

Early Childhood Development Mission

to transform

Meghalaya's Economy



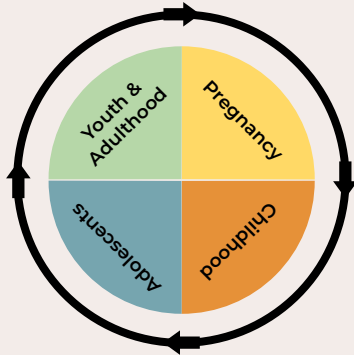
MECDM

Meghalaya Early Childhood
Development Mission

Why we need to reimagine our approach to early childhood

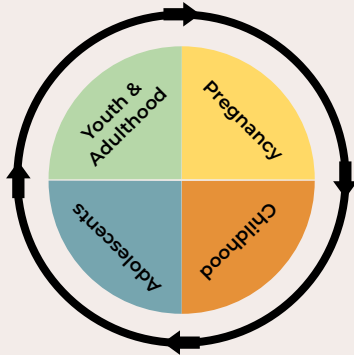
Why we need to reimagine our approach to early childhood

1. **Life-Cycle Model** shows that all development outcomes are connected

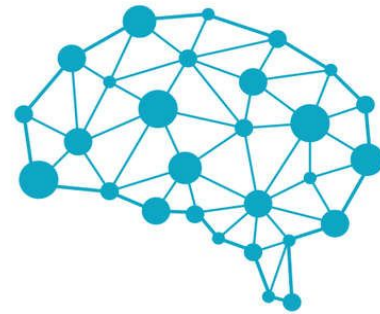


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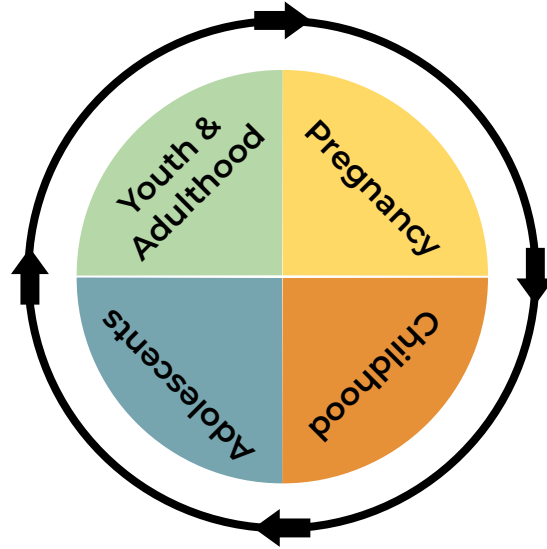


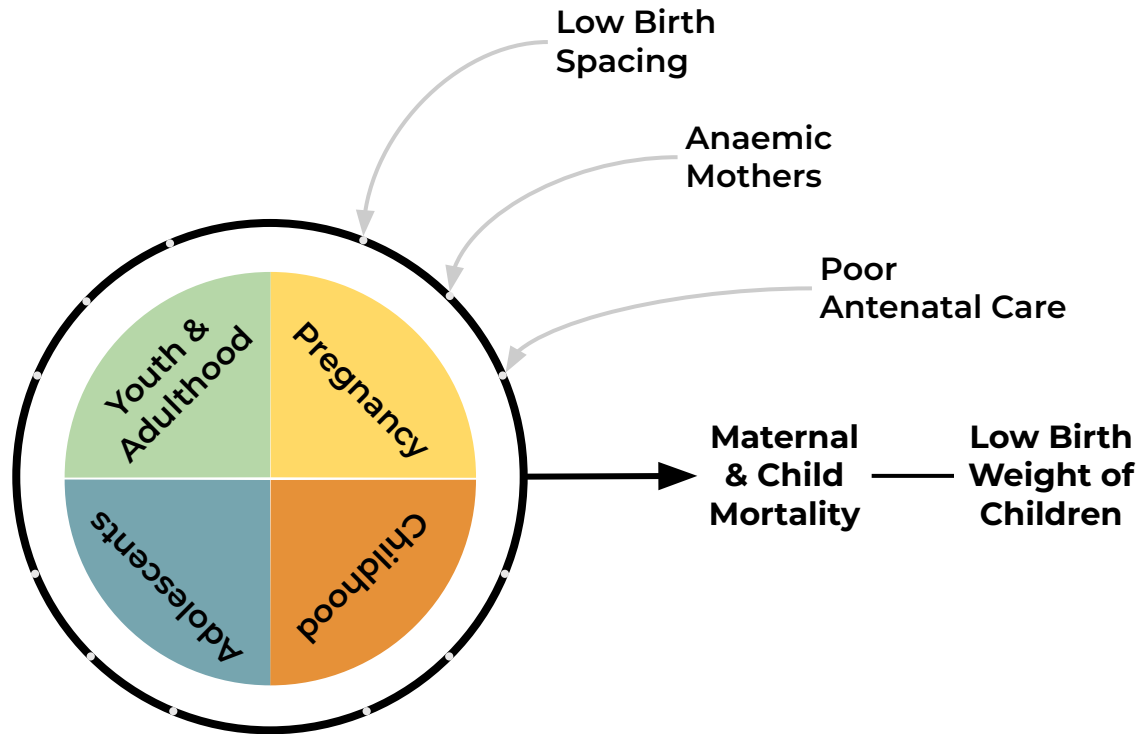
2. Critical Importance of Early Years in shaping our brains and body

