Getting Ready for School: A Child to Child Approach

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

MAY 2020
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Why Early Childhood?

Although increasing numbers of children are enrolling in primary school, many enter late or too early alongside older siblings, fall behind, fail to progress and drop out before completing their basic education.

A key factor in this is lack of access to quality early learning opportunities that enable children to develop crucial cognitive, social and emotional skills determining school readiness. Being academically and emotionally prepared for school is a predictor of a child’s academic outcomes: children who enter school ready to learn are more likely to perform well and complete successive levels of education.

Multiple kinds of vulnerabilities affect children’s school attendance, retention and performance – including gender, geography, economic circumstance and disability. Children from remote or marginalized areas are at a disadvantage, as are girls. Failure to complete a basic education has significant and negative impacts across a child’s life cycle. Investing in early learning can provide the head start needed to overcome and break out of a cycle of disadvantage.

There is significant evidence to demonstrate that for each additional year of education can increase a girl’s earning from 10-20%, having significant spillover effects on education for future generations.

Source: World Bank, Returns to Investment in Education

Child to Child’s Getting Ready for School (GRS) programme presents an innovative, low-cost solution that supports school readiness for children with little access to quality early learning opportunities. Its defining characteristic is that it involves the direct and active participation of children as agents of change. GRS is based on the Child to Child concept of older children (Young Facilitators) being supported to teach/coach younger children (Young Learners) in their communities.

Through fun, interactive learning activities, Young Learners develop early learning skills and socio-emotional competences. Consequently, they are more likely to enroll in school on time, ready to learn and to complete a basic primary education. Young Facilitators consolidate their own learning, gain confidence, and develop valuable interpersonal / life skills.

GRS was originally implemented in six countries from 2007 to 2010: Bangladesh, China, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Tajikistan and Yemen. It is inherently adaptable and has been contextualized to address specific vulnerabilities of children facing exclusion due to poverty, geography, disability or disaster. It was adapted for Sierra Leone and Pakistan in 2011 and 2013 respectively, to address issues including health, safeguarding and child protection, disaster risk reduction and gender equality. It has been observed to be particularly effective for nomadic communities, and further adaptation could involve migrant and displaced children in camps, with the additional benefit of engaging at-risk adolescents in productive activities.
How GRS promotes school readiness

School readiness can be conceptualised as having three dimensions – children's readiness for school; schools' readiness for children; and families' and communities' readiness for school. GRS promotes school readiness based on the following factors:

1. In addition to their primary caregivers, young children are strongly influenced by other children – typically older siblings, playmates or minders that they interact with daily. Establishing a rhythm of schooling and building learning skills as well as confidence through older children in communities will facilitate a smooth transition to school.

2. Acting as a peer mentor / Young Facilitator enhances the confidence, self-esteem and leadership skills of the older children. There is significant evidence that this increases the older child's aspirations and lays the foundations for the next generation of teachers.

3. Schools and education systems can build on this phenomenon, incorporate child-centred practices and cultivate optimal learning environments to support every child’s smooth transition into primary school and advance every child’s learning.

4. Involving parents, caregivers and siblings in a community-based early learning programme fosters positive attitudes towards education. Who not only witness the way potential can be unlocked for children, but can be actively engaged to support the process.

The Child to Child Getting Ready for School materials and methods can be integrated into on-going primary school activities.

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Why GRS?

1. It is a scaleable innovation that works

GRS is built on more than 10 years of refinement and learning across a range of income and settings with a significant evidence base attesting to its effectiveness across a range of domains. Newer ECD models have less experience and practice to draw on. Teachers say when the children come to school, ‘we can tell who has been a GRS child’.

In Ethiopia, GRS was adopted as one of the 4 pillars of Ethiopia's national ECCE policy framework - known in-country as Child-to-Child School Readiness Programme (CtC SRP). It has been credited with a 3.8% increase in GER (from 5.6% in 2009/10 to 26.1% 2012/13). In 2014, it was estimated to be reaching approx 300,000 children in 3300 primary schools. By 2018, undocumented UNICEF estimates put its reach at approximately 500,000 children a year.

