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

- Convene group to discuss “developmentally on track”
- Integrate perspectives on technical and practical issues in measurement
- Examine pathways for integrating data
- Collect and leverage data in cooperation with partners
- Evaluate feasibility of scales
- Universal learning scale, World Health Organization as models
- Use results to inform global monitoring