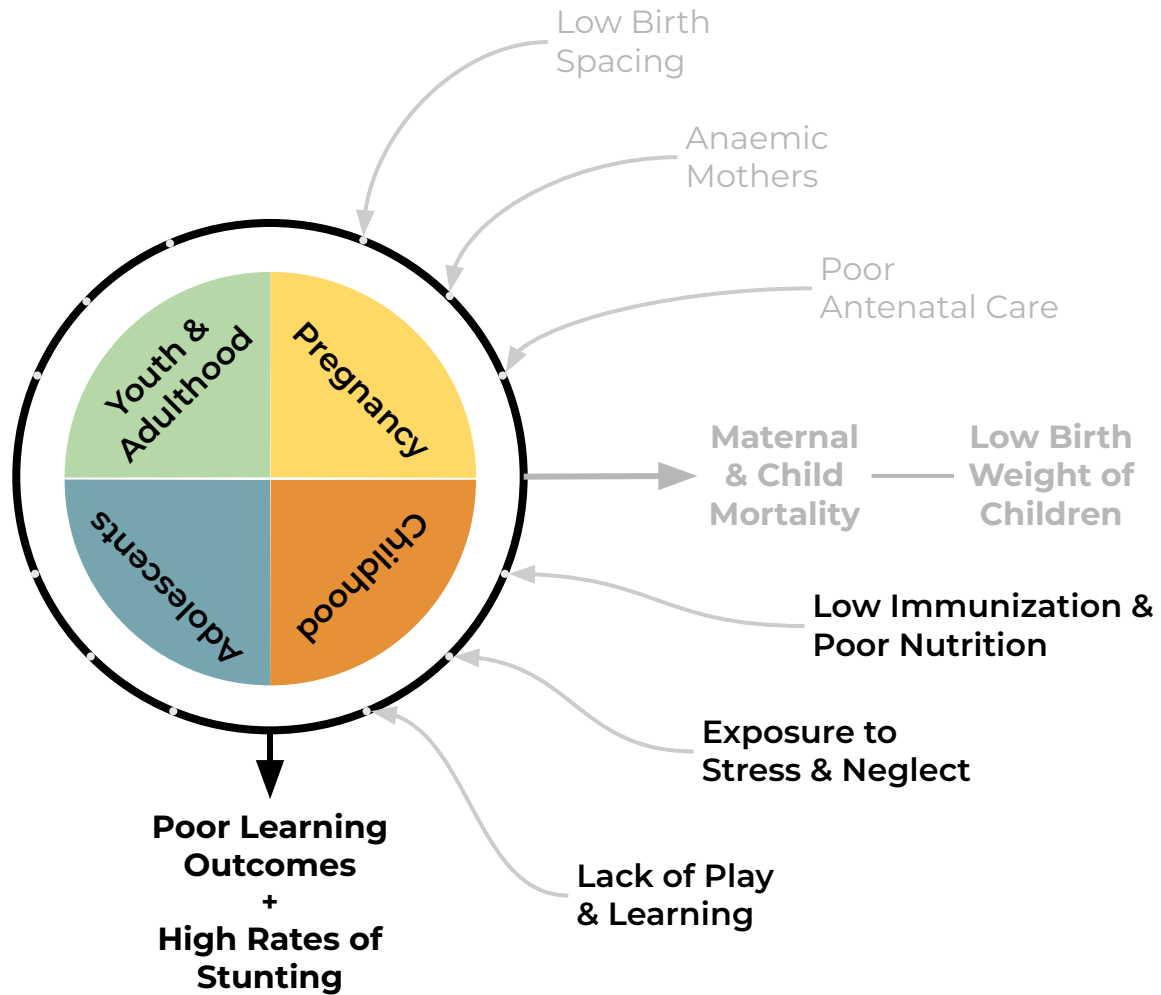


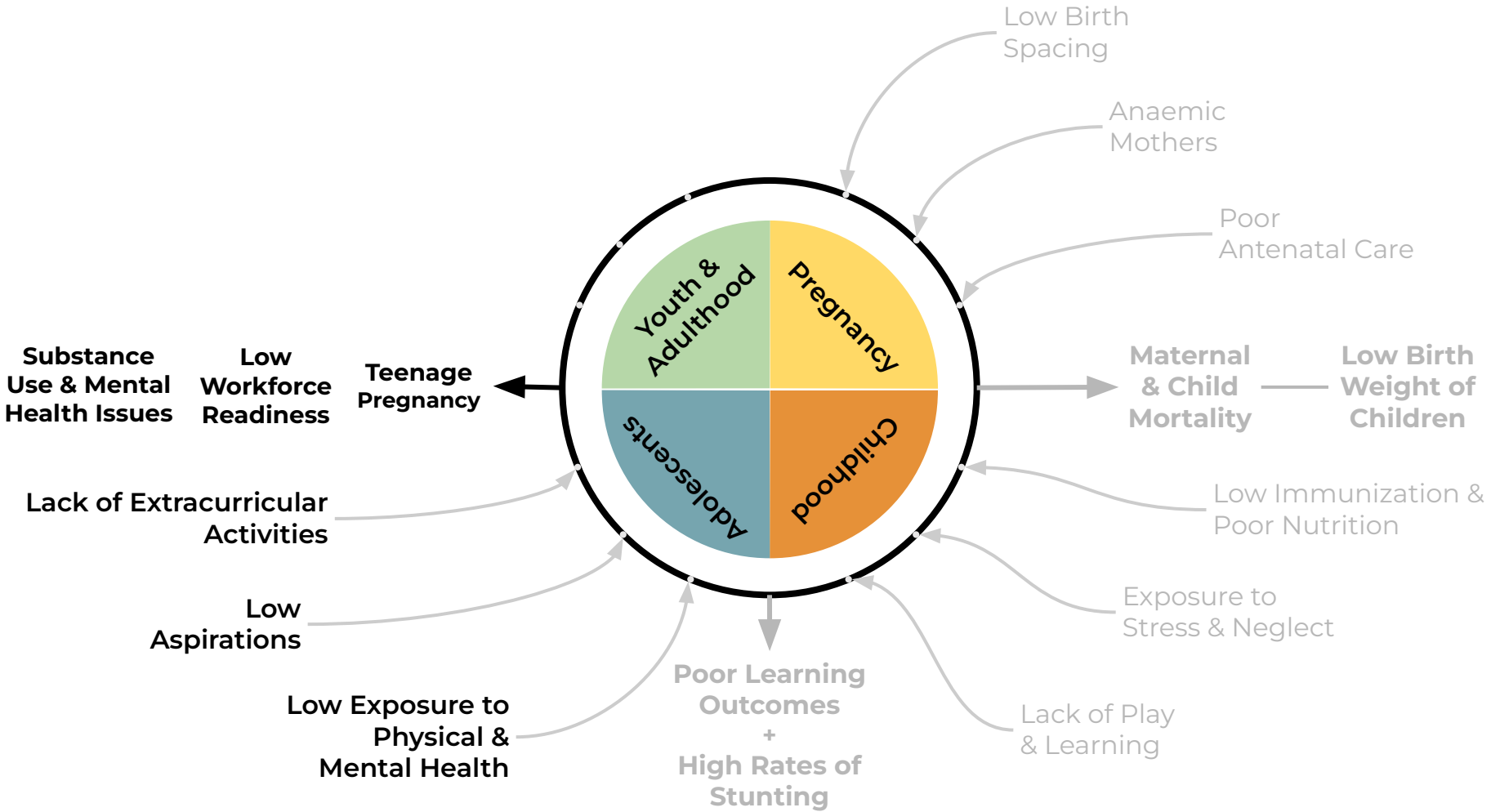
1. Life Cycle Model