2. It empowers children

GRS draws upon the natural phenomenon of children engaging with and helping each other. These naturally occurring behaviours are used to deliver tangible outcomes. As well as promoting school readiness and boosting educational attainment for the Young Learners, GRS harnesses the skills, enthusiasm and energy of Young Facilitators as a primary educational resource. In contexts where children are habitually marginalised, a programme which recognizes children’s strengths and mobilises them as an important community resource presents a significant opportunity to build confidence and engender empowerment. Participation in GRS raises the status of participating older and younger children and increases their belief in their own abilities, and changes adults’ attitudes about what children can do. Evidence from across a range of contexts that have implemented GRS has shown that this can be particularly transformative for girls acting as Young Facilitators. Key informants from across a range of contexts have identified the potential of Young Facilitators to build pipeline of committed and good quality teachers drawn from marginalised communities.

3. It is cost-effective

Getting Ready for School is particularly relevant for children in geographically remote or socio-economically disadvantaged communities lacking access to formal / quality early childhood education, addressing the challenges of providing early childhood education to all. It is designed to be implemented in resource-poor environments, characterized – for example – by a lack of classrooms and teachers, particularly for early education. Rather than replace comprehensive early childhood development programmes, such as kindergartens or preschools, the programme supplements those with a low-cost alternative in communities where formal early childhood development programmes are unavailable to most families. However, while low-cost is appealing, it is important to remember that low-cost is not no-cost, and under-investment can threaten the integrity and quality of the programme.
Impact of getting ready for school

The primary target beneficiaries are typically disadvantaged, young children (Young Learners) in the year before they enter school (4-6 years old) who would otherwise not have access to early learning opportunities and older children (Young Facilitators) between the ages of 10 – 12 years. Secondary beneficiaries include parents, caregivers and the wider community who are supported to increase their awareness about the critical importance of supporting their children’s education. They can also include teachers who are trained in child-centred and developmentally appropriate activities which improve their classroom practice and makes learning relevant and enjoyable for children. There are therefore several layers of impact for GRS, depending on how it is implemented.

Impact On Young Learners

The impact on Young Learners has been formally documented during the original Getting Ready for School pilot implemented by UNICEF across six settings between 2007-2010, with additional evaluations in Ethiopia where it was taken to scale by government. Significant positive outcomes were reported for children including:

- **Increased on-time primary enrolment for both girls and boys.** In Yemen, children involved in the programme showed significantly higher rates of on time enrolment (83% vs 34%), better social and emotional development, and higher academic performance in literacy than their peers not involved in the programme.

- **Significant programme impacts on children’s beginning literacy and mathematics** in Bangladesh, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia and Yemen. This held true for the medium term evaluation in Ethiopia, as children in school at Grade 1 who went through the programme were performing better than others.

- **Positive impacts on children's school readiness in all six countries.** In Yemen, these positive effects were sustained throughout the first grade.

- **Decrease drop-out rates and enhance overall primary school performance.** In spite of the absence of longitudinal data, according to 2014 evaluation for the Ethiopia government, “the CtC SRP appears to have an impact on children's success in school, in the both short and medium-term, including in the areas of on-time enrolment, academic achievement and dropout.”

- **Anecdotal (but important) impact on non-academic skills,** including social and behavioural development and reduced fear of school. “No new entrant to class one tried to run home or cried at the beginning of the term. On the contrary, those that had taken part in the Child to Child programme helped those who had not taken part to settle down.”

