

# AIM-ECD Research and Guidance Notes



## Measuring Early Childhood Development Among 4–6 Year Olds: The Identification of Psychometrically Robust Items Across Diverse Contexts

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The last 15 years have seen an explosion of measurement tools for assessing the development of young children in low- and middle- income countries. This paper builds on and contributes to that literature by identifying a core set of caregiver-report items and a core set of direct assessment items that measure key developmental domains for children aged 4–6 (48–83 months) and that demonstrate adequate psychometric properties across diverse contexts, the first in this age group to the authors' knowledge. Data were harmonized from previous early childhood measurement efforts in 12 countries that all used the same base measurement tool. Data analyses yielded 20 caregiver report items and 84 child direct assessment items grouped into 16 tasks that show strong item-level statistics across countries and that cover the domains of early literacy, early numeracy, executive functioning, and social-emotional competencies. Next steps include adding data and items from other measurement tools to the same analytical framework and field testing across a number of contexts and early childhood measurement efforts. The vision is for the resulting core sets of items, along with guidance on data collection, management, and analysis, to serve as global public goods so that they can present a starting point for testing across different early childhood measurement tools for children aged 4–6; (i) increase quality across measurement efforts, and (ii) facilitate the scale up of early childhood measurement. When implemented with items that capture local contexts and that measurement needs, these core sets of items should help to advance understanding of universal and context-specific factors that underlie child development and thus help policymakers make decisions that ensure children receive the quality early childhood care and education they need in order to reach their full potential.

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## Guiding Questions for Choosing the Right Tools to Measure Early Childhood Outcomes: Why, What, Who, and How

**Abstract:** A growing understanding of the importance of children's earliest years has led to an increasing desire to measure early childhood development (ECD) outcomes. There are now nearly 150 tools for measuring ECD outcomes internationally, which can make it challenging to choose an appropriate measurement tool for a given measurement effort. This document guides the user through the why, who, what, and how questions that must be considered prior to selecting tools for measuring ECD outcomes. Users should document their responses at each step to collate the information needed to identify and select an appropriate ECD measurement tool.

**Public Disclosure Authorized**

**E L P** EARLY LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

### Guiding Questions for Choosing the Right Tools to Measure Early Childhood Outcomes: Why, What, Who, and How

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**INTRODUCTION**

A growing understanding of the importance of children's earliest years has led to an increasing desire to measure early childhood development (ECD) outcomes. There are now nearly 150 tools for measuring ECD outcomes internationally, which can make it challenging to choose an appropriate measurement tool for a given measurement effort. These tools vary widely in terms of the:

- purpose for which they were designed **(why)**,
- relevant populations and age ranges with whom they are appropriate to use **(who)**,
- information about child development they produce including skills, developmental domains, and behaviors they assess **(what)**,
- manner in which they are administered **(how)**.

This document guides the user through the **why**, **who**, **what**, and **how** questions that must be considered prior to selecting tools for measuring ECD outcomes. Users should document their responses at each step to collate the information needed to identify and select an appropriate ECD measurement tool.

For an inventory of ECD measurement tools, please see the ECD Measurement Inventory that accompanies the Toolkit for