

System Approach for Better Education Results – SABER

Early Childhood Development

SABER - ECD

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- System Approach for Better Education Results (SABER)
- Introduction of SABER-ECD concepts
- Report on Bulgaria – findings and recommendations

System Approach for Better Education Results - SABER

SABER Initiative

Goal: The goal of System Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) is to provide countries with a multi-sectorial assessment of the **educational** policies in each country.

Currently in Bulgaria

- SABER Teachers;
- SABER Workforce Development;
- SABER Early Childhood Development (ECD).

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Goal: To identify the achievements, as well as gaps, of the policies and programs for Early Childhood Development (ECD) and inform the improvement of existing ECD system.

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Definition – Early Childhood Development policies

ECD policy framework addresses **healthcare, nutrition, early learning, social protection and child protection systems.**

- They are targeted at **pregnant women, small children and their parents and others who provide child care.**
- A robust ECD policy should include programs in all essential sectors; provide comparable coverage and equitable access across regions and socioeconomic status – especially reaching the most disadvantaged young children and their families.

The Core ECD Policy goals

Policy Goals

Establishing an
Enabling
Environment

Implementing
Widely

Monitoring and
Assuring Quality

Policy Levers

- Legal framework
- Intersectoral Coordination
- Finance

- Scope of Programs
- Coverage
- Equity

- Data Availability
- Quality Standards
- Compliance with Standards

Outcome

Effective ECD policies

All children
have the
opportunity
to reach
their full
potential

Health care	Nutrition	Early Learning	Social Protection	Child Protection
<p>Standard health screenings for pregnant women;</p> <p>Skilled attendants at delivery;</p> <p>Childhood immunizations;</p> <p>Well-child visits.</p>	<p>Breastfeeding promotion;</p> <p>Salt iodization;</p> <p>Iron fortification.</p>	<p>Parenting programs (during pregnancy, after delivery and throughout early childhood);</p> <p>High quality childcare for working parents;</p> <p>Free pre-primary school (preferably at least two years with developmentally appropriate curriculum and classrooms, and quality assurance mechanisms).</p>	<p>Services for orphans and vulnerable children;</p> <p>Policies to protect rights of children with special needs and promote their participation/access to ECD services;</p> <p>Appropriate housing conditions for quality ECD provision;</p> <p>Financial transfer mechanisms or income supports to reach the most vulnerable families (could include cash transfers, social welfare, etc.).</p>	<p>Mandated birth registration;</p> <p>Job protection and breastfeeding breaks for new mothers;</p> <p>Specific provisions in judicial system for young children;</p> <p>Guaranteed paid parental leave of least six months;</p> <p>Domestic violence laws and enforcement;</p> <p>Tracking of child abuse (especially for young children);</p> <p>Training for law enforcement officers in regard to the particular needs of young children.</p>

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Levels of analysis

Collection of extensive multisectorial information on the existing policies and programs associated with ECD in Bulgaria;

Interviews with representatives of the interested countries;

Analysis of the policies and programs for early learning, health care, nutrition, social protection and child protection;

Gathering of data, which will allow for the comparison with other regional countries and around the world;



Data analysis

Structure of the analysis

Each of the three policy goals for ECD consists of a series of policy levers. The overall assessment is based on the level of development within the different policy levers and goals.

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Table 2: ECD policy goals and levels of development

ECD Policy Goal	Levels of Development			
	Latent	Emerging	Established	Advanced
				
Establishing and Enabling Environment	Non-existent legal framework; ad-hoc financing; low inter-sectoral coordination	Minimal legal framework; some programs with sustained financing; some inter-sectoral coordination.	Regulations in some sectors; functioning inter-sectoral coordination; sustained financing.	Developed legal framework; robust inter-institutional coordination; sustained financing.
Implementing Widely	Low coverage; pilot programs in some sectors; high inequality in access and outcomes.	Coverage expanding but gaps remain; programs established in a few sectors; inequality in access and outcomes.	Near-universal coverage in some sectors; established programs in most sectors; low inequality in access.	Universal coverage; comprehensive strategies across sectors; integrated services for all, some tailored and targeted.
Monitoring and Assuring Quality	Minimal survey data available; limited standards for provision of ECD services; no enforcement.	Information on outcomes at national level; standards for services exist in some sectors; no system to monitor compliance.	Information on outcomes at national, regional and local levels; standards for services exist for some sectors; system in place to regularly monitor compliance	Information on outcomes from national to individual levels; standards exist for all sectors; system in place to regularly monitor and enforce compliance.

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Abbreviations

It is not the goal of the abbreviated list of interventions used in the report to name the existing governmental policies and programs but to name the sectors and the type of services for which SABER – ECD identifies the existence of level of development and effectiveness.

