

BAGMATI PROVINCE SCHOOL READINESS REPORT 2082 BS (2025/26 AD)

Assessment of Grade 1 Children's School Readiness Based on
Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS)



Government of Nepal
Ministry of Education and Sports
Education Review Office
Sanothimi, Bhaktapur

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FOREWORD

The Government of Nepal recognizes the critical importance of Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) in laying the foundation for children's success in formal education, lifelong learning and holistic development. Over the years, the government has made substantial investments to expand access to ECED and strengthen service quality across the country. As a result, ECED enrollment has increased significantly. However, while enrollment indicators provide important information on access, they do not adequately capture the developmental and learning outcomes of children participating in ECED programmes. Assessing children's school readiness is therefore essential for understanding the effectiveness of ECED programmes and for generating evidence to strengthen policy and practice related to children's transition to formal schooling.

To monitor children's readiness for Grade 1 and assess the effectiveness of ECED programmes, the Education Review Office (ERO) initiated the national school readiness assessment of Grade 1 children in 2017 AD. ERO developed the assessment framework based on the Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS), which defines expected developmental outcomes for children aged 48–60 months. In addition to assessing children, ERO collected background information on ECED programmes and schools in reference to national minimum standards, policies, and implementation guidelines. Over time, ERO continuously refined the assessment framework and tools to align them with emerging national priorities and international bestpractices in early childhood assessment.

This report presents the findings of the School Readiness Assessment conducted at the beginning of the academic year 2082 BS (2025/26 AD) among newly enrolled Grade 1 children in Bagmati Province. The assessment had two broad objectives: (i) to assess Grade 1 children's developmental and learning status in reference to the ELDS, and (ii) to examine the relationships between ECED characteristics and children's developmental and learning outcomes.

The previous national school readiness assessment conducted by ERO (2024) was nationally representative but focused exclusively on large classes, defined as schools with Grade 1 enrollments of 15 or more students. However, a substantial proportion of ECED centres in Nepal serve fewer than 15 children and fall into the category of small classrooms. Consequently, the earlier assessment did not adequately capture the readiness status of children enrolled in these settings. The current assessment addresses this important gap by including both small classes (Grade 1 enrollment <15) and large classes (Grade 1 enrollment ≥15), enabling comparative analysis of children's readiness outcomes across different types of schools in relation to class size and context, using a sample from Bagmati Province.

Specifically, the study examined whether ELDS scores differ between children enrolled in small and large classes and explored the extent to which teacher characteristics, school characteristics, governance arrangements, and support systems influence children's developmental and learning outcomes.

ERO conducted the assessment and prepared the report through extensive technical consultation and collaboration with experts and stakeholders. UNICEF Nepal provided valuable technical and financial support to strengthen the school readiness assessment system and

ECED-related assessment initiatives. The contributions of experts, Dr. Kishore Shrestha, Dr. Meenakshi Dahal and Mr. Hari Khanal, technical personnel, and ERO staff, particularly Directors of ERO, Mr. Yubaraj Adhikari, Ms. Pramila Bakhati, Mr. Narayan Jha and Mr. Deviram Acharya, Section Officers, Ms. Nisha Oli and Mr. Khagendra Shrestha have been instrumental in strengthening the methodological rigor of the assessment, refining the tools, and improving reporting practices. I appreciate my whole team for their input and support in this assessment.

ERO would like to express its sincere gratitude to UNICEF Nepal for its technical and financial support in conducting this study. ERO also extends its appreciation to Dr. Nepali Sah, UNICEF consultant, for leading the quantitative and qualitative data analysis and drafting the report.

We are grateful to Dr. Neven Knezevic, Chief of Education, and Dr. Dipu Shakya, Education Specialist (ECD), UNICEF Nepal, for their support throughout the study. We also acknowledge the technical input from previous UNVs, Mr. Mahesh Dahal and Mr. Kenji Kitamura, from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, who provided valuable support during the data validation and cleaning processes.

We also acknowledge the contributions of the officials from the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), ERO, Curriculum Development Center, and the Centre for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD).

The support and guidance received from the Hon. Education and Sports ministers Mahabir Pun and Sasmit Pokharel, and respected education secretary Choodamani Paudel and Dr. Hari Prasad Lamsal have been instrumental in finalizing this report.

Finally, we sincerely acknowledge the contributions of children, parents, teachers, ECED teachers, headteachers, and children who participated in the study and provided valuable input during data collection and validation.

Before finalizing this report, ERO organized consultations and discussions with relevant stakeholders, practitioners, and experts. ERO incorporated the feedback and suggestions received through these processes to ensure that the report reflects current evidence, policy priorities, and practical realities of ECED implementation in Nepal. The team also reviewed relevant national and international literature on ELDS, school readiness, and early childhood development to ensure that the assessment and interpretation of findings align with established standards and practices.

We expect that the findings presented in this report will contribute to ongoing policy dialogue and programme improvement efforts aimed at strengthening ECED quality and supporting children's successful transition to basic education. ERO remains committed to promoting evidence-based educational improvement and welcomes further discussion on the findings, implications, and recommendations emerging from this assessment.

Jayaram Adhikari
Director General



कार्यकारी सारांश

पृष्ठभूमि र उद्देश्य

प्रारम्भिक बालविकास र शिक्षाले बालबालिकाको समग्र विकासलाई प्रवर्धन गर्न तथा जीवनभरको सिकाइका लागि बलियो आधार निर्माण गर्न महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका खेल्छ। विश्वव्यापी प्रमाणहरूअनुसार गुणस्तरीय प्रारम्भिक बाल विकास तथा शिक्षाले विद्यालय तयारीमा सुधार गर्छ। कक्षा दोहोर्‍याउने र विद्यालय छोड्ने दर घटाउँछ। नेपालमा प्रारम्भिक बाल विकास तथा शिक्षा, विद्यालय शिक्षा प्रणालीको अभिन्न अङ्गको रूपमा विकास हुँदै आएको छ। यसलाई राष्ट्रिय नीतिहरूले महत्वपूर्ण स्थान दिएका छन्, साथै यसको पहुँच तथा भर्नामा पनि उल्लेखनीय विस्तार भएको छ।

यस अध्ययनको मुख्य उद्देश्य बागमती प्रदेशमा कक्षा १ मा भर्ना हुने समयमा बालबालिकाको विद्यालय तत्परता (school readiness) को परीक्षण गर्नु थियो। कक्षा १ मा भर्ना हुने उमेर ५ वर्ष (६० महिना) भएको कारणले गर्दा र तत्कालीन शिक्षा विभागबाट निर्धारित प्रारम्भिक सिकाइ तथा विकास मापदण्ड (Early Learning and Development Standards- ELDS) ले प्रस्ट रूपमा ६० महिनासम्मका बालबालिकाले हासिल गर्नुपर्ने मापदण्ड तय गरेको हुँदा यस परीक्षणका लागि ELDS लाई आधार मानिएको छ। यस अध्ययनले अघिल्ला राष्ट्रिय परीक्षणहरूमा देखिएको महत्वपूर्ण रिक्ततालाई सम्बोधन गर्ने प्रयास गरेको छ। मुख्यतः पहिलेका अध्ययनमा ठुला कक्षाहरू (कक्षा १ भर्ना ≥ १५) मा केन्द्रित थियो। विगतमा अध्ययनको क्रममा भएको रिक्तता पूरा गर्नका लागि बागमती प्रदेशमा केन्द्रित अध्ययनले साना कक्षा (कक्षा १ भर्ना < १५) र ठुला कक्षा दुवैका बालबालिकालाई समेट्दै तुलना गरेको छ।

परिमाणात्मक तथा गुणात्मक दुवै किसिमका तथ्याङ्क सङ्कलन गरिएको यस अध्ययनमा खेलमा आधारित विधिमा आधारित बालबालिकाको विद्यालय तत्परतासम्बन्धी परिमाणात्मक तथ्याङ्क, विद्यालयको जानकारी तथा ECED शिक्षक, कक्षा १ शिक्षक, प्रधानाध्यापक र अभिभावकबाट गुणात्मक धारणा सङ्कलन गरेको छ। परीक्षण शैक्षिक सत्रको सुरुवातमा, सन् २०२५ मे २३ देखि जुन ११ (वि.सं. २०८२ जेठ ९-२८) सम्म सञ्चालन गरिएको थियो। यस अध्ययनको विश्लेषण ९१ विद्यालयका कक्षा १ मा भर्ना भएका ५९२ जना बालबालिकाको तथ्याङ्कमा आधारित छ।

मुख्य निष्कर्षहरू

यस परीक्षणले प्रारम्भिक सिकाइ तथा विकास मापदण्ड र ECED प्रणालीगत तत्त्वहरूका आधारमा बागमती प्रदेशका कक्षा १ का बालबालिकाको विद्यालय तत्परताको चित्र प्रस्तुत गर्दछ। बागमती प्रदेश स्तरमा, अपेक्षित स्तर (on-track) को वर्गमा पर्ने बालबालिकाको अनुपात वि.स. २०८० को राष्ट्रिय परीक्षणसँग धेरै फरक देखिँदैन। वर्तमान परीक्षण (वि.स. २०८२) मा बागमती प्रदेशमा ५३.९% बालबालिका on-track छन्, जुन वि.स. २०८० मा बागमती प्रदेशमा ५४.९% र राष्ट्रिय रूपमा ४९.१% थियो। यस परीक्षणले साना र ठुला कक्षाका बालबालिकाको स्तरमा महत्वपूर्ण भिन्नता देखाएको छ।

- १) समग्रमा वि.स. २०८२ मा बागमती प्रदेशका ५३.९% बालबालिका अपेक्षित स्तर (on-track) मा छन्। ४४.६% प्रगतिशील (progressing) अवस्थामा छन् र १.५% सङ्घर्षरत (struggling) अवस्थामा छन्। यसले धेरै बालबालिका आधारभूत सिप पूर्ण रूपमा विकास नगरी कक्षा १ मा प्रवेश गरिरहेको देखाउँछ।
- २) विद्यालय तत्परताको अवस्था हेर्दा बहुआयामिक (multi-dimensional) देखिन्छ। संज्ञानात्मक (cognitive) (६४.९%), शारीरिक (physical) (६३.२%) र भाषिक (language) (६२.२%) क्षेत्रमा तुलनात्मक रूपमा राम्रो

- उपलब्धि देखिन्छ । तर सामाजिक-संवेगात्मक (socio-emotional) विकासमा ठुलो कमजोरी देखिन्छ । जहाँ केवल ३९.७% बालबालिका मात्र अपेक्षित स्तरमा (on-track) छन् भने १७% सङ्घर्षरत (struggling) स्तरमा छन् ।
- ३) साना र ठुला कक्षाका बालबालिकाको सिकाइ र विकास स्तर भिन्नता देखिन्छ । ठुला कक्षामा ५४.२% बालबालिका अपेक्षित स्तरमा (on-track) छन् भने साना कक्षामा ५०.३% बालबालिका अपेक्षित स्तरमा छन् । ठुला विद्यालयका बालबालिकाले अधिकांश क्षेत्रमा राम्रो प्रदर्शन गरेका छन्, तर शारीरिक क्षेत्रमा साना कक्षाका बालबालिका अलि राम्रो देखिन्छन् । तथ्याङ्कको विश्लेषणले यो सम्बन्ध देखाए तापनि अन्य कारकहरू नियन्त्रण गर्दा यसको प्रभाव कमजोर हुन्छ, जसले विद्यालय आकार मात्र सिकाइ र विकास स्तरका लागि निर्णायक नभएको देखाउँछ ।
- ४) समता (equity) सम्बन्धी ठुलो चुनौती देखिन्छ:
- क) ६० महिनाभन्दा माथिका बालबालिकाले तुलनात्मक रूपमा सबै क्षेत्रमा राम्रो प्रदर्शन गरेका छन् । समग्रमा ६० महिनाभन्दा माथिका ५७.३% बालबालिका अपेक्षित स्तरमा छन्, जबकि ४८-६० महिनाका बालबालिकामध्ये २९.८% र ४८ महिनाभन्दा कम उमेरका बालबालिकामध्ये २३.४% मात्र अपेक्षित स्तरमा छन् ।
- ख) सहरी क्षेत्रका बालबालिकाले सबै क्षेत्रमा राम्रो प्रदर्शन गरेका छन् । समग्रमा, सहरी क्षेत्रका ५९.२% बालबालिका अपेक्षित स्तरमा छन्, जबकि ग्रामीण क्षेत्रका बालबालिकामध्ये ३१.२% मात्र अपेक्षित स्तरमा छन् ।
- ग) मातृभाषा नेपाली भएका बालबालिकाले अधिकांश क्षेत्रमा राम्रो प्रदर्शन गरेका छन्, तर शारीरिक क्षेत्रमा भने दुवै समूहबिच प्रदर्शन समान देखिन्छ । समग्रमा, मातृभाषा नेपाली भएका ५५.७% बालबालिका अपेक्षित स्तरमा छन्, जबकि अन्य मातृभाषा भएका बालबालिकामध्ये ४७.५% अपेक्षित स्तरमा छन् ।
- घ) लैङ्गिक भिन्नता तुलनात्मक रूपमा कम देखिन्छ । छात्रहरूले संज्ञानात्मक क्षेत्रमा (६७.८% vs. ६२%) र शारीरिक क्षेत्रमा (६५% vs. ६१.५%) केही राम्रो प्रदर्शन गरेका छन् । जबकि छात्राहरूले सामाजिक-संवेगात्मक क्षेत्रमा (४०.६% vs. ३८.८%) र समग्र नतिजामा राम्रो प्रदर्शन देखाएका छन् । समग्रमा, ५६.४% छात्राहरू अपेक्षित स्तरमा छन् भने छात्रहरूमा यो प्रतिशत ५१.५% छ ।
- ङ) भौगोलिक असमानता पनि उल्लेखनीय रूपमा देखिन्छ । काठमाडौँ उपत्यकाका बालबालिकाले बागमती प्रदेशका अन्य भौगोलिक क्षेत्रका बालबालिकाभन्दा राम्रो प्रदर्शन गरेका छन् । समग्रमा, काठमाडौँ उपत्यकाका ६१.३% बालबालिका अपेक्षित स्तरमा छन्, जबकि बागमती प्रदेशकै तराई क्षेत्रमा ५२.८%, हिमाली क्षेत्रमा ४१.२%, र पहाडी क्षेत्रमा ३८.७% बालबालिका मात्र अपेक्षित स्तरमा छन् ।
- च) विद्यालय व्यवस्थापनको प्रकारअनुसार, संस्थागत विद्यालयका बालबालिकाले सामुदायिक विद्यालयका बालबालिकाभन्दा सबै विकासात्मक क्षेत्रमा उच्च विद्यालय तत्परता प्रदर्शन गरेका छन् । समग्रमा, संस्थागत विद्यालयका ६६.७% बालबालिका अपेक्षित स्तरमा छन्, जबकि सामुदायिक विद्यालयमा यो प्रतिशत ३४.१% छ । तथापि, संस्थागत विद्यालयहरूमा भर्ना हुने परिवारको आयस्तर तथा संस्थागत विद्यालयमा फरक ECED सहभागिताको अवधिलाई यो अध्ययनमा विश्लेषण गरिएको छैन ।
- ५) बालविकास शिक्षकको गुणस्तर, विद्यालय तत्परताको सबैभन्दा महत्त्वपूर्ण निर्धारकहरूमध्ये एकका रूपमा देखिएको छ । यसले शिक्षक तालिम तथा सहयोग प्रणालीलाई सुदृढ गर्नुपर्ने आवश्यकता औँल्याउँछ । उच्च बालविकास शिक्षक सूचकाङ्क भएका विद्यालयमा अध्ययन गर्ने बालबालिकाले शारीरिक क्षेत्रबाहेक अधिकांश क्षेत्रमा राम्रो प्रदर्शन गरेका छन् । समग्रमा, उच्च बालविकास शिक्षक सूचकाङ्क (अङ्क ४-६) भएका विद्यालयका ५६.२% बालबालिका अपेक्षित स्तरमा छन् । जबकि मध्यम बालविकास शिक्षक सूचकाङ्क भएका विद्यालयका बालबालिकामध्ये ४१.९% र न्यून शिक्षक सूचकाङ्क भएका विद्यालयका बालबालिकामध्ये ५३.१% अपेक्षित स्तरमा छन् ।

- ६) बालविकासको पूर्वाधारले बालबालिकाको विद्यालय तत्परताको नतिजासँग बलियो सम्बन्ध देखाएको छ। समग्रमा, सबैभन्दा उच्च पूर्वाधार सूचकाङ्क भएका विद्यालयमा अध्ययन गर्ने ७२.७% बालबालिका अपेक्षित स्तरमा छन्। जबकि सबैभन्दा न्यून पूर्वाधार सूचकाङ्क भएका विद्यालयमा अध्ययन गर्ने बालबालिकामध्ये २१.२% मात्र अपेक्षित स्तरमा छन्।
- ७) विद्यालय सुशासन तथा सहयोग प्रणालीले पनि बालबालिकाको विद्यालय तत्परता नतिजासँग बलियो सम्बन्ध देखाएको छ। समग्रमा, सबैभन्दा उच्च सुशासन तथा सहयोग सूचकाङ्क भएका विद्यालयमा अध्ययन गर्ने ६०.४% बालबालिका अपेक्षित स्तरमा छन्। जबकि सबैभन्दा न्यून सुशासन तथा सहयोग सूचकाङ्क भएका विद्यालयका बालबालिकामध्ये २७.२% मात्र अपेक्षित स्तरमा छन्।

प्रमुख सिफारिसहरू

निष्कर्षहरूले ECED को गुणस्तर सुधार गर्ने, प्रारम्भिक कक्षाको शिक्षणसँगको समन्वय सुदृढ गर्ने, समावेशी तथा भाषासंवेदनशील अभ्यासलाई प्रवर्धन गर्ने र नेपालका पछाडि परेका समुदायहरूलाई लक्षित सहयोग प्रदान गर्ने समग्र तथा समता-केन्द्रित दृष्टिकोणको आवश्यकता औँल्याउँछन्। साथै, बालबालिकाको प्रारम्भिक सिकाइ अनुभवलाई प्रभावित गर्ने प्रणालीगत असमानताहरूलाई सम्बोधन गर्दै ECED सेवाको गुणस्तर सुदृढ गर्न विशेष प्राथमिकता दिन आवश्यक देखिन्छ।

१) स्रोत वितरणमा समानता सुनिश्चित गर्ने:

साना, ग्रामीण र सामुदायिक विद्यालयहरूलाई असर पार्ने असमानता सम्बोधन गर्दै समानतामा आधारित योजना र स्रोत वितरणलाई प्राथमिकता दिनुपर्छ। पछाडि परेका क्षेत्रमा पूर्वाधार, सिकाइ सामग्रीको पहुँच र संस्थागत सहयोग प्रणाली सुदृढ गर्नुपर्छ। ECED क्षेत्रमा देखा परेका असमानताको अनुगमन गर्ने र प्रमाणमा आधारित लगानी मार्गदर्शन गर्न EMIS र Education Equity Index को प्रयोगलाई सुदृढीकरण गर्न अति आवश्यक छ।

२) उपयुक्त उमेरअनुसार विद्यालय प्रवेश सुनिश्चित गर्ने:

विद्यालय प्रवेश उमेरसम्बन्धी नीतिको प्रभावकारी कार्यान्वयन सुदृढ गर्दै बालबालिकाले ECED (४८ महिना) तथा कक्षा १ (६० महिना) मा विकासात्मक रूपमा उपयुक्त उमेरमा प्रवेश गर्ने सुनिश्चित गर्न आवश्यक छ। गुणस्तरीय ECED कार्यक्रमको पहुँच विस्तार गर्नुका साथै, प्रारम्भिक उमेरका तथा अपेक्षाकृत कम तयार भएका बालबालिकालाई लक्षित सहयोग प्रदान गरी उनीहरूको प्रारम्भिक शिक्षामा सहज अनुकूलन सुनिश्चित गर्नुपर्छ।

३) संस्थागत र सामुदायिक विद्यालयलाई राष्ट्रिय ECED नीतिसँग सामञ्जस्यता कायम गर्ने:

सबै प्रकारका विद्यालयहरू, विशेष गरी संस्थागत विद्यालयहरूमा, राष्ट्रिय ECED नीति तथा पाठ्यक्रमको प्रभावकारी कार्यान्वयन गर्दै ECED सहभागिता तथा प्रारम्भिक सिकाइ अनुभवमा रहेका असमानताहरू न्यूनीकरण गर्न आवश्यक छ। साथै निजी विद्यालय सञ्जालहरूसँग सहकार्य प्रवर्धन गरी सम्पूर्ण क्षेत्रमा समान मापदण्ड र अभ्यासको सुनिश्चितता गर्नुपर्छ।

४) ECED पाठ्यक्रम र ELDSको प्रभावकारी कार्यान्वयन प्रवर्धन गर्ने:

ECED र कक्षा १ का सबै शिक्षक, प्रधानाध्यापक, र विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समिति (SMC) सदस्यहरूले ECED पाठ्यक्रम र ELDS सम्बन्धी अभिमुखीकरण तथा तालिम सुनिश्चित गर्नुपर्छ। कक्षाकोठा योजना, मूल्याङ्कन, र विद्यालय तत्परता परिणाम सुधार गर्न पाठ्यक्रम तथा ELDS सामग्रीको उपलब्धता, प्रयोग र अनुगमन सुदृढ गर्नु अपरिहार्य छ।

५) **शिक्षक तालिम र निरन्तर पेसागत क्षमता अभिवृद्धि गर्ने:**

पूर्व-सेवाकालीन (pre-service) र सेवाकालीन (in-service) शिक्षक तालिम प्रणालीलाई सुदृढ गर्दै खेलमा आधारित र बालकेन्द्रित शिक्षण पद्धति, सामाजिक-भावनात्मक सिकाइ, समावेशी शिक्षा तथा ECED पाठ्यक्रम र सिकाइ सामग्रीको प्रभावकारी प्रयोगमा बढी जोड दिनुपर्ने देखिन्छ। ECED र कक्षा १ मा घोकने रटाउने र अत्यधिक शैक्षिक दबाबलाई निरुत्साहित गर्ने नियमित मेन्टरिङ, कक्षाकोठा अवलोकन र सुपरिवेक्षण प्रणाली स्थापना गर्ने आवश्यक छ।

६) **ECED मा मातृभाषामा आधारित द्विभाषिक वा बहुभाषिक शिक्षाको कार्यान्वयन सुदृढ गर्ने:**

विविध भाषिक पृष्ठभूमिका बालबालिकालाई सहयोग गर्न ECED र प्रारम्भिक कक्षाहरूमा बहुभाषिक शिक्षा नीतिहरूलाई व्यवहारमा उतार्नुपर्छ। स्थानीय भाषामा दक्ष शिक्षकहरू भर्ना गर्नुपर्छ। सन्दर्भअनुकूल बहुभाषिक सिकाइ सामग्री विकास गर्नुपर्छ। यसले गैरनेपाली मातृभाषा भएका बालबालिकाको बुझाइ, सहभागिता र सिकाइ परिणाम सुधार गर्छ।

७) **ECED कार्यक्रमहरूमा समानता र समावेशिता प्रवर्धन गर्ने:**

शिक्षक तालिम, पाठ्यक्रम, र कक्षाकोठा अभ्यासमा लैङ्गिक संवेदनशील र समावेशी दृष्टिकोण समावेश गर्नुपर्छ। विशेष गरी ग्रामीण र पछाडि परेका समुदायका बालबालिकालाई लक्षित गर्दै लैङ्गिक, भौगोलिक, भाषिक र सामाजिक आर्थिक असमानता सम्बोधन गर्ने हस्तक्षेपहरू डिजाइन गर्न आवश्यक छ।

८) **अभिभावक संलग्नता र अभिभावक शिक्षा सुदृढ गर्ने:**

बालबालिकाको सिकाइ र विकासप्रति अभिभावकको चेतना र संलग्नता बढाउन अभिभावक/अभिभावकत्व (parenting) शिक्षा कार्यक्रम विस्तार गर्नुपर्छ। समग्र बाल विकास, सामाजिक भावनात्मक सिकाइ र विद्यालय तत्परताको महत्त्वबारे अभिभावकलाई अभिमुखीकरण गर्नुपर्छ। साथै घर र विद्यालयबिचको सहकार्यलाई बलियो बनाउन प्रोत्साहन गर्नुपर्छ।

९) **सुशासन, जवाफदेहिता, र विद्यालय नेतृत्व सुदृढ गर्ने:**

प्रधानाध्यापक र विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समिति (SMC) सदस्यहरूको क्षमता ECED नेतृत्व, विद्यालय तत्परता, अपाङ्गतामैत्री शिक्षा, तथा ELDS को प्रयोग सुदृढ गर्नुपर्छ। विद्यालय सुशासनलाई कक्षाकोठाको अभ्यास र बालबालिकाको सिकाइ परिणामसँग जोड्ने गरी नियमित अनुगमन, सुपरिवेक्षण र सहयोग प्रणाली संस्थागत गर्नुपर्छ।

१०) **मूल्याङ्कन र तथ्याङ्क प्रणाली सुदृढ गर्ने:**

विद्यालय तयारी मूल्याङ्कनको गुणस्तर, एकरूपता तथा तुलनात्मकता सुधार गर्न नमुना छनोट प्रक्रियालाई मानकीकरण गर्ने, मूल्याङ्कन उपकरणहरू सुदृढ गर्ने, तथा सूचकहरूलाई ELDS रूपरेखासँग समन्वय गर्ने आवश्यक छ। साथै, ECED मा सहभागिता अवधि, पूर्वाधार, सुशासन, तथा बालबालिकाको सिकाइ नतिजासम्बन्धी जानकारी समेट्ने तथ्याङ्क प्रणालीलाई सुदृढ गर्दै नीति निर्माण तथा योजना प्रक्रियामा गुणात्मक र परिमाणात्मक प्रमाणहरूको एकीकृत प्रयोगलाई थप प्रभावकारी बनाउनुपर्छ।

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background and Objective

Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) plays a critical role in fostering children's holistic development and building a strong foundation for success once entering formal schooling and lifelong learning. Global evidence shows that quality ECED improves school readiness, reduces dropout and repetition, and contributes to enhanced long-term productivity and well-being. In Nepal, ECED has evolved into an integral part of the education system, supported by national policies and accompanied by significant expansion in access and enrollment.

The main objective of this study was to assess the school readiness of Grade 1 children in Bagmati Province at the point of school entry using the Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) framework and to examine how child, teacher, and school-level factors influence readiness outcomes. The study also aimed to address a key gap in previous national assessments, which primarily focused on larger classes (Grade 1 enrollment ≥ 15). In contrast, this study includes and compares children from both small classes (Grade 1 enrollment < 15) and large classes.

Using a mixed-methods approach, the study collected quantitative data on children's readiness through play-based assessments, as well as school-level information and qualitative insights from Grade 1 teachers, ECED teachers, headteachers, and parents. The assessment was administered at the start of the academic year 2082 BS, from May 23, 2025 to June 11, 2025 (Jestha 9-28, 2082). The analysis is based on data from 592 Grade 1 children across 91 schools.

Key Findings

This assessment provides a comprehensive overview of Grade 1 children's school readiness in Bagmati Province, based on the Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) and key factors in the ECED system. At the provincial level, the proportion of children classified as on-track does not differ significantly from the findings of the previous national assessment conducted in 2023-24. In the current assessment, 53.9% of children in Bagmati Province were classified as on-track, compared with 54.9% in the 2023-24 assessment and 49.1% nationally. However, the study highlights important differences in performance between children from large and small classes, as summarized below.

1. Overall, 53.9% of children are on track in Bagmati Province, with a substantial proportion remaining either progressing (44.6%) or struggling (1.5%). These findings indicate that many children enter Grade 1 without fully developed foundational skills.
2. School readiness appears to be multi-dimensional, with relatively stronger performance in the cognitive (64.9% on-track), physical (63.2% on-track), and language (62.2% on-track) domains. The challenges are particularly evident in the socio-emotional domain, where only 39.7% of children meet the expected levels, while a considerably higher proportion (17%) fall into the struggling category.
3. The differences between small and large classes are evident. Overall, 54.2% of children are on track in large classes compared to 50.3% in small-class-size schools. Children in larger classes generally perform better across most domains, except in the physical domain, where children from small classes perform slightly better. Although multivariate analysis confirms this association, the effect weakens after controlling for other variables, suggesting that school size alone does not independently determine outcomes. Rather, these differences are largely explained by variations in resources, teacher capacity, and learning environments.
4. Equity remains a major concern, as disparities persist by age, location, language, and socio-economic background.
 - a. Children aged above 60 months perform better across all domains. Overall, 57.3% of children aged over 60 months are on track, compared with 29.8% among children aged 48-60 months and 23.4% among children under 48 months.
 - b. Geographic disparities are also pronounced. Children in Kathmandu Valley perform better than those in other ecological zones. Overall, 61.3% of children in Kathmandu Valley are on track compared to 52.8% in the Terai, 41.2% in the Mountain region, and 38.7% in the Hill region.
 - c. Children with Nepali as their mother tongue perform better across most domains, except for the physical domain, where performance is similar between groups. Overall, 55.7% of children with Nepali as their mother tongue are on track, compared to 47.5% among children with other mother tongues.
 - d. Gender differences are relatively modest. Boys perform slightly better in the cognitive domain (67.8% vs. 62%) and physical domain (65% vs. 61.5%), while girls show stronger socio-emotional outcomes (40.6% vs. 38.8%) and better overall outcomes. Overall, 56.4% of girls are on track compared to 51.5% of boys.

- e. Children from urban areas perform better across all domains. Overall, 59.2% of children from urban areas are on track, compared to 31.2% among children from rural areas.
 - f. By school management type, children in institutional schools demonstrate higher readiness scores than children from community schools across all domains. Overall, 66.7% of children in institutional schools are on track, compared to 34.1% in community schools. However, the assessment could not consider the socio-economic status of the families children come from and the longer duration of ECED exposure in institutional schools, which may be one of the reasons for this difference.
- 5. ECED Teacher quality emerges as one of the most important determinants of school readiness, highlighting the need to strengthen teacher training and support systems. Children attending schools with a high ECED teacher index perform better across most domains, except the physical domain. Overall, 56.2% of children attending schools with a high ECED teacher index (scores 4-6) are on track, compared to 41.9% among children attending schools with a medium teacher index and 53.1% among children attending schools with a low teacher index.
 - 6. ECED infrastructure shows a strong association with children's readiness outcomes across all domains. Overall, 72.7% of children attending schools with the highest infrastructure index are on track, compared with 21.2% of those attending schools with the lowest infrastructure index.
 - 7. School governance and support systems also demonstrate a strong relationship with children's readiness outcomes. Overall, 60.4% of children attending schools with the highest governance and support index are on track, compared with 27.2% of those attending schools with the lowest governance and support index.

Key Recommendations

The results highlight the need for a comprehensive, equity-centered approach that enhances the quality of ECED, improves coherence with early grade instruction, advances inclusive and language-sensitive practices, and directs support toward underserved communities in Nepal.

Priority should be given to strengthening the quality of ECED provision while addressing systemic disparities that affect children's early learning experiences.

1. Ensure equitable distribution of resource allocation:

- Address inequalities affecting small, rural, and community schools by prioritizing equity-based planning and resource allocation.
- Strengthen infrastructure, access to learning materials, and institutional support systems in underserved areas.
- Expand the use of EMIS and the Education Equity Index to monitor disparities and guide evidence-based investments in ECED.

2. Enforce age-appropriate entry into ECED and Grade 1:

- Strengthen implementation of school entry age policies and ensure that children enter ECED and Grade 1 at developmentally appropriate ages.
- Expand access to quality ECED programs and provide targeted support to younger and underprepared children to facilitate smoother transitions into primary education.

3. Align institutional and community schools with national ECED policy:

- Strengthen implementation of the national ECED policy and curriculum across all school types, including institutional schools, to reduce disparities in ECED exposure and early learning experiences.
- Promote collaboration with institutional school networks to ensure consistent standards and practices across the sector regardless of institutional and community school category.

4. Promote effective implementation of the ECED curriculum and ELDS:

- Ensure that all ECED and Grade 1 teachers, headteachers, and School Management Committee (SMC) members receive orientation and training on the ECED curriculum and ELDS.
- Strengthen the availability, use, and monitoring of curriculum and ELDS materials to improve classroom planning, formative assessment, and school readiness outcomes.

5. Strengthen teacher training and continuous professional development:

- Strengthen pre-service and in-service teacher training systems with greater emphasis on play-based and child-centered pedagogy, socio-emotional learning, inclusive education, and the effective use of ECED curriculum, ELDS, and learning materials.
- Establish regular mentoring, classroom observation, and coaching mechanisms to improve classroom practices and discourage rote learning and excessive academic pressure in ECED and Grade 1.

6. Strengthen implementation of mother-tongue-based bilingual or multilingual education in ECED:

- Operationalize multilingual education policies in ECED and early grades to support children from diverse linguistic backgrounds.
- Recruit teachers proficient in local languages and develop contextualized multilingual learning materials to improve comprehension, participation, and learning outcomes among children with non-Nepali mother tongues.

7. Promote equity and inclusion in ECED programmes:

- Integrate gender-responsive and inclusive approaches into teacher training, curriculum, and classroom practices.
- Design targeted interventions to address disparities related to gender, geography, language, and socio-economic background, particularly for children from rural and marginalized communities.

8. Enhance parental engagement and parenting education:

- Expand parenting education programmes to strengthen parental awareness and engagement in children's learning and development.
- Orient parents on the importance of holistic child development, socio-emotional learning, and school readiness, while encouraging stronger home-school collaboration.

9. Strengthen governance, accountability, and school leadership:

- Build the capacity of headteachers, SMC and PTA members on ECED leadership, school readiness, disability-inclusive education, and the use of ECED curriculum, ELDS and report cards.
- Institutionalize regular monitoring, supervision, and follow-up systems linking school governance with classroom practices and children's learning outcomes.

10. Strengthen assessment and data systems:

- Improve the quality, consistency, and comparability of school readiness assessments by standardizing sampling approaches, strengthening assessment tools, and aligning indicators with the ELDS framework.
- Enhance data systems to capture information on ECED exposure, infrastructure, governance, and child outcomes, and strengthen integration of qualitative and quantitative evidence for policy and planning.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

कार्यकारी सारांश	viii
Executive Summary	xii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	1
1.1 Background and Rationale	1
1.2 Objectives of the Assessment	5
1.3 Scope of the Assessment	9
CHAPTER 2: ECED POLICY LANDSCAPE	9
2.1 Global and Regional ECED Policy Context	9
2.2 National ECED Policy and Legal Framework	10
2.3 Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS)	12
2.4 Alignment of ELDS with Grade 1 Curriculum	14
2.5 Implementation Status and Challenges	14
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND DATA SOURCES	17
3.1 Study Design	17
3.2 Sampling Design	17
3.2a Qualitative Interview	20
3.3 Assessment Tools and Instruments	21
3.4 Data Collection Procedures	21
3.5 Data Management and Analysis	22
3.6 Ethical Considerations	24
3.7 Limitations of the Study	24
CHAPTER 4: PROFILE OF GRADE 1 CHILDREN AND LEARNING CONTEXT	27
4.1 Socio-Demographic Profile of Children	27
4.2 School and Classroom Characteristics	29

CHAPTER 5: CHILDREN'S SCHOOL READINESS STATUS	57
5.1 Overall School Readiness	57
5.2 Domain-wise Findings	58
5.3 Disparities in School Readiness by Individual Characteristics	58
5.4 Association with School and Teacher Characteristics	64
CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS FROM MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS	87
6.1 Children's readiness across ELDS domains	87
6.2 Comparison with National and International Evidence	92
CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	95
7.1 Conclusions	95
7.2 Key Recommendations	96
REFERENCES	104
ANNEXES	109
Annex 1: Tools and background survey (translated version)	110
Annex 2: Survey findings details	133

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.	Description of domains, sub-domains, and aspects of ELDS Standards in Nepal	13
Table 2.	Distribution of Population, Sample of School and Children	18
Table 3.	Distribution of Total and Selected Schools, by Class Size, and Types	18
Table 4.	Distribution of Selected Schools (Classes) by Size and Types	18
Table 5.	Distribution of Children Selected and Participated in the Assessment	19
Table 6.	Distribution of Non-response Rate by Selected Characteristics	20
Table 7.	Distribution of Qualitative Interviewees by Types and Gender	21
Table 8.	Final cut score for the domains of study	24
Table 9.	Duration of Pre-and In-Service Training	36
Table 10.	Regression Output for Composite Readiness of Children	73

LIST OF ANNEX TABLES

Annex Table 1. Distribution children by their participation in the survey by district, ELDS 2082	133
Annex Table 2. Percentage distribution of surveyed children by selected characteristics, ELDS 2082	134
Annex Table 3. Summary of Qualitative Respondents	136
Annex Table 4. Percentage Distribution of Schools by Size and by Selected Background Characteristics, 2082 (unweighted)	137
Annex Table 5. Percentage Distribution of Schools by Management Type and by Selected Background Characteristics, 2082 (unweighted)	145
Annex Table 6. Percentage Distribution of Children by Readiness Scores by Domain, and Selected Background Characteristics, 2082 (weighted)	154
Annex Table 7. Regression Outputs by Models and Domains, 2082 (weighted)	158

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Status of children aged 36-59, developmentally on track in selected countries	3
Figure 2. Age Distribution of Children (Histogram) (unweighted)	27
Figure 3. Distribution of Sampled Children by Background Characteristics (Weighted)	28
Figure 4a. Distribution of School Locality and Class Size (Unweighted)	29
Figure 4b. Distribution of School Locality, Types and Sizes(Unweighted).	29
Figure 5. Distribution of ECED Class Size and Types (Unweighted)	31
Figure 6. Distribution of Sampled Schools and School Type	31
Figure 7. Distribution of ECED Teachers by Background Characteristics and Class Size	32
Figure 8. Distribution of ECED Teachers by Background Characteristics and School Type	33
Figure 9. Distribution of ECED Teacher Qualifications by Class Size (Unweighted).	34
Figure 10. Distribution of ECED Teacher Qualifications by School Type (Unweighted).	34
Figure 11. Distribution of ECED Teacher Training by Class Size (Unweighted).	35
Figure 12. Distribution of ECED Teacher Training and School Type (Unweighted)	35
Figure 13. Distribution of Sampled Schools by Infrastructure (Unweighted).	38
Figure 14. Distribution of Schools Infrastructures, by School Type (Unweighted)	38
Figure 15. Availability of Infrastructures by Class Size and School Type (Unweighted)	39
Figure 16. Distribution of Schools by Provision of Services, by Class Size (Unweighted).	40

Figure 17. Distribution of Sampled Schools by Provision of Services (Unweighted)	40
Figure 18. Distribution of Schools by Availability of Learning Areas and Class Size	41
Figure 19. Distribution of Schools by Availability of Learning Areas and School Type	42
Figure 20. Learning Materials with Learning Areas by Class Size and School Type	43
Figure 21. Sampled Schools by Use of ECED Curriculum, by Class Size and School Type	44
Figure 22. Purpose of Use of ECED Curriculum by School Type and Size	44
Figure 23. Availability of ELDS Document by School Type and Size	45
Figure 24. Purpose of Use of ELDS Document by School Type and Size	46
Figure 25. Language of Instruction by Class Size	47
Figure 26. Language of Instruction by School Type	47
Figure 27. Headteacher and SMC Members Training on ECD/ECED by Class Size	48
Figure 28. Headteacher and SMC Members Training on ECD/ECED by School Type	49
Figure 29. SMC Support by Class Size	50
Figure 30. SMC Support by School Type	50
Figure 31. SMC Observation by Class Size	51
Figure 32. SMC Observation by School Type	51
Figure 33. Parent Support by Class Size in Bagmati Province	52
Figure 34. Parent Support by School Type	53
Figure 35. Frequency of Homework by Class Size	54
Figure 36. Frequency of Homework by School Management Type	54
Figure 37. Overall Readiness of Children in Bagmati Province (2082 BS) compared to the previous assessment (2080 BS)	57
Figure 38. Readiness of Children by Domain in Bagmati Province, 2082 BS	58
Figure 39. Readiness of Children by Domain and Gender in Bagmati Province, 2082 BS	59
Figure 40. Percentage of Children On-Track by Domain and Age	61
Figure 41. Percentage of Children On-Track by Domain and Mother-tongue	62
Figure 42. Percentage of Children On-Track by Domain and Place of Residence	63
Figure 43. Percentage of Children On-Track by Domain and Ecological Zone	64
Figure 44. Percentage of Children On-Track by Domain and Class Size	65
Figure 45. Percentage of Children On-Track by Domain, by Management Type	66
Figure 46. Percentage of Children On-Track by Domain, by Teacher Index	67
Figure 47. Percentage of Children On-Track by Domain, by Infrastructure Index	68
Figure 48. Children On-Track by Domain and School Governance/Support Index	70
Figure 49. Children On Track by Domain and Availability of ELDS Document	71
Figure 50. Children On-Track by Domain and Use of ECED Curriculum	72

ACRONYMS

CDC	Curriculum Development Center
CF	Child Friendly
CSS	Cluster Sample Size
CSV	Comma Separated Values
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECEC	Early Childhood Education Centres
ECED	Early Childhood Education and Development
EDCU	Education Development and Coordination Unit
ELDS	Early Learning and Development Standards
EMIS	Educational Management Information System
ERO	Education Review Office
ESS	Effective Sample Size
HT	Head Teacher
ICC	Intra-class Correlation Coefficient
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MOEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
NASA	National Assessment of Student Achievement
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PPS	Probability Proportional to Size
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SESP	School Education Sector Plan
SMC	School Management Committee
SSDP	School Sector Development Plan
SSRP	School Sector Reform Plan
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization



Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Background and Rationale

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is the level of education typically designed with a holistic approach to support children's early physical, cognitive, social and emotional development for children under age five as per UNESCO's International Standard Classification of Education (UNESCO 2011). ECE is widely recognized as a critical foundation for lifelong learning, human capital formation, and social equity (UNESCO, 2015; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000).

A substantial body of global evidence demonstrates that quality ECE interventions yield high economic and social returns. Nobel Laureate James Heckman (2006) showed that investments in early childhood produce the highest returns in human capital development. High quality ECE programmes improve learning outcomes, reduce repetition and dropout rates, and enhance long-term productivity and well-being (World Bank, 2018; Britto et al., 2017). Longitudinal studies confirm that children who enter primary school with strong foundational skills in language, numeracy, self-regulation, and socio-emotional domains achieve better academic results and are less likely to drop out (Duncan et al., 2007; McCoy et al., 2017).

In Nepal, ECE is defined as one year of education before school entry for children aged four years old as per the Free and Compulsory Education Act (2075 BS (2018)) and is formally referred to as Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED). ECED in Nepal originated from community-based early learning and childcare initiatives in the late 1970s and early 1980s, largely supported by non-governmental organizations and development partners. Over time, ECED evolved from informal childcare arrangements into a more structured and development-oriented early learning system. ECED is strongly supported by the ECED curriculum, the Minimum Standards for ECED (2075 BS (2018)), and the Early Learning and Development Standards for age four (48-60 months) (2012). Its importance was reinforced through national education sector plans, including the School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP), School Sector Development Plan (SSDP), and the current School Education Sector Plan (SESP), which recognize ECED as an integral component of basic education and an important foundation for improved school readiness (MoEST, 2016; 2022).

ECED services are primarily delivered through community-based ECED centres and school-based pre-primary classes, with greater responsibility assigned to local governments following the federal restructuring in 2015. Programmes emphasize play-based and child-centered pedagogy, use of mother tongue or familiar languages, parental engagement, and integration with health, nutrition, and child protection interventions (UNICEF Nepal, 2019). Access has expanded significantly, with ECED centres increasing from 1,471 in 2003/04 to 41,284¹ centres enrolling 1,301,428 children in 2024/25. The gross enrollment rate (GER) reached 101 (girls: 99.6; boys: 102.1), while the net enrollment rate (NER) remains lower at 70.2 (girls: 70.3; boys: 70.2) (Flash I Report 2081), with notable variations across provinces, school types, and socio-economic groups. Despite progress in access, challenges persist in ensuring quality, including shortages of trained facilitators, inadequate learning materials and infrastructure, and limited alignment between ECED practices and Grade 1 teaching and learning approaches (World Bank, 2020).

Global and Regional Evidence on Early Learning Outcomes

A global increase in attention to early learning outcomes is reflected in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.2, which calls for all children to have access to quality early childhood development and to be ready for primary education. To support this goal, Going Global Early Learning and Development Standards developed by UNICEF focus on children's competencies from birth to age eight across physical, cognitive, socio-emotional, and language development (UNICEF 2016). First piloted in 2003 in six countries² The initiative influenced ECED systems most directly through curriculum development, though its use for measuring children's development and informing policy has remained limited.

Global monitoring tools have also expanded. The Early Childhood Development Index (ECDI), implemented through the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), has been used in more than 70 countries (2019-2023) to assess whether children aged 36-59 months are developmentally on track across literacy-numeracy, physical, socio-emotional, and learning domains.³ Similarly, International Development and Early Learning Assessment (IDELA) operates in over 40 countries and measures emergent literacy, numeracy, motor, and socio-emotional skills. Evidence from India in 2017 shows a composite IDELA score of 62.34%, ranging from 50.8% in social-emotional development to 76.2% in motor skills, with literacy and numeracy scores of 63.9% and 58.5%⁴ respectively. In Bhutan, a 2015

1 Among these 33,470 centres (81%) are government funded, 7,814 centres (18.9%) institutional, and 519 centres (1.2%) operated in religious schools (Flash I Report 2081 (2024/25)).

