

A Parents' Guide to
Quality
Early Childhood
Care and Education
in Dubai



Building Strong Foundations Together



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Key Definitions



DUBAI CHILD

KHDA's vision for every child in Dubai's early years – curious, confident, and rooted in both their own culture and Emirati life. The concept reflects a holistic view of the child, active in life and learning.

LEARNING COMMUNITY

Everyone around your child – educators, family, and the wider setting – working towards the same goals.

INCLUSION

The values, policies and everyday practices that ensure every child and family is welcomed, valued and able to belong, participate, learn and thrive within the ECCE community. Inclusion recognises and responds to each child's individual strengths, needs, identity and circumstances, and removes or reduces barriers through appropriate support, adaptations and equitable opportunities.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The physical and emotional spaces where children learn and play, including indoor and outdoor areas, resources, interactions, and the overall feel of the setting.

SAFEGUARDING

The shared responsibility to protect and promote every child's safety, rights and wellbeing. It includes creating safe and caring environments; preventing harm, abuse, neglect, exploitation and unsafe practice; recognising and responding to concerns at the earliest opportunity; and ensuring that children are listened to, supported and protected.

WELLBEING

A child's experience of being physically and emotionally healthy, safe, secure, connected and valued. Wellbeing is supported through nurturing relationships, responsive care, inclusive environments and opportunities for children to play, learn, communicate, develop confidence and independence, and express their feelings, needs and identity.

Introducing Dubai's Quality Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education

Every child in Dubai deserves the very best start in life. This short guide is here to help you understand what “quality” really looks like in early childhood care and education – not as a checklist, but as something you can see, feel, and ask about.

The guide helps you unpack the Knowledge and Human Development Authority's (KHDA) Quality Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in Dubai – the standard every ECCE setting in the city is working towards. The guide explains key aspects of the framework and offers suggestions on how you can work with your child's educators and the leaders, owners, and governors of your child's ECCE setting to shape the direction and goals of the ECCE provision you and your child experience.

The full framework is available [here](#).



Why does Dubai have a quality framework for early childhood?

Dubai's early years sector is wonderfully diverse, with early childhood centres, kindergartens, and settings of every size, philosophy, and background. A shared framework means that whatever type of setting you choose for your child, that setting is working towards the same standard of quality, and your child's right to high-quality care and education is protected.

It also means you and your child's educators have a shared language for talking about quality – what's working, what could be better, and how you can help shape it together.



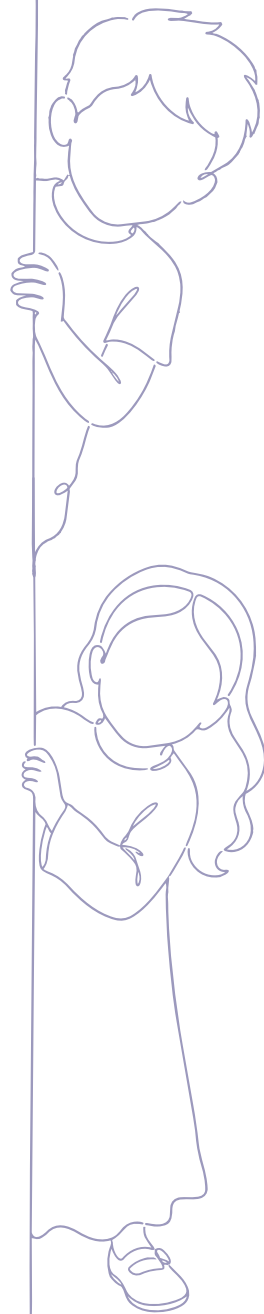
The Dubai Child



At the centre of the Framework is:

KHDA's vision for THE DUBAI CHILD:
A global child living a local life: an active, curious, happy, and inquiring learner, growing in identity, language, and culture, and as a valued citizen, contributing to the rich tapestry of the UAE as a whole.

Quality ECCE and strong community engagement are essential to the holistic wellbeing of the Dubai Child – a concept that includes children of all nationalities currently living in Dubai.



What Quality Looks Like

The early years of a child's life can have lasting impacts on their learning and holistic wellbeing – positive experiences and supportive learning environments shape children's life paths, wherever they may lead.

