

Government of India
Ministry of Women
and Child Development



Government of India
Ministry of Education

Guidelines

for

Co-location of

Anganwadi Centres with Schools



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MESSAGE

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, envisioned under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister, marks a historic milestone in Bharat's education journey. Rooted in the country's rich traditions and value systems, the policy reimagines the entire education system to prepare our children and youth to contribute meaningfully to the nation building. In line with the vision of NEP 2020, **three years of preschool (Bal Vatika)** have been integrated into the **5+3+3+4 curricular and pedagogical structure**, placing **Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)** at the heart of learning. The policy emphasizes joyful, play-based, and holistic early learning, ensuring that every child has a strong foundation to thrive in school and in life. Foundational learning, no doubt, has the potential to lead Bharat into a future of knowledge, innovation, and prosperity.

In this spirit, the co-location of Anganwadi Centers (AWCs) within schools represents a transformative step towards providing integrated, inclusive, and equitable education. This calls for harnessing the combined strengths of the Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Women and Child Development. This initiative ensures continuity between early learning at AWCs and formal schooling starting at Grade-1. It also ensures the optimal use of resources, promotes active community participation, and provides children with a smooth and nurturing transition from preschool to primary school.

The "**Guidelines for Co-location of Anganwadi Centers in Schools**" provide States and UTs with a framework to further strengthen collaboration between the two Departments and extend this possibility in as many locations as possible. Investment in the strong foundations of ECCE and ensuring synergy between care, nutrition, and learning, I am sure, will go a long way in securing brighter future for our young children.

My heartiest congratulations to all stakeholders — States, Union Territories, teachers, Anganwadi workers, parents and communities — for their continued commitment to realizing the vision of NEP 2020. I am sure, this laudable initiative will pave the way towards the vision of a Viksit Bharat by 2047.


(Dharmendra Pradhan)



सत्यमेव जयते



Message

Early childhood is the most critical stage of human development, laying the foundation for lifelong learning, health, and well-being. Guided by the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision for a *Viksit Bharat*, we believe investment in early childhood is critical investment in the nation's future, building strong, capable, and compassionate citizens who will lead India towards 2047 with confidence and pride. We are committed to ensuring that every child in India receives access to quality early childhood care and education in a safe, inclusive, and nurturing environment.

Ensuring a strong foundation for our youngest citizens is at the heart of the Government of India's vision for Early Childhood Care and Education. The objectives of the National Education Policy 2020 and Mission Saksham Anganwadi & Poshan 2.0 are also aligned in this direction. The co-location of Anganwadi Centres with primary schools marks a transformative step towards this vision, enabling seamless access to education, nutrition, and holistic development for every child. It will not only strengthen the continuum of care and learning for children, but also enable stronger convergence between education, nutrition, and health services. This integrated approach will empower our Anganwadi Workers and teachers to work together in shaping the cognitive, emotional, and social development of young learners, ensuring a smooth transition from pre-school to Grade 1.

I am confident that these guidelines will serve as a valuable resource for States and Union Territories in implementing co-location effectively, while keeping the best interests of every child at the centre. Together, through this collaborative effort, we move closer to the vision of a *Viksit Bharat 2047*, where every child grows to their full potential and contributes meaningfully to the nation's progress.

I congratulate all stakeholders, partners, and field functionaries for their unwavering dedication and encourage them to take forward this mission with the spirit of *Seva, Samarpan, and Sankalp*.

(Annpurna Devi)



संजय कुमार, भा.प्र.से
सचिव

Sanjay Kumar, IAS
Secretary



स्कूल शिक्षा और साक्षरता विभाग
शिक्षा मंत्रालय
भारत सरकार
Department of School Education & Literacy
Ministry of Education
Government of India



Message

The **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**, for the first time in the history of the country's education policy, recognizes **Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)** as the foundation of the learning continuum by integrating three years of preschool into the **5+3+3+4 structure**. Turning this vision into reality has required the collective efforts of **Ministries, Departments, and States/UTs**, working together with a shared commitment to give every child the best start in life. Hon'ble Prime Minister of country has emphasized the need to *"invest in pre-primary level to make children a good, ethical, thoughtful and an empathetic human being."* It is a long-term vision for **@Viksit Bharat 2047**.

