline by caregivers (physical and/or psychological) (2005–16)		No data	6 of 10 children and adolescents beaten at some time in their homes; 7 of 10 have suffered psychological violence ^b	72.0%	61.0%	Nearly 40% of children and adolescents physically assaulted at home by their parents ^c	UNICEF ^d
Use of basic drinking water services (% of households) (2017)		97	91	85	99	94.0	UNICEF
Use of basic sanitation services (% households) (2017)		90	74	60	97	88.0	UNICEF

COUNTRY		COLOMBIA	PERU	ARGENTINA	URUGUAY	ECUADOR	SOURCE
Preschool net enrollment rate (%) 2016 ^e	Female	85.0	89.4	71.5	92.2	69.5	ECLAC
	Male	84.0	88.5	70.5	90.5	66.5	

Sources: UNICEF, Statistical Tables on the State of the World's Children 2019 and Statistical Tables on the State of the World's Children 2017. *Poverty (USD 5.50/day) and extreme poverty (USD 1.90/day) data*: ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean), from Household Survey Database (BADEHOG). *Migration data*: UNICEF, 2019, Migrant and Refugee Children; retrieved from: https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Child-migrants-and-refugees_Dec2019.xlsx. *Violence data*: https://www.unicef.org/spanish/publications/files/UNICEF_Early_Moments_Matter_for_Every_Child_Sp.pdf.

^a Data are for the most recent year available during the period specified.

^b <https://www.unicef.org/peru/sites/unicef.org/peru/files/2019-09/cifras-violencia-ninas-ninos-adolescentes-peru-2019.pdf>.

^c <https://www.unicef.org/ecuador/comunicados-prensa/violencia-el-principal-desaf%C3%ADo-para-la-infancia-en-ecuador>.

^d Approximately 80% of children between age 2 and 4 are systematically subjected to violent methods of discipline by their caregivers, according to a study of 78 countries, covering 28% of children age 2–4.

^e Number of children enrolled in preschool regardless of age expressed as a percentage of the total number of children who are of official preschool age. Net enrollment rate: Number of students in the normative age group enrolled in the level or type of education in question, expressed as a percentage of the population of the same age group.

Annex C. Summary by Country: Programs, Benefits and Services

ARGENTINA

In 2005, the *National Law for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents* (Law 26.061) was enacted. The law was aligned with the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, which establishes the role of national and regional governments in guaranteeing the comprehensive protection of the rights of children and adolescents. In 2007, Law 26.233 on the *Regulation of Child Development Centers* (CDI) was enacted. The law highlighted and recognized various early education and childcare spaces.

The early childhood policy has two specific services, which guide a set of actions aimed at guaranteeing young children's development.

The *National Early Childhood Plan* (Decree No. 574/2016) proposes interventions to create, expand, regulate, and strengthen services for the comprehensive care of children through child development centers.²² The *First Years Program* provides family accompaniment. Both interventions are dependent on the National Secretariat of Childhood, Adolescence and Family, which is part of the Ministry of Social Development.

Approved through Decree 750/19, the "*Early Childhood First*" *National Strategy (ENPIP)* aims to reduce social and local gaps that affect comprehensive development in early childhood, in order to provide a full guarantee of rights from the prenatal stage until the age of 6. It is an intersectoral and federal proposal, whose guidelines were prepared by the Undersecretariat for Early Childhood, SENNAF, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Education, with technical support provided by UNICEF.

Its objective is to coordinate government agencies and civil society organizations to address, from a global perspective, five key dimensions to promote children's well-being.²³ The ENPIP proposes actions organized in different dimensions of child development, namely: life and health, identity, conditions to guarantee upbringing, education and care for development, promotion of rights and actions in situations of risk and/or rights violations. Specifically, in the dimension of care and education, explicit reference is made to the strengthening training/professionalization of

human resources for early childhood care, linked to the quality of services.

NATIONAL EARLY CHILDHOOD PLAN²⁴ – FACT SHEET

This tool is meant to guarantee the comprehensive development of children 45 days to 4 years old in situations of social vulnerability and to promote the protection of their rights. The plan will be implemented within the scope of the Ministry of Social Development through the National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and Family (SENNAF), with a national scope including both urban and rural coverage.

Objective

Promotion and strengthening of care spaces and a comprehensive approach to children in their early childhood, ensuring adequate and healthy nutrition, as well as early stimulation and health promotion. It also aims to foster conditions for active participation in family and community environments that facilitate upbringing processes and children's development, promoting within-family and community strengthening.

Intervention Modalities/Components

The Plan proposes interventions to create, expand, regulate, and strengthen services for the comprehensive care of children through *child development centers* and the *First Years Program* for family accompaniment. Both interventions depend on the National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and the Family, which is part of the Ministry of Social Development.

Early Childhood Spaces (ECS)/ Child Development Centers (CDC). Direct care for children aged 45 days to 4 years old living in socially vulnerable situations. Most of these centers operate 11 months a year with one shift a day. The CDCs provide:

- *Nutritional assistance:* food adapted to the needs of each age group and communities' eating habits.

- *Prevention and health promotion*: workshops and training for children and their families.
- *Early stimulation and psychomotor skills*: games, physical exercises and recreational activities that strengthen their abilities.
- *Workshops and training courses*: meetings to promote reflection and training of educators, mothers, nutritionists and professionals of the early childhood centers.

The plan's operation is decentralized; the expansion and/or opening of the CDCs is carried out through agreements between SENNAF and different governmental and nongovernmental local bodies. Through these agreements the national government provides financial assistance in exchange for compliance with regulations.

Early Years/Early Childhood Program – Accompanying Upbringing (Acompañamos la crianza).²⁵ Strengthening the parenting skills of families in vulnerable situations with children 0 to 4 years old, by training individuals, provincial and local institutions, and community networks. This component consists of the following three lines of action:

- *Family visits*: Facilitators make periodic visits to families to accompany them in child upbringing processes, sharing knowledge, experiences, resources, and concerns related to comprehensive child development. The technical team accompanies facilitators in the follow-up of families to provide support in cases that require intervention and referral to local, provincial or national institutions.
- *Strengthening facilitators' networks and community education*: This component is aimed at promoting the consolidation of local institutional practices pertaining to early childhood and parenting through training, continuous education and the certification of facilitators and other community actors. Facilitators receive a Certification of Labor Competences from the Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero and the Ministry of Production and Labor as a recognition of the work they perform with families and their role in promoting and caring of early childhood in communities.
- *Community education for children*: Awareness-raising, dissemination, educational and training activities are carried out in different communities in coordination with children's networks operating in the territory.

Service Staff

In both interventions, the activities are primarily carried out by educators and facilitators, who are accompanied by central technical teams that visit the territories and provide training.

At the *Child Development Centers (CDCs)*, work teams are composed of a director or coordinator; the classroom staff made up of teachers, educators and assistants; and there is an interdisciplinary technical team, which includes social workers, motor development specialists and psychologists who advise and accompany families and communities, and keep track of all children's situation.

In the *Early Years* program, facilitators were selected in each of the provinces and municipalities based on their prior experience in community work, interests, and explicit commitment to early childhood. Their membership in social organizations and living in the neighborhood or locality were also considered.

Training Process

The training and capacity building of these actors aims to contribute to improving the performance of staff who care for children, and to qualitatively improve their competences to foster child development.

Early Childhood Educators/Operators. CDC. Training people working in Early Childhood Centers/CDCs has been *continuous and unsystematic* for decades. Different offers provided by the State, community organizations or international organizations are proposed as "*continuous education*," "*training*" or "*updates*" without an initial level of education as a common entry requirement to attain positions or jobs of educators or assistants, or an in-service training modality within the initial period of working at an institution.

There is no framework of competences in the sector to guide the multitude of offers. Each training course has its own objectives, main topic, duration, and methodology. These often respond to the possibilities and experience of the institution offering it. Almost none of the proposals are evaluated and the certifications do not act as formal qualifications for a professional career, nor provide access to higher education or salary improvement.

In 2018, an initial training proposal was implemented; the *Early Childhood Operators Course* was designed

and implemented through an agreement between the National Ministries of Health and Social Development and Education, Culture and Science. The project design was led by the Undersecretariat for Early Childhood of SENNAF, which called upon the National Institute of Technological Education (INET) of the Ministry of Education. The proposal provided a technical training space aimed at enhancing practices and experiences, redefining skills and knowledge and contributing theoretical content to strengthen the institutional pedagogical operation of Child Development Centers (CDCs) by developing new strategies for early childhood care and support, thus guaranteeing children access to their rights and an environment that facilitates their full development, consistent with the purpose of the Comprehensive Protection System.

The course was primarily aimed at CDC workers (caretakers/educators/operators) with incomplete or complete primary education and incomplete or complete secondary education. The methodology was blended. It certified 72 teaching-training hours which, eventually, can be the first stage of formal education that can be connected with further levels of education, such as technical courses for example.

The proposal was very well received because, even though the childcare staff had participated in various training programs, they had never received certification from the Ministry of Education. The organizations provided space/classrooms and infrastructure for the weekly meetings and authorized the educators to participate in the course during work hours, recognizing it as “in-service training.” A total of 1,100 women were educated in this training course which was free of charge.

Facilitators of the Early Years Program/Accompanying Upbringing (Acompañamos la crianza). The central focus of the Early Years Program/Accompanying Upbringing is having continuous training meetings for facilitators on different topics. The following booklet was developed with guidelines on their role: *Booklet for Program Facilitators*.

The program prepares *cards for accompanying families*, that are meant to guide and organize the family visits. Each card is related to some aspect of comprehensive child development and presented within the framework of the rights of the child. Each card contains a brief development of the topic raised and suggestions to promote conversation and dialogue. They can be used in any order, and it is up to the facilitator to use one or the other based on the family’s interests or concerns. Through this material, facilitators have resources and tools that

enable them to accompany families and have dialogue on parenting issues.

COLOMBIA

The State Policy for Comprehensive Early Childhood Development, “From Zero to Forever,” Law 1804 of 2016, adopts a vision that reaffirms the principles enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Among these principles, it highlights the recognition of rights without exception, distinction or discrimination for any reason, the special protection of their freedom and human dignity, and the best interest of the child. The policy is based on the Doctrine of Integral Protection as an action framework for the State Policy for Comprehensive Early Childhood Development, “From Zero to Forever,” inasmuch as it recognizes children in their early childhood as subjects of rights. This policy presents the Colombian State’s position and understanding of the vital cycle of early childhood, as well as a set of standards associated with this population, along with the processes, structures and institutional roles led by the government. These, in partnership with families and society, ensure the comprehensive protection and guarantee of the rights of pregnant women and children between zero and six years old.

The coordination, synergy and intersectoral management of the policy is the responsibility of the Intersectoral Commission for Comprehensive Early Childhood Care (CIPI), made up of the: Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Health and Social Protection, Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (ICBF), National Planning Department, Department of Social Prosperity, Ministry of Sports, Ministry of Housing, Ministry of National Education, Unit for the Attention and Integral Reparation of Victims, Presidency of the Intersectoral Commission for Food and Nutritional Security, Youth Council, and the Presidential Council for Children and Adolescents, with the latter acting as the technical secretary of the CIPI.