2 Brazil, Ghana, Jordan, Paraguay, Philippines, and South Africa.

3 <https://data.unicef.org/resources/early-childhood-development-index-2030-ecdi2030/> (accessed April 4, 2026).

4 <https://data.idela-network.org/data/Child-Development-Data-Affordable-Preschool-India> (accessed April 4, 2026).

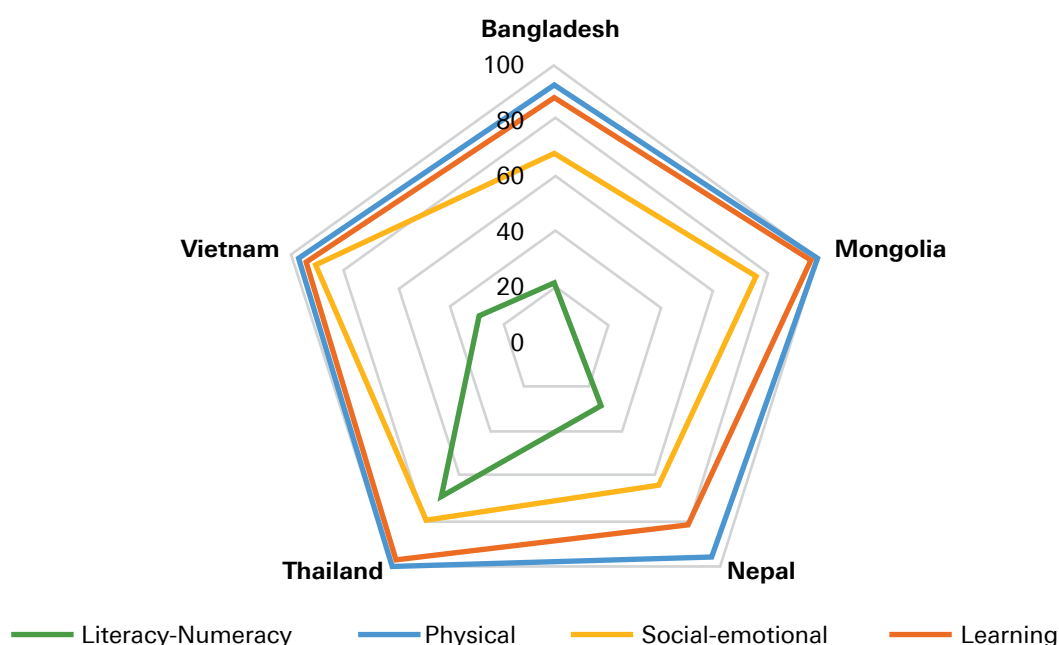
study reported a lower composite IDELA score of 44.4%, with domain scores varying from 36.35% in emergent literacy to 56.85% in motor development⁵.

Longitudinal evidence indicates that stronger early learning competencies significantly influence later learning. A multi-state study in India found that a one-percentage-point increase in school-readiness scores (SRS) leads to a 0.346 percentage-point increase in Early Grade Assessment (EGA) scores at age 6, and a 0.105 percentage-point increase at age 7 (Kaul et. al., 2017). However, regional studies in South Asia highlight persistent quality challenges. For example, research in India found that both Anganwadis centres and private preschools often lack developmentally appropriate curriculum and rely heavily on rote teaching of “3Rs” – reading, writing and arithmetic (Kaul et. al., 2017).

Comparative evidence shows that less than one-third of Nepali children aged 36-59 months were developmentally on track in literacy and numeracy, while only 64% were on track in the socio-emotional domain according to the Early Childhood Development Index (ECDI). These figures are lower than those reported in many other countries in the region (World Bank, 2020).

Figure 1

Status of children aged 36-59, developmentally on track in selected countries



Source: World Bank 2020.

5 <https://data.idela-network.org/data/Child-Development-Data-Affordable-Preschool-India> (accessed April 4, 2026).

Evidence from Nepal similarly shows gaps in foundational learning. The national Classroom-Based Early Grade Reading Assessment of Grades 2 and 3 reported an average score of 65% (ERO 2017), suggesting that many children enter Grade 1 without adequate foundational skills. Assessing school readiness using developmentally appropriate frameworks such as the Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) is therefore critical for identifying early learning gaps and informing policies and programmes to strengthen the transition from early childhood education to Grade 1.

Transition from ECED to Formal Schooling (Grade 1)

The transition from ECED to formal schooling marks a major developmental and institutional shift. In ECED settings, learning is typically play-based, flexible, and holistic, whereas Grade 1 introduces structured instruction, subject-based learning, and formal assessment. However, the Basic Education curriculum for Grades 1-3 demands an integrated approach to teaching and formative assessment. In Nepal, despite policy emphasis in the School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) and the School Education Sector Plan (SESP), challenges remain in ensuring continuity. These include variations in ECED quality, differences in teacher training and pedagogical approaches in practice, and inadequate infrastructure (MoEST, 2022; World Bank & UNICEF, 2020).

Child readiness is widely recognized as a critical foundation for children's successful participation in formal education. Children who enter Grade 1 with adequate foundational skills, including language development, self-regulation, curiosity, and problem-solving, adapt better to classroom routines, engage positively with teachers and peers, and acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills. Conversely, children lacking developmental readiness often face persistent gaps, higher repetition rates, and increased risk of dropout (Horn et al., 2022; Kim, 2024).

Not all children in Nepal have equal access to quality ECED services. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds, including those from marginalized caste and ethnic groups, remote geographic areas, linguistic minorities, and children with disabilities, are significantly less likely to attend quality programmes and therefore enter Grade 1 unprepared (ERO, 2024; World Bank, 2020).

Assessing school readiness at Grade 1 entry using the Early Learning Development Standards (ELDS), which are the standards expected to be achieved by the school entry age of 5 years (60 months), is therefore essential. It helps identify existing disparities, understand children's preparedness, and inform targeted interventions to support smoother transitions and more equitable learning outcomes. Building on this foundation, this study assesses the school

readiness of Grade 1 children in Bagmati Province using the national ELDS framework. While the previous national readiness assessment (ERO, 2024) focused on large classes, this study compares the readiness of children in both large and small classes to examine potential differences between them.

Relevance of Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) in Assessing School Readiness

Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) provide a nationally defined framework that articulates age-appropriate developmental expectations for young children across multiple domains for 48 to 60 months. In Nepal, ELDS are designed to guide ECED programming, curriculum development, teacher training, and child assessment, with a strong emphasis on holistic development rather than narrow academic skills.

Using ELDS as the basis for assessing school readiness offers several advantages. First, it naturally reflects the agreed priorities and contextual realities, ensuring that assessments are culturally and developmentally appropriate. Second, ELDS encompasses a broad range of developmental domains, including physical, social, emotional, language, cognitive, and learning-related skills, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of children's readiness for school. Third, ELDS-based assessments support alignment between early childhood programmes and formal schooling, promoting continuity in learning expectations and pedagogical approaches.

Assessing the school readiness of freshly enrolled Grade 1 children using ELDS provides valuable evidence of how well early learning systems are preparing children for formal education and where additional support is needed. Such evidence is essential for strengthening the ECED–Grade 1 transition, improving teaching and learning practices, and advancing equity in early education outcomes.

1.2 Objectives of the Assessment

This assessment has two broad objectives:

- a. To assess Grade 1 children's developmental and learning status in reference to the Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS).
- b. To examine the relationships between ECED characteristics and children's development and learning outcomes.

The previous national school readiness assessment (ERO 2024) was nationally representative but focused exclusively on large classes (those with Grade 1 enrolment of 15 or more). A significant proportion of ECED centres in Nepal serve fewer than 15 students and are classified as small classes. In 2081 BS (2023-24), out of 5,569 ECED centres in Bagmati Province, 1,554 (27.9%) were classified as small, while the remaining 4,015 (72.1%) were classified as large. Among community ECED centres, 36.7% were small, compared to 8.7% among institutional centres. As a result, the earlier assessment did not provide insights into the readiness status of children from small classes. The current assessment addresses this gap by comparing the readiness levels of children from both small and large classes.

Thus, this study also sought to address the following broad research questions:

- 1) Are there differences in ELDS scores between children enrolled in small classes (G1 enrollment < 15) and those in large classes (G1 enrollment $\geq$ 15)?
- 2) To what extent do teacher characteristics, school characteristics, and school governance and support systems influence children's ELDS scores?

1.3 Scope of the Assessment

This study focused on newly enrolled Grade 1 children, based on the expectation that they had recently completed an ECED programme and attained the Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) expected by the age of 60 months. The ELDS standards and corresponding assessment tools are ideally designed for children aged 48 to 60 months, a period that typically corresponds to completion of ECED, with children generally reaching approximately 60-72 months of age upon entry into Grade 1. However, the assessment included all newly enrolled Grade 1 children regardless of age, as all children are expected to demonstrate the foundational competencies required for school readiness at the time of enrollment. Consequently, the study sample included some children younger than 48 months and others older than 60 months. This age variation reflects the gap between NER and GER, indicating the presence of both underage and overage children among newly enrolled Grade 1 students.

The study aimed to examine differences in developmental and learning outcomes between children in large and small classes and was therefore conducted only in Bagmati Province, given that the province has diverse geography and a balanced number of large and small classes. All 13 districts in the province were included using probability proportional to size (PPS) sampling; however, district-level disaggregation was inappropriate due to very small sample sizes in some districts.

As noted above, the assessment covered four major domains, consistent with previous rounds. Although the ELDS framework identifies social, emotional, and cultural development as separate domains, these were combined into a single category in this study to ensure comparability with earlier assessments, resulting in four main domains: Physical, Socio-emotional, Language, and Cognitive.

The sample information was drawn from the EMIS data. Ecological zones were already defined in the given data.



Chapter 2

ECED POLICY LANDSCAPE

Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) has increasingly been recognized as a foundational stage of lifelong learning and human development. Investments in early learning not only improve children's readiness for formal schooling but also contribute to better educational attainment, social inclusion, and long-term economic productivity. Globally and in Nepal, the policy landscape for ECED has evolved significantly in recent decades, supported by international commitments, national education reforms, and the development of Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS). This section outlines the global and national policy context for ECED, the ELDS framework in Nepal, its alignment with Grade 1 expectations, and key implementation challenges.

2.1 Global and Regional ECED Policy Context

Early Childhood Development as an outcome is firmly embedded in the global education and development agenda, particularly through Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.2, which calls on all countries to ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education (United Nations, 2015). This target highlights the dual emphasis on access and quality, recognizing early childhood as a critical period for cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development.

The Education 2030 Framework for Action, adopted by UNESCO and partners, further reinforces ECD as an essential component of inclusive and equitable quality education (UNESCO, 2016). It encourages governments to expand at least one year of free and compulsory pre-primary education and strengthen school readiness interventions, particularly for marginalized and disadvantaged populations.

Recent international evidence further underscores the importance of investing in quality early childhood education and care (ECEC). The OECD's *Building Strong Foundations for Life* report highlights that the first five years of life represent a critical window of opportunity and vulnerability, in which early experiences significantly shape later educational achievement, well-being, and life outcomes. The report emphasizes that while expansion in access to ECEC is important, participation alone does not guarantee positive outcomes; the quality and inclusiveness of ECEC services are equally critical (OECD, 2026).

Across South Asia, government systems typically provide one year of school-readiness pre-primary education before Grade 1, while private providers commonly offer 2–3 years of preschool programmes beginning at ages 3–4. Most programmes serve children aged 3–5 or 3–6 years, reflecting the broader regional definition of early childhood education prior to entry into primary school (UNESCO 2021).

International Frameworks on Early Learning and School Readiness

Several international frameworks guide broader Early Childhood Development (ECD) policy and practice worldwide. The Nurturing Care Framework for Early Childhood Development, developed jointly by WHO, UNICEF, UNESCO, and the World Bank, emphasizes five essential components for early childhood well-being: good health, adequate nutrition, responsive caregiving, safety and security, and opportunities for early learning (WHO, 2018).

Similarly, UNICEF defines school readiness as a multidimensional concept encompassing child, school, and family/community readiness (UNICEF, 2015). These frameworks highlight that readiness is not only about children’s competencies but also about supportive environments that enable successful transitions into formal schooling.

As noted in Chapter 1, various international tools have been developed to measure children’s learning and development outcomes following participation in ECED programmes. The Going Global Early Learning and Development Standards focus on children’s competencies from birth to age 8 across physical, cognitive, socio-emotional, and language development. The Early Childhood Development Index (ECDI), implemented through the MICS, assesses whether children aged 36–59 months are developmentally on track in literacy-numeracy, physical, socio-emotional, and learning domains. Similarly, the International Development and Early Learning Assessment (IDELA) measures emergent literacy, numeracy, motor, and socio-emotional skills of children aged 3.5 to 6 years.

These instruments indicate that, while school readiness measurements vary in target age groups and specific domains, they share substantial similarities and significant overlap.

2.2 National ECED Policy and Legal Framework

Nepal has made substantial progress in institutionalizing ECED within its education system, particularly through constitutional recognition, sector planning, and policy reforms.

National ECED Policy and Strategy

The Constitution of Nepal (2015) guarantees the right to Early Childhood Development (GoN, 2015). The Education Act 2028 BS (8th amendment) and the Compulsory and Free Education Act (2018) further support the expansion of basic education and reinforce the importance of Early Childhood Education and Development as part of the education continuum (GoN, 2018).

The National Strategy for Early Childhood Development (2077-2088) specifies its objective as “to provide age-appropriate targeted and quality services to all children 0-8 years of age in an integrated manner for their holistic development” (NPC, 2020). The National Curriculum Framework (2019) indicates engagement in holistic development (physical, socio-emotional, cultural, cognitive), nutritious food and healthy habits, clean and safe behaviors, critical thinking, and language and communication skills to be developed by children aged four years and completed (48 months).

Education Sector Plans and ECED Integration

ECED has been progressively integrated into Nepal’s education sector planning processes. The School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) and its successor, the School Education Sector Plan (SESP), recognize pre-primary education as a key strategy for improving learning outcomes in the early grades (MoEST, 2016).

Key priorities include:

- Expanding access to pre-primary education
- Improving quality through trained facilitators and learning materials
- Strengthening governance and financing
- Enhancing monitoring and assessment mechanisms

Roles and Responsibilities of Key Institutions

With Nepal’s transition to a federal governance system in 2015, responsibilities for ECD are shared across three levels of government. The federal Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) develops national policies and standards, while provincial governments coordinate implementation, and local governments manage service delivery, including the operation of ECD centres (MoEST, 2019; World Bank, 2020; CDC, 2077BS).

ECED Class structure

The Education Act 2028 BS (9th Amendment, 2017) and the National Curriculum Framework for School Education 2076 BS formally recognize one year of early childhood education for four-year-old children. In addition, the National Curriculum Framework for School Education Nepal 2076 BS, also permits communities to establish childcare centres (*Sishu Syahar Kendra*) for three-year-old children (36–47 months) (ERO, 2077BS).

At the same time, the number of institutional ECED centres operating outside the government public education system has been increasing. These centres often offer nursery and kindergarten programmes for younger children, often beginning from around 30 months, with a variety such as playgroup, nursery, LKG, and UKG (ERO 2024). Variations in the duration

of ECED participation and the types of early learning experiences to which children are exposed may have implications for their school readiness and subsequent learning outcomes.

2.3 Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS)

The Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) are a framework developed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) to promote the holistic development of young children. The standards target children aged 48–60 months and outline age-appropriate developmental expectations across key domains. ELDS were initially developed in 2008 and formally approved in 2012 following validation with diverse stakeholders, including policymakers, ECD experts, teachers, parents, and communities. It provides national benchmarks for children’s development and learning at the end of the ECED cycle. The framework emphasizes holistic child development rather than focusing solely on academic skills. It serves as a guiding framework for curriculum design, teaching practices, child assessment, and the monitoring and improvement of ECED programmes. The standards define competencies children should achieve across the following domains:

1. Physical development: focuses on health & hygiene, nutrition, gross and fine motor skills.
2. Social and emotional development: covers relationships, cooperation, teamwork, and social behavior, self-concept, emotional expression, confidence, and self-control.
3. Cognitive development: encompasses problem solving, reasoning, understanding the environment, early numeracy, and concepts.
4. Language development: focuses on listening, speaking, communication, pre-reading, and pre-writing skills.
5. Cultural development: covers identity, family and community values, national culture and diversity.

These domains (also shown in Table 1) align with global evidence that early learning is multidimensional and requires integrated support across developmental areas.

Table 1*Description of domains, sub-domains, and aspects of ELDS Standards in Nepal*

Domain	Sub-domains	Specific Aspect
1. Physical development	Physical Development	Gross motor
		Fine motor
		Sensor motor
	Health	Personal hygiene
		Clean environment
		Safe practices
	Nutrition	Food habit
2. Social and emotional development	Social development	Relationships (peers/adults)
		Life skills
		Cooperation
		Social behavior
	Emotional development	Self-concept
		Emotional expression
		Security and confidence
		Self-control and balance
3. Cognitive development	Intellectual development	Learning process
	Cognitive development	Classification and ordering
	Cognitive knowledge (scientific exploration)	Sky & weather
		Living/non-living things
		Materials
		Technology
		Transportation
		Distance & direction
		Concept of time
	Math	Numeracy
		Measurement
	Creativity	Creative art
		Imagination, drama/role play
		Music and movement
4. Language development	Communication	Listening
		Communicating with others
	Literacy	Pre-reading
		Pre-writing
5. Cultural development	Nation and nationality	Unity in diversity
	Values	Family and community

Source: DoE (2069 BS).

2.4 Alignment of ELDS with Grade 1 Curriculum

A key objective of ELDS is to ensure continuity between early childhood learning and primary education. Nepal's Grade 1 curriculum builds upon competencies introduced in ECED, particularly in language, numeracy, and socio-emotional development (CDC, 2019).

However, significant gaps persist in practice. While ECED emphasizes play-based, flexible, and child-centered pedagogy, Grade 1 classrooms frequently shift quickly toward formal, textbook-driven instruction and rote learning (memorization). This abrupt change creates discontinuity in children's learning experiences and often leads to difficulties in meeting new academic expectations (Kunwar and Acharya, 2025; World Bank & UNICEF, 2020; CDC 2022;).

2.5 Implementation Status and Challenges

Despite significant expansion of ECED programmes in Nepal, significant challenges persist in both access and quality. The net enrolment rate (NER) remains much lower than GER, indicating a high proportion of under-aged and over-aged children in ECED centres. This raises serious concerns about age-appropriate learning and overall quality of provision.

Equity gaps are pronounced: while girls' enrolment lags only slightly behind boys nationally, children from poorer households, remote areas, marginalized ethnic/caste groups, and linguistic minorities have substantially lower access to quality ECED services. Urban-rural and provincial disparities are also evident, with remote mountainous districts falling far behind (World Bank, 2020). This reflects a socio-cultural preference to invest in quality education for boys over girls, as institutional ECED centres are often perceived as being of higher quality than community schools- although this is not always the case in reality.

Quality remains a major concern in Nepal's ECED sector. Many centres suffer from inadequate infrastructure, insufficient learning materials, and poorly trained teachers. According to the Flash I Report 2081 BS (2024/25), only 68.1% of schools met three prioritized minimum enabling conditions (PMECs), 51.2% met four PMECs, and just 4.6% met all five PMECs. According to the policy, teachers should have a secondary qualification and a minimum of 90 hours of basic and practical training. However, only 64.5% of teachers are qualified nationally (Flash I Report 2081 BS). Curriculum implementation is inconsistent, and there is weak alignment between ECED and Grade 1, often resulting in abrupt transitions and the "schoolification" of early childhood programmes (World Bank, 2020; UNESCO, 2016).

Governance challenges have intensified with federalization, as responsibilities have shifted to local governments without adequate capacity, resources, or coordination mechanisms. Monitoring and evaluation systems are also weak, making it difficult to track quality outcomes (World Bank, 2020).

Although ELDS provides a framework for monitoring child development, systematic assessment practices are still evolving. Strengthening assessment and monitoring systems aligned with ELDS is essential for tracking progress and informing policy decisions (WHO, 2018). With Early Learning and Development Standards to be achieved by 60 months clearly set, Nepal has a strong foundation to assess children on their school readiness and inform policy decisions to ensure that all children have support to start equitably despite of their background.



Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY AND DATA SOURCES

3.1 Study Design

This study is a cross-sectional school-based assessment of grade 1 children. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used. Quantitative information was gathered from students, whereas qualitative information was gathered from headteachers, Grade 1 teachers, ECED teachers, and parents from randomly selected schools and communities.

3.2 Sampling Design

The study utilized a two-stage cluster random sampling design, with schools serving as the primary sampling units (PSUs) as done in the School Readiness Report 2080 (ERO 2024). The required cluster sample size (CSS) was determined by adjusting the effective sample size (ESS) for simple random sampling to account for a 9% margin of error at the 95% confidence level and the design effect (deff), using the formula:

$$\text{CSS} = \text{ESS} \times \text{deff}.$$

The design effect was calculated as:

$$\text{deff} = 1 + (C - 1) \times \text{ICC},$$

where C represents the cluster size, and ICC is the intra-cluster correlation coefficient. An ICC of 0.25 was adopted, based on the NASA 2015 study of grade 3 students, resulting in a deff of 4.50.

Assuming a 95% confidence level, a 9% margin of error, an expected proportion of 0.5, a cluster size of 15 students per school, and an intra-class correlation coefficient (ICC) of 0.25, the required sample size was 536 students from 42 schools. With a 14% non-response rate, the required sample size was approximately 623.

Using probability proportional to size (PPS) sampling, the final sample of 623 Grade 1 students was allocated by school size. Small classes, representing 27.9 percent of schools, contributed 174 students sampled from 35 schools, with five students selected per school. Large classes accounted for 72.1 percent of schools and included 449 students sampled from 45 schools, with 10 students selected per school, ensuring proportional representation by school size (Table 2). Sample weights were computed to support unbiased inference: for each selected school, the within-school selection probability was calculated as the ratio of the cluster size to the actual Grade 1 enrolment, and overall weights were derived as the inverse of the child-level selection probability and rounded to two decimal places.

Table 2*Distribution of Population, Sample of School and Children*

Size	Eligible Population		Target Sample		Sample			
	Schools (PSU)	Grade 1 students	School	Students	Selected School	# of Students in selected schools	# of Students Selected for Assessment	# of Students Participated in the Assessment
Large	4,015	108,847	45	449	68	1,607	556	490
Small	1,554	10,790	35	174	23	161	117	102
Total	5,569	119,637	80	623	91	1,768	673	592

The final sample comprised 91 schools and 673 students. Of these, 68 were large classes, and 23 were small classes, covering 556 students from large classes and 117 students from small classes (Tables 2, 3, and 4).

Table 3*Distribution of Total and Selected Schools, by Class Size, and Types*

Size	Total Schools		Community Schools		Institutional Schools		Selected Schools (Class)	
	Number	Prop%	Number	Prop%	Number	Prop%	Number	Prop%
Large	4,015	72.1	2,420	63.3	1,595	91.3	68	74.7
Small	1,554	27.9	1,402	36.7	152	8.7	23	25.3
Total	5,569	100	3,822	100	1,747	100	91	100

Among the selected schools, three-fourths (74.7%) were large classes, while one-fourth (25.3%) were small classes. In terms of management type, 70% were community schools and 30% were institutional (private) schools. The proportion of small classes varied significantly by management type: the majority (89%) of institutional schools had large classes, compared to just over two-thirds (68.3%) of community schools (Table 4).

Table 4*Distribution of Selected Schools (Classes) by Size and Types*

Size	Total Selected Schools		Community Schools		Institutional Schools	
	Number	Proportion (%)	Number	Proportion (%)	Number	Proportion (%)
Large	68	74.7	44	68.8	24	88.9
Small	23	25.3	20	31.3	3	11.1
Total	91	100	64	100	27	100

As the target sample sizes were determined using the latest available EMIS data, the sampling plan was designed to achieve these targets. However, during fieldwork, the number of students present in the selected schools did not fully align with the EMIS records. Consequently, the selection of schools and students differed slightly from the original plan. In addition, some schools classified as small in EMIS had been merged with nearby schools, requiring the selection of alternative schools as replacements (Table 2).

Among the selected children, 82.6% were from large classes and 17.4% were from small classes. By management type, 60.4% of children were from community schools and 39.6% were from institutional (private) schools. The proportion of children from small classes varies significantly by management type: 21.4% of selected children from community schools were in small classes, compared to only 11.3% from institutional schools (Table 5).

However, not all selected children participated in the survey. A total of 592 students completed the assessment, resulting in an overall non-response rate of 12 percent, which was slightly lower than the anticipated 14 percent. Of the students participating in the assessment, 490 (82.8%) were from large classes, and 102 (17.2%) were from small classes. By management type, 345 students (58.3%) were from community schools, and 247 (41.7%) were from institutional schools (Table 6 and Annex Table 1).

Table 5

Distribution of Children Selected and Participated in the Assessment

Size	Total Children		Community Schools		Institutional Schools	
	Number	Proportion (%)	Number	Proportion (%)	Number	Proportion (%)
# of Children Selected for Participation in the Assessment						
Large	556	82.6	320	78.6	236	88.7
Small	117	17.4	87	21.4	30	11.3
Total	673	100	407	100	266	100
# of Children Participated in the Assessment						
Large	490	82.8	271	78.6	219	88.7
Small	102	17.2	74	21.4	28	11.3
Total	592	100	345	100	247	100

The overall non-response rate was 12 percent, but it varies substantially by size, management type, and district. The non-response rate was marginally lower among students from small classes (11.9%) than from large classes (12.8%). Non-response rates also varied considerably by district, ranging from 0% to 42.5%. By school management type, institutional (private) schools had a much lower non-response rate (7.1%) compared to community schools (15.2%). Similarly, non-response rates differed by ecological zone, ranging from 4.2% in the mountain region to 12.5% in the hill region (Table 6).

Table 6*Distribution of Non-response Rate by Selected Characteristics*

Characteristics	Non-response rate (%)
Size	
Large	11.9
Small	12.8
Type	
Community	15.2
Institutional	7.1
Ecozone	
Mountain	4.2
Hill*	14.4
KTM Valley	10.2
Terai	12.0
Total	12.0

*Excluding districts in Kathmandu Valley.

Samples were selected using the probability proportional to size (PPS) sampling in each district to ensure representativeness. However, given the considerable variation in non-response rates across districts, district-level analysis was deemed inappropriate due to reliability concerns and was therefore not conducted.

3.2a Qualitative Interview

To capture parents' and teachers' perceptions of children's readiness across all developmental domains, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders. In total, 152 interviews were completed, comprising 44 headteachers, 36 Grade 1 teachers, 34 ECED teachers, and 38 parents.

Overall, approximately 64 percent of respondents were female, although the gender distribution varied considerably by respondent category (see Table 7). By school management type, 72.4% of respondents were from community schools and 27.6% were from institutional (private) schools. By school size, 73% of respondents were from large classes and 27% were from small classes (see Annex Table 2).

Table 7*Distribution of Qualitative Interviewees by Types and Gender*

Types of Interviewees	Female	Male	Total	% Female
Headteacher	9	35	44	20.5%
Grade 1/Primary Teacher	25	11	36	69.4%
ECED Teacher	34	0	34	100.0%
Parents	29	9	38	76.3%
Total	97	55	152	63.8%

3.3 Assessment Tools and Instruments

The assessment tool used in the study was a play-based questionnaire administered directly to children (see Annex A). The tool was adapted from the 2080 School Readiness Assessment, with only minor modifications. Trained enumerators scored each child's performance by assigning **2 points** for fully correct responses or actions, **1 point** for partially correct responses or actions, and **0 points** for incorrect responses or actions or for non-responses.

In addition, a qualitative checklist was used to capture perceptions from parents, headteachers, teachers, and ECED teachers in randomly selected schools (see Annex B). These perceptions were recorded on audio and later transcribed into text for reporting purposes.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

A total of 17 enumerators underwent a three-day training programme prior to the commencement of data collection. The training was conducted by officials from the Education Review Office (ERO) with support from UNICEF Nepal. As part of the training, enumerators conducted a pilot assessment in selected nearby schools not included in the sample. This pilot exercise allowed enumerators to apply the questionnaire under real-world field conditions, thereby improving their clarity and confidence in administering the assessment.

To ensure the validity and reliability of data collection, particular emphasis was placed on standardizing the administration and scoring procedures among enumerators. During the pilot phase, enumerators practiced administering the assessment and scoring responses until they achieved a high level of inter-rater reliability (IRR)⁶.

⁶ In the first piloting phase, the average inter-rater reliability (IRR) score was 77.3 percent, which increased to 98.6 percent in the second phase of piloting.

Three key principles for ethical evidence generation – respect, beneficence and non-maleficence, and justice, as outlined in the UNICEF’s International Charter for Ethical Research Involving Children⁷ and UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis (2015)⁸ were applied throughout the assessment.

During fieldwork, enumerators coordinated with teachers to establish a child-friendly assessment environment so that children could participate without fear or discomfort. Teachers provided language support between enumerators and children only when necessary and helped ensure that children felt secure, comfortable, and free from distractions. Once the environment was established, enumerators conducted brief ice-breaking activities to build rapport and trust, in accordance with the assessment guidelines. Children were also informed that they could withdraw from the interview at any stage.

The assessment was administered independently by enumerators, without the presence of Grade 1 teachers or other school staff, to minimize potential influence on children’s responses. All data were collected digitally using the KoboToolbox application on tablet devices.

Officials from the Education Development and Coordination Units (EDCU) (11 persons) and the Education Review Office (ERO) (two persons) monitored the data collection process, both remotely and through in-person field visits to selected centres, ensuring data quality and supporting the smooth implementation of the assessment.

Fieldwork Period: The assessment was administered at the start of the academic year following enrollment. Data collection began on May 23, 2025, and was completed on June 11, 2025 (Jestha 9–28, 2082).

3.5 Data Management and Analysis

Data was downloaded from KoboToolbox in CSV and Excel formats and subsequently converted into SPSS for analysis. The dataset was carefully inspected to ensure accurate variable labeling in SPSS. ECED background data were merged with the student-level dataset prior to analysis.

Univariate analyses were conducted to examine frequency distributions, which informed the appropriate categorization and regrouping of responses. In addition, composite indices were constructed to generate three new variables—ECED Teacher Index, ECED Infrastructure Index, and School Governance and Support Index—by combining related indicators. The

7 <https://childethics.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/ERIC-compendium-approved-digital-web.pdf> (accessed May 28, 2026).

8 https://www.unicef.org/bulgaria/sites/unicef.org.bulgaria/files/2018-09/Annex_UNICEF_Procedure_for_Ethical_Standards.pdf (Accessed May 28, 2026).

use of composite indices is particularly important, as it helps mitigate multicollinearity among closely related independent variables while capturing the underlying constructs more comprehensively. This approach enables the inclusion of more relevant indicators in the analysis in a statistically robust manner and improves the interpretability and stability of the regression estimates.

ECED Teacher index: The ECED teacher index was developed by combining four variables: teacher qualification (Grade 8 or less=0, Grade 10=1, Grade 12=2, Bachelor's=3, and Master's=4); pre-service training in ECED (no=0, yes=1); in-service training on ECED (no=0, yes=1); and training on management of disability (no=0, yes=1). The maximum attainable score was 7, although the highest observed score was 6. Based on the total scores, the teacher index was classified into three ordinal categories: **Low** (0-2), **Medium** (3), and **High** (4-6).

ECED infrastructure index: The ECED infrastructure index was constructed by combining multiple indicators, including the availability of a playground, adequate classroom space, seating arrangements, designated learning areas, and learning materials. The index also included specific types of materials (numeracy, role play, science, creative, constructive, and other materials), as well as essential facilities such as a first-aid box, drinking water, toilets (including gender-specific, child-friendly toilets), provision of midday or additional meals, and exercise books. Based on the total scores, the index was classified into five ordinal categories: **Lowest** (<20%), **Lower** (20–40%), **Middle** (41–60%), **High** (61–80%), and **Highest** (>80%). This categorization was based on five quantiles, consistent with the approach commonly used in DHS and MICS for constructing wealth quintiles.

School governance and support index: The school governance and support index was constructed by combining several indicators, including headteacher training on ECED, SMC training on ECED, use of the ECED curriculum and its intended purpose, homework practices, maintenance of children's records, SMC support and monitoring visits, SMC support for children with disabilities, parental contributions to school meals, and support for sports and other activities. Based on the total scores, the index was classified into five ordinal categories: **Lowest** (<20%), **Lower** (20–40%), **Middle** (41–60%), **High** (61–80%), and **Highest** (>80%). This categorization was based on five quantiles, consistent with the approach commonly used in DHS and MICS for constructing wealth quintiles.

Scoring and classification of ELDS domains

This study adopted the same cut-off scores for the specific domains as those used in the 2023-24 (2080 BS) study, as presented below (Table 8).

Table 8*Final cut score for the domains of study*

Development Domain	Struggling	Progressing	On Track
Composite	< 0.344	$0.344 \leq \text{score} < 0.74$	≥ 0.74
Physical	< 0.284	$0.284 \leq \text{score} < 0.735$	≥ 0.735
Language	< 0.405	$0.405 \leq \text{score} < 0.807$	≥ 0.807
Cognitive	< 0.294	$0.294 \leq \text{score} < 0.657$	≥ 0.657
Social-Emotional	< 0.392	$0.392 \leq \text{score} < 0.699$	≥ 0.699

Source: Adapted from Education Review Office (2024)

3.6 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to strict ethical standards throughout the data collection process. Prior to participation, informed consent was obtained from school authorities and parents or caregivers, and verbal assent was sought from children in an age-appropriate manner. Enumerators clearly explained the purpose of the assessment, the voluntary nature of participation, and the right to withdraw at any stage without any consequences.

Child safeguarding measures were integrated into all field procedures to ensure children's safety, comfort, and dignity. Assessments were conducted in a child-friendly environment, and enumerators received training on safeguarding protocols, appropriate conduct, and referral mechanisms for concerns.

Confidentiality and data protection were maintained by anonymizing all personal identifiers and restricting access to the dataset to authorized personnel only. Data were securely collected using encrypted digital devices and stored in password-protected systems to ensure privacy and compliance with ethical research standards.

3.7 Limitations of the Study

The study encountered several challenges during implementation. In some cases, schools that had been sampled as large appeared small during field visits, while some sampled as small appeared large. This discrepancy arose because the sampling was based on the previous year's Grade 1 enrolment data, which did not always reflect the actual enrolment situation at the time of data collection. The NMICS 2024-25 indicates that, nationally 12.6% of ECED children's records (7.2% in Bagmati Province) were not linked to the EMIS database (NSO 2026), which may partly explain the discrepancy observed.

Some background questions were also modified, which created challenges in maintaining full comparability with earlier assessments. In addition, enumerators had difficulty randomly

selecting students via KoboToolbox because many schools maintained inconsistent or incomplete attendance registers. Furthermore, floods and road blockages limited access to some sampled schools, requiring replacements within the same sampling strata.

The study design did not include children with disabilities in the assessment, as the assessment tool is based on ELDS for 48 to 60 months, the standard set based on average children in Nepal. Children with disabilities require special attention and tailored tools based on the type of disability, which is not considered in this study. Hence, the sample did not include children with disabilities. When they were identified in the field, they were allowed to participate in their capacity. Most children with physical disabilities continued to participate in other domains, while some children could not participate in any assessment questions and were recorded as non-responders. However, the study does not provide disaggregated information on the school readiness of children with disabilities, as the number was not significant.

Although a substantial number of respondents, including headteachers, Grade 1 teachers, ECED teachers, and parents, were reached through the perception survey, a review of the transcribed responses indicates that the quality of data collected was limited. In particular, insufficient probing during interviews led to superficial and, at times, inconsistent responses, making it difficult to meaningfully compare findings across respondent groups.

Despite these operational challenges, the study achieved a sufficient sample size to conduct most planned analyses and draw meaningful conclusions at the overall and subgroup levels. However, due to relatively small sample sizes in several districts and high non-response rates, district-level comparisons of school readiness were not considered statistically meaningful and therefore excluded from the analysis.



Chapter 4

PROFILE OF GRADE 1 CHILDREN AND LEARNING CONTEXT

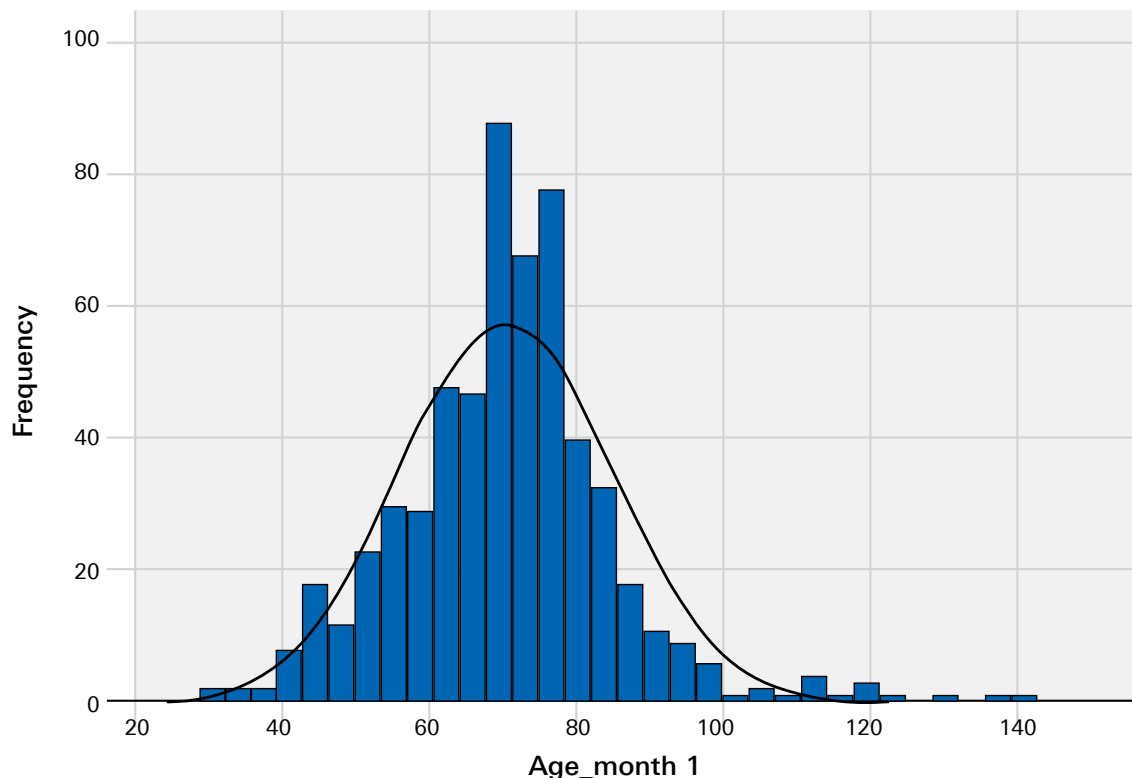
4.1 Socio-Demographic Profile of Children

A total of 592 Grade 1 children participated in the study and completed the assessment. The sample demonstrated strong gender balance, with girls representing 50.3% of the unweighted sample (49.2% weighted) and boys 49.7% (50.8% weighted), indicating equitable representation by sex.

Children's ages range from 31 to 141 months, with a mean age of 70.59 months (95% CI: 69.41-71.77). Based on the age categories used in the analysis, 5.8% of children are below 48 months, 15.6% are between 48 and 60 months, and 78.6% are above 60 months. There are slight differences in both the proportions and mean age between the weighted and unweighted samples (see Annex Table 1).

Figure 2

Age Distribution of Children (Histogram) (unweighted)



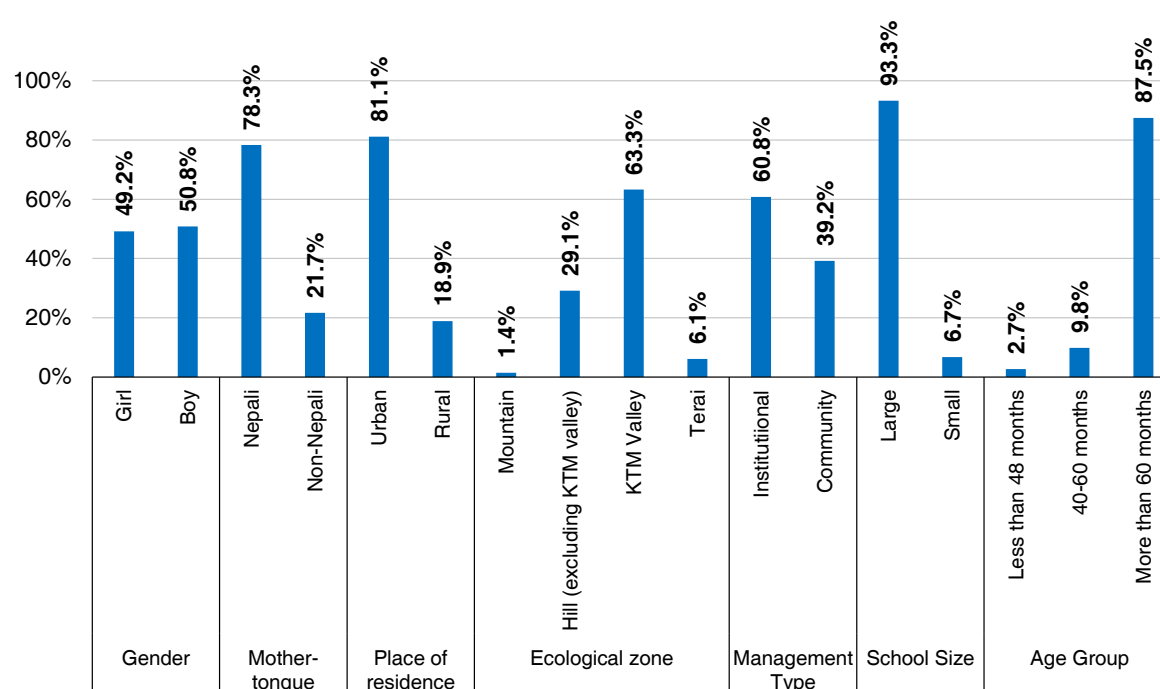
In terms of mother tongue, children with Nepali as their mother tongue constituted about three-fourths of the sample (74.2% unweighted; 78.3% weighted), while approximately one-fourth of children reported other mother tongues (25.8% unweighted; 21.7% weighted), reflecting linguistic diversity.

However, the sample distribution was skewed toward urban areas after weighting. Urban children accounted for 66.7% of the unweighted sample and 81.1% of the weighted sample, compared with 33.3% (unweighted) and 18.9% (weighted) from rural locations. District representation was uneven, with Kathmandu contributing the largest share, followed by Chitwan and Sindhuli, while several districts had relatively small proportions.

Ecologically, most children were from the Hill zone, with limited representation from Terai and Mountain regions. Overall, while PPS sampling and weighting improved representativeness, rural, Mountain, and some district perspectives remained underrepresented (Figure 3).

Figure 3

Distribution of Sampled Children by Background Characteristics (Weighted)



Note: *Hill excluding districts in Kathmandu (KTM) Valley.

4.2 School and Classroom Characteristics

School type and location

The sampled 91 schools exhibit clear geographic and institutional differences between small and large classes.

By location, small classes are predominantly rural (65.2%), whereas large classes are primarily urban (60.3%). Overall, the sample is balanced, with 46.2% rural and 53.8% urban schools. However, the distribution of large classes by location indicates a greater concentration of larger institutions in urban or peri-urban areas. By management type, about two-thirds (64.1%) of community schools are located in rural areas, while almost all institutional schools (96.3%) are located in urban areas (see Figure 4a and 4b).

Figure 4a

Distribution of School Locality and Class Size (Unweighted)

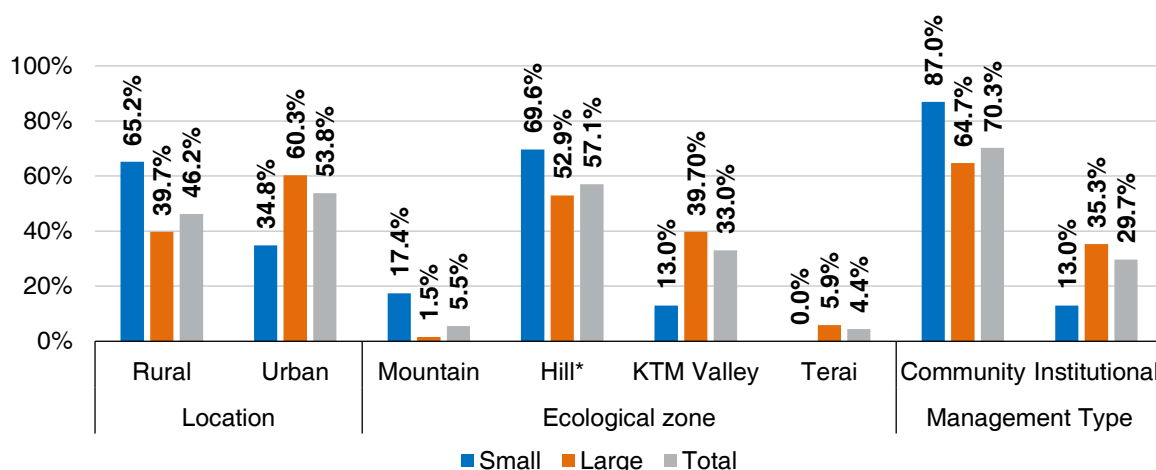
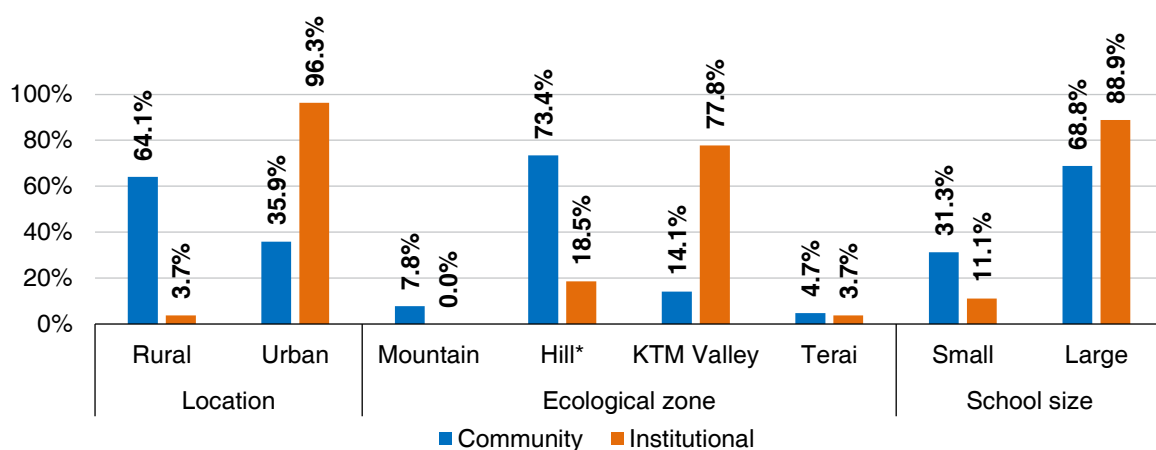


Figure 4b

Distribution of School Locality, Types and Sizes (Unweighted).



