

Corporate Support for Early Childhood Development

A Holistic Framework to Support Multiple Generations

Businesses have a powerful role to play in shaping the future—one where young children thrive, families are supported, and communities grow stronger. Yet, corporate contributions to early childhood development (ECD) are often seen through a narrow lens, typically limited to philanthropy. This framework broadens that view, illustrating the many ways businesses can be key partners in advancing ECD—not just as funders, but also as changemakers, innovators, and advocates.

This framework outlines six actionable pathways for business leaders and ECD experts to collaborate in meaningful ways. It also includes examples of businesses taking action in each area. By recognizing the diverse roles companies can play, we can build stronger partnerships that create lasting impact.

This framework is meant to be an invitation to rethinking corporate engagement in ECD. Let's expand our collective knowledge and work together to shape a future where every child has the best possible start, and all communities, economies, and nations have opportunities to flourish.





Company Practices

Family-Friendly Policies: Adopt paid leave, flexible work hours, breastfeeding accommodation, support for child care.

Communication: Talk with employees, the media and the public about the importance of the early years.



Community Engagement

Employee Volunteering Programs: Encourage staff to participate in initiatives, mentoring, or educational activities.

Local Partnerships: Collaborate with local organizations; serve on advisory boards.

Crisis Response & Resilience: Provide emergency support during crises, such as funding for rebuilding after natural disasters.



Direct Investment

Financial Support: Contribute to programs, initiatives, research, and infrastructure; innovative financing mechanisms.

In-Kind Donations: Provide supplies, technology, learning materials, meeting space, administrative services.



Public Policy Advocacy

Policy Advocacy: Advocate for public policies at the local, national and global levels.

Thought Leadership: Use the company's platform to communicate through local, national, and international business forums. Engage other business colleagues and organizations.

Cross-Sector Partnerships: Facilitate collaboration across governments, NGOs, and other sectors to align policy goals with systemic changes.

ROI: Support research & development on the return on investment of ECD/multi-generational investments.



Product & Service Innovation

Child-Friendly Products: Create products that support cognitive and physical development ensuring inclusivity for children with disabilities or diverse cultural backgrounds.

Child Safety Standards: Ensure all products, services, and business practices are aligned with high safety standards for children.

R&D: Invest in research that contributes to innovations in multi-generation health, education, well-being, and employability.

Innovation in Service Delivery: Invest in solutions that support better outcomes for young children and their families.



Sustainability and CSR/ESG Integration

ECD Incorporated into ESG and CSR Strategies: Link to broader sustainability goals, with long-term social and economic outcomes, and make ECD a priority for CSR / ESG investments.

Impact Measures: Develop metrics to track and report progress on well-being and business contributions, including social impact measurement tools and child well-being indices.

Examples of Business Actions



Company Practices

PT Surabaya Autocomp Indonesia, a Japanese operating company that produces automotive wiring components in Indonesia, created childcare centers near their workplaces, making quality care accessible to all employees. The feeling of security parents have knowing that their children are being well cared for and that they have opportunities to check on their children regularly enables them to focus better at work.

Grupo Altex, a Mexican agro-industrial business with more than 7,000 employees, supports the childcare needs of its employees – local strawberry producers – and community members by working with a local provider to offer affordable, accessible, quality childcare. The company also provides other family-friendly benefits, such as maternity and paternity leave, lactation breaks, and flexible work arrangements.

The **Special Dog Company** has been recognized by Brazil's Fundação Abrinq as a "Child-Friendly Company," with extended parental leave, breastfeeding accommodations, and encouragement to support parents.

The Centre for Child Rights and Business' **WeCare program** has helped companies in eight countries create family-friendly workplace practices; the **Child-Friendly Space program** has worked with more than 100 factories in China, Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Türkiye to create child care services.



Community Engagement

Bank Rakyat in Malaysia has created a multi-pronged initiative addressing autism, including creating sporting events, work experience opportunities, and entrepreneurial support for children with autism. It also raises awareness and recognizes organizations that help the autism community.

Pfizer's broad partnership with Save the Children is promoting maternal and child health through supporting health care services, placing pro bono Pfizer staff in nine countries in order to share their knowledge and skills, and providing emergency support and volunteer actions after natural disasters.

Johnson & Johnson's comprehensive Vision Made Possible initiative uses many strategies to protect and restore vision, including a school-based eye health program that mobilizes volunteers and professionals to reach three million children annually, across Asia, Africa, and North America.



Direct Investment

Senda, a fútbol (soccer) products supplier in Argentina, is a Fair Trade company, providing safe working conditions and fair pay, and donates 1% of its sales to soccer programs that improve children's lives through sport, promoting gender equality and education.

The **Mahindra Group**, based in India, has a long-standing mission of supporting girls' education, firmly rooted in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of quality education and gender equality. They have reached more than 590,000 girls, working with communities to promote support for at least 10 years of schooling, as well as build self-esteem and resilience.

The **Spur Corporation** is home to 10 restaurant brands in South Africa. Its foundation takes a multi-faceted approach to supporting early childhood development, including funding training for early educators, meals for at-risk children, and child protection services.



Public Policy Advocacy

The **Kenyan Private Sector Alliance**, working with UNICEF, launched the Better Business Practices for Children initiative. The organization successfully advocated for legislation to promote and protect breastfeeding, and continues to support policy change. It also effectively encouraged dozens of member companies to adopt policies to support breastfeeding.

The **Business Council of Australia (BCA)** developed a comprehensive national plan to improve the nation's economic competitiveness; "Central to the 10 policy levers recommended for action and the big ideas for reform is a national early childhood system that develops the competencies for the future."

The **Greater Miami (Florida) Chamber of Commerce**, in the United States, has long advocated for more public funding for early education. Their 2024 report found child care issues cost the state more than \$5 billion annually. "We are fully committed to ensuring that childcare issues remain a top priority."



Product & Service Innovation

Happy Baton, a Hong Kong toy company, provides a monthly subscription service for families, providing toys that support healthy development. "Toys are returned, sanitized, and sent out to other families, reducing waste and introducing children to the importance and value of reusing and sharing early on."

Barefoot Books, a publisher founded in Great Britain, ensures that its products reflect the world's diversity, giving young learners exposure to many cultures. They partner with organizations to distribute books to at-risk children across the world.

Tegu, a children's toy company based in Honduras, provides a creative array of blocks that promote development and imagination. It uses environmentally responsible manufacturing that pays workers a living wage.



Sustainability and CSR/ESG Integration

McKinsey for Children, headquartered in Germany, currently sponsors 18 projects in 11 developing countries, supporting more than 3,000 children in need. The projects provide education, meals, or shelter, with the goal of making a lasting difference in the children's lives. The projects receive both financial support and professional advice.

Safaricom, a Kenya-based telecommunications company, has made the SDGs an integral part of their business culture. Children are a leading part of this strategy, with a wide array of initiatives that promote internet safety and privacy for children, encourage children to pursue STEM careers, create community health services to boost maternal and child health, and use education and care to reduce the incidence of Type 1 diabetes in children.

Wilmar International, a global food company based in Singapore, scored a perfect mark in the Global Child Forum's annual report on children's rights and business. Its company policies include a strong stance against any form of child labor, and proactive outreach and education to protect children from abuse.