



ISSN NO. 2320-5407

Journal homepage: <http://www.journalijar.com>

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL
OF ADVANCED RESEARCH

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Creating a Rainbow: Recommendations for developing efficient, feasible and sustainable early childhood care and educational reforms to promote the optimal development within preschool children in Sri Lanka

Pathirana Buddhuprabha Darshanika D

Department of Philosophy & Psychology, Faculty of Arts, University of Peradeniya, Peradeniya

Manuscript Info

Manuscript History:

Received: 15 May 2015
Final Accepted: June 2015
Published Online: July 2015

Key words:

Early Childhood, Preschools,
Policy, Programs

*Corresponding Author

**Pathirana Buddhuprabha
Darshanika D**
buddhiprabhap@pdn.ac.lk

Abstract

Decades of research conducted on child psychology has revealed Early Childhood as a critical period which creates a profound impact on the remaining developmental stages of the individual. Even though the government of Sri Lanka has taken several initiatives to provide quality services in the context of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCD) the national education systems still recognizes the child from five years and above. As a result, social, cognitive and emotional needs of the young children during this significant period, which are considered as critical, and contributing to their overall development seem to be somewhat neglected.

The aim of the present paper is to review the available local as well as global policies on ECCD to provide recommendations for evidence based ECCD policy for Sri Lanka. It also provides recommendation for successful & organized policy implementations, advocacy and research for national/international ECCD partners providing ECCD services in Sri Lanka. These recommendations are based on careful evaluation of literature and author's field experience as preschool teacher trainer, ECCD researcher and practitioner.

Copy Right, IJAR, 2015,. All rights reserved

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood care and development (ECCD) as the foundation of human development, a period of most critical and rapid human growth with greatest sensitivity to environmental influences, human capital formation has been a widely acclaimed concept (Berk, 1994; Berk, 2010; Salawitz & Perry, 2010).

Moreover, there is growing recognition that human capital investments made in early childhood are important determinants of school performance (Alderman, Behrman, Lavy, & Menon, 2001) and lifetime productivity (Behrman, Hoddinott, Maluccio, Soler-Hampejsek, Behrman, Martorell, 2008). Previous studies also suggest strong associations between cognitive and psychosocial skills measured at young ages and educational attainment, earnings, and employment outcomes (Boissiere, Knight, & Sabot, 1985; Behrman, Cheng, & Todd, 2004; Barnett, & Masse, 2007; Belsky, Vandell, Burchinal, Clarke -Stewart, McCartney, Owen, et al, 2007) in later years. However, literature states that more than 200 million children younger than 5 years from low-income and middle-income countries were not attaining their developmental potential, primarily due to poverty, nutritional deficiencies, and inadequate learning opportunities (Grantham-McGregor, Cheung, Cueto, Glewwe, Richter, & Strupp, 2007; Walker, Wachs, Gardner, et al. 2007). Hence, in connection with all this ECCD of the young child seems to be extremely significant area which requires national concern.

In keeping with this concern, Sri Lanka in the past has made many commendable commitments to reinvigorate the development of its young children (UNICEF, 2005), including being a signatory to the child rights charter, acknowledging importance of early childhood in its development efforts (Early childhood care and education in Sri Lanka, 1986; Pathirana, 2006; UNICEF, 2005; The World Bank, 2005), devoting considerable resources to implement standards/ guidelines for preschools/ day care centers and monitoring/evaluation process of such institutions (Wijetunge & Wickramaratna, 2003; Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2015).

Hence, it could be said that present day Sri Lanka is a witnesses to large number of proactive intervention towards ECCD (MCDWA, 2012); such as setting up minimum standards for ECCD centers, teacher qualification and training (Pathirana, 2006). The government has also taken initiatives to promote home based ECCD programs, upgrade play areas of the preschools in a culture/child friendly ways, developed model preschools/ECCD villages and provided capacity development programs for field officers (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2015). This is a considerable improvement compared to the prevailed situation which existed few years back which allowed Carte Blanche for any individual to start and conduct a preschool (Pathirana, 2006), due to the absence of formal procedure to oversee or screen the quality of ECCD services provided (UNICEF, 2003). The ECCD services in Sri Lanka also benefitted from the windfall of funds which reached Sri Lankan after Tsunami which seemed to have contributed immensely in building new preschools, and providing resources (child/culture friendly play grounds, teacher training manuals, and guidebooks for teachers) (PLAN, 2005; Save the Children, 2008, Pathirana, 2012).