Note: *Hill excluding districts in KTM Valley.

From an ecological perspective, over two-thirds (69.6%) of small classes are located in the Hill region, followed by 17.4% in the Mountain and 13% in the Kathmandu Valley. Among large classes, slightly over half (53%) are located in the Hill, followed by 39.7% in the Kathmandu Valley, 6% in the Terai, and 1.5% in the Mountain. By management type, about three-fourths (73.4%) of community schools are located in the Hill, followed by 14% in the Kathmandu Valley, around 8% in the Mountain, and 5% in the Terai. In contrast, more than three-fourths (78%) of institutional schools are located in the Kathmandu Valley, followed by the Hill and Terai regions (see Figures 4a and 4 and Annex Table 4).

In terms of school size, over two-thirds (69%) of community schools are large, whereas 89% of institutional schools are large (see Figures 4a and 4b, and Annex Table 3).

Overall, these patterns indicate that small classes are more likely to be located in rural areas, community-managed, and geographically dispersed across ecological zones, including the Mountain region. In contrast, large classes tend to be concentrated in urban Hill areas, particularly in the Kathmandu Valley, where institutional schools are more prevalent. This distribution suggests that community schools often serve children from marginalized households, as evidenced by other studies (World Bank, 2020; Shrestha, 2023). The data also point to potential equity gaps in access to resources and school readiness support between rural/small classes and urban/large classes.

Number of Classes and Types of ECED

Data on the number of ECED classes by school size indicates substantial variation in Bagmati Province. Overall, more than half of the schools (54%) had only one ECED center, a proportion that was considerably higher among small classes than large classes (87% vs. 46%). In contrast, large classes had a substantially higher proportion of schools with two to four classes compared to small classes. By school management type, three-quarters of community schools (75%) had only one class, followed by two classes (14.1%). In comparison, over half of institutional schools (51.9%) had four classes, followed by three classes (40.7%) (see Figures 5 and 6).

Similarly, data on the types of ECED classes by school size show that a higher proportion of large classes run playgroup, nursery, and Sishu Kaksha classes, whereas a substantially higher proportion of small classes operate nursery and ECED centres. By school management type, one-third of community schools (33.9%) offered Sishu Kaksha, followed by nursery (29%), and ECED centres (19.4%). In contrast, over half of institutional schools (51.9%) offered playgroup, followed by nursery (40.7%) (see Figures 5 and 6).

These findings reveal a clear distinction between community and institutional schools, as well as between large and small classes, in terms of both the number and types of ECED classes. As noted in Chapters 1 and 3, children in institutional schools are exposed to longer

periods of ECED than those in community schools. The data also suggest that, despite government policy provisions, there is a growing trend toward introducing multiple types of ECED classes in community schools.

Figure 5

Distribution of ECED Class Size and Types (Unweighted)

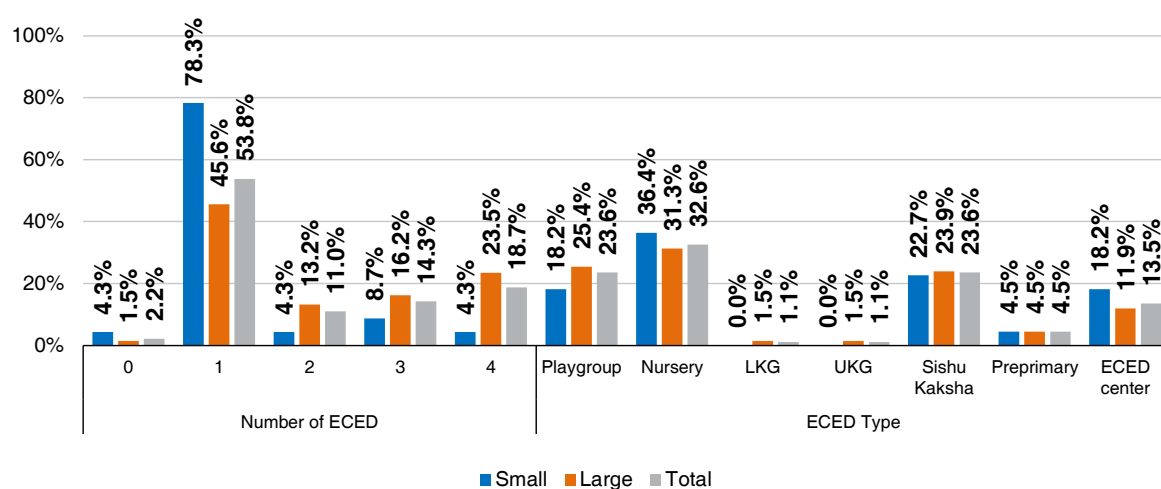
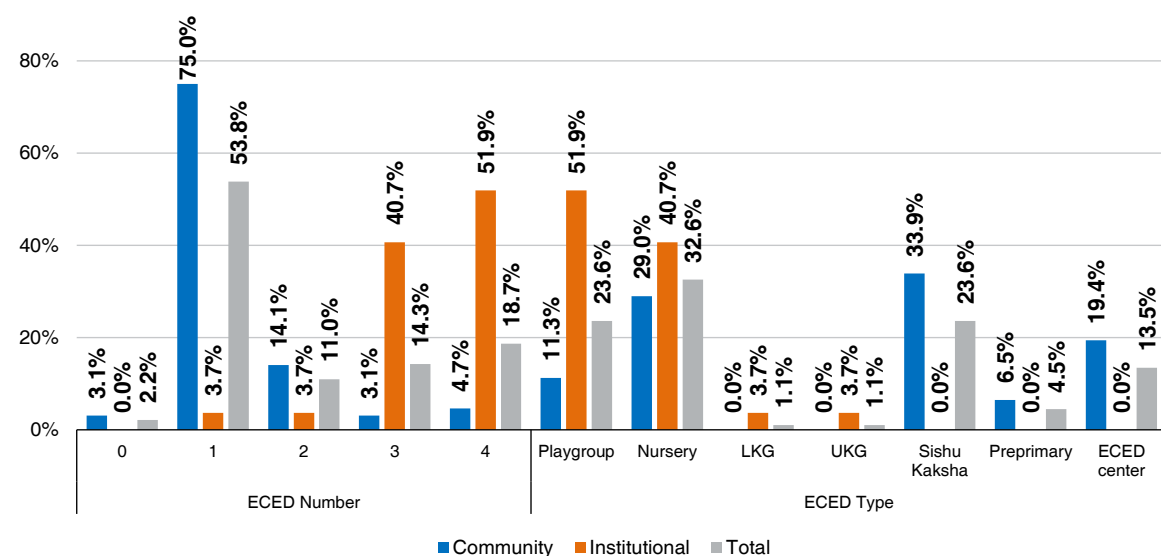


Figure 6

Distribution of Sampled Schools and School Type



Teacher's characteristics

Gender: The sampled schools in the study show a predominantly female workforce, with females comprising 95.7% in small classes and 91.2% in large classes, resulting in an overall proportion of 92.3%. By school management type, 89% of ECED teachers in community schools are female, while all ECED teachers in institutional schools are female (see Figures 7 and 8).

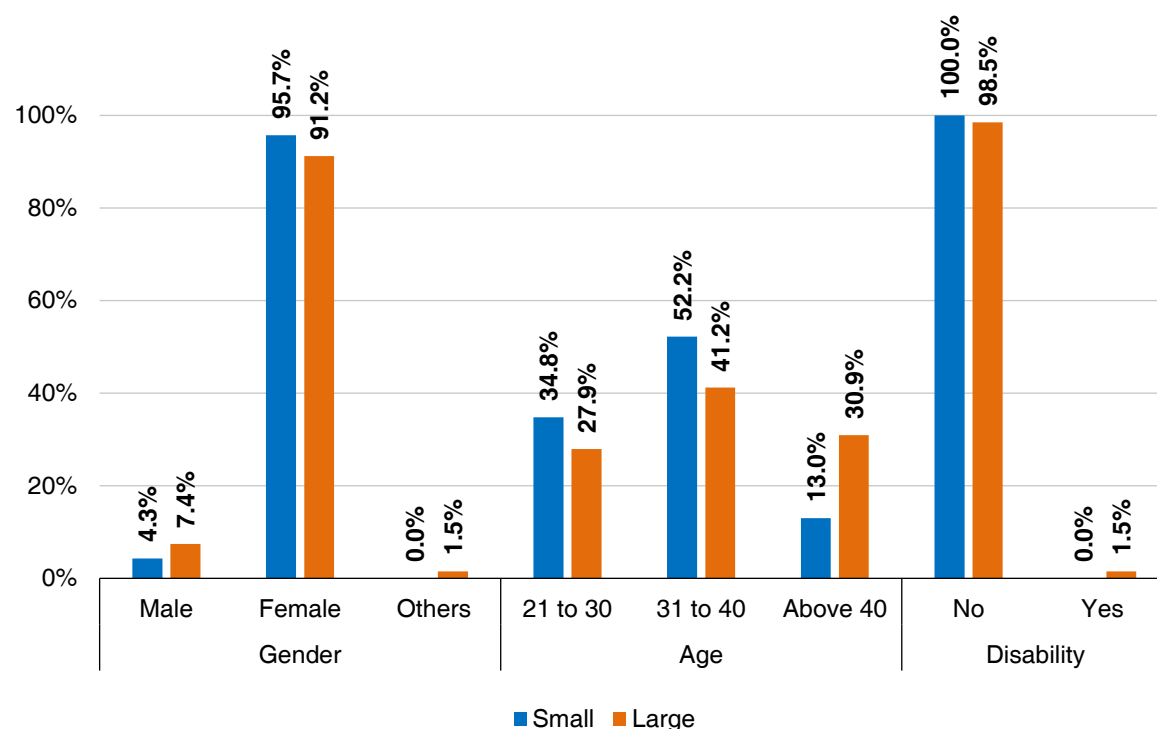
This pattern is consistent with national data reported in the Education Management Information System (EMIS)⁹ Nepal. According to the government policy, preference is given to recruiting female ECED teachers, based on the perception that women are generally more nurturing and better suited to working with young children. In situations where female candidates are not available, male teachers may also be recruited to serve as ECED teachers.¹⁰

Age: Teachers' age distribution reveals that teachers in small classes are relatively younger overall, with 34.8% aged 21–30 years compared to 27.9% in large classes. In contrast, large classes have a higher proportion of teachers aged 40 or older, at 30.9%, compared to 13.0% in small classes. This pattern suggests that teachers in larger schools tend to have greater experience than those in smaller schools (Figure 3).

By school management type, institutional schools have a slightly higher proportion of teachers aged over 40 (29.6%) than community schools (25%). In contrast, in the 31-40 age group, community schools have a higher proportion of teachers (45.3%) than institutional schools (40.7%). Overall, these differences are relatively modest, suggesting no substantial variation in teachers' age distributions across school management types (see Figures 7 and 8). A negligible proportion of ECED teachers were found to have some kind of disability.

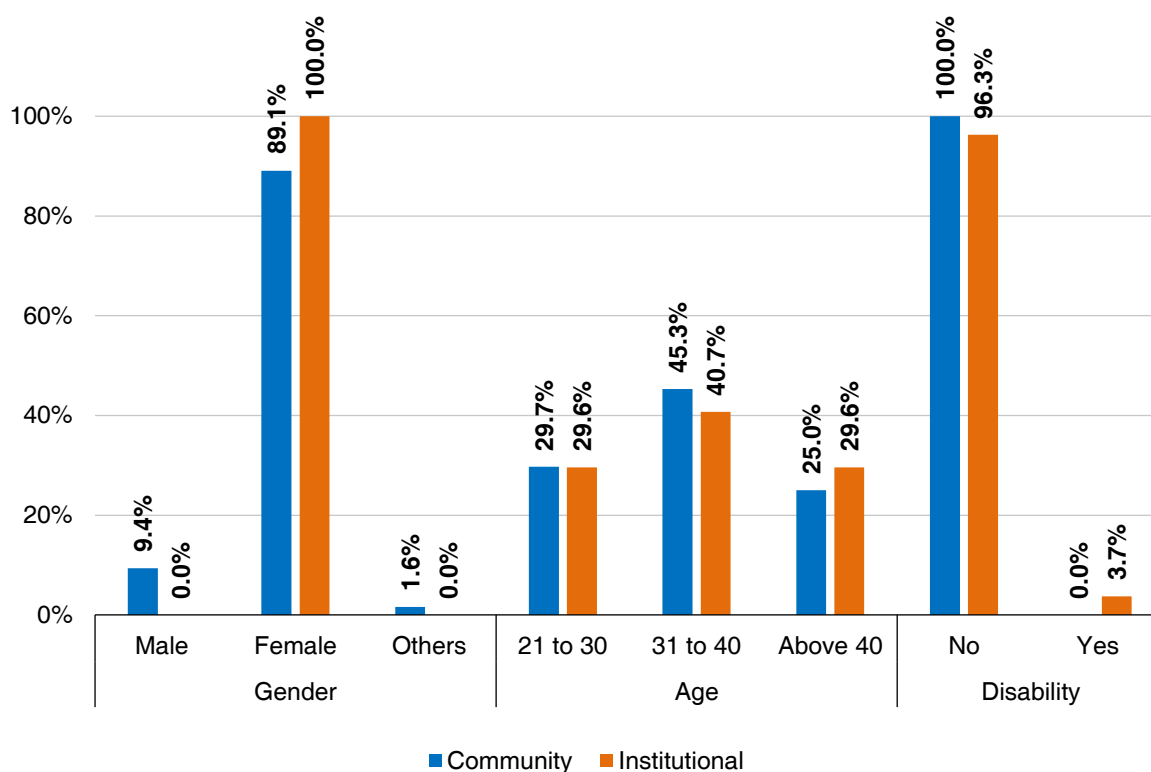
Figure 7

Distribution of ECED Teachers by Background Characteristics and Class Size



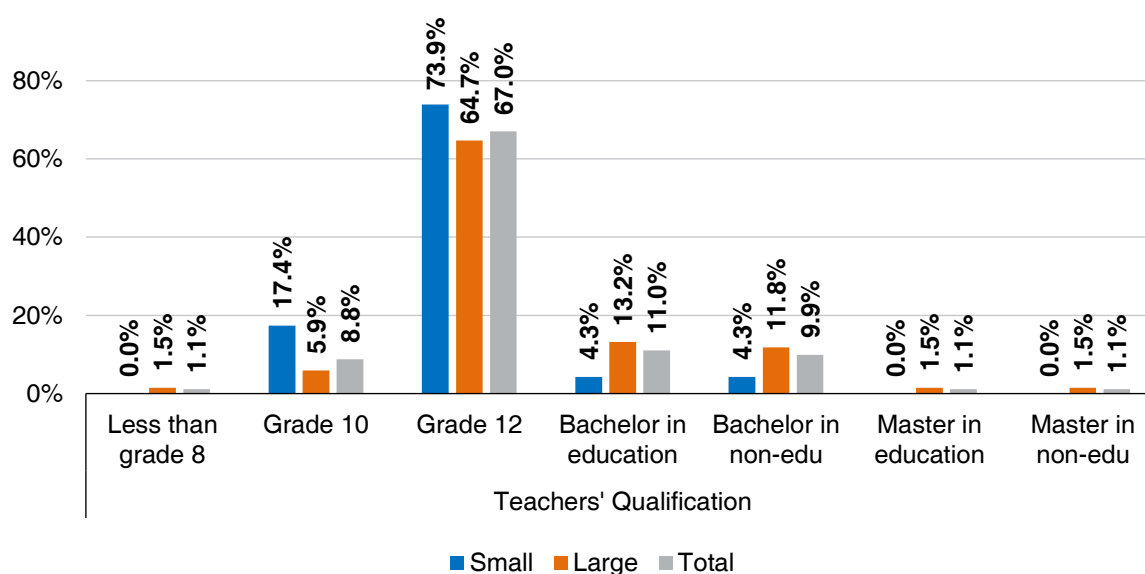
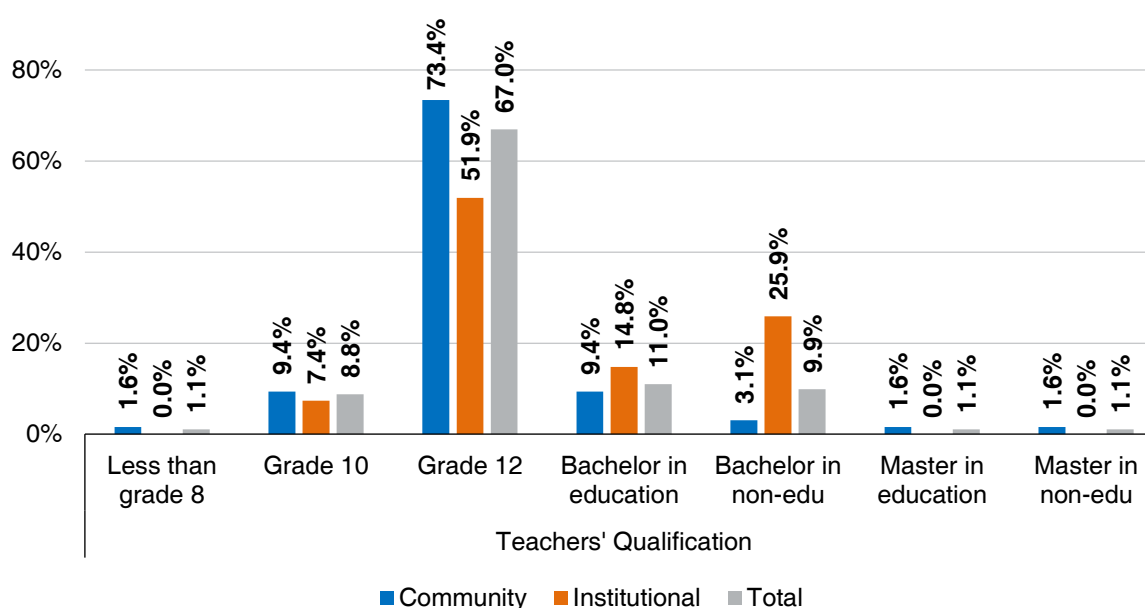
⁹ According to the Flash I Report 2081, 97.1% of government supported ECED teachers are female and remaining 2.9% are males.

¹⁰ Flash I Report 2080.

Figure 8*Distribution of ECED Teachers by Background Characteristics and School Type*

Qualifications: Teachers' educational qualifications vary considerably across school sizes. Overall, 67.0% hold a Grade 12 qualification, 11.0% have a bachelor's in education, and 9.9% have a bachelor's in non-education. Small classes have a higher proportion of teachers with a Grade 12 qualification (73.9% vs. 64.7% in large classes). In contrast, large classes employ a greater share of teachers with higher education qualifications, including bachelor's degrees (25% vs. 8.6% in small classes) and master's degrees (3% vs. none were reported in small classes) (Figures 9 and 10).

By school management type, three-quarters of teachers (73.4%) in community schools have a Grade 12 qualification, compared to about half (51.9%) in institutional schools. Institutional schools have a substantially higher proportion of teachers with bachelor's degrees (40.7%) than community schools (12.5%). In contrast, a slightly higher proportion of teachers with Grade 10 qualifications are employed in community schools than in institutional schools (9.4% vs. 8.8%) (Figures 9 and 10).

Figure 9*Distribution of ECED Teacher Qualifications by Class Size (Unweighted)***Figure 10***Distribution of ECED Teacher Qualifications by School Type (Unweighted)*

ECED Training: By school size, approximately two-thirds of ECED teachers in small classes (65.2%) and 57.4% in large classes received pre-service training related to ECED. In contrast, 60.9% of ECED teachers in small classes and 85.3% in large classes received in-service training. These findings indicate slightly higher coverage of pre-service training in smaller schools, but substantially higher coverage of in-service training in larger schools. However, training to address the needs of children with disabilities remained limited overall, with a slightly higher proportion of teachers in small classes (8.7%) receiving such training than in large classes (7.4%) (Figure 11).

By school management type, a similar proportion of ECED teachers in community schools (59.4%) and institutional schools (59.3%) had received pre-service training related to ECED. Likewise, a proportion of teachers in both community schools (79.7%) and institutional schools (77.8%) had received in-service training. However, training related to the management of disability remains limited overall, although the proportion of teachers receiving such training was somewhat higher in institutional schools (18.5%) than in community schools (Figure 12).

Overall, these findings suggest that while a moderate proportion of teachers have received ECED-specific training, pre-service qualifications in education and training on disability inclusion remain limited. This highlights the need for expanded professional development opportunities, particularly in inclusive education.

Figure 11

Distribution of ECED Teacher Training by Class Size (Unweighted)

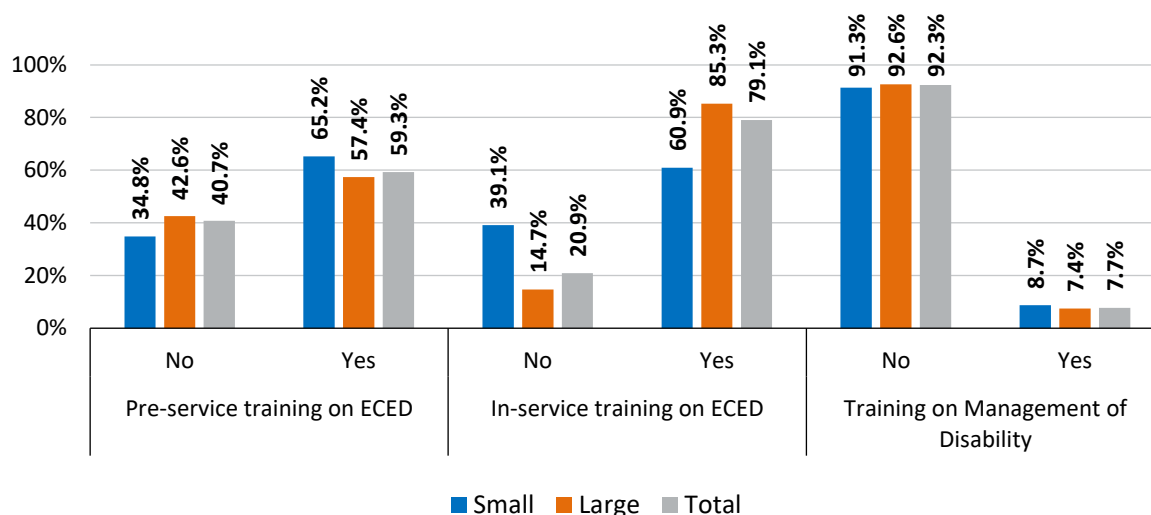
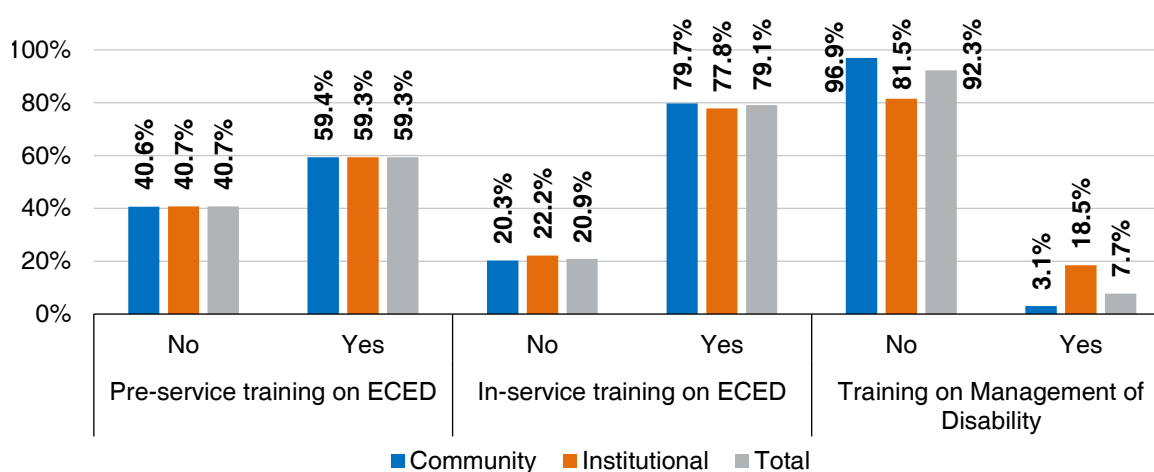


Figure 12

Distribution of ECED Teacher Training and School Type (Unweighted)



Note: See Annex Tables 3 and 4 for further details on other characteristics of ECED centres.

Duration of Training: Overall, teachers received an average of 21 days of pre-service training and 34 days of in-service training, with substantial variation by school management type and school size for both. The median duration of pre-service training was 7 days, while the median duration of in-service training was 16 days, again indicating considerable variation across school management types and school sizes. Details on the duration of both types of training are described below (Table 9).

Pre-Service Training: Teachers from community schools were more likely to have received shorter duration pre-service training, training before starting career as an ECED teacher and provided by private training centres or universities, with 42.1% receiving up to 5 days of training compared to 31.2% in institutional schools. In contrast, a substantially higher proportion of teachers from institutional schools (56.2%) had received more than 10 days of training than teachers from community schools (31.6%). Similarly, teachers from small classes were more likely to receive shorter-duration training (46.7% received up to 5 days and 33.3% received 6–10 days), whereas teachers from large classes were more likely to have received training lasting more than 10 days (46.2%) (Table 9).

In-Service Training: Teachers from community schools were more likely to have received up to 20 days of in-service training (37.3% received up to 10 days and 29.4% received 11–20 days), while a substantially higher proportion of teachers from institutional schools (38.1%) had received training lasting more than 30 days, compared to teachers from community schools (9.8%). A similar pattern was observed by school size, with teachers from large classes more likely to receive longer-duration training than those from small classes (Table 9).

Table 9

Duration of Pre-and In-Service Training

Training Type	Duration	Type		Size		Total
		Community	Institutional	Small	Large	
Pre-service training	Up to 5 days	42.1	31.2	46.7	35.9	38.9
	6-10 days	26.3	12.5	33.3	17.9	22.2
	Above 10 days	31.6	56.2	20.0	46.2	38.9
	Total	100	99.9	100	100	100
	Mean (Days)	10	50	7	27	21
	Median (Days)	7	15	7	7	7
	Mode (Days)	7	15	7	7	7
	N	38	16	15	39	54

Training Type	Duration	Type		Size		Total
		Community	Institutional	Small	Large	
In-service training	Up to 10 days	37.3	23.8	28.6	34.5	33.3
	11-20 days	29.4	14.3	42.9	20.7	25.0
	21-30 days	23.5	23.8	21.4	24.1	23.6
	Above 30 days	9.8	38.1	7.1	20.7	18.1
	Total	100	100	100	100	100
	Mean (Days)	17	75	17	38	34
	Median (Days)	15	29	15	19	16
	Mode (Days)	15	5	15	8	15
	N	51	21	14	58	72

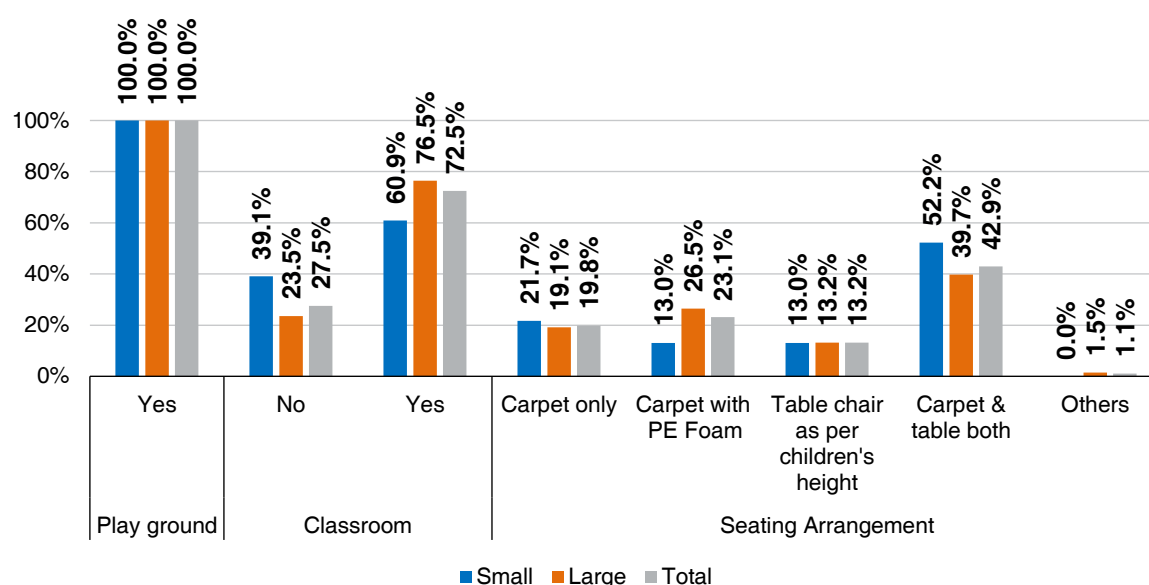
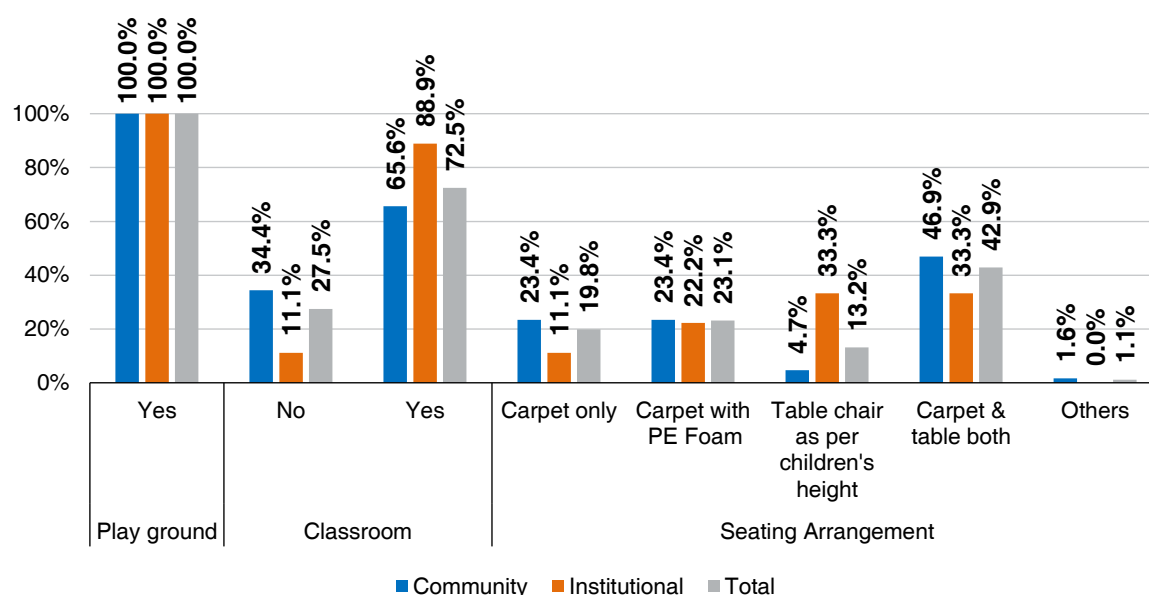
Classroom environment and resources

The sampled schools exhibit notable differences between small and large classes across key characteristics, reflecting variations in resources, infrastructure, and pedagogical readiness for early-grade learning.

Playground and Seating Arrangement: Infrastructure disparities are evident across school sizes. Although all schools reported having playgrounds (100%), dedicated classrooms are significantly more common in large classes (76.5%) than in small classes (60.9%). In terms of seating arrangements, better facilities are more prevalent in larger schools. For instance, carpet-with-PE-foam or table-chair arrangements are more common in large classes (26.5% and 13.2%, respectively) compared to small classes (13.0% each). In contrast, carpet-only seating arrangements are more common in small classes (21.7%) (Figure 13).

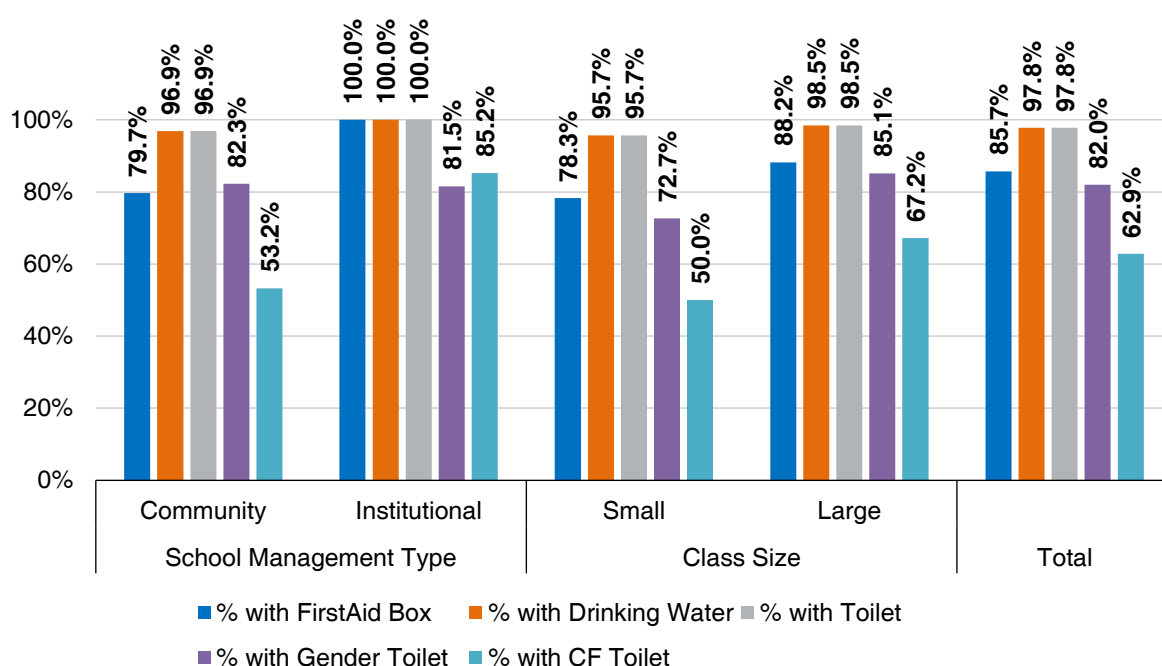
By school management type, infrastructure disparities are also pronounced. Dedicated classrooms are significantly more common in institutional schools (88.9%) than in community schools (65.6%). Similarly, improved seating arrangements are more observed in institutional schools, where carpet-with-PE-foam or table-chair setups account for 22.2% and 33.3%, respectively, compared to 23.4% and 4.7% in community schools. Carpet-only seating arrangements remain more common in community schools (23.4%) (Figure 14).

Overall, these findings indicate that institutional and larger schools tend to have better classroom infrastructure and seating arrangements. This suggests potential inequalities in the learning environment between community and institutional schools.

Table 13*Distribution of Sampled Schools by Infrastructure (Unweighted)***Table 14***Distribution of Schools Infrastructures, by School Type (Unweighted)*

Basic Facilities: Basic facilities are strong with drinking water available in 95.7% of small and 98.5% of large classes, and first aid boxes are present in 78.3% of small and 88.2% of large classes.

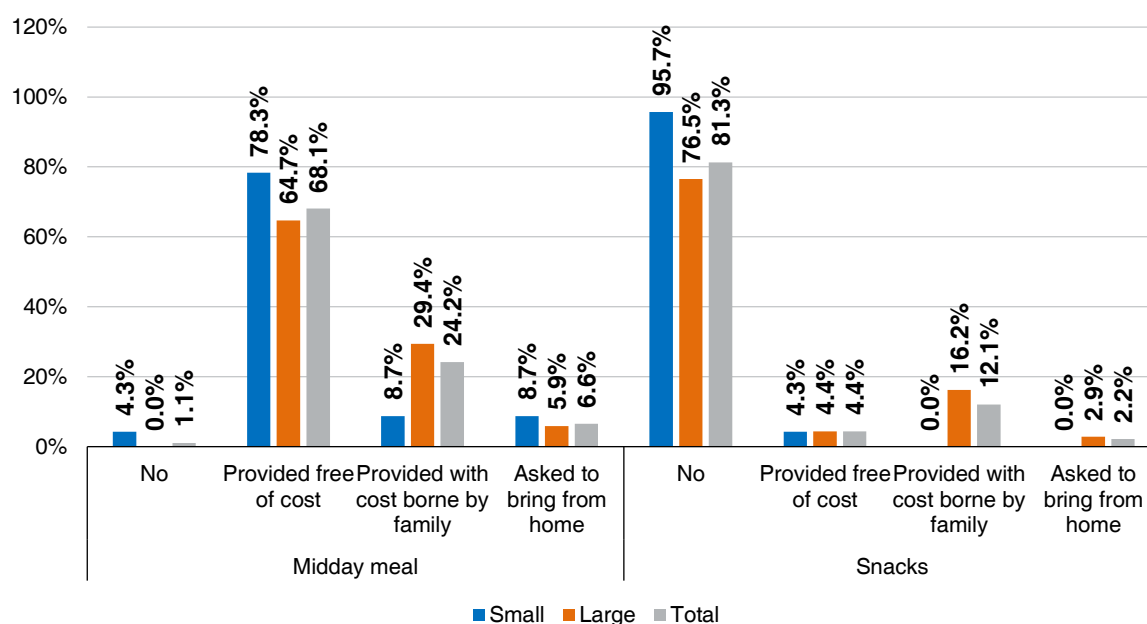
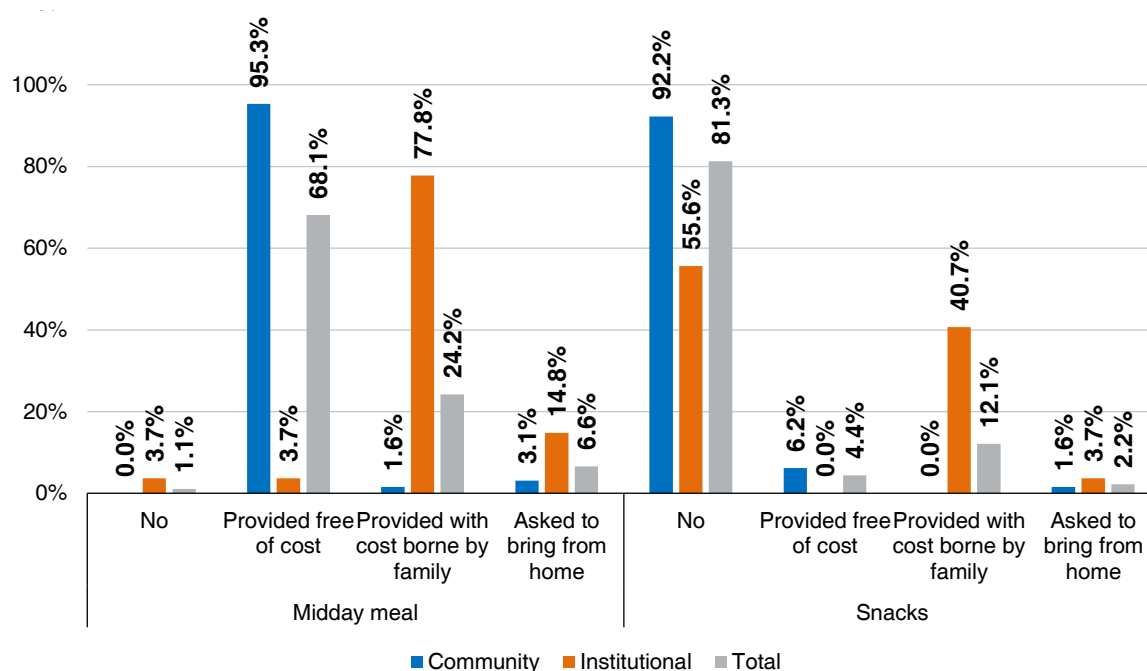
Toilet facilities are nearly universal across both types (95.7% in small classes vs. 98.5% in large). Gender-segregated toilets are more common in large classes (85.1% vs. 72.7% in small), as are child-friendly (CF) toilets (67.2% vs. 50.0%). This suggests larger schools are better equipped to meet child-centered sanitation standards, likely due to greater resources or compliance with government guidelines (Figure 15).

Table 15*Availability of Infrastructures by Class Size and School Type (Unweighted)*

Mid-day Meal: According to the home grown based nutritious midday meal framework (2081BS), there is a need to promote and strengthen the practice of providing homegrown food for school midday meal programs (MoEST 2024). The provision of midday meals is widespread across all schools, with 95.7% of small classes and all large classes (100%) offering some form of meal. Overall, more than two-thirds of schools provide meals free of charge, with a slightly higher proportion among small classes (78.3%) than among large classes (64.7%). About one-quarter of schools provide meals with the cost borne by families, a practice that is considerably more common in large classes (29.4%) than in small classes (8.7%). The majority of schools (81.3%) do not provide meals beyond the midday meal. However, a notable proportion of large classes (16.2%) provide additional snacks, although these are mostly financed by families (Figures 16 and 17).

By school management type, a vast majority of community schools (95.3%) provide midday meals free of cost, compared to only 3.7% of institutional schools. In contrast, three-quarters of institutional schools (77.8%) provide midday meals with the cost borne by families, followed by 14.8% of schools where children are required to bring meals from home (Figures 16 and 17).

Overall, these findings highlight significant differences in meal provision practices between community and institutional schools. While community schools largely ensure free meal provision, institutional schools rely more on family contributions.

Table 16*Distribution of Schools by Provision of Services, by Class Size (Unweighted)***Table 17***Distribution of Sampled Schools by Provision of Services (Unweighted)*

Workbooks/Exercise Books: Although the ECED curriculum emphasizes play-based and child-centered pedagogy, there is widespread use of workbook and/or exercise books (81.2% overall). There is notable variation by school size, with a considerably higher proportion of small classes providing either 'all-in-one' or other types of workbooks or exercise books than large classes.

By school management type, all institutional schools provide workbooks and/or exercise books, compared to only 72% of community schools. A more similar proportion of community and institutional schools provide “all-in-one” exercise books (62.5% vs. 66.7%). However, a substantially higher proportion of institutional schools (33.3%) provide other types of workbook or exercise books.

Learning Areas: Dedicated learning areas are present in 56.5% of small classes, compared to 45.6% of large classes. Among small classes, the highest proportion reported having three to four learning areas, whereas large classes most commonly reported four learning areas, followed by six. The mean number of learning areas was similar across school sizes, at 4.15 in small classes and 4.19 in large classes; however, the detailed data are not presented here.

By school management type, over half of institutional schools (55.6%) reported the presence of learning areas, compared to 45.3% of community schools. The distribution of schools varies considerably by the number of learning areas in both community and institutional schools. The mean number of learning areas was 4.44 in community schools and 3.66 in institutional schools (data table not shown) (Figures 18 and 19).

Overall, these findings suggest moderate availability of learning areas across schools, with some variation by school size and management type.

