ECDI20**30**
Early Childhood Development Index

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

General Questions

1. WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION ON THE ECDI2030?

The English version of the ECDI2030 module can be downloaded here. Dissemination materials include an advocacy video. Tools to support country uptake of the ECDI2030 include a Quick Implementation Guide, Instructions for Interviewers, Guidelines for Integration into Household Surveys, Customization and Translation Guidelines, training materials, syntaxes, tabulation plans, and templates for reporting. These materials are available on the ECDI2030 resources page.

2. WHAT LANGUAGES ARE AVAILABLE?

The ECDI2030 is available for download here in the following languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese (standard), Portuguese (Brazilian), Russian and Spanish.

3. HOW LONG DOES THE ECDI2030 TAKE TO ADMINISTER?

The ECDI2030 takes around three minutes to administer under normal conditions. The duration of the interview can be affected by several factors, including the respondent's comprehension and literacy level, wording and phrasing differences across translations and, in some contexts, the need to have local interpreters supporting the interview process. Administration time can also be affected when the respondent has a functional difficulty, which may require the use of specific types of interviewing assistance to ensure inclusive data collection. Respondents who have problems with language, are very talkative, or have children with many difficulties may take longer to answer questions.

The administration timing should only be considered as a general indication that can be useful for survey planning purposes. As part of the implementation process of any survey, the ECDI2030 should be pre-tested prior to final fieldwork, which will provide a more precise estimate of the administration time in each specific context.

4. HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO TRAIN ENUMERATORS ON THE USE OF THE ECDI2030?

Similar to other survey modules, the administration of the ECDI2030 requires dedicated training to ensure that enumerators use adequate interview techniques, which include asking questions and registering responses in a standardized way. Prior to the actual training session, all fieldwork personnel should review the ECDI2030 Instructions for Interviewers manual. Training on using the ECDI2030 should take around three hours and include a careful review of the questionnaire, the Instructions for Interviewers manual and training materials, with sufficient practice sessions and mock interviews. All these materials are part of the ECDI2030 implementation tools that are available on the ECDI2030 resources page.

Regardless of the data collection mode, interviewers should be trained to administer the ECDI2030 on paper. For surveys using Computer-Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI), additional training should be provided on administering the module using CAPI.

5. HOW MUCH WILL IT COST TO IMPLEMENT THE ECDI2030?

The costs associated with implementing a new measure at the population level are mostly associated with preparing the instrument and related materials, fees associated with the use of copyrighted tools when applicable, costs resulting from additional training and interview time in the field, as well as costs associated with data processing and analyses. Because the ECDI2030 and its accompanying implementation package are available for use at no charge, its incorporation into existing household surveys should not result in significant increased costs, especially if the survey already entails the collection of data on children. Integrating the ECDI2030 into ongoing household surveys implies adding 20 questions to an existing questionnaire that covers children aged 24 to 59 months, resulting in approximately three minutes of additional interview time. Training time required to prepare fieldworkers to administer the ECDI2030 is around three hours.

6. WHAT SORT OF ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT THE INCLUSION OF THE ECDI2030 IN MY COUNTRY?

Technical assistance is available on the inclusion of the ECDI2030 in new or existing household surveys. This support

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includes guidance on all stages of survey implementation, from design to data analysis and reporting. If you need assistance, please contact Claudia Cappa (ccappa@unicef.org).

A package of implementation tools to support country uptake of the ECDI2030 is also available. These materials include a Quick Implementation Guide, Instructions for Interviewers, Guidelines for Integration into Household Surveys, Customization and Translation Guidelines, training materials, tabulation plans, and templates for reporting. Dissemination materials include an advocacy video. These materials are available on the ECDI2030 resources page.

Conceptual aspects

7. WHY IS THE MEASUREMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AT SCALE SO COMPLICATED?

Early childhood is the most significant and rapid stage of development in human life, involving innate biological aspects in constant interaction with the environment. The interactions between genetic factors and everyday experience shape the developing brain from before birth through the early years and establish the basis for healthy development throughout a child's life. Examples of such interactions include the food children eat, the play they engage in and the stimulation they are exposed to. Early childhood development (ECD) refers to the formation of physical, cognitive, psychological and social skills that takes place through these interactions during the first eight years of life.