Despite these advancements, early childhood education is a still voluntary process in the Sri Lankan milieu. As a result it suffers from a lack of government oversight and funding, preventing/hindering volumes of activities required to create a significant difference in the lives of young Sri Lankan children (Pathirana, 2006; The World Bank, 2005). Compared with the global contexts (UNICEF, 2007; UNESCO, 2009) the government of Sri Lanka has not been fervent about shouldering the total responsibility of ECCD services provided to its young charges (Pathirana, 2006; The World Bank, 2005). The national education systems to this date recognize the child from the age of 5 years and above, even though EFA (Education for All) goals of the Ministry of Education (2013) in Sri Lanka recognize ECCD as its first EFA goal (Ministry of Education, 2013). As a result, it could be hypothesized that ECCD seemed to be yet perceived as a downward extension of formal schooling (Pathirana, 2006) which functions as what in reality can be described as pre-primary educational units before children enter formal schools (Early Childhood Care and Education, 1986; Pathirana, 2006).

Majority of the preschools or ECCD institutes which provides ECCD services to children between the 3 to 5 years are managed by private, religious or non-governmental organizations (Ministry of Child Development and Women's Affairs, 2013; Wijetunge & Wickramaratna, 2003); paid by parents or sponsored by local and international non-governmental organizations. They are conducted more or less as a small business or charity. Different committees/ professionals bodies and experts on ECCD; from eighties (Early Childhood Care and Education, 1986) to the recent past (Wijetunge et al, 2003; The world Bank, 2005; Pathirana, 2006; Pathirana, 2012) point out several limitation in this structure and function such as lack of organized direction at the national level, inability to establish connection between the curriculum of preschool and primary education (The World Bank, 2005), lack of adequate physical facilities, (UNICEF, 2003; Wijetunge et al, 2003) in adequately trained teachers and low teacher salaries (Pathirana, 2006; UNICEF, 2003) to attract qualified individuals.

Literature conveys that Sri Lanka has drafted a policy on ECCD (Ministry of Social Affairs, 2003; Batticaloa District. 2009), developed ECCD policy (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2015) policy implications, national plan of actions, and guidelines for child development centers (Pathirana, 2006). However, its availability and circulation has been sadly absent to the prominent stakeholders and public. This is in spite of the fact that the website of the Ministry of Women's Affairs has been stating for many years that policy standard will be implemented at national to rural level in order to ensure the protection of rights of children in Sri Lanka (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2015).

The limited available literature of this ECCD policy only provides information pertaining to its mission, vision statements and potential future actions to achieve them. The vision of the ECCD National policy is listed as ensuring the right of every Sri Lankan child to start healthy life in a nurtured, safe, caring and stimulating environment that

enables him or her to be physically healthy, mentally alert, emotionally secure, socially competent and intellectually able to learn. Its mission is stated as attaining optimal survival, growth and development of all Sri Lankan children by providing a safe, caring and conducive environment in the home and other settings, well supported by a comprehensive and integrated system of ECCD services. Though the mission and vision appears to be comprehensive and holistic in nature, the implementation process which describes the significance of preschool education appears to be somewhat haphazard, confusing, and seem to lack structure. Further, the implementation processes do not seem to fully support or detail the optimum development described in its mission and vision statements. As a result, social, cognitive and emotional needs of the young children during this significant period, which are considered as critical (Perry, 1997; Salavitz & Perry, 2010) and contributing to the overall development appears to be somewhat neglected by the Sri Lankan government; in spite of its varied initiatives to promote ECCD within Sri Lankan children.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of the this paper is to review policy landscape at local and global contexts to provide recommendations for optimum standards to ensure the rights and needs of Sri Lankan children requiring ECCD using an analytical approach.

Its objectives are as follows: 1. conduct an analytical review of existing ECCD policies and research studies in local/global contexts to examine whether they provide a foundation to create a protocol; 2. Seek to examine if factors known to promote the developmental potential of children were articulated in these existing policies; 3. explore whether available information of these national policies contain the characteristics known to be important for strong social policies, and investigate gaps in the existing literature/policies, policy implementations, and advocacy to provide recommendations for a sustainable, optimal development within the Sri Lankan children (3 to 5 years).