The **"Guidelines for Co-location of Anganwadi Centers with Schools"** is a concrete step in this direction. It embodies the partnership between the Department of School Education & Literacy (DoSEL), Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Ministry of Women & Child Development (MWCD), while also incorporating the valuable inputs received from States, Union Territories, Autonomous Institutions and line Ministries. This collaborative process has ensured that the Guidelines will serve as a practical tool for convergence of Departments at States/UTs to support effective co-location at the local level, while remaining responsive to diverse contexts and needs.

By bringing Anganwadi Center and schools under one roof, these Guidelines create opportunities for joint planning, better use of infrastructure, and smoother transitions for children from preschool to Grade I. Most importantly, they reinforce the principle that care, nutrition, and early learning must go hand in hand to strengthen the foundations of every child's future.

I congratulate the teams from both the Ministries who relentlessly worked towards these Guidelines showcasing the whole-of-government approach.

I am confident that with the active engagement of States, UTs, teachers, and Anganwadi workers, this initiative will greatly enhance school readiness, improve retention, and raise learning outcomes in the early and subsequent years. Together, we are laying the foundation for a stronger and more inclusive education system — one that ensures every child steps into school with confidence, curiosity, and hope for a brighter future not only for herself/himself but also for Bharat.


(Sanjay Kumar)

124 'सी' विंग, शास्त्री भवन, नई दिल्ली-110001
124 'C' Wing, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi-110001
Telephone: +91-11-23382587, +91-11-23381104 Fax : +91-11-23387589
E-mail: secv.sel@nic.in

अनिल मलिक, आई.ए.एस.
सचिव

Anil Malik, I.A.S.
Secretary

Tel. : 011-23383586, 23386731
Fax : 011-23381495
E-mail: secy.wcd@nic.in



भारत सरकार
महिला एवं बाल विकास मंत्रालय
शास्त्री भवन, नई दिल्ली-110 001

Government of India
Ministry of Women & Child Development



75
आज़ादी का
अमृत महोत्सव



MESSAGE

Early years form the foundation of every child's journey. Our collective responsibility is to ensure that this foundation is strong, inclusive, and future-ready. The co-location of Anganwadi Centres with primary schools is a significant step towards realizing the vision of seamless Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) under NEP 2020 and Mission Saksham Anganwadi & Poshan 2.0.

These guidelines provide a clear roadmap for States and Union Territories to integrate services, optimize resources, and create an enabling ecosystem for young learners. The emphasis on convergence between Anganwadi functionaries and school teachers, joint planning of activities, curriculum alignment, and active community participation will ensure that children transition smoothly from pre-school to primary education.

The success of this initiative depends on effective coordination at every level, national, state, district, block, and community. I urge all stakeholders to work with dedication and synergy, ensuring that no child is left behind. By strengthening the continuum of care, learning, nutrition and health we are investing in the nation's most valuable asset, our children.

I am confident that with concerted efforts, the co-location model will serve as a catalyst for improving learning outcomes and advancing the vision of *Viksit Bharat 2047*.

(Anil Malik)

Guidelines for Co-location of Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) with Schools

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Abbreviations

AWCs	Anganwadi Centres
AWWs	Anganwadi Workers
AWHs	Anganwadi Helpers
BaLA	Building as Learning Aid
BRC	Block Resource Centre
BRC	Block Resource Coordinator
CAC	Cluster Academic Coordinator
CDPO	Child Development Project Officer
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRC	Cluster Resource Centre
CRGs	Community Resource Groups
DEPwD	Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities
DEO	District Education Officer
DIET	District Institute for Education and Training
DoS	Department of Sports
DoSE&L	Department of School Education and Literacy
DoSJE	Department of Social Justice and Empowerment
DPO	District Programme Officer
DWCD	Department of Women and Child Development
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
FLN	Foundational Literacy & Numeracy
HoS	Head of School
JTF	Joint Task Force
MHRD	Ministry of Human Resource Development
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MoE	Ministries of Education
MoHFW	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
MoWCD	Ministry of Women and Child Development
MSDE	Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship
NCERT	National Council for Educational Research and Training
NCF-FS	National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage
NEP	National Education Policy
PSE	Pre-school Education
PTM	Parent-Teacher Meeting
RTE	The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act
SCERT	State Councils of Educational Research and Training
SMC	School Management Committee
SPNIWCD	Savitribai Phule National Institute of Women and Child Development
TLM	Teaching Learning Material
UDISE+	Unified District Information System for Education Plus
UT	Union Territory
VHSND	Village Health, Sanitation, and Nutrition Day