The multidimensional nature of ECD and the speed at which children acquire new skills as they grow make the measurement of ECD a complex task. Approaches to measuring ECD in educational and clinical settings have traditionally been based on screening and assessment of individual children. However, comprehensive assessments of ECD depend on highly trained professionals and substantial administration time, making it inadequate for large-scale population monitoring. Generating accurate data on ECD at the population level requires valid instruments that can be implemented in a standardized way so as to generate robust and comparable data. Additional considerations for population-level measurement in the context of multi-topic household surveys include the need for instruments that are short and for which general enumerators can be effectively trained in their administration. The ECDI2030 was developed for population-level measurement and fulfils the requirements mentioned above.

8. HOW WERE THE QUESTIONS IN THE ECDI2030 SELECTED?

The ECDI2030 is the result of a carefully planned methodological process that involved extensive consultations with experts, partner agencies and national statistical authorities to generate the shortest possible set of items to measure the core domains and sub-domains of ECD in children aged 24 to 59 months. This methodological work involved a selection process to identify the best items across 12 core sub-domains within the 3 general domains of health, learning and psychosocial well-being. Conceptual and psychometric criteria used for item selection included the following:

- The initial pool of questions were selected from previously validated instruments that showed validity across different cultural and socioeconomic contexts and relevancy for policymaking.

- All questions were further tested, improved or discarded on the basis of results from cognitive testing in four countries, and results from dedicated field testing in population-based household surveys carried out in two countries.

- Successive rounds of item selection based on psychometric testing were carried out. Each selection round was carried out respecting content-coverage and age-coverage criteria for each domain.

- Psychometric criteria included item difficulty, discrimination, redundancy, overall reliability and specificity in terms of maternal report versus direct assessment of the child's development.

- Data from a total of 36 countries were used to identify the best questions in terms of item difficulty and discrimination criteria.

9. EARLY CHILDHOOD CONTEXTS AND CONCEPTUALIZATIONS VARY ACROSS CULTURES. IS THE ECDI2030 ADEQUATE TO MEASURE DEVELOPMENT IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS?

Indeed, child development can be conceptualized and understood differently across different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, and this is an important issue that was addressed during the design of the ECDI2030. Cultural adequacy across different contexts was one of the criteria used during the initial item selection. It is important to note that all items in the ECDI2030 were derived from instruments previously validated in different cultural and socioeconomic contexts. Additionally, all items were subjected to a dedicated process of cognitive testing, which uses qualitative interviews to address any problems in

question interpretation or overall adequacy to ensure that each question measures what it is intended to measure. Cognitive interviews were carried out with mothers of children across different countries and cultural, socioeconomic and educational backgrounds, and the results were used to inform the item selection and item improvement process.

To generate robust, high-quality comparable data, the ECDI2030 must be implemented in a standardized way, which may require some level of country-specific customization. Customization should be done in a standard way to ensure it does not affect validity and comparability of the data. The ECDI2030 Customization and Translation Guidelines can be found here.

10. THE ECDI2030 ONLY MEASURES DEVELOPMENT FROM 24 TO 59 MONTHS. ISN'T DEVELOPMENT BEFORE AGE 2 AND BEYOND AGE 5 IMPORTANT AS WELL?

Early childhood, spanning the first eight years of life, is an extraordinary period for human development. Investing in this crucial period is considered one of the most critical and cost-effective investments a country can make, because it can have the greatest impact on brain development. The first eight years are thus considered a window of opportunity, providing parents, caregivers and policymakers a unique opportunity to help children thrive and to promote lifelong learning, prosperity and well-being. As explained in question 7, measuring ECD is complex and particularly challenging at the population level. While it is widely established that development is fluid and evolving, the pace of development is especially accelerated in children younger than age 2, which makes measuring ECD in this age group particularly challenging. Likewise, as children grow older and are increasingly exposed to multiple sources of stimulation and learning opportunities, their abilities also become more complex and thus more difficult to measure. While measuring development across the complete early childhood period is highly relevant, it is also complex. For this reason, the design of the ECDI2030 prioritized the measurement of children who are 2, 3 and 4 years old.

Methodological work among partners is ongoing to explore the possibility of identifying a similar set of core questions for both younger and older children, which can be used for population-level monitoring of ECD.

