

Climate Change & Early Childhood Development

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ECD and Climate Change: “From the most vulnerable to the most valuable”

- ECD - A powerful **equalizer** of climate change inequities
- Climate change a **child's rights crisis**
- ECD in climate change, a **key building block** in achieving the SDGs
- **Young children as agents of change**
- **Costs of inaction** are too high



Nearly 90% of the burden of disease attributable to climate change is borne by children under the age of 5

The first 1,000 days are much more vulnerable than other stages in life.

Climate Change and Children: What Do We Know?

- Children breathe more rapidly than adults
- **> 1,000 newborns deaths from air pollution**
- Higher metabolism, breathing less than adults
- Children under 5, **nearly 80% of malaria deaths**
- Children vulnerable to food insecurity
- Children rely on adults for physical and mental wellbeing
- Children are more susceptible to injuries



What Do We Know About Children on The Move?

- **One billion** children in 33 countries at extremely high risk
- **10 million** children displaced in 2020 alone due to weather
- Children in the move are exposed to protection risks
- Nearly **500 million** children live in areas with very high risk of flooding
- Nearly **160 million** live in areas of extreme or high risk of drought





Children and Climate Change in Asia

Policy Actions: Recognition of ECD and Climate intersections

- **2023 ASEAN Declaration** on ECCE in Southeast Asia: A transformed ECCE sector plays an essential role in adaptive capacities of communities
- 2023 Pacific Regional Forum for ECD (PRC4ECD) endorsement of **Action Point 10 of the Pasifika Call to Action on ECD**

Country Highlights



Mongolia's air pollution initiatives

The Government of Mongolia, with UNICEF support, retrofits **kindergartens** to improve young children's learning environments while increasing energy efficiency and combatting air pollution.



Youth engagement in Fiji and Pacific islands

During the 2022 ARNEC Conference, a youth advocate heralded the call from Minister of Health in Fiji for greater **inclusion of young children in the climate agenda**. There have been numerous policy fora in the Pacific to elevate ECD's role in climate change adaptation.



Viet Nam's multi-level climate and DRR initiatives

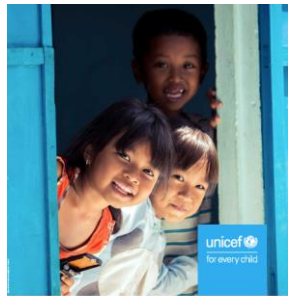
With MOET, UNICEF developed and institutionalized a national Climate-Smart School Framework, including at **pre-primary** level.

With the National College of Education, a survey has been conducted at ECE institutions to understand behaviors of environmental protection in **preschools**.

What Have Partners Done in Asia?



Investment Case: Early Childhood Development in East Asia and the Pacific
An investment opportunity for the private and public sectors.

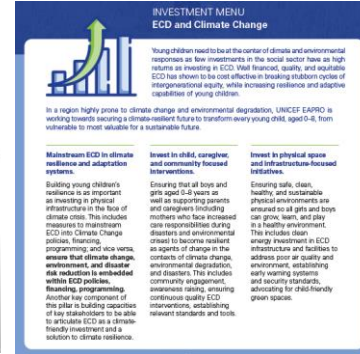
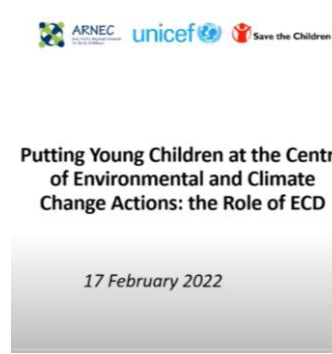


Climate-proof Learning in East Asia and the Pacific
An investment opportunity for the private and public sectors.



The climate crisis is a child rights crisis (UNICEF, 2021) as young children are affected disproportionately, starting in utero. As climate change, environmental degradation¹, and disasters increase, the stability and predictability needed in a young child's life for a nurturing environment essential to their development can be disrupted, especially in the first 1,000 days when the brain develops the fastest. Asia Pacific, as a region home to 80% of the world's young population, faces an immediate crisis. UNICEF's 2021 publication on the Children's Climate Risk Index highlights that approximately 1 billion children (nearly half of the world's children) live in countries classified as at extremely high risk to the impacts of climate change – many of them are from the region. Climate change and environmental shocks are complex challenges that can no longer be treated as purely environmental issues as they have social and economic implications on human development, including poverty, inequality, peace and security. Addressing these issues require working with a range of stakeholders across sectors, especially at the systems level on policies, financing, and programming. Early Childhood Development (ECD)² has the potential to be a building block for climate adaptation, resilience, and sustainable development given its cross-cutting nature that has the power to transform the lives of our youngest populations.