I. Introduction

India's commitment to Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is anchored in key policy frameworks such as Article 45 of the Constitution of India, the National Policy for Children (1974), National Policy for Education (1986), National Plan of Action for Children (2005), the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act (2009), National Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Policy (2013) and National Education Policy (2020). India is also a signatory to the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) 1989. Further, by 2030, Sustainable Development Goal 4 aspires to guarantee that all girls and boys have access to high-quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education.

Within this framework, the co-location of Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) with primary schools has emerged as a practical and forward-looking strategy. With over **14 lakh AWCs** and in **9.16 lakh schools with Grade 1**, nearly **2.9 lakh AWCs are already co-located**. This demonstrates the scale of the initiative, while also highlighting the need for common standards, norms, and operational clarity to maximize its impact.

These guidelines, jointly prepared by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD) and the Department of School Education & Literacy (DoSE&L), provide States and Union Territories a roadmap to strengthen co-location procedure. These guidelines outline the models, norms, and operational criteria for co-location; roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders; and strategies to strengthen convergence, community participation, and school readiness.

The focus is on clear standards of co-location, convergence between AWWs and teachers, joint planning, curriculum alignment, parental engagement, and creation of child-friendly learning environments. By institutionalizing these practices, States and UTs can ensure smoother transitions from pre-school to Grade 1, reduce dropouts, lay the groundwork for stronger learning outcomes, while enabling convergence between Anganwadi Workers and school teachers to support holistic development.

By following these guidelines, States and UTs can ensure that every child, irrespective of background, has access to quality early childhood education, nutrition, and care. These guidelines are not prescriptive but enabling, allowing States and UTs to adapt approaches to their specific needs while ensuring alignment with NEP 2020 and Mission Saksham Anganwadi & Poshan 2.0. They represent a concerted national effort to ensure that every child enters school ready to learn, thrive, and contribute to the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

II. ECCE in India: A Unified Vision

The National ECCE Policy 2013 emphasised the “need to ensure Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) for every child below six years across the country”, establishing a visionary commitment to universal ECCE access. NEP 2020 introduces a 5+3+3+4 curricular structure, with the Foundational Stage (ages 3–8) integrating three years of pre-school (ages 3–6) with Grades 1 and 2 (ages 6–8) to ensure a seamless continuum of early learning.

NEP 2020 states that in order to ensure universal access to high quality ECCE across the country “*ECCE shall be delivered through a significantly expanded and strengthened system of early-childhood education institutions consisting of (a) standalone Anganwadis; (b) Anganwadis co-located with primary schools; (c) pre-primary schools/sections covering at least age 5 to 6 years co-located with existing primary schools; and (d) stand-alone pre-schools - all of which would recruit workers/teachers specially trained in the curriculum and pedagogy of ECCE.*” (Para 1.4 NEP 2020).

Recognizing the critical role of early education in shaping cognitive, emotional, and social development, NEP 2020 calls for convergent action by the Ministries of Education (MoE), Women and Child Development (MoWCD), Health, and Tribal Affairs. Accordingly, Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSE&L) had constituted a Joint Task Force (JTF) of all line Ministries [Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), Ministry of Defence (MoD), Department of Social Justice and Empowerment (DoSJE), Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), and Department of Sports (DoS)] in September, 2021. JTF is constituted to provide continuous guidance for the implementation of ECCE and better collaboration of services for the same.

2.1. Existing structure of ECCE in India

2.1.1 The Anganwadi services: The vast majority of ECCE in India is delivered through the Anganwadi system, implemented under the Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 via approximately 14 lakh Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) nationwide. Operated by Anganwadi Workers and Helpers (AWWs/AWHs), these centres provide a comprehensive package of six services: Supplementary Nutrition, Pre-school Non-formal Education, Nutrition and Health Education, Immunization, Health Check-ups, and Referral Services. Under Mission Poshan 2.0, MoWCD promotes ECCE to ensure the holistic development of children under six through family, community, and centre-based approaches. ECCE services include early stimulation for children under three and structured, play-based pre-school education for those aged 3–6 years, emphasizing creativity, emotional and cognitive development, motor skills, and healthy habits. Regular home visits incorporating early stimulation activities for children aged 0–3 years, along with counselling sessions, monthly ECCE days, and quarterly parent meetings, play a vital role in strengthening community engagement and enhancing school readiness.