11. WHY DOES THE ECDI2030 GENERATE ONLY A SINGLE INDICATOR?

The ECDI2030 is not intended to generate data for reporting on individual development domains. Rather, it is meant to produce one population-level indicator based on a single summary score that captures the interlinked developmental concepts embedded in the three domains mentioned in SDG indicator 4.2.1. That said, the single summary score is calculated on the basis of a series of age-specific cut-scores.

Designing an instrument to accurately generate domain-level indicators for health, learning and psychosocial well-being would require a much larger set of items, which would render the tool impractical for household surveys. The ECDI2030 is the result of a carefully planned methodological process that involved extensive consultations with experts, partner agencies and national statistical authorities to generate the shortest possible set of items to measure the three core domains and 12 sub-domains of ECD for children aged 24 to 59 months. However, due to criteria of psychometric validity and reliability, it is only intended to generate a single indicator.

12. WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT COMPONENTS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT THAT NEED TO BE MEASURED?

A comprehensive monitoring framework for ECD should include indicators that measure both inputs and outcomes. Factors such as children's nutritional status, access to early learning opportunities, and exposure to responsive caregiving are important inputs, or determinants of ECD, to which children will be exposed in varying degrees. These inputs have an influence on developmental outcomes among children. The ECDI2030 is intended to measure the achievement of key milestones in health, learning and psychosocial well-being, which are conceptualized as outcomes in the child developmental process. Further information on existing measures of other aspects of child development can be found here.

13. HOW IS THE ECDI2030 RELATED TO THE NURTURING CARE FRAMEWORK?

The ECDI2030 is intended to measure the achievement of key milestones in health, learning and psychosocial well-being, which are conceptualized as outcomes in the child developmental process. The nurturing care framework is a conceptual framework that lays out the following five components of nurturing care: health, nutrition, early learning, responsive caregiving, and security and safety, nested within an enabling policy framework to support families and caregivers. These elements are conceptualized as inputs or determinants of early childhood development, as opposed to outcomes.

14. MY COUNTRY HAS AN EXISTING MEASURE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT FOR CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 5. DO I HAVE TO USE THE ECDI2030 TO TRACK MY COUNTRY'S PROGRESS OF SDG INDICATOR 4.2.1?

Tracking progress of SDG indicator 4.2.1 requires a population-level instrument to measure the proportion of all children aged 24 to 59 months in the country who are developmentally on track in the domains of health, learning

and psychosocial well-being. Additionally, for the purposes of global monitoring, countries should seek to use the same measure over time and generate data that are comparable to those collected by other countries. The ECDI2030 was developed with the specific aim of providing countries with a measure that meets the requirements for global monitoring and reporting on SDG 4.2.1. In particular, the ECDI2030 has the conceptual validity and content coverage for measuring the three domains stated in SDG indicator 4.2.1 among children aged 24 to 59 months.

15. BESIDES THE ECDI2030, WHAT OTHER INSTRUMENTS CAN BE USED TO MEASURE EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT? HOW DO I KNOW IF I SHOULD USE THE ECDI2030, RATHER THAN OTHER TOOLS?

Numerous tools have been developed over the years to measure early childhood development. These tools have been designed to respond to different data needs. For example, some tools may respond to the need for data on a single aspect of early childhood development, such as language, while others try to capture multiple developmental domains. The intended purpose for measurement is a major factor in determining the selection of an adequate instrument to measure ECD.

Measurement tools can differ depending on whether the required data need to be collected at the individual or population level. In general, individual-level measurement implies the use of instruments that allow for a more in-depth assessment of a child's abilities and behaviours and normally entail complex protocols and longer administration times. Most individual-level measurement tools, such as the Bayley Scales of Infant Development, were developed to be used in clinical and/or educational settings, requiring specialized training and the use of costly administration materials and licenses. Such instruments are not considered feasible and suitable for use in population-level household surveys. Population-level instruments, on the other hand, tend to follow simpler administration protocols and require less training.

Measurement tools can also differ with respect to their implementation, including whether they involve direct assessment of a child's abilities, parental-reported information, or a combination of both. There are advantages and caveats to these different approaches. For example, a data collection exercise aimed at understanding language development and literacy skills taking place in an early childcare context might benefit from the use of an instrument based on direct assessment of children. That same instrument, however, may not be suitable in the context of a large-scale household survey involving the collection of data on multiple topics.