Recommendations: Policy Development & Revision

Recommendation 1: Universal preschool education for Sri Lankan children

Decades of research outcomes carried out in different countries (Rao, Sun, Pearson, Pearson, Liu, Conostas, & Engle, 2012; Kagitcibasi, Sunar, & Bekman, 2001; Aboud, 2006) convey the need and importance for a universal preschool education. Global research also point out that in addition to enhanced school readiness and improved academic performance, participation in high quality preschool programs has been linked with higher primary school achievement, reduced school dropout rates (Taiwo, & Tyolo, 2002), higher intelligence scores and reasoning within young children (Kagitcibasi., et al, 2001). Further, recent research convey that effective investments in ECCD have the potential to reduce inequalities perpetuated by poverty, poor nutrition, and restricted learning opportunities. Moreover, a simulation model of the potential long-term economic effects of increasing preschool enrolment to 25% or 50% in every low-income and middle-income country indicates a benefit-to-cost ratio ranging from 6.4 to 17.6 (Engle, Fernald, & Alderman et al, 2011). Equipped with all these data it would be extremely unwise to ignore the economic benefits of universal ECCD, as its psycho-economic gains would far outweigh its economic costs.

Therefore, the first and foremost recommendation the paper makes for the revised ECCD policy is the universal ECCD education. Since 2011 Sri Lankan academics have been fervently lobbying for 6% of the national GDP for education. Hence, this paper recommends to the higher education institutions, community organizations and NGO's to lobby for a universal preschool education for Sri Lankan children between the age group of 3-5 years and request the government of Sri Lanka to reserve a significant percentage of its GDP for ECCD.

However, the paper admits that given the economic constraints under which government organizations function, the immediate setting up of an effective and sophisticated structure for implementation of such recommendation may not seem realistic. Therefore, the paper urges the responsible government organizations to identify culturally relevant, economically feasible strategies in the provision of universal early childhood care and education to young children in Sri Lanka.

Recommendation 2: Availability of the detailed and clear description of the present ECCD policy

The paper views the unavailability of the present ECCD policy to the public and varied ECCD stakeholders as a major limitation and recommends the State Ministry of Child Affairs to take immediate action to remedy it. Further, the paper is of the opinion that such a process would procure public/stake holder suggestions/recommendations and would lead the way to the revisions in the present policy towards being more child friendly. However, the paper is of

the opinion that focus should be to keep an organized, holistic, universal ECCD as the central focus. Even though its mission and vision statements convey a holistic/ universal outlook, the available information on the present ECCD policy appears to be somewhat disorganized and peripheral in its implementation; lacking the organization, centralization and universality which seem to be present in the national policies across the globe (UNICEF, 2007; ECCD policy India, 2012, Association for the Development of Education in Africa, 2006).

The experiences of policy development in other developing countries convey (ADEA, 2006; Pence, 2004) that policy development/revisions takes time and requires flexibility and sensitivity (Pence, 2004; Neuman, & Devercelli, 2012). It also high lights four key lessons learnt during the Early Childhood Development (ECD) policy development process in African Countries which seemed to be worth considering when revising or developing an ECCD policy for Sri Lanka. These key areas are the need for: i. Broad consultation and participation by all stakeholders; ii. Alignment of the ECD policy with major national and sectorial development policies and strategies; iii. Availability of technical and institutional capacity for cross sectoral policy planning; and iv. Strategic structures to host and promote the policy and its implementation.

The paper is of the opinion that the quality of the participatory process has significant impact on the quality of the policy itself and the effectiveness of its implementation due to following reasons. First, consultation among all concerned groups and institutions on ECCD and their active participation in the policy development process would help to build consensus on key issues and fundamental concepts and place the child's interest above specific groups or sectorial focus. Second participatory process would also promote transparency, synergy and cost-effectiveness in the shared roles and responsibilities for the well-being of the child. Third, above all, they ensure national ownership of the policy.

