



EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN MALAWI

2023 EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SECTOR
PERFORMANCE REPORT

OUTLINE

- Introduction
- Sector Performance
 - Increased Access to Early Childhood Education on an Equitable Basis
 - Improved Quality of Learning and Teaching in Early Childhood Education
 - Improved Governance and Management of Early Childhood Education
- Recommendations

INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Development is a critical phase spanning from conception to 8 years old, emphasizes high-quality care, nutrition, healthcare, safe environments, play, and early education for holistic child development.

Early Childhood Education is fundamental, setting the foundation for a child's future well-being and academic success.

Malawi's focus on inclusive early learning aligns with the Early Childhood Development Policy (2018) and other policy frameworks.

Challenges remain in ensuring equitable ECE access due to resource constraints, low visibility and profile for ECE.

This report analyzes ECE in Malawi, informing evidence-based decisions to enhance ECE outcomes.



ECE IMPLEMENTATION IN MALAWI

- ECE in Malawi is being implemented through private and public pre-schools.
- The public pre-schools follows the Community Based Childcare Centre (CBCCC) model .
- They are owned and managed by the communities with volunteer ECD caregivers providing care, stimulation and early learning to children aged 3 to 5 years.
- So far we have about 13,295 CBCCCs.

Infrastructure

- Most CBCCs are in borrowed structures, some in temporary shelters whilst some in purposefully built infrastructure.
- Communities mobilize themselves to construct any type of the CBCC structure
- Ministry also support District councils with resources for upgrading of CBCCs

There are model and satellite CBCCs

Partners also support in infrastructure construction

Some councils use CDF and other resources to construct CDF

- There are about 25% percent purposely built CBCC

CBBC infrastructure





SAFE WATER SOURCES

- About 90% of the CBCCs in the country have water sources.
- The type of safe water sources being boreholes (70%), taps (16%) and protected wells (4%).
- The rest (10%) are unprotected water sources [unprotected wells (7%) and rivers (3%)].

A blue surface with various colorful plastic letters and numbers scattered across it. The letters and numbers are in shades of red, yellow, green, and blue. Some are in sharp focus, while others are blurred in the background. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

INCREASED
ACCESS TO EARLY
CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION ON
AN EQUITABLE
BASIS

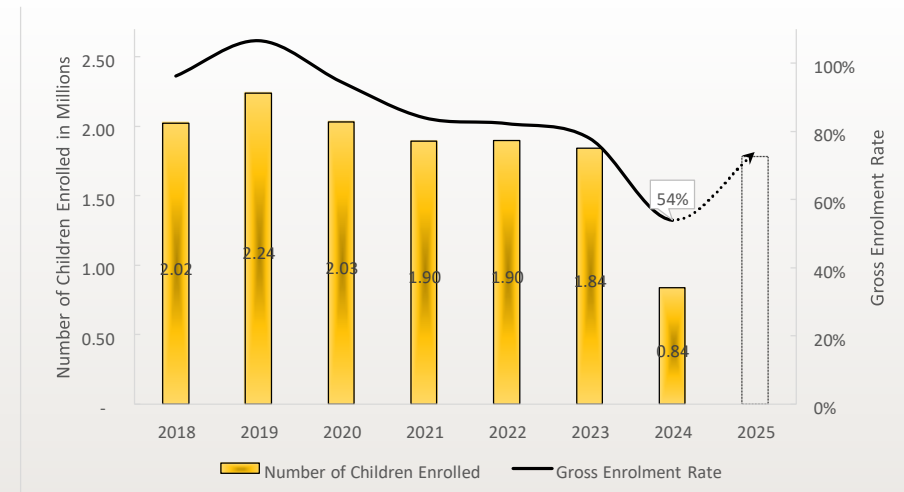
GROSS ENROLMENT RATE

Enrolment has trended from 2.02 million in 2019, reaching an all-time high of 2.24 million children in 2020, before regressing to 0.84 million in 2024.