Within the framework of the From Zero to Forever policy, early childhood education or initial education is a right of children under six years old. It is conceived as an intentional, permanent and structured educational and pedagogical process, which is part of comprehensive care. The policy states that children develop their potential, capacities and skills in experiences that involve play, artistic expressions, literature and exploring the environment, with the family as a central actor in this process.

STATE POLICY FOR COMPREHENSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT, FROM ZERO TO FOREVER – FACT SHEET

“From Zero to Forever” (*De Cero a Siempre*) is Colombia’s National Policy for Comprehensive Early Childhood Care, which coordinates and advances the development of plans, programs, projects and intersectoral actions for comprehensive early childhood care.

Objective

The set of planned national and local actions are aimed at promoting and guaranteeing children’s development during early childhood.

Intervention Modalities/Components

Early education is provided through the ICBF, with the education sector led by Secretariats of Education and private service providers. The private sector offers early education spaces through different types of institutions, including kindergartens, stimulation centers, private schools, children’s workshops, among other modalities. These cover a significant portion of the country’s child population. The Ministry of National Education has been streamlining quality conditions, along with the technical, pedagogical and normative areas of early education. The goal is that the preschool education service is a mechanism through which the rights of children under six years old can be materialized.

Currently, the country has two major strategies. The first is early education services operated by the ICBF for children and their families from gestation to 5 years old. The second is preschool as the first level of the formal education system, which has a transition grade as the first mandatory grade that is designed for children 5 to 6 years old.

Preschool education is the first level of the formal education system and consists of three grades: pre-kindergarten, for children three years old; kindergarten, for children four years old; and transition, for children five years old, the latter being the mandatory grade established in the Constitution.

The early education spaces managed by the ICBF are materialized in different care modalities: institutional²⁶ (CDC), family,²⁷ its own intercultural modality²⁸ and community²⁹ (Family Welfare Community Homes - HCB).³⁰

The ICBF Community Modality has four services:

- Community Well-being Homes (HCB for their initials in Spanish)
- Group Community Welfare Homes
- Basic Care Units (UBA for their initials in Spanish)
- Community Comprehensive Well-being Homes

The different modalities are aimed at guaranteeing the right to quality comprehensive early education and childcare for children from gestation until they enter the education system at the preschool level. In this sense, generating the necessary mechanisms is promoted to progressively educate the human resources that are currently responsible for caring for the youngest children.

This study will focus on the Community Modality since it is the one carried out by community parents.

Service Staff³¹

The human talent that takes on educational and pedagogical actions in the modalities has different profiles depending on the modality in which the person works.

Education Process

Colombia has made important efforts to strengthen the training and qualifications of the people who work in education. Its actions have been primarily focused on people who perform pedagogical functions and tasks. The country has organized education in three subsystems, specifically:

- Initial education subsystem.
- In-service training subsystem.
- Advanced education subsystem.

Initial Education Subsystem. This covers all forms of education that involve pedagogy, as well as the analytical understanding of how teaching and learning occur in human beings, specifically learning how to teach, building knowledge, and mobilizing thinking in different fields of knowledge based on a solid epistemological, theoretical and practical foundation. The above is organized diachronically and synchronically during the process of a student becoming an education professional. The degree qualifies the educator to work in the educational system as a teacher or as holder of a bachelor’s degree in education.³² In early education modalities, within the framework of comprehensive care

TABLE 1: INTERVENTION MODALITIES/COMPONENTS

INSTITUTIONAL MODALITY	
Profile of the educational agent	Education: Professional in education sciences in areas related to early childhood education, or with emphasis in special education, psychology, pedagogy or educational psychology.
Pedagogical assistant profile	Education: Degree from a technical institute or high school diploma.
GRADE: PRESCHOOL	
Preschool teacher	Any of the following nine academic degrees: Bachelor's degree in: preschool education, infant education, pedagogy (alone, with another option or emphasis), early childhood education, pedagogy, psychopedagogy with emphasis in educational counseling, special education, basic education with emphasis in special education, or elementary education.
FAMILY MODALITY	
Profile of the educational agent	Education: Professionals in infant pedagogy, preschool education, early childhood education, special education, psychopedagogy.
OWN MODALITY	
Profile of the community education agent	Education: University graduates in performing arts, music, ethno-educators, physical educators, who speak the native language and know the culture. Graduates from technical schools in comprehensive early childhood care with a minimum of one year of experience working with children or working with families and communities. Holders of teaching certificates or people completed the highest level of formal schooling offered in the community. Recognized in the community for their traditional knowledge, use of the native language and cultural knowledge. Must have resided in the area where the community attention unit (CAU) operates for at least one year.
Profile of the pedagogical professional	Education: Professionals in education sciences in areas related to early childhood education. Ethno-educators.
COMMUNITY MODALITY	
Profile: Community parent	Education: Teaching certificate or technical degree in early childhood. In cases in which the previously established profile is not found, the requirement may be to validate the highest level of schooling that exists in the territory, in which case the operator must present supporting documents and evidence of the strategies used to select human talent. In the case of ethnic groups, the community parent must be recognized by the community and have its approval based on their traditional knowledge, use of the mother tongue, knowledge of its culture and territory, in addition to having completed the highest level of formal education offered in the educational institutions in their respective community.

led by the ICBF, this area seeks to guarantee continuity in the educational trajectories of people who work in the field of early childhood. This is achieved through educational services³³ that contribute to the professional development of ICBF educators.

In-service Training Subsystem. These are training actions carried out by educators from the beginning of their professional practice, which constitute the basis of their professional performance. This modality includes experiences related to education, diversification and innovation that occur formally and informally during the professional life of a teacher or principal, which are aimed at improving their work in education.³⁴

This area is organized in two categories (see Table 2).

The methodology of in-service training through a situated accompaniment model aims to contribute to improving the quality of early education. It is a proposal oriented towards the recognition, strengthening and re-signification of pedagogical practices. Its objective is to ensure interactions, development and learning processes in children, in accordance with the available tools and technical references in the country. To achieve this goal, it seeks to create spaces where teachers, pedagogical assistants and community mothers can develop significant and continuous processes of observation, feedback, reflection and development of their pedagogical practices and proposals with children. This is done with accompaniment from a pedagogical peer, with a view that exchanging experiences among peers enriches them, as they are shared and analyzed together.

The central components of the MÁ S + pedagogical practice are the coordinators of the accompaniment process as they are part of the daily experiences of teachers, pedagogical assistants and community parents. Their work is to address the objective of organizing reflection and enabling the development of enriched pedagogical experiences, by identifying the strengths, potential, and areas of opportunity for each participant. The MÁ S + work methodology facilitates the direct strengthening of the service unit through one-on-one work, group sessions and individual reflections. The central themes of the strengthening process are: 1. Pedagogical planning; 2. Pedagogical environments; 3. Interactions; 4. Development follow-up; 5. Care practices; and 6. Involving families in pedagogical practices.

The *Everybody Learns Program (Todos a Aprender – ELP)* uses a cascade methodology between coordinators, trainers, and teacher tutors, who develop various training strategies such as group meetings, classroom accompaniment and learning communities with selected teachers in the country’s urban and rural areas. Due to the health emergency in 2020, the Ministry of National Education (MEN) adapted operations to virtual sessions (with synchronous and asynchronous entities), organizing the educational method in the following three cycles: I. Pedagogical strategies; II. Interactions to grow and learn; III. Transforming the ordinary into the extraordinary.³⁵ The following cycles were offered in 2021: Basic concepts and recognition of pedagogical practice; Cycle 1: Classroom and research projects with children; Cycle 2: Enjoying reading and writing in everyday life; and Cycle 3: Resources for pedagogical documentation and evaluating experiences.

TABLE 2: TRAINING PROCESS

<p>DIPLOMA DEGREES AND SHORT COURSES</p>	<p>Programs that correspond to classroom courses of at least 60 hours, virtual courses of at least 80 hours, diploma courses and internships with at least 120 classroom hours, which can be mixed or virtual. The internship is in person. These training processes are aimed at all human talent working with children in early childhood.</p>
<p>SITUATED PEDAGOGICAL ACCOMPANIMENT</p>	<p>The situated pedagogical accompaniment model (MÁS +) is aimed at developing the capacities of the staff who work in the service units (UDS, for the Spanish abbreviation) via the different early childhood care modalities and services of the ICBF. The model seeks to generate timely, relevant and quality actions with a strong focus on pedagogical management and leadership of the UDS, in the case of situated pedagogical accompaniment.</p> <p>Everybody Learns Program (Programa Todos a Aprender – PTA) is a strategy of the Ministry of National Education, to train teachers in service through situated pedagogical accompaniment. Its purpose is to strengthen the pedagogical practices and knowledge of teachers in the country’s official educational establishments. Since 2019, the program has taken on the challenge of accompanying preschool teachers. For this reason, the initial education training area was created with the objective of strengthening teachers’ practice in an effort to achieve curricular coordination and alignment, and thus strengthen the educational trajectory.</p>

Advanced Training Subsystem. The final structure of the education system is supported by formally structured academic programs at the specialization, master’s, doctorate and post-doctorate levels, elevating the human talent that completes initial training and/or those in service who aspire to grow and advance in their studies to the highest educational level.³⁶

Within the framework of the intersectoral group on training human talent that works in the early childhood sector, progress has been made in developing training paths for each profile that works with children in early childhood. The objective is to highlight possible paths for training and professional development, based on having the basic education required. In this manner, specific modalities have been established to educate high school graduates, graduates from technical schools, and certified or graduate teachers.

Early Childhood Information System – Human Talent Training Module

Within the framework of the Early Childhood Intersectoral Commission (CIPI), the Early Childhood Information System (SIPI) was created. One of the modules that make up this system is training human talent. This module registers the different profiles that work with children in early childhood, are part of the different institutions that make up the CIPI and have received some type of training or qualification. This record is made to monitor compliance with the national goal of educating human talent working with early childhood, which is established for each four-year period.

TABLE 3: EDUCATION SUBSYSTEMS OFFERED BY ENTITIES ON THE INTERSECTORAL COMMISSION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

EDUCATION LINES		PROGRAM TYPE	OFFERING ENTITY
Initial education		Primary and secondary education by cycles (flexible modality for adults)	ICBF
		Bachelor’s degree	MEN
		Technical degree	
In-service training	Updating skills	On-site courses	All CIPI entities ¹
		Virtual courses	
		Diploma programs	
		Internships	
	Strengthening (MÁS + – Situated Accompaniment Model)	MÁS + Institutional	ICBF
		MÁS + Ethnic	
		MÁS + Community	
		MÁS + Coordinators	
	Everybody Learns Program	MEN	
Advanced training	Specializations	MEN	
	Master’s	MEN	
	Doctorates		
	Post-doctorate studies		

¹ CIPI: Intersectoral Early Childhood Commission formed by the Presidential Council for Children and Adolescents, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Sports, Ministry of Health and Social Protection, Ministry of Education, Colombian Institute of Family Welfare – ICBF, Administrative Department of Social Prosperity, Unit of Attention and Integral Reparation to Victims.

ECUADOR

In 2002, Ecuador published the *Childhood and Adolescence Code*, which established the obligation to create and approve a National Comprehensive Protection Policy and a new decentralized and participatory institutional legal framework. Since then, the government's action plans for the comprehensive development of children have become clearer and systematic. Furthermore, they have legislative support with the enactment of the Comprehensive Child Protection System and the National Council for Children and Adolescents (CNNA), which were based on three principles of rights protection: "parity in the development of public policies; the creation of protection bodies; and the provision of services to implement protection measures."