Literature conveys that ECCD policy development teams across the globe (UNICEF, 2007; Pence, 2004) when developing their ECCD or ECD policies launched their policy development process with national stakeholders' conferences and workshops which were supported strongly by international partner organizations (ADEA, 2006; UNICEF, 2007). They also conducted local and regional consultations in different parts of the regions/countries using local languages before the national policy development workshops. For instance, in Ghana, ECCD national policy comprise of a comprehensive institutional framework that provides a roadmap for government ministries, district assemblies, communities, families, the private sector and non-governmental organizations to invest and implement ECCD programs (UNICEF, 2007). Therefore, the paper urges the Sri Lankan policy development/revision teams to adopt a similar procedure. Further, the paper is of the opinion that this strategy would enable the Sri Lankan communities to make culturally pertinent inputs into the policy revisions, a lack which seem to reflect in the present policy implementation activities. The paper also believes that stakeholders' consultations would promote a collective creation of an ECCD vision for Sri Lanka which would capture major concepts to develop a holistic policy for the optimal development of preschool children.

Recommendation 3: Reviewing and identifying existing local/global ECCD policies/related policies

The paper also recommends reviewing and identifying existing relevant policies (e.g. children with special needs, child nutrition, and child protection) pertaining to Sri Lankan preschool children, local as well as foreign; strategies/ programs as well as their strengths and limitations when developing/revising a comprehensive ECCD policy for Sri Lanka.

Recommendation 4: Networking with other ministries for feedback and review

In addition, the paper recognizes the importance of advice and input of other ministries such as Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Census and Statistics to be involved at an effective level in future revisions and implementations. The consultation and inputs provided by Ministry of Finance & Economic on the costing and financing of the ECCD policy would be crucial while information and technical feedback provided by the Census & Statistics would indefinitely contribute to facilitate needed research and monitoring.

Policy Implications

Recommendation 5: Policy Implications to enact universal preschool education

In comparison to other developing countries in Asia and Africa Sri Lankan children have achieved sound physical, cognitive and social foundations due to the health and primary education reforms adapted by the country (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2013). While commending on these achievements the paper is of the opinion that such foundations would not contribute the development of future educational and life successes of the young Sri Lankan children if they are not fortunate to enjoy the privilege of universal preschool education. Hence, the paper urges the policy implementers to ensure enactment of universal preschool education through implementation of legal reforms, allocation of funding for teacher training/preschool teacher salaries, provisions and infrastructure.

Recommendation 6: Integrating various inter-sectoral activities pertaining to ECCD into a holistic framework.

Next, the paper recommends integrating the various inter-sectoral activities pertaining to ECCD into a holistic framework. The proposed integrated approach should aim at providing the all-round or holistic development of the child, encompassing health, nutrition, water & sanitation, care, stimulation, learning, social protection, family, community empowerment, sustainability, and early violence prevention; enabling the Sri Lankan children to develop to their fullest potential.

Though government of Sri Lanka has pledged to provide Sri Lankan children the best start in life, among all the competing socio-economic priorities, reports convey that formal national commitment, shown through the adoption of declarations of ECCD policies remains inadequate and is not matched by adequate government funding for young children and their families.

Moreover, in the past and even at present, Sri Lankan ECCD agencies were precariously dependent on private and international donors to fund ECCD programs. However, the current global economic crisis has created an environment which limits funding and support from international funding bodies. Due to this, the paper envisions that the ECCD policy makers would require more funds from the government and greater advocacy to get more allocations from the national budget. Therefore, the paper is of the opinion that the ECCD policy makers in the government sectors require to be creative, suggesting the government innovative ways of directing funds gained from debt cancellation and tax levies.

Advocacy

Recommendations 7: Advocacy

Two conditions make advocacy for ECCD policy development in Sri Lanka a necessity. First, ECCD addresses the needs of very young and vulnerable children who depend on the adult society to realize their rights to nutrition, stimulation, health, education, care and protection. Second, the rights and needs of the young children are multi-sectoral and multidisciplinary. Therefore, in order to realize them; the literature convey that the broad partnerships of families, communities, municipal, provincial and national government, private sector, civil society organizations, women's groups, children's associations, NGOs, media as well as international development partners requires to be achieved (Neuman et al, 2012; ADEA, 2006; Pence, 2004). Hence, this paper recommends the government ECCD agencies in Sri Lanka involved in ECCD policy making to sensitize and mobilize all these partners through appropriate advocacy as ECCD policies need a critical mass to push forward the agenda. It also recognizes the need of the critical mass to mobilize and urge the ECCD policy makers in the government to speed up the process of presenting a revised/holistic ECCD policy which contributes to the optimal development within the young children in Sri Lanka.