In sum, selecting an instrument to measure ECD requires consideration of several important factors. The ECDI2030

is a population-level data collection instrument that was specifically designed, tested and validated to be incorporated in large-scale household surveys, with the aim of providing countries with a measure that meets the requirements for global monitoring and reporting on SDG 4.2.1.

16. IS THE ECDI2030 ONLY INTENDED TO BE USED IN LOW- AND MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES, OR CAN IT ALSO BE USED IN HIGH-INCOME COUNTRIES?

The ECDI2030 was designed to be used in all countries. The methodological work undertaken to generate the ECDI2030 and the data used to select and improve the item set addressed the development of children in varied contexts. The module's applicability in low-, middle- and high-income countries was ensured through several processes: the items comprising the initial draft set of items were derived from instruments previously validated for use across all income levels; cognitive testing of the draft set was carried out in Bulgaria, Mexico, Uganda and the United States; data that informed item selection and psychometric validity were collected across 36 different countries; and the ECDI2030 cut-scores used to identify children who are developmentally on track were defined through a standard setting exercise with a global panel of ECD experts from 13 countries, with diverse geographical representation.

17. ARE THERE PLANS TO REVISE THE ECDI2030 IN THE FUTURE?

The development of the ECDI2030 included several rounds of testing using both quantitative and qualitative methods, and was carried out in several low-, middle- and high-income countries. As more countries use the ECDI2030, it will be important to reassess its performance in different contexts. This reassessment is not likely to result in changes to items or response options, but it can provide important information to improve supporting documentation and instructions. Also, as data at the global level become available, a revision of the current cut-scores may also become necessary.

18. SOME QUESTIONS SEEM TOO DIFFICULT OR TOO EASY FOR CHILDREN OF CERTAIN AGES. CAN INTERVIEWERS SKIP THOSE QUESTIONS TO SAVE TIME?

The ECDI2030 was intentionally designed to reflect the increasing difficulty of skills children acquire as they grow older, therefore some questions might seem too easy or too difficult for some children. There are two important points to remember here. First, all questions should be asked exactly as stated in the questionnaire, except for one question that includes a skip rule, as explained in the ECDI2030 Instructions for Interviewers. Second, the fact that some questions might seem too hard or too easy may generate reactions from some respondents. Such reactions should be addressed by

interviewers to ensure that the respondent understands that this is a normal and expected issue and that all questions are required to measure child development.

19. SOMETIMES MOTHERS MIGHT BE UNSURE ABOUT WHAT ANSWER TO GIVE. IN THOSE CASES, IS IT POSSIBLE TO CHECK DIRECTLY WITH THE CHILD IF SHE/HE CAN DO WHAT IS BEING ASKED?

Given the types of questions in the ECDI2030, it is possible that respondents may want to find out from a child directly if he or she can do the things being asked. This is not appropriate and should always be avoided by explaining to the respondent that the questions are to be answered solely based on her perception and knowledge of the child. Deviating from this protocol not only affects the standardization of the interview procedure, but could also introduce unnecessary biases and affect data quality.

Detailed information on how to address situations like the one mentioned above can be found in the ECDI2030 Instructions for Interviewers.

20. THE ECDI2030 GENERATES A SINGLE INDICATOR BUT IS NOT INTENDED TO PROVIDE SUB-SCORES ON THE INDIVIDUAL DOMAINS OF HEALTH, LEARNING AND PSYCHOSOCIAL WELL-BEING. DOES THAT MEAN THAT CHILDREN CAN BE CLASSIFIED AS DEVELOPMENTALLY ON TRACK, EVEN THOUGH THEY MAY NOT BE DEVELOPING WELL IN ONE DOMAIN?

Content coverage was one of the core criteria guiding the process of item selection and overall psychometric modelling of the ECDI2030. This ensures that the ECDI2030 not only covers the three domains stated in SDG indicator 4.2.1, but also 12 interlinked sub-domains that reflect key developmental milestones in health, learning and psychosocial well-being.