The National Intersectoral Early Childhood Strategy, "*Full Childhood*," aligned with the 2013-2017 *National Plan for Good Living*, led by the Coordinating Ministry of Social Development, was created in 2012 from an intersectoral and comprehensive vision to enhance the comprehensive development of children under 5 years old. This strategy considers that living conditions, early stimulation, education, nutrition, and affection during early childhood, have a significant impact on people's futures. The actions are aimed at reducing inequities, establishing that the starting point in the human development process is the gestation period. The strategy sets out to consolidate a comprehensive and intersectoral early childhood care model with local, intercultural and gender approaches. In 2017, the *Mission Tenderness* Program was approved, with the aim of ensuring that the services offered by the Ministries of Public Health, Economic and Social Inclusion, Education, Agriculture, the Water Secretariat and decentralized autonomous governments reached pregnant women and children under 5 years old.

Ecuador has made significant progress in increasing access to early childhood development (ECD) services and in improving health and child development outcomes. The country adopted the Comprehensive Child Development Public Policy, which calls for investment in the physical, cognitive and socio-emotional development of children in their first years of life. This is in addition to the *Mission Tenderness*, an integrated strategy that y childhood development (ECD), particularly in the first 1,000 days, and connects the health, education and protection sectors.³⁷

Three ministries oversee ECD services in Ecuador: The Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion (MIES).

Intervention Modalities/Components

The MIES is responsible for two main services for children under 3 years old from low-income families: children's centers and home visiting services. Children from vulnerable families participate in both services.

- **Child Development Centers (CDCs)** (formerly good living children's centers): educational services that prioritize care, nutrition, preventive health and early stimulation/education services for children 1 to 3 years old, from families living in poverty or extreme poverty, teenage mothers, single-parent households, among other vulnerable situations. Most of these centers are funded by the MIES and work through agreements with local, autonomous and decentralized governments (GADS). Some children's centers are run by NGOs that have agreements with the MIES, which is responsible for the supervision and evaluation of childcare services.
- **Household Care for Comprehensive Child Development:** Growing with our Children (Creciendo con Nuestros Hijos - CNH) is a family education modality for children under 3 years old and their caretakers. CNH educators conduct weekly home visits to families with children under two years old and weekly group visits in community spaces for families with children 2-3 years old. Educators provide nutrition counseling services, games and early stimulation exercises, referrals, child protection, family counseling, and other support to parents. Like the childcare centers, the household visit programs operate through agreements between MIES and GADS.

Service Staff

Child development centers are staffed primarily by coordinators and childcare assistants. Generally, there is one coordinator per center who supervises the assistant caretakers, who are responsible for approximately 10 children.

Coordinators are expected to have a college degree in early childhood education and at least one year of experience in directing or coordinating ECD activities. Although the recently established requirements for the care assistant role specify a technical or university degree, most care assistants only have a secondary or high school degree. The same situation is observed in the case of *CNH family*

educators who are hired directly by the MIES and supervised by local governments.

The educators live in marginal urban areas, with mobility difficulties and in vulnerable conditions. Most of them are breadwinners and work 8 hours a day in the centers. To address the problem with the generalized lack of qualifications, a technical and continuous education program was created to enable staff to obtain a technical or university degree while working. This offer applies to both CNH family educators and CDI educators.

Education Process

There are several initiatives implemented by the MIES to support and expand staff dedicated to early childhood under the Strategy to Improve Human Talent and *Mission Tenderness*. These aim to:

- Professionalize/improve the skills of CDC assistants through the Comprehensive ECD Technical Program. Launched in 2014 by the MIES in collaboration with public higher education institutions (under the direction of the National Secretary of Higher Education, SENESCYT). The courses combine theory (1,500 hours) with practice (3,000 hours) and can be completed in the workplace. To enroll in the technical program, applicants must take the National Exam for Higher Education (ENES) and pass a leveling course.
- *Continuous training* for coordinators and assistants through study circles. These study circles reinforce the knowledge that children's centers workers have acquired in their professional lives, promote self-reflection and evaluation, foster open dialogue, and increase collaboration among colleagues.
- *Continuous training* for staff at children's centers and home visits through a MIES online training platform that offers training modules on different topics, such as: Child nutrition; Early, comprehensive and inclusive stimulation; Comprehensive Child Development Public Policy; Personal development and human growth; Educating with love and equality (preventing and eradicating gender-based violence); Combating malnutrition (food safety); Discovering the child's brain (neurosciences); Training trainers; Pedagogy for service; First aid for young children; and Diversity from a young age (interculturality).
- *Thematic forums: The Ecuador We Want; A Healthy Ecuador Free of Malnutrition*. The platform can be used by coordinators, assistants and educators and provides access to participants to a virtual

classroom with training plans, online publications, materials and interactive resources.

- *The certification of professional competences* includes a two-month theoretical and practical evaluation workshop that is accessible to coordinators and educators. The workshop is conducted both in-person and virtually, and covers topics such as early childhood care, nutrition, health, early stimulation and engagement with families. Upon successful completion of the workshop, participants receive a certificate of labor competences.

PERU

In 2013, Peru approved Supreme Resolution No. 413-2013-PCM, which created the Multisectoral Commission in charge of proposing "*Childhood First*" Guidelines and an *Integrated Action Plan*. The purpose of these guidelines is to guarantee comprehensive early childhood development through cross-sectoral action. The commission is composed of representatives from different ministries. In 2019, through Supreme Decree No. 003 of the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion (MIDIS), the "*Childhood First*" Territorial Management Strategy, was approved, which seeks coordination among national, regional and local government entities to advance early childhood development. "Childhood First" established a sectoral roadmap to coordinate the different government agencies' efforts. This work focuses on seven outcomes that affect children's well-being and development, and entails a list of priority outcomes to be achieved by the State and society. Furthermore, the roadmap lists effective interventions to implement in order to bring about desired changes and establishes indicators for monitoring and evaluating results. Peru has demonstrated extensive efforts to align the principles proposed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child in its domestic legal system, institutional framework and programmatic actions. In this sense, the current early childhood agenda is an ongoing dialogue on these three dimensions. When comparing the country's situation with the other countries in the study, Peru is characterized by a higher proportion of indigenous and urban populations.

The country has made progress in developing a Comprehensive Rights Protection System. From planning, through the PNAIA and the "Include to Grow" Strategy, it has mobilized significant resources to provide a clear conceptual and action framework to guide early childhood public policy. The country has deployed various strategies

and actions to attend to, and protect, the rights of children and their families. It has also created several instruments to ensure the evaluation and monitoring of the early childhood policy, which demonstrates joint work between different sectors, including the MIDIS, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations.

NATIONAL CUNA MÁS PROGRAM³⁸ – FACT SHEET

The Cuna Más National Program (PNCM) is a targeted social program under the responsibility of the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion (MIDIS). It has a national scope with urban and rural coverage.

Objective

Improve the development of children under 36 months old in areas of poverty and extreme poverty, to overcome the gaps in their cognitive, social, physical and emotional development.

Strategic Objectives

1. Design and implement relevant and quality services aimed at the comprehensive development of poor and extremely poor children under 3 years old, involving their families in the planning and execution of activities.
2. Involve participation from communities, civil society, the private sector and government entities in the management and financing of services aimed at comprehensive early childhood care, particularly in areas of poverty and extreme poverty.
3. Expand coverage of early childhood services focused on areas of poverty and extreme poverty.

Intervention Modalities/Components

Day Care Service (DCS). Direct care for children 6 to 36 months old; the daughters and sons of mothers who work and/or study or require care spaces to meet their children's health, nutrition, safety, protection, affection, rest, play, learning, and skills development basic needs. Weekly service of 8 hours per day at day care centers/homes.

At the operational level, comprehensive care is organized along the following lines: food and nutritional care; child health care; child learning; and work with families.

Family Accompaniment Service (FAS). Dedicated for children under 3 years old, their families and pregnant mothers in poverty and extreme poverty. The service aims to advance the development and strengthening of families' knowledge, skills, and care and learning practices (parents/primary caretaker) to improve child development.

This modality is carried out through *home visits* and *socialization and inter-learning sessions* that are a space for guidance regarding the importance of play and care practices that foster child development. The socialization and inter-learning sessions are spaces where families meet to play and exchange experiences related to child development. They are conducted by facilitators and technical assistants.

Service Staff

The activities of both components are carried out by volunteer community actors (CA),³⁹ who are chosen by the community in recognition of the social structures and of the leaders who select people to care for children. Sociocultural practices, language and cosmovision in rural Andean and Amazonian areas are taken into consideration. Secondary education is a requirement, but in some territories, this requirement is flexible due to a lack of candidates.

At the DCS there are: maternal community health workers (in charge of the children); maternal health advisors; family advisors; kitchen partners; administrative support staff, one member of the board of directors, and one member of the supervisory council. At the FAS, there are facilitators and administrative support staff, one member of the board of directors, and one member of the supervisory council.

Education Process

The objective of training and capacity building for community stakeholders is to contribute to improving their performance in each of the country's local units, seeking to qualitatively improve their competences.

Education is provided in two stages: *initial and continuous education*, both of which are developed based on the learning trajectories established for each role or function performed by community actors and technical guidelines (directives, procedures). These trajectories are embodied in the initial and continuous education roadmaps, which determine the training modalities and actions.

The CA Education Program includes:

- Initial and continuous education curricula for technical teams, community actors, facilitators, boards of directors, supervisory councils, and administrative support staff of the SAF and SCD (approved in 2020 by RDE No. 681).
- The curricula are made up of modules with corresponding competences, objectives and topics, which are implemented through sessions on specific subjects.

Educating community actors begins with teaching the technical assistants, as they are the ones who train the community actors in each territory. This is done through methodological orientation sessions and the development of learning modules. The training is fully done through telephones and the Internet via telecommunication equipment such as computers, laptops, tablets, smartphones or basic cell phones. Moreover, virtual group training sessions through the Moodle platform are also carried out. Each training module has its own sessions, workbooks and telephone scripts. Distance training is also provided through printed material in areas with little or no connectivity.

Each session is developed through a training call, a feedback call and a third call to reinforce the lessons learned. Knowledge is assessed through closed questions at the beginning and end of the program to observe changes in knowledge and opinions. Furthermore, technical support is provided to community actors to verify the skills strengthened in the service provision practice, for either the SCD or SAF.

In 2021, Peru has begun the process of competence certification by the PNCM and the National Educational Quality System of Evaluation, Accreditation and Certification (SINEACE), which is an entity.

URUGUAY

In Uruguay, the *Child and Family Care Centers Plan* (CAIF Plan) was created in 1988. It was based on an agreement between UNICEF and the government as an intersectoral public partnership policy between the national State, civil society organizations and municipalities, to guarantee the protection and promotion of the rights of children from conception to 3 years old. The plan targets families in situations of poverty and/or social vulnerability. In 2005, the focus was on increasing coverage and improving

quality. The coverage increase was achieved by converting the weekly modality to daily, opening new centers and implementing urban and rural modalities. The improvement in quality entailed changes in building infrastructures, establishing the ratio between the number of children and staff, strengthening technical teams, and the universalization of educator training.

