

Measurement of Target 4.2

4.2.1: “Developmentally on Track”

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Target 4.2 Includes Several Elements

Goal 4, Target 4.2 by 2030 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

Child development outcome measurement is just one of several important elements

Context

- MICS ECDI has been identified as the global indicator
- National governments and regional groups are also investing in ECD measurement
- Rich context for measurement: Many ECD measures developed, in use now with good deal of agreement on what to measure
 - About half of similar items cut across all measures – early reading, math skills
 - Direct observations more reliable for early academic/cognitive skills; parent/teacher report for social/emotional skills

Questions

- What does it mean for a child to be “developmentally on track”?
 - Measurement will likely help define a common language
 - Given environmental and contextual influences on development, how can “developmentally on track” be globally measured?
- What are the political and technical realities of global ECD measurement?
- How can data best be used to drive improvement in ECD services and outcomes?

Developmental Science

- Early childhood development is combination of environmental influences and genetics, linear and non-linear developments
 - Some elements are linear with singular quantitative function (e.g., growth in vocabulary) and some elements are discontinuous, with jumps from one stage to the next (e.g., empathy development)
- Domains are interconnected – early math, for example, may contribute to later literacy
- Age at which children achieve skills has often been used to define “on track”

Early timing, later learning ...

- *When* children achieve milestones has often been used to determine who is “on track”
 - Walking, talking are relevant to all children and sensitive to environmental influences (but will eventually develop in all normally-developing children)
- Ages at which skills develop vary from one place to the next, and vary meaningfully by SES as well as contextual influences
 - Knowledge of letters, numbers sensitive to exposure – range of ages at which normally-developing children will develop them
 - Systematic measurement is likely reveal years of difference between children in different countries: tough for scale development

Implications for Measurement

- Defining “developmentally on track” to level of specificity required for measurement
 - Lots of information on child development overall, but little systematic information on timing and scope of normative development in diverse contexts to use for measurement
 - Comparisons based on SES, other factors associated with equity useful in defining normative development
- Options for Target 4.2
 - Define “developmentally on track” according to national standards
 - Introduce idea of common modules (MELQO)
 - Rely on one measure or create one scale (World Health Organization: Global growth curves used to inform definition of stunting)

Political Realities

- Technical base for ECD measurement within many countries is emerging
 - Few people who have expertise or time to focus on ECD measurement
- When measurement is initiated, primarily to **inform national planning and policymaking**
 - Alignment with local curricula and quality standards is important
 - Measurement of quality in ECD programs, pre-primary likely to be very impactful

Three Goals

- **Efficiency in measurement:** Integrating data from national and regional assessments
 - Birth to three years should also be part of the dialogue, with explicit links to primary school measurement
- **Accuracy and reliability:** Defining conceptual questions and setting technical standards
- **Prioritize contribution to implementation**
 - Focus on measurement that leads to national and regional action
 - Measure quality of pre-primary education and ECD programs

Possible Starting Process