Example

- Standard health screening for pregnant women
- Skilled attendants at delivery
- Childhood immunization
- Well-child visits

ECCE = Early Childhood Education and Care

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**Findings and
Recommendations**

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➤ Legal framework:

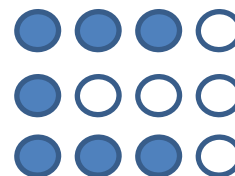
- **Consider strengthening the legal framework for ECD.** The current legal framework for ECD is not specifically tailored to ECD aged children but rather to the age group 0 to 18 years. It is also reported that there is currently no unified understanding of what ECD entails and what effective strategies should be put in place to ensure the provision of integrated ECD services to enable all young children develop to their full potential.
- **Create innovative mechanisms to promote adequate and sustainable nutritional policies to encourage iron fortification of food staples.** The WHO recommends food fortification with iron including folic acid, zinc, vitamin B12, and Vitamin A. The Government of Bulgaria is encouraged to build upon existing nutritional programs that encourage iron fortification of food staples.

**Establishing an
Enabling
Environment**

➤ Legal Framework

➤ Intersectoral Coordination

➤ Finance



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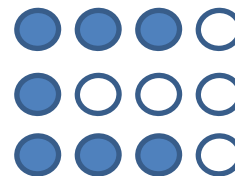
Bulgaria: Country Report

➤ Intersectoral Coordination:

- **Ensure the development of an explicitly stated multisectoral ECD strategy.** Bulgaria should transform its ECD system from single sector to a multi-sectoral approach, by converging interventions in education, health, nutrition, care stimulation, and protection.
- **Establish a common plan of action for ED service delivery at the state level.** Given that essential ECD services are provided across multiple sectors, it is important to establish a common plan of action for effective service delivery. **Mechanisms to coordinate ECD service provision at the delivery level will be essential to guarantee that every child has access to all of the essential services.**

Establishing an Enabling Environment

- Legal Framework
- Intersectoral Coordination
- Finance



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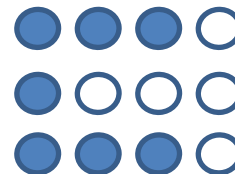
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➤ Finance:

- Strengthening ECD budget coordination mechanisms between the different sectors involved. Effective implementation of integrated ECD policy will necessitate a **jointly coordinated budget planning process across ministries.**
- The OECD recommends that a public investment of 1 percent of GDP is the minimum required to ensure provision of quality early childhood care and education services. Bulgaria currently spend 0.8 percent of its GDP on preschool (UNESCO, 2010) and could consider a **higher level of ECD financing to ensure the needs of young children are met.**
- Ensure that **low-income and vulnerable children have access to key health and nutrition interventions.** Overall, out-of-pocket expenditure as a percentage of total health expenditures is high in Bulgaria.
- Ensure sustainable and adequate commitment to ECD spending. Sustainable financial investment in the preprimary education sector.

Establishing an Enabling Environment

- Legal Framework
- Intersectoral Coordination
- Finance



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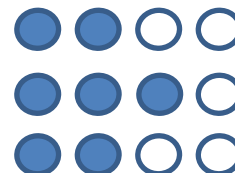
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➤ Scope of Programs:

- **Establish sustainable mechanisms to promote, expand, and report the provision of adequate nutrition interventions to young children and expecting mothers.**
Breastfeeding promotion; Iron fortification of food staples and reducing anemia prevalence in pregnant women can prevent intellectual and physical impairment in children,
- Programs designed to assist parents and families.

**Implementing
Widely**

- Scope of Programs
- Coverage
- Equity



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➤ Coverage:

Consider providing additional early childhood care opportunities for children younger than 3 years.

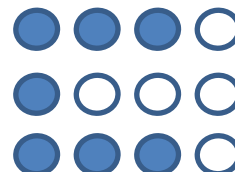
The Government of Bulgaria is encouraged to further improve the provision of ECCE to ensure that children younger than three years old have also adequate opportunities for early stimulation and learning.

A possible step is renewing the mission and functions of nurseries as institutions that set clear educational and developmental goals for children's early childhood, including through the appointment of pedagogical specialists in each nursery group.

Attention should be paid to the access of maternal and childhood health services for expecting mothers and young children. Recommendations for M3 to develop new strategies which will guarantee the equitable access to healthcare services and the maintenance and availability of high quality services.

**Implementing
Widely**

- Scope of Programs
- Coverage
- Equity



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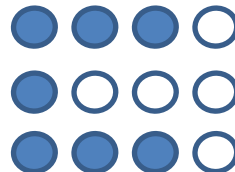
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➤ Equity:

- **Ensure that essential ECD interventions are provided to poor children and to those who are hard to reach, mostly in the rural areas.** Data are not available to access ECD provision in relation to children’s socio-economic status. Evidence suggests that lack of appropriate early learning and access to essential health and nutrition interventions place poor children at a disadvantage before they start school. The Government of Bulgaria should further ensure expanded access to essential ECD services targeted towards low-income and vulnerable children as well as those in hard to reach areas.

**Implementing
Widely**

- Scope of Programs
- Coverage
- Equity



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➤ **Data Availability:**

Enhance coordination of sectors involved in data collection for ECD services. Ensuring coordination and consistency of data from all sectors is crucial if the Government of Bulgaria is to measure the impact of its investments and guarantee that all children are provided with the essential and/or targeted services they need. The Government of Bulgaria could consider the establishment of an improved integrated monitoring and evaluation system that would help guarantee that eligibility beneficiaries receive the appropriate services.