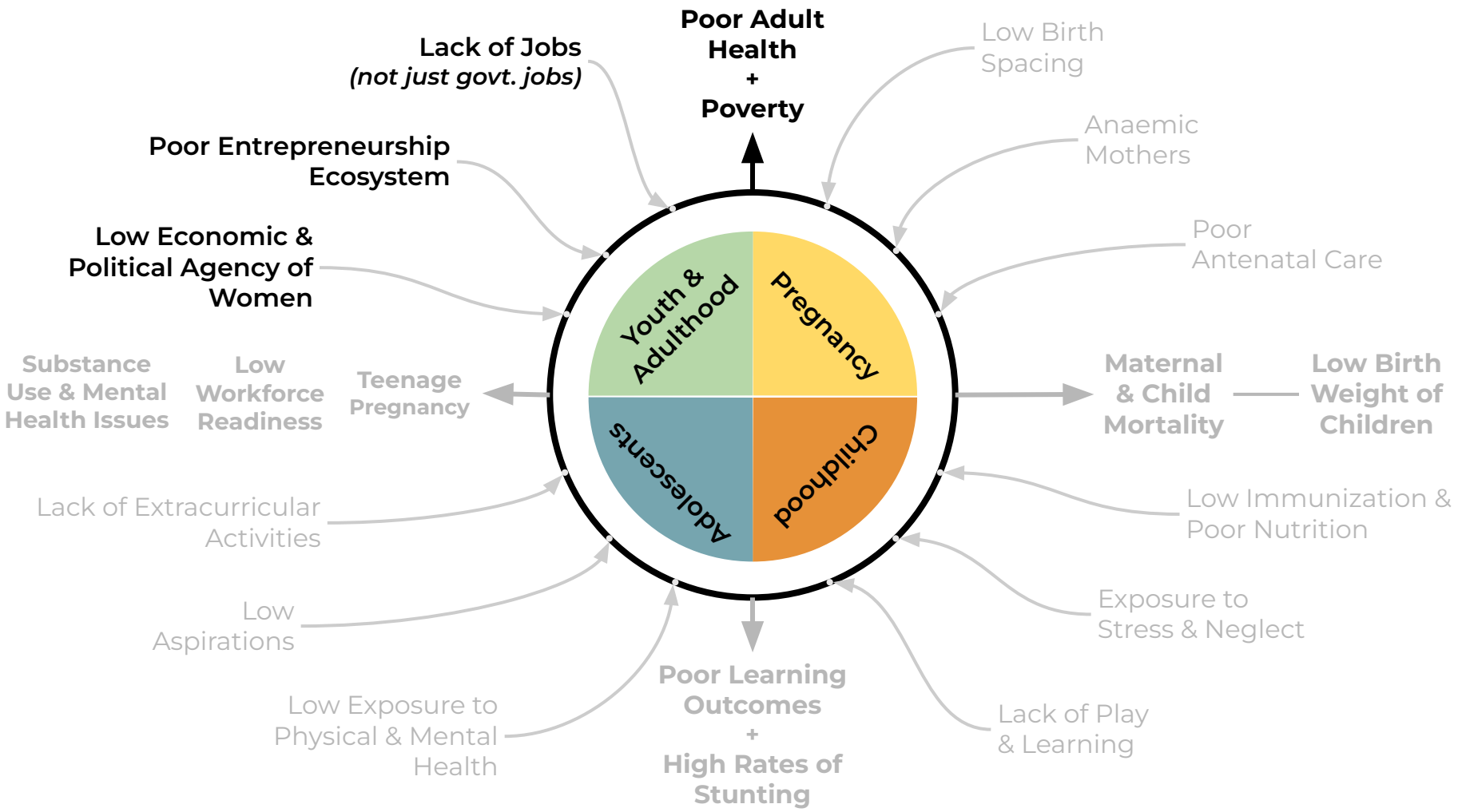
We are using a **Life Cycle Model** to shape our Human Development Agenda











