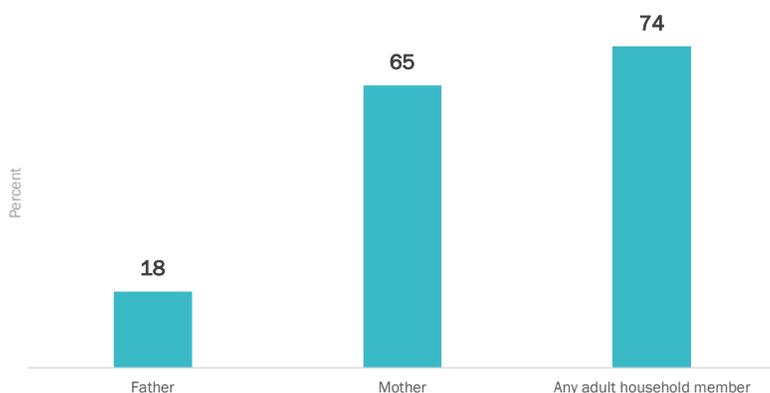


Early Stimulation and Early Childhood Education



Early Stimulation & Responsive Care



Percentage of children age 2-4 years with whom the father, mother, or adult household members engaged in activities that provide early stimulation and responsive care during the last three days

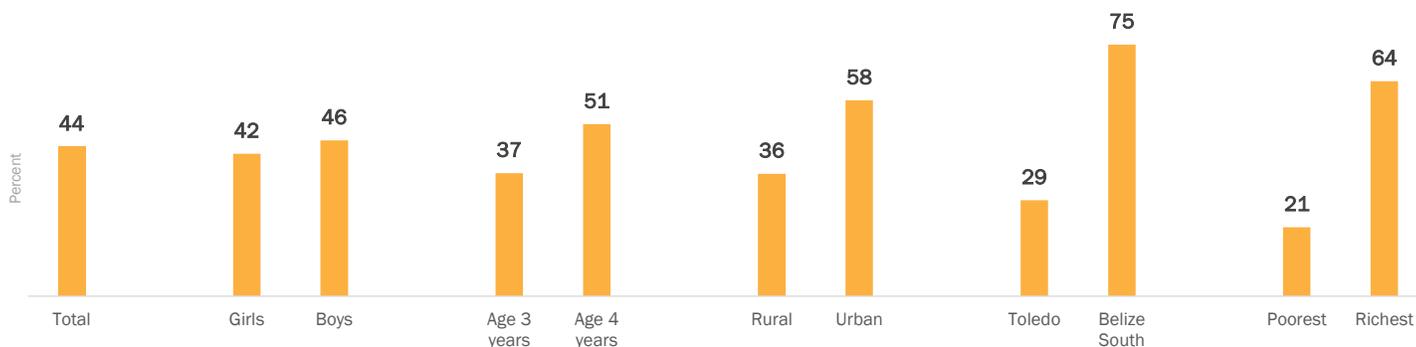
Note: Activities include reading books to or looking at picture books with the child; telling stories to the child; singing songs to or with the child; taking the child outside the home; playing with the child; and naming, counting or drawing things for or with the child.

Early childhood, which spans the period up to 8 years of age, is critical for cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development. During these years, a child's newly developing brain is highly plastic and responsive to change.

Optimal early childhood development requires a stimulating and nurturing environment, access to books and learning materials, interactions with responsive and attentive caregivers, adequate nutrients, access to good quality early childhood education, and safety and protection. All these aspects of the environment contribute to developmental outcomes for children.

A broad range of factors can prevent children from reaching their full developmental potential. These risks are often interrelated and include poverty, poor health, exposure to violence and high stress levels, inadequate care, and limited learning opportunities. Timely and effective interventions can prevent these risks and address the barriers disproportionately affecting children living in the most vulnerable contexts. Investments during the early years are one of the most cost-effective ways countries can reduce inequalities among children and promote the best start in life for all.

Attendance to Early Childhood Education Programmes



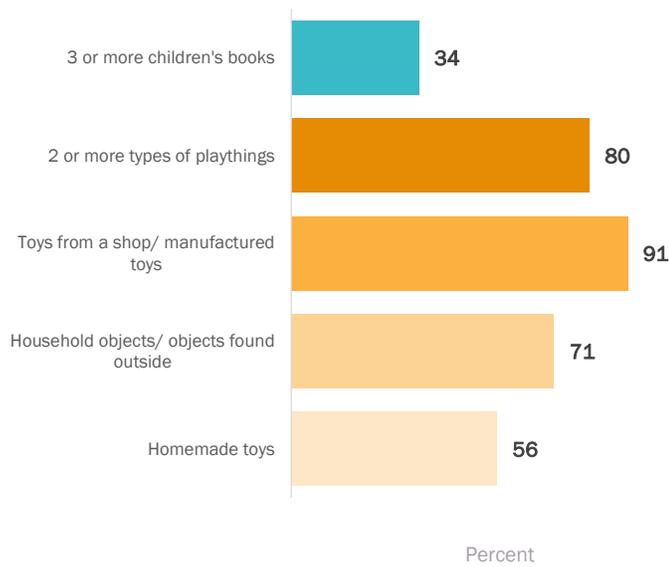
Percentage of children age 3-4 years attending an early childhood education programme, by background characteristics

Key Messages

- Many young children receive stimulation from adults in their household, with 73.6% of those aged 2–4 years benefiting from such interactions.
- Mothers are the primary source of stimulation for children, reaching 64.7%, while fathers contribute far less at only 17.5%.
- Participation in early childhood education remains limited, as just 44.4% of children aged 3–4 years attend these programmes.
- Attendance is higher among urban children (58.2%) and age 4 (51.1%).
- Poorest households show lowest attendance (20.5%); richest at 63.9%.
- Belize South leads with 74.8% ECE attendance; Toledo lowest at 28.5%.
- A small proportion of children face inadequate supervision, with 4.9% nationally experiencing this concern.
- Highest supervision concern in Orange Walk (9.4%) and Stann Creek (9.0%).
- Most children have access to play materials, with 90.9% having manufactured toys, though only 34.4% own three or more books.

Access to Books and Playthings, and Child Supervision

Toys and children's books



Percentage of children under age five according to the number of children's books available in their homes, and their access to different types of playthings and toys.

Inadequate supervision of children

Region	Inadequate supervision
National	4.9
COROZAL	2.4
ORANGE WALK	9.4
BELIZE NORTH	3.8
BELIZE SOUTH	2.4
CAYO	4.7
STANN CREEK	9.0
TOLEDO	2.7

Percentage of children under age five left alone or under the supervision of another child younger than 10 years of age for more than one hour at least once in the last week, by region

Early Childhood Development Index 2030 (ECDI2030)

The ECDI2030 captures the achievement of key developmental milestones by children between the ages of 24 and 59 months.

The measure includes 20 questions about the way children behave in certain everyday situations, and the skills and knowledge they have acquired, reflecting the increasing difficulty of the skills children acquire as they grow. The 20 items are organised according to the three general domains of health, learning and psychosocial well-being. A child is considered to be developmentally on track if they have achieved the minimum number of milestones expected for their age group.

The data generated by the ECDI2030 can be used for monitoring and reporting on SDG indicator 4.2.1, and to inform government efforts to improve developmental outcomes among young children.



Percentage of children aged 2-4 years who are developmentally on track in health, learning, and psychosocial well-being, by background characteristics

ECE: Early childhood education. Children age 2 are excluded, as early childhood education attendance is only collected for age 3-4 years. (Note: Attendance to ECE is 86.3%)

* Values in parentheses indicate findings based on 25-49 unweighted cases

** Values for "Early Childhood Education - Not Attending" are not shown as they are based on less than 25 unweighted cases.

The Belize Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) was carried out in 2024 by the Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB) as part of the global MICS programme. Technical support was provided by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). UNICEF, and the Government of Belize provided financial support.

The objective of this snapshot is to disseminate selected findings from the Belize MICST7, 2024 related to Early Childhood Development (ECD). Data from this snapshot can be found in tables TC.9.1, LN.1.1, TC.9.2, TC.9.3 and TC.10.1 in the Survey Findings Report.

Further statistical snapshots and the Survey Findings Report for this and other surveys are available on mics.unicef.org/surveys.