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

Abstract: 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.


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.