In 2012, the *Uruguay Grows with You* (UCC) Program was created as a space to coordinate and strengthen the State's early childhood work. UCC is a public policy with national coverage, which consolidates the comprehensive early childhood protection system. To this end, it proposes the development of universal and targeted actions that guarantee adequate care and protection for pregnant women and the development of children under 4 years old. The program is implemented through a perspective of rights, gender and generations. Its work is based on the proximity methodology, home visits and family guidance. In 2015, the *National Comprehensive Care System*, Law No. 19.353, was approved. The law approved a coverage expansion by 2020, universalized education for 3-year-old children, and continued the joint management of the CAIF and National Public Education Administration. Lastly, in 2019, the *Community Care Homes* program was implemented with the aim of promoting care within rural communities further away from urban centers.

Early childhood public policies are considered fundamental to ensure the comprehensive development of children (ENIA, 2008). Several initiatives have been implemented by the State to ensure better training of staff working in the early childhood sector.

In accordance with the tradition of the Uruguayan educational system, education proposals are formal in nature, require a prior educational level and certification issued by official bodies. Despite this, certain tensions are seen between this training proposal for educators and the teaching guilds that have been reluctant to value and recognize these training spaces.

NATIONAL COMPREHENSIVE CARE SYSTEM - FACT SHEET

Intervention Modalities/Components

Uruguay organizes public early childhood care services in the form of child and family care centers (CAIF) and day care centers, for children 1 to 3 years old, and preschool education for those older than 3. The former is within the

scope of protection agencies and the latter is part of the education system.

The centers have urban and rural modalities with two formats of care at each center:

- Early education for children 2 and 3 years old, with daily service of 4 or 8 hours according to the family's needs.
- Timely stimulation, for children 0 to 24 months and their parents or adult caretakers, implemented through a weekly 3-hour workshop.

The **CAIF Plan** had two types of coverage: a daily modality with the early education program for 2-3 year olds, and a weekly modality for parents of children 0 to 2 years old through the *Timely Stimulation Program*. In 2006, Infamilia and the Childhood and Adolescence Institute of Uruguay (Instituto del Niño y Adolescente del Uruguay – INAU) agreed to transform the weekly modality into a daily one, including the Timely Stimulation Program.

- **Community care homes** began to be implemented in 2019. These are care modalities for children that are developed on community grounds, under the charge of duly educated caretakers authorized by INAU. Their objectives are:
 - a) Contribute to creating conditions for the development of children 0 to 5 years old.
 - b) Protect, make effective and guarantee the right to a family life of children in this age group who are deprived of prenatal care, emphasizing protection in socio-community environments.
 - c) Form a singular Comprehensive Early Childhood Protection System of the INAU, coordinating with the health, education and SNIC sectors.
- **Care Homes in the Territory (CC-T) modality.**⁴⁰ There are two types of CC-T:
 - a) Those operated under an agreement with a civil society organization (CSO), which is responsible for providing the service and hiring the caretakers who provide the service.
 - b) Those operated with two or more caretakers under a one-person contract.

The *Uruguay Grows with You* program, created in 2012,⁴¹ has an organizational chart for the development of its actions, with regional facilitators and departmental or zone

field supervisors. Field work is implemented by operators and specialist two-person dyads (*duplas*). The duplas accompany families with pregnant women and children under four years old who are in situations of biological and social risk and provide support and monitoring. The duplas include a health technician (nutrition, psychomotor therapist, nursing, medicine, obstetrics) and one from the social sphere (social work, psychology, sociology, social education). At regular intervals, interventions are planned and designed, and then the dupla provides accompaniment to each family. They combine several methodological tools, including: home visits, group activities, support in accessing benefits, networking, and inter-institutional coordination.⁴²

Service Staff

Each center has a teacher, educators, a service assistant, a psychologist, a social worker, a psychomotor therapist, an administrative assistant and a cook. The daily care is supervised by the teacher but falls mainly on the educators.

The selection process considers the profile of the caretaker, their interest in the work to be developed, aptitudes for caregiving, education, communication and conflict resolution skills, as well as the ability to become involved in dynamic family processes. The care and education of a young child is a task that requires adults who are psychologically, emotionally and physically available, while also sensitive to children's expressions. Likewise, a key aspect is that they are aware of the need for knowledge to guide warm and safe interactions that promote children's well-being. The skills required to fulfill the role of community caretaker are organized into three competence areas: health, safety and nutrition; knowledge of babies, stimulation and play; and communication.

The requirements to apply for these jobs are to be between 21 and 50 years old (not exclusive), have completed basic education, have a valid health card, present a certificate of good conduct, and have competences for sensitive care. As a result of the selection process, having passed the various phases (interview, evaluation of techniques and passing the training course), they will become part of the registry of care workers.

Education Process

Educators are trained through the "Basic Training for Early Childhood Educators" (FBEP) of the Training and Studies

Center (CENFORES) of the Childhood and Adolescence Institute of Uruguay (INAU). The program was launched in 2000 and has continued uninterrupted to date. It has a national scope and currently has more than 3,000 graduates.

The training program targets adults who work in early childhood centers. It seeks to transcend the mere instrumentation of the worker and promote the figure of the educator. Educators are expected to develop an educational and caring practice based on reflection, interaction and affection with children in the nexus between the educational center and their families.

The expansion of continuous education for everybody who works with children and adolescents includes staff of the INAU Institute and NGO partners. Moreover, the educational competences are institutionalized.

The following two proposals are developed within CENFORES' Early Childhood Education Program: basic early childhood educator training (FBEPI) and early childhood educator technical program (non-university, tertiary).

Objectives of the FBEPI Program

- Raise awareness about the relevance of the educational and care function in the first years of life.
- Promote the acquisition of a broad and updated set of knowledge to work as an early childhood educator.
- Develop a work methodology that considers observation and tracking information as essential tools.

- Promote participants to look at themselves as professionals.
- Promote the creation of proposals to be developed in specific contexts, combining conceptual foundations and the context in which they will be applied.

The FBEPI Program aims to provide educators with tools to perform their work. It recognizes the importance of the first years of life for a person's education; the relationship of dependence and autonomy established between children and adults; the need to offer quality early childhood care in order to compensate for inequalities and enable equal opportunities; compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child; promotion of the family as the natural context for children's development and the consideration of new roles for women and men in society; and the nature of early childhood which requires a response through diverse and flexible modalities. Central themes include the concept of the child and early childhood; the concept of infancy as a developmental stage in and of itself, which entails desires, interests and peculiar rhythms at the cognitive, affective, motor and social levels. Early childhood is expressed as a stage in the life cycle and the program highlights the possibility that these children can symbolically represent reality through language.

In 2016, the FBEPI coordinated with the National Integrated Care System and became a reference for educators in the system.

In this manner, 3 consecutive training courses were developed: a 90-hour **Introductory Course** (first stage of the training process for early childhood educators for children 0-3 years old), a 210-hour **Education and Care Course 1** and 204-hour **Education and Care Course 2**.

Annex D. Program Matrices: Training Programs and Processes

ARGENTINA

EARLY CHILDHOOD OPERATORS COURSE

General objective

Promote, through training entities and modalities that integrate theory and practice, the development of actions that understand and recognize children 0 to 4 years old as subjects of rights, in accordance with the ethical and democratic framework, as well as updated legal frameworks in force as part of the Comprehensive Protection System.

Specific objectives linked to the target profile

- Identify significant components of the regulatory framework with respect to the role of CDCs in the Comprehensive Protection System.
- Recognize children as subjects of rights and citizens in their early childhood.
- Recognize the importance of the attachment bond as a foundation for early childhood growth and development.
- Identify and re-evaluate the roles of educators and families in care and upbringing processes.
- Facilitate tools for the organization and daily work in early education and childcare spaces.

Central themes and content

Historical and normative framework. Paradigm shift: from tutelary to providing comprehensive protection. Comprehensive Protection System. Definition, scope, construction, and operation. Normative framework. Convention on the Rights of the Child, constitutional and institutional rank. Laws 26061, 26233 and Early Childhood Plan; objectives and guiding principles. Children as subjects of rights and citizens from early childhood. Best interest of the child.

Early Childhood Development. Organization of care spaces: parenting tools and activities from a rights-based perspective and comprehensive sexual education. Child

development. Fundamentals and conception of child development. Development organizers. Tools for the care, attention, hygiene, nutrition, health/vaccination, education, stimulation, and recreation of children in each early childhood age group. Bonding and attachment: roles of educators and families in care and upbringing processes. Play, communication and language. Concept of autonomy in early childhood.

Socio-educational principles in daily life and their application in practice: Tools to keep individual records of every child's trajectory. Initial interview. Development and application of tools to observe children in early childhood spaces.

Methodology. Theoretical material was developed in conjunction with experience-based practices and the incorporation, for analysis and reflection, of practices implemented in the classrooms.

Evaluation. 80% attendance during in-person weeks, with an opportunity to make up for missing classes by doing additional course work. Submission of practical work. Design and implementation of a final group project involving a community intervention.

Even though the *Early Childhood Operators Course* was a suitable proposal to initiate a formal professional certification for many educators/caretakers who have been performing the daily task of educating and caring for children for years in early childhood settings, the implementation of this training course was discontinued with the change of the national government. As an initial training course and for general staff education, a "toolbox" was designed that consists of 6 guides for educators divided by age-group. The toolbox contains more than 20 videos showing different key moments of routines in CDCs (feeding time, reading stories, giving bottles, changing diapers, receiving children, among others).⁴³

Facilitators of the Early Years Program – Accompanying Parenting (Acompañamos la crianza)

The training of the facilitators is based on the transfer of contents developed through the family worksheets. Each

concept sheet corresponds to one or more activity sheets with proposals to share with families. Furthermore, each topic has graphic material (trptychs) to work on and hand out to families, in addition to videos.⁴⁴

The following are main subjects developed in the worksheets: Parenting practices; Adults, girls and boys; Construction of identity; Health of the youngest family members; Play in the early years; Curious boys and girls; First readers; Breastfeeding; Pregnancy and birth; Food safety in the family; Proper treatment during childhood; Genders and parenting practices; Community, families and gardens; Limits in upbringing; Oral storytelling in early childhood; and Family visits.

In the framework of the National Work Competences Program of the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security, facilitators must:

- Make contact with families with children up to 4 years old, identifying their specific needs and the institutional actors, community members and other local resources available, in accordance with the comprehensive child development priorities.

- Plan and organize a call for participation and activities for families.
- Implement the call for participation and activities as planned.
- Evaluate the activities developed to advance early childhood development, based on an assessment performed, the planning, and the results.