The paper also recognizes advocacy as a continuous process which need to be carried out before and after the adoption of a revised policy implementation and recommends the ECCD advocates to follow the objectives of effective policy advocacy for ECD presented by Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) (2006) when developing guidelines for effective, structured advocacy plan of action. These objectives/ guidelines

recommends i.to increase understanding of the rights of the young child and her/his family; ii. to raise the priority given to ECD in the society, national development and the government at all levels; iii. to encourage government to meet its obligations to young children and their families, undertake global and regional conventions and declarations, national constitutions and legal instruments; iv.to get commitment for the necessary investments for the care and development of young children and their families; and v) to get the cooperation/participation of the multiple sectors and partners with shared responsibilities for holistic and integrated ECD.

The paper also recommends the Sri Lankan ECCD policy formulators to learn from advocacy process of other countries which developed ECCD policies in the past. For instance, Zambia, when developing its national ECD policy (ADEA, 2006), had high level advocacy, led by a National ECD Network of different ministries, civil society organizations, and international non-governmental organizations (e.g. UNICEF/ UNESCO). It also issued a Government Gazette to assign ECD as a portfolio of the Ministry of Education and to establish a high level National Council for ECD (UNICEF Zambia, 2004). Since high level sustainable advocacy requires a social mobilization and information strategy to maintain a high priority for ECCD and continuous partnerships for children, the paper also recommends the government ECCD agencies in Sri Lanka to procure similar binding partnerships from all stake holders and recognize crucial role of media in this effort.

Research

Recommendations 8: Research

The paper also highlights the importance of policy development and advocacy needs to be supported with convincing research evidence, data and information. This is useful especially where important areas of ECCD are neglected, new concepts and approaches such as disability (Mendis, 2006) early violence preventions or environmental education which acknowledges current environmental problems (Pathirana, 2003; Pathirana, 2006; Pathirana, 2012), is not fully appreciated. Other unaddressed and neglected areas includes the rights and needs of families of young children, positive cultural childcare practices, parental education, functional literacy for women and gender sensitive parenting by both women and men. Hence, the papers recommend conducting diagnostic studies in the above dominions of ECCD which in turn would assist in laying the foundation to draft a revised holistic policy framework and would also assist in designing culture-sensitive/relevant advocacy.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the paper advocates for the need to design, evaluate, revise, and implement effectual ECCD policy for Sri Lanka; integrating the various sectoral activities in a holistic framework. However, it also recognizes the limitation that the government of Sri Lanka would experience when exploring the concept of holistic and universal ECCD policy for Sri Lankan children. The paper also acknowledge the fact that Sri Lanka with its low income, recovering after conflict face the problem of choosing the types of ECCD delivery systems for child care, health, nutrition, early education, sanitation and family support. The choice seemed to be mainly between family and community based ECCD programs on one hand, which are less expensive to the country, and the more costly formal, institution-based approaches characterized by present school on the other hand. The dilemma also relates to quality and equity between the community-based programs which reach more underprivileged, economically deprived children and the formal, elitist, institution- based system that politically may attract more public finances. By pointing out this dilemma, the present paper believes that the concerned parties would take proactive interventions to resolve it in the best interests and to the optimal benefit of the preschool age children in Sri Lanka

However, considering the fact that children and young people constitute a significant proportion of Sri Lanka's population (MoE, 2008; Ministry of Education), the paper stresses the importance of proper care and investment in their early childhood to ensure a bright future for the country with well-developed human capital and enhanced productivity.