2.1.2 Pre-school Education facilities in Government Schools: Several State Governments had been offering one or two years of pre-school education in schools. These additional classes were funded from State level or local body funds. Samagra Shiksha scheme launched in the year 2018 as an integrated scheme for school education acknowledged schools to be a continuum from pre-primary to Senior Secondary classes. The Framework for Samagra Shiksha made budgetary provision for adding pre-school classes in school and strengthening of AWCs located within school premises. With additional funding available, several States initiated two years of pre-school classes in primary schools. Budget provisions were also made for strengthening the pre-school education through greater convergence with Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 programme of MoWCD.

2.2. Co-location of AWCs with primary schools

Co-location of AWCs with primary schools promotes integrated service delivery for young children by ensuring continuity between early childhood care and formal education. This approach facilitates better utilization of infrastructure, enhances school readiness, and strengthens convergence between the education and nutrition sectors. It also fosters a smooth transition for children from pre-school to primary education, while encouraging closer collaboration between AWWs and school teachers, ultimately contributing to improved learning and developmental outcomes.

Objectives of Co-Location

- To ensure school preparedness and smooth transition of children from AWC to Grade 1 in primary schools.
- To have better linkages and convergence between AWCs and primary school for providing joyful learning experiences and stimulating environment leading to holistic development of children.
- To ensure enhanced retention rate of children at primary level in order to gain higher achievement at different levels of learning.

2.3 Current status of Co-location of AWCs

Current status of co-location of AWCs

Total operational AWC: 14,02,072

Total Government and Government Aided schools having Grade-1: 9,16,145

Total Government and Government Aided schools having Grade-1 which have co-located AWC: 2,90,959

Total Government and Government Aided schools having Balvatikas/Pre-Primary Sections: 2,51,979

Total Government and Government Aided schools having both Balvatikas/Pre-Primary Sections and co-located AWCs: 78,393

Source: UDISE+ 2023-24, Poshan Tracker, July, 2025

2.4. Joint Concerted Efforts toward Co-location of AWCs

- In 2017, a joint D.O. letter of Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and MoWCD (No. 11-4/2017-CD.I & 12-19/2017/EE.8 dated July 20, 2017) was sent to all the States and UTs advising them to explore the possibility of co-location of AWCs which means locating an AWC within the premises of a school having Grade 1, when the school is located within the habitation catchment area of the AWC. States were requested to examine the possibility of co-locating AWC, with a view to improving child preparedness for going to school and to ensure smooth transition from pre-school to formal schooling.
- On August 1, 2022, the MoWCD issued guidelines for Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0, recommending States/UTs to co-locate AWCs operating from rented spaces or lacking adequate infrastructure with nearby Government Schools having Grade 1.
- A joint advisory from the DoSE&L & MoWCD was issued on 2nd April, 2025 regarding co-location of AWCs and improving the delivery of ECCE and Foundational Literacy & Numeracy (FLN) services across the country.

2.5. Some Examples of Existing Models of Co-location*

Field observations from various regions highlight diverse practices in the co-location of AWCs with primary schools. These approaches vary depending on different levels of convergence, resources and infrastructure. Following are the few examples of the different types of co-location being practised in the field:

- i. In some areas, a spare room has been designated within the primary school for the AWC which caters to children aged 3–5 years, while the school runs Balvatika classes for 5-6 year-olds; however, convergence between the two is often limited.
- ii. In some places, new buildings for AWCs have been constructed within school premises, ensuring physical co-location. However, there is little or no convergence with the schools.
- iii. In certain locations, stand-alone AWCs have been administratively mapped or twinned with nearby primary schools. ECCE-trained teachers from the school visit the AWC to support AWWs in curriculum planning and classroom transactions.
- iv. Co-located AWCs at times lack access to basic school facilities such as electricity supply, kitchen setups, and learning resources. In the absence of dedicated classrooms, many AWCs or Balvatikas are being run from school verandas or temporary spaces within the premises.

(*The models being described above are on the basis of field visits by NCERT and SPNIWCD)

These field examples underscore that while multiple models of co-location between AWCs and primary schools exist across the country; each must be critically evaluated for its effectiveness in promoting developmental continuity and school readiness. States/UTs are encouraged to review their current models and in coordination with their respective Department of WCD and School Education, realign them in accordance with these standardized guidelines. Regardless of the model in place, it is essential to ensure that infrastructure and learning resources are equitably provided, and there is robust convergence between AWCs and schools.

III. Norms and Criteria for Co-locating AWCs with nearby Schools having Grade-1

3.1 Models of co-location of AWCs in schools having Grade-1

States/UTs are currently implementing varied models, and have specific operational challenges. To address these and ensure uniformity in implementation, standardized models are detailed below:

Model Type	Criteria	Model to be followed
1.	If minimum space and infra criteria are met <ul style="list-style-type: none">• AWCs should meet the standard specifications for establishment, as per WCD norms, as far as possible• The schools selected for co-location should have adequate space for AWC, outdoor & indoor play area, toilets for young children, drinking water facility, area for kitchen for preparation of Hot Cooked Meal for children, store for storing food items and separate entry and exit gates.	Physically co-locate AWC
2.	If space and infra requirements are not met	Mapping with nearest school with Grade-1

3.2 Guidelines to States and UTs for Co-location of AWCs with nearby Government Schools

3.2.1 Co-location may be considered for AWCs, which have not yet been upgraded as Saksham Anganwadis. In determining co-location of the AWCs, States and UTs need to see the feasibility of co-locating jointly by State School Education and State Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD) based on the following considerations:

- Co-location may preferably be considered in schools with Grade 1 that do not have an existing Balvatika/pre-primary class.
- Prioritize the co-location of AWCs that lack their own buildings, are operating from rented premises, or have inadequate infrastructure facilities.
- Prioritize co-location of those AWCs where most of the children belong to marginalized groups (economically weaker sections, tribal areas, and migrant families).
- For the ease of re-location of AWCs, it is suggested to consider a maximum travel distance of up to 500 meters in urban areas and up to 1 km in rural areas, ensuring ease of access for pregnant women and children. However, State/UTs have the flexibility to make decisions based on the geographical terrain and the feasibility of relocation in their specific areas.

- v. Schools selected for co-location should have adequate indoor space to accommodate the AWC, along with key features such as outdoor play areas, child-friendly toilets, safe drinking water facilities, a designated kitchen space for preparing Hot Cooked Meals, and an area for establishing a Poshan Vatika, all of which contribute to creating a conducive and enriching environment for early childhood care and development.
- vi. Co-located AWCs should have separate entry and exit gates, if possible, to ensure the safety and security of small children. Otherwise streamlined access for all beneficiaries like pregnant women, lactating mothers etc., should be ensured.
- vii. In case of more than one AWC to be co-located in a school, efforts must be taken to physically not co-locate more than 2 AWCs in one primary school, keeping in view the space availability. If it is not possible to co-locate both the AWCs, then the nearer AWC should be co-located and all the remaining AWCs may be mapped with the school (as per Model 2 above). Also, for schools with Grade-1 having more than one AWC in the same habitation area, the school needs to be ready to accommodate all the children joining Grade-1 smoothly with ample space.
- viii. The guidelines for Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 shall be applicable to co-located AWCs.

3.2.2 Only if the above criteria are met, should the next steps be initiated for co-locating the AWC. The decision should be discussed with the School Management Committee (SMC) members of the concerned school and the mothers and parents whose children attend the pre-school programme at the AWC and access other services of the Anganwadi.

3.3 Mapping of AWCs with nearby schools

3.3.1 Wherever, physical co-location is not possible, States/UTs may map their AWC to the nearest school having Grade 1, so that transition of children from AWC to schools is smooth. Initial step to be taken by the States and UTs is the rationalization of data of AWCs. These key data include the number of block and district-wise functional AWCs, identification of AWCs in their own buildings, in community spaces or rented buildings. Based on this data, AWCs co-located within the premises of Government schools with or without dedicated space and AWCs which can be co-located would get identified. All States and UTs are advised to map each and every AWC with the nearest school. Gati shakti portal can be made use of for this exercise. As per the available data of primary schools and AWCs, it is likely that more than one AWCs is mapped to a primary school.

3.3.2 The mapping process serves several critical purposes. It facilitates a seamless transition from AWCs to schools, particularly benefiting children in remote or underserved areas ensuring equitable access to formal education. This alignment enables timely admission and smooth integration of children graduating from AWCs into the appropriate grade levels in the mapped schools. Moreover, the mapping fosters improved coordination between AWCs and schools, promoting a collaborative approach to addressing the holistic educational and developmental needs of children. By establishing clear linkages, the process also institutionalizes joint ownership and shared responsibility between the MoWCD and the

DoSE&L, strengthening mechanisms for monitoring, accountability, and sustained commitment to ensuring no child is left behind.

3.4 Convergence between AWCs and Primary Schools

The purpose of co-locating AWCs in primary schools is to develop better convergence between the two institutions for smooth transition of children. For bringing about better convergence, the State WCD departments and Education departments should be in agreement in respect to the following:

i. Reconciling of data of children

- The data of children in the age group of 3-6 years with AWC and/or primary schools should be reconciled, in both, to know the exact target population in the said age group and avoid duplication.
- The School Education department and State DWCD should develop student registry for the age group of 3 to 6 years so that duplication of services can be avoided.

ii. Conducting Joint Activities

- In physically co-located AWCs, joint activities should be encouraged between teachers and AWWs/AWHs to foster collaboration and strengthen school readiness. These may include events such as Annual Day, Sports Day, ECCE Day, festivals, Bal Mela, tree plantation drives, Eco-club activities under Mission LiFE, Poshan Maah, Poshan Pakhwada, Parent-Teacher Meetings (PTMs), Village Health, Sanitation, and Nutrition Day (VHSND), parent workshops, family literacy programmes, health education sessions, and other school-home collaboration initiatives, particularly with the primary grades. To ensure meaningful convergence, it is essential that the Anganwadi Worker, Supervisor, Head of School (HoS) and Grade 1 teacher/Primary teacher/ pre-primary teacher participate jointly in such activities. In particular, during PTMs organized at the AWC, the presence of the Grade 1 teacher/primary teacher or the HoS should be encouraged.
- Regular visits by school teachers to mapped AWCs ideally once a month are to be encouraged to facilitate joint activities in collaboration with AWWs.
- The DWCD and SCERT/DIET should develop a unified activity calendar, a common annual calendar (including academic, non-academic activities) and standardized learning-teaching material for children aged 3-6 years, regardless of whether they are in AWCs or Balvatika to bring about better convergence and to ensure age-appropriate experiences for holistic development of children. Additionally, exchange of indigenous rhymes and stories can be promoted for integration into BaLA paintings to enhance contextual learning and visual engagement.
- Joint Guidelines should be issued by State DWCD and Education Department to AWCs and primary schools for organising common events and conducting joint activities in which parents of children in AWC and Grade 1 and 2 can take part.

This would develop better programmatic linkages and involvement of parents in the school events.

iii. Monthly Coordination Meetings

- Regular monthly meetings should be organized between teachers, AWWs of co-located AWCs, and all AWWs from mapped AWCs. These meetings should be held in the presence of the Principal or Head of School (HoS) and the Child Development Project Officer (CDPO) or designated Supervisor. These meetings will ensure a coordinated approach to education, sharing best practices, discussing challenges, and aligning strategies to facilitate smooth transitions and quality service delivery.

3.5 Creation of Child Friendly Learning Environment

Children learn best at the foundational stage when they are given opportunities for exploration, experimentation, sharing experiences, conversation through stories, songs, rhymes, art & craft, music and movement activities, indoor and outdoor play and opportunities for being with nature through field trips. Children also need to be safe, emotionally supported and guided through constant appreciation, encouragement and motivation helping them develop positive self-concept. This can be achieved by designing learning experiences by following age-appropriate pedagogy and curriculum. Therefore, it is important that continuum of learning from pre-school to Grade 2 is followed as per the recommendation of NEP 2020 and National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage (NCF-FS) 2022.