Impact on Young Facilitators

The initial pilot and evaluation did not adequately document the impact of the programme on Young Facilitators as it was primarily focused on – and sought to measure - the school readiness and academic attainments of Young Learners. Despite this, there is significant anecdotal evidence that they:

- **Acquired life skills and gained confidence.**

- **Felt further motivated to stay in school and do better.** The programme had a positive impact on Young Facilitators in terms of their own school attendance, school attainment (self-reported), and enhanced status and voice within communities. For example, following the pilot in Bangladesh, one third of Young Facilitators (out of a sample of 307)
reported improved school attendance; half reported improved school grades in maths, reading, science and social studies.

- Raised their own aspirations and expressed an interest in joining teaching as a career. In the DRC and Ethiopia, for example, YFs strongly stated that they want to become teachers after being involved in the programme.

**Impact on Teachers and Schools**

The way the Child to Child programme was implemented, teachers were deliberately engaged in training Young Facilitators and also in some cases to implement GRS in schools. It was seen that the intervention has the potential to promote the following outcomes for teachers and schools:

- Teachers had increased awareness about the importance of the impact of early childhood learning and how it significantly influences children's overall educational outcomes.
- Teachers were supported to adopt child-friendly methods so that they can more effectively engage children in the classroom through enhanced quality of teaching and learning methods and materials.
- Positive student outcomes increased teachers' confidence and satisfaction.
- Better linkages were fostered between school and home, with schools recognizing the needs of the youngest learners, creating child-friendly learning environments and raising educational standards.

**Impact on parents and communities**

GRS is valued by communities who see it as an investment in the future of their children and who are proud of the progress in their children and the enhanced confidence and status of young facilitators. The fact that the project is highly visible in communities may have contributed to this - often children's learning takes place in school and parents do not get to see it happening. For parents/caregivers, the following effects were seen:

- There were demonstrable improvements in support for children's learning e.g. practicing activities at home; and schools reported increased engagement and participation from GRS parents.
- The profile of ECD was raised with both parents and in communities. Parents and families gained increased awareness of the importance of child development and gain skills for promoting early learning opportunities, as well as positive health, safety and nutrition practices. They also understood the importance of on-time enrolment.
- Stronger relations were built between schools, families and community. This was supported by anecdotal evidence. In Ethiopia, there were stories of a mother who wept as she spoke of how children – both Young Facilitators and Young Learners – had provided a pathway for her disabled child to come out of hiding and take their place in the community. A widow said that the programme has made her determined to support her older daughter throughout her education.

The following sections provide more detailed explanations of materials and training, communication and advocacy, and evaluation.
Getting Ready for School is a one-year programme for children during the year before they enrol in primary school and can also be used to enhance teaching and learning environments in the first year of school.

The 35-week programme is designed to be implemented during a school year, with one session each week.

Since the official age of entry varies from country to country, the materials can be used with children aged four through six. The design is flexible, however, and allows for adaptation. The duration and frequency of group sessions, for example, can be adapted to meet the needs within a particular context.

The learning activities focus on early literacy through listening to and telling stories, as well as numeracy – counting, sorting and problem solving. Throughout the programme, attention is also placed on developing both Young Learners’ and Young Facilitators’ self-esteem, confidence and enthusiasm for learning.

How it works

1. Identifying participants

- **Young Learners** - all children of the appropriate age are encouraged to participate. In collaboration with school directors and community leaders, all eligible children are identified the year before the required school enrolment age. Child to Child has extensive experience with involving older children in this type of mapping activity. Once eligible young children are identified, parents are informed and encouraged to enrol their children.

- **Young Facilitators** - it is recommended that children in the last year of primary school be selected and matched with one or several eligible children (try to limit group size to five) The early learning activities promoted through the programme are simple, but require mastery of basic literacy and math skills. **Being a Young Facilitator is not just about being the "best" student - strong interpersonal skills and an ability to interact well with young children are important qualifications.** In addition, students should express a personal desire in the participate in the programme – their participation must be voluntary.

Selection of Young Facilitators should be done in an inclusive manner so that students who are not selected do not feel rejected by staff.