This implied that GER progressed from 96% in 2019 to 104% in 2020 before reaching 34% in 2023.

The decline could reflect progress in aligning enrolments with the right age group, ensuring a more accurate measure of ECD access.

The 2025 goal of 70% established by NESIP was surpassed in 2024

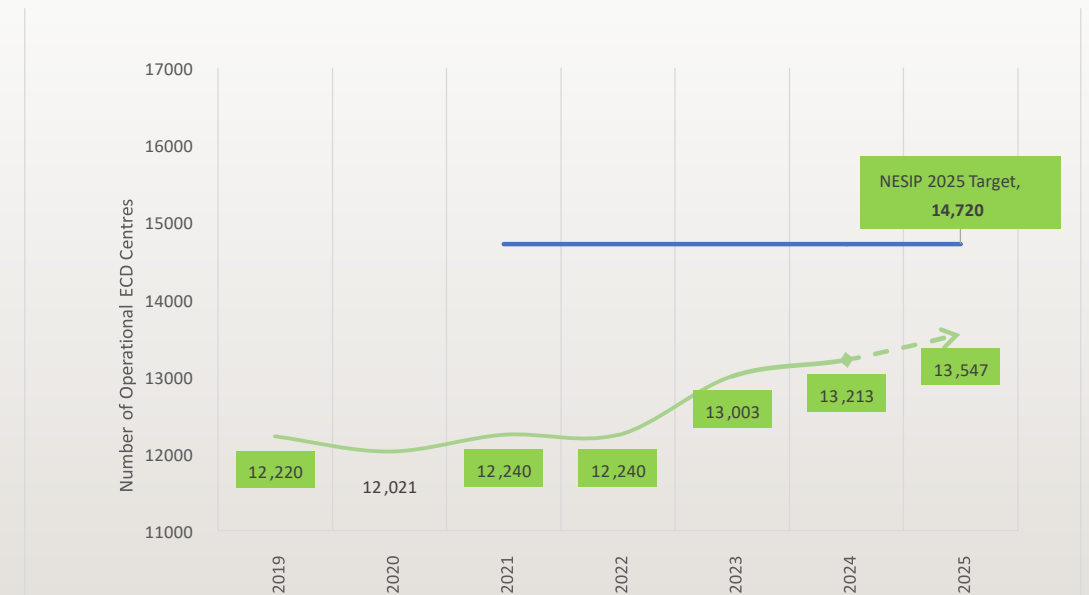


NUMBER OF OPERATIONAL ECD CENTERS

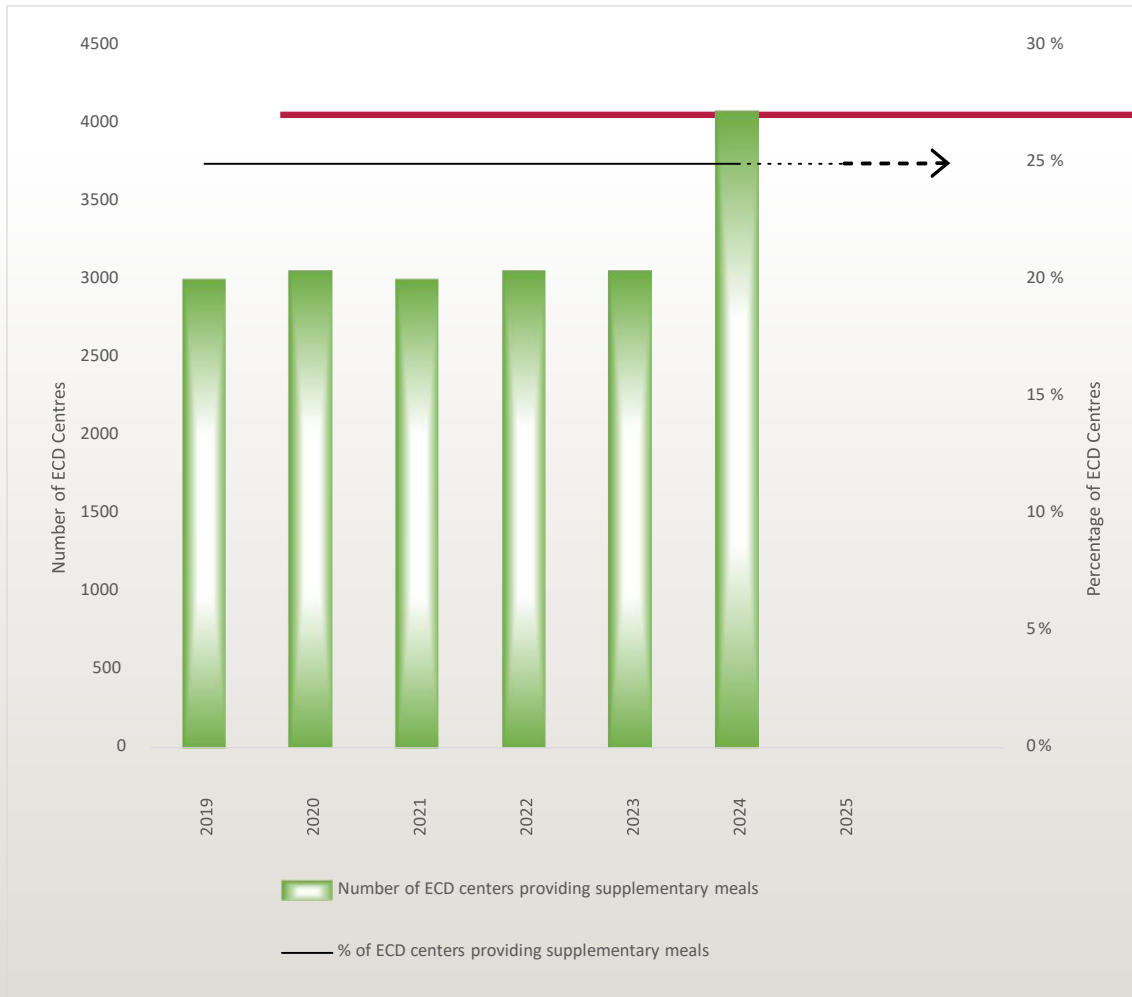
From 2019 to 2024, the number of operational ECD centres in Malawi increased from 12,220 to 13,295, showing progress in expanding early childhood development services

However, the growth rate falls short of meeting the 2025 projections based on NESIP operationalization.

Projections estimate 13,547 ECD centres in 2025, far below the NESIP goal of 14,720 by 2025.



PERCENTAGE OF ECD CENTERS PROVIDING SUPPLEMENTARY MEALS



From 2019 to 2024, there has been a consistent 25% rate of ECD centers offering supplemental meals, meeting the nutritional needs of young children.

The number has steadily increased, rising from 3,001 in 2013 to 4,080 in 2024.

While Malawi has exceeded the NESIP target, the overall number of ECD centers remains small, emphasizing the need for ongoing improvement and financial investment.

IMPROVED
QUALITY OF
LEARNING AND
TEACHING IN
EARLY
CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION



ECE CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

- The curriculum focuses on the play based learning pedagogy
- It emphasizes on the use of play areas and locally made play materials
- There is a syllabus for age 3, 4 and 5
- Caregivers guide also provides guidance on activities for children, materials to be used and assessment

PERCENTAGE OF CAREGIVERS TRAINED

From 2019 to 2023, the percentage of trained caregivers remained constant at 50%.

%. In 2024, this figure increased slightly to 51%, but it still falls short of the NESIP target of 75% by that year.

To meet the NESIP goal of 75% by 2025, efforts should be intensified for the training of ECD caregivers.