The certification of competences does not require prior education accreditations. Rather, it, “is the accreditation of knowledge demonstrated on the job, regardless of how it was acquired, based on a standard (or competence norm) developed by specialists in the sector” (Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security). This facilitates the formal recognition of their knowledge and opens a pathway to work opportunities in municipalities, national intervention programs with local implementation, NGOs, among others.⁴⁵

COLOMBIA

TABLE 4: COMPETENCES ACCORDING TO SERVICE MODALITY AND PROFILE

MODALITY	PROFILE	EDUCATION	COMPETENCES
Institutional	Educational agent	Professional in education sciences in areas related to early childhood education, or with emphasis in special education, psychology, pedagogy or educational psychology.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participate in the design and implementation of a pedagogical project that is adjusted to the characteristics of the modality, so that it is aligned with national pedagogical guidelines and responds to individual and cultural conditions of the children, their communities and families. ● Observe and characterize the development of the children in the group to enrich planning of pedagogical activities. ● Plan pedagogical experiences to be carried out with the children (institutional environment) and their families (family environment), taking into account that this planning is developed in a coordinated manner with the pedagogical project and the children's needs and interests. ● Participate in developing the Comprehensive Care Pathway, to identify relevant actors and referral mechanisms to guarantee children's rights in the different environments in which they live. ● Maintain permanent communication with the children's parents or responsible adults with a view towards identifying situations favorable to their development and reestablish their rights when they are affected by non-compliance, threats or rights violations. ● Participate in the design and implementation of strategies to plan, monitor and evaluate the process. ● Accompany and guide families' educational actions related to the upbringing and care of their children in their household and immediate social environment. ● Mobilize and coordinate resources from families, communities and institutions to restore and advance the guarantee of children's rights. ● Organize and systematize information on actions carried out with children, families and communities. ● Implement the established strategies for the characterization of children, families and community educational agents.
	Pedagogical Assistant	Degree from technical school or high school graduate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support care actions aimed at promoting the health, nutrition, protection and safety of children and their families. ● Support actions to organize and arrange materials before, during, and at the end of pedagogical experiences. ● Accompany the implementation of the pedagogical component aligned with the children's characteristics and interests. ● Support the teachers in charge of the children in the personal care, cleanliness and safety of the children. ● Provide support in preparing materials to work with children. ● Know and participate in the development of the Comprehensive Care Pathway to identify warning signs or violations in children's development, and thus be able to notify the coordination team, professional team, and the families themselves about situations observed.

TABLE 4: COMPETENCES ACCORDING TO SERVICE MODALITY AND PROFILE (CONTINUED)

MODALITY	PROFILE	EDUCATION	COMPETENCES
Family	Educational agent	Professional in early childhood pedagogy, preschool education, early childhood education, special education, or psychopedagogy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Plan, implement, evaluate and adjust group and home educational meetings with children and adults, as well as participate in developing training and support activities for families. ● Participate in the design and implementation of a pedagogical project that is adjusted to the characteristics of the modality, so that it is aligned with national pedagogical guidelines and responds to individual and cultural conditions of the children, their communities and families. ● Observe and characterize the development of the children in the group to enrich planning of pedagogical activities. ● Plan pedagogical experiences to be carried out with the children (institutional environment) and their families (family environment), considering that this planning is developed in a coordinated manner with the pedagogical project and the children's needs and interests. ● Participate in developing the Comprehensive Care Pathway, to identify relevant actors and referral mechanisms to guarantee children's rights in the different environments in which they live. ● Maintain permanent communication with the children's parents or responsible adults with a view towards identifying situations favorable to their development and reestablish their rights when they are affected by non-compliance, threats or rights violations. ● Participate in the design and implementation of strategies to plan, monitor and evaluate the process. ● Accompany and guide families' educational actions related to the upbringing and care of their children in their household and immediate social environment. ● Mobilize and coordinate resources from families, communities and institutions to restore and advance the guarantee of children's rights. ● Support the established strategies for the characterization of children, families and community educational agents.

TABLE 4: COMPETENCES ACCORDING TO SERVICE MODALITY AND PROFILE (CONTINUED)

MODALITY	PROFILE	EDUCATION	COMPETENCES
Own	Community Education Agent	<p>University graduate in performing arts, music, ethno-educators, physical educators, who speak the native language and know the culture.</p> <p>Graduate from a technical school in comprehensive early childhood care with a minimum of one year of experience working with children or working with families and communities.</p> <p>Holder of teaching certificate or completed the highest level of formal schooling offered in the community. Recognized in the community for traditional knowledge, use of native language and cultural knowledge. Must have resided in the area where the community attention unit (CAU) operates for at least one year. Technicians in comprehensive early childhood care with a minimum experience of one year working with children or working with families and communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan, along with the pedagogical professional, the experiences to be carried out with the children, taking into account that this planning should be carried out in coordination with the pedagogical proposal, the POAI, and the children's needs and interests. Observe and characterize the development of the children in the group to enrich planning of pedagogical activities. Maintain permanent communication with the children's parents or responsible adults with a view towards identifying situations favorable to their development and reestablish their rights when they are affected by non-compliance, threats or rights violations. Mobilize and coordinate resources from families, communities and institutions to restore and advance the guarantee of children's rights. Understand children's individual and cultural needs and differences. Have creativity, resourcefulness and innovation in pedagogical processes. Encourage community organization. Involve families in pedagogical experiences. Capable of listening and observing children, to document and sensitively accompany their developmental process. Leadership and teamwork skills. Ability to establish empathic relationships. Observation skills. Willingness to accompany and work in social and community mobilization efforts.
Community	Community parent	<p>Teaching certificate or technical degree in early childhood. In cases in which the previously established profile is not found, the requirement may be to validate the highest level of schooling that exists in the territory, in which case the EAS must present supporting documents and evidence of the strategies used to select human talent.</p> <p>In the case of ethnic groups, the community parent must be recognized by the community and have its approval based on their traditional knowledge, use of the mother tongue, knowledge of its culture and territory, in addition to having completed the highest level of formal education offered in the educational institutions in their respective community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observe and characterize the development of the children in the group to enrich planning of pedagogical activities. Weekly planning of pedagogical experiences to be carried out with the children, taking into account that this planning is developed in a coordinated manner with the pedagogical project and the children's needs and interests. Maintain permanent communication with the children's parents or responsible adults with a view towards identifying situations favorable to their development and reestablish their rights when they are affected by non-compliance, threats or rights violations. Mobilize and coordinate resources from families, communities and institutions to restore and advance the guarantee of children's rights. Organize information on actions taken with children, families and communities. Support the strategies established for the characterization of children, families and community educational agents. Understand children's individual and cultural needs and differences. Clearly expresses oneself in written and verbal forms. Encourage community organization. Involve families in pedagogical experiences. Capable of listening and observing children, to document and sensitively accompany their developmental process.

TABLE 4: COMPETENCES ACCORDING TO SERVICE MODALITY AND PROFILE (CONTINUED)

MODALITY	PROFILE	EDUCATION	COMPETENCES
Own	Professional in Pedagogy	Professional in education sciences in areas related to early childhood education or an ethno-educator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skilled in educating trainers (this profile provides guidance and constant pedagogical accompaniment to the community educational agent in the own modality). • Skilled in planning and designing pedagogical experiences and environments in collaboration with community educational agents. • Skilled in working with heterogeneous groups of children with different abilities from diverse cultures. • Observation skills. • Skilled in supporting and working on social and community mobilization efforts. • Implement policies related to a rights-based and differential approach, specifically in relation to children with disabilities, those belonging to ethnic groups, or victims of armed conflict.
Grade Preschool	Preschool Teacher	<p>Any of the following academic degrees:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bachelor's degree in preschool education (alone, with another option or emphasis). 2. Bachelor's degree in infant education (alone, with another option or emphasis). 3. Bachelor's degree in pedagogy (alone, with another option or emphasis). 4. Bachelor's degree in early childhood education. 5. Bachelor's degree in pedagogy. 6. Bachelor's degree in psychopedagogy with emphasis in educational counseling. 7. Bachelor's degree in special education. 8. Bachelor's degree in elementary education with emphasis in special education. 9. Teaching accreditation from a higher education institute. 	<p>Core competences: Strategic direction and institutional horizon, conceptual mastery, academic planning and organization, didactics, monitoring and evaluation of learning, support for academic management, administration of physical spaces and resources, participation and coexistence, community outreach and risk prevention.</p> <p>Behavioral competences: Leadership and motivation to achieve, sensitivity, assertive communication, teamwork, negotiation and mediation.</p>

ECUADOR

CARE DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

General competence of educators: Manage actions that promote the protection, care and comprehensive development of children 0 to 36 months old at CDCs, while complying with current regulations.

Competence Unit 1: Monitor the comprehensive health of the children in the care unit following the

established protocol, while complying with current regulations.

Competence Unit 2: Provide guidance and support to the families of children in the care unit, strengthening co-responsibility to improve the levels of comprehensive child development.

TABLE 5: GENERAL COMPETENCE OF EDUCATORS⁴⁶

COMPETENCE ELEMENTS	PERFORMANCE CRITERIA
1.1 Prepare the learning space and didactic material in accordance with the established planning and procedures.	1.1.1 Verifies the condition of the learning environment (orderliness, cleanliness, ventilation, temperature, brightness, safety).
	1.1.2 Prepares didactic and recreational equipment and materials in accordance with the plan.
1.2 Receive and welcome the child, providing security and trust based on the established protocol.	1.2.1 Welcomes each child and their parents and/or representative in a warm and courteous manner creating security and trust.
	1.2.2 Registers signatures upon the children's entry.
	1.2.3 Ensures the child is awake upon entry.
	1.2.4 Checks if the child arrives in a different condition, records the information (health, physical appearance, etc.) and informs the parent or representative immediately.
	1.2.5 Welcomes the child into the classroom to facilitate a connection with the physical environment where they will remain during the day.
	1.2.6 Verifies authorization for administration of medicines/medical certificate (medicine supply protocol).
1.3 Support children when eating during the four established meal periods, taking into account each child's individual characteristics (age, developed skills, health status, among others).	1.3.1 Observes the composition of meals and their organoleptic characteristics (breakfast, snacks, lunch).
	1.3.2 Complies with the established schedule of four meal periods.
	1.3.3 Supports the children in their group during mealtime, taking into consideration their needs, availability of space and resources, considering that every moment should be educational.
	1.3.4 Verifies that food is served in a gradual and orderly manner.
	1.3.5 Accompanies the children in hygiene processes (hand washing, face washing, tooth brushing, etc.).
	1.3.6 Continuously motivates the children to eat all food, with proper utensil use (cups, spoons, napkins), while respecting the individual development process of each child.
	1.3.7 Organizes and monitors the children in the dining room according to their age.
	1.3.8 Uses appropriate protective clothing (mask, face shield, apron, gloves).
	1.3.9 Informs the coordinator of new developments during mealtime (fruit in bad condition, ingestion of insects, health problems).

TABLE 5: GENERAL COMPETENCE OF EDUCATORS (CONTINUED)

COMPETENCE ELEMENTS	PERFORMANCE CRITERIA
<p>1.4. Plan and carry out pedagogical activities that stimulate the development and recreation of groups of children in accordance with the time of the day.</p>	<p>1.4.1 Uses tools, learning strategies and methodological techniques (free play, psychomotor skills, musicals, and movement) to stimulate the children's development in the following areas: emotional and social bonding, discovery of the natural and cultural environments, body exploration and motor skills, verbal and nonverbal language, while complying with current regulations (MINEDUC early education curriculum, technical regulations of the Institutionalized Services for Integrated Early Childhood Development (SIDUPI)).</p>
	<p>1.4.2 Implements learning experiences based on Sub-level 1 of the MINEDUC Sub-level 1 Early Education Curriculum, taking into consideration the child's development (health status, age, motor skills, intellectual and affective skills, stimulation, among other factors), and the characteristics of the group.</p>
	<p>1.4.3 Provides safe learning environments with play materials located within the reach of the children, taking into consideration the work methodology and planned activities.</p>
	<p>1.4.4 Creates an appropriate atmosphere of tranquility to encourage freedom of expression and develop pleasant and affectionate emotions in communication with children (face, tone of voice, movements, physical contact, among others).</p>
	<p>1.4.5 Applies learning instruments and evaluates acquired skills (checklist, observation sheet, anecdotal record, field notebook).</p>
	<p>1.4.6 Shares the results of the achievement sheet (scope of development) with families.</p>
	<p>1.4.7 Early detection of possible disabilities for timely attention.</p>
<p>1.5 Comply with children's rest and sleep times, taking into consideration established procedures.</p>	<p>1.5.1 Prepares the physical space and prepares the children for adequate rest by providing tranquility, security and trust.</p>
	<p>1.5.2 Establishes the rest time (minimum one hour, maximum one and a half hours), taking into consideration the age of the children.</p>
	<p>1.5.3 Motivates the children to rest through instrumental music, stories and other activities that help put children asleep.</p>
	<p>1.5.4 Monitors and ensures that the children are in proper postures during rest.</p>
	<p>1.5.5 Takes care of the children when they get startled and helps them fall back asleep (nightmares, health, etc.).</p>
	<p>1.5.6 Motivates children to wake up gently and affectionately with nursery rhymes.</p>
	<p>1.5.7 Prepares and grooms the child to continue the established schedule.</p>

TABLE 5: GENERAL COMPETENCE OF EDUCATORS (CONTINUED)

COMPETENCE ELEMENTS	PERFORMANCE CRITERIA
1.6. Carry out closing activities (saying goodbye and handing over the children to their parent or relative responsible for their care) following the established protocol.	1.6.1 Hand over the children only those authorized in an affectionate and cordial manner.
	1.6.2 Informs family members about what happened to their child during the day.
	1.6.3 Provides an account of the activities carried out, their achievements and difficulties during the day.
	1.6.4 Suggests activities to be carried out at home and recommends the proper use of materials and accessories for daily hygiene and clothing.
	1.6.5 Records any observations or developments that occurred during the day in the field notebook.
	1.6.6 Records the children's departure times, via the signatures of the responsible adults who take the children.
2.1 Inform, guide and support the families of the children in their group, regarding their children's comprehensive development process.	2.1.1 Communicates in a clear and timely manner about the child's progress or difficulties to family members or legal representatives.
	2.1.2 Expresses themselves with respect and does not discriminate in any manner.
	2.1.3 Demonstrates interest, concern, sensitivity, and commitment to the comprehensive care of the child.

TABLE 6: KNOWLEDGE SPECIFICATION

INFORMATION	Content of the Technical Standard for Institutionalized Services for Integrated Early Childhood Development (SIDUPI). Contents of the Early Education Curriculum Sub-level 1 (MINEDUC 2014). Content of the Childhood and Adolescence Code.
FUNDAMENTAL KNOWLEDGE	Developmental characteristics of children 0 to 36 months old. Children's Code. Techniques of popular education for the family and community. Methodological Guide for CIBV-CDI Services.
CAPACITIES	Teamwork, leadership, creativity, planning and organization, initiative and proactivity, and assertive communication.

COMPREHENSIVE CARE IN THE GROWING WITH OUR CHILDREN (CNH) MODALITY

General competence of family counselors/family

educators: Provide family counseling and support the protection of pregnant women and children 0 to 36 months old in accordance with current regulations.

Competence Unit 1: Provide individual and group family counseling, applying the guidelines established

in the Growing with Our Children modality and current regulations.

Competence Unit 2: Evaluate individual and group family counseling in the Growing with Our Children modality according to current regulations.

TABLE 7: GENERAL COMPETENCE OF FAMILY COUNSELORS/FAMILY EDUCATORS

COMPETENCE ELEMENTS	PERFORMANCE CRITERIA
1.1 Plan individual and group family counseling based on the needs jointly identified with the families of children 0 to 36 months old and pregnant women in accordance with current regulations.	1.1.1 Schedules the days and times of individual and group family counseling sessions with the families in accordance with current regulations.
	1.1.2 Records the individual and group counseling provided on the record for each client in accordance with the reality in the territory and time availability of the families of children 0 to 36 months old and pregnant women.
	1.1.3 Selects the contents to be developed in individual and group counseling.
1.2 Prepare work area and didactic material in accordance with established procedures.	1.2.1 Establishes with the families, the space where individual counseling will take place and arranges a location for group counseling with the community in accordance with current regulations.
	1.2.2 Prepares the space for the development of individual or group counseling sessions.
	1.2.3 Prepares didactic material for the development of individual and group counseling sessions in accordance with current regulations.
1.3 Provide guidance to the families of children 0 to 36 months old and pregnant women regarding care, development and learning, in accordance with current guidelines and regulations.	1.3.1 Holds talks to provide guidance on care, development and learning, with the families of children 0 to 36 months old and pregnant women, in accordance with established procedures.
	1.3.2 Motivates the families of children 0 to 36 months old and pregnant women to put into practice the lessons learned from the counseling on care, development and learning.
	1.3.3 Generates commitments with families of children 0 to 36 months old and pregnant women in accordance with established procedures.
1.4 Record physical and digital information, according to current guidelines and regulations.	1.4.1 Manually records the attendance of pregnant women and children who participate in family counseling in accordance with established procedures.
	1.4.2 Requests the participants' signature on the roadmap to record the completion of the individual and group counseling session.
	1.4.3 Uploads information on the attendance of pregnant women and children who participate in family counseling to the current online platform of the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion.
	1.4.4 Reports alerts, developments, and needs identified in the Growing with Our Children Care Unit, in accordance with the guidelines and regulations in force.
	1.4.5 Reports the egress of children and pregnant women according to established procedures.
	1.4.6 Admits new assigned users to comply with the approved micro-planning in accordance with the guidelines and regulations in force.
	1.4.7 Accompanies the families of children 0 to 36 months old and pregnant women in health check-ups in accordance with the guidelines established in current regulations.
	1.4.8 Files information according to established procedures.

TABLE 7: GENERAL COMPETENCE OF FAMILY COUNSELORS/FAMILY EDUCATORS (CONTINUED)

COMPETENCE ELEMENTS	PERFORMANCE CRITERIA
2.1 Follow-up on commitments generated in individual and group counseling sessions. The program is aimed at families of children 0 to 36 months old and pregnant women.	2.1.1 Verifies compliance with commitments made during individual or group counseling and the family's involvement in the upbringing of children 0 to 36 months old and/or of the pregnant woman.
	2.1.2 Records the progress of counseling provided to pregnant women and families of children 0 to 36 months old in accordance with the guidelines established in current regulations.
	2.1.3 Provides an account of new developments identified in accordance with established procedures.
2.2 Jointly evaluate with families, the achievements reached through individual and group counseling in accordance with current regulations.	2.2.1 Assesses the care, development and learning of children and/or pregnant women according to established procedures.
	2.2.2 Analyzes the results and encourages the active participation of families and/or expectant mothers in putting into practice the guidance provided via the Growing with Our Children modality.
	2.2.3 Records the results of the achievements of children 0 to 36 months old and pregnant women in the current computer system.
2.3 Verify the health check-ups of pregnant women and children in the care unit in accordance with current regulations.	2.3.1. Follows up on the care provided at the health center to pregnant women and children from vulnerable priority groups.
	2.3.2. Monitors growth by recording and plotting it on growth curves according to current regulations.
	2.3.3. Reports developments regarding health check-ups of pregnant women and children in the care unit in accordance with current regulations.

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The following tables refer to the initial and continuous education curricula for community actors that provide direct care for children and their families (mothers and facilitators).⁴⁷

TABLE 8: INITIAL TRAINING PROGRAM FOR COMMUNITY ACTORS

MODULE NAME & NO.	COMPETENCE	OBJECTIVE	RESULT 85% OF PARTICIPANTS	TOPICS
Module 1: Getting to know the Cuna Más National Program and Early Childhood Development (ECD)	Provide information about the service operations in the intervention area where it is being implemented.	Understand the importance of ECD and the impact it has on the development of children under 36 months old.	Are knowledgeable about ECD and the seven outcomes prioritized in the childhood development.	Cuna Más National Program. Importance of Early Childhood Development.
Module 2: Covid-19 prevention and self-care	Know and practice self-care habits for good health care habits in the face of Covid-19.	Identify the signs and symptoms of Covid-19 for its adequate prevention, as well as to differentiate protocols for identified cases.	Acquire knowledge on preventing Covid-19 and acting in the event of suspicious cases.	Covid-19 Prevention and Care. Identifying risk situations for pregnant mothers and newborns. Actions and response measures for prenatal and delivery care involving suspected or confirmed cases of Covid-19.

TABLE 8: INITIAL TRAINING PROGRAM FOR COMMUNITY ACTORS (CONTINUED)

MODULE NAME & NO.	COMPETENCE	OBJECTIVE	RESULT 85% OF PARTICIPANTS	TOPICS				
Module 3 – Part 1: Planning and implementing the remote family accompaniment	Motivate and generate reflection regarding children’s behavior to provide responsive care. Share messages about caring and learning practices, while promoting play and adult-child interaction.	Understand and plan the implementation and development of activities for remote family accompaniment.	Plan the implementation and development of activities for remote family accompaniment.	Learning practices promoted by the PNCM.				
				Strategy to strengthen care and learning practices for remote accompaniment.				
				Development of family counseling sessions.				
				How to ask open-ended questions?				
				How to develop a relationship built on trust with families?				
				Strengthening the capacity to accompany play and communication activities that contribute to the child’s development in families.				
				Guidance for families on caring for children with disabilities or different developmental rhythms.				
				Verbal and non-verbal communication for remote family accompaniment.				
				How to respond to a child during care and play? – Non-verbal responses.				
				Proper treatment in daily care: emotional responsiveness.				
Module 3 – Part 2: Planning and implementing the remote family accompaniment				How to respond to children’s initiative during play time?				
				Importance of praising children during moments of care and play.				
				How to encourage the primary caretaker in remote family accompaniment?				
				Stressful situations that a child under 3 years old goes through.				
				Module 4: Creating a climate of trust among technical accompaniment staff and community actors	Perceive personal development as part of their life project from a personal improvement approach to develop their role and leadership as a community actor.	Recognize the importance of developing communication skills and confidence at work to improve their competences and skills.	Know the importance of developing communication skills and confidence at work.	What does being a community actor mean to my life?
								Personal development: Self-esteem – I.
								Personal development: Expressing myself – I.
								Personal development: Relaxation – I.
								Personal development Empathy – I.

