



UPDATE PLAY FOR ALL

PROGRAMME FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (ECD)



DW DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP CHILDREN

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RAISING QUALITY, CHANGING ATTITUDES – DELIVERING OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN

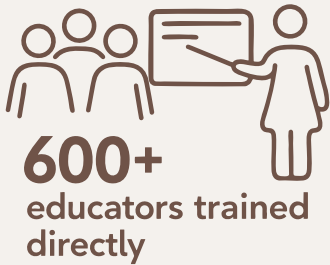
In 2025, Development Workshop Namibia strengthened its commitment to Early Childhood Development by focusing on three interconnected pillars: quality improvement, attitude transformation, and measurable outcomes. This year we witnessed significant shifts in how communities, parents, and caregivers understand and support young children’s development.

Our work shows that when we invest in both the physical environment of ECD centres and the knowledge and attitudes of caregivers, we create lasting change. Through a combination of infrastructure upgrades, intensive educator training, strategic parental engagement, and mass media campaigns, we have reached hundreds of thousands of families with messages and support that are transforming childhood experiences across Namibia.

OUR DONORS AND PARTNERS:



2025 ECD RESULTS AT A GLANCE



increase in educator confidence



60,000+
individuals through direct engagement



1.84 million
people reached through media



41.5%
improvement in parenting knowledge



81,280
children reached through parents



195+
centres actively supported



39 centres upgraded with infrastructure



78% reduction in severe child wasting



85% of educators rated training 'very good'



FAMILY-BASED ECD- SUPPORTING NURTURING CARE IN HOMES:

The foundation of early childhood development is laid at home. In 2025, we intensified our efforts to equip parents and caregivers with the knowledge, confidence, and practical skills to support their children's holistic development. Our family-based interventions reached deep into communities, delivering targeted messages through multiple channels and creating lasting behaviour change.

House-to-House Campaigns: Bringing ECD to Every Doorstep

Our most intensive community engagement came through comprehensive house-to-house campaigns. Community Outreach Workers conducted personalized visits, delivering ECD guidance directly to families and building trusted relationships within communities. This door-to-door approach proved especially effective in reaching families who may not attend Community Parenting meetings or have children enrolled in ECD centres. The campaigns reached over 60,000 individuals across multiple towns, providing them with flyers, parenting booklets, and meaningful conversations about child development.

Parenting Workshops: Building Knowledge and Confidence

Throughout 2025, we conducted strategic parenting workshops targeting parents, community leaders, church leaders, and caregivers. Over 17,000 parents participated in intensive sessions or sought guidance from our team. These highly interactive sessions were designed to be practical and engaging, covering responsive caregiving, positive discipline, emotional well-being, and shared parenting responsibilities. Feedback consistently showed that participants left feeling more equipped and confident in their parenting roles.

Engaging Men and Fathers: A New Direction

Father involvement has long been a challenge in ECD programming. In 2025, we took innovative approaches to address this gap. Working with community leaders, we established the Havana Men’s Community Gym to create a safe and fulfilling space for men. The gym provides a non-threatening entry point for conversations about parenting. Men come to train with a qualified coach, benefit from the endorphins and stress release of exercise, and for those interested can stay for short sessions on fatherhood, ECD, and parenting topics. This initiative has been very well received and will expand in 2026. We also partnered with “Men on the Side of the Road,” an NGO supporting unemployed men, to reach them with information and opportunities for meaningful activities.

Community Celebrations: Making ECD Visible and Joyful

To promote broader awareness of ECD and strengthen parental involvement, children’s fun days were organized across several towns. These events provided opportunities for parents to spend quality time with their children, participate in their learning, and celebrate their development. The events also served as an avenue to engage parents in discussions about responsive caregiving, early learning, and healthy child development.



Measuring Impact: Demonstrable Behaviour Change

To understand the true impact of our family-based interventions, we conducted rigorous knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) assessments. The results demonstrate profound and measurable shifts in caregiver beliefs and behaviours:

- Overall: 41.5% improvement in ECD knowledge, attitudes, and practices; 28.8% improvement in behaviours
- Gender roles: 59 percentage point increase in rejecting traditional caregiving roles (from 31% to 90%)
- Positive discipline: 45 percentage point increase in disagreement with corporal punishment (from 38% to 83%); 19 percentage point decrease in reported use of physical punishment
- Play and literacy: 24 percentage point increase in parents playing with children (from 61% to 85%); 22 percentage point increase in book ownership
- Nurturing behaviours: 43% increase in parents speaking kindly; 10% increase in physical affection.

CENTRE-BASED ECD; CREATING QUALITY LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Quality ECD centres are vital community assets that provide safe, stimulating spaces where children can learn and develop. In 2025, we strengthened our support to ECD centres across Namibia through educator training, infrastructure improvements, provision of teaching materials, and integration of nutrition support. Our centre-based work currently reaches 195 centres with a “wrap around approach”.



Educator Training: Measurable Impact on Quality

Young children learn through play, and for them to do so effectively, their teachers need to be confident, knowledgeable, and playful. In 2025, we trained over 600 educators across 15 towns and 8 regions in Namibia. Our training uses Montessori principles adapted for low-income settings where space and materials are limited.



Impact assessment of our training programmes showed remarkable results:

- 48% increase in educator confidence (from 3.2 to 4.7 out of 5)
- 85% of participants rated training as 'very good'
- Educators moved from teacher-directed to child-centred practices
- Children showed higher engagement, improved literacy readiness, and stronger social-emotional development
- Ability to create teaching aids from recycled materials cited as transformative

Our training covered pre-mathematics, language development, music, play-based learning, and socio-emotional growth. A unique aspect involves teaching educators to create recyclable teaching materials from household items, ensuring they can access materials without additional costs. Beyond classroom practice, we trained educators on their role as ECD champions in communities. Across 195 centres, 423 parent meetings were subsequently held by the teachers, creating a closer link between the families and the centres.