As explained in question 11, designing an instrument to generate reliable domain-level indicators for health, learning and psychosocial well-being would require a much larger set of items, which would render the tool impractical for household surveys. This does not mean that the ECDI2030 does not reflect all three domains. Rather, it means that the domains are not themselves measured with sufficient reliability to recommend reporting at the domain level.

Rather than seeking to measure each domain separately, the psychometric strategy used to develop the ECDI2030 sought to select items that (a) represented all three domains and 12 sub-domains and (b) maximized the overall reliability (test information) of the indicator. Item response theory was used to inform item selection, using a two-parameter (2pl) model. This means that item selection was based not only on each item's difficulty or age-appropriateness, but also on the correlation of the item with the overall latent construct. As a result, children's individual item scores will tend to be associated with the overall ECDI2030 score, in such a way that the probability of a child having inadequate development in one particular domain, while reaching the minimum test score to be classified as developmentally on track, is highly improbable.

21. HOW WERE THE ECDI2030 CUT-SCORES DEFINED?

The ECDI2030 indicator measures the proportion of children aged 24 to 59 months who are developmentally on track in the domains of health, learning and psychosocial well-being. The indicator is constructed using the 20 questions in the ECDI2030 to identify children aged 24 to 59 months who have achieved the minimum number of milestones expected for their age group – in other words, children who pass the minimum cut-score to be identified as developmentally on track. These cut-scores were defined through a standardized methodology, called a standard setting exercise, through which a global panel of ECD experts from 13 countries generated a series of criterion-referenced standards that reflect their expectations about the performance of a child who is developmentally on track. This methodology uses a combination of expert opinion (judgemental component) informed by actual information on children's performance (empirical component). Therefore, the ECDI2030 cut-scores represent the expected knowledge, skills or abilities that children of different ages should have to be identified as 'on track'.

22. HOW SHOULD THE RESULTING ESTIMATES OF THE ECDI2030 INDICATOR BE INTERPRETED?

Similar to other indicators, the resulting estimate for the ECDI2030 indicator is expected to always be less than 100 per cent. However, defining an absolute target or expectation for the ECDI2030 indicator at the country level will only be possible once data from a sufficiently large enough number of countries have been collected. In the meantime, the ECDI2030 indicator can be meaningfully disaggregated to compare the proportion of children who are developmentally on track across different population sub-groups to identify inequities.

23. DOES THE ECDI2030 CAPTURE GENDER DIFFERENCES IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT?

When it comes to measurement tools, there is an important distinction between gender-relevant and gender-biased measures. In designing the ECDI2030, one of the main objectives was to develop a measure that is gender-relevant, but not gender-biased. Because the underlying objective of global monitoring tools, such as the ECDI2030, is to generate robust and comparable data across different contexts and

countries, efforts were made to avoid selecting items that might introduce bias into the data as a result of a child's sex. These types of biases can cause systematic errors in the resulting data and strongly affect the usefulness of results. Therefore, reducing (or completely removing) such bias when designing new questionnaires and measures is paramount. A question such as, "Can your child (i.e., is your child able to) play with dolls?" would be an example of a gender-biased item since, in many countries, it might not be typical for boys to play with dolls. This means that girls would be seen as 'performing' better on this item than boys, based purely on the fact that boys (in some contexts) might have less exposure or opportunities to play with dolls as compared to girls. The opposite would also be true for a question that asked whether a girl is able/can play with trucks. If an entire questionnaire is composed of items of a similar nature, then the resulting data might (erroneously) suggest that boys are

developing better (or faster) than girls. In fact, this would simply be an artifact of the biased nature of the items and not a reflection of true gender differences in children's development. True gender differences in child development are due to many factors, including differential treatment in upbringing as well as diverse cultural expectations and parenting strategies. Such differences can be captured if the measure is developed to be gender-relevant but not gender-biased, as is the case with the ECDI2030.

In regards to disaggregation by sex, responses to the ECDI2030 are meant to be collected along with data on background characteristics of children, including but not limited to sex. The indicator generated by the ECDI2030 can and was designed to be meaningfully disaggregated to reveal disparities in developmental outcomes among children with different backgrounds.

Comparison of the former ECDI and the ECDI2030

24. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE FORMER ECDI AND THE ECDI2030?