2. Involving teachers

Given the participation of both the Young Facilitator, who is an older primary school student, and the soon-to-be enrolled Young Learner, it is suggested that teachers from both first grade and higher primary grades be jointly responsible for coordinating and implementing the programme. The materials introduce teachers to innovative and child-centred early learning teaching methods, so it is strongly recommended that first grade teachers
participate in training and have access to the materials. The teaching and learning methods incorporated in the materials can enrich and enhance the teaching skills used by teachers in the first grade classroom.

An outline for training teachers has been included as Appendix 1, to guide participating teachers and introduce them to the Child to Child approach. Ideally, teachers should have an opportunity to participate in training workshops to learn about early child development, with an emphasis on the development of early literacy and numeracy. Interactive hands-on learning help teachers explore all activities in the programme. In addition, teachers should be encouraged to discuss how to facilitate the programme and support the skills of the young facilitators. The length of the training will depend on teacher capacity and the context.

3. Organising Sessions

The structure of the Getting Ready for School programme is based on weekly club meetings at the primary school, but it is also suitable for home-based settings with some adult supervision for safeguarding purposes. The weekly meetings provide children with all the materials needed to carry out the early learning activities. Children are encouraged to continue using the materials in creative ways outside of the school clubs.

4. Involving parents

Children learn best through repetition and the activities implemented during each group session can also be used at home. Parents and other family members have an important role in repeating and building on the group activities and are also encouraged to contribute to the group sessions.

Even in the pilot, implementation of GRS was not uniform. In some countries (such as DRC) the pilot ran alongside other UNICEF education programmes providing teacher training and school kits; and in other countries, such as Tajikistan, alongside civil society programmes. In Bangladesh, school management committees played a significant role in programme implementation providing oversight and support to teachers and families involved in the programme, even though this support was not formally planned. The base materials for GRS can be adapted and used by organisations – or governments - according to the context.
Materials

Core materials

Key materials comprise *Getting Ready for School Guides – Booklets 1-3 and Activity Pack for Young Learners*. The three booklets are easy-to-use guides providing step-by-step instructions for each activity and can be used by both teachers and Young Facilitators. The Activity Packs are meant to be provided to each of the Young Learners.

The Getting Ready for School programme consists of five activity sets, each including activities for seven group sessions; the seventh session for all activity sets is dedicated to review.

For each session, the guide highlights learning objectives and the materials needed. Warm-up activities and suggestions for review are included. Each activity has been carefully selected to support continuous home-based learning and interaction, and suggestions for how children can continue to work together outside the group sessions are an important component.
The programme begins with simple tasks that gradually become more challenging. **As each set builds on the skills of the previous set, the programme must be implemented sequentially.** The literacy activities build vocabulary, comprehension and confident communication. The numeracy activities are designed to help children connect mathematical concepts with real-life situations. Children use everyday objects to solve problems and estimate sizes and shapes, thereby becoming familiar with numbers, quantities and counting.

**All activities are designed to contribute to:**
- Development social skills such as listening, taking turns and sharing.
- Enabling children to take initiative and express their views and feelings.
- Building children's confidence and self-esteem
- Nurturing creativity and imagination.

**Activities that support the natural development and understanding of numbers include:**
- Sorting and grouping objects.
- Using everyday objects such as beans, pebbles and buttons to learn about numbers.
- Comparing and measuring size and shape.
- Recognizing and predicting patterns.
- Playing number games.
- Practicing problem-solving skills.

**Activities related to books and language include:**
- Listening to and talking about stories.
- Retelling stories and creating new stories.
- Learning through songs and poems.
- Making books and reading together.
- Encouraging creativity through drawing and puppets.
- Using strategies to discover new words.
- Finding print in everyday life.
**Supplementary materials**

The Getting Ready for School Resource Pack includes Early Readers (18 books of stories and activities for YFs, parents and caregivers). The materials consist of developmentally appropriate stories and learning activities that can be used by children in early primary school as they relate to younger children from birth to age five. The suggested materials are designed to enhance young children’s social, language, motor and thinking skills.