Additionally, 8 educators were supported to complete their National Certificate in Early Childhood Development through NAMCOL, with comprehensive mentoring, practical skills training including computer literacy, and visits to best practice centres.

Building Centres and Enhancing the Learning Environments

There is a serious shortage of quality ECD infrastructure across Namibia, especially for community ECD centres that are affordable and accessible to low-income families. In 2025, with support from the Swiss Embassy, Twin Hills Trust, MTC and the Capricorn Foundation, we worked to address critical infrastructure and resource needs across multiple towns.

In Windhoek, 6 ECD centres in the informal settlements received major infrastructure upgrades including construction of safe toilets and fencing, classroom renovations, and playgrounds. In the Erongo region, 33 centres across Omaruru, Karibib, and Usakos received comprehensive support including storage boxes, bookshelves, and First Aid Kits. In Omaheke and Rehoboth, centres received infrastructure support and teaching materials. The MTC Onawa Model ECD Centre in Oshakati is operational and serving as a community hub for training and support, while a new MTC Model Centre is being constructed in Rehoboth in partnership with the Ministry of Education.

DWN’s storybook initiative continued to expand, with 20 library boxes filled with storybooks translated into various local languages distributed to kindergartens. These boxes serve as libraries for centres and allow parents to borrow books and read to their children at home.

Nutrition Support: Feeding Bodies and Minds

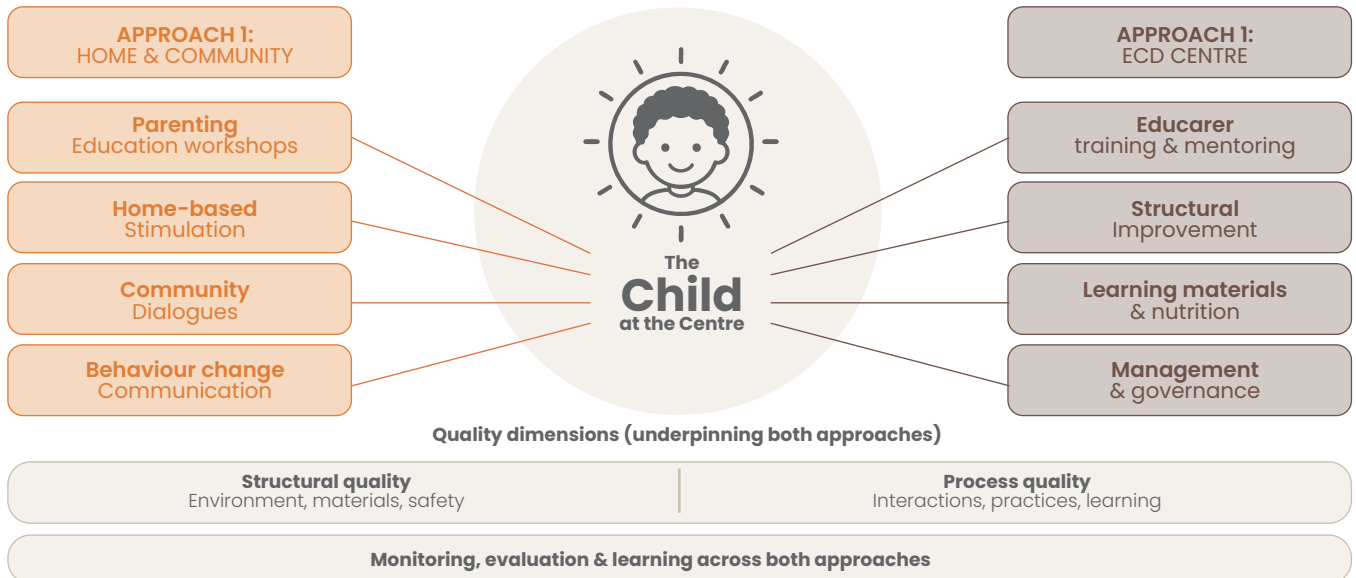
Good nutrition is fundamental to early childhood development. Feeding programmes provided daily nutritious meals to 1,046 children across 33 centres. An endline assessment showed remarkable improvements in severe malnutrition indicators: severe wasting decreased from **9% to 2% (78%**

reduction), severe thinness dropped from **9% to 1% (89% reduction)**, and severe underweight declined from **7% to 2% (71% reduction)**. The consistency and magnitude of improvements strongly suggest that the feeding programme played a substantial role in reducing severe malnutrition.



THE DWN CHILD-CENTRED MODEL

Two approaches to improving the environments where children grow and learn



LOOKING AHEAD: SUSTAINING MOMENTUM AND SCALING IMPACT

The results from 2025 demonstrate that comprehensive, multi-level ECD interventions create measurable change. When we combine quality improvements in centres with attitude transformation in families and national visibility campaigns, we create an ecosystem where children can truly thrive.

As we move into 2026, our priorities include continuing to strengthen family based ECD with a focus on parental and community knowledge and practices, and providing more wrap around support to ECD centres to help them to improve their delivery of quality early learning. The DWN ECD Playbook provides more information about this model.

OUR DONORS AND PARTNERS

We are deeply grateful to our donors and partners who make this work possible as well as our partners in ECD at the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare, Ministry of Education, Innovation, Youth, Sports, Arts and Culture, and Ministry of Health and Social Services.



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