To capture information on children's achievement of certain universal developmental milestones across countries, UNICEF developed a set of specific questions for mothers/caregivers to measure the overall developmental status of children within the physical, literacy-numeracy, social-emotional and learning domains. This work was undertaken with a technical advisory group, within the context of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS). This 10-item index – the Early Childhood Development Index, or ECDI – was added to the MICS beginning in 2009, and has since been used in over 70 countries. For more information about how the MICS ECDI was developed, please click here.

When the MICS ECDI was being developed, there were only a handful of available measures aimed at collecting data on child development outcomes at the population level. The goal was to produce representative national prevalence estimates as opposed to evaluating interventions or conducting clinical assessments of individual children. However, the landscape has changed since that time, and a number of groups have been working to develop, test and validate measures of ECD with various purposes in mind. The development of the ECDI2030 was initiated in response to these advances in the field of ECD measurement as well as the requirements associated with SDG monitoring.

25. WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF THE ECDI2030 COMPARED WITH THE MICS ECDI?

The ECDI2030 is designed to obtain information on the overall level of development that a child has reached according to his/her age across three interrelated domains: health, learning and psychosocial well-being. The main advantage compared with the MICS ECDI is that the ECDI2030 was

specifically designed and validated to generate estimates for reporting on SDG indicator 4.2.1. The content coverage of the ECDI2030 is also broader and more comprehensive than the MICS ECDI, including a larger number of developmental sub-domains.

26. MY COUNTRY HAS USED THE MICS ECDI IN SEVERAL SURVEYS. WILL THE DATA COLLECTED WITH THE ECDI2030 BE COMPARABLE WITH THE MICS ECDI?

The MICS ECDI and the ECDI2030 target different age groups and measure slightly different developmental domains. The two measures were also developed through different methodological approaches, which resulted in psychometrically different instruments and scoring methods. While big differences are not expected in terms of the proportion of children identified as on track by both instruments, the indicators they generate are not entirely comparable.

27. HOW DO THE RESULTING COUNTRY ESTIMATES COLLECTED USING THE ECDI2030 COMPARE WITH THOSE PRODUCED IN THE LANCET ARTICLE IDENTIFYING THE PROPORTION OF THOSE AT RISK OF NOT REACHING THEIR FULL POTENTIAL DUE TO POVERTY AND STUNTING?

The Lancet article, 'Early Childhood Development Coming of Age: Science through the life course', refers to children at risk of not reaching their full potential, while the ECDI2030 reflects those who are minimally on track in terms of their development. The Lancet article presents estimates for children under age 5 while the ECDI2030 only generates data for children 24 to 59 months old.

Survey design and implementation considerations

28. MY COUNTRY IS IMPLEMENTING A SURVEY, BUT IT ONLY INCLUDES 4- AND 5-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN. CAN WE USE THE ECDI2030 WITH THIS AGE GROUP?

No. The ECDI2030 can only be used to collect data on children aged 24 to 59 months, that is, those who are 2, 3 and 4 years old. You could still use the ECDI2030 to collect data on 4-year-old children, but you would only be able to report on the proportion of children aged 4 years whose development is on track. Please refer to the ECDI2030 Quick Implementation Guide for other important recommendations.

29. IN MY COUNTRY WE ARE INTERESTED IN ECD REPORTING FOR ALL CHILDREN UNDER AGE 5 YEARS. CAN WE USE THE ECDI2030 FOR CHILDREN UNDER 2 YEARS OLD?

No. The ECDI2030 can only be used to collect data on children who are 2, 3 and 4 years old. Please refer to the ECDI2030 Quick Implementation Guide for other important recommendations.

30. MY COUNTRY IS ABOUT TO START A SURVEY IN PRESCHOOLS. CAN WE USE THE ECDI2030 WITH TEACHERS AS RESPONDENTS?

No. The ECDI2030 has only been validated to be applied to the mother or primary caregiver of children aged 24 to 59 months in the context of household surveys. Please refer to the ECDI2030 Quick Implementation Guide for other important recommendations.