There should be no discrimination between children enrolled in co-located AWCs and schools. Children attending AWCs should have equal access to school facilities and resources. Adhering to these norms is vital to uphold every child's right to inclusive, equitable, and safe early childhood education.

3.6 Curriculum

Many States/UTs have developed their own State/UT specific, contextualised curricula for AWCs, either independently by DWCD or in collaboration with State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs). However, it is imperative that all State-level curricula be aligned with NCF-FS in terms of domains, curricular goals, and age-appropriate competencies to ensure uniformity and quality in ECCE across the country. The recently launched 'Aadharshila Curriculum' by MoWCD for children aged 3–6 years provides a structured, play-based approach aligned with NCF-FS. Similarly, based on NCF-FS, DoSE&L has formulated the Jaadui Pitara as Teaching Learning Material (TLM) which contains 53 items for the foundational stage like toys, games, puzzles, puppets, posters, flashcards, story cards, play book set for students, handbooks for teachers known as "Unmukh", and user manual and Activity book "Anand" which contains integrated worksheets to be used by children. All States/UTs are encouraged to adopt, adapt, or integrate these two TLMs into their existing frameworks to enhance foundational learning outcomes in AWCs. The digital version of Jaadui

Pitara is e-Jaadui Pitara (e-JP), which integrates technology with play based pedagogy and offers 1,000+ stories in 14 Indian languages through 3 unique bots- Katha Sakhi (storyteller), Teacher Tara (educator's guide) and Parent Tara (parental support). It is readily available for use by teachers/AWWs on iOS & Android and should be used fully.

3.7 Training /Capacity Development of Anganwadi workers and teachers

Guidelines regarding Training /Capacity Development of AWWs and teachers will be issued separately to support effective and uniform rollout by States and UTs.

3.8 Engagement of Community and Parents

Parents and community play an important role in ensuring that children attend school regularly and their home environment provides enough opportunities for children to progress in their learning through different activities. The following suggested activities could be organised either jointly where there is physical co-location or independently (in cases of mapping) in all schools and AWCs for the parents of children in the Foundational Stage:

- Teachers and AWWs/AWHs should engage with the community and parents during celebration of Annual Day, Sports Day, ECCE Day, festivals, PTM Day, VHSND, etc.
- Parents, grandparents, community members should be invited for conducting storytelling, art craft and talk about their professions.
- Organising Praveshotsav/ School Readiness/ FLN Mela where parents of children in AWCs, Balvatika and Grades 1 and 2 are made to participate in the activities so that they realise the importance of play and activity-based learning.
- Regular activities can be taken up by the community like creating children's libraries, display of children's work, chaupal reading demonstrations etc.
- Community Resource Groups (CRGs) to be constituted with the help of Block Resource Centre/ Cluster Resource Centre (BRC/CRC) in each school/cluster by involving storytellers, singers, dancers, musicians, riddle makers, toymakers, comedians, etc.
- Parents can be guided by forming WhatsApp groups wherein short videos, activities to be done with children at home can be shared. Information about the activities in the school, and child's progress can be shared with the parents. Parents can also be informed about the kind of assistance the child needs at home for learning.
- Parents should be informed about the expected learning outcomes, portfolios, home assignments and their role in supporting the child at home.

IV. Role of various Stakeholders in co-location of AWCs with the primary schools

There are various stakeholders mainly in the form of ECCE functionaries at various levels (National, State, District, Blocks/ Clusters, Schools and Community) belonging to the Education Department and State DWCD. Following are the roles and responsibilities of these stakeholders for co-location of AWCs with the primary school for ensuring pre-school education for all children and their smooth transitions to primary education: -

4.1 Joint steps to be taken by State DWCD and State Education Department

- Respective departments may instruct AWWs and teachers to work in collaboration and coordination with each other for smooth transition of children.
- Monitor the roles and responsibilities of Block, Cluster, Village & School functionaries, with respect to the co-location of AWCs and their functioning.
- Register all co-located or mapped or twinned AWCs on UDISE+.
- Ensure budgetary allocation under Samagra Shiksha for strengthening pre-school education programme in co-located AWCs, as per norms, which could include learning materials for children, infrastructure upgradation, joint activities between school and AWC; parental engagement and awareness building.
- Ensure that the AWWs will remain in charge of activities including pre-school education at the AWC level, while teachers will continue to remain in-charge of the school.
- There will be no change in the existing reporting mechanism of AWCs which shall remain the same for co-located AWCs, like AWWs reporting to the Supervisor, who will report to the CDPO and so on.
- MoWCD will register children in the age group of 3-6 years in the AWC which is regularly updated on the Poshan Tracker. The same should be shared with DoSE&L also so that duplication of services can be avoided.