TABLE 8: INITIAL TRAINING PROGRAM FOR COMMUNITY ACTORS (CONTINUED)

MODULE NAME & NO.	COMPETENCE	OBJECTIVE	RESULT 85% OF PARTICIPANTS	TOPICS
<p>Module 5 – Part 1: Provision of services</p>	<p>Plan activities related to the service operation in the intervention area under their charge, to ensure that the program’s objectives are met.</p> <p>Provide safe environments for children’s development and health.</p>	<p>Manage the different components involved for the proper operation and provision of the service.</p>	<p>Know the tools to create optimal conditions for the provision of services.</p>	<p>Co-Management Model.</p> <p>Targeting criteria and identifying intervention zones to create management committees.</p> <p>Focus and forming management committees.</p> <p>Electing a board of directors.</p> <p>What is the role of community actors in the framework of remote family accompaniment?</p> <p>Signing and renewal of cooperation agreements with management committees.</p> <p>Promoting community monitoring.</p>
<p>Module 5 – Part 2: Provision of services</p>	<p>Make supplies available to provide various types of kits. service.</p>	<p>Know the procedures for the distribution of food, hygiene, protection, and ECD kits.</p>		<p>Management of financial resources allocated to the management committee.</p> <p>How to be prepared for risk or disaster situations?</p> <p>How to attend and report accident and disaster situations that occur at a SCD and SAF?</p> <p>Actions to prevent violence. Steps to take in cases of violence. How to recognize signs of violence in children?</p> <p>Service provision: food distribution.</p> <p>Service provision: Distribution of hygiene and protection kits.</p> <p>Service provision: Distribution of ECD kits.</p>
<p>Module 6: Self-care practices for good health at PNCM</p>	<p>Provide messages on healthy eating, hygiene and self-care practices for good health.</p>	<p>Recognize the importance of promoting self-care practices for good health in families with children and pregnant mothers to improve PNCM users’ health.</p>	<p>Recognize the importance of promoting self-care practices for good health in families with children and pregnant mothers to improve PNCM users’ health.</p>	<p>Self-care practices for good health promoted by the PNCM.</p> <p>Importance of prenatal check-ups.</p> <p>Importance of monitoring the growth and development calendar (CRED).</p> <p>Importance of hand washing and its daily practice in the family.</p> <p>Importance of exclusive and prolonged breastfeeding.</p> <p>Guidance for families on safe water consumption.</p> <p>How to guide families in implementing complementary feeding?</p> <p>Preparing meals with iron-rich foods based on the children’s age and its importance as a preventive measure for anemia.</p>

TABLE 8: INITIAL TRAINING PROGRAM FOR COMMUNITY ACTORS (CONTINUED)

MODULE NAME & NO.	COMPETENCE	OBJECTIVE	RESULT 85% OF PARTICIPANTS	TOPICS
Module 7: Program information management tools	Skilled to properly use information management tools.	Properly manage the register to send messages and conduct family counseling, as well as other instruments necessary to perform the job.	Skilled to properly fill out the program's information collection forms.	Registration of formats that are used in daily work. Incident reporting and counseling notes form.
Module 8: Remote training actions	Take on the role of mentor for community actors, considering their sociocultural characteristics and the remote, participative and empathetic formative process.	Knowledgeable of the strategy for remote capacity building.	Knowledgeable of the strategy for remote capacity building to develop training actions.	Remote capacity building for adults.
Module 9: Counseling to promote healthy mental behavior in the context of Covid-19	Use counseling strategies that support their intervention in specific situations related to the mental health impact of Covid-19.	Knowledgeable of techniques and key messages to promote healthy mental behavior in the context of Covid-19.	Knowledgeable of techniques and key messages to promote healthy mental behavior in the context of Covid-19.	Strategy for the provision of brief counseling tools for the Covid-19 context.
Module 10: Motivation towards the financial inclusion of community actors	Take on the role of a promoter that provides guidance on mechanisms and practices for financial inclusion.	Understand the importance of financial inclusion and its impact on the development and social inclusion of PNCM users.	Knowledgeable of the mechanisms and practices for financial inclusion.	Financial inclusion. Strategies and tools that support financial inclusion.
Module 11: Raising awareness of anti-corruption and anti-bribery practices	Assess quality and anti-bribery measures and mechanisms to address complaints.	Identify anti-corruption and anti-bribery practices in their daily work.	Informed about anti-bribery and anti-corruption regulations and expected practices.	Basic concepts, regulations and anti-corruption and anti-bribery practices.
Module 12: Gender and disability approaches	Use of a gender approach to address specific everyday life situations. Use of the disability approach to address specific everyday life situations.	Identify practices that undermine the inclusion of the gender and disability approaches in everyday life.	Informed about the concepts and practices of the gender and disability approaches.	Basic concepts. Mechanisms to identify discrimination, inequality, and exclusion based on gender and disability status. Practices to promote equality between men and women.

TABLE 9: CONTINUOUS TRAINING PROGRAM FOR COMMUNITY ACTORS

MODULE NAME & NO.	COMPETENCE	OBJECTIVE	RESULT 85% OF PARTICIPANTS	TOPICS
<p>Module 1: Intervention approaches</p>	<p>Intercultural and equal opportunity interventions.</p>	<p>Recognize and apply program intervention approaches in the development of PNCM activities.</p>	<p>Knowledgeable of the program's intervention approaches for proper service provision and continuity.</p>	<p>How to promote an intervention with an intercultural approach?</p>
				<p>How to promote equal opportunity care for children?</p>
<p>Module 2: Community intervention</p>	<p>Recognize the importance of the role of community actors in the program to achieve proper service provision and continuity.</p>	<p>Identify and integrate strategies that can be used to achieve community involvement for proper service provision and continuity.</p>	<p>Knowledgeable of strategies to achieve community involvement for proper service provision and continuity.</p>	<p>How to promote community participation?</p>
				<p>How to promote volunteering in the community?</p>
<p>Module 3: Strengthening the provision of remote family accompaniment for community actors</p>	<p>Inform and provide guidance on self-care practices for good health and learning habits for children at home, while in a complementary manner, raise awareness and disseminate messages on preventing Covid-19, mental health, and violence prevention through WhatsApp text messages.</p>	<p>Understand and send messages on preventing Covid-19, mental health, and violence prevention. Provide guidance on self-care practices for good health and learning habits for children at home, taking care of one's mental health, and violence prevention through telephone counseling.</p>	<p>85% of community actors (facilitators, maternal community health workers, health advisors for mothers, family advisors) provide remote family accompaniment.</p>	<p>How to strengthen families' capacity to respond to children's needs and interests? How to guide families on the quality of interactions to control children's emotions and behavior? How to properly treat children during interactions? How to teach families to correctly and lovingly handle children's behavior? How to anticipate, verbalize and promote autonomy in children? How to strengthen the caregiving, play and communication skills families have learnt in sessions 04 to 07? How to guide families on making children's play more complex? How to promote the use of safe and relevant toys and materials that contribute to child development? Active listening in family strengthening practices. Empathy in remote family accompaniment. How to encourage the primary caretaker in remote family accompaniment? Personal development and/or social and communication skills to facilitate telephone counseling.</p>

TABLE 9: CONTINUOUS TRAINING PROGRAM FOR COMMUNITY ACTORS (CONTINUED)

MODULE NAME & NO.	COMPETENCE	OBJECTIVE	RESULT 85% OF PARTICIPANTS	TOPICS
Module 4: Healthy Practices	Caring and Healthy Practices in the PNCM.	Achieve that the participant recognizes the importance of promoting healthy nutrition and care practices in families with children and pregnant mothers to improve PNCM users' health.	Recognize the importance of promoting healthy eating and care practices in families with children and pregnant mothers to improve PNCM users' health.	How to prepare meals with iron-rich foods based on the children's age? – II
				Anemia: causes, prevention, consequences in child development and planned program actions.
				Roles and functions of the different actors in monitoring the prevention and treatment of anemia within the framework of the multisectoral plan to combat anemia.
				Iron supplementation for PNCM child users.
				Hemoglobin dosage for PNCM child users.
				Preventive measures and care procedures for ADD and ARI.
				How to guide families on the physical and emotional changes that pregnant women go through during pregnancy?
How to recognize signs of illness among PNCM children.				
Module 5: Covid-19	Disseminate messages about Covid-19 preventive measures that enable a return to normal daily life during a pandemic.	Identify preventive and regulatory measures regarding Covid-19.	Knowledgeable of the preventive intervention measures for proper service provision and continuity.	How to maintain a preventive attitude towards Covid-19?
Module 6: Financial inclusion	Maintain an environment of financial inclusion.	Recognize the benefits of using banking as a bridge to financial inclusion.	Knowledgeable of banking mechanisms.	How to maintain financial inclusion practices?

URUGUAY

The Basic Education Program for Early Childhood Educators (FBEPI) aims to provide educators with the tools to perform their work, focusing on:

- The importance of the first years of life in an individual’s education.
- The dependency-autonomy relationship established between children under three years old and adults.
- The need to offer quality early childhood care to compensate for inequalities and make equal opportunities possible.
- Compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- The necessary promotion of the family as the natural context for child development and to consolidate new roles for women and men in society.
- The nature of early childhood, which makes it necessary to respond to diverse and flexible modalities.

General objectives of Basic Education

- Raise awareness of the importance of the educational and care function in the first years of life.
- Support the acquisition of a broad and updated set of knowledge to work as an early childhood educator.
- Develop a work methodology that places observation and record-keeping as essential tools.
- Encourage participants to look at themselves as professionals.
- Advance the creation of proposals to be developed in specific contexts, combining conceptual foundations and the context in which they will be applied.

TABLE 10: ENTRY PROFILE

INTRODUCTORY COURSE	EDUCATION AND CARE COURSE 1. FUNCTIONS, ROLE AND TASKS	EDUCATION AND CARE COURSE 2. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATIONAL ACTIONS: METHODOLOGY AND TECHNIQUES
<p>People who have completed their 4th year of high school and perform early education and childcare functions at early childhood care centers.</p>	<p>Aimed at those who have completed basic secondary education, passed the FBEPI “Introductory Course,” and work in any care modality for children 0 to 3 years old.</p>	<p>Aimed at those who have passed the “Education and Care 1.” course and work in an institutional care modality with young children, performing educational and care functions.</p> <p>Passing this course completes the Basic Education for Early Childhood Educators (FBEPI – 504 h.), which is recognized by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Resolution 995/12). This in turn, enables those who have completed secondary education (high school) to continue their tertiary studies at CENFORES in the Early Childhood Educator Plan, which has a revalidation plan between the two courses.</p>

Hourly workload of the training course

Introductory course: 90 hours between the classroom and virtual modalities. (Currently being conducted virtually due to Covid-19.)

Education and Care 1: 210 hours. Combines the classroom modality (120 hours) with a virtual component (30 hours) and a practical component (work practice, 60 hours).

Education and Care 2: 204 hours. Theoretical and practical in nature. The course combines the in-person modality (138 hours) with a virtual component (22 hours). The practical component (44 hours) is considered part of the work performance framework.