References

- Aboud, F.E. (2006). Evaluation of an early childhood preschool program in rural Bangladesh, *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 21, 46–60.
- Alderman, H., Behrman, J.R., Lavy, V., & Menon, R. (2001). “Child Health and School Enrollment: A Longitudinal Analysis,” *Journal of Human Resources* 36 (1), 185–205.
- Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) (2006). Facing the Challenge of Defining Early Childhood Development Models that can be Scaled Up: Ensuring a Supportive Policy Environment, Retrieved on 24th of March, 2013 from, http://www.adeanet.org/adeaPortal/adea/biennial-2006/doc/document/PL4_2%2BMingatJaramillo_en.pdf
- Barnett, W. S., & Masse, L. N. (2007). Early childhood program design and economic returns: Comparative benefit-cost analysis of the Abecedarian program and policy implications, *Economics of Education Review*, 26, 113–125.
- Batticaloa District (2009). *Report on the Institutional Framework for the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) in Eastern Province (2009)*. Retrieved on 20th of July, 2012 from, www.clovekvtisni.cz/download/pdf/299.pdf
- Behrman, J.R., Cheng, Y., & Todd, P.E. (2004). Evaluating the preschool programs when length of exposure to the program varies: A nonparametric approach, *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 86(1), 108–132
- Behrman, J. R., Hoddinott, J., Maluccio, J. A., Soler-Hampejsek, E., Behrman, E. L., Martorell, R., et al. (2008). What determines adult cognitive skills? Impacts of pre-school, school-years and post-school experiences in Guatemala. IFPRI Discussion Paper 00826. Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute
- Belsky, J., Vandell, D. L., Burchinal, M., Clarke -Stewart, K. A, McCartney, K., Owen, M. T., et al. (2007). Are there long -term effects of early child care? *Child Development*, 78(2), 681–701
- Berk, L. (1994). *Child Development*. New Delhi, India; Prentice Hall: 03rd Edition
- Berk (2010). *Child Development*. New Delhi, India; Prentice Hall: 08th Edition
- Boissiere, M., John B. Knight, J.B., & Sabot, R.H. (1985). “Earnings, Schooling, Ability and Cognitive Skills,” *American Economic Review* 75, 1016–1030.
- Central Bank of Sri Lanka (2013), retrieved on 28th of December, 2014, http://www.cbsl.gov.lk/pics_n_docs/10_pub/ docs/statistics/other/econ & ss 2013 e.pdf
- Children’s Secretariat (1996). Report of UNICEF sponsored home based early childhood development project
- Daily News (2011). National Policy on Early Childhood Care and Development Retrieved on 24th of March, 2013 from, <http://www.dailynews.lk/2011/12/19/news22.asp>
- Early childhood care and education in Sri Lanka (1986), Retrieved on 13th July, 2015 from, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0007/000705/070543eb.pdf>
- ECCD policy India (2012) Retrieved on 20th of March, 2013 from <http://wcd.nic.in/schemes/ECCE/National%20ECCE%20Policy%20draft%20%281%29.pdf>
- Engle, P. L., Fernald, L. C., Alderman, H., Behrman, J., O’Gara, C., Yousafza i, A., De Mello, M.C., Hidrobo, M., Ulkuer, N., Ertem, I., Iltus, S. and the Global Child Development Group (2011). Strategies for reducing inequalities and improving developmental outcomes for young children in low-income and middle-income countries.

The Lancet, 378, 1339-1353;

Grantham-McGregor, S., Cheung, Y.B., Cueto, S., Glewwe, P., Richter L, & Strupp, B. (2007). Developmental potential in the first 5 years for children in developing countries. *Lancet*, **369**, 60–70.

Taiwo, A. A., & Tyolo, J. B. (2002). The effect of preschool education on academic performance in primary school: A case study of grade one pupils in Botswana. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 22, 169–180.

Kagitcibasi, C., Sunar, D., & Bekman, S. (2001). Long-term effects of early intervention: Turkish low-income mothers and children. *Applied Developmental Psychology*, 22, 333-361

Mendis, P. (2006). Children who have Disability in Early Childhood Care and Development Centres: A Resource Book for Teachers, Save the Children Publication, Retrieved on 24th of March, 2013 from, http://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/ECCD_Disability_Manual.pdf

Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka (2013). New Vision for Education and Milestones of Progress: Progress in 2012 and Proposed Programmes in 2013, retrieved on 3rd of August, 2014, from http://www.moe.gov.lk/web/images/stories/publication/report_e.pdf

Ministry of Education(2008). Sri Lanka: EFA Mid-Decade Assessment.

