



The [Early Childhood Education Policy Academy](#)¹ is a multi-year effort by the World Bank designed to help countries identify needs and generate options to improve early childhood education (ECE) at the country level. It offers a unique opportunity for country teams to strengthen policymaker capacity, problem-solve within a global network of peers, and engage in South-to-South learning along some of the world's leading early childhood practitioners and academic experts. The program's first cohort supported 12 countries² from April 2021 to November 2022. This case study showcases how the program specifically supported the El Salvador country team.

CONTEXT

El Salvador has made significant advancements in early childhood development (ECD). This includes the introduction of a multisectoral national ECD policy, *Crecer Juntos* (Growing Together) in 2020, the passing of the *Crecer Juntos* Law in 2022 (enacted in January 2023), and most recently, the establishment of the Early Childhood Institute in 2023 as the responsible body for early childhood in El Salvador. In the face of low early learning coverage (with an average enrollment of just 34%), the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MINEDUCYT), together with the Office of the First Lady and other institutions, has positioned ECE as a right and leveraging the policy and law, has committed to increasing access to quality early learning services for all children aged 0 to 3, improving the quality of ECE for all children ages 4 to 6, and strengthening the first grade for all children aged 7. With these steps serving as a promising foundation, El Salvador is on its way to building more effective system coordination, along with finalizing the Early Childhood Development and Learning Standards (ECDLS), which constitute the frame of reference for the educational reform *Mi Nueva Escuela* (My New School) that include a curriculum reform, and strengthening teachers' pre- and in-service training, among others. The ways in which the program has supported these efforts are detailed below.

ECE SNAPSHOT

Access

GER: 34%
0-3 years: 6.4%
4-6 years: 57.4% (2018), source: Country blog

Public 83.7%, Private 15.3%
Urban 61%, Rural 39% ([World Bank](#) 2018)

Enabling environment

Learning standards/curriculum



PROGRAM CONTRIBUTION

GOAL 1

IMPROVE THE CURRICULUM



- **Contribution:** The program has supported the country team with Technical Assistance (TA) to collaborate with MINEDUCYT in a situation diagnosis in preparation for the revision of the national early childhood curriculum.
- **Next steps:** Revise and design the national curriculum for early childhood and kindergarten education (including the transition to the first grade) to align with the ECDLS.

GOAL 2

BUILD EFFECTIVE COORDINATION



- **Contribution:** The program course on Building Effective Learning Systems presented relevant strategies with the country team to successfully improve ECD system coordination.
- **Next steps:** Through the Growing and Learning Together: Comprehensive ECD in El Salvador project, the country team is establishing a quality assurance system and supporting the Early Childhood Institute to strengthen quality standards and certification processes.

GOAL 3

STRENGTHEN PARENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



- **Contribution:** The program course on Parent and Community Engagement has been timely with regards to El Salvador's efforts to strengthen parental practices.
- **Next steps:** The government is working with the community to identify community spaces to engage at-risk families in family circles, by providing a range of cross-sectoral services, including on special needs. This work has been defined in the Model of Integrated Early Childhood Care through the Family and Community Pathway.

¹ The Early Childhood Education Policy Academy is managed by the World Bank's Early Learning Partnership (ELP), a multi-donor trust fund that provides resources and technical assistance to support early childhood development and early learning around the world.

² Participating countries included: Cambodia, Central African Republic, El Salvador, Liberia, Morocco, North Macedonia, Paraguay, Senegal, South Africa, Türkiye, West Bank and Gaza, and Uganda.