



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 Paraguay country team.

CONTEXT

Paraguay has made important progress in advancing quality early learning. This is evident in the [results of the 10-year implementation evaluation](#) of the National Integrated Early Childhood Development (ECD) Plan 2010-2020, as well as the implementation of the [National Strategy for ECD](#), which matches efforts of the [National Government Plan](#). The country has also adopted an [ECE Investment Program](#), which significantly contributed to increase early learning coverage rates among children aged 3 to 5. Finally, the Ministry of Education and Sciences (MEC) has designed, evaluated, and implemented a [National Instrument for Measuring the Quality of ECD Spaces](#) in formal education to promote strategies to ensure ECE services offered across the country are of high quality. Looking forward, the national government aims to strengthen the regulatory ECE framework, improve the physical learning environments in preschools, and continue efforts to engage parents. The ways in which the program has supported these efforts are detailed below.

ECE SNAPSHOT

Access

- Preschool coverage (age 5): 80% (111,764 children)
- Kindergarten coverage (age 4): 54% (83,431 children)
- Pre-kindergarten coverage (age 3): 15% (25,068 children)

Source: [World Bank, 2023](#)

Enabling environment

Learning standards/curriculum



PROGRAM CONTRIBUTION

GOAL 1

BUILD EFFECTIVE EARLY LEARNING SYSTEMS



- **Contribution:** A Technical Assistance (TA) provided by the program has supported the MEC in reviewing early childhood regulations and standards to align with international best practices, ensuring their successful implementation in the Paraguayan context through a shorter, user-friendly format. The new ECE Regulations were approved by MEC authorities in August 2023 by [Ministerial Resolution N°1238/23](#).
- **Next steps:** The MEC's General ECE Directorate (*Dirección General de Educación Inicial*) will work jointly with local stakeholders in monitoring compliance with the provisions of the document.

GOAL 2

IMPROVE THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT



- **Contribution:** Through its sponsorship to attend the [LEGO Idea Conference](#) in June 2022, the program supported the country team to explore solutions for advancing play-based learning approaches and to improve the quality of the learning environment.
- **Next steps:** The country's objective is to incorporate provisions for infrastructure, furniture, and learning materials in the Preliminary Draft 2024 MEC budget, thereby ensuring sustainable quality provision.

GOAL 3

STRENGTHEN PARENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



- **Contribution:** The program presented an opportunity for the country team to explore various strategies to empower schools to engage more closely with parents and communities and to showcase its achievements under the *Servicio Maestra Mochilera* (Backpack Teacher Services).
- **Next steps:** Through the General ECE Directorate, establish a training program at the local level to encourage the participation and training of families in ECD and childcare.

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, Turkey, West Bank and Gaza, Uganda.