Table 18

Distribution of Schools by Availability of Learning Areas and Class Size

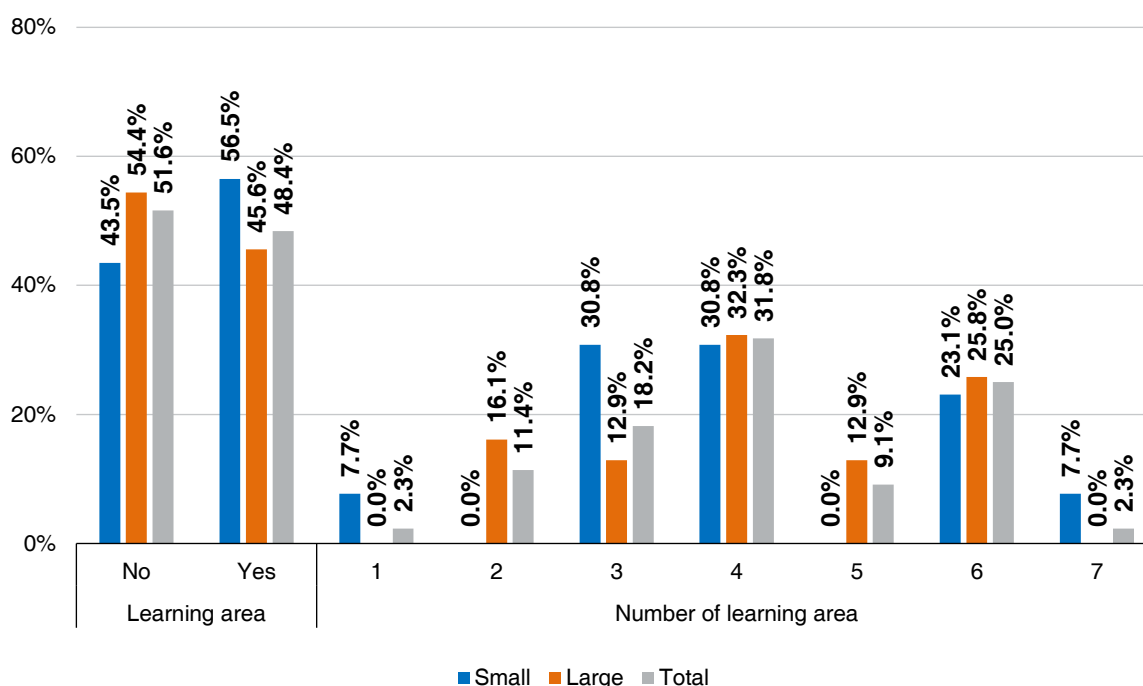
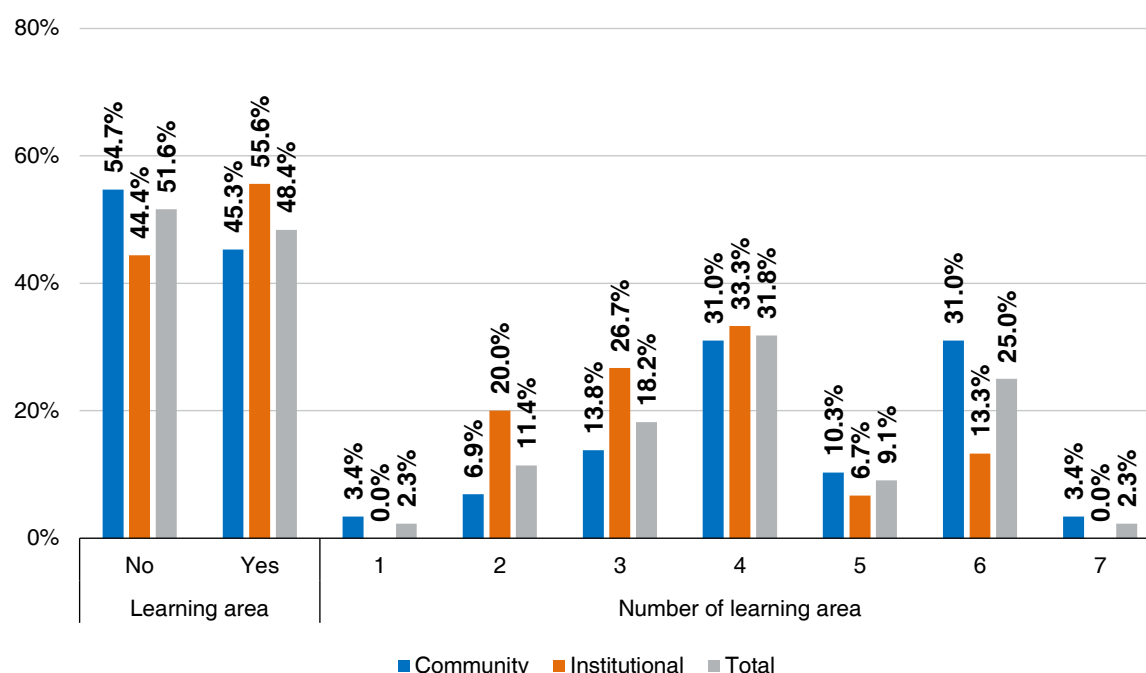
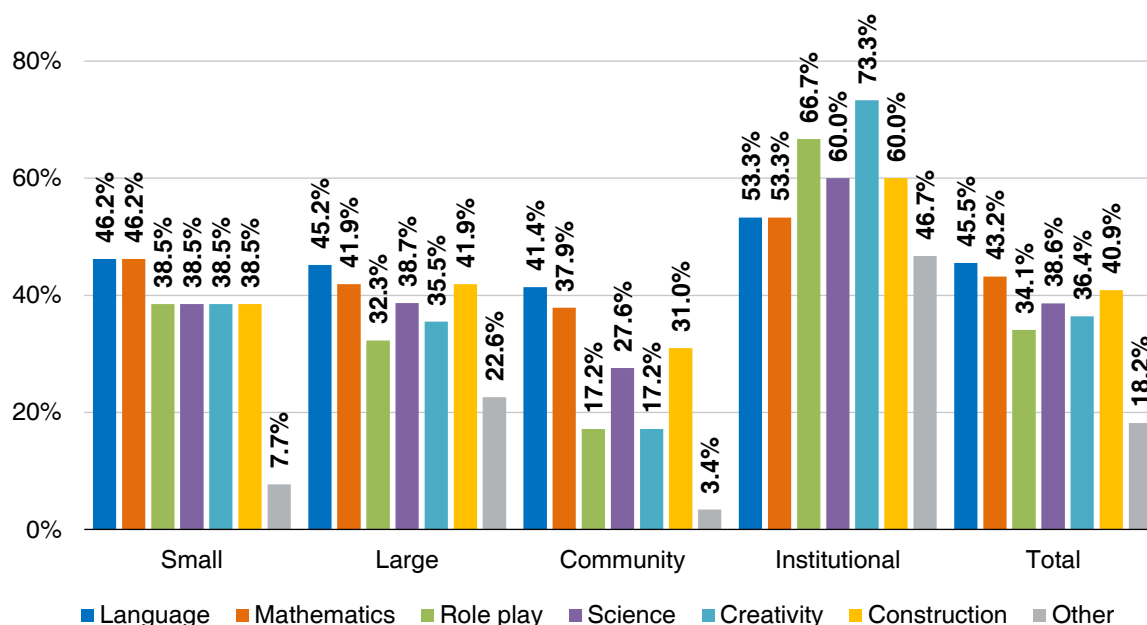


Table 19*Distribution of Schools by Availability of Learning Areas and School Type*

Learning Materials: Among schools with dedicated learning areas, the availability of learning materials varies substantially across different areas. On average, between one-third of schools (34.1% in role-play areas) and nearly half (45.5% in language areas) reported having adequate learning materials for all children. A considerably higher proportion of institutional schools reported having sufficient learning materials across all learning areas than community schools.

By Class Size, the pattern is mixed; however, in general, a higher proportion of large classes reported having adequate learning materials for all children compared to small classes. An exception is observed in the language and numeracy areas, where a relatively higher proportion of small-class schools reported having sufficient learning materials (Figure 20 and Annex Table 3).

Overall, the findings suggest disparities in the adequacy of learning materials across school types and sizes. Such differences may influence children's opportunities for active engagement and play-based learning, which could in turn contribute to variations in school readiness scores.

Table 20*Learning Materials with Learning Areas by Class Size and School Type*

ECED Curriculum: The use of curriculum in ECED classes is moderately high in Bagmati province, with 69.6% of small classes and 64.7% of large classes reporting its use during the academic year 2081. By school management type, curriculum use is somewhat higher in institutional schools (77.8%) than in community schools (60.9%).

Among the schools that reported using a curriculum, nearly all indicated that they were using the ECED Curriculum 2077. This was reported by all small classes (100%) and by 90.9% of large classes. Similarly, a large majority of both community schools (94.9%) and institutional schools (90.5%) reported using the ECED Curriculum 2077 (Figure 21 and Annex Table 4).

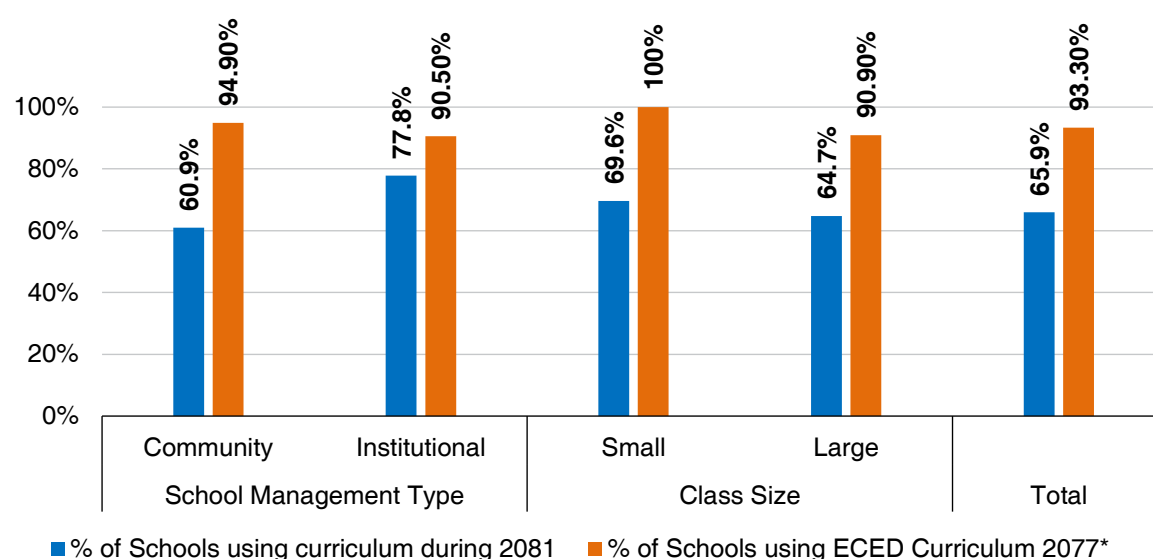
The curriculum is primarily used to achieve learning objectives for children, as reported by 70% of schools, followed by its use for both classroom learning activities and achieving learning objectives (26.7%). By management type, a substantially higher proportion of community schools reported using the curriculum mainly to achieve learning objectives for children (85%) compared to institutional schools (42.9%). More than half of institutional schools (57.1%) reported using the ECD curriculum for both classroom learning activities and to achieve learning objectives, compared with only 10.3% of community schools.

By school size, four-fifths of small classes (81.2%) reported using the curriculum primarily to achieve learning objectives for children, compared to two-thirds of large classes (65.9%). Over a quarter of large classes (29.5%) reported using the curriculum for both classroom learning activities and to achieve learning objectives, compared with 18.8% of small classes (Figure 22 and Annex Table 3).

These findings indicate a relatively high level of alignment with Nepal's National ECED policy, which promotes the use of the standardized 2077 ECED curriculum. However, the fact that a notable proportion of schools still do not use the curriculum may have implications for the consistency and quality of early learning experiences, which, in turn, could affect children's learning achievement and developmental outcomes.

Figure 21

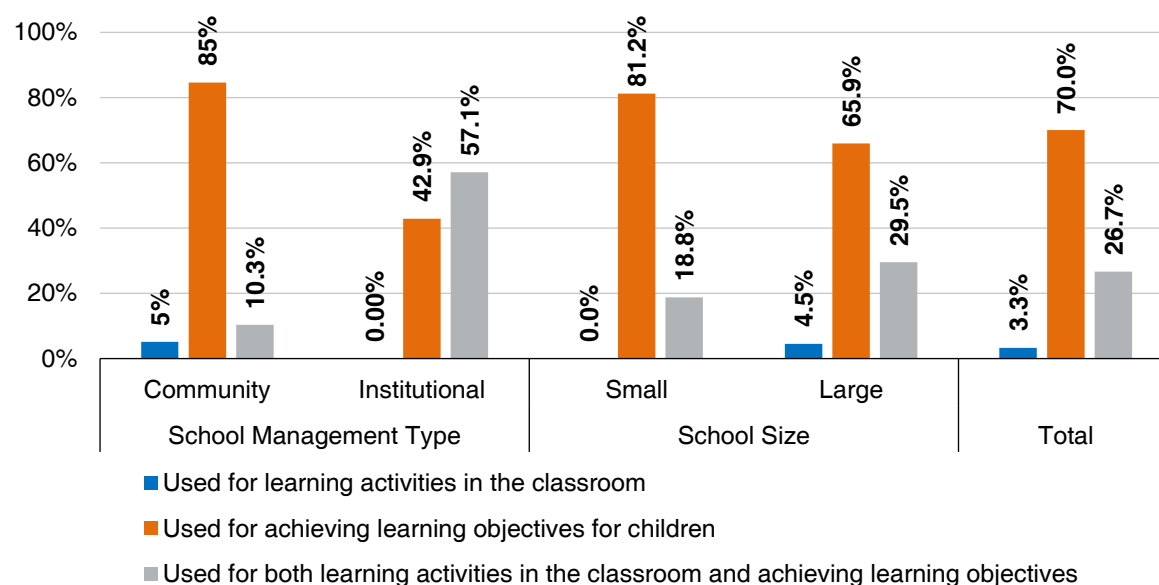
Sampled Schools by Use of ECED Curriculum, by Class Size and School Type



Note: *The denominator for this indicator (% of schools using the ECED Curriculum 2077) is the number of schools that reported using a curriculum during the academic year 2081.

Figure 22

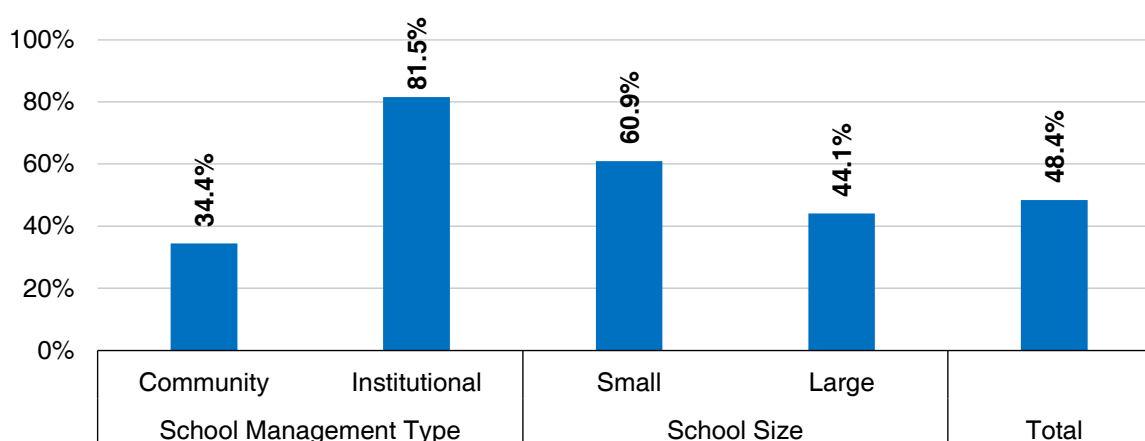
Purpose of Use of ECED Curriculum by School Type and Size



Availability and Use of ELDS Document: Less than half of the schools (48.4%) reported the availability of the ELDS document in their schools. This varies substantially by management type; while 81.5% of institutional schools reported its availability, it was available in only about one-third (34.4%) of community schools. By school size, 60.9% of small schools reported the availability of the ELDS document, compared to 44.1% of large classes (Figure 23).

Figure 23

Availability of ELDS Document by School Type and Size



Among the schools that reported having the ELDS Document, they were also asked about its purpose. Overall, 40.5% of schools reported using it to measure children's learning outcomes for reporting to parents, 28.6% used it for planning classroom learning activities, and 31% used it for both purposes. These patterns vary by school management type and size (Figure 24).

By management type, half of community schools (50%) reported using the ELDS document for planning learning activities in the classroom, compared to about one-third (35%) who used it for measuring children's learning outcomes to report to parents, while the remaining 15% used it for both purposes. Among institutional schools, equal proportions (45.5% each) reported using it for measuring learning outcomes and for both purposes, while only 9.1% reported using it primarily for planning classroom activities (Figure 24).

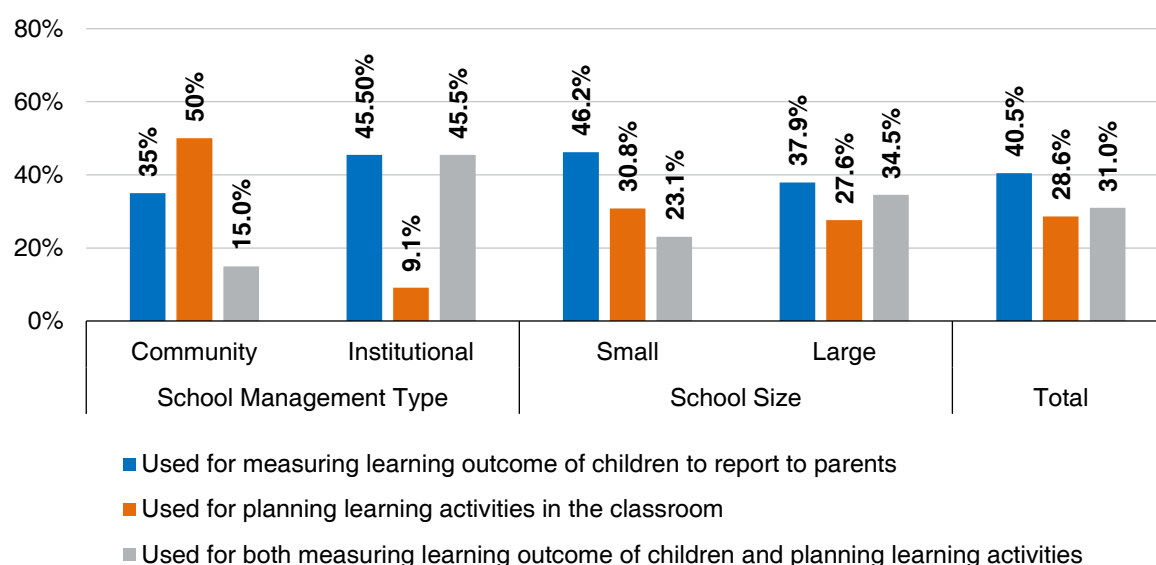
By school size, 46.2% of small classes and 37.9% of large classes reported using the ELDS document to measure children's learning outcomes, while 30.8% of small classes and 27.6% of large classes used it for planning learning activities in the classroom. Additionally, 23.1% of small classes and 34.5% of large classes reported using it for both purposes (Figure 24).

Overall, the findings indicate that the availability and effective use of the ELDS document remains uneven across schools, particularly between community and institutional schools. From a policy and programmatic perspective, this highlights the need to ensure the wider distribution of ELDS materials and to strengthen teachers' capacity to use them to plan

developmentally appropriate learning activities and to monitor children's developmental progress. However, the substantial difference in the proportion of schools reporting that the ELDS document is available by school management type warrants further investigation. Future research should incorporate additional probing questions in the survey tool, along with verification through enumerator-led direct observation, to validate reported availability and use of the document.

Figure 24

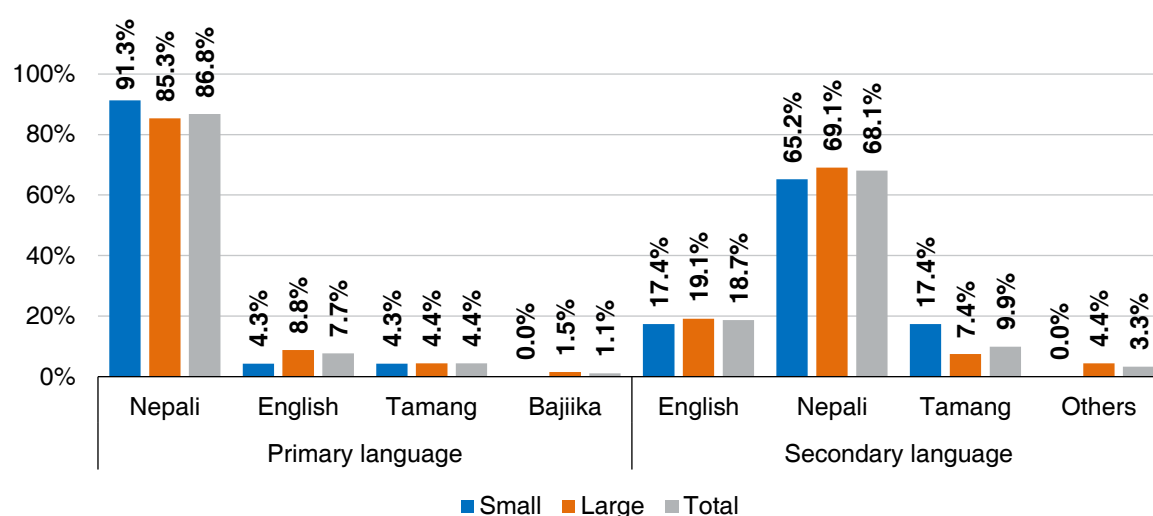
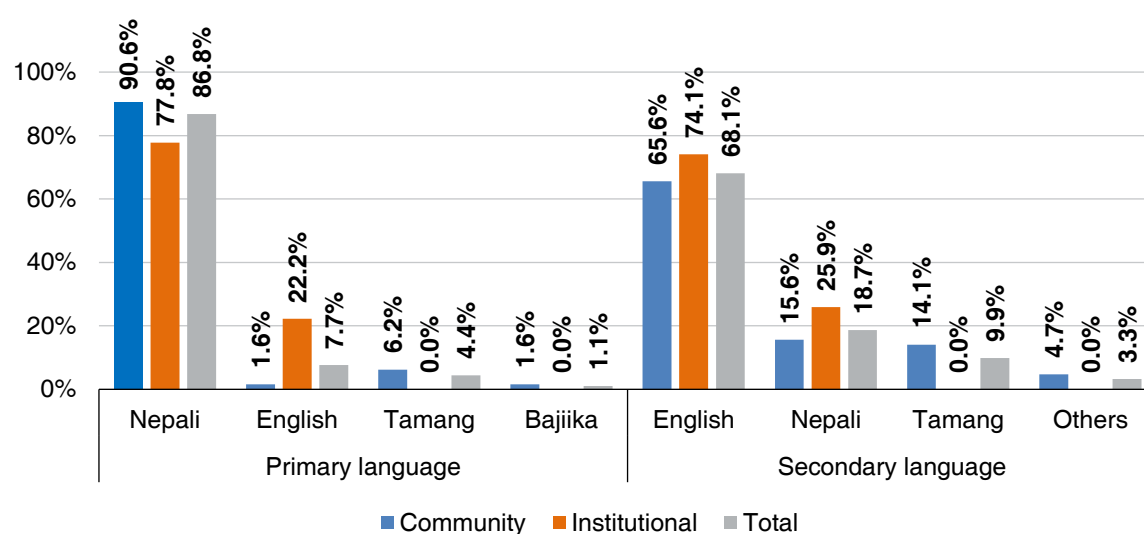
Purpose of Use of ELDS Document by School Type and Size



Language of Instructions: The language of instruction shows that Nepali predominates as the primary language in both school types, accounting for 91.3% in small classes and 85.3% in large classes. English is used as the primary language in a smaller proportion of schools, though it is slightly more common in large classes (8.8%) than in small classes (4.3%). Nepali is also the most common second language of instruction (65.2% in small vs. 69.1% in large classes), followed by English (17.4% in small classes vs. 19.1% in large classes), suggesting a modest shift toward bilingual learning environments in larger schools (Figure 25).

By school management type, Nepali remains the primary language of instruction in both community and institutional schools, with a significantly higher prevalence in community schools (90.6%) than in institutional schools (77.8%). Notably, around three-quarters of institutional schools (74.1%) reported English as a secondary language of instruction, compared to about two-thirds of community schools (65.6%). Tamang is also used as a secondary language in about 14% of community schools (Figure 26).

Overall, these findings highlight the continued dominance of Nepali as the medium of instruction and the presence of bilingual learning environments in some schools. Nepal's education policy and ECED/primary education guidelines encourage the use of children's mother tongue or local languages as a medium of instruction in early grades, alongside Nepali, to support inclusive and effective learning (NPC, 2020; MoEST 2022). In this context, the use of bilingual approaches and local languages can enhance children's comprehension, participation, and early learning outcomes, thereby positively influencing learning achievement and school readiness.

Figure 25*Language of Instruction by Class Size***Figure 26***Language of Instruction by School Type*

Headteachers and SMC Training: Only about one-third of schools (36.3%) reported that headteachers had received training on ECD/ECED, with a slightly higher proportion in small classes (43.5%) than in large classes (33.8%). By school management type, about a quarter of community schools (23.4%) reported that their headteachers had received ECD/ECED training, compared to over two-thirds of institutional schools (66.7%).

Regarding training for School Management Committee (SMC) members on ECD/ECED, only about a quarter of schools (23.1%) reported having trained members, with a somewhat higher proportion in large classes (25.0%) than in small classes (17.4%) (Figure 27). By school management type, 15.6% of community schools reported that SMC members had received ECD/ECED training compared to 40.7% of institutional schools (Figure 28).

Overall, the limited training coverage among headteachers and SMC members suggests gaps in leadership and governance support for ECED programmes. Strengthening their capacity could improve oversight, resource allocation, and pedagogical support, which are critical for enhancing the quality of teaching and ultimately improving children's learning achievement.

Figure 27

Headteacher and SMC Members Training on ECD/ECED by Class Size

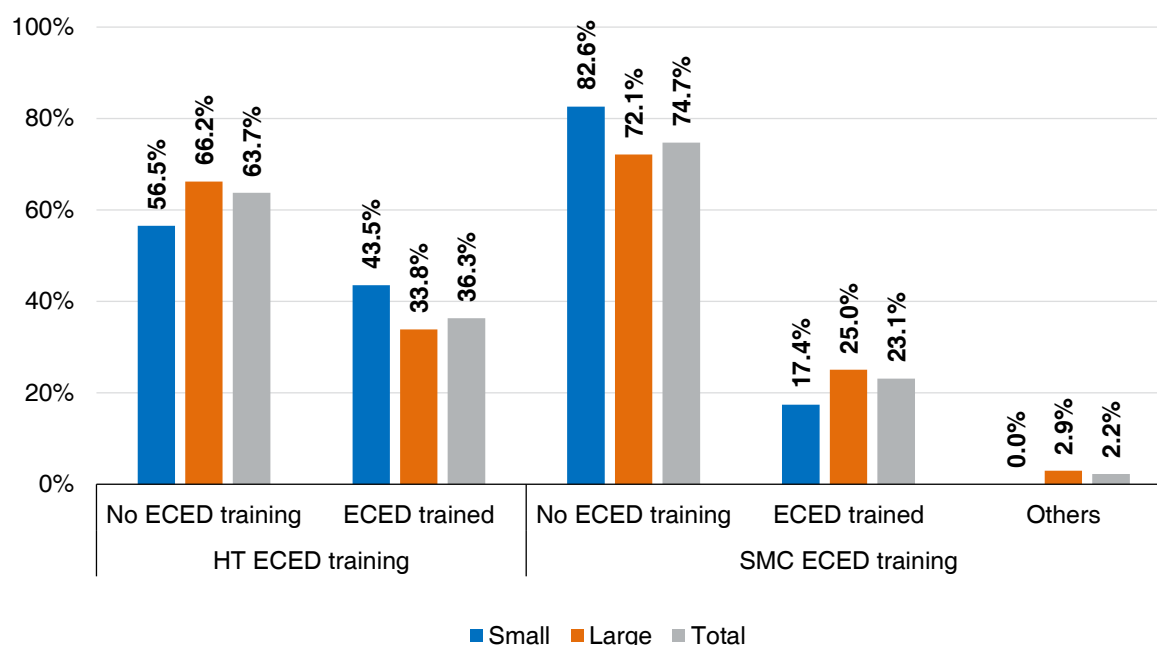
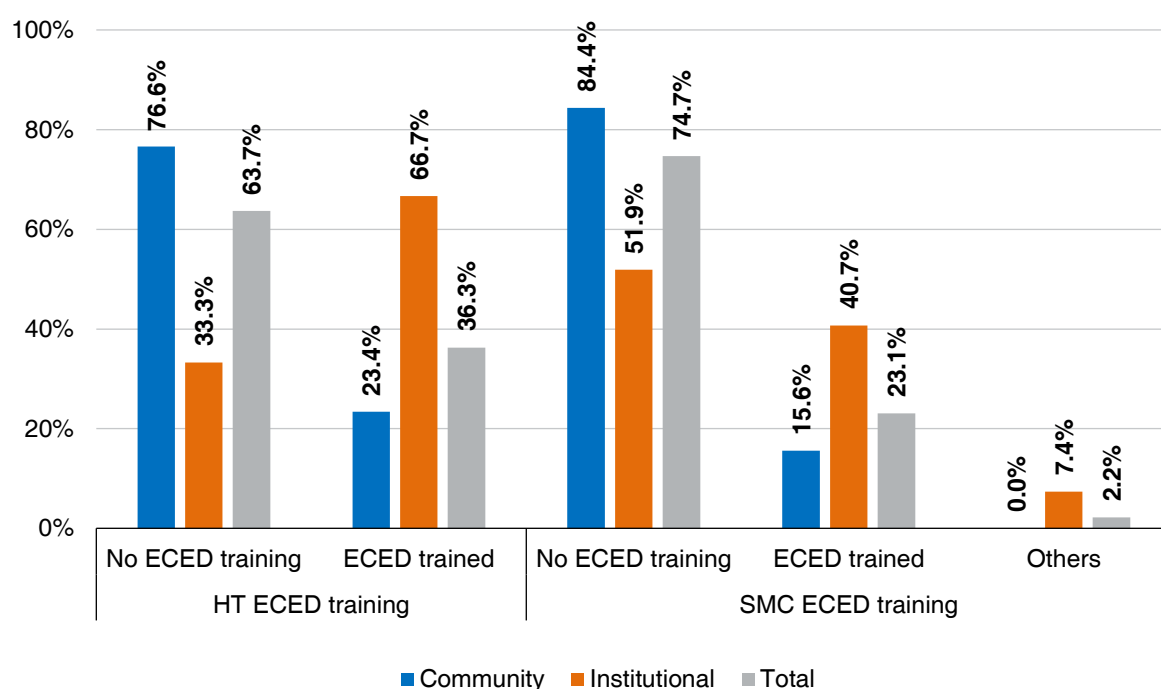
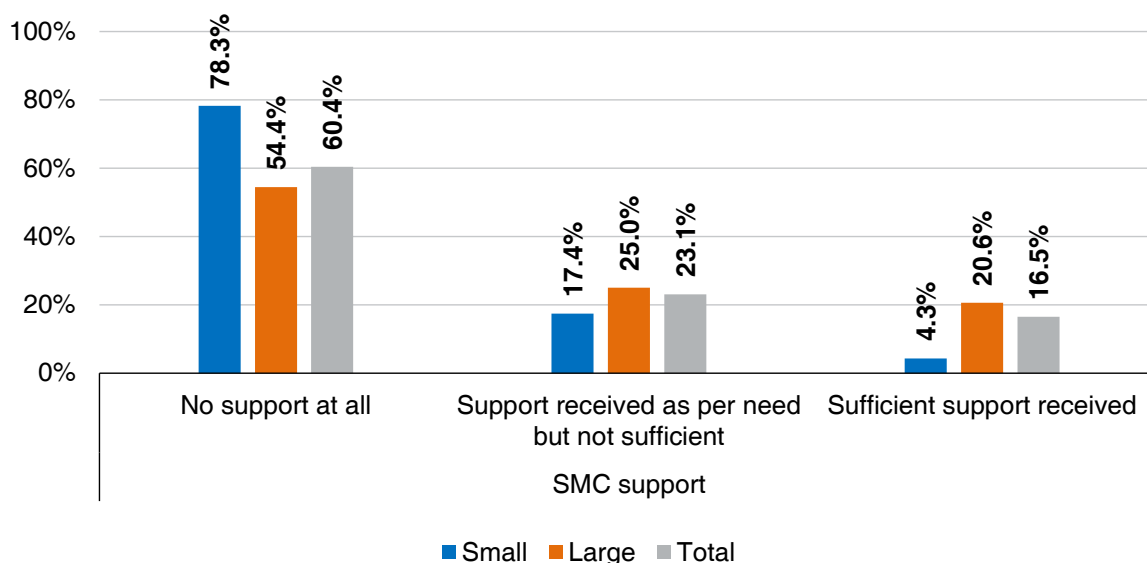
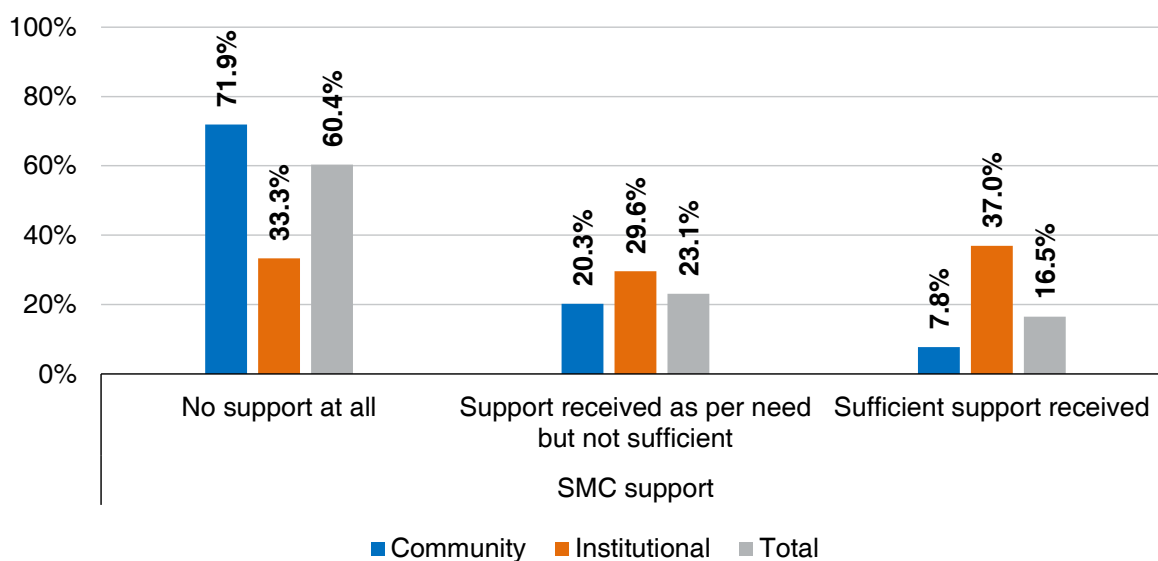


Figure 28*Headteacher and SMC Members Training on ECD/ECED by School Type*

SMC Support for ECED: Data reveal substantial variation in school governance and community support between small and large classes and between community and institutional schools. Overall, SMC support remains limited, particularly in small classes, where over three-quarters of schools (78.3%) reported receiving no support at all, compared to slightly over half of large classes (54.4%). Only about one-fifth of large classes (20.6%) reported receiving sufficient support from SMC members, a proportion that was even lower among small classes (4.3%) (Figure 29).

By school management type, about three-quarters of community schools reported no support at all (71.9%), compared to only one-third of institutional schools (33.3%). Over one-third of institutional schools (37%) reported receiving sufficient support, compared to only 7.8% of community schools (Figure 30).

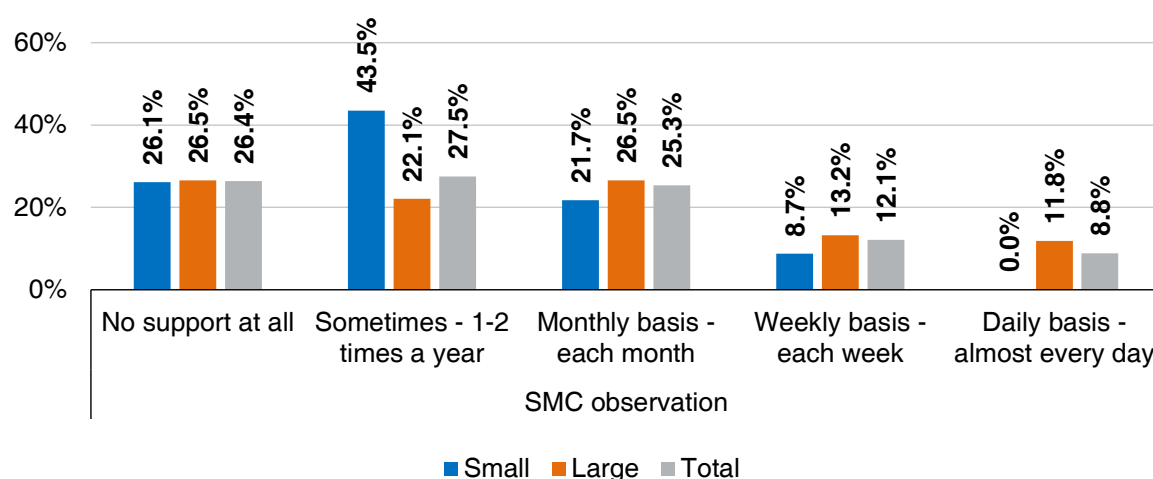
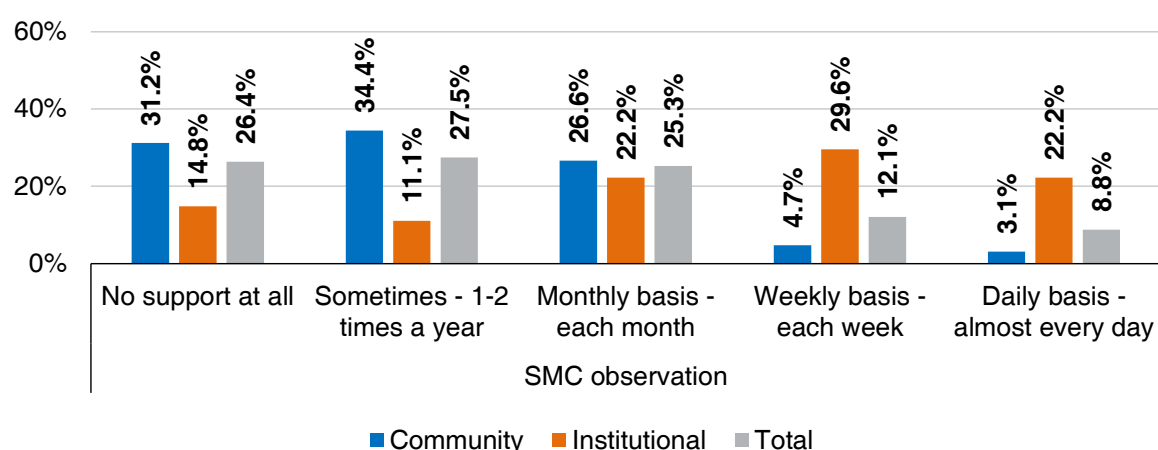
These findings suggest weak engagement of SMCs in supporting ECED, particularly in community and smaller schools. Limited governance and oversight may undermine the quality of ECED service delivery, including resource allocation, monitoring of teaching practices, and support for early learning, ultimately affecting children's learning outcomes and school readiness.

Figure 29*SMC Support by Class Size***Figure 30***SMC Support by School Type*

SMC Observation: Data indicates substantial variation in SMC members' observation of ECED activities across schools. Overall, more than one-quarter of schools reported no observations by SMC members at all. About one-fifth of small classes (21.7%) and slightly over one-quarter of large classes (26.5%) reported monthly observation by SMC members. Weekly observation was reported by 13.2% of large classes and 8.7% of small classes, while daily observation by SMC was reported only by large classes (11.8%) (Figure 31).

By school management type, about one-third of community schools (31.2%) reported no observation by SMC members, compared to only 14.8% of institutional schools. Slightly over one-quarter of community schools (26.6%) and about one-fifth of institutional schools (22.2%) reported monthly observation by SMC members. In contrast, nearly one-third of institutional schools (29.6%) reported weekly observation by SMC members, compared to only 4.7% among community schools. Daily observation by SMC members was reported largely by institutional schools (22.2%), whereas it was negligible in community schools (3.1%) (Figure 32).

These findings suggest uneven engagement of SMCs in monitoring ECED activities, particularly in community schools. Limited observation and oversight may weaken school governance and accountability, thereby affecting the quality of classroom practices and the overall learning environment.

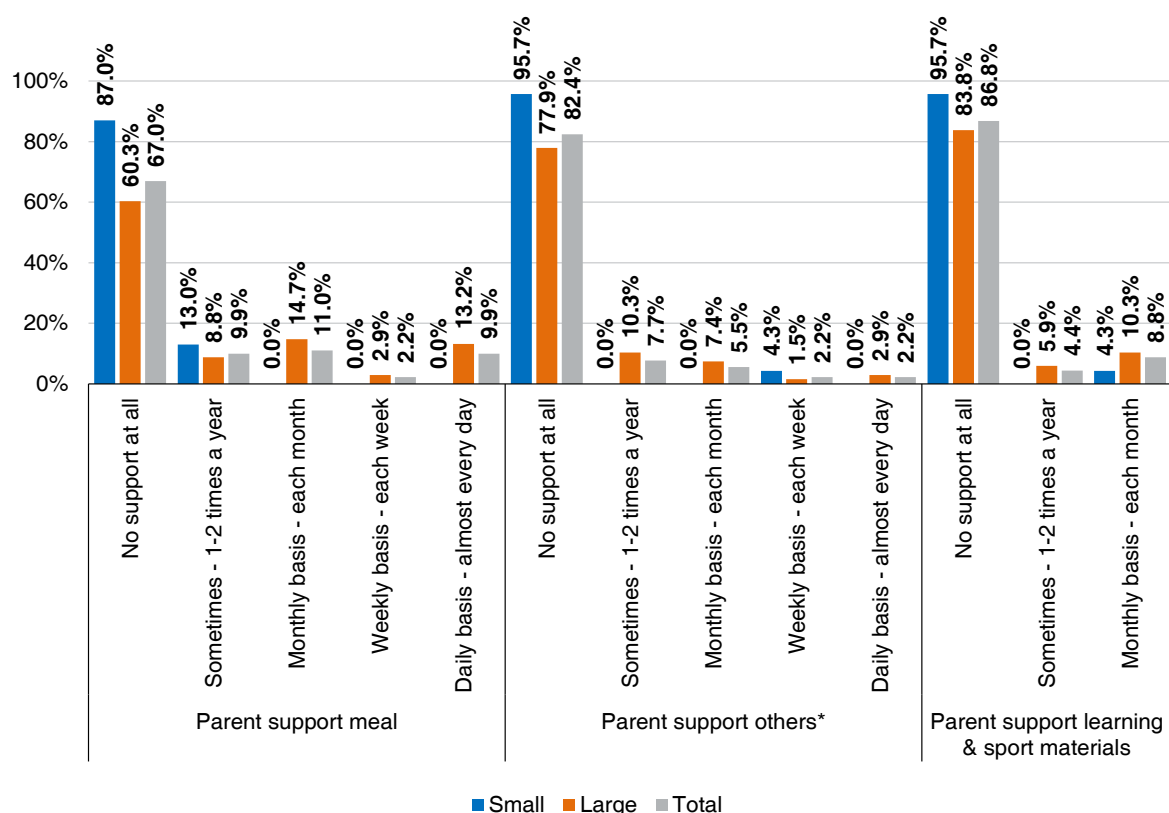
Figure 31*SMC Observation by Class Size***Figure 32***SMC Observation by School Type*

Parents' Contribution: Parental contributions were generally low across both large and small classes, particularly for meals, sports, and other activities, with over 80% of schools reporting no support in most categories. By school management type, while the majority of community schools reported no parental support across all categories, institutional schools reported relatively higher levels of parental contributions in several areas (Figures 33 and 34).

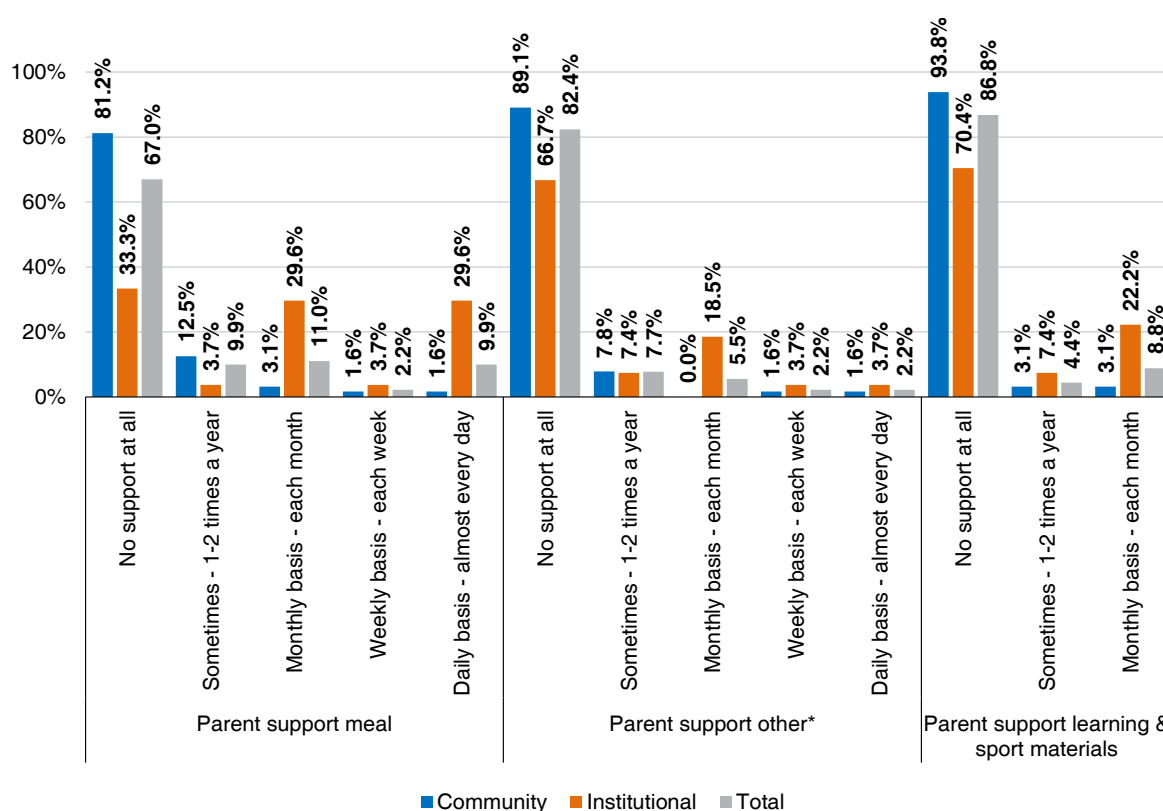
These findings indicate limited parental engagement in supporting school activities, particularly in community schools. Low levels of parental involvement may constrain the availability of learning resources and enrichment opportunities for children, as well as the accountability of teachers and school authorities, thereby impacting the overall quality of education.

Figure 33

Parent Support by Class Size in Bagmati Province



Note: * Other supports include storytelling, sharing of local knowledge & skills etc.

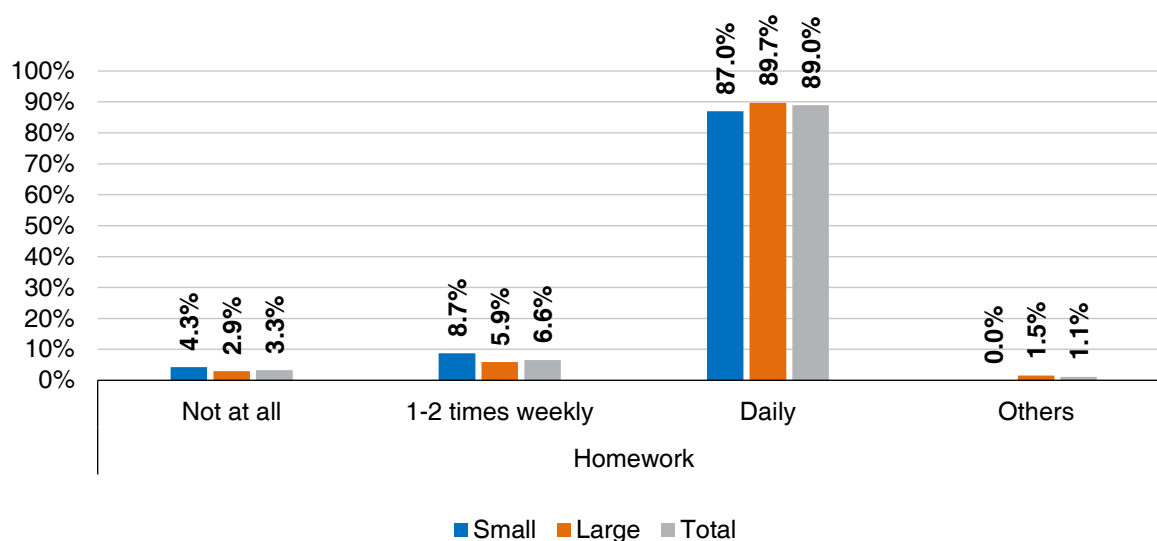
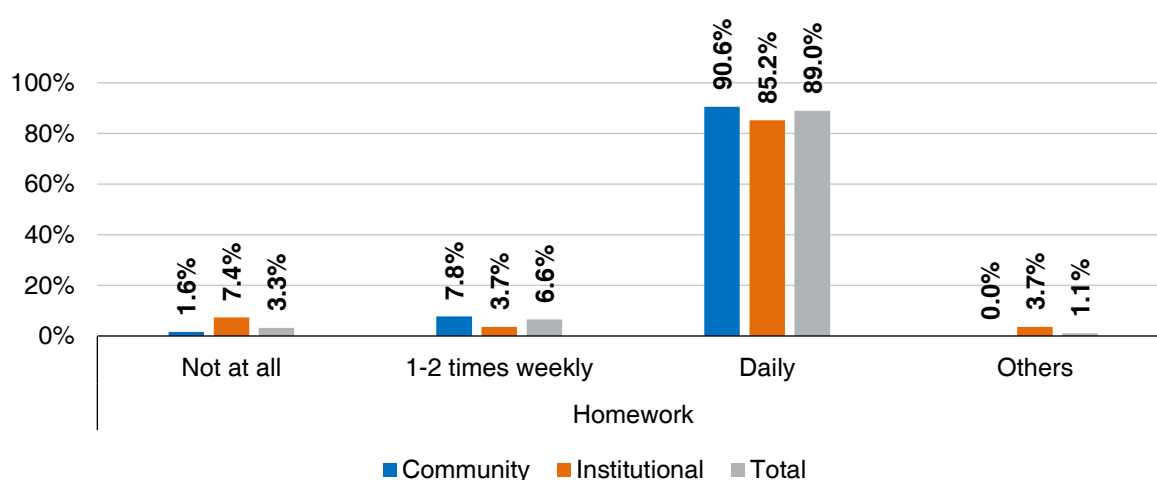
Figure 34*Parent Support by School Type*

Note: * Other supports include storytelling, sharing of local knowledge & skills etc.

Homework: Aligned with the national findings, data on homework practices and frequency shows that overwhelmingly high proportions of schools (97%) assign homework to ECED students, with minimal differences by school size. The practice of assigning homework on a daily basis is also very common (89%), again with only minor differences between small and large classes.

By school management type, the practice of assigning homework to ECED students is slightly more prevalent in community schools than in institutional schools. A majority of schools in both categories reported assigning homework daily, with 90.6% of community schools and 85.2% of institutional schools doing so (Figures 35 and 36).

However, the high prevalence of homework in ECED classes raises concerns about alignment with national ECED policy and developmentally appropriate practices, which emphasize play-based learning over formal academic tasks for young children. Excessive or frequent homework at this stage may place unnecessary pressure on children and families and may not contribute effectively to early learning. Instead, focusing on interactive, play-based classroom activities is more likely to support children's holistic development and improve the quality of early learning experiences.

Figure 35*Frequency of Homework by Class Size***Figure 36***Frequency of Homework by School Management Type*

Overall, the findings suggest notable differences in readiness-related conditions between small and large classes. Large classes demonstrate marginal advantages in material sufficiency, gender-segregated and child-friendly facilities, free meal provision, and supplementary support, reflecting stronger institutional capacity. Small classes, while comparable in terms of access to basic toilets and showing some strengths in training and learning-area arrangements, rely more heavily on family contributions and tend to operate with more limited resources. Across both school types, however, significant gaps remain in the availability of age-appropriate learning resources and dedicated ECED materials, which may constrain the quality of early-grade learning environments.

Notable differences in readiness-related conditions exist between community and institutional schools. Community schools often provide free midday meals, whereas institutional schools do not. Besides this, institutional schools are advantaged in terms of material sufficiency, gender-disaggregated and child-friendly facilities, and supplementary support.

These disparities have important implications for children's school readiness and early learning achievements. Inadequate learning materials, limited institutional support, and uneven access to child-friendly facilities may reduce opportunities for play-based learning, interaction, and cognitive stimulation that are critical for early development. From a policy and programmatic perspective, the findings highlight the need for targeted investments, particularly in resource-constrained schools, to ensure equitable access to quality ECED services. Strengthening the provision of developmentally appropriate learning materials, improving child-friendly infrastructure, and reinforcing support systems for teachers and schools will be essential to enhance children's readiness for Grade 1 and improve early learning outcomes across Nepal.



Chapter 5

CHILDREN'S SCHOOL READINESS STATUS

5.1 Overall School Readiness

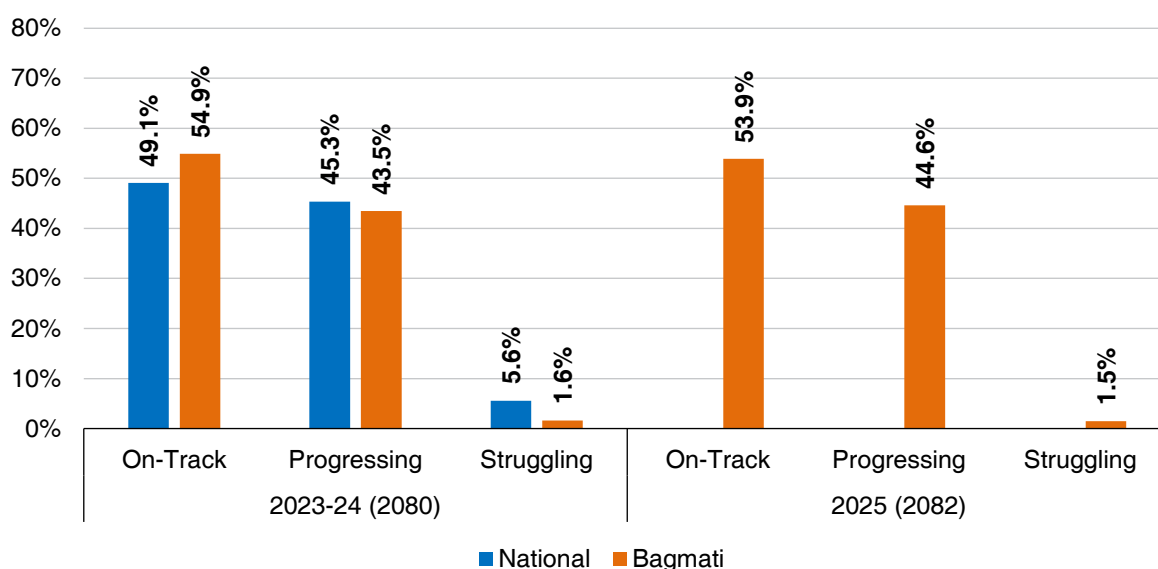
The assessment shows that the composite score, which aggregates domains, places slightly over half of children (53.6%) on track, while 44.6% are progressing, and 1.5% are struggling in Bagmati Province (Figure 37).

The national composite readiness results from the 2080 BS (2023/24 AD) Schools Readiness Assessment indicate that about half (49.1%) of children were on track, 45.3% were progressing, and 5.6% were struggling. In Bagmati Province, the figures were 54.9% on track, 43.5% progressing, and 1.6% struggling. The findings of the current assessment are closely aligned with the Bagmati Province results reported in the 2080 BS assessment, showing only minimal variation across the readiness categories (Figure 37).

Importantly, while the 2080 BS assessment surveyed only large classes, the 2082 BS (2025/26 AD) assessment included both small and large classes. Despite this broader coverage, the comparable results suggest a consistent pattern of school readiness among Grade 1 children in Bagmati Province, indicating the continued relevance and applicability of the ELDS and tools adopted in Nepal.

Figure 37

Overall Readiness of Children in Bagmati Province (2082 BS) compared to the previous assessment (2080 BS)



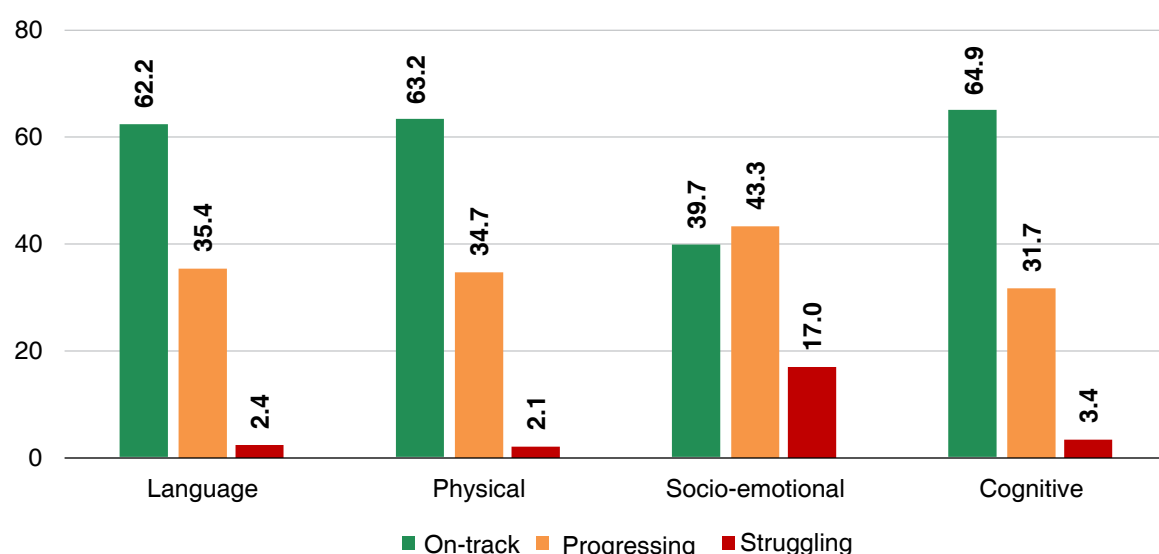
5.2 Domain-wise Findings

The assessment reveals substantial variation in readiness scores across domains. Children performed relatively well in the cognitive, physical, and language domains, with only slight differences in scores, but performed considerably lower in the socio-emotional domain. Nearly two-thirds of children are on track in the cognitive (64.9%), language (62.2%), and physical (63.2%) domains, whereas only about two-fifths are on track in the socio-emotional domain (39.7%).

The proportion of children in the progressing category is substantially higher in the socio-emotional domain (43.3%), compared to about one-third in the other three domains, with some variation. Similarly, a considerably higher proportion of children are struggling in the socio-emotional domain (17%), while the proportion is minimal in the other domains (Figure 38).

Figure 38

Readiness of Children by Domain in Bagmati Province, 2082 BS



5.3 Disparities in School Readiness by Individual Characteristics

This section examines the relationship between children's school readiness outcomes and key individual socio-demographic characteristics, including gender, age, mother-tongue (language), place of residence (rural/urban), and ecological regions.

Gender: School readiness data disaggregated by gender show that girls perform slightly better than boys in the composite development scores, with 56.4% of girls classified as on-

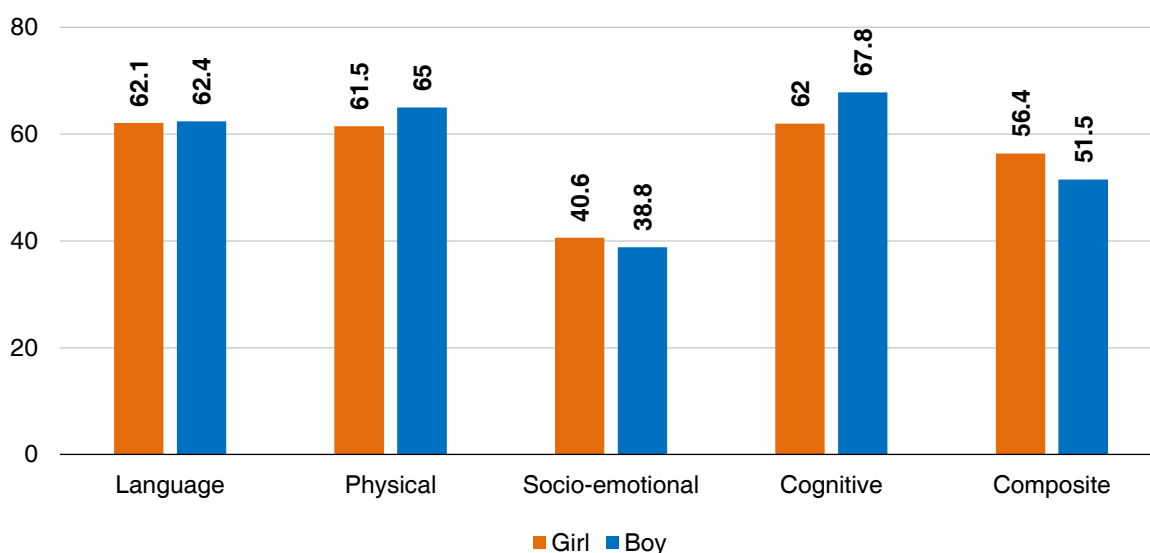
track compared to 51.5% of boys. Across domains, boys perform slightly better in cognitive and physical development, whereas girls show a modest advantage in the socio-emotional domain. No notable gender difference is observed in the language domain.

In the cognitive domain, 67.8% of boys are on track compared to 62% of girls. Similarly, in the physical development domain, 65% of boys are on track, compared to 61.5% of girls. In contrast, in the socio-emotional domain, 40.6% of girls are on track compared to 38.8% of boys. In the language domain, performance is nearly identical, with 62.4% of boys and 62.1% of girls classified as on-track (Figure 39).

Overall, these patterns indicate only modest gender differences across domains, suggesting broadly similar readiness levels between boys and girls. However, the relatively stronger socio-emotional readiness among girls and the slightly higher cognitive and physical readiness among boys point to the need for balanced pedagogical approaches in early grades that support both socio-emotional development – particularly for boys- and continued cognitive and physical engagement for all children. Such insights can help inform gender-responsive teaching practices and early learning interventions.

Figure 39

Readiness of Children by Domain and Gender in Bagmati Province, 2082 BS



Age Group: The assessment tools are ideally designed for children above 60 months, as they are based on the ELDS for 48 to 60 months, a period that typically corresponds to completion of ECED. Children are expected to achieve these developmental standards by 60 months. As per the existing Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2018 AD, children above 60 months are expected to enter Grade 1. In practice, however, the age of children entering ECED and Grade 1 varies considerably due to the structure of the school enrolment system. Enrolment typically takes place during a rigid one-off admission period at the beginning

of the academic year, while children reach the eligible enrolment age at different points throughout the year depending on their date of birth. As a result, some children who attain the required age shortly after the enrolment window opens may need to wait until the following academic year to enroll. These variations make it difficult to consistently maintain the intended age range in actual enrollment practices. Moreover, there are schools without ECED centres/pre-schools in the community, which has led to underage enrollment.

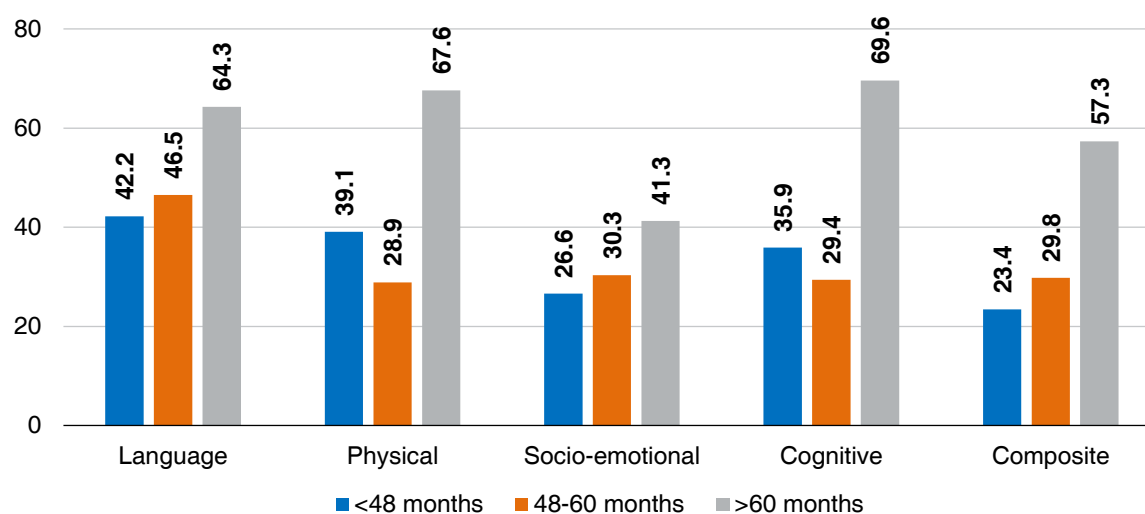
In addition, as noted in Chapter 1, the coexistence of a high GER and relatively low NER further indicates that children of varying ages are enrolled in ECED and Grade 1. Therefore, the assessment was designed to capture the foundational readiness of all children entering Grade 1, irrespective of age, so as to reflect the realities of classroom composition and school readiness within the education system. Accordingly, all newly enrolled Grade 1 children were included in the sample, and findings are presented across age groups.

The age-disaggregated results reveal notable differences in school readiness. Based on the composite score, only 29.8% of children aged 48-60 months are on track. The proportion is lower among children younger than 48 months (23.4%) and substantially higher among those older than 60 months (57.3%).

Importantly, although the ELDS benchmarks are intended for children aged 48-60 months, the fact that only slightly more than half of children older than 60 months meet the expected standards suggests that foundational readiness gaps persist among older children. This highlights that school readiness challenges extend across the full range of children entering Grade 1, rather than being limited to a specific age group.

Across domains, a broadly similar pattern is observed, although in some cases, younger children perform slightly better than those aged 48-60 months, particularly in the physical and cognitive domains. In the cognitive domain, 29.4% of children aged 48-60 months are on track, compared with 35.9% of children younger than 48 months and 69.6% of children older than 60 months. Similarly, in the physical domain, 28.9% of children aged 48-60 months are on track, compared to 39.1% of children younger than 48 months and 67.6% of children older than 60 months. In the language domain, 46.5% of children aged 48-60 months are on track, compared with 64.3% of those older than 60 months. Likewise, in the socio-emotional domain, 30.3% of children aged 48-60 months are on track, compared with 41.3% of children older than 60 months (Figure 40).

These findings highlight a clear developmental maturity gap associated with age at school entry. From a policy and programmatic perspective, the results underscore the importance of strengthening age-appropriate ECED programmes and ensuring adherence to recommended school entry ages. At the same time, it is critical to provide targeted support for younger children entering Grade 1 to help bridge developmental gaps and support smoother school transitions.

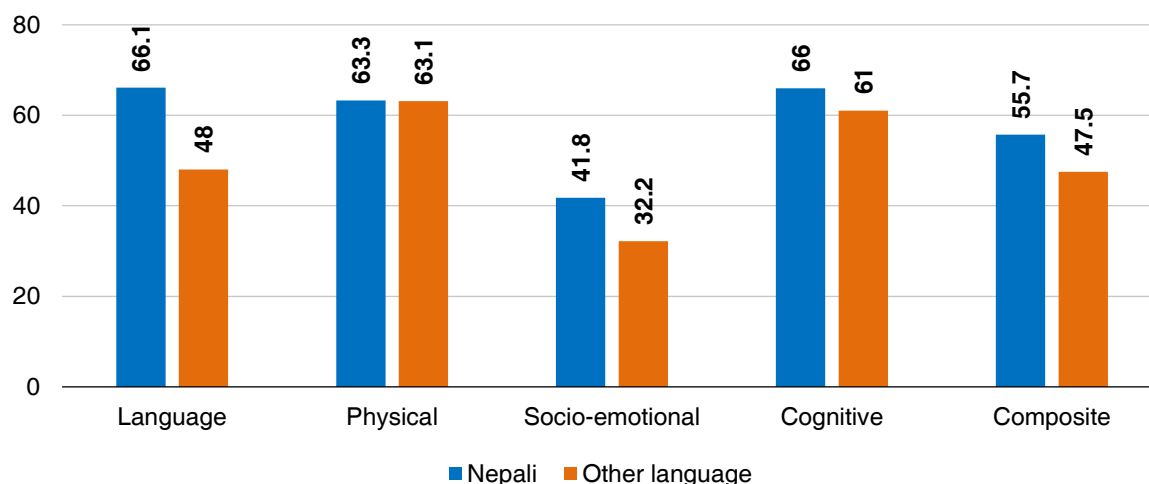
Figure 40*Percentage of Children On-Track by Domain and Age*

Mother-tongue (Language): Children with Nepali as mother tongue demonstrate higher levels of school readiness compared to children with other mother tongues across most domains. In terms of the composite score, more than half (55.7%) of children whose mother tongue is Nepali are classified as on-track, compared to a lower proportion among children with other mother tongues (47.5%).

The difference is particularly pronounced in the language domain, where 66.1% of Nepali mother-tongue children are on track, compared with 48.0% of children with other mother tongues. Physical readiness is largely similar between the two groups. However, in the socio-emotional domain, children with Nepali as their mother tongue perform better than children with other mother tongues (41.8% vs. 32.2%). A similar pattern is observed in the cognitive domain, where 66.0% of Nepali mother-tongue children are on track compared to 61.0% of children with other mother tongues.

Children with other mother tongues also show higher proportions in the struggling category, particularly in the language domain (4.3% vs. 1.9%) and the cognitive domain (4.9% vs. 2.9%). This suggests that language barriers may affect comprehension, classroom participation, and early learning experiences (Figure 41 and Annex Table 5).

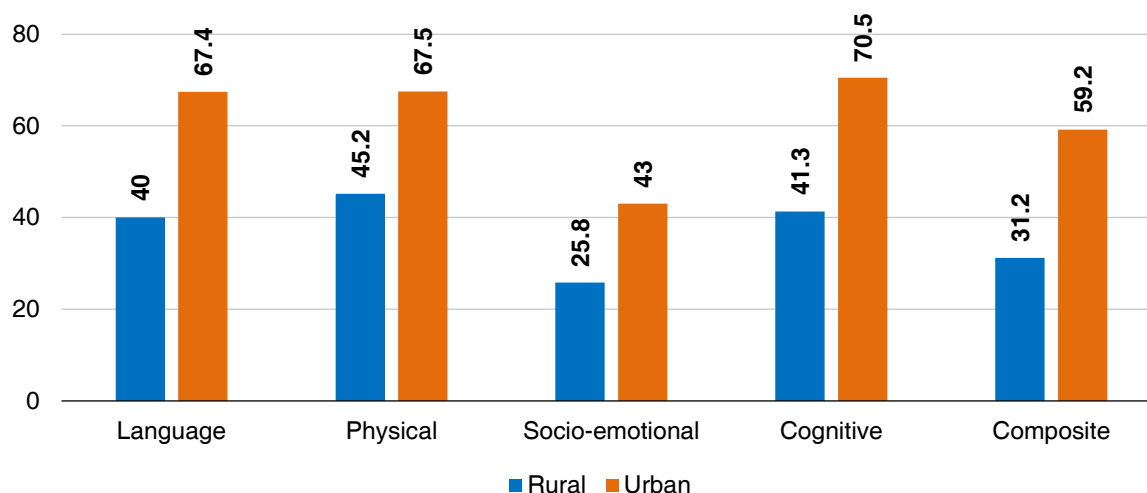
These findings highlight the critical role of language in early learning and underscore the importance of promoting mother-tongue-based multilingual education in the early grades. Strengthening language-sensitive teaching practices and providing appropriate learning materials in local languages could improve learning outcomes and facilitate smoother transitions to Nepali as the medium of instruction.

Figure 41*Percentage of Children On-Track by Domain and Mother-tongue*

Place of Residence: Urban children consistently outperform their rural counterparts across all developmental domains, reflecting significant disparities in resources and access to quality ECED services between the two settings.

Overall, in composite scores, slightly over half of urban children (59.2%) are on track, compared to less than one-third of rural children (31.2%). In the language domain, about two-thirds of urban children (67.4%) are on track, compared to less than half (40.0%) of rural children. In the physical domain, over two-thirds of urban children (67.5%) are on-track, compared to less than half (45.2%) of rural children. In the socio-emotional domain, fewer than half of urban children (43.0%) are on track, declining to an even lower 25.8% among rural children. In the cognitive domain, 70.5% of urban children are on track, compared to 41.3% of rural children. A higher proportion of rural children fall into the struggling category, especially in socio-emotional development (30.3% compared to 13.8% among urban children) and cognitive development (9.7%, compared to 1.9% among urban children). These patterns likely reflect limited access to quality ECED services in rural areas (Figure 42 and Annex Table 5).

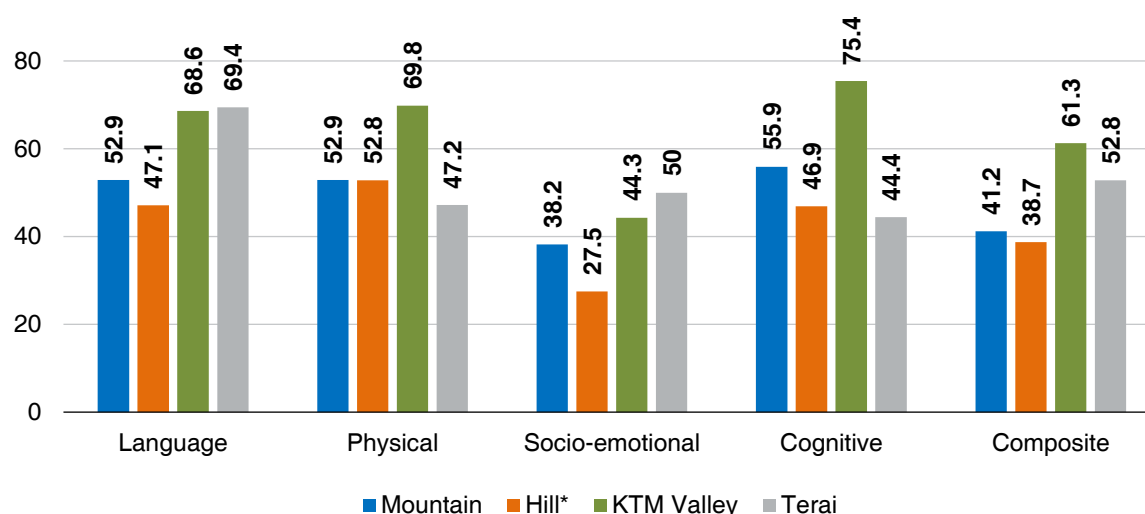
These urban-rural disparities may further be exacerbated by the heavy concentration of better-resourced schools and ECED centres in urban areas, which often benefit from better infrastructure, better-trained teachers, and greater access to learning materials. Consequently, children in rural areas face systemic barriers to holistic development. This underscores the need for targeted policy and programmatic investments to strengthen ECED service quality and infrastructure in rural communities in order to reduce long-term inequalities in learning and human capital development.

Figure 42*Percentage of Children On-Track by Domain and Place of Residence*

Ecological zone: Children's school readiness varies substantially across ecological regions, even within Bagmati Province, in all developmental domains. Overall, composite scores show that the highest proportion of children from the Kathmandu Valley (61.3%) is on track, followed by children from the Terai (52.8%), the Mountain (41.1%), and the Hill (38.7%) regions in Bagmati Province.

In the language domain, 69.4% of children from the Terai and 68.6% of Kathmandu Valley are on track, compared to 52.9% of Mountain children and 47.1% of Hill children. In the physical domain, slightly over two-thirds of children from the Kathmandu Valley (69.8%) are on-track, compared to about half of children from the Mountain (52.9%) and the Hill (52.8%), while a slightly lower proportion of Hill children (47.2%) are on-track. In the socio-emotional domain, half of the children from the Terai (50%) are on track, compared to 44.3% in Kathmandu Valley, 38.2% in the Mountain, and 27.5% in the Hill region. In the cognitive domain, three-quarters of children from Kathmandu Valley (75.4%) are on track, compared to 55.9% from the Mountain, 46.9% from the Hill, and 44.4% from the Terai.

These variations point to ecological region-specific challenges, such as geographic remoteness and limited access to services in the Mountain and Hill regions. The findings highlight the need for context-responsive policies and targeted programme interventions, such as strengthening ECED infrastructure, teacher support, and learning resources in underserved ecological regions, to ensure more equitable school readiness outcomes (Figure 43 and Annex Table 5).

Figure 43*Percentage of Children On-Track by Domain and Ecological Zone*

5.4 Association with School and Teacher Characteristics

This section examines the relationship between children's school readiness outcomes and key school- and teacher-level characteristics, including school size, management type, ECED teacher index, ECED infrastructure index, and school governance/support index.

School Size: One of the key research questions of this study is whether school size influences children's school readiness outcomes. Accordingly, both bivariate and multivariate analyses included this variable.

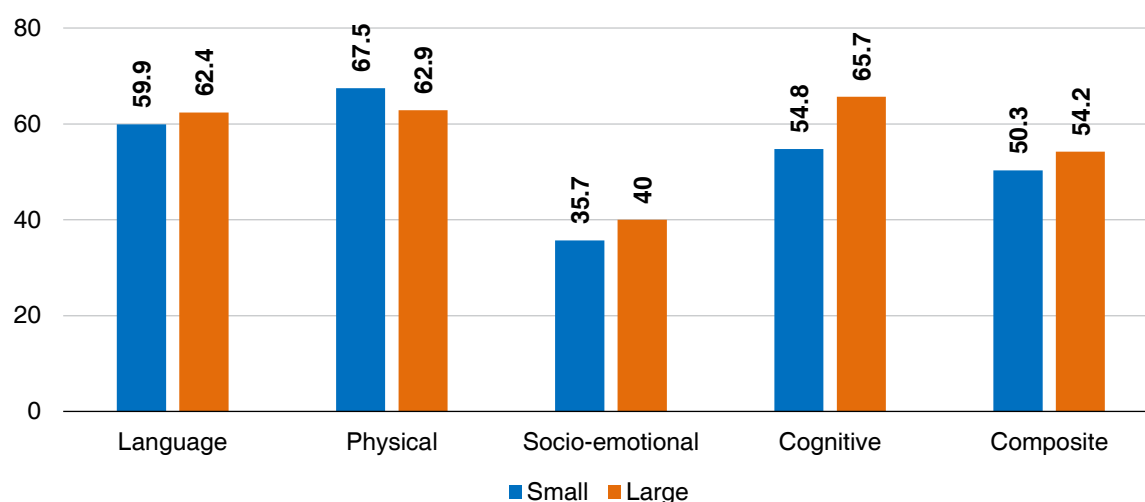
The data reveal that readiness scores differ by school size. In the composite score, a slightly higher proportion of children from large classes are on track (54.2%) than those from small classes (50.3%). By domain, children from large classes perform better in cognitive, language, and socio-emotional development. In the cognitive domain, 65.7% of children from large classes are on-track, compared to 54.8% of children from small classes. In the language domain, 62.4% of children in large classes are on track, compared with 59.9% in smaller classes. Similarly, in the socio-emotional domain, 40% of children from large classes are on track, compared to 35.7% of children from small classes. In contrast, children from small classes perform better in the physical domain; over two-thirds of children from small classes (67.5%) are on track, compared to 62.9% of children from large classes (Figure 44 and Annex Table 5).

These differences may partly reflect the structural characteristics of the school system, as large classes are more often located in urban areas and are frequently institutional or better-resourced, while small classes are predominantly community-based and located in rural settings. The findings suggest that school readiness outcomes are closely linked to broader disparities in school resources and learning environments. This underscores the

need for policies and programmes that strengthen the quality of ECED services in smaller, community schools, particularly through improved teacher support, learning materials, and infrastructure, to ensure more equitable early learning opportunities.

Figure 44

Percentage of Children On-Track by Domain and Class Size



Management Type: Another important characteristic distinguishing school is their ownership and management type. Two types of schools – community (government funded), and institutional (private) – were included in the study. Children’s readiness scores differ substantially by school management. Institutional (private) schools perform better than community schools across all developmental domains.

In the composite score, about two-thirds of children from institutional schools (66.7%) are on-track, compared to just about one-third of children from community schools (34.1%). In the language domain, nearly three-quarters (72.7%) of children from institutional schools are on-track, compared to less than half (46%) of children from community schools. In the physical domain, over two-thirds (68.4%) of children from institutional schools are on track, compared to 55.2% in community schools. In the socio-emotional domain, 45.0% of children from institutional schools are on track, compared to 31.5% in community schools. Similarly, in the cognitive domain, 81.0% of children in institutional schools are on track, compared to 40.1% in community schools. These differences emphasize the role of institutional support and learning environments in shaping children’s school readiness outcomes (Figure 45).

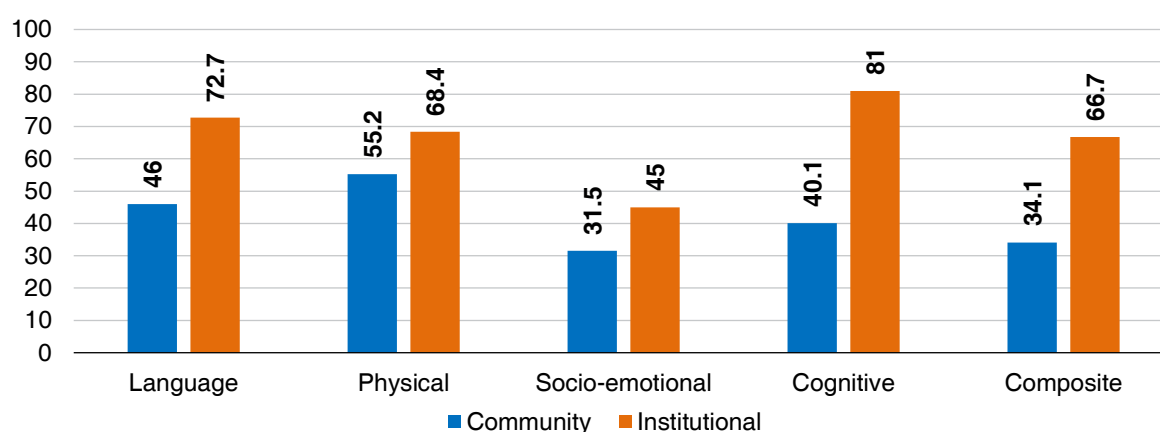
The observed disparities may partly reflect the fact that institutional schools are more commonly located in urban areas and often benefit from better infrastructure, smaller class sizes, greater access to learning materials, and more qualified teachers. These findings point to the need for targeted policy and programmatic efforts to strengthen the quality of ECED provision in community schools—particularly through investments in teacher capacity, learning resources, and supportive learning environments—to reduce inequities in early learning opportunities.

According to the Education Act (2028 BS), the eighth amendment, one year of ECED for four-year-old children is provided. Given that institutional schools typically offer a longer ECED duration than community schools (see Figures 5 and 6 in Chapter 4), the observed higher readiness scores among children in institutional schools should be interpreted with caution. Institutional schools often provide two to three years of early childhood education through multiple levels—such as play groups, nursery, LKG, and UKG—whereas community schools generally offer only one year of ECED. As a result, children in institutional schools are likely to have had longer, more structured exposure to early learning opportunities before entering Grade 1, yet, developmentally, their performance is also not meeting all ELDS domains by 60 months.

This suggests that differences in readiness outcomes may partly reflect variations in the duration and structure of ECED exposure rather than school management type alone. From a policy and programmatic perspective, the findings highlight a broader discussion on the standard approach to ECED programs to ensure more equitable early learning experiences. The government has defined early childhood care services for children below age 4 (48 months) in the education regulation; however, institutional schools have focused more on early education even for the younger age group. Future research should also systematically capture the duration of children’s ECED participation and their Socio-Economic Status (SES) to better understand its influence on school readiness outcomes.

Figure 45

Percentage of Children On-Track by Domain, by Management Type



ECED Teacher Index: ECED teachers are central to the quality of early childhood education programmes. Their qualifications, as well as training in ECED and disability inclusion, play an important role in shaping children’s school readiness and developmental outcomes. As described in Chapter 3, these teacher-related characteristics were combined to construct a teacher index. Bivariate analysis indicates that the teacher index is associated with children’s readiness score across most domains, with higher teacher index scores generally associated with better readiness outcomes.

In terms of composite readiness score, slightly over half of children (56.2%) from schools with a high teacher index were on track, compared to 41.9% from schools with a medium teacher index and 53.1% from schools with a low teacher index.

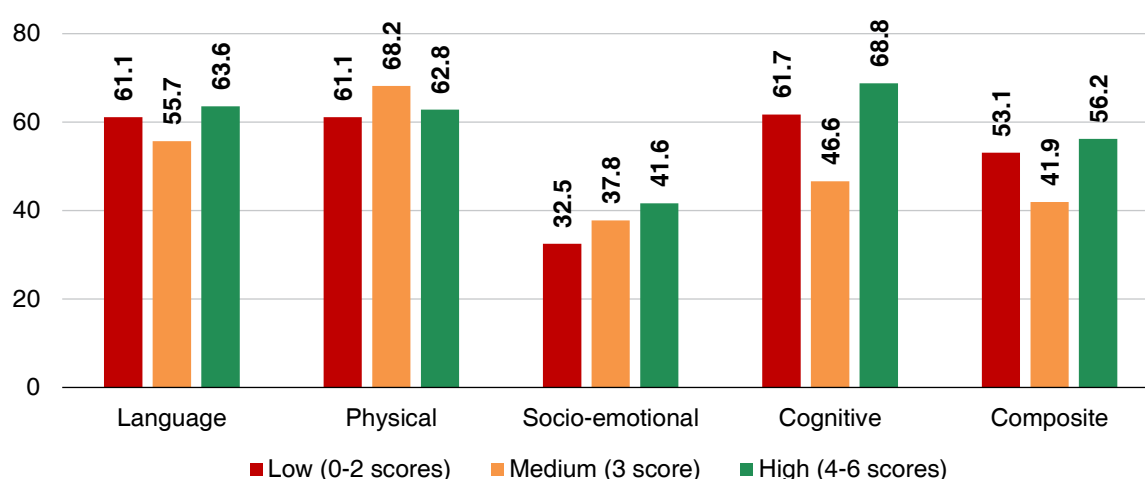
Across domains, children from schools with a high teacher index consistently demonstrated stronger outcomes, particularly in language, cognitive, and socio-emotional domains. In the language domain, 63.6% of children from schools with a high teacher index were on-track, compared to 55.7% among those from schools with a medium teacher index, and 61.1% among those from schools with a low teacher index. In the socio-emotional domain, the proportion of children on track increased from 32.5% in schools with a low teacher index to 37.8% in schools with a medium teacher index and 41.6% in schools with a high teacher index. Similarly, in the cognitive domain, 68.8% of children from schools with a high teacher index are on track, compared to 46.6% and 61.7% in medium- and low-index schools, respectively (Figure 46).

Overall, the findings suggest that children in schools with a high teacher index tend to demonstrate better school readiness outcomes across most domains, although some mixed patterns were observed between low- and medium-index schools.

These results underscore the critical role of teacher capacity in fostering children's school readiness. From a policy and programmatic perspective, the findings highlight the importance of strengthening ECED teacher qualifications and expanding access to continuous professional development—particularly in early childhood pedagogy and inclusive education—to improve the quality and effectiveness of ECED programmes.

Figure 46

Percentage of Children On-Track by Domain, by Teacher Index



ECED Infrastructure Index: Infrastructure plays a critical role in determining both access to and the quality of ECED programmes, which in turn influences children's school readiness. The data reveals substantial variation in the availability of different types of infrastructure across schools. As noted in Chapter 3, these infrastructure characteristics were combined

to construct an infrastructure index. Bivariate findings indicate that the infrastructure index is associated with children's readiness scores across all domains, with higher infrastructure index scores generally associated with better readiness outcomes.

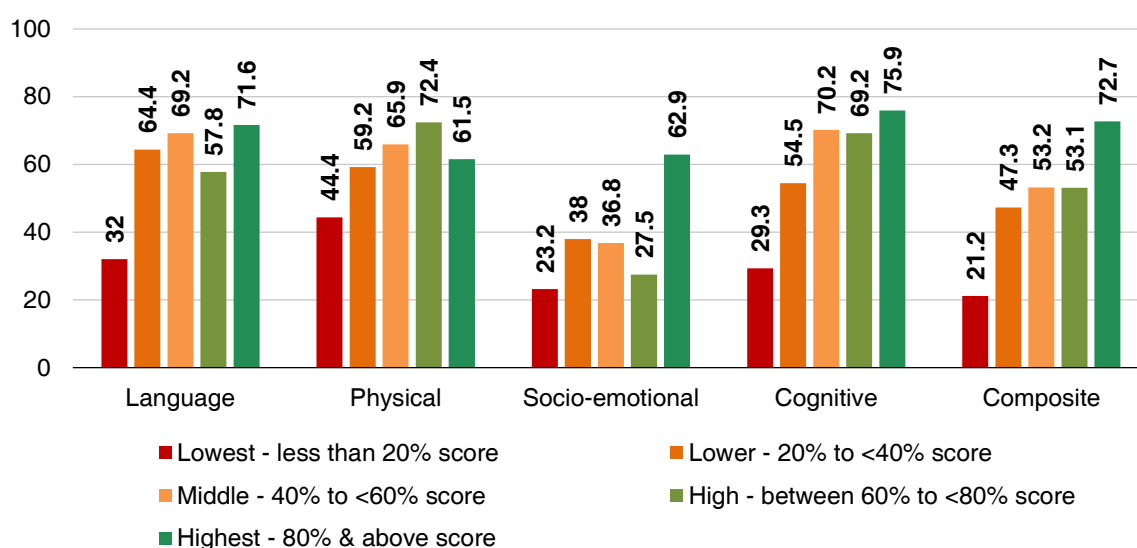
In the composite score, about three-quarters of children (72.7%) from schools with the highest infrastructure index are on track, compared to only 21.2% from schools with the lowest infrastructure index. In the middle three index categories, the proportion of children who are on track ranges from 47.3% to 53.2%.

By domain, there is some variation in readiness outcomes across infrastructure index categories. In the language domain, 71.6% of children from schools with the highest infrastructure index are on track, compared to 32.0% from schools with the lowest, with mixed patterns across the remaining three index categories. In the physical domain, the highest proportion of on-track children is observed among children from schools in the high (72.4%) and middle (65.9%) infrastructure index categories, followed by the high (61.5%), lower (59.2%), and low (44.4%) index categories. In the socio-emotional domain, 62.9% of children from schools with the highest infrastructure index are on track, compared to 23.2% among those with the lowest scores, with some variation across the middle categories. In the cognitive domain, three-quarters (75.9%) of children from schools with the highest infrastructure index are on track, compared to 29.3% in the lowest index category (Figure 47 and Annex Table 5).

Overall, the findings suggest a strong association between the availability of adequate infrastructure and improved school readiness outcomes. From a policy and programmatic perspective, this highlights the need for targeted investments in ECED infrastructure, particularly in under-resourced community and rural schools, to ensure safe, child-friendly learning environments that support holistic early childhood development.

Figure 47

Percentage of Children On-Track by Domain, by Infrastructure Index



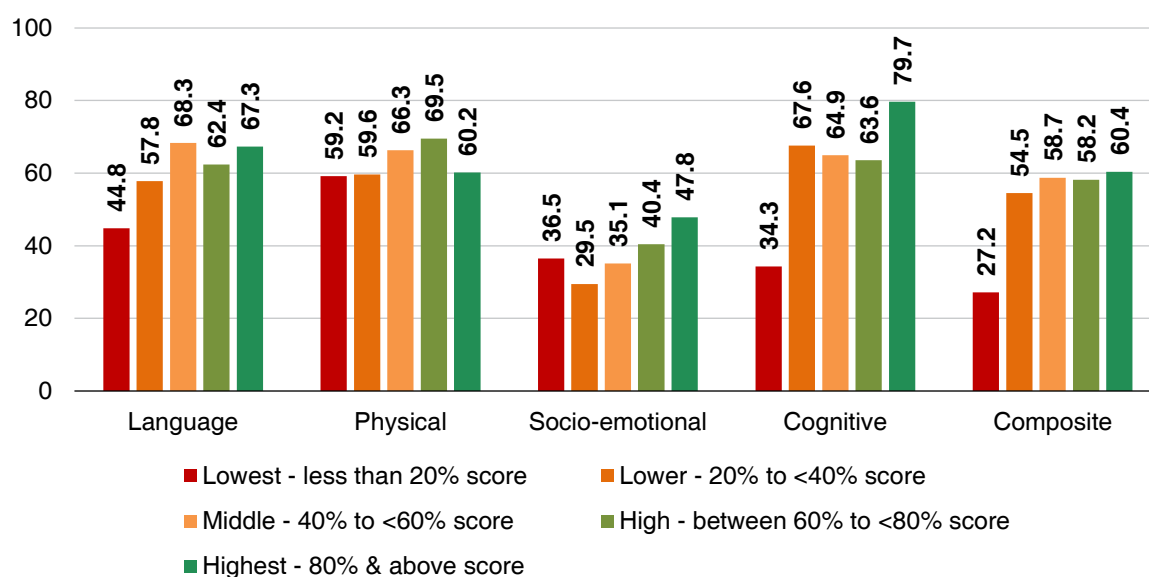
School Governance/Support Index: Following teachers and infrastructure, school governance and support represent another important pillar that contributes to improving the quality of ECED programmes and children’s readiness outcomes. As noted in earlier chapters, there is a considerable variation in school governance and support systems across schools.

As described in Chapter 3, these governance and support characteristics were combined to construct a school governance/support index. Bivariate findings indicate that this index is associated with children’s readiness scores across all domains, with higher school governance/support index scores generally linked to better readiness outcomes.

In the composite score, 60.4% of children from schools with the highest school governance/support index are on-track, compared to only 27.2% of children from schools with the lowest index score. In the middle three index categories, the proportion of children who are on track ranges from 54.5% to 58.7%.

By domain, there is some variation in readiness outcomes across school governance/support index categories. In the language domain, 67.3% of children from schools with the highest school governance/support index are on track, compared to 44.8% of children from schools with the lowest index, with mixed patterns across the remaining three index categories. In the physical domain, the highest proportion of on-track children is observed among the children from schools with high (69.5%) and middle (66.3%) governance/support index categories, followed by the highest (60.2%), lower (59.6%), and low (59.2%) index categories. In the socio-emotional domain, 47.8% of children from schools with the highest governance/support index are on track, compared to 36.5% among children with the lowest scores, again with some variation across the middle categories. In the cognitive domain, 79.7% of children from schools with the highest governance/support index are on track, compared to only 34.3% in the lowest index category, while the three middle index categories show relatively similar levels ranging from 63.6% to 67.6% (Figure 48 and Annex Table 5).

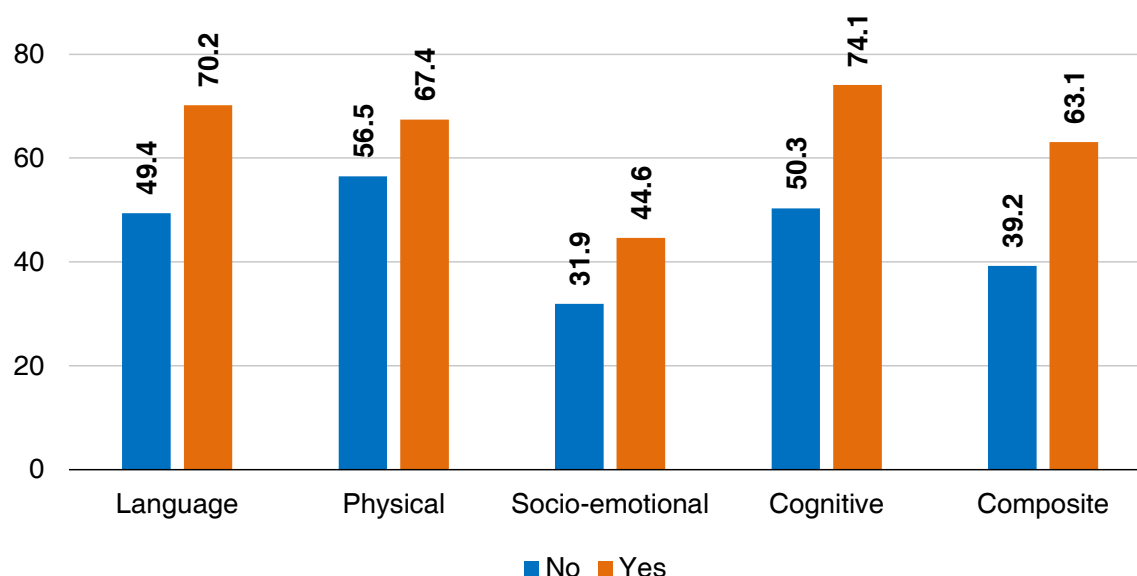
Overall, the findings suggest that stronger school governance and institutional support are associated with improved readiness outcomes across most domains. From a policy and programmatic perspective, this highlights the importance of strengthening school leadership, supervision, and support mechanisms, particularly in community schools, to ensure effective implementation of ECED programmes and improve the quality of early learning environments.

Figure 48*Children On-Track by Domain and School Governance/Support Index*

Availability of ELDS Document: Based on the composite score, 63.1% of children from schools that reported having the ELDS document are on-track, compared to 39.2% among children from schools without the ELDS document.

By domain, considerable variation exists between ELDS document availability and children's readiness scores, with particularly large differences observed in the language and cognitive domains. In the cognitive domain, 74.1% of children from schools with an ELDS document are on track, compared to 50.3% from schools without one. Similarly, in the language domain, 70.2% of children from schools with the ELDS document are on track, compared to 49.4% of those without it. In the physical domain, 67.4% of children from schools with the ELDS document are on track, compared to 56.5% among those without it. In the socio-emotional domain, 44.6% of children from schools with the ELDS document are on track, compared with 31.9% from schools without it (Figure 48).

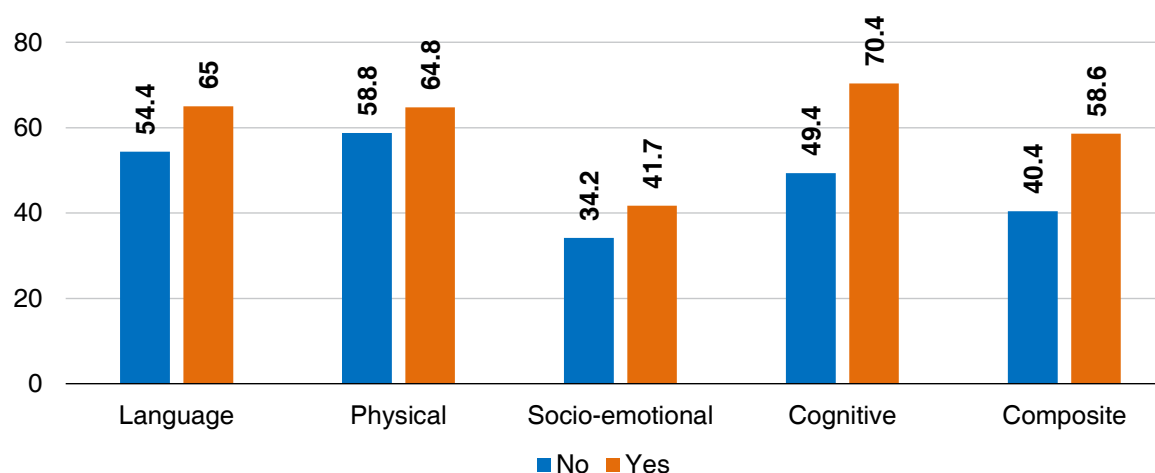
These findings suggest that the availability of the ELDS document is strongly associated with improved school readiness outcomes across all domains. The ELDS serves as a critical tool for guiding teachers in planning developmentally appropriate activities and for helping school management monitor children's progress and learning achievements. In terms of policy and programme delivery, ensuring universal access to ELDS materials, along with strengthening teachers' capacity to effectively use them, can significantly enhance the quality of ECED delivery and contribute to improved early learning outcomes.

Figure 49*Children On Track by Domain and Availability of ELDS Document*

ECED Curriculum Use: Although this variable is included in the school governance/support index, it is analysed separately, similar to the ELDS document. Based on the composite score, 58.6% of children from schools that reported using the ECED curriculum are on track, compared with 40.4% from schools that do not use the curriculum.

By domain, considerable variation exists between the use of the ECED curriculum and children's readiness score, with particularly large differences observed in the cognitive domain. In the cognitive domain, 70.4% of children in schools using the ECED curriculum are on track, compared with 49.4% in schools without it. In the language domain, 65% of children in schools using the ECED curriculum are on track, compared with 54.4% in schools without it. In the physical domain, 64.8% of children in schools using the ECED curriculum are on track, compared with 58.8% in schools without it. In the socio-emotional domain, 41.7% of children from schools using the ECED curriculum are on track, compared with 34.2% from schools without it (Figure 50).

These findings suggest that the use of a structured ECED curriculum is positively associated with improved school readiness outcomes across all domains. The curriculum provides teachers with a clear framework for planning age-appropriate, play-based learning activities and supports school management in maintaining consistency and quality in ECED delivery. From a strategic policy and programming lens, strengthening the implementation and regular use of the ECED curriculum, along with teacher training and supervision, can play a critical role in enhancing the quality of ECED programmes and improving children's early learning outcomes.

Figure 50*Children On-Track by Domain and Use of ECED Curriculum*

Findings from Multivariate Analysis

To further examine the factors associated with children's school readiness, multivariate regression models were run separately for each domain—socio-emotional, cognitive, language, physical, and composite. The analysis assessed the influence of child characteristics, teacher qualifications, and school environment factors using a stepwise approach. Variables were introduced progressively, including child characteristics, school structural factors, teacher characteristics, infrastructure, governance indicators, and classroom inputs. Model 4 represents the fully adjusted specification; Model 5 aligns with the variables used in the 2023-24 study.

The models demonstrate moderate explanatory power across domains. For socio-emotional readiness, the models explain 11.3% (Model 4) and 11.5% (Model 5) of the variance. For cognitive readiness, explanatory power increases to 23.0% and 25.1%, respectively. In the language domain, the models account for 15.8% (Model 4) and 16.0% (Model 5) of the variance, while for physical readiness, the models explain 13.3% (Model 4) and 13.6% (Model 5) of the variance. For composite readiness, the models explain 21.6% (Model 4) and 23.0% (Model 5) of the variation. Overall, the final models explain between 11% and 23% of the differences in children's readiness outcomes, with the highest explanatory power observed in cognitive and composite domains and the lowest in socio-emotional readiness (see Annex Table 6).

Across domains, most explanatory variables remain statistically significant in the fully adjusted models, indicating robust associations. Age and language background emerge as strong predictors, with older children and those whose home language aligns with the language of instruction demonstrating higher readiness levels. Teacher-related factors also show consistent positive associations, highlighting the importance of training and support

systems. Similarly, school infrastructure and governance are linked to improved outcomes, underscoring the role of institutional quality.

These findings suggest that while child, teacher, and school factors significantly influence readiness, a substantial portion of variation remains unexplained, particularly in non-cognitive domains. Strengthening teacher capacity, improving school environments, and addressing language-related barriers should therefore be central to policy and programmatic efforts to enhance school readiness.

Table 10 below summarizes regression results for children's composite readiness scores, followed by an interpretation of the findings.

Table 10

Regression Output for Composite Readiness of Children

Variables	Composite									
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5^	
	B (Sig)		B (Sig)		B (Sig)		B (Sig)		B (Sig)	
(Intercept)	0.566	***	0.556	***	0.555	***	0.551	***	0.563	***
Age (months)	0.002	***	0.002	***	0.002	***	0.002	***	0.002	***
Gender (Male)	-0.010	***	-0.010	***	-0.010	***	-0.011	***	-0.013	***
Mother tongue language (Nepali)	0.016	***	0.015	***	0.015	***	0.013	***		
Place of Residence (Urban)	0.041	***	0.040	***	0.043	***	0.046	***	0.041	***
Ecozone (Ref=Hill)										
Mountain	0.093	***	0.090	***	0.071	***	0.073	***		
KTM Valley	0.017	***	0.016	***	0.014	***	0.011	***		
Terai	0.028	***	0.028	***	0.032	***	0.032	***		
Size of Class (Small)	-0.020	***	-0.018	***	-0.014	***	-0.017	***		
Type of School (Community)	-0.081	***	-0.080	***	-0.071	***	-0.067	***	-0.059	***
Teacher Index			0.004	***	0.002	**	0.002	*		
Infrastructure Index					0.001	***	0.001	***		
Governance Support Index							0.000	+		
Primary Language of Instruction (Nepali)					-0.023	***	-0.024	***	-0.031	***
Teacher Qualification (Grade 10)									-0.029	***
Pre-Service training (Yes)									-0.003	*

Variables	Composite									
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5 [^]	
	B (Sig)		B (Sig)		B (Sig)		B (Sig)		B (Sig)	
In-Service Training (Yes)									-0.005	**
Availability of Language Learning Area (Yes)									0.058	***
Availability of Mathematics Learning Area (Yes)									-0.080	***
Availability of Role-Play Learning Area (Yes)									0.042	***
Availability of Science Learning Area (Yes)									-0.045	***
Availability of Creative Learning Area (Yes)									0.029	***
Availability of Constructive Learning Area (Yes)									0.000	+
Availability of Early Childhood Assistants (Yes)									0.031	***
Usage of Curriculum (Yes)									0.030	***
Usage of ELDS (Yes)							0.010	***	0.004	*
Model Summary										
Adjusted R Square	0.206	***	0.206	***	0.215	***	0.216	***	0.230	***
N (weighted)	58174		58174		58174		58174		58174	

Note:

*** Significant at 0.001 level, ** Significant at 0.01 level, * Significant at 0.05 level

+ Not significant

[^] Model 5 includes variables as per 2080 ELD assessment**Child-Level Characteristics**

Age (in months): consistently positive and statistically significant across all domains and model specifications. In the fully adjusted models, older children demonstrate higher scores in the socio-emotional, cognitive, physical, and composite domains. In the language domain, although the association is positive, it is less pronounced. In the composite score, each additional month of age is associated with an increase of approximately 0.2 points across all models. Overall, age remains one of the strongest and most stable predictors of school readiness outcomes.

These findings underscore the importance of age-appropriate school entry and adequate exposure to ECED prior to Grade 1. From a policy perspective, ensuring that children enroll at the appropriate age and have sufficient duration of early learning opportunities can play a critical role in improving readiness outcomes.

Gender: Being male is negatively associated with several domains in the fully adjusted models, except in the physical domain, where boys perform better than girls. In the composite score, boys score approximately 1.0 to 1.3 points lower than girls across models. The gender gap is particularly pronounced in the socio-emotional domain, where boys score between 2.2 and 2.6 points lower than girls, while the difference is comparatively smaller in the cognitive domain. In contrast, boys score approximately 0.7-0.8 points higher than girls in the physical domain. Overall, gender differences are statistically significant across all models, although the magnitude of differences varies by domain.

These findings suggest the need for targeted interventions to support boys' socio-emotional and overall development in the early years. Strengthening gender-responsive pedagogical approaches in ECED classrooms can help address these disparities and promote more balanced developmental outcomes from both the policy and programmatic perspectives.

Mother Tongue (Language): Children whose mother tongue is Nepali demonstrate modest but statistically significant advantages in the language, cognitive, and socio-emotional domains across most models, including the composite score. Conversely, children with other mother tongues perform better than Nepali-speaking children in the physical domain. In the composite score, Nepali-speaking children score approximately 1.3 to 1.6 points higher than non-Nepali-speaking children, with some variation in the magnitude of differences across domains; however, the associations remain statistically significant across models.

Overall, these findings suggest that language background plays an important role in shaping school readiness and underscore the need for inclusive, multilingual approaches in ECED programmes.

Place of Residence: Urban residence is positively and significantly associated with readiness across all domains and models. Although the magnitude of the association decreases after adjusting for school quality and teacher-related variables, it remains positive across all domains, indicating persistent urban advantages beyond observable school characteristics. In the composite score, urban children score about 4.0 to 4.6 points higher than children from rural areas. The magnitude of the difference is largest in the physical domain, followed by language and cognitive domains, and is comparatively smaller in the socio-emotional domain. These findings clearly highlight the extent of rural-urban disparities in school readiness.

The results underscore the need for targeted investments in rural ECED services, including improved infrastructure, teacher support, and access to quality learning materials.

Addressing these gaps is essential to ensure more equitable early learning opportunities and to reduce disparities in school readiness outcomes.

Ecological Zone: Multivariate analysis, after controlling for other factors, shows a different pattern than bivariate findings. Children from the Mountain region and the Kathmandu Valley performed better than those from the Hill region (the reference category) across most models and domains. Children from Terai show slightly better performance in the socio-emotional and language domains but lower performance in the cognitive and physical domains.

In the composite score, children from the Mountain region score approximately 7.1 to 9.3 points higher than children from the Hill region, followed by those from the Terai (2.8 to 3.2 points higher) and the Kathmandu Valley (1.1 to 1.7 points higher). These findings indicate notable ecological variations in school readiness patterns after accounting for other influencing factors.

The results highlight the need for context-specific interventions that address domain-specific ecological disparities. Tailored strategies that account for geographic, socioeconomic, and service-delivery differences across regions are essential to promote more equitable readiness outcomes.

School Structural and Resources Characteristics

Class Size: Children enrolled in smaller classes initially show lower levels of school readiness, particularly in the cognitive domain and composite score. However, after controlling for teacher- and classroom-related factors, the association becomes more positive in the socio-emotional domain. The mixed patterns observed across domains and models suggest that class size alone may not independently determine readiness outcomes. In the composite score, children from small classes score approximately 1.4 to 2.0 points lower than those from large classes after controlling all other factors, although the magnitude and direction of the association vary across domains and models.

Management Type: Attendance in community schools is negatively associated with school readiness across all domains and in most models. With the exception of one model in the physical domain, the association remains statistically significant across domains. In the composite score, children from community schools score approximately 5.9 to 8.0 points lower than children from institutional schools after controlling for all other factors. This pattern suggests that differences with school management type persist even after accounting for teacher- and infrastructure-related characteristics.

Teacher Index: The Teacher Index shows a positive and statistically significant association with school readiness across most domains, except the physical domain. In the fully adjusted models, higher teacher index scores are associated with improved readiness outcomes in

the socio-emotional, cognitive, language, and composite domains, but not in the physical domain. In the composite score, each unit increase in the teacher index is associated with an increase of approximately 0.2 to 0.4 points in children's readiness scores, with stronger effects observed in the socio-emotional and language domains.

School is often the first major context of socialization outside the household, where children observe, learn, and replicate social and emotional skills, social norms, and expected patterns of behavior. Emotions and relationships play a central role in the learning process, and teachers serve as key role models who influence children's socio-emotional development through their own behavior, the quality of teacher-student interactions they foster, and the ways they manage and organize the classroom environment (Villasenor, n.d.)¹¹. These findings underscore the critical role of teacher capacity in shaping children's early learning and developmental outcomes.

This further highlights the importance of investing in teacher training, professional qualifications, and continuous professional development to strengthen the quality of ECED programmes and enhance children's school readiness.

Infrastructure Index: Overall, the models demonstrate that the infrastructure index has a positive and statistically significant association with children's school readiness, particularly in the socio-emotional, cognitive, physical, and composite domains, after controlling all other factors. In the composite score, each 1-unit increase in the infrastructure index is associated with approximately a 0.1-point increase in children's readiness scores, with relatively stronger effects observed in the socio-emotional domain.

While the bivariate analysis showed a strong association between infrastructure and children's readiness, the multivariate analysis indicates that, although the association remains statistically significant, the magnitude of the effect is comparatively modest. This suggests that infrastructure alone is insufficient to improve readiness outcomes. Rather, factors such as school management, governance, and teacher quality may play a critical role in ensuring that available resources are effectively utilized to support children's learning and development. Nevertheless, the consistent significance of the infrastructure index highlights the importance of improved physical learning environments in promoting better developmental outcomes.

Overall, these findings underscore that investments in school infrastructure should be complemented by strengthened teaching quality and effective school management systems to translate physical resources into meaningful gains in children's school readiness.

11 <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/285491571864192787-0050022019/original/VillasenoTheDifferentwaysthatteacherscaninfluencethesocioemotionaldevofstudents.pdf> (accessed on May 7, 2026).

Governance and Support Index: School governance and support mechanisms show mixed associations with children’s school readiness across domains. The association is generally negative and statistically significant in the language and physical domains, while it is positive and statistically significant in the socio-emotional domain. In the composite score, the association is positive but modest and not statistically significant. Relatively stronger negative effects are observed in the language and physical domains, while the effects in the cognitive domain are smaller and mixed.

Although the bivariate analysis indicated a strong positive relationship between governance and support mechanisms and children’s readiness outcomes, the multivariate analysis suggests that the magnitude of the association becomes modest—and in some domains negative—after controlling for other factors. This implies that governance and support mechanisms alone may not be sufficient to improve readiness outcomes and are likely to interact with other factors, particularly teacher quality and classroom practices, in shaping children’s learning outcomes and development.

These findings highlight the need for policy and programmatic efforts to move beyond formal governance structures and focus on strengthening the effectiveness, coherence, and implementation of support systems—especially by aligning school leadership, teacher support, and accountability mechanisms—to ensure that governance inputs translate into improved classroom practices and better school readiness outcomes.

Instructional and Classroom Inputs

While most of the instructional and classroom inputs were combined together in the infrastructure and governance index, the primary language of instruction was separately included in Models 3, 4, and 5. Other individual classroom-level inputs were only included in Model 5.

Primary Language of Instruction: This variable was included in Models 3, 4 and 5. Findings from the multivariate analysis show mixed patterns in its association with school readiness outcomes. The primary language of instruction is positively and significantly associated with outcomes in the physical domain. In contrast, it is negatively associated with outcomes in the cognitive, language, socio-emotional, and composite domains.

In the composite score, children from schools where Nepali is the primary language of instruction score approximately 2.3 to 3.1 points lower than children from schools using other languages. Similarly, children in Nepali-medium schools score about 1.9 to 2.6 points lower in the socio-emotional domain, 2.3 to 3.2 points lower in the cognitive domain, and 4.8 to 5.5 points lower in the language domain. In contrast, children from Nepali-medium schools score about 0.5 to 1.1 points higher in the physical domain than those from schools using other languages.

These findings should be interpreted alongside the bivariate results, which indicate that children whose mother tongue is not Nepali tend to have lower readiness outcomes overall. Taken together, the results suggest a complex interaction between home language and the medium of instruction, in which language mismatch may influence learning differently across developmental domains.

From a policy and programmatic perspective, the findings underscore the importance of strengthening mother-tongue-based multilingual education approaches. Ensuring that early-grade instruction is aligned with children's home languages, while gradually supporting the transition to Nepali, may help improve comprehension, participation, and overall school readiness outcomes.

Teacher Qualification and Training: Teacher qualifications show a statistically significant but mixed association across domains. The association is positive in the physical domain but negative in all other domains. Children taught by teachers with Grade 10 qualifications tend to score lower than those taught by more qualified teachers in most domains, except in the physical domain, where the opposite pattern is observed. Specifically, children from schools with teachers having Grade 10 qualifications score about 2.4 points lower in the socio-emotional domain, 1.7 points lower in the language domain, 2.9 points lower in the composite score, and 7.1 points lower in the cognitive domain, while scoring about 1.7 points higher in the physical domain.

Both pre-service and in-service teacher training show statistically significant but mixed associations with readiness outcomes. Overall, pre-service training is associated with higher readiness scores in the language and physical domains but lower scores in the socio-emotional, cognitive, and composite domains, with varying magnitudes. In contrast, in-service training shows positive associations with the socio-emotional and cognitive domains, but negative associations with the remaining domains. The effect of in-service training is comparatively stronger than that of pre-service training. Children taught by teachers with in-service training score about 5.4 points higher in socio-emotional and 1.6 points higher in cognitive domain, but about 4.4 points lower in the language domain and 6.5 points lower in the physical domain. In contrast, children taught by teachers with pre-service training score about 1.5 points higher in the language domain and 1.2 points higher in the physical domain, while scoring about 1.7 points lower in both socio-emotional and cognitive domains, and 0.3 points lower in the composite score.

These findings underscore the interconnected role of teacher qualifications and pre-service and in-service training in shaping learning outcomes, suggesting that higher academic qualifications, combined with strong foundational (pre-service) training and continuous professional development, are critical to improving overall school readiness.

Learning Areas and Classroom Resources: The availability of structured learning areas demonstrates strong but domain-specific effects on children's readiness outcomes:

- **Language Learning Area:** Positively associated with socio-emotional, cognitive, physical, and composite domains, but negatively associated with the language domain. Children from schools with a language learning area score higher across most domains (ranging from approximately 2.9 points higher in the physical domain to 15.5 points higher in the socio-emotional domain), but approximately 6.0 points lower in the language domain.
- **Mathematics Learning Areas:** The availability of a mathematics learning area is negatively and statistically significantly associated with most domains, except for the physical and composite domains. Children from these schools score lower overall, with differences ranging from about 8.0 points lower in the composite scores to 15.8 points lower in the cognitive domain.
- **Science Learning Areas:** Science learning areas show a negative and statistically significant association across all domains. Children score lower in every domain, with differences ranging from approximately 0.1 points lower in the socio-emotional domain to 9.3 points lower in the language domain.
- **Role-Play Learning Area:** Positively and significantly associated with all domains. Children score higher across domains, with gains ranging from about 2.2 points in the physical domain to 7.9 points in the cognitive domain.
- **Creativity Learning Areas:** Positively associated with cognitive, language, and composite domains; not statistically significant in the physical domain; and negatively associated with the socio-emotional domain. Children score higher in the cognitive domain (8.1 points), and composite domains (2.9 points), but approximately 7.2 points lower in the socio-emotional domain.
- **Construction Learning Areas:** Positively associated with socio-emotional and language domains but negatively associated with cognitive and physical domains (positive but not statistically significant for the composite domain). Children score higher in the socio-emotional domain (6.5 points) and the language domain (3.1 points), but lower in the cognitive domain (7.1 points) and the physical domain (2.5 points).
- **Early Childhood Assistants:** The presence of ECED assistants shows a positive and statistically significant association across all domains. Children in these schools generally score higher, with gains ranging from 1.2 points in the socio-emotional domain to 6.3 points in the physical domain.

Overall, these mixed findings suggest that the mere availability of learning areas and resources does not automatically translate into improved outcomes. Rather, how effectively teachers utilize these materials and integrate them into child-centered pedagogy is critical.

From a policy and programmatic perspective, this highlights the need to strengthen teachers' practical skills in using learning materials, ensure proper orientation on the purpose of different learning areas, and provide ongoing pedagogical support so that classroom resources are meaningfully translated into improved school readiness outcomes.

ECED Curriculum Use: In Model 4, the ECED curriculum was incorporated into the governance/support index. However, in Model 5, it was included as a separate variable to align with the 2080 Assessment model. The findings show that the use of the ECED curriculum is strongly and positively associated with school readiness outcomes across all domains. Children from schools that use the ECED curriculum score, on average, approximately 2.4 points higher in the language domain, 2.5 points higher in the cognitive domain, 2.9 points higher in the physical domain, 3.0 points higher in the composite score, and 4.3 points higher in the socio-emotional domain.

These results highlight the critical role of structured, developmentally appropriate curricula in enhancing children's school readiness. From a policy and programmatic perspective, ensuring consistent implementation of the ECED curriculum, along with strengthening teacher training, supervision, and monitoring systems, should be prioritized to improve the quality of ECED delivery and achieve better, more equitable learning outcomes.

ELDS Document Availability: In Models 4 and 5, the availability of the ELDS document was included to assess its effect while controlling for other variables. The findings show a mixed relationship between the availability of the ELDS document and children's readiness outcomes. The association is statistically significant and positive in the language and physical domains, but statistically significant and negative in the socio-emotional and cognitive domains. For the composite score, the association is strongly positive in Model 4 but only moderately positive in Model 5.

On average, children from schools with the ELDS document score about 1.4 to 3.0 points higher in the physical domain and 3.4 to 3.7 points higher in the language domain. In contrast, they score about 0.7 to 1.6 points lower in the cognitive domain and 1.3 to 1.4 points lower in the socio-emotional domain. For the composite score, children score about 1.0 points higher in Model 4, but 0.4 points higher in Model 5.

The findings suggest that the availability of the ELDS document alone may not be sufficient to improve school readiness outcomes consistently across all domains. Rather, the document's effectiveness likely depends on how well it is integrated into classroom practice. From a policy and programmatic perspective, this underscores the importance of strengthening teachers' capacity to use ELDs effectively for lesson planning, assessment, and child-centered pedagogy. Continuous monitoring, mentoring, and instructional support systems are also essential to translate the availability of the ELDS document into improved school readiness outcomes.

Qualitative Findings from Perception Survey

Findings from the perception survey reveal a strong and consistent emphasis on multiple dimensions of school readiness among key stakeholders—headteachers, Grade 1 teachers, ECED teachers, and parents. Overall, most parents frequently emphasize academic readiness, particularly the ability to recognize letters in Nepali and English, identify numbers, and perform basic reading and writing tasks. Alongside this, behavioral and social readiness, such as showing respect, following instructions, and interacting appropriately with teachers and peers, is also commonly highlighted.

Headteachers and Grade 1 teachers are similarly inclined towards academically demanding expectations, with many emphasizing that children should enter Grade 1 with prior knowledge of alphabets (both Nepali and English), the ability to count numbers (often up to 100), and basic reading and writing skills. In some cases, expectations extend to reading simple texts and pronouncing words correctly, reflecting a strong, performance-oriented perspective on readiness. While Grade 1 teachers present a somewhat more balanced view—acknowledging aspects of communication and classroom interaction—their perspectives still lean predominantly toward academic preparedness.

In contrast, ECED teachers provide the most diverse and developmentally oriented perspectives, with clear variation by school type. In institutional schools, ECED teachers often align with the academic expectations of headteachers and Grade 1 teachers. However, in small and community schools, they tend to emphasize a more holistic understanding of readiness, including self-care, social interaction, play, and basic communication, alongside introductory literacy skills.

Upon probing details of school readiness, stakeholders elaborate:

Physical domain: Findings from the perception surveys indicate that headteachers consistently emphasized children’s independence in routine daily tasks—such as toileting, handwashing, eating, and basic play—as critical to effective classroom participation.

Approximately two-thirds of headteachers (64%) and ECED teachers (65%) highlighted the importance of physical and motor skills, including the ability to play and hold a pencil, compared to a slightly higher proportion of primary grade teachers (74%). Similarly, a majority across respondent groups underscored self-care and hygiene-related competencies—such as toileting, handwashing, and eating independently—with this emphasis reported by 68% of headteachers, 71% of primary grade teachers, and 88% of ECED teachers.

Primary grade teachers placed particular emphasis on gross and fine motor skills—such as ball play and early writing skills—alongside self-care abilities, noting that these competencies help prevent classroom disruptions and support smoother instructional processes. In

contrast, ECED teachers highlighted foundational self-help skills as central to school readiness, with relatively greater emphasis on health, hygiene, and play-based physical development than on academic preparedness.

Among parents, approximately three-fourths (76%) emphasized the importance of physical and fine motor skills, such as playing and holding a pencil or pen. An even larger proportion (89%) highlighted self-care and hygiene-related competencies as essential components of school readiness.



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Children should be able to play with a ball, do small exercises, and move according to their age.” (Head Teacher)

“If children cannot sit properly, hold a pencil, or manage basic movements, learning becomes difficult.” (Primary/G1 Teacher)

“They should be able to take care of their hygiene, play freely, and start holding a pencil.” (ECED Teacher)

Language domain: Findings from the perception survey indicate that a large majority of headteachers (84%), primary grade teachers (83%), and ECED teachers (79%) emphasized the importance of clear Nepali speech, basic English proficiency, and conversational skills as key components of school readiness.

Among parents, there was near-universal agreement (95%) on the importance of children demonstrating readiness in clear Nepali communication and basic English skills before entering Grade 1.

Socio-emotional domain: Findings from the perception survey indicate that a large majority of headteachers and primary grade teachers (91% each), as well as ECED teachers (82%), emphasized the importance of social skills—such as sharing, cooperation, and non-aggressive behavior—as essential components of school readiness.

In contrast, fewer respondents highlighted emotional regulation skills, including the ability to control anger and to express feelings appropriately. This was reported by 54% of primary grade teachers, 56% of ECED teachers, and 57% of headteachers. Cultural awareness—such as knowledge of festivals and local traditions—was emphasized by approximately two-thirds of respondents (62% of ECED teachers, 66% of teachers, and 68% of headteachers).

Among parents, there was unanimous emphasis on social skills, with all respondents highlighting the importance of sharing, cooperation, and non-aggressive behavior. A substantial proportion (76%) also underscored cultural awareness, while about two-thirds (63%) emphasized emotional regulation skills, including anger management and appropriate expression of emotions.



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Children should wear clothes that reflect their culture and know about festivals and their importance.” (Head Teacher)

Teachers linked culture to identity:

“Knowing their festivals and traditions helps children feel proud of who they are.” (Primary/G1 Teacher)

ECED teachers emphasized expressive activities:

“They should be able to sing, dance, and talk about their festivals.”

Cognitive domain: Findings from the perception survey indicate that a substantial majority of headteachers (80%) and primary grade teachers (80%) emphasized academic readiness—particularly knowledge of letters, words, and numbers—as an important component of cognitive preparedness for Grade 1. In comparison, a slightly lower proportion of ECED teachers (68%) highlighted academic skills as central to readiness.



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***Head Teachers:** Strongly emphasized foundational academics as essential for grade 1 transition, focusing on letters (ABCD/Nepali letters), numbers (1-100), and basic writing to reduce teacher burden. E.g., "ABCD, 1-100, Nepali letters". – a headteacher from Sindhuli*

***Primary Teachers:** Focused on practical recognition and application, like words and simple math, to build on ECED. E.g., "Basic Barakhari (letters), words". – a teacher from Kathmandu. More urban teachers included English basics.*

***ECED Teachers:** Viewed academics as secondary to play, stressing recognition over mastery. E.g., "Consonants, Alphabet". An ECED teacher from Dolakha. Emphasized child-led learning.*

Approximately three-fourths of respondents also underscored the importance of general knowledge—such as knowing one’s family name and basic personal information—with this emphasis reported by 77% of headteachers, 71% of ECED teachers, and 69% of primary grade teachers.

Among parents, the emphasis on academic readiness was even more pronounced. Nearly all parents (95%) identified children’s knowledge of letters, numbers, and words as a key indicator of preparedness for school. A slightly lower proportion (82%) also emphasized general knowledge, such as knowing one’s family name and other basic personal information.



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Chapter 6

KEY FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter summarizes the key findings and their implications on policy and programmatic interventions.

6.1 Children's readiness across ELDS domains

Overall Developmental Status of Children

1. The assessment of Grade 1 children in Bagmati Province presents a mixed but informative picture of school readiness. Overall, 53.9% of children are on-track in the composite domain, which is broadly consistent with the 2080 Readiness Assessment (49.1% nationally and 54.9% in Bagmati) (Figure 36 in Chapter 5). The proportion of children in the progressing category is also comparable to the national estimates, though slightly higher than the provincial benchmark.
2. Domain wise results show relatively stronger performance in cognitive (64.9% on-track), physical (63.2%), and language (62.2%) domains, while the socio-emotional domain lags significantly behind (39.7%). Although most children demonstrate basic readiness upon entering Grade 1, a substantial proportion remains in transition. The share of children in the progressing category ranges from 31.7% (cognitive) to 43.3% (socio-emotional), with a notably high 17% of children struggling in the socio-emotional development. This highlights a critical window for targeted interventions, as many children could achieve full readiness with appropriate support in ECED and early grades.
3. Several factors may explain the weaker socio-emotional outcomes. Increasing parental and school emphasis on early academic performance appears to limit attention to holistic development. In addition, high rates of labor migration in Nepal contribute to reduced parental supervision and strained family environments (World Bank, 2019). Evidence suggests that 11% of children from migrant households exhibit poor psychological well-being compared to 5% of children from non-migrant households. Such children are also 2.3 to 2.7 times more likely to display behavioral difficulties (Adhikari & Adhikari, 2024).

Data also reveal a decreasing trend of parental engagement with children. According to the NMICS 2019, adult household members engaged in four or more activities with 85.6% of children aged 2-4 years in Bagmati Province, whereas this figure declined to 54.8% in the 2024-2025 NMICS. Fathers' engagement was particularly low and declined further over time (24.0% in 2019 vs. 17.2% in 2024-25). Although mothers' engagement remained comparatively higher than fathers', it also declined during the same period (63.3% in 2019 vs. 45.2% in 2024-25) (NSO, 2026, and CBS 2020). It is worth noting that the level of parental engagement in Bagmati Province remains higher than the national average.

4. These findings underscore the need to systematically integrate play-based and social-emotional learning approaches with ECED and early primary classrooms. At the same time, comparisons with international evidence should be made cautiously, as differences in measurement approaches—such as the use of mean scores versus categorical thresholds—limit direct comparability and reinforce the importance of context-specific interpretation.

Does ELDS Scores Differ by Class Size?

Bivariate findings show that children in large classes demonstrate higher readiness outcomes (54.2% on-track) compared to those in small classes (50.3% on track). This pattern is consistent across domains, with the largest gap observed in the cognitive domain (65.7% on-track in large classes vs. 54.8% in small classes) (Figure 44).

Multivariate analysis also confirms this relationship; however, the effect diminishes in the full model, indicating that school size alone does not independently determine outcomes. Rather, differences appear to reflect underlying structural disparities (as discussed in Chapter 4). Large classes are typically urban, institutional, and better-resourced, whereas small classes are often rural and community-based, with more limited resources.

These findings suggest that readiness outcomes are closely linked to inequalities in learning environments, underscoring the need to strengthen ECED quality in small classes through improved teacher support, learning materials, and infrastructure.

Equity Dimensions and ELDS Scores:

The findings reveal significant disparities across demographic and contextual characteristics.

Age shows the strongest and most consistent association with school readiness, with children above 60 months outperforming younger peers across all domains, particularly

in cognitive and composite scores. This finding is consistent with the 2080 BS Readiness Assessment. However, this pattern raises important concern. The ELDS framework targets children aged 48-60 months, yet children within this target group demonstrate lower-than-expected readiness. More notably, even children above 60 months—who would be expected to achieve near-universal competencies do not reach this level.

This misalignment indicates that readiness outcomes are not meeting age-based expectations, pointing to gaps in the effectiveness and quality of ECED provision. It also reflects underlying equity concerns, as children are not receiving the level or consistency of early learning support needed to achieve expected developmental standards. Addressing this requires stronger adherence to school entry age policies, reinforcement of age-appropriate and targeted interventions, and a systemic focus on improving the quality and equity of ECED services to ensure all children are adequately prepared for school.

Place of residence reveals a significant equity gap in school readiness. Children in urban areas consistently outperform their rural peers across all domains, with particularly wide disparities in cognitive and socio-emotional. Rural children also show markedly higher proportions in the struggling category, especially in these same domains. Multivariate analysis confirm that these differences persist even after controlling for other factors.

These disparities point to systemic inequities in access to quality ECED services, including trained teachers, adequate learning materials, and stimulating learning environments in rural areas. Without targeted and sustained investments to address these gaps, such inequalities are likely to widen over time, reinforcing existing disadvantages. Bridging this rural–urban divide is therefore critical—not only for improving school readiness outcomes, but also for ensuring more equitable learning opportunities and long-term educational trajectories for all children.

Mother tongue is another important predictor of school readiness. Children with Nepali as their mother tongue show higher readiness across composite, language, socio-emotional, and cognitive domains compared to children with other mother tongues, who are more likely to fall into the struggling category. Multivariate analysis confirms that these disparities persist even after controlling for other factors.

These findings point to a clear equity gap linked to language of instruction. When teaching is primarily delivered in Nepali, children from non-Nepali-speaking households face structural barriers to comprehension, participation, and early learning engagement. This language mismatch not only constrains learning outcomes but also reinforces broader inequalities in school readiness from the outset of formal education. Strengthening mother-tongue-

based multilingual instruction in early grades is therefore essential to ensure more equitable learning opportunities and improved readiness outcomes for all children.

Ecological regions: Geographical variation by ecological regions shows a mixed and somewhat inconsistent pattern in school readiness outcomes. In the bivariate analysis, children from the Kathmandu Valley generally outperform those from other regions across most domains, except for language, where children from the Terai region perform at nearly similar levels. Children from the Hill region consistently show lower readiness, particularly in most domains, except the physical domain.

However, the multivariate analysis presents a different pattern. After controlling for other factors, children from the Mountain region perform better than those from the Hill region across most domains and models. This divergence from bivariate results suggests that other contextual and structural factors significantly mediate geographical differences in readiness outcomes.

It is important to note that the sample distribution across ecological zones was uneven, with a relatively low number of children from the Mountain and Terai regions despite the application of PPS sampling¹². This limitation may affect the stability and interpretability of multivariate estimates and constrain robust comparisons across ecological zones.

From a policy and programmatic perspective, these findings underscore the need for context-specific and geographically targeted interventions that address domain-specific disparities across ecological regions. At the same time, from a methodological point of view, the results highlight the importance of ensuring adequate and representative sample sizes across all ecological zones to enable reliable bivariate and multivariate comparisons and strengthen the validity of equity-focused analysis.

Gender differences in school readiness are relatively modest and show mixed patterns. Boys demonstrate slight advantages in cognitive and physical domains, while girls perform better in composite and socio-emotional readiness. However, multivariate analysis indicates that boys experience modest disadvantages across all domains after controlling other factors. This is consistent with the 2080 Readiness Assessment findings.

These findings suggest that gender disparities are not pronounced but remain meaningful, particularly when underlying factors are considered. From a policy and programming perspective, this calls for a **gender-responsive approach** that moves beyond broad comparisons to address specific developmental needs—supporting boys in socio-emotional

12 Out of 592 children who participated in the survey, only 23 were from the Mountain region and 36 were from the Terai region.

development while sustaining girls' gains in cognitive and physical domains. Integrating gender-sensitive pedagogy, classroom practices, and teacher training can help ensure balanced development and more equitable readiness outcomes for both boys and girls.

Do Teacher Characteristics, School characteristics, and School Governance and Support Systems Influence Children's ELDS Scores?

Another question that this research aims to address is to assess whether teacher characteristics, school characteristics, and school governance and support systems influence children's ELDS scores.

Type of school management: Both bivariate and multivariate analyses confirm a statistically significant association between school readiness and school type, with children in community schools scoring lower across all domains. These differences point to persistent systemic disparities in instructional quality, resources, and school management.

However, attributing better performance to institutional schools requires caution, as there are important structural and programmatic differences, particularly in the duration, intensity, ECED curriculum, and nature of ECED provision between the two. The current data does not adequately capture these differences, limiting the ability to draw definitive conclusions about the underlying drivers of observed gaps. This highlights a critical data and measurement gap: future assessments should systematically collect child-level information on ECED exposure (e.g., duration, type, and quality of programmes), Socio-economic status to enable more accurate and meaningful comparisons of school readiness across school types.

Teacher qualification and training: Teacher qualifications and training, captured both through the teacher index and as separate variables in different models, show a positive association with school readiness. Children in schools with high teacher capacity consistently demonstrate better outcomes across all domains, underscoring the catalytic role of teachers in shaping early learning and development.

These findings reinforce that improving ECED quality is fundamentally dependent on strengthening teacher capacity. From a policy and programmatic perspective, this calls for institutionalizing minimum qualification standards, expanding pre-service and continuous professional development, and ongoing mentoring and support systems. Investing in teachers is therefore one of the most effective levers for improving school readiness and achieving more equitable learning outcomes.

School infrastructure: Bivariate analysis shows a strong association between the availability of adequate infrastructure and readiness outcomes. Multivariate results confirm this relationship, though the effect is moderate and varies across domains after controlling for other factors. This suggests that infrastructure alone is not sufficient; its impact depends on complementary factors such as effective school management, governance, and teacher quality, which enable the meaningful use of available resources.

From a policy and programming perspective, this underscores the need not only to ensure equitable provision of infrastructure but also to systematically track infrastructure indicators through EMIS and use these data for targeted planning, resource allocation, and interventions to improve readiness outcomes.

School governance and support structure: Bivariate analysis shows a strong positive association between governance mechanisms and children’s readiness outcomes, while multivariate results reveal a modest but significant negative effect after controlling other factors. This suggests that governance alone is insufficient and interacts with teacher quality and classroom practices.

These findings call for shifting from formal governance structures to effective implementation—aligning leadership, teacher support, and accountability—so governance translates into improved teaching and stronger school readiness.

6.2 Comparison with National and International Evidence

The findings of this assessment are broadly consistent with national and international evidence on early learning and school readiness. National assessments conducted by the Education Review Office show that a considerable proportion of Grade 1 children do not meet expected competencies, with 45.3% progressing and 5.6% struggling nationally, and 43.5% progressing and 1.6% struggling in Bagmati province (ERO, 2024). In Bagmati, 54.9% of children were on track in 2023-24, closely aligning with the current estimate (53.9%). Similar patterns are observed in this assessment, particularly in cognitive and language domains. The strong age gradient, where older children perform better, also reinforces earlier evidence on the importance of age-appropriate school entry and adequate participation in Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) (ERO, 2024; MoEST, 2016).

These findings are consistent with global evidence from UNESCO and UNICEF, which show that school readiness is strongly influenced by socioeconomic status, language background, and the quality of early learning environments (UNESCO, 2020; UNICEF, 2019). The observed disparities by place of residence and ecological zone, with rural and disadvantaged children

lagging behind, closely mirror global trends (UNESCO, 2020). Likewise, lower readiness among non-Nepali-speaking children reflects well-documented challenges associated with learning in a non-native language, underscoring the importance of multilingual education approaches (UNESCO, 2016a).

The positive association between teacher capacity and child readiness aligns with international evidence highlighting the central role of teacher quality, structured pedagogy, and continuous professional development in improving foundational learning outcomes (World Bank, 2018; UNICEF, 2019). Similarly, the influence of infrastructure and governance reflects global findings that well-resourced and effectively managed learning environments contribute to better outcomes (UNESCO, 2020; World Bank, 2018).

Overall, the results reaffirm that school readiness is multi-dimensional, shaped by child, household, and system-level factors. Achieving equitable readiness outcomes therefore required targeted, equity-focused interventions—prioritizing rural children, linguistic minorities, younger entrants, and those in under-resourced schools—to ensure all children enter Grade 1 with the foundational skills needed to succeed.



Chapter 7

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Conclusions

This assessment provides a comprehensive picture of Grade 1 children's school readiness in Bagmati Province, anchored in the Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) and an analysis of key ECED system factors. Overall, the findings present a mixed but consistent pattern: while 53.9% of children are on track, a substantial proportion remain either progressing (44.6% in the composite score) or struggling (1.5% in the composite score). The challenges are particularly evident in the socio-emotional domain, where only 39.7% of children are on track, while 43.3% are progressing, and 17% are struggling. These findings suggest that many children are entering Grade 1 without fully developed foundational competencies, highlighting a critical need and opportunity for early intervention.

The results clearly show that school readiness is multi-dimensional, with stronger performance in cognitive, physical, and language domains but persistent gaps in socio-emotional development. These gaps appear to be linked to systemic factors such as increased academic pressure in the early years and broader social dynamics, including migration-related family disruptions. This underscores the need to rebalance ECED and early-grade practices toward holistic, play-based, and socio-emotional learning approaches, rather than a narrow academic focus.

The study also finds that differences in readiness between small and large classes are largely explained by underlying structural inequalities. While children in larger classes perform better, this advantage diminishes after controlling for other factors, indicating that school size itself is not the driver, but rather disparities in resources, teacher capacity, and learning environments. This reinforces the importance of targeting under-resourced, typically rural community schools to ensure more equitable outcomes.

Equity emerges as a central theme across all findings. Significant disparities are observed by age, location, language, and socio-economic context. Although older children perform better, even some children over 60 months do not achieve expected competency levels, indicating system-wide quality gaps in ECED provision. Similarly, rural children consistently lag behind urban peers, and non-Nepali-speaking children face clear disadvantages, reflecting structural barriers in access to quality services and language of instruction. These patterns highlight the urgent need for equity-focused policies, including adherence to appropriate school entry age, expansion of mother-tongue-based multilingual education, and targeted support for disadvantaged groups.

At the system level, the findings confirm that teachers are the most critical drivers of school readiness. Strong positive associations between teacher qualifications, training, and child outcomes emphasize the need for systematic investments in teacher capacity, including pre-service qualifications, continuous professional development, and ongoing mentoring. Infrastructure and governance also matter, but their effects are conditional, effective outcomes depend on how well these inputs are utilized through strong school leadership, accountability, and classroom practices. This calls for moving beyond inputs to a focus on effective implementation and system coherence.

The assessment also highlights important data and measurement gaps, particularly in capturing differences in ECED exposure across school types and ensuring adequate representation across ecological zones. Strengthening data systems, such as integrating child-level ECED participation data and using EMIS for planning, will be essential for more accurate, evidence-based decision-making.

In conclusion, the findings demonstrate that improving school readiness in Nepal requires a holistic and equity-driven approach. Policy and programme responses must prioritize quality ECED provision, teacher development, inclusive and language-responsive pedagogy, and targeted support to marginalized and hard-to-reach populations. Without such deliberate efforts, existing disparities are likely to persist, limiting children's ability to achieve foundational learning and undermining broader goals of equitable and inclusive education.

7.2 Key Recommendations

This report presents key recommendations derived from the analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data, as well as the relevant literature reviewed.

As the report highlights that a considerable proportion of children fall into the progressing and struggling categories across multiple domains, many of the recommendations are appropriately targeted to support children in these categories. The assessment further identifies several systemic, methodological, and programmatic gaps that affect the quality, comparability, and effectiveness of ECED and school-readiness outcomes. The recommendations are therefore designed to adopt a holistic approach, generating both immediate impacts through equity-focused interventions and longer-term improvements by addressing the underlying factors influencing school readiness outcomes.

The following recommendations are proposed for consideration by relevant stakeholders to improve school readiness outcomes among ECED children.

Recommendation 1: Ensure equitable distribution of resources and strengthen adequate infrastructure in underserved areas.

The analysis reveals significant inequities across school types and locations. Community and small classes, which are often located in rural areas, face shortages in infrastructure, learning materials, trained teachers, and institutional support, while private and larger schools are relatively better resourced. These disparities contribute to differences in children's readiness outcomes. The Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) has also introduced the Education Equity Index¹³, an innovative tool that has proven effective in guiding equity-based resource allocation across the education sector.

Recommended Actions:

- 1.1** Use EMIS data on Minimum Enabling Conditions (MECs) to guide equity-based planning and targeted resource allocation to underserved schools (MoES/CEHRD/Provincial and Local Governments).
- 1.2** Strengthen and expand EMIS to capture comprehensive ECED indicators for regular monitoring of infrastructure, resources, and performance (MoES/CEHRD).
- 1.3** Expand the Education Equity Index to include ECED indicators, enabling systematic tracking of disparities in access, participation, and learning outcomes, and informing evidence-based policy and investment decisions (MoES, ERO).

Recommendation 2: Enforce Age-Appropriate School Entry into ECED and Grade 1

Findings show that age has a strong and incremental association with school readiness outcomes. Although the ELDS framework is designed for children aged 48-60 months, their readiness levels are lower than expected. In some domains, particularly physical and cognitive development, children younger than 48 months perform comparatively better, suggesting possible gaps in age-appropriate programme delivery and implementation.

While the GER in ECED is high (121), the NER remains substantially lower (85.5) (CEHRD 2026), indicating the presence of both under-age and over-age children in ECED classes. Such age variation may affect classroom dynamics and teaching-learning processes.

Although children aged above 60 months perform better than younger groups, many still do not achieve the expected competency levels. This suggests that the issue extends beyond

¹³ <https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/nepals-equity-index-innovations-financing-reach-children-most-need> (accessed April 16, 2026).

age differences alone and points to broader concerns regarding the quality and effectiveness of ECED provision.

These findings underscore the need to enforce age-appropriate school entry alongside improvements in ECED quality.

Recommended Actions:

- 2.1.** Enforce school entry age policies and expand access to quality ECED programmes (MoES/Local Governments).
- 2.2.** Provide targeted support to younger and underprepared children entering Grade 1 to bridge developmental gaps and ensure smoother school transitions (CEHRD/Provincial and Local Government).



Recommendation 3: Align Community and Institutional Schools with the National ECED Policy

Evidence shows significant differences in ECED exposure, particularly in terms of duration and types of provision, creating disparities between children attending community and institutional (private) schools. This highlights the need to mainstream and consistently implement the national ECED policy and curriculum across all school types, as also emphasized in the 2080 Readiness Assessment.

Recommended Actions:

- 3.1** Initiate structured dialogue and collaboration with the Private Boarding Schools Association to facilitate the institutionalization and adoption of the National ECED policy and curriculum within institutional schools (MoES).
- 3.2** Enforce the implementation of the national ECED policy and curriculum across all types of schools, ensuring standardization in ECED provision and reducing disparities in children's early learning experiences (MoES/CEHRD, Provincial and Local Governments).



Recommendation 4: Strengthen understanding and use of the ELDS Framework and ECED curriculum

Train and orient ECED and Grade 1 teachers, headteachers, and SMC members on the ELDS Framework and ECED curriculum. Findings indicate that the availability and effective use of these tools remain inconsistent across schools, limiting their impact on classroom practices and school readiness outcomes.

Recommended Actions:

- 4.1** Integrate comprehensive modules on the ECED curriculum and ELDS Framework into teacher training programmes. Where such content already exists, ensure effective delivery and practical application (CEHRD, CDC).
- 4.2** Ensure that all schools have access to government-approved ECED curriculum and ELDS materials and promote their regular use in classroom planning and assessment (CEHRD, CDC, Provincial and Local Governments).
- 4.3** Embed the use of ELDS and ECED curriculum into training follow-up systems, classroom observations, and supervision mechanisms led by school leadership and education authorities to ensure accountability and sustained implementation (CDC, CEHRD, Provincial and Local Governments).



Recommendation 5: Strengthen teacher training and continuous professional development, with a strong emphasis on play-based pedagogy, inclusive education, and the effective use of curriculum and learning materials.

At the classroom level, teaching practices remain largely focused on rote instruction of foundational skills (reading, writing, and arithmetic), with limited use of child-friendly, play-based approaches. This is reflected in the low proportion of children on track in the socio-emotional domain and the relatively high proportion in the struggling category. Findings from the perception survey further indicate that the majority of headteachers, Grade 1 teachers, and many ECED teachers tend to prioritize literacy and numeracy over holistic development. The findings also reveal a widespread practice of assigning homework to ECED and Grade 1 students.

Given that teachers are a central determinant of school readiness, these findings underscore the need to institutionalize mandatory pre-service qualifications, alongside sustained, high-quality in-service and support systems.

Recommended Actions:

- 5.1** Revise and strengthen teacher training curricula to systematically integrate socio-emotional learning (SEL) and play-based pedagogy across ECED and Grade 1. Where such content already exists, ensure its effective implementation through structured monitoring and support mechanisms (CEHRD and ETCs).
- 5.2** Establish a robust follow-up system to assess training effectiveness, including classroom observations, feedback from students and school leadership. Findings from these assessments should be used to continuously refine and improve subsequent training cycles (CEHRD/ETC).

- 5.3** Institutionalize mandatory pre-service qualifications for ECED teachers, complemented by ongoing in-service training and mentoring, to ensure sustained improvements in classroom practices and school readiness outcomes (MoES, CEHRD, Provincial and Local Governments).
- 5.4** Institutionalize regular monitoring, mentoring and coaching systems, including observation of classroom practices, and discourage rote teaching and homework in ECED (School Leadership, Local Governments).



Recommendation 6: Strengthen implementation of mother-tongue-based bilingual or multilingual education in ECED

Language of instruction remains a critical issue, with Nepali dominating classroom teaching despite many children speaking other mother tongues. Findings show that children whose mother tongue is Nepali perform better than those with other home languages. This mismatch affects comprehension and learning outcomes, underscoring the need to implement mother-tongue-based bilingual or multilingual education in ECED and early grades. Past studies also reaffirm this need and recommend the implementation of multilingual education in ECED and early grades (MoEST, et. al., 2016).

Recommended Actions:

- 6.1** Operationalize multilingual education policies in ECED and early grades (MoEST/ Provincial and Local Governments).
- 6.2** Implement mother-tongue-based bilingual language of instruction based on school mapping and linguistic context (CEHRD, Provincial and Local Governments).
- 6.3** Recruit and deploy teachers proficient in local languages to support effective communication and learning in ECED and early grades (CEHRD, Provincial and Local Governments).
- 6.4** Develop contextualized multilingual learning materials to support multilingual teaching learning (CEHRD, CDC, ETCs, LGs).



Recommendation 7: Address Gender and Other Equity Issues in the ECED Programme

Equity emerges as a central theme across all domains, with significant disparities observed by gender, age, location, language, and socio-economic context. Rural children consistently lag behind urban peers, and non-Nepali-speaking children face clear disadvantages, reflecting structural barriers in access to quality services and the language of instruction. These

patterns underscore the urgent need for equity-focused policies and targeted interventions to ensure inclusive and equitable school readiness outcomes.

Recommended Actions:

- 7.1** Integrate gender-responsive and inclusive pedagogical approaches into teacher training and the ECED curriculum, ensuring that teaching practices address the diverse needs of children across gender and other dimensions of disadvantage (CEHRD, CDC, Provincial Governments).
- 7.2** Design and implement context-specific, equity-focused interventions that address geographic, linguistic, and socio-economic disparities, with particular attention to rural and marginalized communities (Provincial and Local Governments).



Recommendation 8: Strengthen Parental Engagement through Parenting Education Programmes

Findings indicate that parental engagement and support systems are generally weak, suggesting significant scope for improvement. Parents' perceptions—particularly their emphasis on literacy and numeracy—further highlight the need to orient them on the importance of the ECED curriculum and children's holistic development and school readiness outcomes.

Recommended Actions:

- 8.1** Expand and institutionalize parenting education programmes to enhance parental engagement and awareness. These programmes should cover key areas such as ECED policy and curriculum, the importance of holistic child development, and school readiness outcomes, enabling parents to better support their children's learning at home, as well as contribute effectively to ECED centres (CEHRD, Provincial and Local Governments, School Leadership).



Recommendation 9: Strengthen Governance, Accountability and School Leadership

Evidence indicates limited training and engagement of headteachers (36.3% trained on ECED) and School Management Committees (SMCs) (23.1% trained on ECED), weak parental involvement, and inadequate monitoring systems that constrain the effective functioning of ECED centres. Strengthening governance and accountability requires targeted capacity-building, structured monitoring and feedback mechanisms, and enhanced parental awareness to support early childhood development and school readiness outcomes.

Recommended Actions:

- 9.1** Strengthen the capacity of headteachers and SMC members by providing structured training and orientation on ECED, disability inclusive education, ECED curriculum, ELDS Framework, report cards, and their leadership and accountability roles in strengthening ECED services and school readiness (CEHRD, Provincial and Local Governments).
- 9.2** Institutionalize a robust monitoring, follow-up, and tracking system that links school governance to classroom practices. This system should systematically document key observations, findings, and recommendations made by the SMC members during ECED centres visits and ensure their follow-up and implementation at the school level (CEHRD, Provincial and Local Government, School Leadership).


Recommendation 10: Standardize and strengthen assessment and data systems

Several methodological limitations were identified, including small and uneven sample sizes, inconsistent geographic categorizations, modifications in assessment tools, differences in ECED exposure between community and institutional schools (see Recommendation 9), and weak perception survey design. These issues limit comparability across districts, over time, and with global benchmarks. Addressing these challenges requires a more standardized, robust, and integrated assessment and data system aligned with the national ELDS framework (e.g., ELDS).

Recommended Actions:

- 10.1** Standardize sampling approaches and ensure adequate representation by setting minimum sample thresholds for all strata. This includes adjusting sampling strategies (e.g., inflating the representation of underrepresented districts and categories) to improve representativeness and comparability (ERO/MoES).
- 10.2** Harmonize assessment tools by minimizing unnecessary changes and, where revisions are required, retaining key legacy items to allow trend analysis over time. Align indicators with national frameworks such as ELDS to ensure consistency (ERO/MoES).
- 10.3** Strengthen reporting and comparability by complementing categorical results (on-track, progressing, struggling) with mean scores and domain-wise competency measures, enabling comparison across contexts and with global benchmarks (ERO/MoEST).

- 10.4** Align geographic classifications with standard national frameworks to ensure consistency and comparability with other national assessments and datasets (ERO/MoEST).
- 10.5** Collect comprehensive child-level data on socio-economic status, ECED exposure, including duration, type, and quality of provision, to better understand variations in readiness outcomes by school management types (ERO, CEHRD).
- 10.6** Revise and implement a structured perception survey with standardized probes and response formats, and link it to child-level data through unique identifiers. This will strengthen the integration of qualitative insights with quantitative readiness data and improve overall analytical rigor (ERO, CEHRD).

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ANNEXES

ANNEX 1

Tools and background survey (translated version)

Education Review Office Early Learning and Development Standard Assessment Tool

Section A: Background Information

- 1) Name of enumerator:
- 2) Date:
- 3) Districts (Bagmati):
- 4) Name of school (with school code):
- 5) Name of child:

- 6) Is participating in the ELDS assessment?

Yes ☐

No ☐

What are the reasons for non-participation?

- a. The child is not present today
- b. The child rejected participation
- c. The child has a health concern
- d. Others (specify)

- 7) Child's sex: Girl ☐ Boy ☐

- 8) Child's birthday (BS)..... (Day) (Month) (Year)

- 9) Child's Mother Tongue:

01 = Nepalese; 02 = Newari; 03 = Tamang; 04 = Magar; 05 = Tharu; 06 = Maithili;
07 = Gurung;

08 = Chepang; 09 = Thami; 98 = Other, (Specify)

- 10) Has the child attended ECED center before enrolling in Grade 1?

00 = Did not attend (directly enrolled to grade 1); 01 = Attended the ECD/ECED
center of this school;

02 = Attended another ECD center (Specify)

Section B: Learning and Development Standard Assessment

Simple Guide to Enumerator

The enumerator should conduct all the activities of Section B individually for the purpose of quality and reliability. Before conducting the activities, the process and method of doing each activity should be clearly explained to the student and examples should also be shown. For the management and preparation of the working environment, take support from the facilitator. For the operation and assessment of activities, assign score point in the tables given in this assessment tool.

Please remember, all the **procedures and instructions** written in bold letters are to be read/ performed by the enumerators as it is.

Before beginning any assessment, it is important to establish a relaxed and playful rapport with the child. Ask him/her a few questions about them (such as their name, where they live, other subjects of interest) and introduce yourself as follows:

****Namaskar. My name is I live in..... I am also involved in teaching young children like you. I have come to talk with you and see what kind of games you know that you can do. Please tell me what you know.****

Assessment Questionnaire

S. No. 1. Social Development: Self-concept

Activity: Expressing oneself

Materials: None

Procedure and Instruction

- Ask the child his/her age.
- **Now I will ask you some questions. Are you ready? Thank you.**
 - o **How old are you?**
- Score according to the child's performance.
 - o The child can verbally say their age or show it with their fingers. Any response that is around 2 years above or below the estimated age is considered correct.

Question	Answer age (2)	Do not response (-)
A. How old are you?		

S. No. 2. Cognitive Development. Activity: Arranging puzzle**Materials:** Picture of Dog and its 4 equal dimensional puzzle pieces**Procedure and Instruction**

- The enumerator draw the child's attention and show the full picture of the dog. Then hand over the pieces of puzzle to the child and ask him/her to arrange the puzzle according to the picture. Give them 1 minute to complete.
- **Today we will play several games. First, let's play a puzzle. Look at me.** (show the picture of a dog) **This is a dog. Now, I will give you these pieces of the puzzle. You have to make a picture of the dog from these pieces.**
- Score according to the child's performance.
 - o What is important in the scoring is how many pieces are in the right/appropriate place in relation to the whole image (how the parts relate to the whole)
 - o If the child completes the puzzle upside down, that is scored as correct.

Materials	Arrange all pieces correctly (2)	Arrange two or three pieces correctly (1)	Could not arrange (0)	No response (-)
Puzzle				

S. no. 3. Cognitive Development Activity: Knowledge of numbers**Materials:** Separate cards of the different pictures of objects with numbers 4, 3, 6**Procedure and Instruction**

- Show the pictures to the children and consequently ask them how many are there in order.
- **Look at these papers. Here are some pictures.** (Showing them first picture) **How many fish are there?** (Showing second picture) **How many cows are there?** Ask continuously.
- Score according to the child's performance.

Materials	Correct answer (2)	Wrong answer (0)	Do not respond (-)
Second (Fish)			
Third (Cow)			
Fourth (Cat)			

S. no. 4. Language Development Activity: Copying shapes**Materials:** Pencil and A4 sheet***Procedure and Instruction***

- Provide a pencil and A4 sheet to each child to write. Enumerators will write the following shapes and ask the child to copy these in the given paper on by one: 1) Half circle, 2) Slanting line, 3) U-shape
- **Look, here is something written in the paper (half circle). Can you see it?**
Thank you. Now, copy it as shown in the paper. (Continue for the rest of shapes)
- Score according to child's performance
 - o If the child draws the shapes in wrong directions (i.e., half circle, slanting line, U-shapes), that is considered as not correct.

	Shape	Written correctly (2)	Not written correctly (0)	Do not respond (-)
A	Half circle:			
B	Slanting line: /			
C	U-shape: U			

S. no. 5. Cognitive Development Activity: Creative Art**Materials:** A card with five circles.***Procedure and Instruction***

- Attract the attention and provide the card with five circles. Ask children to complete the circles by coming up with different items.
- Provide 2 minutes for the activity.

Look at this paper. Here are five empty circles. Please come up with and draw different objects which you see every day or you imagine, using these circles.

- Score according to the child's performance.

Aspect	Draw 4 or 5 objects (2)	Draw 1-3 objects (1)		Do not draw (-)
A. Fluency: how many responses				
B. Flexibility: how many types of responses				

S. no. 6. Language Development: Pre-reading **Activity:** Naming objects and initial letters**Materials:** A card with the picture of Pigeon (Parewa) and Makai (corn)**Procedure and Instruction**

- Start with the demonstration of the activity by showing the picture of *Parewa* (Pigeon) and saying "this is a pigeon and its first letter is p". Then, show the picture of *Makai* (Maize or corn) and ask children to name the object and identify its first letter. If the child cannot correctly answer the name of the object, enumerators should tell the name of the object before asking its first letter ("This is *Makai*. What is the first letter of *Makai*?")

Now, we will play another game. I will show you a picture of an object and ask you to name the object and its first letter. First, let's practice. (Show Parewa). This is 'Parewa' and its first letter is 'P'. Now, it's your turn.

- o **Please tell me the name of the object** (Show Makai). **What is the first letter of 'Makai'? Thank you.**
- Score according to child's performance

Object		Correct name/letter (2)	Incorrect name/letter (0)	Do not respond (0)
Makai (corn)	Naming			
	Initial letter			

S. no. 7. Language Development: Pre-reading **Activity:** Identifying alphabet**Materials:** Alphabet card**Procedure and Instruction**

- Show the Nepali alphabet cards (ख, घ) in order and let the child identify them.
- **Now, let's identify alphabets. I will show alphabets. You answer what those alphabets are.** (show ख) **Thank you.** (show घ) **Thank you.**
- Score according to the child's performance.

Shown alphabets	Correct answer (2)	Incorrect answer (0)	Do not respond (-)
First Nepali alphabet ख			
Nepali alphabet घ			

S. no. 8. Language Development: Listening Comprehension**Activity:** Comprehending story **Materials:** Short story**Procedure and Instruction**

- Read aloud the short story *slowly, clearly* and *in a fair and neutral rhythm*. Then, sequentially ask the questions, and score as mentioned in the assessment tool.
- Make sure the child can hear you - if you are in a very noisy area get closer to the child
- The story cannot be repeated
- Ask each question *slowly and clearly*. Each question may be repeated ONCE if needed.
- **Now I am going to tell you an interesting story. After I have told you the story I will ask you some questions. I will just read once, so listen carefully, okay?**

There was a fat cat. He always wore a red hat. One day when he was sleeping, a small mouse came silently and stole the hat. The cat woke up to find his hat gone. He got very angry and started chasing the mouse.

- a. **"Who stole the cat's hat?"**
- b. **"What color was the hat?"**
- c. **"Why did the cat chase the mouse?"**

- Score according to child's performance

Questions	Correct answer (2)	Incorrect answer (0)	Do not respond (-)
A. "Who stole the cat's hat?" (Correct: the mouse)			
B. "What color was the hat?" (Correct: red)			
C. "Why did the cat chase the mouse?" (Correct: because the mouse took/stole its hat)			

S. no. 9. Physical Development: Gross motor **Activity:** Hopping on one-foot**Materials:** None***Procedure and Instruction***

- First, show the activity by hopping for 5 times with any one foot. Ask children to hop 5 times with lifting one foot.

Now, we will play lifting one foot up. First, I will perform. Observe carefully. First, I will hop five times by lifting a foot (hop five times). Now, you also hop for 5 times by lifting one foot at one place.

- Score according to child's performance
 - o Count the number of continuous hops (hops during which the child doesn't put his foot down or hold onto something) the child makes.
 - o If children put both of his/her feet down, hold onto something, or move around while hopping, score 0.

Performed activity	Hop 5 times correctly (2)	Hop less than 5 times correctly (1)	Hop incorrectly (0)	Do not respond (-)
Hop				

S. no. 10. Physical Development: Fine motor **Activity:** Forming shape**Materials:** Pencil and the dotted picture of the flag (one fourth of A4 size)***Procedure and Instruction***

Provide children with a dotted flag picture in quarter sized A4 sheets and a pencil. Then ask them to shape by joining dots. Give 1-minute time.

I will give you a paper. The paper has a dotted figure of the flag. Draw the flag by joining the dots properly with straight lines.

- Score according to child's performance based on the two scoring dimensions
 - o In dimension A, if the corners are little rounded, there is a tiny little space between the two lines making the corner or the child extends/overshoots the lines past the corners, you can still accept them as closed corners.
 - o In dimension B, score the performance based on the reference.

Scoring dimensions	3 closed corners (2)	1-2 closed corners (1)	No closed corners (0)	Do not perform (-)
A. Number of closed corners, no gaps				
	Resemble flag by joining dots properly (2)	Resemble flag by joining dots improperly (1)	Do not join dots completely (0)	Do not perform (-)
B. Resemble closely the picture (form flag by joining dots)				

S. no. 11. Physical Development: Gross motor **Activity:** Throwing and catching ball

Materials: Soft ball with 6 to 8 centimeter dimension

Procedure and Instruction

- You and the child should be in two-meter distance facing each other. You will throw the ball to the child, and the child catches it. Then, the child will throw it back to you. Repeat three times.

Child, I will throw this ball towards you. Catch properly. Then you too throw the ball toward me similarly, I will catch.

- Score according to the child's performance.
 - o Throwing properly means that children throw the ball in front of the enumerators' body.

Performed Activity	Throw 3 times properly (2)	Throw less than 3 times properly (1)	Throw 3 times improperly (0)	Do not perform (-)
A. Throwing task				
Performed Activity	Catch 3 times properly (2)	Catch less than 3 times properly (1)	Could not catch all 3 times (0)	Do not perform (-)
B. Catching Task				

S. no. 12. Physical Development: Sensory motor **Activity:** Sensory identification

Materials: None

Procedure and Instruction

- Play the recorded high and low tone sounds in order and ask him/her to identify which is low.

Now, let's play another game.

- o **I will play two sounds, and once you hear them, I will ask you which is in low pitch/tone** (play the sounds one by one). **Ok, please tell me, which was low pitch/tone, the first one or the second one?**
- Score according to the child's performance.

Performed Activity	Identify correctly (2)	Identify incorrectly (0)	Do not perform (-)
A. Identify low tone sound			

S. no. 13. Cognitive Development **Activity:** Sorting shapes and colors

Materials: Picture cards of stars and circles (two red stars and one yellow star, two yellow circles and one red circle)

Procedure and Instruction

- Place the picture cards in front of the child and say:

We're going to play a game where we group pictures together that are similar. Look at these cards and try to arrange all of them in two groups with others that are alike. Use all the cards and put one group here and one group here (physically show with the hands).

- Once the child has completed sorting by one criterion, do NOT move the piles back together and say,

Ok now look at the cards again and try to find another/different way to group these cards.

- Be patient and wait as the child tries to examine how to arrange the cards.
- Score according to the child's performance.

Performed Activity	Sort all cards correctly into the two groups (2)	Sort some but not all cards correctly into the two groups (1)	Not sort cards correctly into the two groups at all (0)	Do not respond (-)
Sort by first criterion				
Sort by second criterion				

S. no. 14. Cognitive Development**Activity:** Concept of Time**Materials:** None**Procedure and Instruction:**

- Tell the day of the assessment. Ask them in order; Which day was yesterday? Which day is tomorrow?

Today is day. Now tell me which day yesterday was. Thank you. Which day is tomorrow?

- Score according to child's performance

Materials	Correct answer (2)	Incorrect answer (0)	Do not respond (-)
Yesterday			
Tomorrow			

S. no. 15. Cognitive Development Activity: Identification of means of transportation**Materials:** Picture of bus and airplane.**Procedure and Instruction:**

- Show the paper with the picture of bus and airplane, then ask about their usage.

Children, look here. There are two pictures in the paper.

(Showing picture of bus and airplane) **For what purpose are they used? What can we do with them?**

- Score according to children's responses.
 - o Correct answers can be anything one can do with the objects and are not limited to the main usage: e.g., correct answers for 'bus' can include but not be limited to going to a relative's house, traveling to school, etc. If a child gives answers related to toy bus or cartoon bus, redirect them to talking about buses in real life.

Materials	Correctly answer both (2)	Correctly answer any one (1)	Incorrect answer (0)	Do not respond (-)
A. Mode of Transportation				

S. no. 16. Social Development **Activity:** Identifying relationship with friends

Materials: None

Procedure and Instruction

- Ask the child to name any three friends.

Children, tell me the names of three of your friends?

- Score according to child's performance
 - o Friends can be from school, community, or other peer networks.
 - o Animals or imaginary friends/cartoons don't count.
 - o If a child repeats the same name don't count it twice unless it is clear that they are referring to two different people.

Tell name of 3 friends clearly (2)	Tell name of 2 or 1 friends clearly (1)	Tell that he/she has no friend (0)	Do not respond (-)

S. no. 17. Emotional Development **Activity:** Empathy

Materials: A picture of crying child lying on the ground

Procedure and Instruction

- Show the picture of a crying child lying on the ground. Do not mention that the child is crying before asking the question:
- **Now let's look at this picture. What would you do if your friend was like this, as shown in the picture?**

If the child is unable to answer or identify what the emotion is, you can give a hint:

This child is feeling hurt, sad, or upset. What would you do if your friend was like this, as shown in the picture?

- Score according to the child's performance.
 - o Appropriate responses are actions that may help the friend feel better: ask how he is doing, hug him, tell him he will be OK, find out if he needs medicine, play with him, hold his hand, get an adult to help him or other acceptable answers.

	Give a correct response for how to make friend feel better (2)	Give an incorrect response for how to make friend feel better (0)	Do not respond (-)
A. Gives one response for how to make friend feel better			

S. no. 18. Emotional Development **Activity:** Emotional awareness/regulation

Materials: None

Procedure and Instruction

- Ask the child what makes him/her feel **scared** (question A). If the child can properly answer, ask him/her what he/she would do to feel better when he/she is feeling **scared** (question B). If the child provides one response (whether appropriate or inappropriate), probe to get a second response. Then, ask the child what makes him/her feel happy (question C).

A. Now I have some questions about feelings. Think for a moment and tell me what makes you feel scared. (*Wait for the child to respond and if answer is unclear ask, "How/why does that make you scared?"*)

If child cannot name something that makes them scared, skip to question c) about happiness).

B. Then ask, What do you do to feel better when you are feeling scared? (*Wait for the child to respond and if answer is unclear ask, "How/why does this make you feel better?"*)

If child cannot name something that makes them feel better, skip to question c) about happiness.

Continue and ask: What else do you do to feel better when you are feeling scared? (*Wait for the child to respond and if answer is unclear ask, "How/why does this make you feel better?"*)

C. Finally, ask: Now tell me what makes you feel happy. (*Wait for the child to respond and if answer is unclear ask, "How/why does that make you happy?"*)

- Score according to the child's responses.
 - o In question B, coping responses are correct if they display that the child is trying to self-soothe: e.g., trying to call someone, run away from a scary situation. Crying is an acceptable response.

	Clearly identify something that makes them scared (2)		Try to identify something that makes them scared but not clear (0)	Do not respond (-)
Question A				
	Gives two appropriate responses (2)	Gives one appropriate response (1)	Gives only inappropriate responses (0)	Do not respond (-)
Question B				
	Clearly identify something that makes them happy (2)		Try to identify something that makes them happy but not clear (0)	Do not respond (-)
Question C				

S. no. 19. Social Development Activity: Solving conflict**Materials:** None**Procedure and Instruction**

- Tell the situation and ask the child how he/she would solve the problem. If the child provides one response (whether appropriate or inappropriate), probe to get a second response.

Now I will ask you to imagine a situation where you are playing with a toy that you like when another child wants to play with that same toy, but there is only one toy. What would you do in this situation? (Prompt ONCE by asking after the first response) Is there anything else you would do? (Do not refer to this other child as "friend".)

- Score according to the child's performance.
 - o Appropriate answers for solving conflict convey that the child understands concepts and can identify concrete strategies for solving the problem. Some examples could be: *talk to the child and ask him to wait, take turns, share, get another toy, and play together with the toy.* An "appropriate response" is one where the child demonstrates an ability to negotiate the situation favorably, in a way that the other child is not hurt or left upset. This often involves sharing of some kind.
 - o *Inappropriate response: push the child away, tell him it's mine and he can't have it.* An "incorrect" includes responses that do not solve the situation favorably or at all. That is, the child who wants to play is left crying, hurt, or neglected.

Gives two appropriate responses (2)	Gives one appropriate response (1)	Gives only inappropriate responses (0)	Do not respond (-)

S. no. 20. Cultural Development Activity: National values and norms (national anthem)**Materials:** Recording of the national anthem***Procedure and Instruction***

- Play the recorded national anthem and ask the child to show you what he/she usually does when hearing the song.

I am going to play one song. I am going to observe what you do, so please show me what you usually do.

- Score according to child's performance.

Response	Stand up and sing along (2)	Sing along without standing (1)	Do not respond (-)
National Anthem			

S. no. 21. Cultural Development Activity: Festival**Materials:** None***Procedure and Instruction***

- Ask the child his/her favorite festivals celebrated in his/her home or neighborhood/ community? Do not probe or give hints when the child cannot elaborate.

What are your favorite festivals celebrated at home or neighborhood/ community? How do you celebrate it?

- Score according to the child's performance.
 - o Festivals include but are not limited to national festivals, local festivals, family events (e.g., Marriage and birthday).
 - o Elaboration of how to celebrate the festival include but not limited to eating special food, wearing special clothes, visiting special places, and dancing.

Whether the answer seems to correctly reflect the usual way of celebration does not matter as far as the child can elaborate how to celebrate it.

Elaborate how to celebrate (2)	Tell the favorite festival but do not elaborate (1)	Give an inappropriate answer (mentions something which is not a festival) (0)	Do not respond (-)

ECED center background questionnaire - 2082

1) Name of enumerator:

2) Date:

1. Target ECD Centre/School ¹⁴ Basic Information		
B12.	District	
B13.	Name of (mother) school	
B14.	School code of (mother) school	_____ (code)
B15.	Type of ECD center	01 = Attached to the mother school 02 = Not attached to the mother school
B16.	Name of ECD center	
B17.	School type	01 = Community (public) school/center 02 = Institutional (private) school/center 98 = Other (specify)
B18.	School open days throughout the year	(Days)
	Throughout the year, total number of days of study	 (Days)
	The time children spend in ECED each day ---hours	(Hours)
B19.	School headteacher/principal has completed training or orientation on ECD/ECED (in any year so far)	00 = No 01 = Yes

¹⁴ The definition of the target ECD Centre/School: the ECD Centre/School that the majority of assessed children (in grade 1 in academic year 2081) attended

1. Target ECD Centre/School ¹⁴ Basic Information							
BI10.	School management committee (SMC) has received training or orientation on ECD/ECED (in any year so far)	00 = No 01 = Yes 98 = There is no SMC					
BI11.	ECD class structure						
	BI12_A. How many ECD classes did the school/center have in the academic year 2081?	BI12_B. What was the type of ECD class? (For each class indicated)	BI12_C. What was the main age group of the ECD class? (For each class indicated)	BI12_D. How many children were enrolled in the ECD class? (For each class indicated)	BI12_E. How many teachers did the ECD class have? (For each class indicated)	BI12_F. How many caretakers (aayas) did the ECD class have? (For each class indicated)	BI12_G. Number of children with disabilities (moderate to severe) in the class. (For each class indicated)
		01 = Playgroup (PG) 02 = Nursery 03 = LKG 04 = UKG 05 = Sishu kaksha (infant class) 06 = Pre-primary class 07 = Bal bikas kendra (ECD center) 98 = Others (Please specify)					

2. ECD Teachers' Information (in the target ECD class ¹⁵)						
T11. Teacher's Gender	T12. Year of Birth (Note: in Nepali calendar)	T13. Disability status Do you identify yourself as a person with a disability?	T14. Working Period as ECD teachers (Note: Round off in years)		T15. Educational qualification	T16. Pre-service training (training before starting career as an ECD teacher)
			T14_A. Total period	T14_B. At the current ECD center		
01 = Male 02 = Female 98 = Others		00 = No 01 = Yes			01 = Less than grade 8 02 = Grade 8 03 = Grade 10 04 = Grade 12 05 = Bachelor's degree in education 06 = Bachelor's degree in non-education 07 = Master's degree in education 08 = Master's degree in non-education 98 = Others (please specify)	T16_A. Did you receive pre-service training in ECED? T16_B. Duration of training (days) T16_B. Provider of pre-service training
					00 = No (skip T16_B) 01 = Yes	01 = Private training institutions 02 = NGOs/development partners 03 = University 04 = Government Office 98 = Others List of Universities 03_a = Kathmandu University 03_b = TU, Padma Kanya campus 03_c = Open University 03_d = Others (specify)

15 Definition of the target ECD class: the ECD classroom that the majority of assessed children (in grade 1 in academic year 2080) attended in the academic year 2079

Continued						
T17. In-service training (training after starting the ECD teacher career)				T18. Continuous supervision or coaching (visit classroom and provide feedback) in the last year (2081)		T19. Training to address the needs of children with moderate to severe additional needs/disabilities
T17_A. Number of training 00 = Not taken (skip T18_B-D)	T17_B. Provider (For each training)	T17_C. Year of training (For each training) (Note: In Nepali calendar)	T17_D. Duration of training in days (For each training)	T18_A. How many supervision or coaching visits did you receive in the last year (2081)? 00 = None (skip T18_B)	T18_B. Provider	
	01 = Private training institutions 02 = NGOs/ Development Partners 03 = University 04=DEO/EDCU/ Education Training Center/ Local government 98: Others (specify)				01 = Local Government 02 = Provincial Education Training Center 03 = NGO/INGO 04 = Private institution (please specify) 98 = Others (please specify)	00 = No 01 = Yes

4. Characteristics of the target class			
TC1_A.	What was the primary language of instruction in class in the last school year (2081)?	01 = Nepalese 02 = English 03 = Tamang 04 = Bajjika	
TC1_B.	What was the secondary language of instruction in class in the last school year (2079)?	01 = Nepalese 02 = English 03 = Tamang 98 = Other, Specify	
TC2.	Was the ECD class operated with other classes in the last school year (2081)?	00 = No 01 = Yes	If 00, skip TC2_B.
TC2_B.	With which grades or classes was the ECD class operated in the last school year (2081)?	01 = With Grade 1 02 = With other ECD classes, such as nursery or playgroups for younger children 98 = Other, Specify	
TC3.	Did the ECD/ECD facility have a playground outside available for all children?	00 = No 01 = Yes	
	If yes, estimated area (of the playground)		
TC4.	Did the ECD class have sufficient space for <i>all</i> children (2 square meter space per child) inside the room in the last school year (2081)?	00 = No 01 = Yes	
TC5.	How was the seating arrangement of the ECED in last year's academic session (2081)?	01 = Carpet only 02 = Carpet and table both 03 = Carpet with pre-foam 04 = Table and chair as per children's height 98 = Others (specify)	
	Were learning areas set aside for children's learning in the ECD class last year's academic session (2081)?	00 = No 01 = Yes	

4. Characteristics of the target class			
	If Yes, how many learning areas?	(Number)	
TC6_A.	In the last academic year (2081), was there a language area available in the ECD classroom with language learning materials (such as picture cards, letter boards, word cards, picture books) for children?	00 = No 01 = Yes but insufficient (less than 10 items) 02 = Yes and sufficient (10 or more items)	
TC6_B.	Did the ECD class have a learning area for mathematics with relevant learning/play materials (number board, counting chart, abacus, etc.) in the last school year (2081)?	00 = No 01 = Yes but insufficient (less than 10 items) 02 = Yes and sufficient (10 or more items)	
TC6_C.	Did the ECD class have a learning area for role play with relevant learning/play materials (dolls, puppets, animal sets) in the last school year (2081)?	00 = No 01 = Yes but insufficient (less than 10 items) 02 = Yes and sufficient (10 or more items)	
TC6_D.	Did the ECD class have a learning area for science with relevant learning/play materials (plants, colorful objects, animal sets) in the last school year (2081)?	00 = No 01 = Yes but insufficient (less than 10 items) 02 = Yes and sufficient (10 or more items)	
TC6_E.	Did the ECD class have a learning area for creativity with relevant learning/play materials (music instruments, crayons, pictures) in the last school year (2081)?	00 = No 01 = Yes but insufficient (less than 10 items) 02 = Yes and sufficient (10 or more items)	
TC6_F.	Did the ECD class have a learning area for construction with puzzles and building blocks in the last school year (2081)?	00 = No 01 = Yes but insufficient (less than 10 items) 02 = Yes and sufficient (10 or more items)	
TC6_G.	Did the ECD class have other learning areas (specify) in the last school year (2081)?	00 = No 01 = Yes but insufficient (less than 10 items) 02 = Yes and sufficient (10 or more items) Specify the area(s) _____	If 00, skip TC6_H. If 01 or 02, specify the area
TC7.	Did the ECD class have a curriculum in the last school year (2081)?	00 = No 01 = Yes	If 00, skip TC7_B and TC7_C.
TC7_B.	Was it the national ECED 2077 curriculum?	01 = Yes 98 = Others (Specify)	

4. Characteristics of the target class			
TC7_C.	For what purpose did you use the curriculum last year (2081)? (multiple options)	00 = Not using it for any purposes 01 = Using it to plan classroom activities 02 = Using it to reach learning and development objectives 98 = Others (Specify)	
TC8.	Did the ECD class have the Early Learning and Development Standards document in the last school year (2081)?	00 = No 01 = Yes	If 00, skip TC8_B.
TC8_B.	How did you use the ELDS in the last school year (2081)? (multiple options)	00 = Not using it for any purposes 01 = Using it with report cards (assessing each child's developmental status and share it with parents) 02 = Using it to plan classroom activities 98 = Others (Specify)	
TC9.	How much homework did you give your students in the last school year (2081)?	00 = No homework given at all 01 = A couple of times a week 02 = Daily 98 = Others (Specify)	
TC9_B.	What kind of homework did you give?	01 = Hand writing 02 = Memorizing letters, words, numbers 03 = Various creativity/constructive tasks 04 = Project work 05 = Story reading from parents 99 = others (specify)	
TC10.	Did the ECD class maintain a portfolio/record for individual children in the last school year (2081)?	00 = No 01 = Yes	
TC11.	Did the ECD class have a first aid box for basic treatment for injury/accident in the last school year (2081)?	00 = No 01 = Yes	
TC12.	Did the ECD facility provide safe water for drinking in the last school year (2081)?	00 = No 01 = Yes	

4. Characteristics of the target class				If 00, skip TC12_B and TC12_C
TC13.	Did the ECD facility have toilets in the last school year (2081)?	00 = No 01 = Yes		
TC13_B.	Were the toilets available for boys and girls separately in the last school year (2081)?	00 = No 01 = Yes		
TC13_C.	Were the toilets child-friendly (i.e., smaller size) in the last school year (2081)?	00 = No 01 = Yes		
TC14.	Was lunch provided at the ECD facility in the last school year (2081)?	00 = No 01 = Yes. Provided by the facility free of charge 02 = Yes. Provided by the facility with charge to families 03 = Yes. Brought from home		
TC15.	Were snacks provided at the ECD facility in the last school year (2081)?	00 = No 01 = Yes. Provided by the facility free of charge 02 = Yes. Provided by the facility with charge to families 03 = Yes. Brought from home		
TC16.	Did the ECD class use any textbooks or workbooks in the last school year (2081)?	00 = No 01 = All in One 98 = Others (Specify)		
TC17_A.	How often did the ECD class receive support from the SMC for providing resources, such as learning and play materials and funds in the last school year (2081)?	00 = Not at all, 01 = Occasionally (a few times a year) 02 = Monthly (every month) 03 = Weekly (every week) 04 = Daily (every day or almost every day)		
TC17_B.	How often did the ECD class receive supervision visits from SMC in the last school year (2081)?	00 = Not at all, 01 = Occasionally (a few times a year) 02 = Monthly (every month) 03 = Weekly (every week) 04 = Daily (every day or almost every day)		

4. Characteristics of the target class			
TC17_C.	How often did the ECD class receive support from the SMC for addressing needs of children with disabilities in the last school year (2081)?	00 = Not at all, 01 = Occasionally (a few times a year) 02 = Monthly (every month) 03 = Weekly (every week) 04 = Daily (every day or almost every day)	(skip if B112_G= 0)
TC18_A.	How often did the ECD class receive parents' support for school meals in the last school year (2081)?	00 = Not at all, 01 = Occasionally (a few times a year) 02 = Monthly (every month) 03 = Weekly (every week) 04 = Daily (every day or almost every day)	
TC18_B.	How often did parents engage in classroom activities (storytelling, sharing local knowledge, etc.) in the last school year (2081)?	00 = Not at all, 01 = Occasionally (a few times a year) 02 = Monthly (every month) 03 = Weekly (every week) 04 = Daily (every day or almost every day)	
TC18_C.	How often did the ECD class receive parents' support in providing learning materials (stationery, local resources, etc.) in the last school year (2081)?	00 = Not at all, 01 = Occasionally (a few times a year) 02 = Monthly (every month) 03 = Weekly (every week) 04 = Daily (every day or almost every day)	

ANNEX 2:**Survey findings details****Annex Table 1.***Distribution children by their participation in the survey by district, ELDS 2082*

District		Participation in Assessment		Total
		Yes	No	
Kathmandu	#	176	18	194
	%	90.7	9.3	100
Bhaktapur	#	49	1	50
	%	98.0	2.0	100
Lalitpur	#	29	10	39
	%	74.4	25.6	100
Chitwan	#	77	6	83
	%	92.8	7.2	100
Makwanpur	#	23	17	40
	%	57.5	42.5	100
Kavrepalanchok	#	21	4	25
	%	84.0	16.0	100
Sindhupalchowk	#	18	5	23
	%	78.3	21.7	100
Sindhuli	#	57	9	66
	%	86.4	13.6	100
Ramechhap	#	25	10	35
	%	71.4	28.6	100
Dolakha	#	34	1	35
	%	97.1	2.9	100
Rasuwa	#	30	-	30
	%	100.0	0.0	100
Dhading	#	31	-	31
	%	100.0	0.0	100
Nuwakot	#	22	-	22
	%	100.0	0.0	100
Total	#	592	81	673
	%	88.0	12.0	100

Size		Participation in Assessment		Total
		Yes	No	
Large	#	490	66	556
	%	88.1	11.9	100
Small	#	102	15	117
	%	87.2	12.8	100

Type		Participation in Assessment		Total
		Yes	No	
Community	#	345	62	407
	%	84.8	15.2	100
Institutional	#	247	19	266
	%	92.9	7.1	100

Ecozone		Participation in Assessment		Total
		Yes	No	
Hill	#	533	76	609
	%	87.5	12.5	100
Mountain	#	23	1	24
	%	95.8	4.2	100
Terai	#	36	4	40
	%	88.0	12.0	100

Annex Table 2.

Percentage distribution of surveyed children by selected characteristics, ELDS 2082

Characteristics	Number	Percent (Unweighted)	Percent (Weighted)
Gender			
Girl	298	50.3	49.2
Boy	294	49.7	50.8
Mother-tongue			
Nepali	439	74.2	78.3
Other Languages	153	25.8	21.7
Place of residence			
Urban	395	66.7	81.1
Rural	197	33.3	18.9

Characteristics	Number	Percent (Unweighted)	Percent (Weighted)
District			
Kathmandu	176	29.7	56.8
Chitwan	77	13.0	13.1
Sindhuli	57	9.6	9.6
Bhaktapur	49	8.3	4.2
Dolakha	34	5.7	2.5
Dhading	31	5.2	2.4
Rasuwa	30	5.1	2.2
Lalitpur	29	4.9	2.3
Ramechhap	25	4.2	1.4
Makwanpur	23	3.9	2.0
Nuwakot	22	3.7	1.1
Kavrepalanchok	21	3.5	1.0
Sindhupalchok	18	3.0	1.4
Ecozone			
Mountain	23	3.9	1.4
Hill*	279	47.1	29.1
Kathmandu Valley	254	42.9	63.3
Terai	36	6.1	6.1
Size of School			
Large	490	82.8	93.3
Small	102	17.2	6.7
Management Type			
Institutional	247	41.7	60.8
Community	345	58.3	39.2
Age Group*			
Less than 48 months	34	5.8	2.7
40-60 months	92	15.6	9.8
More than 60 months	462	78.6	87.5
Mean age (month)	588	70.59	72.24
		(95% CI: 69.41-71.77)	(95% CI: 72.14 - 72.33)
Median age (month)	588	71	72
Total (Bagmati Province)	592	100	100

* Age data were missing four children; therefore, proportions are calculated based on a denominator of 588.

Annex Table 3.*Summary of Qualitative Respondents*

Type/Size	Parents			Headteacher			Teacher			ECD Teacher			Grand Total		
	Sex		Grand Total	Sex		Grand Total	Sex		Grand Total	Sex		Grand Total	Sex		Grand Total
	F	M		F	M		F	M		F	M		F	M	
Community	20	7	27	5	27	32	17	10	27	24	-	24	66	44	110
Large	13	3	16	3	21	24	12	7	19	17	-	17	45	31	76
Small	7	4	11	2	6	8	5	3	8	7	-	7	21	13	34
Institutional	9	2	11	4	8	12	8	1	9	10	-	10	31	11	42
Large	8	2	10	4	6	10	6	1	7	8	-	8	26	9	35
Small	1	-	1	-	2	2	2	-	2	2	-	2	5	2	7
Grand Total	29	9	38	9	35	44	25	11	36	34	-	34	97	55	152
Large Total	21	5	26	7	27	34	18	8	26	25	-	25	71	40	111
Small Total	8	4	12	2	8	10	7	3	10	9	-	9	26	15	41

Annex Table 4.*Percentage Distribution of Schools by Size and by Selected Background Characteristics, 2082 (unweighted)*

Background Characteristics	Small	Large	Total
Primary Language (2081)			
Nepali	91.3%	85.3%	86.8%
English	4.3%	8.8%	7.7%
Tamang	4.3%	4.4%	4.4%
Bajjika	0.0%	1.5%	1.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91
Secondary Language (2081)			
English	17.4%	19.1%	18.7%
Nepali	65.2%	69.1%	68.1%
Tamang	17.4%	7.4%	9.9%
Others	0.0%	4.4%	3.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91
ECED type			
Attached to mother school	100.0%	97.1%	97.8%
Different school	0.0%	2.9%	2.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91
ECED type			
Playgroup	18.2%	25.4%	23.6%
Nursery	36.4%	31.3%	32.6%
LKG	0.0%	1.5%	1.1%
UKG	0.0%	1.5%	1.1%
Sishu Kaksha	22.7%	23.9%	23.6%
Preprimary	4.5%	4.5%	4.5%
ECED center	18.2%	11.9%	13.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91
ECED mixed			
No	73.9%	73.5%	73.6%
Yes	26.1%	26.5%	26.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91
ECED mixed grade			
Grade 1	66.7%	100.0%	91.7%
Grade 2	33.3%	0.0%	8.3%

Background Characteristics	Small	Large	Total
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	6	18	24
HT ECED training			
No ECED training	56.5%	66.2%	63.7%
ECED trained	43.5%	33.8%	36.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91
SMC ECED training			
No ECED training	82.6%	72.1%	74.7%
ECED trained	17.4%	25.0%	23.1%
Others	0.0%	2.9%	2.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91
ECED number			
0	4.3%	1.5%	2.2%
1	78.3%	45.6%	53.8%
2	4.3%	13.2%	11.0%
3	8.7%	16.2%	14.3%
4	4.3%	23.5%	18.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91
ECED teacher sex			
Male	4.3%	7.4%	6.6%
Female	95.7%	91.2%	92.3%
Others	0.0%	1.5%	1.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91
Teachers with Disability			
No	100.0%	98.5%	98.9%
Yes	0.0%	1.5%	1.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91
Training on Disability Management			
No	91.3%	92.6%	92.3%
Yes	8.7%	7.4%	7.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91

Background Characteristics	Small	Large	Total
Teachers' qualification			
Less than grade 8	0.0%	1.5%	1.1%
Grade 10	17.4%	5.9%	8.8%
Grade 12	73.9%	64.7%	67.0%
Bachelor in education	4.3%	13.2%	11.0%
Bachelor in non-edu	4.3%	11.8%	9.9%
Master in education	0.0%	1.5%	1.1%
Master in non-edu	0.0%	1.5%	1.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91
Play ground			
Yes	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total	22	67	89
Classroom			
No	39.1%	23.5%	27.5%
Yes	60.9%	76.5%	72.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91
Sitting			
Carpet only	21.7%	19.1%	19.8%
Carpet with pre-foam	13.0%	26.5%	23.1%
Table chair as per children's height	13.0%	13.2%	13.2%
Carpet & table both	52.2%	39.7%	42.9%
Others	0.0%	1.5%	1.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91
Learning area			
No	43.5%	54.4%	51.6%
Yes	56.5%	45.6%	48.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91
Number of learning area			
1	7.7%	0.0%	2.3%
2	0.0%	16.1%	11.4%
3	30.8%	12.9%	18.2%
4	30.8%	32.3%	31.8%
5	0.0%	12.9%	9.1%
6	23.1%	25.8%	25.0%
7	7.7%	0.0%	2.3%

Background Characteristics	Small	Large	Total
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91
Language material	(If learning area=yes)		
Yes but not sufficient for all - less than 10	53.8%	54.8%	54.5%
Yes sufficient for all - more than 10	46.2%	45.2%	45.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	13	31	44
Numeric material			
Not available	7.7%	3.2%	4.5%
Yes but not sufficient for all - less than 10	46.2%	54.8%	52.3%
Yes sufficient for all - more than 10	46.2%	41.9%	43.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	13	31	44
Role play material			
Not available	0.0%	9.7%	6.8%
Yes but not sufficient for all - less than 10	61.5%	58.1%	59.1%
Yes sufficient for all - more than 10	38.5%	32.3%	34.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	13	31	44
Science material			
Not available	23.1%	16.1%	18.2%
Yes but not sufficient for all - less than 10	38.5%	45.2%	43.2%
Yes sufficient for all - more than 10	38.5%	38.7%	38.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	13	31	44
Creative material			
Not available	30.8%	9.7%	15.9%
Yes but not sufficient for all - less than 10	30.8%	54.8%	47.7%
Yes sufficient for all - more than 10	38.5%	35.5%	36.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	13	31	44
Constructive material			
Not available	23.1%	16.1%	18.2%
Yes but not sufficient for all - less than 10	38.5%	41.9%	40.9%
Yes sufficient for all - more than 10	38.5%	41.9%	40.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	13	31	44

Background Characteristics	Small	Large	Total
Other material			
Not available	53.8%	41.9%	45.5%
Yes but not sufficient for all - less than 10	38.5%	35.5%	36.4%
Yes sufficient for all - more than 10	7.7%	22.6%	18.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	13	31	44
ECD curricula use			
No	30.4%	35.3%	34.1%
Yes	69.6%	64.7%	65.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91
Curricula2077 use			
Yes	100.0%	90.9%	93.3%
Others	0.0%	9.1%	6.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	16	44	60
Curricula purpose			
Used for activities in the classroom	0.0%	6.5%	4.5%
Used for children learning and developmental purpose	100.0%	93.5%	95.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	13	31	44
Homework			
Not at all	4.3%	2.9%	3.3%
1-2 times weekly	8.7%	5.9%	6.6%
Daily	87.0%	89.7%	89.0%
Others	0.0%	1.5%	1.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91
First aid box			
No	21.7%	11.8%	14.3%
Yes	78.3%	88.2%	85.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91
Drinking water			
No	4.3%	1.5%	2.2%
Yes	95.7%	98.5%	97.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91

Background Characteristics	Small	Large	Total
Toilet			
No	4.3%	1.5%	2.2%
Yes	95.7%	98.5%	97.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91
Gender toilet			
No	27.3%	14.9%	18.0%
Yes	72.7%	85.1%	82.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	22	67	89
CF Toilet			
No	50.0%	32.8%	37.1%
Yes	50.0%	67.2%	62.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	22	67	89
Midday meal			
No	4.3%	0.0%	1.1%
Provided free of cost	78.3%	64.7%	68.1%
Provided with cost borne by family	8.7%	29.4%	24.2%
Asked to bring from home	8.7%	5.9%	6.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91
Additional meal			
No	95.7%	76.5%	81.3%
Provided free of cost	4.3%	4.4%	4.4%
Provided with cost borne by family	0.0%	16.2%	12.1%
Asked to bring from home	0.0%	2.9%	2.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91
Exercise book			
No	8.7%	23.5%	19.8%
All in one	73.9%	60.3%	63.7%
Others	17.4%	16.2%	16.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91
SMC support			
No support at all	78.3%	54.4%	60.4%
Support received as per need but not sufficient	17.4%	25.0%	23.1%
Sufficient support received	4.3%	20.6%	16.5%

Background Characteristics	Small	Large	Total
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91
SMC observation			
No support at all	26.1%	26.5%	26.4%
Sometimes - 1-2 times a year	43.5%	22.1%	27.5%
Monthly basis - each month	21.7%	26.5%	25.3%
Weekly basis - each week	8.7%	13.2%	12.1%
Daily basis - almost every day	0.0%	11.8%	8.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91
SMC disability support			
No support at all	66.7%	44.4%	47.6%
Sometimes - 1-2 times a year	0.0%	11.1%	9.5%
Monthly basis - each month	0.0%	16.7%	14.3%
Weekly basis - each week	33.3%	11.1%	14.3%
Daily basis - almost every day	0.0%	16.7%	14.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	3	18	21
Parent support meal			
No support at all	87.0%	60.3%	67.0%
Sometimes - 1-2 times a year	13.0%	8.8%	9.9%
Monthly basis - each month	0.0%	14.7%	11.0%
Weekly basis - each week	0.0%	2.9%	2.2%
Daily basis - almost every day	0.0%	13.2%	9.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91
Parent support other			
No support at all	95.7%	77.9%	82.4%
Sometimes - 1-2 times a year	0.0%	10.3%	7.7%
Monthly basis - each month	0.0%	7.4%	5.5%
Weekly basis - each week	4.3%	1.5%	2.2%
Daily basis - almost every day	0.0%	2.9%	2.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91
Parent support sport			
No support at all	95.7%	83.8%	86.8%
Sometimes - 1-2 times a year	0.0%	5.9%	4.4%
Monthly basis - each month	4.3%	10.3%	8.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91

Background Characteristics	Small	Large	Total
Location (rural/urban)			
Rural	65.2%	39.7%	46.2%
Urban	34.8%	60.3%	53.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91
Ecozone			
Mountain	17.4%	1.5%	5.5%
Hill*	69.6%	52.9%	57.1%
Kathmandu Valley	13.0%	39.7%	33.0%
Terai	0.0%	5.9%	4.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91
Type			
Community	87.0%	64.7%	70.3%
Institutional	13.0%	35.3%	29.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91
Age group ECED			
12–24	0.0%	6.8%	5.2%
24–36	38.9%	35.6%	36.4%
36–48	44.4%	54.2%	51.9%
48–60	16.7%	3.4%	6.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91
Teacher agegrp			
21 to 30	34.8%	27.9%	29.7%
31 to 40	52.2%	41.2%	44.0%
41 to 66	13.0%	30.9%	26.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91
Pre-service training on ECED			
No	34.8%	42.6%	40.7%
Yes	65.2%	57.4%	59.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91
In-service training on ECED			
No	39.1%	14.7%	20.9%
Yes	60.9%	85.3%	79.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91

Background Characteristics	Small	Large	Total
ECED mixed grade			
Mixed with grade 1	17.4%	26.5%	24.2%
Mixed with grade 2	8.7%	0.0%	2.2%
Operated separately	73.9%	73.5%	73.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	23	68	91

Annex Table 5.

Percentage Distribution of Schools by Management Type and by Selected Background Characteristics, 2082 (unweighted)

Background Characteristics	Community	Institutional	Total
Primary Language (2081)			
Nepali	90.6%	77.8%	86.8%
English	1.6%	22.2%	7.7%
Tamang	6.2%	0.0%	4.4%
Bajjika	1.6%	0.0%	1.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	64	27	91
Secondary Language (2081)			
English	65.6%	74.1%	68.1%
Nepali	15.6%	25.9%	18.7%
Tamang	14.1%	0.0%	9.9%
Others	4.7%	0.0%	3.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	64	27	91
ECED type			
Attached to mother school	100.0%	92.6%	97.8%
Different school	0.0%	7.4%	2.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	64	27	91
ECED type			
Playgroup	11.3%	51.9%	23.6%
Nursery	29.0%	40.7%	32.6%
LKG	0.0%	3.7%	1.1%
UKG	0.0%	3.7%	1.1%
Sishu Kaksha	33.9%	0.0%	23.6%
Preprimary	6.5%	0.0%	4.5%
ECED center	19.4%	0.0%	13.5%

Background Characteristics	Community	Institutional	Total
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	62	27	89
ECED mixed			
No	71.9%	77.8%	73.6%
Yes	28.1%	22.2%	26.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	64	27	91
ECED mixed grade			
Grade 1	88.9%	100.0%	91.7%
Grade 2	11.1%	0.0%	8.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	18	6	24
HT ECED training			
No ECED training	76.6%	33.3%	63.7%
ECED trained	23.4%	66.7%	36.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	64	27	91
SMC ECED training			
No ECED training	84.4%	51.9%	74.7%
ECED trained	15.6%	40.7%	23.1%
Others	0.0%	7.4%	2.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	64	27	91
ECED number			
0	3.1%	0.0%	2.2%
1	75.0%	3.7%	53.8%
2	14.1%	3.7%	11.0%
3	3.1%	40.7%	14.3%
4	4.7%	51.9%	18.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	64	27	91
ECD teacher sex			
Male	9.4%	0.0%	6.6%
Female	89.1%	100.0%	92.3%
Others	1.6%	0.0%	1.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	64	27	91

Background Characteristics	Community	Institutional	Total
Teachers with Disability			
No	100.0%	96.3%	98.9%
Yes	0.0%	3.7%	1.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	64	27	91
Training on Disability Management			
No	96.9%	81.5%	92.3%
Yes	3.1%	18.5%	7.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	64	27	91
Teachers' qualification			
Less than grade 8	1.6%	0.0%	1.1%
Grade 10	9.4%	7.4%	8.8%
Grade 12	73.4%	51.9%	67.0%
Bachelor in education	9.4%	14.8%	11.0%
Bachelor in non-edu	3.1%	25.9%	9.9%
Master in education	1.6%	0.0%	1.1%
Master in non-edu	1.6%	0.0%	1.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	64	27	91
Play ground			
Yes	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total	62	27	89
Classroom			
No	34.4%	11.1%	27.5%
Yes	65.6%	88.9%	72.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	64	27	91
Sitting			
Carpet only	23.4%	11.1%	19.8%
Carpet with pre-foam	23.4%	22.2%	23.1%
Table chair as per children's height	4.7%	33.3%	13.2%
Carpet & table both	46.9%	33.3%	42.9%
Others	1.6%	0.0%	1.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	64	27	91

Background Characteristics	Community	Institutional	Total
Learning area			
No	54.7%	44.4%	51.6%
Yes	45.3%	55.6%	48.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	64	27	91
Number of learning area			
1	3.4%	0.0%	2.3%
2	6.9%	20.0%	11.4%
3	13.8%	26.7%	18.2%
4	31.0%	33.3%	31.8%
5	10.3%	6.7%	9.1%
6	31.0%	13.3%	25.0%
7	3.4%	0.0%	2.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	29	15	44
Language material	(If learning area=yes)		
Yes but not sufficient for all - less than 10	58.6%	46.7%	54.5%
Yes sufficient for all - more than 10	41.4%	53.3%	45.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	29	15	44
Numeric material			
Not available	6.9%	0.0%	4.5%
Yes but not sufficient for all - less than 10	55.2%	46.7%	52.3%
Yes sufficient for all - more than 10	37.9%	53.3%	43.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	29	15	44
Role play material			
Not available	10.3%	0.0%	6.8%
Yes but not sufficient for all - less than 10	72.4%	33.3%	59.1%
Yes sufficient for all - more than 10	17.2%	66.7%	34.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	29	15	44
Science material			
Not available	27.6%	0.0%	18.2%
Yes but not sufficient for all - less than 10	44.8%	40.0%	43.2%
Yes sufficient for all - more than 10	27.6%	60.0%	38.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	29	15	44

Background Characteristics	Community	Institutional	Total
Creative material			
Not available	24.1%	0.0%	15.9%
Yes but not sufficient for all - less than 10	58.6%	26.7%	47.7%
Yes sufficient for all - more than 10	17.2%	73.3%	36.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	29	15	44
Constructive material			
Not available	24.1%	6.7%	18.2%
Yes but not sufficient for all - less than 10	44.8%	33.3%	40.9%
Yes sufficient for all - more than 10	31.0%	60.0%	40.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	29	15	44
Other material			
Not available	55.2%	26.7%	45.5%
Yes but not sufficient for all - less than 10	41.4%	26.7%	36.4%
Yes sufficient for all - more than 10	3.4%	46.7%	18.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	29	15	44
ECED curricula use			
No	39.1%	22.2%	34.1%
Yes	60.9%	77.8%	65.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	64	27	91
Curriculum 2077 use	(If ECD curricula use=Yes, Yes=60)		
Yes	94.9%	90.5%	93.3%
Others	5.1%	9.5%	6.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	39	21	60
Curricula purpose			
Used for activities in the classroom	5.7%	0.0%	4.5%
Used for children learning and developmental purpose	94.3%	100.0%	95.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	35	9	44
Homework			
Not at all	1.6%	7.4%	3.3%
1-2 times weekly	7.8%	3.7%	6.6%
Daily	90.6%	85.2%	89.0%
Others	0.0%	3.7%	1.1%

Background Characteristics	Community	Institutional	Total
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	64	27	91
First aid box			
No	20.3%	0.0%	14.3%
Yes	79.7%	100.0%	85.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	64	27	91
Drinking water			
No	3.1%	0.0%	2.2%
Yes	96.9%	100.0%	97.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	64	27	91
Toilet			
No	3.1%	0.0%	2.2%
Yes	96.9%	100.0%	97.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	64	27	91
Gender toilet			
No	17.7%	18.5%	18.0%
Yes	82.3%	81.5%	82.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	62	27	89
CF Toilet			
No	46.8%	14.8%	37.1%
Yes	53.2%	85.2%	62.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	62	27	89
Midday meal			
No	0.0%	3.7%	1.1%
Provided free of cost	95.3%	3.7%	68.1%
Provided with cost borne by family	1.6%	77.8%	24.2%
Asked to bring from home	3.1%	14.8%	6.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	64	27	91
Additional meal			
No	92.2%	55.6%	81.3%
Provided free of cost	6.2%	0.0%	4.4%

Background Characteristics	Community	Institutional	Total
Provided with cost borne by family	0.0%	40.7%	12.1%
Asked to bring from home	1.6%	3.7%	2.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	64	27	91
Exercise book			
No	28.1%	0.0%	19.8%
All in one	62.5%	66.7%	63.7%
Others	9.4%	33.3%	16.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	64	27	91
SMC support			
No support at all	71.9%	33.3%	60.4%
Support received as per need but not sufficient	20.3%	29.6%	23.1%
Sufficient support received	7.8%	37.0%	16.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	64	27	91
SMC observation			
No support at all	31.2%	14.8%	26.4%
Sometimes - 1-2 times a year	34.4%	11.1%	27.5%
Monthly basis - each month	26.6%	22.2%	25.3%
Weekly basis - each week	4.7%	29.6%	12.1%
Daily basis - almost every day	3.1%	22.2%	8.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	64	27	91
SMC disability support			
No support at all			47.6%
Sometimes - 1-2 times a year			9.5%
Monthly basis - each month			14.3%
Weekly basis - each week			14.3%
Daily basis - almost every day			14.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N			21
Parent support meal			
No support at all	81.2%	33.3%	67.0%
Sometimes - 1-2 times a year	12.5%	3.7%	9.9%
Monthly basis - each month	3.1%	29.6%	11.0%
Weekly basis - each week	1.6%	3.7%	2.2%

Background Characteristics	Community	Institutional	Total
Daily basis - almost every day	1.6%	29.6%	9.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	64	27	91
Parent support other			
No support at all	89.1%	66.7%	82.4%
Sometimes - 1-2 times a year	7.8%	7.4%	7.7%
Monthly basis - each month	0.0%	18.5%	5.5%
Weekly basis - each week	1.6%	3.7%	2.2%
Daily basis - almost every day	1.6%	3.7%	2.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	64	27	91
Parent support sport			
No support at all	93.8%	70.4%	86.8%
Sometimes - 1-2 times a year	3.1%	7.4%	4.4%
Monthly basis - each month	3.1%	22.2%	8.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	64	27	91
Location (rural/urban)			
Rural	64.1%	3.7%	46.2%
Urban	35.9%	96.3%	53.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	64	27	91
Ecozone			
Mountain	7.8%	0.0%	5.5%
Hill*	73.4%	18.5%	57.1%
Kathmandu Valley	14.1%	77.8%	33.0%
Terai	4.7%	3.7%	4.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	64	27	91
Type			
Community	31.3%	11.1%	25.3%
Institutional	68.8%	88.9%	74.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	64	27	91
Age group ECED			
12–24	0.0%	16.0%	5.2%
24–36	26.9%	56.0%	36.4%

Background Characteristics	Community	Institutional	Total
36–48	63.5%	28.0%	51.9%
48–60	9.6%	0.0%	6.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	52	25	77
Teacher agegrp			
21 to 30	29.7%	29.6%	29.7%
31 to 40	45.3%	40.7%	44.0%
41 to 66	25.0%	29.6%	26.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	64	27	91
Pre-service training on ECED			
No	40.6%	40.7%	40.7%
Yes	59.4%	59.3%	59.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	64	27	91
In-service training on ECED			
No	20.3%	22.2%	20.9%
Yes	79.7%	77.8%	79.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	64	27	91
ECED mixed grade			
Mixed with grade 1	25.0%	22.2%	24.2%
Mixed with grade 2	3.1%	0.0%	2.2%
Operated separately	71.9%	77.8%	73.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	64	27	91

Annex Table 6.*Percentage Distribution of Children by Readiness Scores by Domain, and Selected Background Characteristics, 2082 (weighted)*

Background Variables	Language Domain				Physical Domain			
	Struggling	Progressing	On-track	Total	Struggling	Progressing	On-track	Total
Sex	*** (p<.000)				*** (p<.000)			
Girl	2.2	35.8	62.1	100	2.9	35.7	61.5	100
Boy	2.7	35.0	62.4	100	1.3	33.7	65.0	100
Age group (months)	*** (p<.000)				*** (p<.000)			
Less than 48 months	9.4	48.4	42.2	100	12.5	48.4	39.1	100
48-60 months	6.6	46.9	46.5	100	9.6	61.4	28.9	100
More than 60 months	1.8	33.9	64.3	100	0.9	31.5	67.6	100
Language	*** (p<.000)				*** (p<.000)			
Nepali	1.9	32.0	66.1	100	2.2	34.5	63.3	100
Other language	4.3	47.6	48.0	100	1.6	35.3	63.1	100
Place of residence	*** (p<.000)				*** (p<.000)			
Rural	7.6	52.4	40.0	100	8.3	46.5	45.2	100
Urban	1.2	31.4	67.4	100	0.6	31.9	67.5	100
Ecozone	*** (p<.000)				*** (p<.000)			
Mountain	11.8	35.3	52.9	100	5.9	41.2	52.9	100
Hill*	5.6	47.4	47.1	100	5.4	41.8	52.8	100
KTM Valley	1.0	30.4	68.6	100	0.7	29.6	69.8	100
Terai	0.0	30.6	69.4	100	0.0	52.8	47.2	100
ECD size	*** (p<.000)				*** (p<.000)			
Small	5.7	34.4	59.9	100	5.7	26.8	67.5	100
Large	2.2	35.4	62.4	100	1.8	35.3	62.9	100
Management Type	*** (p<.000)				*** (p<.000)			
Community	5.3	48.6	46.0	100	4.5	40.4	55.2	100
Institutional	0.6	26.8	72.7	100	0.6	31.0	68.4	100
Availability of ELDS Book	*** (p<.000)				*** (p<.000)			
No	5.4	45.2	49.4	100	3.2	40.3	56.5	100
Yes	0.6	29.3	70.2	100	1.4	31.2	67.4	100
Purpose of ELDS Use**	*** (p<.000)				*** (p<.000)			
Used for measuring learning outcome of children to report to parents	0.0	27.4	72.6	100	2.8	35.3	61.9	100
Used for planning learning activities in the classroom	0.0	56.6	43.4	100	1.2	40.6	58.2	100
Used for both measuring learning outcome of children and planning learning activities	1.0	21.1	77.9	100	0.3	24.3	75.4	100

Socio-emotional Domain			
Struggling	Progressing	On-track	Total
*** (p<.000)			
16.4	43.0	40.6	100
17.5	43.7	38.8	100
*** (p<.000)			
28.1	45.3	26.6	100
41.7	28.1	30.3	100
13.9	44.9	41.3	100
*** (p<.000)			
17.3	40.9	41.8	100
15.9	52	32.2	100
*** (p<.000)			
30.3	43.8	25.8	100
13.8	43.2	43.0	100
*** (p<.000)			
14.7	47.1	38.2	100
27.8	44.7	27.5	100
12.4	43.3	44.3	100
13.9	36.1	50.0	100
*** (p<.000)			
21.7	42.7	35.7	100
16.6	43.4	40.0	100
*** (p<.000)			
25.8	42.7	31.5	100
11.2	43.8	45.0	100
*** (p<.000)			
21.4	46.7	31.9	100
14.2	41.2	44.6	100
*** (p<.000)			
9.1	34.5	56.5	100
30.7	49.2	20.1	100
11.9	43.6	44.6	100

Cognitive Domain			
Struggling	Progressing	On-track	Total
*** (p<.000)			
3.3	34.7	62.0	100
3.4	28.7	67.8	100
*** (p<.000)			
12.5	51.6	35.9	100
11	59.6	29.4	100
2.3	28.2	69.6	100
*** (p<.000)			
2.9	31.0	66.0	100
4.9	34.1	61.0	100
*** (p<.000)			
9.7	49.0	41.3	100
1.9	27.7	70.5	100
*** (p<.000)			
8.8	35.3	55.9	100
8.1	45.0	46.9	100
1.4	23.2	75.4	100
0.0	55.6	44.4	100
*** (p<.000)			
13.4	31.8	54.8	100
2.6	31.7	65.7	100
*** (p<.000)			
6.8	53.1	40.1	100
1.1	17.9	81.0	100
*** (p<.000)			
4.9	44.8	50.3	100
2.4	23.5	74.1	100
*** (p<.000)			
0.4	23.2	76.4	100
7.0	43.9	49.2	100
1.9	16.5	81.6	100

Composite Domain			
Struggling	Progressing	On-track	Total
*** (p<.000)			
1.2	42.4	56.4	100
1.8	46.7	51.5	100
*** (p<.000)			
7.8	68.8	23.4	100
7.0	63.2	29.8	100
0.7	42.0	57.3	100
*** (p<.000)			
1.3	43.1	55.7	100
2.4	50.2	47.5	100
*** (p<.000)			
6.1	62.7	31.2	100
0.4	40.4	59.2	100
*** (p<.000)			
5.9	52.9	41.2	100
3.8	57.5	38.7	100
0.5	38.3	61.3	100
0.0	47.2	52.8	100
*** (p<.000)			
5.7	43.9	50.3	100
1.2	44.7	54.2	100
*** (p<.000)			
3.4	62.5	34.1	100
0.3	33.0	66.7	100
*** (p<.000)			
2.9	57.9	39.2	100
0.6	36.3	63.1	100
*** (p<.000)			
0.4	33.5	66.1	100
0.0	68.9	31.1	100
1.0	26.6	72.4	100

Background Variables	Language Domain				Physical Domain			
	Struggling	Progressing	On-track	Total	Struggling	Progressing	On-track	Total
ECD Curriculum Use	*** (p=<.000)				*** (p=<.000)			
No	6.4	39.2	54.4	100	2.1	39.1	58.8	100
Yes	1.0	34.0	65.0	100	2.1	33.1	64.8	100
Purpose of ECD Curriculum Use***	*** (p=<.000)				*** (p=<.000)			
Used for learning activities in the classroom	0.0	57.1	42.9	100	0	57.1	42.9	100
Used for achieving learning objectives for children	1.3	35.6	63.1	100	3.9	37.8	58.2	100
Used for both learning activities in the classroom and achieving learning objectives	0.8	31.6	67.6	100	0.2	27.5	72.2	100
Teacher Index	*** (p=<.000)				*** (p=<.000)			
Low (0-2 scores)	1.1	37.8	61.1	100	1.9	36.9	61.1	100
Medium (3 score)	3.0	41.2	55.7	100	1.4	30.4	68.2	100
High (4-6 scores)	2.6	33.8	63.6	100	2.2	34.9	62.8	100
Infrastructure Index	*** (p=<.000)				*** (p=<.000)			
Lowest - less than 20% score	8.1	59.8	32.0	100	6.9	48.6	44.4	100
Lower - 20% to <40% score	4.1	31.5	64.4	100	1.4	39.4	59.2	100
Middle - 40% to <60% score	1.5	29.3	69.2	100	1.5	32.6	65.9	100
High - between 60% to <80% score	1.8	40.4	57.8	100	1.7	26.0	72.4	100
Highest - 80% & above score	0.7	27.8	71.6	100	1.3	37.1	61.5	100
School governance/support Index	*** (p=<.000)				*** (p=<.000)			
Lowest - less than 20% score	7.1	48.2	44.8	100	1.4	39.4	59.2	100
Lower - 20% to <40% score	6.2	36.0	57.8	100	5.1	35.3	59.6	100
Middle - 40% to <60% score	2.0	29.6	68.3	100	3.2	30.4	66.3	100
High - between 60% to <80% score	1.0	35.6	62.4	100	1.2	29.3	69.5	100
Highest - 80% & above score	0.0	32.7	67.3	100	1.1	38.7	60.2	100
Total	2.4	35.4	62.2	100	2.1	34.7	63.2	100
N				58,675				58,675

*Hill categories excluding districts in Kathmandu Valley

** These are based on lower number of samples who were from the schools with availability of ELDS Book

***These are based on lower number of samples who were from the schools with use of ECD curriculum

Socio-emotional Domain			
Struggling	Progressing	On-track	Total
*** (p=<.000)			
23.0	42.9	34.2	100
14.8	43.5	41.7	100
*** (p=<.000)			
35.7	28.6	35.7	100
15.5	38.6	45.9	100
13.5	49.0	37.5	100
*** (p=<.000)			
20.3	47.2	32.5	100
22.3	39.9	37.8	100
15.3	43.1	41.6	100
*** (p=<.000)			
37.1	39.8	23.2	100
20.2	41.8	38.0	100
14.0	49.3	36.8	100
20.4	52.1	27.5	100
6.2	30.9	62.9	100
*** (p=<.000)			
26.6	36.8	36.5	100
16.0	54.5	29.5	100
17.9	47.0	35.1	100
22.0	37.6	40.4	100
8.5	43.7	47.8	100
17.0	43.3	39.7	100
			58,675

Cognitive Domain			
Struggling	Progressing	On-track	Total
*** (p=<.000)			
5.1	45.5	49.4	100
2.8	26.9	70.4	100
*** (p=<.000)			
7.1	42.9	50.0	100
2.9	35.6	61.5	100
2.5	17.3	80.2	100
*** (p=<.000)			
5.3	33.1	61.7	100
4.7	48.6	46.6	100
2.7	28.4	68.8	100
*** (p=<.000)			
12.4	58.3	29.3	100
3.4	42.1	54.5	100
1.2	28.6	70.2	100
3.5	27.3	69.2	100
1.5	22.6	75.9	100
*** (p=<.000)			
5.7	60.1	34.3	100
4.4	28.0	67.6	100
4.4	30.6	64.9	100
5.1	31.3	63.6	100
0.0	20.3	79.7	100
3.4	31.7	64.9	100
			58,675

Composite Domain			
Struggling	Progressing	On-track	Total
*** (p=<.000)			
2.3	57.3	40.4	100
1.2	40.2	58.6	100
*** (p=<.000)			
0.0	71.4	28.6	100
1.6	43.1	55.2	100
0.8	36.1	63.1	100
*** (p=<.000)			
0.8	46.1	53.1	100
1.4	56.8	41.9	100
1.7	42.2	56.2	100
*** (p=<.000)			
5.0	73.7	21.2	100
2.7	50.0	47.3	100
0.3	46.4	53.2	100
1.3	45.6	53.1	100
0.7	26.6	72.7	100
*** (p=<.000)			
3.1	69.7	27.2	100
3.6	41.8	54.5	100
2.0	39.3	58.7	100
0.8	41.0	58.2	100
0.0	39.6	60.4	100
1.5	44.6	53.9	100
			58,675

Annex Table 7.*Regression Outputs by Models and Domains, 2082 (weighted)*

Variables	Socio-emotional					Cognitive				
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5^	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5^
	B (Sig)	B (Sig)	B (Sig)	B (Sig)	B (Sig)	B (Sig)	B (Sig)	B (Sig)	B (Sig)	B (Sig)
(Intercept)	0.432 ***	0.398 ***	0.359 ***	0.355 ***	0.403 ***	0.565 ***	0.563 ***	0.563 ***	0.564 ***	0.566 ***
Age (months)	0.002 ***	0.002 ***	0.002 ***	0.002 ***	0.002 ***	0.002 ***	0.002 ***	0.002 ***	0.002 ***	0.002 ***
Gender (Male)	-0.022 ***	-0.023 ***	-0.022 ***	-0.022 ***	-0.026 ***	-0.008 ***	-0.008 ***	-0.007 ***	-0.007 ***	-0.012 ***
Mother tongue language (Nepali)	0.011 **	0.007 *	0.005 *	0.008 **		0.011 ***	0.010 ***	0.010 ***	0.011 ***	
Place of Residence (Urban)	0.017 ***	0.014 ***	0.017 ***	0.015 ***	0.028 ***	0.033 ***	0.033 ***	0.035 ***	0.033 ***	0.022 ***
Ecozone (Ref=Hill)										
Mountain	0.121 ***	0.109 ***	0.076 ***	0.076 ***		0.087 ***	0.086 ***	0.068 ***	0.067 ***	
KTM Valley	0.052 ***	0.048 ***	0.033 ***	0.041 ***		0.015 ***	0.014 ***	0.013 ***	0.016 ***	
Terai	0.085 ***	0.085 ***	0.089 ***	0.090 ***		-0.004 +	-0.004 +	0.000 +	0.001 +	
Size of School (Small)	-0.008 *	-0.003 +	0.004 +	0.010 **		-0.064 ***	-0.063 ***	-0.059 ***	-0.056 ***	
Type of School (Community)	-0.054 ***	-0.053 ***	-0.037 ***	-0.031 ***	-0.063 ***	-0.131 ***	-0.131 ***	-0.121 ***	-0.122 ***	-0.119 ***
Teacher Index		0.012 ***	0.006 ***	0.003 **			0.001 +	-0.001 +	-0.002 +	
Infrastructure Index			0.004 ***	0.003 ***				0.001 ***	0.001 ***	
Governance Support Index				0.002 ***					0.000 *	
Primary Language of Instruction (Nepali)			-0.019 ***	-0.020 ***	-0.026 ***			-0.023 ***	-0.023 ***	-0.032 ***
Teacher Qualification (Grade 10)					-0.024 ***					-0.071 ***
Pre-Service training (Yes)					-0.017 ***					-0.017 ***
In-Service Training (Yes)					0.054 ***					0.016 ***
Availability of Language Learning Area (Yes)					0.155 ***					0.101 ***
Availability of Mathematics Learning Area (Yes)					-0.141 ***					-0.158 ***
Availability of Role-Play Learning Area (Yes)					0.030 **					0.079 ***
Availability of Science Learning Area (Yes)					-0.001 +					-0.031 ***
Availability of Creative Learning Area (Yes)					-0.072 ***					0.081 ***
Availability of Constructive Learning Area (Yes)					0.065 ***					-0.071 ***
Availability of Early Childhood Assistants (Yes)					0.012 ***					0.042 ***
Usage of Curriculum (Yes)					0.043 ***					0.025 ***
Usage of ELDS (Yes)				-0.013 ***	-0.014 ***				-0.007 **	-0.016 ***
Model Summary										
Adjusted R Square	0.088 ***	0.092 ***	0.112 ***	0.113 ***	0.115 ***	0.225 ***	0.225 ***	0.230 ***	0.230 ***	0.251 ***
N (weighted)	58174	58174	58174	58174	58174	58174	58174	58174	58174	58174

Note:

*** Significant at 0.001 level

** Significant at 0.01 level

* Significant at 0.05 level

+ Not significant

^ Model 5 includes variables as per 2080 ELD assessment

Language					Physical					Composite				
Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5^	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5^	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5^
B (Sig)	B (Sig)	B (Sig)	B (Sig)	B (Sig)	B (Sig)	B (Sig)	B (Sig)	B (Sig)	B (Sig)	B (Sig)	B (Sig)	B (Sig)	B (Sig)	B (Sig)
0.785 ***	0.763 ***	0.791 ***	0.784 ***	0.798 ***	0.407 ***	0.438 ***	0.440 ***	0.436 ***	0.403 ***	0.566 ***	0.556 ***	0.555 ***	0.551 ***	0.563 ***
0.001 ***	0.000 ***	0.000 ***	0.000 ***	0.001 ***	0.004 ***	0.004 ***	0.004 ***	0.004 ***	0.004 ***	0.002 ***	0.002 ***	0.002 ***	0.002 ***	0.002 ***
-0.013 ***	-0.013 ***	-0.013 ***	-0.015 ***	-0.016 ***	0.007 ***	0.008 ***	0.008 ***	0.007 ***	0.008 ***	-0.010 ***	-0.010 ***	-0.010 ***	-0.011 ***	-0.013 ***
0.045 ***	0.043 ***	0.044 ***	0.037 ***		-0.013 ***	-0.010 ***	-0.010 ***	-0.016 ***		0.016 ***	0.015 ***	0.015 ***	0.013 ***	
0.041 ***	0.039 ***	0.043 ***	0.052 ***	0.069 ***	0.093 ***	0.096 ***	0.095 ***	0.102 ***	0.052 ***	0.041 ***	0.040 ***	0.043 ***	0.046 ***	0.041 ***
0.060 ***	0.052 ***	0.027 ***	0.035 ***		0.119 ***	0.130 ***	0.139 ***	0.145 ***		0.093 ***	0.090 ***	0.071 ***	0.073 ***	
-0.005 *	-0.007 **	0.001 +	-0.013 ***		0.004 +	0.008 **	0.009 **	-0.003 +		0.017 ***	0.016 ***	0.014 ***	0.011 ***	
0.074 ***	0.074 ***	0.082 ***	0.079 ***		-0.073 ***	-0.074 ***	-0.075 ***	-0.078 ***		0.028 ***	0.028 ***	0.032 ***	0.032 ***	
0.000 +	0.003 +	0.010 ***	-0.003 +		0.011 ***	0.006 +	0.004 +	-0.008 *		-0.020 ***	-0.018 ***	-0.014 ***	-0.017 ***	
-0.097 ***	-0.096 ***	-0.083 ***	-0.075 ***	-0.034 ***	-0.003 +	-0.004 +	-0.008 ***	-0.005 +	0.014 ***	-0.081 ***	-0.080 ***	-0.071 ***	-0.067 ***	-0.059 ***
	0.008 ***	0.007 ***	0.009 ***			-0.011 ***	-0.010 ***	-0.007 ***			0.004 ***	0.002 **	0.002 *	
		0.000 +	0.000 +				0.000 ***	0.000 **				0.001 ***	0.001 ***	
			-0.002 ***					-0.002 ***					0.000 +	
		-0.048 ***	-0.048 ***	-0.055 ***			0.011 ***	0.011 ***	0.005 *			-0.023 ***	-0.024 ***	-0.031 ***
				-0.017 ***					0.017 **					-0.029 ***
				0.015 ***					0.012 ***					-0.003 *
				-0.044 ***					-0.065 ***					-0.005 **
				-0.060 ***					0.029 ***					0.058 ***
				0.007 +					0.005 +					-0.080 ***
				0.026 ***					0.022 **					0.042 ***
				-0.093 ***					-0.055 ***					-0.045 ***
				0.075 ***					0.009 +					0.029 ***
				0.031 ***					-0.025 ***					0.000 +
				0.017 ***					0.063 ***					0.031 ***
				0.024 ***					0.029 ***					0.030 ***
			0.037 ***	0.034 ***				0.030 ***	0.014 ***				0.010 ***	0.004 *
0.139 ***	0.142 ***	0.152 ***	0.158 ***	0.16 ***	0.124 ***	0.128 ***	0.129 ***	0.133 ***	0.136 ***	0.206 ***	0.206 ***	0.215 ***	0.216 ***	0.230 ***
58174	58174	58174	58174	58174	58174	58174	58174	58174	58174	58174	58174	58174	58174	58174

In collaboration with:



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Ministry of Education and Sports
Education Review Office
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