

# Anchor Items for Measurement of Early Childhood Development (AIM-ECD)

Brief

July 2022

## What is AIM-ECD?

The Anchor Items for the Measurement of Early Childhood Development (AIM-ECD) are two tools designed to measure early learning and development for children aged 4 to 6 years. AIM-ECD measures key early childhood development (ECD) in the key domains of early literacy, early numeracy, executive functioning, and social emotional development. AIM-ECD includes both a caregiver report and direct assessment tool. The items were selected due to their [robust psychometric properties in low- and middle-income contexts](#)<sup>1</sup> based on analyses of data from the Measuring Early Learning Quality and Outcomes (MELQO) initiative.

The set of AIM-ECD tools were developed as global public goods with additional materials to support the translation, adaptation, enumerator training, and implementation of the tools in diverse contexts.

**The Direct Assessment (DA)** involves an enumerator engaging in 14 activities directly with a child, taking approximately 20 to 25 minutes to administer. **The Caregiver Report (CR)** measures children's development indirectly through a 10-minute

interview with the child's caregiver, most often a parent. The CR tool also collects a variety of sociodemographic information. While it is advantageous to administer the DA alongside the CR, most data collection efforts use just one measurement tool depending on the context, measurement objectives, and information needs of policymakers and stakeholders. The DA is designed for use when detailed domain-level data on development is desired, while the CR is more appropriate for integration into large-scale monitoring surveys.

## Why do we measure ECD?

It is critical for governments, development partners, teachers, and parents to have useful information on children's development and the [quality of early learning environments](#) and to generate data in a way that can inform policies and foster improvements in ECD systems. Valid and reliable measures of child development and early learning experiences that can be implemented at scale are critical for monitoring purposes and understanding whether programs and policies are having

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<sup>1</sup> Review the [background paper](#) for more about the robust process of item selection.

their intended impacts. Without this information, programs and policies are less likely to be as effective, efficient, and equitable as they could be.

## How to implement AIM-ECD?

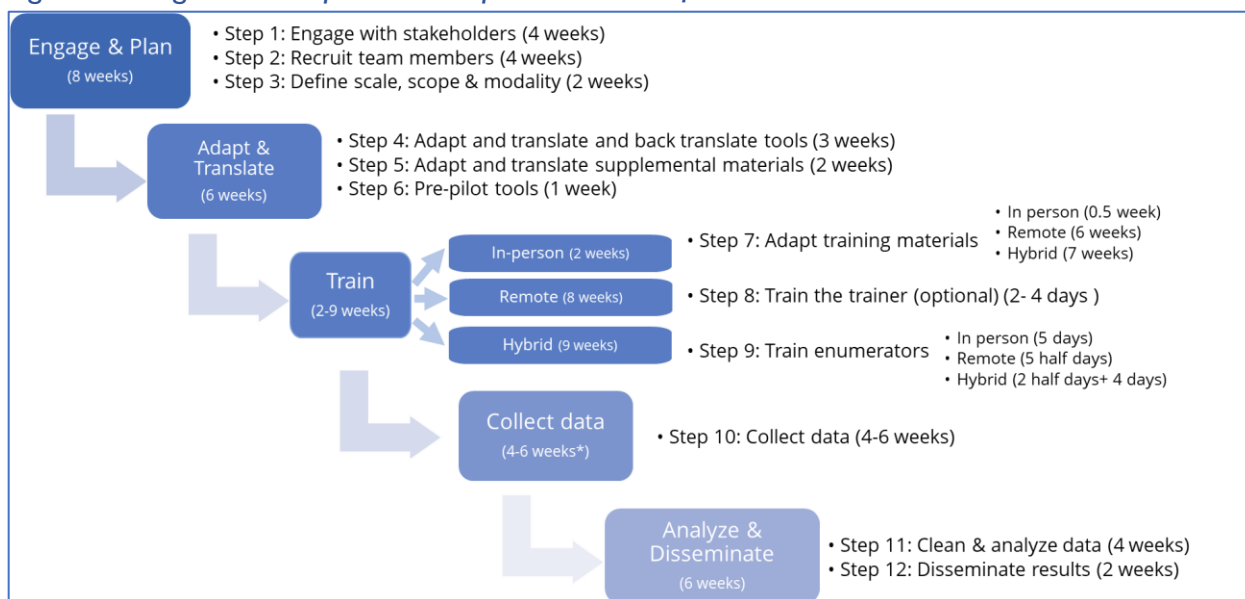
The **AIM-ECD Implementation Guide** covers the five key stages for the implementation of AIM-ECD: stakeholder engagement and planning, tool adaptation and translation, enumerator training, data collection, and data analysis and results dissemination as shown in the figure below. The total time from initiation to completion can take approximately between 6 to 8 months, but longer or shorter periods are possible depending on previous experience using AIM-ECD, the sample size required, and the complexity of the data collection.