This set of base materials is drawn from the resources created during various iterations of GRS and is to be made available for adaptation and wider use. Additional materials were also created and housed within Child to Child, including resources with health and nutrition messages created for Ethiopia; life skills and girls’ protection related content created for Sierra Leone, and disaster reduction messages created for the Paths to School Success programme in Pakistan.

**Additional supplementary materials:**
- Here we are
- How many legs?
- Let’s pretend
- Sami’s building and counting school
- Stop, look and listen
- Beautiful things for Anna
- Playing together
- What is Chicken doing?
- Anna’s big band
- I can, you can
- Making new friends
- Sami’s book of games for babies
- The Colour Game
- Kofi and the great big goat
- Where is Chicken going?
- Where is Chicken?
- Tina Learns to count
- Six bananas please!

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**Communication and Advocacy**

A two-pronged communication strategy would support the objectives of Getting Ready for School:

- **High-level advocacy** is important from the very initial stages of the project because it involves securing buy-in among partners and participants, as well as encouraging ownership by policymakers and communities. As the programme expands and moves into the mainstream, a strong focus on evaluation can support advocacy based on real results.

- **Community-level sensitization** should be designed to engage community members, particularly parents and caregivers, to raise awareness of the importance and benefits of early learning and the critical role that they can play in enhancing their children’s development. Such sensitization introduces the Child to Child Getting for School Programme as an effective model for promoting early learning, increasing acceptance of and participation in the initiative. Possible channels to reach this audience include pamphlets, posters, flyers, radio announcements and TV spots.

*The Introduction section in Booklet 1 has suggested posters for communities e.g. on the power of play. Additional suggested messages are present in Appendix 1: Key Advocacy Messages.*
PROGRAMME EVALUATION

To determine the effectiveness of GRS, a comprehensive evaluation in each of the six pilot countries was conducted by the American Institutes for Research using a randomised control trial methodology\(^2\). It is to be noted that this did not adequately account for the positive impacts on Young Facilitators. The most recent impact evaluation from Ethiopia was conducted by the University of Toronto, Canada in March 2014, which assessed the benefits of GRS over a longer period of time\(^3\).

A sample list of indicators and evaluation instruments is attached as Appendix 3. For ongoing monitoring, a weekly reflection tool for Young Facilitators has been included as an appendix in Booklets 1 and 2. Additional appendices in Booklet 3 contain monitoring and evaluation tools that can be adapted according to the programme.

Some models of evaluation that can be applied are:

- **impact evaluations** to determine the outcomes for multiple beneficiary groups;
- **process evaluations** to determine how well things worked;
- **cost evaluations** to determine costs and inform potential scale-up;
- **policy evaluations** to determine your impact on national approaches.

**Impact Evaluation**

The **impact evaluation** would determine the benefits or changes for children and families. You may also seek to determine the extent to which participation in the intervention has an impact on teachers’ instructional methods, the teaching and learning environment, and school’s readiness for children. Good questions for evaluating Getting Ready for School could address the programme’s impact on four groups: children and families; first grade teachers and those at other levels; schools; and communities.

*Sample questions that you may seek to ask are included in Appendix 4.*

**Process Evaluation**

The crucial questions to be addressed are:

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the programme?
- What is working well?
- What could be improved?
- Who participated and how much of the programme did they receive?

Methods used to obtain this information can include interviews and focus groups with key informants, as well as reviews of teachers’ reflective records, attendance records and the demographic profile tool.

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Cost Evaluation

Investment in early childhood is often seen as an effective way to bring about positive social and economic returns, especially for children of poor families. The inclusion of a cost-benefit analysis adds an important dimension to the overall evaluation by providing first-hand information on the cost-effectiveness of these services, which can be used to guide future investment decisions.

Policy evaluation

Efforts can be made to monitor changes in national policies. Issues to consider include changes in legislation regarding national commitment to the GRS approach as a strategy to increase school readiness and on-time enrolment. In addition, the design can consider the impact on preschool and primary school teacher training requirements. An examination of policies before and after the study period should take place. Interviews with key policymakers will provide additional insight into policy changes.
GOING FORWARD

In March 2018, Child to Child commissioned a consultancy to review its flagship programme Getting Ready for School (GRS), and its potential impact on the sustainability of the wider organisation. GRS was independently reviewed as evidenced, scalable and flexible – a rare combination.

While much is known about the benefits for younger children (Young Learners), more research needs to be done to document the impact of the programme on older children (Young Facilitators). In addition, the model would benefit from formal incorporation of child safeguarding mechanisms to protect both the older and younger children who engage with the programme.

The current form of the GRS materials is a result of a review process in 2020, which brought together the different materials that had evolved to create a core that could be built on and adapted by early childhood networks, INGOs, NGOs and community organisations promoting education solutions for all. We hope that the GRS model will continue to address challenges in reaching and teaching children with limited access to early learning opportunities. We have confidence in the power of the programme and in its wide applicability to address ongoing challenges for vulnerable children – from those in remote areas, to those who are differently abled, to those affected by crisis or on the move in a rapidly changing world.
APPENDIX 1:
TRAINING OUTLINES

For implementing organisations, it is strongly recommended to include a training programme to familiarise teachers with the ethos and practical aspects of the Child to Child Getting Ready for School model. It cannot be assumed that teachers in all contexts will already have the skills and knowledge to facilitate children’s participation and train Young Facilitators to deliver the programme.

A sample agenda for teacher training can include the following, with material to be taken from the Introduction and Activity Sets 1-5:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY</th>
<th>SESSIONS</th>
<th>REFERENCE MATERIALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day 1</td>
<td>• Introduction to GRS programme (structure, goal, learning outcomes)</td>
<td>Booklet 1 (introduction)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Introduction to positive discipline and content for parents (e.g. posters like the Power of Play)</td>
<td>Booklet 1 (Set 1), Little Red Hen story as sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The Child to Child Six Step Approach/Session on facilitating meaningful participation for children</td>
<td>Activity Pack for Young Learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Introduction to Set 1 content</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Day 2</td>
<td>• Introduction to Sets 2 – 5 content</td>
<td>Booklet 2 (Sets 2 and 3),</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Brainstorming on codes of conduct</td>
<td>Booklet 3 (Sets 4 and 5)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Adaptation session for rhymes or stories like Larry the Locust</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day 3</td>
<td>• Continuation of adaptation session</td>
<td>Activity Pack</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• 1-2 practice sessions with a group of Young Facilitators</td>
<td>Booklet 3 (Appendices – Monitoring and evaluation tools)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Introduction to monitoring and evaluation tools</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

At the beginning of each set, it is desirable and economical to conduct a combined session for parents and YFs in order for them to gain a broad picture of the whole set. This will need to be done five times – once for each set.

For Young Facilitators, three days of initial training are suggested. A sample agenda for YFs training can look like this:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY</th>
<th>SESSIONS</th>
<th>REFERENCE MATERIALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Day 1 | • Programme Overview - Understanding the programme, YFs’ role and how they will perform it  
• Ground rules and code of conduct (participatory, with role plays including how to behave and how not to behave) | Booklet 1 (Introduction) |
| Day 2 | • Understanding Key Principles (using posters on Power of Play, Language Development, Number Activities, Summary of Knowledge, Skills and Understanding)  
• Strategies for playing with young children using Set 1 activities (role play) | Booklet 1 (Introduction)  
Booklet 1 (Set 1)  
Activity Pack for Young Learners |
| Day 3 | • Introduction to Set 1 Content (can be combined session with parents) | Booklet 1 (Set 1)  
Activity Pack for Young Learners |

**Sample session for Introduction to Set 1 (for parents/YFs)**

1. Welcome parents, young facilitators, carers and family members. Begin by telling parents, young facilitators and families how important their role is in helping their children to prepare for school, learn and succeed.