TABLE 11: GRADUATION PROFILE

INTRODUCTORY COURSE	EDUCATION AND CARE COURSE 1. FUNCTIONS, ROLE AND TASKS	EDUCATION AND CARE COURSE 2. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATIONAL ACTIONS: METHODOLOGY AND TECHNIQUES
<p>Participants should be able to incorporate basic conceptual tools appropriate for the characteristics of young children; their development processes, maturation and growth; the specificity of education and care functions; and their attitudes and aptitudes towards adults. They should be knowledgeable of basic methodological tools regarding the routines at centers (arrival and departure, meals, hygiene, and rest). Likewise, they should incorporate concepts of rights and gender-based perspectives in early childhood care, in addition to being knowledgeable of their related legal frameworks.</p>	<p>Participants should understand the specificity, characteristics and responsibilities that early education and childcare entail, which are closely linked to growth and maturation processes, and the comprehensive development of children 0 to 3 years old.</p> <p>Upon graduation, they will have acquired the conceptual and methodological tools that provide a foundation and intentionality for the job. This will enable them to work in the framework of a center’s institutional project as part of a work team, in accordance with the “Curricular Framework for the Care and Education of Uruguayan Children.” Graduates will be able to integrate tools (techniques) for the daily development of educational and care actions whose intentionality will be explained.</p> <p>They will recognize the importance of language and play as facilitators for significant learning, developing children’s psyches and social bonds, taking this into account their daily actions.</p> <p>They will expand the meaning of routines and the creation of daily habits, along with their importance in working with young children.</p> <p>They will integrate the idea of the environment’s importance as a central aspect in the educational and care task, along with legal and gender-based perspectives as cross-cutting aspects in their daily work.</p>	<p>Graduates will have incorporated early education and childcare conceptual and methodological frameworks and recognize the importance of the intentionality and specificity of actions designed for children at the beginning of their lives.</p> <p>They will employ a well-founded and pertinent work methodology that guides their actions within the framework of a center’s institutional project and teamwork.</p> <p>They will have the tools to perform educational and care tasks and recognize the importance of the bonds they form with young children.</p> <p>They will consider communication, language and play as key elements in the constitution of children’s psyches and facilitators of significant learning.</p> <p>They will further their knowledge of daily routines, their meaning and how to implement them.</p> <p>They will recognize the environment’s importance as a central aspect of the educational task.</p> <p>They will understand and develop work strategies to act at different intervention levels (individual, group, family, community) with proper levels of integration, to guarantee the respect or restitution of children’s rights and the gender perspective’s incorporation.</p> <p>At each action level, they will consider the importance of fostering emotional security tied to young children’s sense of continuity in their life experience.</p> <p>They will guide their work knowledgeable of early childhood public policies, institutional mandates, and legal frameworks.</p>

TABLE 12: CARETAKER — PROFILE AND COMPETENCES⁴⁸

CARETAKER PROFILE	CARETAKER COMPETENCES
<p>The skills required to fulfill the role of community health worker are organized into three competence areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Health, safety and nutrition ● Knowledge of babies, stimulation and play ● Communication <p>Care capacities and their related sensitivity to perform development work, require responsible adults who focus their attention on the physical and emotional needs of the baby. They need to be capable of putting themselves in the baby's place, in order to interpret their needs from their point of view. This is done to synchronize the adult's activities, so they are aligned to the rhythms imposed by the baby. These adults need to be able to address aspects related to healthy child development and the demands that this entails, as well as have the ability to negotiate conflicts or tensions that this process generates with children and families. Lastly, they need to adjust their emotional state to the baby's evolutionary moment and particularities.</p>	<p>Ethical practices, including the proper handling of families' specific information to ensure confidentiality, as well as act in the best interest of the child over other interests.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Act based on the specificity of their role, providing answers based on children's attention and care needs, improving their skills to perform development work by participating in continuous training. ● Work from the co-responsibility perspective, to care for the child with their families and to foster their development. ● Analyze their work, scope of intervention and the processes' evolution, keeping the technical leader informed of achievements, as well as complex and emerging situations..

TABLE 13: CAIF EDUCATOR — COMPETENCES⁴⁹

ATTITUDINAL COMPETENCES	FUNCTIONAL TECHNICAL COMPETENCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establishing links with educational intentionality with children and their families: Identifying the needs of the child and the family in an empathetic manner; and relating with the child and family with respect and affection, while emphasizing their potential. ● Acting with an ethical commitment to children, families and the community: Following the confidentiality criteria in the framework of the intervention's objective when handling information, and always putting the needs and interests of the child first within the framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. ● Responding to problems that affect children and their families: Identifying and analyzing the problem with a comprehensive approach and developing intervention strategies from an interdisciplinary and networking approach. ● Acting to change scenarios: Interpreting situations and promoting solutions to changing situations to achieve the organization's objectives, and adapting work methods to changing structures and contexts. ● Developing professionalism: Identifying needs for new learning and the ability to acquire updated knowledge related to professional practice, seeking learning opportunities, and using and sharing knowledge for professional growth. ● Working with diversity: Identifying and understanding the heterogeneity of situations or realities in the environment, and providing empowering responses that facilitate personal and collective development of competences and resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create preventive actions and foster comprehensive child development in different contexts. ● Implement action strategies to facilitate comprehensive child development, taking into account their uniqueness. ● Actively participate in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the pedagogical project, and the operational planning of the Opportunity Experiences Program and the center's project. ● Encourage family integration in different modalities implemented by the center. ● Encourage family participation in the center's educational proposal. ● Facilitate the strengthening of parental ties and capacities. ● Liaise with services and networks (educational, sports, cultural, health and other institutions) in the community to coordinate actions for children and their families, in agreement with the work team. ● Contribute from their role, to strengthening the CAIF team. ● Implement the established early childhood policy in the territory. ● Contribute with an integrative view to the center's project (institutional project) as a guideline for the team's work. ● Contribute to collective decision-making in critical situations, within the scope of responsibility of the center's team.

Annex E. Participants at Regional Validation Workshop

FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATION	COUNTRY
Fabian	Repetto	Former Deputy Ombudsman	National Office of the Ombudsman for Children and Adolescents	Argentina
Elisa	Pineda	Director and Founder	Community Organization Foundation	
Javier	Quesada	Former Undersecretary of Early Childhood	SENNAF Ministry of Social Development	
Claudia	Castro	Education and Health Specialist	Advisor to the Argentine Society of Pediatrics	
Marcela	Pardo	Researcher	CIAE – IE University of Chile	Chile
Sandra Liliana	Pinzón Duarte	Deputy Director of Technical Management for Early Childhood Division	Colombian Institute of Family Welfare	Colombia
Laura Feliza	Vélez	Deputy Director of Technical Management for Early Childhood Care	Colombian Institute of Family Welfare	
Ana Aidée	Pachón	Early Childhood Quality Professional Deputy Director	Directorate of Early Childhood Ministry of Education	
Diana	Urueña Mariño	Consultant	Presidential Advisory Office for Children and Adolescents	
Doris Andrea	Suarez	Assistant Director of Quality and Relevance	Directorate of Early Childhood, Ministry of Education	
María Consuelo	Gaitán Clavijo	Contractor	Intersectoral Commission for the Integral Care of Early Childhood (CIPI)	
Tatiana	León	Former Undersecretary of Early Childhood	Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion	Ecuador
Manuel	Bravo	Director	Directorate of Early Education, CONAFE	Mexico
Irma	Luna	Director of Early Childhood Education	Secretary of Public Education	
María	Altamarino	Program Manager Specialist	LEGO Foundation	
Elsie	Butterworth	Early Childhood Specialist	Former UNICEF Paraguay Officer	Paraguay
Marcela Mercedes	Calligos Pajares	Guide	Cuna Más	Peru
Mary An	Trinidad Tito	Guide	Cuna Más	

FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATION	COUNTRY
Florencia	López Boo	Chief Economist	Inter-American Development Bank	United States
Ariel	Fiszbein	Education Program Director	Inter-American Dialogue	
Ana María	Nieto	Senior Early Childhood Program Specialist	LEGO Foundation	
Yolanda	Oyarbide	Director	Early Childhood Educator Training Program	Uruguay
Jorge	Ferrando	Former Director	INAU and Early Childhood	
Javier	Alliaume	Early Childhood and Training of Trainers Specialist	Institutos Normales de Montevideo – Consejo de Formación en Educación	
Víctor	Giorgi	Director	IIN-OAS	
Victoria	Lucas	Assistant	IIN-OAS	

NOTES

1. Inter-American Dialogue, "Declaration of the Regional Forum: Towards Quality Early Childhood Education" (2020). <https://www.thedialogue.org/analysis/forum-quality-declaration/>
2. Mercedes Mayol Lassalle, Gabriela Marzonetto and Analía Quiroz Enero, "La educación inicial en los sistemas educativos latinoamericanos para los niños y niñas de 3, 4 y 5 años" (UIS/UNESCO, 2011).
3. Waldman and Cardarelli (2010), as cited by Adrián Rozengardt, "Lo no formal en la Atención y Educación de la Primera Infancia" (UIS/UNESCO 2020).
4. Cited by Rozengardt, op. cit.
5. Pardo and Adlerstein. Technical Secretariat of the Regional Strategy on Teachers for Latin America and the Caribbean. OREALC/UNESCO Center for the Study of Educational Policies and Practices (CEPPE).
6. Rozengardt, op. cit.
7. Rozengardt, op. cit.
8. C. Castro, F. Potenza, J. Quesada and T. Vargas, "Early Childhood in Argentina: Actors and Policies That Promote Child Development" (Porticus-Pharos, 2020).
9. J. Quesada and C. Castro, "Certification of Early Childhood Educators and Care Personnel in Argentina: Systematization of Experience" (2020).
10. The full list of workshop participants is presented in annex E.
11. Inter-American Dialogue. Declaration of the regional forum. Towards quality early childhood education. Recommendation 6: Competences and Certification. August 2020.
12. IIN-ICBF1 CD/doc. 9/13 (extracted from IIN document on early childhood work and family strengthening).
13. Training aimed at initiating or guaranteeing the continuity of the work and educational trajectories of personnel working with IP based on training offers.
14. Updating and deepening of topics related to early childhood education and comprehensive early childhood development. In most of the countries it is an area that requires strengthening.
15. UNICEF. Nutrition, Development and Literacy Program. Castro, C. Manual de Redes y Animación Comunitaria. Quesada, J. 2007.
16. UNESCO 2020. Op. cit.
17. Inter-American Dialogue. 2020. Op. cit.
18. The differential approach is recognized as a way to highlight and recognize the heterogeneity and non-linearity of children's development and their particularities at that moment of their life cycle. It is also a challenge to take into consideration the diversity of configurations of children and families due to their culture, ethnicity, context, conditions, specific dimensions or transitory affectations. In the case of the ICBF (Colombia), the differential rights approach model is based on contextual analyses that entail examining the population subject to ICBF attention as sensitive to differences, not only to be characterized, but also to promote actions that do not cause harm and, on the contrary, encourage comprehensive development, respecting diversity in all its forms (ethnic, cultural, religious, physical, gender, sexual, etc.).
19. Cacharreo – CAJA Lab. Parra V, Reyes JC. Voices from the Field. 2020.
20. The competencies proposal in this document gives central importance to quality interpersonal bonds, proper treatment and play. As organizers of managing actions and experiences in safe and stimulating environments under the "Child Development" category, the proposal is made for skills related to acquiring didactic strategies in exercising the role under the "Pedagogical Skills and Capacities" category.
21. Methodological model applied by Quesada et al. 2020, op. cit.
22. In one period it allocated funding to centers for the prevention and recovery of child malnutrition.
23. Source: SITEAL UNESCO, Country Profile. 2019.
24. National Early Childhood Plan. https://www.siteal.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/sit_accion_files/siteal_argentina_0851.pdf
25. During its 12 years of existence, it has had both denominations.
26. ICBF. Operating Manual. Institutional Modality for Early Childhood Care. 2019. https://www.icbf.gov.co/system/files/procesos/mo12.pp_manual_operativo_modalidad_institucional_v5.pdf
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