¹ Defined as physical environment, chemical, biological and work-related factors external to a person, such as air pollution, lack of clean and safe play spaces, and environmental stressors including heat and mercury.
² ECD is a holistic approach to learning and development through the interrelated components of nurturing care (health, nutrition, responsive care, early learning, security and safety).



Young children are the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, but also the most valuable in the fight against it.

We must recognize the full potential of early childhood development in addressing the effects of climate change. #COP27



From UNICEF East Asia Pacific

5-8 JULY 2022
Young Children in Crisis
ARNEC
Asia Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood

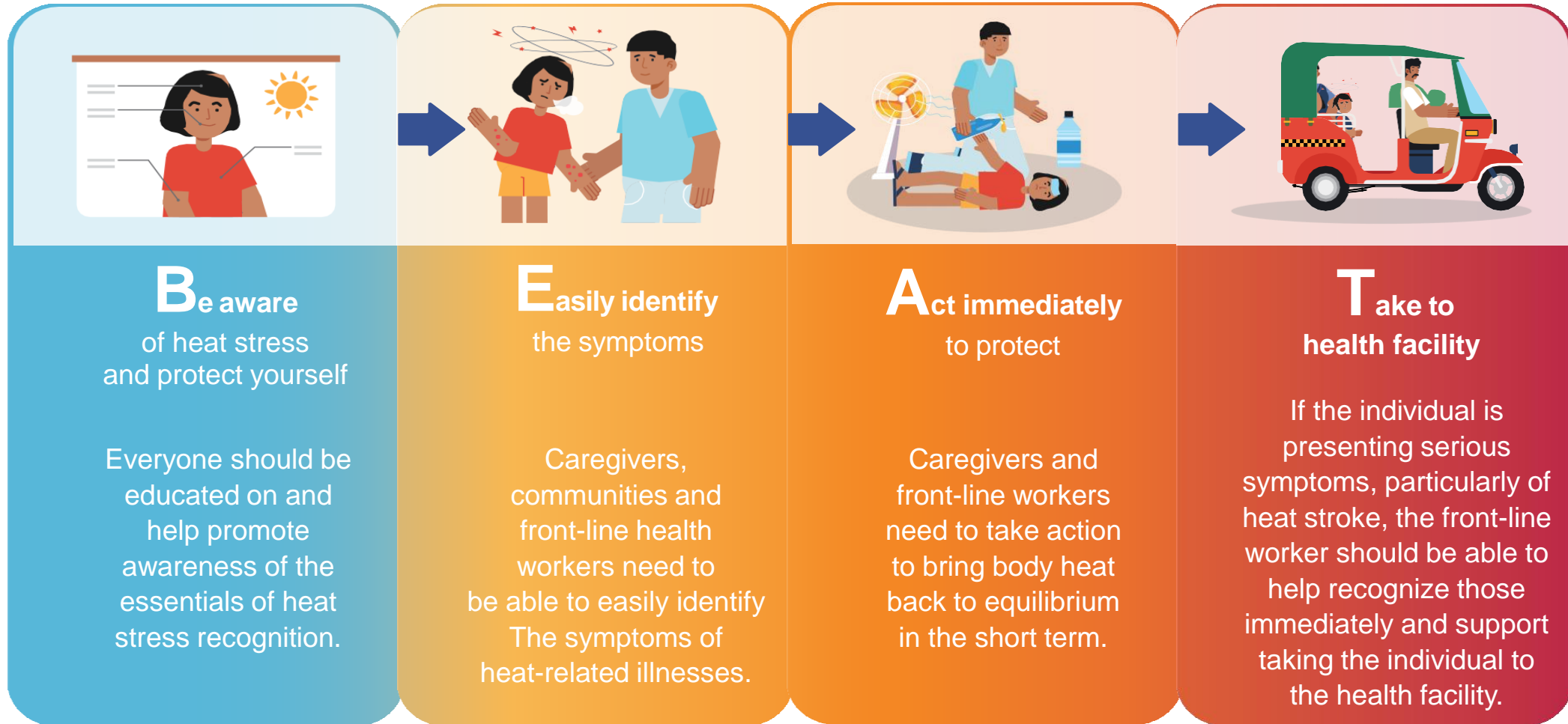


2 investment cases, ECD-Climate advocacy brief & Theory of Change

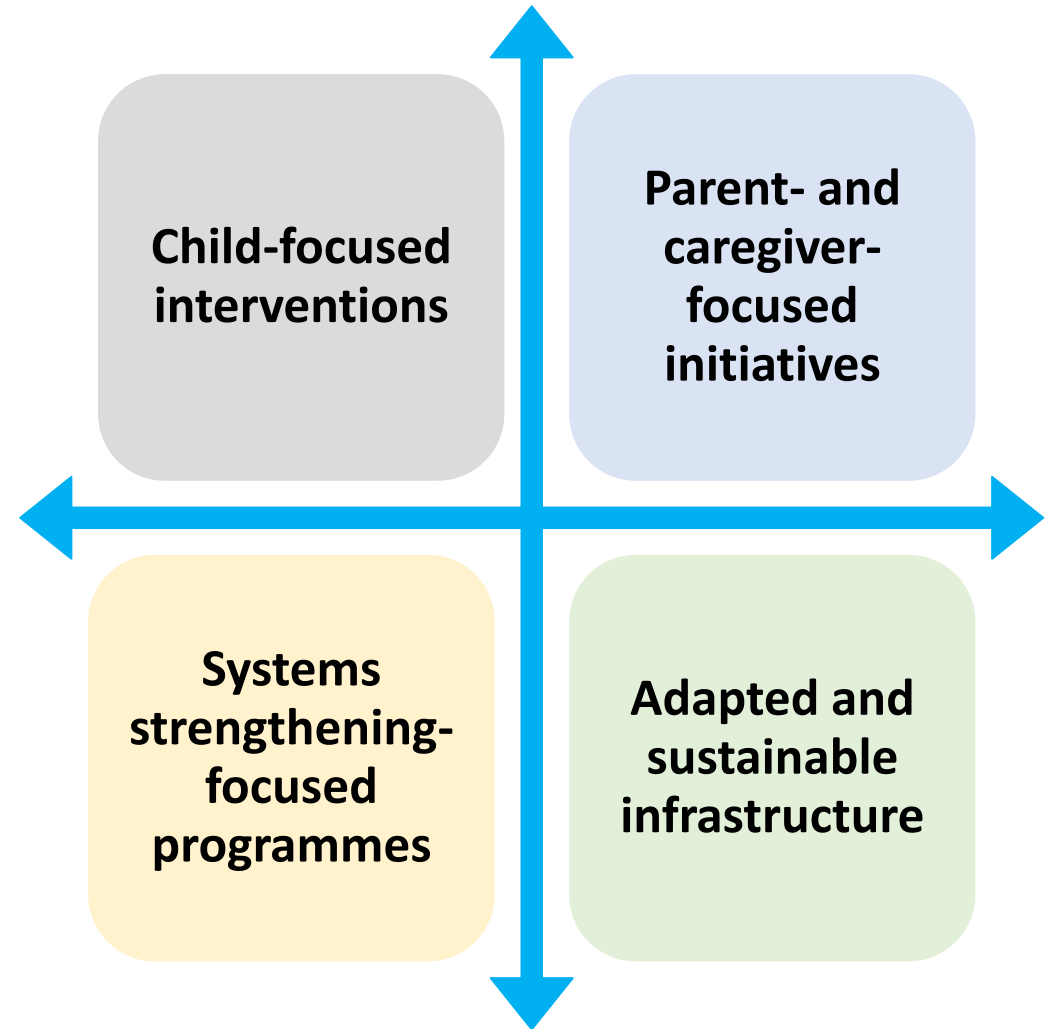
Regional conference, advocacy video, call to action, webinars with ARNEC and Save the Children

Regional scoping study - impact of climate change on young children

B.E.A.T. The Heat: A Risk Communication and First Aid Approach for Caregivers and Frontline Workers



Global Directions for ECD and Climate: UNICEF's Strategies




Illustrative Actions



SUPPORTING
young
children



SMART
INVESTMENT

The background features a central illustration of a family: a pregnant woman in a dark blue dress, a young boy in a yellow shirt, a young girl in a blue shirt, and a baby crawling in a red outfit. Surrounding them are circular icons depicting various climate-related scenarios: a woman by a fan, a person lying on a mat, a person with a fever, a pregnant woman, and a person with a headache. A large sun is at the top center.

“The best investments we can make for children **now** are to ensure the services they need to survive, grow and thrive are resilient to climate and environmental shocks and to support them with the education and skills they will need to adapt and create a green transition and better world.”

Thank You