Ministry of Child Development and Women's Affairs (MCDWA): *Laws, Policies and Plans. Action Plan of ECCD-2012*. Retrieved on 23rd of March, 2013 from http://www.childwomenmin.gov.lk/web/images/pdf/action_plan-eccd-%202012.pdf

Ministry of Child Development and Women's Affairs (2013). Main Development Activities.Retrieveon 24th of March, 2013
<http://www.childwomenmin.gov.lk/web/index.php/en/main-development-child>

Ministry of Women's Affairs (2015).
<http://www.childwomenmin.gov.lk/English/institutes/children-s-secretariat/programmes-to-be-implemented>

Neuman, M. J., & Devercelli, A.E. (2012). Early Childhood Policies in Sub-Saharan Africa: Challenges and Opportunities, *International Journal of Child Care and Education Policy*, 6 (2), 21-34.

Pathirana, B.D.D. (2012). Exploring the efficiency and relevance of psychosocial interventions and early childhood programmes for Sri Lankan children, Tsunami and after, Invited presenter by the International Institute of Health & Development, Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, U.K

Pathirana, B.D.D (2003). Preschool Children & Violence: Psychological Profile in 09th International Conference on Sri Lankan Studies, 28th –30th November, 2003, University of Ruhuna, Matara, Sri Lanka.

Pathirana, B.D.D. (2006). Doctoral dissertation, “An inquiry into early violence/aggression and prosocial behaviors in preschool children in Sri Lanka to identify appropriate interventions”. University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

Pathirana, B.D.D. (2006). Profile of Early Childhood Education in Sri Lanka: Analyzing the past, designing a way forwards. Retrieved on 31st of May, 2015 from,
https://www.google.lk/?gws_rd=ssl#q=national+policy+on+early+childhood+education+in+sri+lanka

Pence, A. (2004). ECD policy development and implementation in Africa, Retrieved on13thof July, 2015, from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001375/137564e.pdf>

Perry, B. (1997). Incubated in Terror: Neurodevelopmental Factors in the “Cycle of Violence” In Osofsky, J.D. (Eds.). *Children in a Violent Society*. New York; Guilford Press.

PLAN (2005). Tsunami 12 months after. Retrieved 4th of August, 2011 from, <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/9C4A3A8CCA293490492570D8001026CF-plan-sasia-14dec.pdf>

Rao, N., Sun, J., Pearson, V., Pearson, E., Liu, H., Conostas, M. A. and Engle, P. L. (2012), Is Something Better Than Nothing? An Evaluation of Early Childhood Programs in Cambodia. *Child Development*, 83, 864–876.

Salavitz, M., and Perry, B.D. (2010). *Born for love*. Harper Collins Publishers, New York.

Save the Children (2008). Four years later: Rebuilding lives after the Tsunami: The children's road to recovery. Retrieved 4th of August, 2011 from, <http://www.savethechildren.org/Tsunami-Report-PDF-Final.pdf>

Taiwo A. A., & Tyolo J.B. (2002). The effect of pre-school education on academic performance in primary school: a case study of grade one pupils in Botswana. *Intern. J. Educ. Dev.* 22(2):169-180. Doi: 10.1016/S0738-0593(01)00020-7

The World Bank. (2005). *Treasures of the Education System in Sri Lanka*. . Retrieved on 24th of March, 2013. http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTSOUTHASIA/Resources/TreasuresInTheEducationSystem_February2005.pdf

UNICEF. (2003). UNICEF sponsored National Seminar on childcare provisions in preschools, Sri Lanka, 02nd October, 2003 at the B.M.I.C.H., Colombo.

UNICEF(2005). UNICEF Sri Lanka: Annual Report, Retrieved on 13th of July, 2015 from http://www.unicef.org/srilanka/Annual_Report_2005%282%29.pdf.

UNICEF (2007). Policies for ECCD development, Retrieved on 20th of March, 2013 from http://www.unicef.org/earlychildhood/index_40752.html

UNICEF Zambia (October 2004), *Mid-term Review Report*, Lusaka.

UNESCO. (2009). *Education: Early Childhood Care and Education*. Retrieved 24th of March, 2013, from UNESCO Website: <http://www.unesco.org/en/early-childhood>

Walker, S.P., Wachs, T.D., Gardner, J.M., et al. (2007). Child development: risk factors for adverse outcomes in developing countries. *Lancet*, **369**, 145–57.

Wijetunge, S., & Wickramarathna, V (2003). National study on childcare provision in preschools, Sri Lanka. Colombo; UNICEF.