One key challenge contributing to consistently low percentages of trained caregivers is high attrition in the sector, which has been ongoing due to volunteerism

Addressing these challenges is essential to retain and increase the number of trained caregivers, ensuring quality ECE.

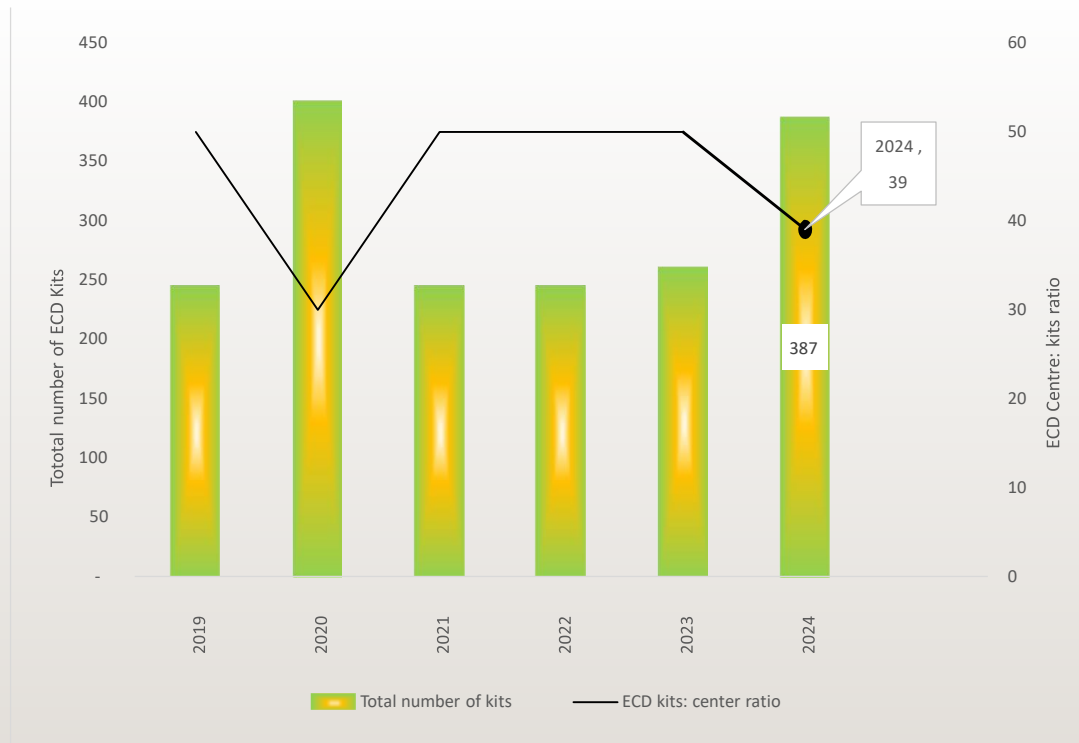


Source: MoGCDSW

CAREGIVER-CHILD RATIO

- The quality of care and individualized attention in ECE is influenced by the caregiver-child ratio, which has remained constant at 60:1 during the reference period.
- Malawi's goal is to reduce the caregiver-child ratio to 30:1 by 2025, aiming for smaller class sizes and more individualized care..
- The consistent caregiver-child ratio correlates with enrollment trends, suggesting responsive caregiver recruitment based on children's enrollment.

ECE KITS CENTER RATIO



Over the years, the ECE Kits centre ratio has experienced fluctuations, varying between 20 and 50 children to 1 cbcc kit per centre.

The ECE Kits centre ratio remained around 50:1 from 2019 to 2024, with predictions for 2025 indicating a continuation of this trend.

Efforts are needed to ensure equal distribution across ECE centers, but the subsector has already exceeded the target ECE Kits centre ratio of 4:1 by 2025.

PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN ACHIEVING LITERACY AND NUMERACY TARGETS




This analysis focuses on the proportion of children aged 48 to 59 months who achieved at least 50% score on literacy and numeracy components of the Malawi Development Assessment Tool (MDAT).

