Family and Community Engagement

Purpose of this Core Function

Ensure that families and communities are **active participants and partners** in supporting children's learning and development across early learning settings

Goal 1
Include families and communities as strategic partners in pre-primary education.

Goals for Core Function 4 Family and community engagement

Goal 3
Build adequate capacity across the subsector to engage with families and communities effectively.

Goal 2
Support families in fostering positive home-learning environments.

Importance of family and community engagement

- **Family engagement conveys a number of benefits for the pre-primary subsector**
  - Create a stronger transition between children's learning at home and experience at preschool
  - Give teachers deeper knowledge about their students, helping them to be more responsive to the needs of children and their families
  - Help shape parents' demand for services and quality

- **Communities can also provide additional assets for the pre-primary subsector**
  - Offer spaces for preschool programmes
  - Provide referrals and expanded services in health and nutrition
  - Serve as a social network to support

Some challenges

Family and community engagement is usually one of the weakest points in the ECE subsector

- Generally not a core target audience

- Engagement with families is often not set in the system's core mandate

- Family engagement is now always in the overall ESP, so it tends to be underdeveloped

Some key considerations

Developing an overall strategy

- Family and community issues are typically in the scope of work of multiple ministries

- Setting goals and developing an overall strategy needs to be an inclusive and coordinated process and include all levels

Support and incentives

- Important for pre-primary staff to be able to communicate with families about programme goals and about the developmental progress of children

- Families and communities are likely to be more engaged if the system provides some incentives, such as the ability to make decisions

Diversity of families and communities

- Explicit attention and responsiveness needs to be paid to the diversity of knowledge, beliefs, needs, and cultural characteristics in a specific community

- Consider the "funds of knowledge" that every family possesses with regard to their children