Poor Adult Health + Poverty

Low Birth Spacing

Anaemic Mothers

Poor Antenatal Care

Maternal & Child Mortality

Low Birth Weight of Children

Low Immunization & Poor Nutrition

Exposure to Stress & Neglect

Lack of Play & Learning

Poor Learning Outcomes + High Rates of Stunting

Low Exposure to Physical & Mental Health

Low Aspirations

Lack of Extracurricular Activities

Substance Use & Mental Health Issues

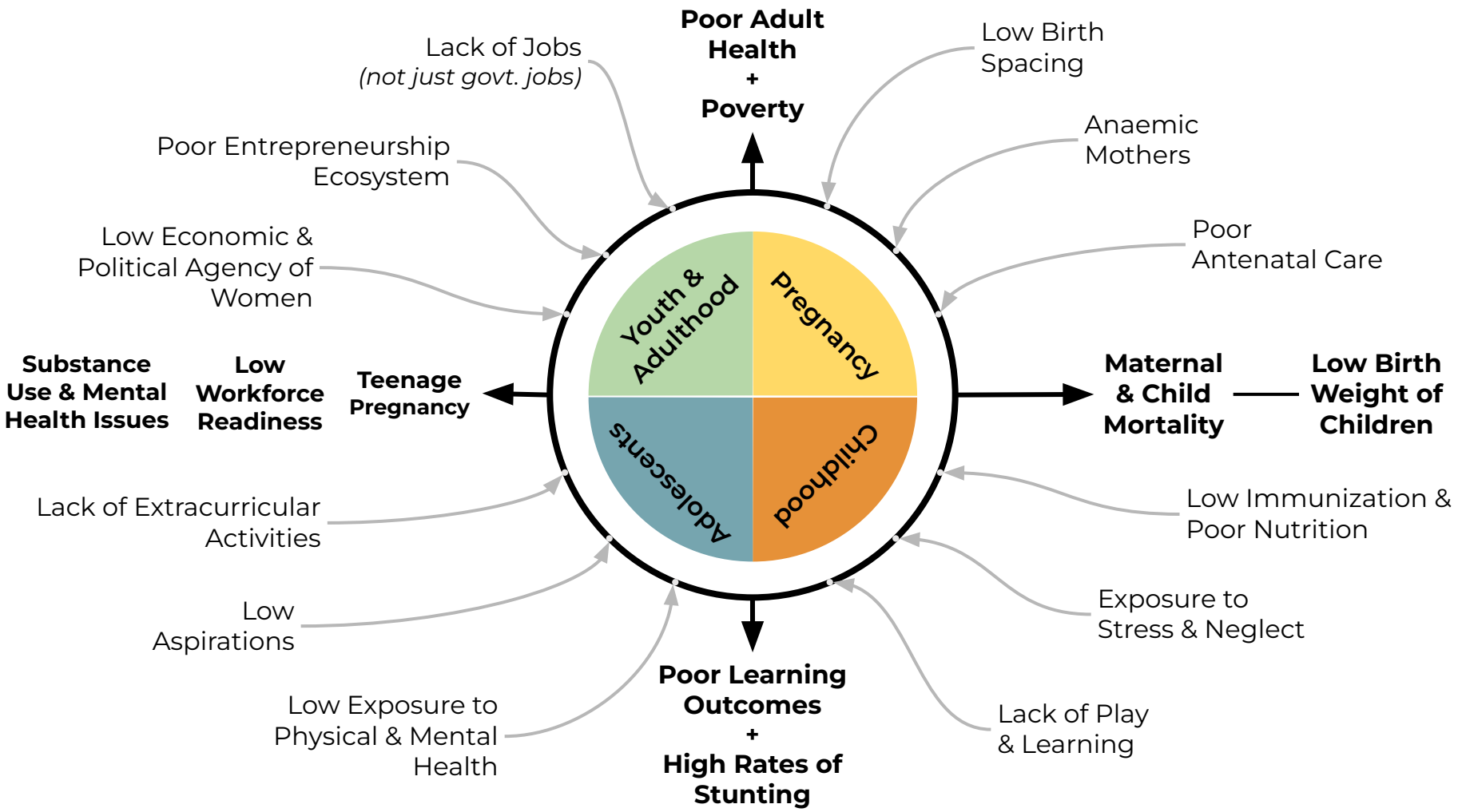
Low Workforce Readiness

Teenage Pregnancy

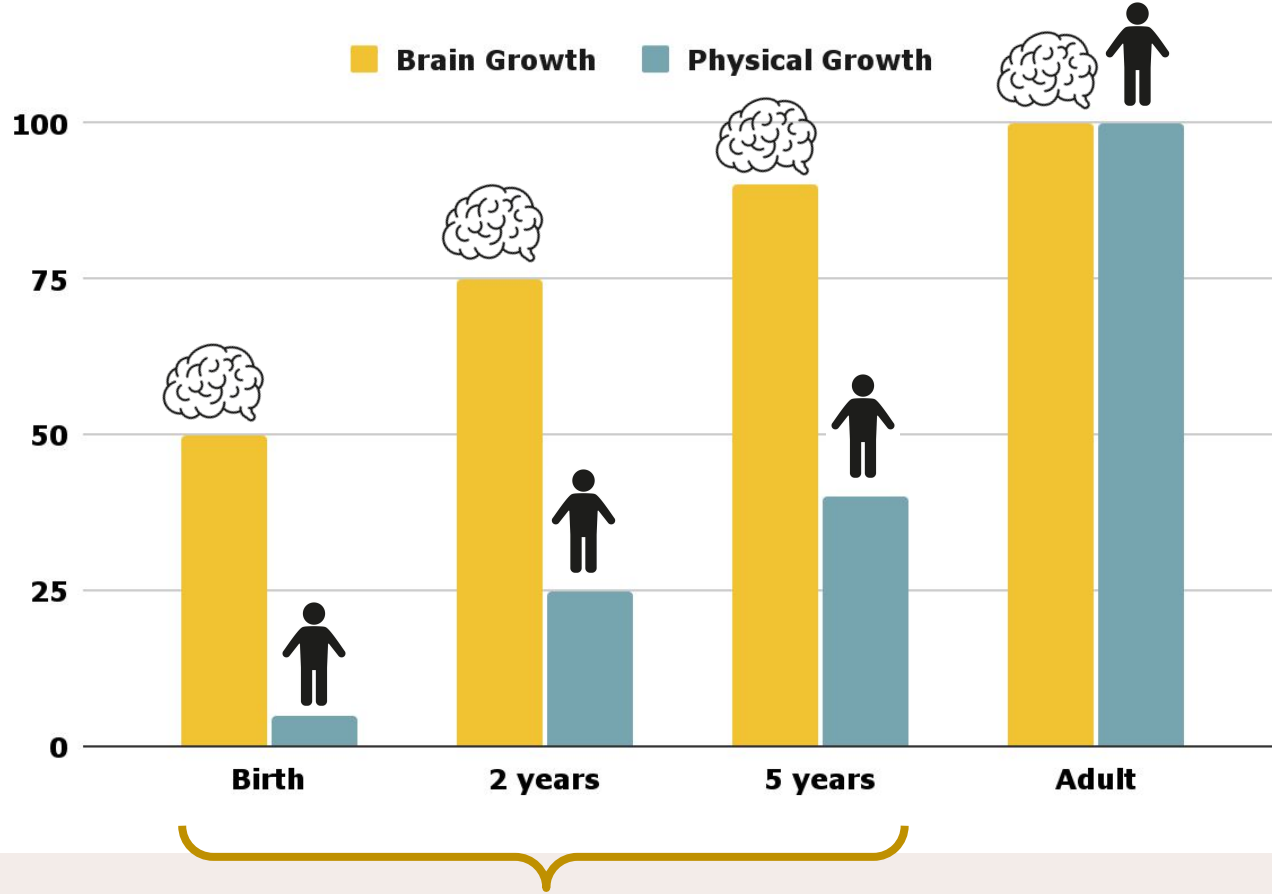
Low Economic & Political Agency of Women

Poor Entrepreneurship Ecosystem

Lack of Jobs (not just govt. jobs)



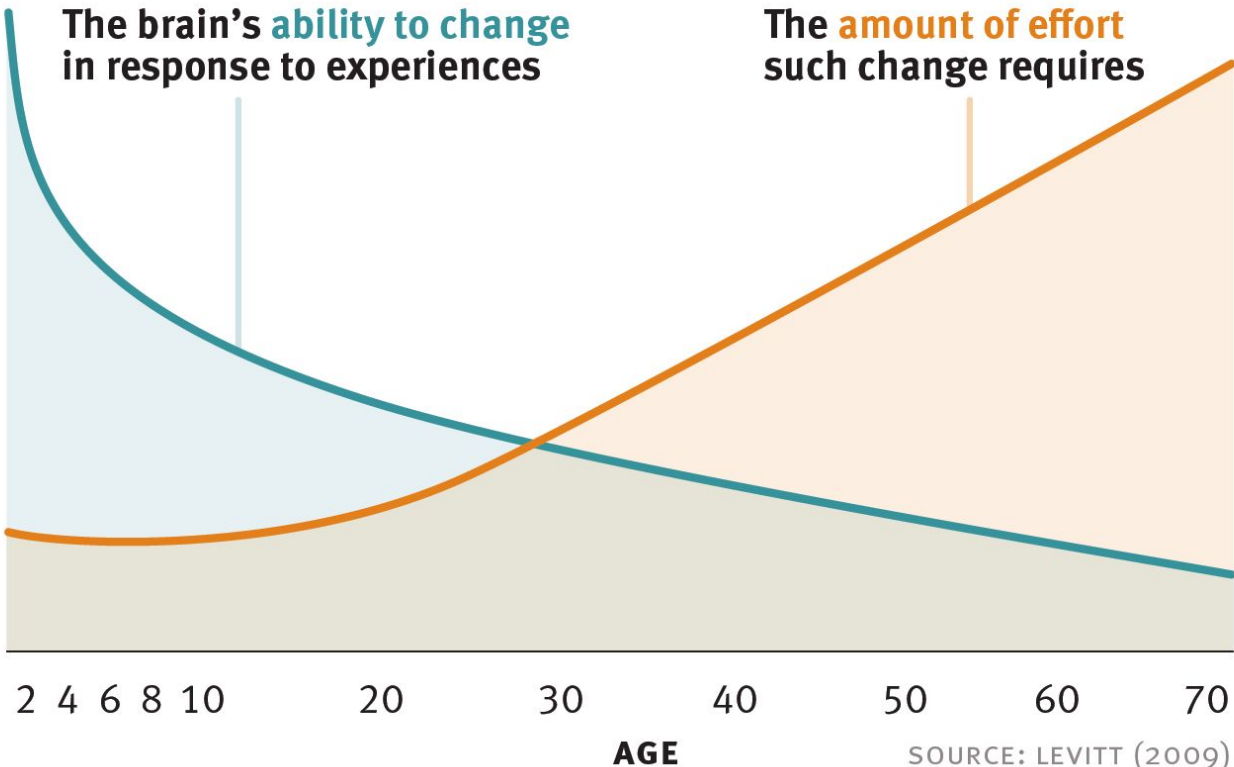
2. Critical Importance of Early Years



90% of Brain Growth happens in just first 5 years

The more we invest in early ages, the more we gain in later years →

Nobel prize winner in Economics, J.J. Heckman, has shown that investing in early childhood can reap a rate of return of 1:15 to 1:17.



SOURCE: LEVITT (2009)

Perry Preschool Study in the US

- Preschool program for children aged 3-4 years
- Daily preschool session and weekly home visits
- Focus on developing cognitive and social skills among children
- Counseling parents on early childhood learning

Participants were followed-up until the age of 40 to assess longitudinal impact of the interventions

Key Impacts

40%

Increase in **People with IQ over 90**

17%

Increase in **Graduation**

20%

Increase in **Those earning \$20K or more**

19%

Reduction in **People Arrested**

Human development Based Economic Growth Model



Strong Economy

Youth
(20 to 29 yrs)

School Children
(9 to 19 yrs)

Early Childhood
(0 to 8 yrs)

Skilling, employment and entrepreneurship systems for youth will help us reap the benefits of demographic dividend

Adolescence is a critical window of opportunity to improve the physical and mental health of our youth

90% of Brain Growth happens just in the first 5 years. This period lays the foundation for a strong economy

Meghalaya's ECD Mission

Current ECD Landscape



Family & Home



ECD at Centre



Community

Current ECD Landscape



Family & Home



ECD at Centre



Community



- **Few home visits** or parents counseling initiatives
- Current initiatives **mostly focus on technical health** and nutrition issues
- **No coaching** on positive parenting practices
- **No initiatives** on importance of happy **family environment**

Current ECD Landscape



Family & Home



ECD at Centre



Community



- Many **Anganwadi** Centres are **not fully functional**
- Current centres only focus on nutrition and **not on learning**
- **Preschools/Schools** are also doing **rote learning**, which can be harmful for children's cognitive development

Conventional *Approach*

Preschools often employ simple **rote learning and memorization** techniques



this can **negatively** affect children's **ability to understand and apply concepts** later in school

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Kaul, V. (1991). Starting Children Too Early on Number Work: A Mismatch of Developmental and Academic Priorities.

Science-Based *Approach*

Play-based activities, **experiential** learning and **interactive** exchanges with caregivers



these can build **cognitive** capacity and strong **foundational literacy and numeracy**

UNICEF (2018). Learning through play: Strengthening learning through play in early childhood education programmes

Current ECD Landscape



Family & Home



ECD at Centre



Community



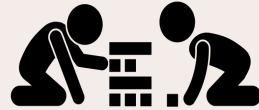
- **Low attendance** of children in **Anganwadi** Centre
- **Community** members are seen as **passive beneficiaries**
- **Low sense of ownership** of AWCs and community events
- **Frontline workers** are **not accountable** to citizens

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ECD Mission



Family & Home



ECD at Centre



Community

**Action in all three domains for
transformative outcomes**

ECD Mission



Family & Home



ECD at Centre



Community



- **Regular Home Visits** that cover all aspects of child development and to discuss child development milestones
- **Coaching parents** on positive parenting practices like **serve and return**, and reducing toxic stress at home
- **Parent Circle Meetings** to discuss and share experiences and ideas

SERVE AND RETURN

Is an **simple but very effective practice** that parents and other caregivers can do for a **child's brain development**.



When a caregiver is **attentive and responds** to a child signals or sounds, they help build the child's brain



Pay attention to what the child is focused on. Is the child looking or pointing at something? Making a sound or facial expression? Moving those little arms and legs? That's a **serve**.

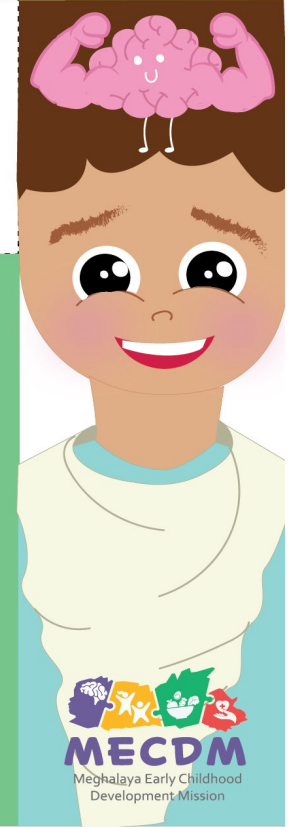
Return the serve by supporting and encouraging. You can make a sound or facial expression— like saying, "I see!" or smiling and nodding to let a child know you're noticing the same thing.

When you return a serve by naming what a child is seeing, doing, or feeling, you make important language connections in their brain, even before the child can talk or understand your words. You can name anything—a person, a thing, an action, a feeling, or a combination.

Every time you return a serve, give the child a chance to respond. **Waiting for the child's respond is crucial.** After they respond, you can respond again. In this way, you can take turns back and forth

Children signal when they're done or ready to move on to a new activity. They might let go of a toy, pick up a new one, or turn to look at something else. When you share a child's focus, you'll notice when they're ready to **end the activity and begin something new.**

HOW TO DO THIS IN **5 STEPS?**



ECD Mission



Family & Home



ECD at Centre



Community



- **Upgrading AWC** to Community-Run ECD Centres that are supported by **ECD Volunteers** from the SHG network
- **Play-Based Learning** for children aged 0 to 8, and ensuring children are school ready
- **Improved nutrition** at the centre with community cooking and produce from local nutrigardens

ECD Mission



Family & Home



ECD at Centre



Community



- **Village Organizations** and **Village Health Councils** will lead the implementation of ECD Mission
- **Village Employment Councils** will ensure proper construction and maintenance of ECD Centres
- Regular **community events** where caregivers and children gather for fun ECD activities

ECD Mission



Family & Home

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Way Forward

ECD Mission

Roll-Out Process

- **Block Conventions**
- **Module 1**
- **Module 2**
- **Module 3**

ECD Mission

Roll-Out Process

● Block Conventions

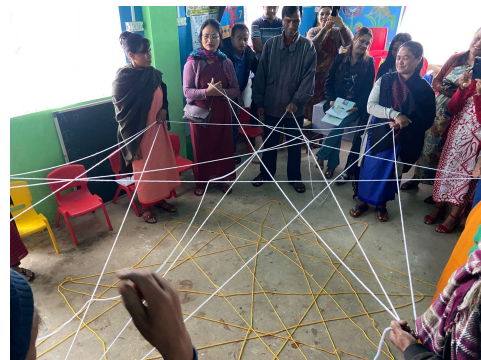
● Module 1

● Module 2

● Module 3



Round 1



Round 2

Sensitizing communities and state functionaries of different departments on

- Importance of ECD through **brain-wiring game**
- Interactive discussion on **role of community** in ECD Mission
- Reflection on the **need for strong collaboration** among departments

ECD Mission

Roll-Out Process

● Block Conventions

● **Module 1**

● Module 2

● Module 3



Training of frontline workers, community leaders and state functionaries on:

- **Importance of the early years** through different activities
- **Play-based activities**, community events, making of **toys** from locally available material
- **Field demonstration** with different community stakeholders

ECD Mission

Roll-Out Process

● Block Conventions

● Module 1

● **Module 2**

● Module 3

Intensive Training of frontline workers, community leaders, ECD Volunteers and state functionaries on:

- **Centre-based activities:** four domains of development + management of ECD centre
- Protocols for **home visits, parent circles, and community events**
- **Health & Nutrition** practices such as KMC
- **Role of VOs, VHCs and VECs** in implementing ECD Mission
- How to use the **Operating Guidelines**

ECD Mission

Roll-Out Process

● Block Conventions

● Module 1

● Module 2


● **Module 3**

Reflection and Problem-Solving discussions with frontline workers, community leaders, ECD Volunteers and state functionaries on:

- **Management of ECD Centres** + Mobilizing Community Demand
- Conducting effective home visits, coaching of parents and **mobilizing the community**
- **Monitoring and adapting** of ECD Mission vision to the local context and building community ownership

ECD Mission

Roll-Out Process

- 
- **Block Conventions** ——— ● **Almost Completed**
 - **Module 1** ————— ● **Ongoing**
 - **Module 2** ————— ● To be completed by **Dec 2023**
 - **Module 3** ————— ● To be completed by **Mar 2024**

ECD Mission is not a program but a **social movement** that requires active participation of all stakeholders in the state. We have to work together with a **sense of purpose and collaboration** to help every child achieve their full potential and to **generate more happiness** for the people of our state.



APPENDIX

Age as a factor in Learning Crisis: Challenges in System

Research evidence from IECEI (2017):

Early childhood is of critical importance

Even 6 months contribute to a significant difference in children's learning levels.

6+ appropriate for entry to grade 1

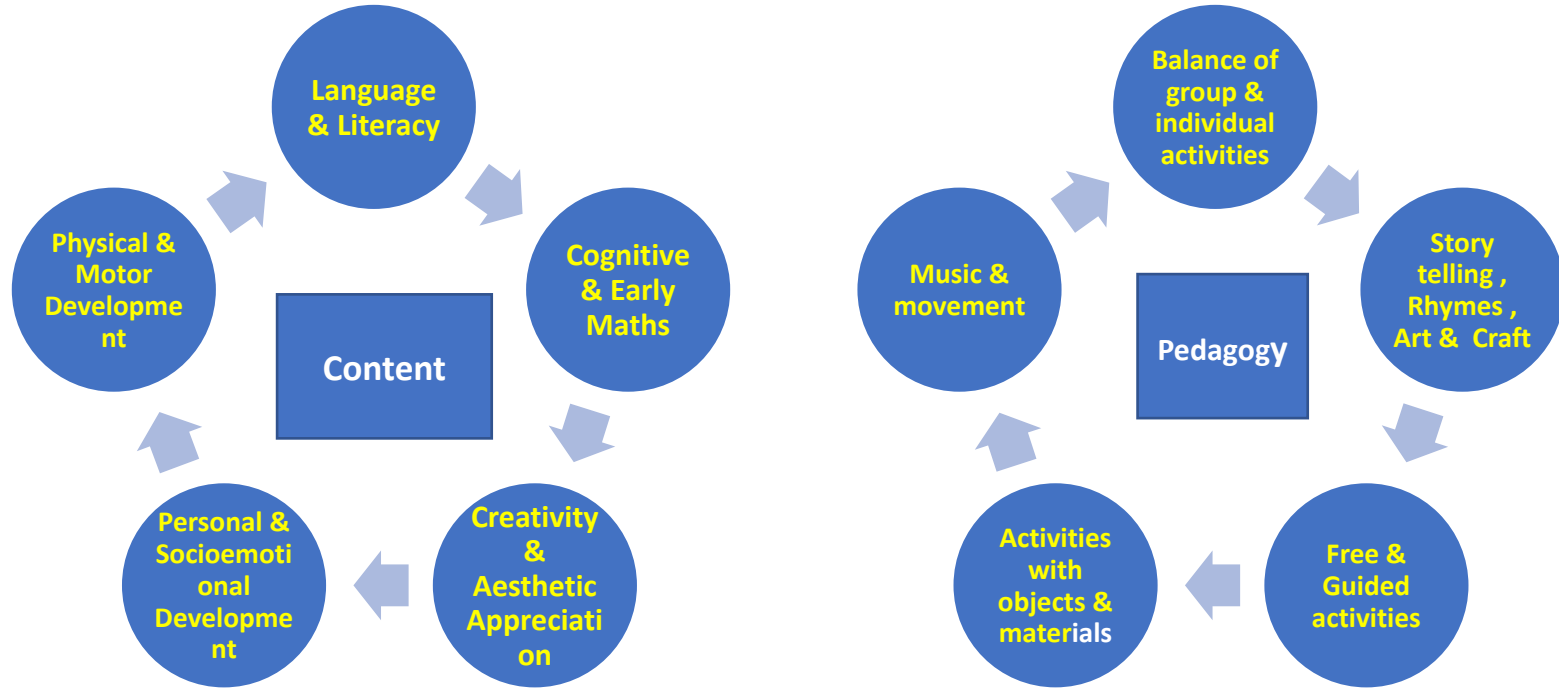
Indian situation:

- ❖ *RTE (2009) specifies age 6 as entry age to grade 1*
- ❖ *Most states have 5+ as entry age to grade 1 : a violation of RTE*
- ❖ *Almost 15-20 percent children in govt primary schools are underage in class 1.*
- ❖ *Age appropriate enrolment and participation is not often seen due to multiple pathways and private schooling.*
- ❖ *ECCE curriculum is not age and developmentally appropriate*
- ❖ *Parental awareness and priorities about good quality education is often not conducive for learning*



Learning crisis in schools –weak roots!

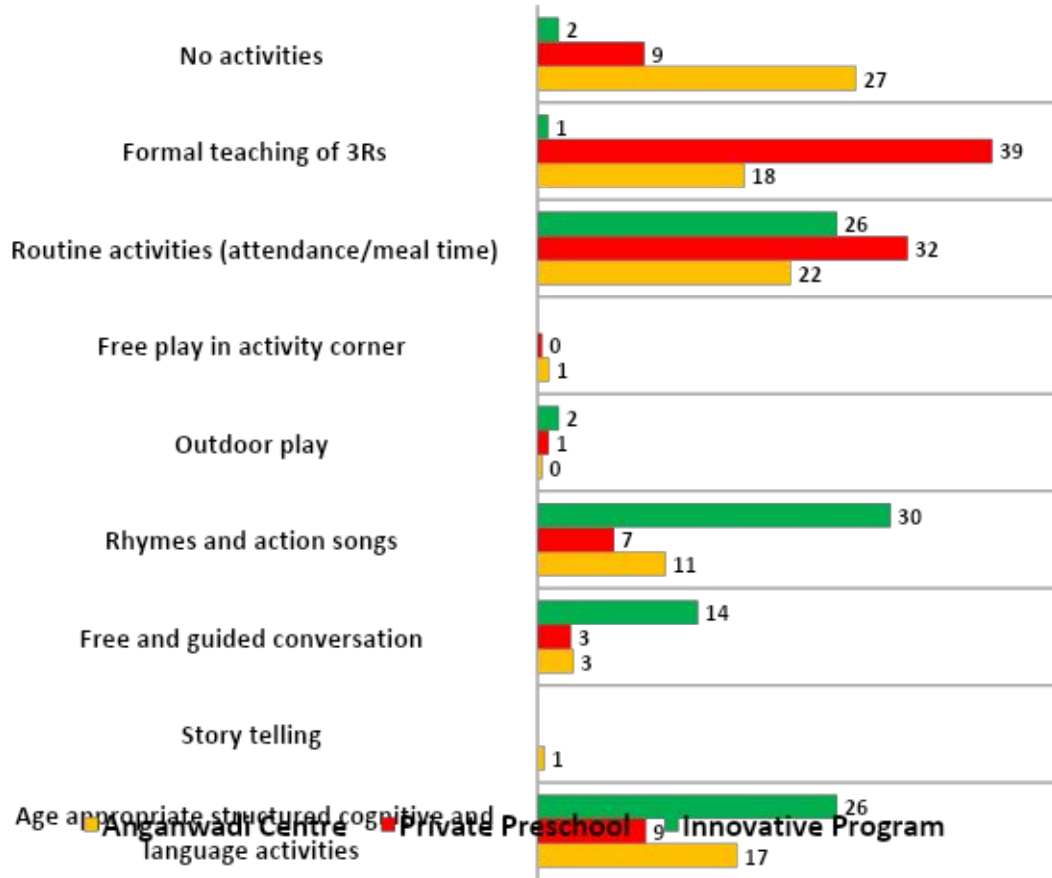
What is Developmentally Appropriate Content & Pedagogy?



Quality of preschool education matters!

- Significant Positive Association between quality of programme and school readiness levels of children at age 5+
- Children attending preschools with higher quality score had higher cognitive readiness levels on SRI.
- Cognitively focused curricular content play based and experiential learning and focus on conceptual understanding scored higher.
- ✓ Play based pedagogy at preschool continued seamlessly in primary grades gave best results and most sustained impact.
- Formal teaching of reading, writing and rote memorisation in preschools negatively associated with school readiness scores.

Percentage of time spent in different activities in ECE programs



Why? HOW DO 4 YEAR OLDS SPEND TIME IN PRESCHOOL?

Formal teaching dominates:

- Maximum time spent in formal teaching of 3 Rs and routine activities in AWs and private preschool. Formal teaching minimal in known practice centres.

Developmentally appropriate practice limited:

- Planned outdoor, indoor play and story telling completely absent
- Some school readiness activities in known practice and AWs but minimal in private preschools.
- Similar trends for rhymes and songs

Meghalaya Performs Poorly on Human Development Indicators

Health

Maternal Deaths	162 (in 2022)
IMR	34 (India: 32)
Life Expectancy	62.3 years (India: 68.5)

Nutrition

Children Stunted	46.5% (India: 35.5%)
Children Wasted	12.1% (India: 19.3%)
Anaemia among women	53.8% (India: 57%)

Education

Std V who can read Std II level text	50.1% (India: 50.3%)
Tenth Pass percentage	50.3%
School Dropout at secondary level	22.4%

Poverty

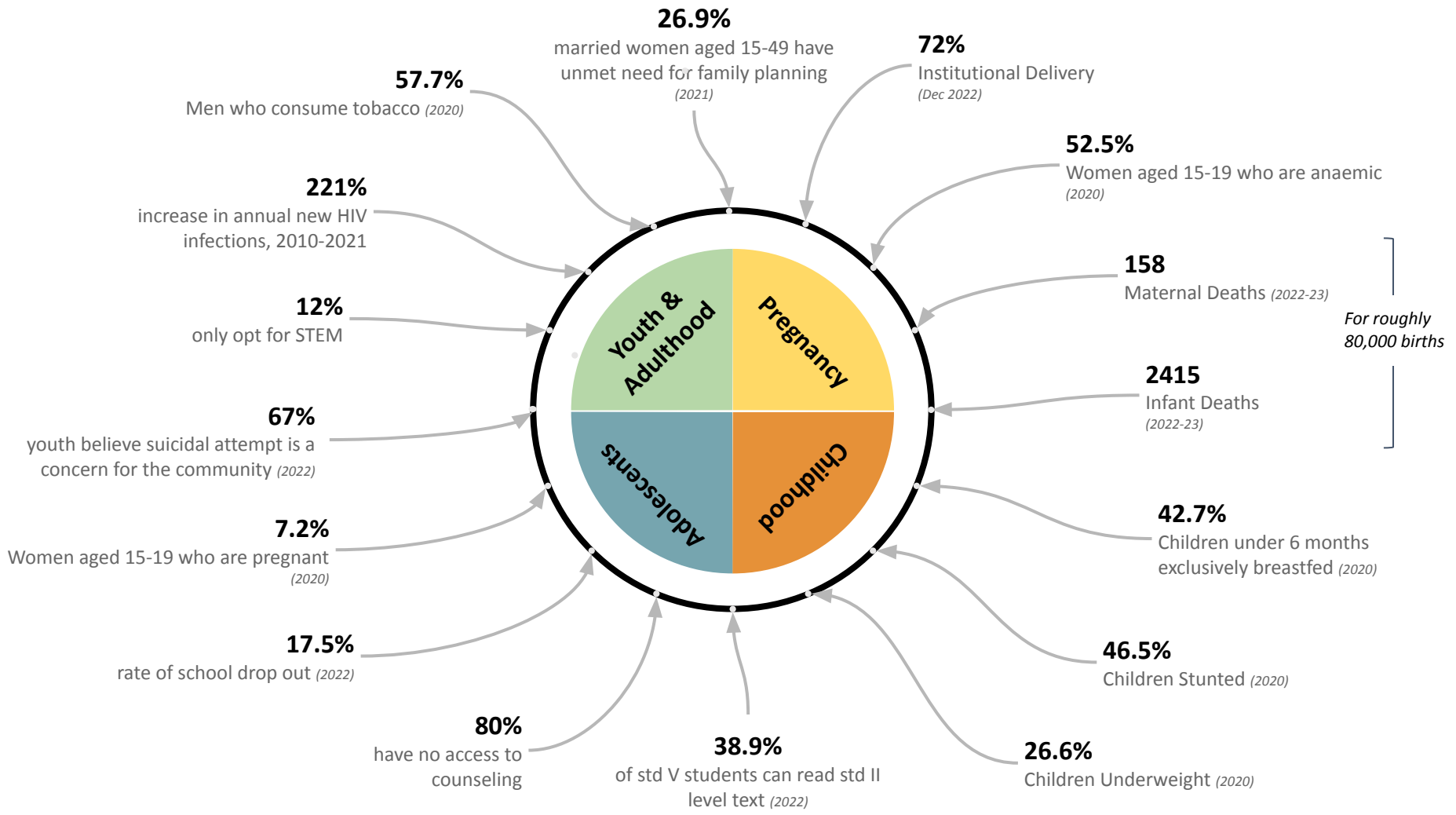
% of Population that are multi-dimensionally Poor

**28%
(3rd from bottom)**

NITI Aayog Report

Social Welfare

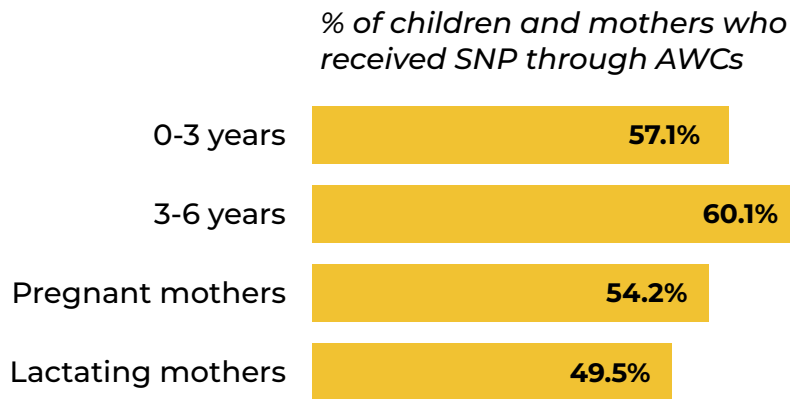
Single Mothers	36222 (CM CARE)
POCSO Cases From Jan 22-March 23)	343



Persistent challenges with demand for ECD services

Low Coverage

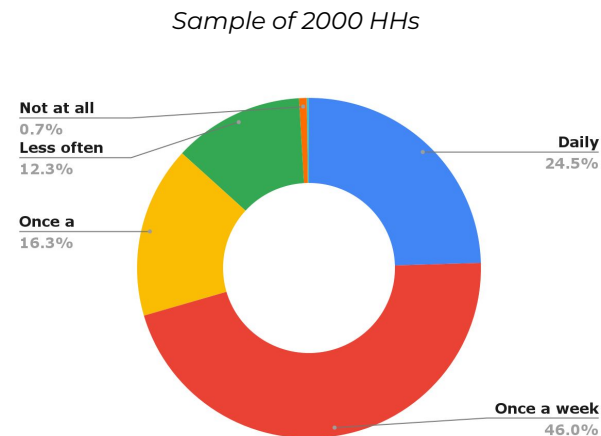
Only 55% of eligible beneficiaries receive SNPs through AWCs



Source: NFHS - 5

Low Frequency

Only 24% receive SNP daily. Almost half receive SNP just once a week



Source: Interim Report on Ongoing Nutrition Study conducted by the Govt. of Meghalaya in collaboration with IIPH-G, IIPH-S, at behest of Ministry of WCD