## What does the AIM-ECD package include?

The AIM-ECD Implementation Package contains documents and guidelines for the adaptation of the DA and CR to new contexts, translation of the measurement tools to new languages with fidelity, training of enumerators to administer the assessments accurately, and data collection on paper or electronically. It also includes documents and guidelines to support data management and a semi-automated workflow that streamlines the creation of a default report. Materials are available in English, Arabic, French, Portuguese, Spanish and Russian.

Access the most up-to-date resources on the [Early Learning Partnership webpage](#) under AIM-ECD resources.

Figure 1: Stages and steps in the implementation of AIM-ECD



\* The length of time for data collection is approximate and depends on the sample size, number of enumerators, geographic spread, etc.

## AIM-ECD resources

Resource	Description
<b>A. Resources to engage and plan</b>	
<b>A.1 Engage with stakeholders</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Brief</b></li> <li>• <b>Presentation</b></li> <li>• <b>Implementation guide</b></li> <li>• <b>Research paper</b></li> </ul>	<p>The <b>Brief</b> and the PowerPoint <b>Presentation</b> can be used to present AIM-ECD to different audiences, including to governments, donors, and partners. It provides a high-level overview of what AIM-ECD is, how it differs from other tools, and background on the development and validation of the tool.</p> <p>The <b>Implementation Guide</b> provides an overview of the process of implementing AIM-ECD and serves as a roadmap to the collection of complementary resources available.</p> <p>The <b>Research Paper</b> presents the robust process to identify the core set of items for the AIM-ECD Caregiver Report (CR) and Direct Assessment (DA) instruments.</p>
<b>A.2 Recruit the team</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>TOR templates to recruit team members</b></li> </ul>	<p>Example <b>Terms of References</b> for hiring the team: trainer, quality assurance assistant, child development expert, translators, sampling expert, data analyst and survey firm.</p>
<b>B. CR and DA manual to adapt and translate</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Adaptation, Administration, and Training Manual<sup>2</sup></b></li> </ul>	<p>The <b>Adaptation, Administration, and Training Manual</b> guides users through the process of translating and adapting the documents that enumerators need to administer and collect data with the CR and DA and a step-by-step instruction on exactly how to administer and score each subtask and item.</p>
<b>C. CR and DA training materials<sup>2</sup></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Guidelines for Training</b></li> <li>• <b>Training Schedule</b></li> <li>• <b>Training Slides</b></li> <li>• <b>Enumerator Quiz</b></li> <li>• <b>Observation Checklist</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Guidelines for Training</b> provides guidance on the hiring and certification of enumerators for data collection. It is Appendix B1 of the Adaptation, Administration, and Training Manuals.</p> <p>The <b>Training schedule</b> is a sample training schedule with field visits to practice administration.</p> <p>The <b>Training slides</b> can be used during in-person training following to the Training Schedule.</p> <p>The <b>Enumerator Quiz</b> is a sample quiz to verify that enumerators have acquired the necessary knowledge needed to faithfully administer the AIM-ECD tools.</p> <p>The <b>Observation Checklist</b> is a checklist for the trainer or expert to use when observing enumerators to ensure correct administration of the AIM-ECD tools.</p>
<b>D. CR and DA resources for data collection</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>CAPI Code<sup>2</sup></b></li> <li>• <b>The Score Sheet<sup>2</sup></b></li> <li>• <b>Data Entry Form</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>CAPI Code</b> is an Excel document with CAPI code used to create a digital version of the CR and DA to use on tablets. It is optimized to work with Survey CTO, but can be used with any XLSForm-based CAPI platform (e.g. Open Data Kit or KoBo Toolbox).</p> <p>The <b>Score Sheet</b> is a form to record an individual scores when administered with pencil and paper.</p> <p>The <b>Data Entry Form</b> is used in conjunction with the Score Sheet to input scores into an Excel database. It includes automated checks to protect against incorrect data entry.</p>
<b>E. CR and DA resources for data analysis and dissemination</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Codebook</b></li> <li>• <b>Semi-Automated Workflow</b></li> <li>• <b>Semi-Automated Workflow Guide</b></li> <li>• <b>Template Report</b></li> </ul>	<p>The <b>Codebook</b> describes all standard AIM-ECD variables and response coding.</p> <p>The <b>Semi-Automated Workflow</b> is a zipped folder structure containing a series of Stata .do files, Excel files, and Word files that can be used to clean, process, and analyze raw data using a standardized methodology and with minimal user input to populate the Template Report.</p> <p>The <b>Semi-Automated Workflow Guide</b> is a step-by-step description of how to process raw data into cleaned and analyzed data included graphs and tables to populate the Template Report.</p> <p>The <b>Template Report</b> is a pre-formatted report that utilizes the graphs, charts, and tables produced by the semi-automated workflow to create a brief report on the findings of the DA or CR data collected.</p>

<sup>2</sup> Available in English, Arabic French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish