

# Assessing and Selecting Measurement Tools for Outcomes-Based Financing Programmes for Early Childhood Care and Education

This fact sheet summarizes the key methods for identifying and selecting tools for measuring the impact of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programmes that are implemented with outcomes-based financing (OBF). Drawing on a [technical brief](#) from the Education Outcomes Fund (EOF), this fact sheet may be especially useful to practitioners interested in measurement tools for child development outcomes and ECCE quality in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

## What is OBF?

At EOF, we define OBF as an innovative finance model where payments are made upon the achievement of pre-agreed results, focusing primarily on outcomes. In the case of OBF programmes for ECCE that we have designed, **outcomes measurement concerns both the quality of ECCE and child development outcomes.**

## What is the importance of measurement tools in OBF programmes for ECCE?

The field of measurement in ECCE has advanced significantly over the past decade, with many tools now validated and several others in the validation process. When paying for outcomes, it is essential to select valid, reliable, sensitive and accurate measurement tools that are easy to use at scale. This is important for four key reasons:

- ▶ Defining appropriate outcome-based payment metrics and setting realistic targets
- ▶ Ensuring accurate, trustworthy payments
- ▶ Allowing real-time adjustments to interventions
- ▶ Minimizing risks such as over-reporting or data manipulation.

## Identifying the most suitable measurement tools for OBF

Reliably assessing child development outcomes and ECCE quality is key for the successful implementation of OBF programmes and the robustness of their impact evaluations.

To identify suitable measurement tools for OBF in ECCE, EOF conducted:

- ▶ Desk reviews
- ▶ OBF-focused internal technical consultations
- ▶ ECCE-focused external technical consultations
- ▶ Consultations with government counterparts.

# Featured tools

EOF has selected the following as the most suitable measurement tools for OBF programmes.

## Internationally recognized measurement tools for early childhood development outcomes:

### IDELA (The International Development and Early Learning Assessment)

suited for interventions targeting children aged 3.5–6 years

#### Strengths:

- + Extensive academic validation and cross-cultural applicability in LMICs
- + Comprehensive implementation support
- + Free, open-source covering all key learning domains and suitable for any ECCE setting

#### Limitations:

- Assessment time slightly longer than comparable tools
- Pre-numeracy and pre-literacy domains focus on scholarly skills – this is a limitation for programmes that are entirely play-based

### GSED (The Global Scales for Early Development)

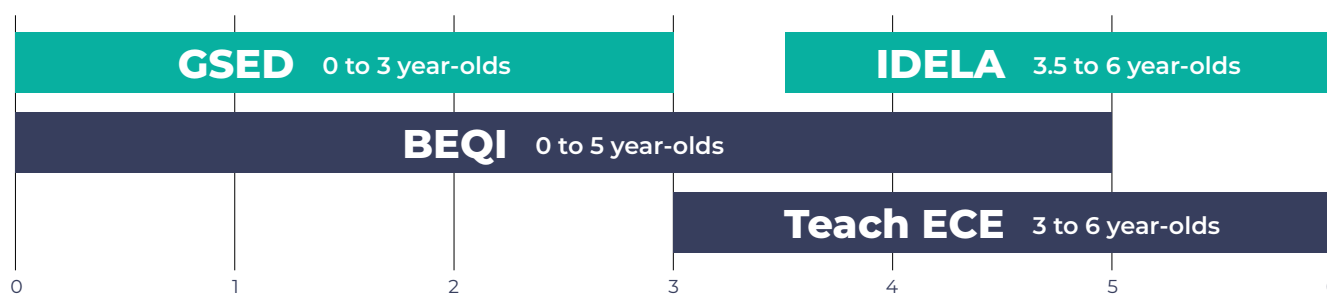
suited for interventions targeting children aged 0–3 years

#### Strengths:

- + Developed for cross-cultural use in LMICs and large-scale data collection
- + Provides extensive support for implementation, scoring and interpretation, with global norms and benchmarks
- + Free, open-source and suitable for any ECCE setting

#### Limitations:

- Evidence for reliability/validity is pending
- Produces only a single overall score
- Longest assessment among comparable tools



## Internationally recognized tools for ECCE quality measurement:

### BEQI (The Brief Early Childhood Quality Inventory)

suited for interventions targeting children aged 0–5 years

#### Strengths:

- + Works in various ECCE settings
- + Offers easy, affordable training for enumerators, with support from ECD Measure
- + Paper-version is free and open-source
- + Designed with ease and simplicity in mind
- + For use in LMICs with both direct classroom observation and teacher interview

#### Limitations:

- Challenging to use at scale due to its highly contextualized nature
- Challenging to compare across countries/ contexts
- Newer so less published evidence

### Teach ECE

suited for interventions targeting children aged 3–6 years

#### Strengths:

- + Free and open-source and developed for use in LMICs
- + Offers strong enumerator training, publicly available materials and training support as well as a data collection app for score analysis
- + Effectively captures process quality and correlates well with child development outcomes

#### Limitations:

- Designed for use in formal early childhood education (ECE) centres only
- Needs more experienced enumerators and expensive to train
- Newer so less published evidence