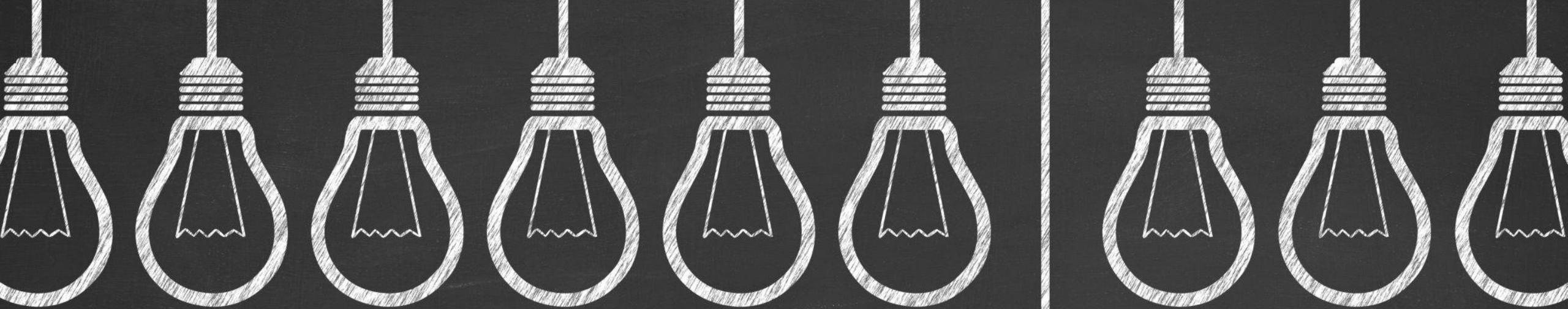
In 2013, no children scored at or above 50% in MDAT's literacy and numeracy components.

Between 2014 and 2017, the proportion gradually increased from 1% to 17%.

From 2018 to 2023, it ranged from 17% to 26%, remaining relatively steady.

The available data is up to 2023, and for 2024, there is a gap, leaving us with only an estimation based on previous trends. , additional efforts are needed to accelerate progress toward the NESIP goal of 50% by 2025.





IMPROVED
GOVERNANCE AND
MANAGEMENT OF EARLY
CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION



ECE BUDGET AS PERCENTAGE OF NATIONAL BUDGET



The percentage has ranged from 0.01% to 0.02% between 2019 and 2024, with gradual growth to 0.02% in 2023.



Based on the data, reaching the 2% target by 2025 seems doubtful without significant adjustments to budget allocations.



International guidelines recommend allocating a minimum of 10% of the budget to ECE,



PERCENTAGE OF ECD CENTERS IMPLEMENTING MALAWIAN HARMONIZED ECE CURRICULUM

Throughout the reference period, approximately 90% of the public nation's ECD centres successfully adopted the curriculum, leading to improved teaching and educational services.

This is a positive trend as the number of ECD facilities using the Malawian harmonized curriculum, reached 11,892 by 2024, exceeding the 50% implementation goal for 2025.

This progress is encouraging for reaching the NESIP goal of achieving 100% implementation by 2030.



RECOMMENDATIONS



Improve data quality.

Strengthen age verification.

Enhance data collection and analysis.

Increase cooperation and coordination.

Implement policy changes and boost policy support.

Foster partnerships and advocacy.

Open more ECD centers.

Enhance caregiver incentives and training.

Create career paths and improve working conditions.

Offer professional development.

Hire more caregivers.

Improve learning environments.

Ensure equitable distribution.

Advocate for higher ECE budget.

Allocate funds for literacy and numeracy.

Enhance teaching methods.

Strengthen evaluation and monitoring.


Explore alternative financing

Improve procurement and efficiently use resources.

Sustain stakeholder collaboration and Involve parents.

Align ECE curriculum with primary education





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The first few years
of a child's life
last forever



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