31. MY COUNTRY IS ONLY INTERESTED IN THE LEARNING DOMAIN. CAN WE USE ONLY THE QUESTIONS ON THAT DOMAIN?

No. The ECDI2030 is not intended to generate data for reporting on individual developmental domains. Rather, it is meant to produce one population-level indicator based on a single summary score that captures the interlinked developmental concepts embedded in the three domains captured by SDG indicator 4.2.1. Designing an instrument to accurately generate domain-level indicators for health, learning and psychosocial well-being would require a much larger set of items, which would render the tool impractical for household surveys. Due to criteria of psychometric validity and reliability, only a single indicator derived from the complete set of questions should be generated. Please refer to the ECDI2030 Quick Implementation Guide for other important recommendations.

32. THE ECDI2030 IS TOO LONG. CAN WE USE ONLY SOME OF THE QUESTIONS?

No. To generate robust information, the ECDI2030 needs be used in its standardized and previously validated form, comprising 20 questions. No questions should be added or removed, nor should there be changes to question phrasing, question order or to the response options. The selection of domains, sub-domains, constructs and items in the ECDI2030 was determined by a long process of consultation and rigorous methodological work involving governments and members of the international community to provide a conceptually valid, culturally adequate and robust measure of ECD in children 2 to 4 years old. Please refer to the ECDI2030 Quick Implementation Guide for other important recommendations.

33. CAN THE CONTENT AND/OR FORMULATION OF THE ECDI2030 ITEMS BE CHANGED?

Except for the items mentioned in the ECDI2030 Customization and Translation Guidelines, items cannot be changed in terms of content, formulation, response options or item order in the questionnaire. Any change beyond those mentioned in the Customization and Translation Guidelines would alter the meaning of the item and would result in the measurement of a different construct, and therefore compromise the validity of the results.

All items in the ECDI2030 were subjected to a dedicated process of field testing including quantitative and qualitative methodologies to develop the current set of items. This included cognitive testing, which uses qualitative interviews to address any problems in question interpretation or overall adequacy to ensure that each question measures what it is intended to measure.

To generate robust, high-quality comparable data, the ECDI2030 must be implemented in a standardized way, which may require some level of country-specific customization. Customization should also be done in a standard way to ensure it does not affect the validity and comparability of the data. The ECDI2030 Customization and Translation Guidelines can be found here.

34. THE ECDI2030 INCLUDES MORE QUESTIONS ON LEARNING THAN ON SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT. CAN WE ADD MORE QUESTIONS ON THESE DOMAINS?

As explained in questions 31, 32 and 33, no questions should be added or removed, nor should there be changes to question phrasing, question order or to the response options. The final selection of items in the ECDI2030 was determined by an exhaustive process of consultation and rigorous methodological work to design a conceptually valid, culturally adequate and robust measure of ECD in children 2 to 4 years old. This process, which took place over a period of five years, included a sequence of carefully planned technical steps, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods, to identify and fine-tune the best items to measure the core

ECD domains and sub-domains. Therefore, the inclusion of new items, or any changes to the ECDI2030 items, would compromise the overall validity of the measure and resulting data. Please refer to the ECDI2030 Quick Implementation Guide for other important recommendations.

35. MOST QUESTIONS IN THE ECDI2030 ARE YES OR NO QUESTIONS. HOW ARE 'DON'T KNOW' ANSWERS ANALYSED?

The 'DON'T KNOW' answer code should only be used when the respondent genuinely doesn't know the answer to the question, and after sufficient probing to help the respondent identify the best matching answer code. For example, if the respondent answers, "I'm not sure if she can do it", the interviewer might be inclined to code this as 'DON'T KNOW'. However, this would not necessarily be the best matching answer code. Such a response would require probing in order to clarify if the respondent is unsure because she has never seen the child do it, or if she is unsure because the child can only do it some of the time. All ECDI2030 items measure skills and behaviours that emerge in the first years of life, and gradually become consolidated as part of the child's abilities. Therefore, it is expected that some mothers will say that the child has only started to do what is being asked, or that the child can only do it sometimes. Answers that reflect that the child is already able to do what is being asked, even if it is not all the time or in all contexts, should be coded as 'YES'. In sum, interviewers should only record 'DON'T KNOW' when the respondent says that she is not aware of such behaviour, for example: "I have never seen her doing it" or "I have never asked her to do it, so I don't know". These and other rules on how to record information on the ECDI2030 items are provided in the ECDI2030 Instructions for Interviewers manual that can be found here.