➤ **Quality Standards and Compliance:**

Strengthening quality assurance mechanisms. While minimum standards and requirements for quality assurance in health and education sectors are well developed in Bulgaria, it is highly recommended that monitoring and compliance mechanisms be strengthened.

Improve qualifications of ECD caregivers for children aged 0-3 in nurseries.

Monitoring and Assuring Quality

Data Availability



Quality Standards



Compliance with Standards



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Recommendations: Establishing an Enabling Environment

To answer adequately for the complex

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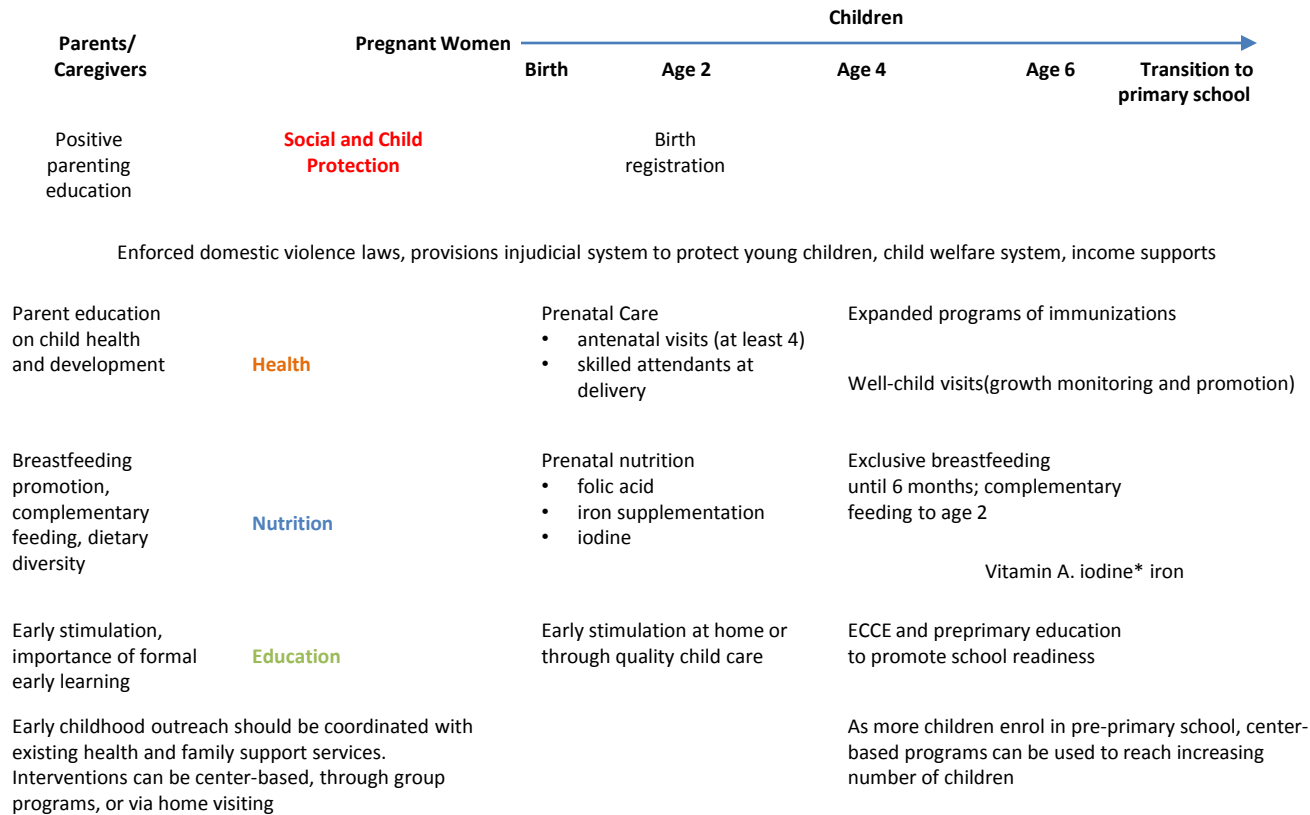
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Recommendations: Implement Widely

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Recommendations: Monitoring and Assuring Quality



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Table 17: International Classification and Comparison of ECD Systems

ECD Policy Goal	Policy Lever	Level of Development					
		Bulgaria	Australia	Chile	Colombia	Sweden	Turkey
Establishing and Enabling Environment	Legal Framework	●●●	●●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●●	●●●
	Coordination	●	●●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●●	●●
	Finance	●●●	●●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●●	●●
Implementing Widely	Scope of Programs	●●	●●●	●●●●	●●●	●●●●	●●●
	Coverage	●●●	●●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●●	●●
	Equity	●●	●●●	●●	●●	●●●●	●●
Monitoring and Assuring Quality	Data Availability	●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●●	●●
	Quality Standards	●●●	●●●	●●	●●	●●●●	●●●
	Compliance with Standards	●●	●●●	●●	●●	●●●●	●●

Legend: Latent ● Emerging ●● Established ●●● Advanced ●●●●

Thank you for your attention!