4.2 District Education Officer (DEO) and District Programme Officer (DPO)

- DEO and DPO should work together for convergence at the local level. They may organise joint meetings of the principals/headmaster and AWWs/supervisors to facilitate better coordination among the local stakeholders and brief them regarding their respective roles.
- DEO and DPO should monitor the roles and responsibilities of BRCs/ CRCs.

4.3 Block Resource Coordinator (BRC), Cluster Academic Coordinator (CAC), Child Development Project Officers (CDPOs), Supervisors and Block Coordinators

- BRC/CAC/CDPO can monitor progress on ground and collect updates during the monthly meetings.

- Block/ Cluster head/coordinator must map resources of blocks/ clusters to meet the demands of AWCs under the blocks/ clusters.
- Infrastructure of SCERTs, DIETs, BRCs and CRCs should be used for training of pre-school teachers and AWWs.
- Awareness among parents should be created on the importance of quality early childhood education and their role in the education and development of their children.
- At block level, BRC, CACs from the education department and CDPOs, supervisors from MoWCD can create a joint social media group. This group can facilitate important communications including government directives/advisories issued for convergence at the ground level.
- CDPOs/Supervisors/Block Coordinators should coordinate with school Head Teachers to ensure 100% transition of children from AWCs to Grade 1. They should examine the reasons for drop-outs and resolve issues at the ground level.
- CDPOs and Supervisors should conduct periodic monitoring visits, including surprise spot-checks, to assess the quality of pre-school education and the availability of pre-school education (PSE) materials in the AWCs to ensure that quality standards are met and necessary course corrections are done.
- BRC/CAC should ensure that schools provide support to AWCs in sharing their infrastructural facilities, resources and pedagogical practices.
- Provisions should be made for the quarterly meetings of DEOs and CDPOs at the district level for review of implementation. BRCs and CACs should coordinate for matters related to implementation at the local level and should share the issues and challenges to be resolved from the district level.

4.4 Involvement of Parents and Community

Parents and community have to be involved as equal partners in their child's education. The AWWs and primary school teachers and HoS must ensure the active involvement of parents and community.

- Parents must participate in all parenting workshops, family literacy programs, health education sessions, and school-home collaboration initiatives as and when organised.
- Parents and families must actively involve themselves in ECCE for children to adjust better, adapt smoothly and comfortably.
- Participation of parents in PTMs should be ensured to discuss child's progress and ensure continuity in learning when moving to primary school.
- Involve panchayat and local communities in planning, monitoring and decision-making processes of ECCE programs.
- Set up feedback mechanisms involving AWWs, school teachers, parents and local authorities to continuously improve the co-location model.

4.5 Effective Co-location through Synergy and Convergence

4.5.1 Effective co-location of AWCs with schools is a pivotal strategy for delivering integrated and comprehensive early childhood education, ensuring a smooth transition for children into formal schooling. This requires robust convergence between the DoSE&L and MoWCD through joint planning, shared training, curriculum alignment, and integrated monitoring. These roles should be tailored to the specific contexts of each State and UT, reflecting local policies and community needs.

4.5.2 To achieve these objectives, States/UTs are expected to implement or adhere to the guidelines for co-location of AWCs and ensure effective collaboration with relevant departments to optimize resource utilization, improve service delivery, and strengthen convergence. By fostering such collaboration, stakeholders work toward the common goal of advancing social and human capital development. Institutionalizing this convergence through formal mechanisms will enhance school readiness, improve learning outcomes, optimize resource utilization, and prevent duplication of efforts.

4.5.3 Timely implementation and cooperation in the co-location of AWCs within schools will significantly strengthen ECCE and FLN services, aligning with the vision of NEP 2020 to lay a strong foundation for young and healthy learners who will lead the way to Viksit Bharat 2047.