2. Make a list of the seven sessions on the board or a chart and display the list with the icons for literacy and numeracy. Emphasise the importance of practice and repetition at home for supporting children's learning.

3. Now read the story of The Little Red Hen and get a few Young Facilitators to act it out in front of the parents.

4. Ask them questions such as: Did you enjoy the story? Why? What did you learn from the story? What did you think of the behaviour of the animals? The behaviour of the hen? Etc.

5. Talk about the importance of stories in helping children to talk, listen, read, write, learn about right and wrong, good behaviour, helping others, etc.

6. **Number Activity:** Put out some pebbles, leaves and sticks. Ask a few children to sort the pebbles under the numerals 1 to 10; ask children to arrange leaves and sticks in order of their size from smallest to biggest.

7. Talk about children learning to count from their daily experiences of counting food items, plates, cups, etc at home – the knowledge teachers build on when children come to school.

8. Spend time listening to comments and concerns about how the programme will be delivered in your context.
APPENDIX 2:
KEY ADVOCACY MESSAGES

Messages for the global or national level audience – policymakers, donors, international organizations and non-governmental organizations – can include:

- Early learning gets children ready to start school at the right age and with the right skills. Without it, progress towards getting all children to access and complete primary education – as well as the quality of that education – will continue to suffer.

- Child to Child's Getting Ready for School approach is one of the most promising, innovative and cost-effective strategies in offering opportunities to children who cannot access or afford preschool.

- Children younger than school age are most influenced by other children, typically older siblings or playmates. The education system can build on this phenomenon to influence child development and school readiness in a more systematic way, and both younger and older children will benefit.

- Children from the poorest families all over the world are less likely to attend school and more likely to drop out if they get there. Even at age five or six, girls are most likely to be absorbed into household chores as boys get priority for schooling. Disparities between rich and poor, ethnic groups, boys and girls, and rural and urban children are most effectively reduced during early childhood.

- Partnerships are essential in attaining the objectives of the initiative.

Community-level messages are designed to reach communities, schools and parents. The following items illustrate four messages that can be adapted.

1. To inform the community, particularly parents, about importance of early learning:

   Learning through Play: On the path to school success

   - Children are born curious and ready to learn.

   - Children learn when they explore, experiment and have fun in a safe place.

   - Children's early experiences shape how their brains develop.

   - Good early experiences help a child's brain develop well.

   - When children have many chances to play, they learn about themselves, others and how things work.
2. To raise awareness about what parents and the wider community can do to enhance children's development:

*Parents are Teachers Too: Talk, sing and listen to your child*

- What you say and do makes a difference in your child's learning.
- Your child watches and learns from you. Because you are so special, she wants to be like you.
- Your child's relationship with you teaches him what she can expect from people and shapes her relationships with them.
- Everyday moments – eating, dressing, going to the market – are times to enjoy your child, talk together and help her learn.
- When you take time to talk, sing and listen to your child, you help her feel good about herself and want to learn.

3. To provide the Child to Child model as an innovative strategy:

*Learning together to get ready for school*

- Children's early learning sets the stage for school success.
- Older children help young children learn from fun games, books and toys.
- Older children are learning as they teach young children.
- Children learn best when family members show interest in games and other activities at home.
## APPENDIX 3:
### SAMPLE EVALUATION INDICATORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Direct child assessment</th>
<th>School records</th>
<th>Older child survey</th>
<th>Parent interview</th>
<th>Teacher interview</th>
<th>School administrator interview</th>
<th>Community/leader interview</th>
<th>UNICEF program implementer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>YOUNGER CHILD</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>On-time school enrolment</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>School readiness: Language development</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>School readiness: Literacy development</td>
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