



Ushirika wa Maendeleo ya Elimu Barani Afrika
الرابطة لأجل تطوير التربية في إفريقيا
Association for the Development of Education in Africa
Association pour le développement de l'éducation en Afrique
Associação para o Desenvolvimento da Educação em África

**Triennale on Education and Training in Africa
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**Promoting critical knowledge, skills and qualifications for
sustainable development in Africa: How to design and
implement an effective response by education and
training systems**

Sub-theme 1

**Common core skills for lifelong
learning and sustainable
development in Africa**

**The Lancet Series on Early Childhood Development (2007, 2011):
What do we know and what is the relevance for Africa?**

by

*Engle, P.L., Fernald, L., Walker, s., Wachs, T., Black, M.,
McGregor, S. and the Global Child Development Group*

Abstract

Working Document

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ABSTRACT

Evidence that the early years of life play a major role in children's development has been corroborated with increasing new evidence reviewed in the most recent Lancet Series in Child Development (Walker et al., 2011; Engle et al, 2011). Risk factors for poor development include poor maternal nutrition, lack of stimulation and learning opportunities, and exposure to violence, but protective factors such as breastfeeding and maternal education can reduce these negative effect. These early influences can change a child's developmental trajectory, wage earning, and eventual life course. Programs for young children as diverse as parenting incorporated into health and nutrition programs, preschool, educational media, cash transfer programs, and ECD components of programs for HIV + and severely malnourished children have made a difference in children's learning outcomes. But despite this promise, disparities are increasing, both within and between countries. In the African context, risk factors such as malaria are putting more children at developmental risk. Preschool experiences, which can facilitate school performance, is unevenly distributed among countries, and even within countries, tends to be for the urban wealthy. Given the wealth of data on the value of preschool and parenting programs these should be made components of a quality educational system that promises to reduce disparities in school achievement and productivity.