

CHILDCARE CAMPAIGN NARRATIVE AND MESSAGING FRAMEWORK

Definition of Childcare	<p>For the purposes of this campaign, childcare can be considered any service that provides children a safe environment to play, learn, and develop social relationships while parents are working. Services are targeted to support families before children begin primary school (typically, 5-6 years of age) and may include home-based models, childcare centres, formal pre-school, or informal arrangements between families.</p>		
Overarching narrative (What does the campaign aim to achieve?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With nearly 350 million children across the globe in need of quality childcare, it is critical that we build stronger, more resilient early education and care systems to improve life outcomes for children and create stronger, more equitable economies. COVID-19, displacement, and other crises have further exposed the inadequacies of national childcare systems across the globe while exacerbating the inequalities that limit access to quality childcare services. Through this global campaign, ECDAN and our partners seek to elevate childcare as a global and national priority and build political commitment to invest in publicly financed policies and systems that expand access to quality, accessible, and affordable childcare services with qualified and decent childcare jobs. Childcare is one of the best investments a country can make by advancing child development, increasing and improving workforce participation (especially for women), stimulating economic growth, and reducing inequalities. We've reached a tipping point, and it's time for governments to increase investments in inclusive, equitable childcare and early education systems <i>now</i> to prepare for tomorrow. 		
Key messages (Why investment in childcare is critical?)	<p><u>Improves life outcomes of children</u></p> <p>The early years are the most important for a child's development and lay the foundation for their future. High-quality childcare provides an opportunity for children to be in a safe, healthy, stimulating environment to learn, play, and grow at a critical time in their development.</p> <p>Children who participate in high-quality childcare have improved developmental and educational outcomes and ultimately, better socio-economic outcomes as adults.</p>	<p><u>Boosts workforce participation and earnings, especially for women</u></p> <p>A safe and affordable childcare system allows caregivers, particularly women, to increase and improve their workforce participation and secure better livelihoods for themselves and their families.</p> <p>Increased investment in childcare by governments also creates entrepreneurship and employment opportunities for women in the childcare sector, creating more, better job opportunities for women.</p>	<p><u>Creates socio-economic value for the country</u></p> <p>Addressing the childcare crisis is one of the best socio-economic investments countries can make because it allows for increased and improved workforce participation, creates job opportunities with low carbon footprints, and provides a safe, healthy, learning environment for children to learn and develop. It benefits children, women, families, and strengthens economies. Countries must invest in stronger, more resilient childcare systems now to build the economy of the future.</p>
Sub-messaging and proof points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2018, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimated there were 1.9 billion children under the age of 15—including 800 million children under six—in need of care globally and warned of a severe and unsustainable “childcare crisis” if not properly addressed. That crisis is now upon us (ILO, 2018). According to a World Bank report published in 2022, 40% (350 million) of the world's children below primary school age are in need of childcare services but lack access. Nearly 8 out of 10 of those children live in low- and middle-income countries (World Bank, 2020). It is also estimated that over 35 million children under five years old are sometimes left without adult supervision, leaving children in potentially unsafe situations without the opportunity to grow socially and cognitively (UNICEF, 2020). Access to quality childcare services for children under 3 is particularly low. For the few countries that do have strong national policies within this age range, demand typically far outpaces supply. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As parents across the globe struggle to balance childcare and work, it is women that are impacted the most as they bear a disproportionate responsibility for caregiving. Globally, women spend two to ten times more on unpaid care work than men (OECD, 2014). Unpaid care work must be recognized, reduced, and redistributed to address gender inequality in the workforce. The disproportionate responsibility for caregiving, combined with the lack of access to childcare, results in additional barriers for women's participation in the workforce, which contributes to gender inequalities like pay gaps and hinders economic growth. Childcare gives families, especially women, the choice to engage in the workforce and more opportunities for career advancement while having peace of mind that their children are well cared for while they work. In 2018, 606 million women were unavailable for employment due to unpaid care work compared to only 41 million men. This strongly impacts on their ability and opportunities for accessing social protection in many contexts. Globally, mothers of children aged 0–5 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High costs, inconvenient times and locations, inadequate policies and regulations, and cultural norms are preventing families from accessing the benefits of childcare while reinforcing deeply rooted inequalities. Childcare represents a transformative investment in human capital, and the resulting developmental and economic stimulus will help countries emerge from the pandemic stronger, more resilient, and better able to meet the challenges of tomorrow. Between 2016 and 2025, gender parity in labour markets could boost global GDP by up to \$28 trillion (Mckinsey, 2015). High-quality early learning and care programs impact both family finances and the broader economy. By providing opportunities for both parents to work, it will increase family earnings, create jobs, and increase tax revenue, which will spur economic growth now and into the future. The global childcare workforce (including all persons employed in the childcare and early education sector, as well as community and domestic workers providing home-

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reach their full potential, children need good health, adequate nutrition, safety and security, responsive caregiving and opportunities for learning. Quality childcare services have the potential to positively address all five of these needs. • Quality childcare can lay the foundation for learning and developing positive social relationships. Studies have shown that access to quality childcare can improve children’s cognitive skills and psychosocial outcomes, improve school readiness, reduce repetition and drop-out rates, and yield higher achievement in school. (World Bank, 2020; Heckman and Masterov 2007; Engle et al. 2011). • Childcare and early education services present an opportunity to improve nutrition outcomes and address stunting by expanding access to healthy foods for children. 	<p>accounted for the lowest employment rates (47.6 per cent) compared to men and women without young children (ILO, 2018).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to quality childcare will improve business productivity by reducing and limiting the loss of human capital, particularly skilled women (World Bank, 2020). • An estimated 43 million new jobs worldwide could be created to meet the need for childcare services while allowing more parents, particularly women, an opportunity to seek or return to employment (World Bank, 2020). • Another estimate by ILO suggests investing in comprehensive and gender-transformative care policy packages, including universal childcare services, could generate up to 299 million jobs by 2035. Approximately 78% of these new jobs will be held by women, and 84% will be in the formal economy (ILO, 2022). 	<p>based childcare services) is affected by significant shortages of workers and dire decent work deficits: i.e., low wages, long or too short hours of work, stress and violence at the workplace, low status, poor working conditions, insecure or no formal contracts, and limited or no social protection and other labour protections (ILO, 2018).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting childcare workers is crucial for promoting quality care and human capital development. COVID-19 showed how vulnerable the childcare market is. Governments must invest in childcare services to build sustainable and resilient childcare systems, provide proper training and accreditation to ensure quality services, and access to social protection. • The combined child development, equality, family welfare, and economic benefits offer a rare opportunity to have a multi-generational impact through government investment.
<p>Recommended call to action for primary target audience</p> <p>(Policymakers and development agencies and implementers)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in publicly financed policies and systems that expand access to quality, affordable childcare services to support children and families, boost workforce participation, grow economies, and create more resilient, equitable societies. Ensure caregivers of all kinds have a seat at the table to develop policies that work for them. • Develop strong quality assurance systems that meet the needs of children and the childcare workforce so the multi-generational benefits of these services can be fully achieved. • Encourage entrepreneurship in childcare through grants, subsidies, tax and other incentives, training, accreditation, and formalization. • Support all childcare workers, who are inadequately paid for the value of their labour and have been particularly hard hit by the pandemic, with a living wage, social protection, sustainable funding, proper training, and professionalization and representation. 		