The numerator for the ECDI2030 indicator represents children who have achieved the minimum number of milestones expected for their age, and the denominator represents all children aged 24 to 59 months. Therefore, for the construction of the ECDI2030 indicator, 'DON'T KNOW' answers are coded in the same way as 'NO' answers and only become part of the denominator.

36. HOW SHOULD I SCORE THE ECDI2030 TO GENERATE THE INDICATOR THAT IDENTIFIES CHILDREN WHO ARE DEVELOPMENTALLY ON TRACK?

The ECDI2030 scoring method uses age-specific cut-scores that reflect the expected increase in the number of milestones that children achieve as they grow older. This means that for a child to be considered on track, the mother/caregiver needs to endorse a pre-defined minimum number of items according to the child's age. The pre-defined cut-scores establish a minimum of: 7 items for children aged 24 to 29 months; 9 items for children aged 30 to 35 months; 11 items for children aged 36 to 41 months; 13 items for children aged 42 to 47 months; and 15 items for children aged 48 to 59 months. The resulting indicator is then defined as follows: the numerator is the number of children aged 24 to 59 months who have achieved the minimum number of milestones expected for their age group, and the denominator is the total number of children aged 24 to 59 months in the sample. Please refer to the ECDI2030 Quick Implementation Guide for other important recommendations.

37. CAN THE ECDI2030 BE USED TO EVALUATE INTERVENTIONS?

The ECDI2030 is a population-level instrument and is not suitable for assessing the developmental status of individual children. Therefore, it should not be used to measure individual child outcomes in the context of intervention evaluation studies. Despite not being suitable to estimate effects at the individual level, the ECDI2030 can still be useful in evaluation designs at the population level for example, in cluster randomized trials or any intervention evaluation that is done at the population, rather than at the individual, level.

38. CAN THE ECDI2030 BE INTEGRATED IN A CENSUS?

The ECDI2030 was designed to be used in sample-based household surveys and is not an adequate instrument to be used in censuses. In contrast to sample surveys, censuses enumerate the totality of members of the population, and therefore they tend to collect data using shorter questionnaires and simpler questions. Additionally, the ECDI2030 is intended to be administered exclusively to the child's mother, except if the mother is deceased or does not live in the same household as the child, which is a requirement that is not likely to be met in censuses, where the respondent is usually the household head.

39. CAN THE ECDI2030 BE USED TO COLLECT DATA IN EDUCATION OR HEALTH MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS?

The ECDI2030 was designed to be used in sample-based household surveys and to be administered exclusively to the child's mother, except if the mother is deceased or does not live in the same household as the child. It has not been validated for use in other data collection contexts nor to be administered to other types of respondents.

Children with disabilities

40. WE ARE ALREADY USING THE CHILD FUNCTIONING MODULE (CFM) FOR 2- TO 4-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN. WHAT DOES THE ECDI2030 ADD TO THE CHILD FUNCTIONING MODULE?

The ECDI2030 and the Child Functioning Module measure two important, yet different, aspects of early childhood. The CFM identifies children with functional difficulties and thus at risk of being disabled. The ECDI2030, on the other hand, measures developmental outcomes across three domains (health, learning and psychosocial well-being) and allows the identification of children who, according to their abilities or manifest behaviours, can be considered minimally on track developmentally. From a population point of view, the proportion of children whose behaviour is not on track, as measured by the ECDI2030, is expected to be larger than the proportion of children identified by the CFM as having a functional difficulty.

41. ARE CHILDREN WITH KNOWN FUNCTIONAL DIFFICULTIES ELIGIBLE FOR THE ECDI2030 AND ARE THEY INCLUDED IN THE CALCULATION OF THE INDICATOR?

The ECDI2030 is a population-level instrument, thus it generates information on all children aged 24 to 59 months, including children with functional difficulties. All questions should be asked exactly as stated in the questionnaire and the interviewer should not assume what the respondent will answer because of any health condition or evident functional difficulty presented by the child. In some cases, the interviewer may sense frustration on the part of the respondent due to the fact that some questions are too difficult. When this happens, interviewers should acknowledge the respondent's frustration and explain that all questions need to be asked, even if they don't seem applicable.