Quality is shaped by many things – from caring relationships and meaningful interactions to safe, engaging environments supported by qualified and caring educators. KHDA's Quality Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education brings all of this together, organised into five areas: learning and curriculum; partnership; the learning environment; health, safeguarding and wellbeing; and system leadership.

Quality doesn't mean every early childhood setting looks the same. Different approaches, curricula, and learning environments can all provide high-quality experiences that support children's learning, wellbeing, and development.

At its heart, quality early childhood care and education can be reflected on through five questions. Keep these in mind on a setting visit, at pickup, in a parent meeting, or when talking to your child.

1

**LEARNING
& CURRICULUM**

Is my child engaged, curious, and learning?

2

PARTNERSHIP

Are we – parents and educators – working together to support my child?

3

**LEARNING
ENVIRONMENT**

Does my child's environment support learning, play, and exploration, and does it inspire my child?

4

**HEALTH, SAFEGUARDING,
WELLBEING**

Is my child safe, healthy, and included?

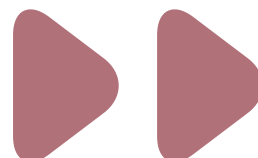
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SYSTEM LEADERSHIP

Is my child's setting well led and always improving?

Understanding Quality: What it means for you & your child

Each section below follows the same simple pattern: what you'll actually notice day to day if things are going well, and a few natural questions you could ask.





1 Is my child engaged, curious, and learning?

Meaningful early learning starts with your child's own curiosity and strengths. You should understand from your child's ECCE setting how your child's sense of themselves as a learner, including their unique strengths and capabilities, are being recognised and supported over time. The learning and care that children experience should reflect and support their interests, worldviews, and connections.

YOU'LL SEE

- Activities and experiences that clearly connect to your child's unique interests and strengths
- Educators have meaningful conversations with your child about their learning and what they enjoy, and encourage them to continue growing
- Your child's home language, heritage and culture evident in everyday learning, alongside Arabic
- Children being encouraged to learn with and alongside others

YOU COULD ASK

- What has caught my child's interest this week?
- How do you help my child build confidence in their ideas and abilities?
- How do you expose children to their home language and culture, including the Arabic language and Emirati culture and integrate it into everyday learning?
- How confident is my child becoming as a learner when trying new things?

2 Are we – parents and educators – working together to support my child?

You are your child's first and most enduring educator. A quality setting treats you as a partner from day one – sharing decisions and building relationships based on trust. As a parent you should be invited to collaborate with your child's educators. Respectful and inclusive relationships will enable everyone to share and learn from different points of view.

YOU'LL SEE

- Educators sharing how your child is learning
- Healthy, respectful, and supportive relationships
- Educators making decisions in partnership with you and your child
- A feeling of belonging and inclusion where everyone's points of view are heard

YOU COULD ASK

- What's the best way for us to stay in touch day to day?
- How can I share what's happening at home that might affect my child?
- How will you let me know if something isn't going well for my child?
- How do you involve parents and families in setting life?



3 Does my child's environment support learning, play, and exploration, and does it inspire my child?

The rooms, materials, and outdoor spaces your child spends their day in should encourage exploration and creativity while reflecting your child's identity, culture, and interests. The tools and technologies used in play and learning should encourage and support exploration and creativity as children try new ideas and make sense of their environment.

YOU'LL SEE

- Rich spaces that invite hands-on exploration and creativity
- Materials, books, and imagery that reflect a range of cultures and languages, including Arabic and Emirati heritage
- A variety of digital tools and responsible use of screens
- Evidence that children helped shape the learning environment – including their work, their choices, and their ideas that reflect their life experiences and world views

YOU COULD ASK

- How do children use outdoor spaces and natural materials?
- How does the environment reflect children's interests, cultures, and learning?
- How do you decide what is displayed in the classrooms and common areas, and why?
- How much screen time do children have in a typical day, and how is it used?
- How does the environment change as children grow and develop?



4 Is my child safe, healthy, and included?

Children learn best when they feel safe, healthy, included, and cared for. This is the foundation on which everything else is built. As a parent, you should understand the systems that the ECCE setting has in place to keep children, educators and the learning community safe and well. You should be supported to understand the nutrition and inclusion policies and what will happen if there is an emergency in the setting.

YOU'LL SEE

- A welcoming, safe, and inclusive environment where health, safety and wellbeing guidelines are shared, understood, and used
- Clean, well-maintained spaces, with well-maintained play equipment and resources with regular safety checks
- The monitoring and recording of children's health, nutrition or sleeping information so that this information can be shared with you each day
- Clear, visible safeguarding information and emergency procedures
- A clear plan outlining any additional support your child may need, the support that will be provided, and how their progress will be monitored

YOU COULD ASK

- What happens if my child is unwell or has an accident?
- How do you support children with different needs?
- How do you make sure my child's dietary, allergy, or medical needs are met every day?
- Who can I speak to if I have a safeguarding concern?



5 Is my child's setting well-led and always improving?

Behind every great classroom is a setting that's well-led with a clear philosophy, educators who are supported to keep learning, and leaders who listen to feedback and act on it. As a parent, you should have opportunities to share your ideas and help shape your child's experience in partnership with educators, managers, owners and governors. The learning and care of the Dubai Child should be at the core of all decision-making.

YOU'LL SEE

- A clear, visible sense of the setting's philosophy and how it is implemented day to day
- Educators who are visibly supported in their own professional learning
- Channels for parent feedback — and evidence that feedback leads to change
- Leaders who are present in the setting and know what's happening in the setting with all children

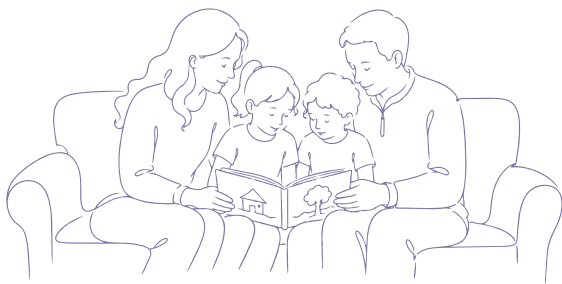
YOU COULD ASK

- How do you gather and act on feedback from parents?
- What has changed recently because of parent or staff feedback?
- How do you support educators to continue learning and improving their practice in ways that benefit my child and all children?
- How do you make sure the setting continues to improve over time?



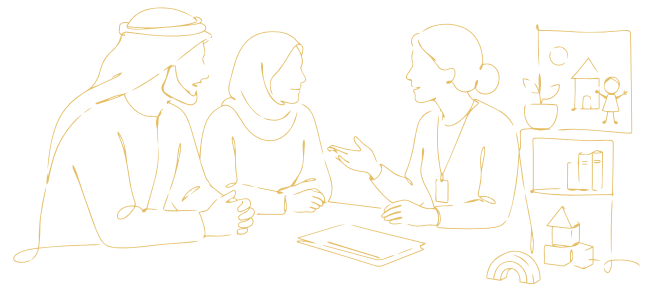
What You Can Do as a Parent

Quality early childhood care and education is about more than what happens in the setting. What happens at home matters just as much — and the two work best when they reinforce each other.



At home (with your child) and in everyday life, you should:

- Include children in everyday activities, tasks, and events
- Praise and encourage your child's efforts, not just results
- Spend quality time together, talking, reading, playing and enjoying each other's company



At the ECCE setting (for your child), you should:

- Talk with your child's educators regularly
- Share your goals and aspirations for your child
- Work as a team with your child's educators

Educators will benefit from understanding your expectations and aspirations for your child. This will enable them to shape and support your child's experiences within the ECCE setting. When you and your child's educators are consistent and connected, your child's confidence, wellbeing, and learning all benefit.

Supporting the Dubai Child Together

KHDA's vision for The Dubai Child sits at the heart of the Framework.

Bringing this vision to life takes collaboration. Parents, families, educators, and those who lead early childhood settings all play an important role in helping children learn, grow, and thrive.

As parents, you are your children's first and most enduring carers and educators. Sharing this responsibility with ECCE settings means you are vital to the development of quality provision and practice in Dubai. We encourage you to think about the Dubai Child in relation to your own child and to work closely with your child's educators to help bring this vision to life.

