

Start Right Now

Transformative Solutions for Early Learning at Scale

The research is clear: early investment in young children produces dramatic, long-term results. Children who experience high-quality early childhood experiences are more likely to succeed in school, earn higher incomes, enjoy better health, and contribute positively to their communities. Families also benefit: parents are better able to work, household stability improves, and intergenerational outcomes are strengthened.

Across Africa, growing child populations and increasing policy attention to early childhood create a powerful opportunity to expand access to quality early learning. Many countries are making progress, yet there is still more to do to ensure all children benefit from consistent, high-quality early learning experiences. In many contexts, there is an opportunity to strengthen affordability, reach, and quality, particularly in rural and underserved communities, so that every child is supported to thrive.



Start Right Now: A Pre-School in a Box

Start Right Now is a scalable early childhood education model that addresses these challenges through an **integrated, community-based approach**, linking education, workforce development, and family engagement. The program is grounded in **evidence-based principles**, reflecting what research shows young children need to thrive: active engagement, play, language-rich environments, responsive relationships and opportunities to explore, question, and make meaning of their world. Start Right Now supports children from age three through primary school entry, building strong foundations for learning, wellbeing, and lifelong success.



How Children Learn Matters as Much as *What* They Learn

- **Learner-centered and inclusive:** Children learn at their own pace in safe, nurturing environments.
- **Play-based and joyful:** Learning is active, engaging, and rooted in play, curiosity, and exploration.
- **Culturally responsive:** Reflecting local languages, traditions and lived experiences.
- **Lifelong learning skills:** Literacy, numeracy, science, problem-solving, collaboration, and self-regulation.
- **Supportive of strong social-emotional foundations:** Intentional activities help children build confidence, empathy, and resilience, which are critical for school readiness and wellbeing.
- **Environmental learning** is woven through the program, encouraging children to ask questions, observe their surroundings, and develop age-appropriate awareness of the natural world and climate resilience.

Community-Based

Start Right Now creates pathways to livelihoods while strengthening local early childhood systems. Facilitators receive training and ongoing support in:

- Core early childhood education principles and playful practices.
- Inclusive instruction that promotes participation for all children.
- Positive classroom and learning environment management.
- Effective use of low-cost and no-cost materials commonly found in homes and communities.
- Communication, leadership, and management.



Scalable, Sustainable Technology-Enabled Learning

Start Right Now builds on EDC's long history of **Interactive Audio Instruction** by combining structured audio guidance with digital content to deliver consistent, high-quality learning at low cost. Technology supports facilitators while keeping learning social, interactive, and centered on children's experiences.



EDC'S INTERACTIVE AUDIO
INSTRUCTION AROUND THE WORLD

EDC's early learning and IAI programs have reached over 100 million learners and hundreds of thousands of educators across 30 countries, with many initiatives sustained through government and community.

Paired with locally relevant physical materials and print resources, the approach strengthens local content ecosystems and positions existing education actors as key partners in delivering quality early learning. Across diverse contexts, Start Right Now and related EDC programs have demonstrated strong results, including higher learning gains, improved school readiness, and reduced equity gaps related to gender, language, location, and socioeconomic status.

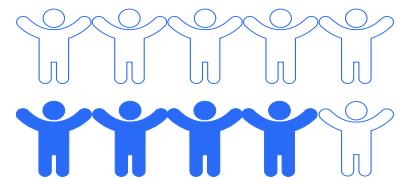


Designed for Scale Within Real Systems

Start Right Now is designed to work within existing early childhood systems or to support expansion where services are still growing. It integrates into government, NGO, community, and private delivery models, complementing existing curricula and strengthening quality and consistency without significant additional cost.

Its affordable, evidence-based, and locally relevant design makes it a powerful resource for expanding quality early learning across diverse contexts, particularly in countries working to strengthen access, quality, and system capacity at scale.

By 2050, a significant share of the world's children will be born in Africa. This underscores the global importance of investing in strong early childhood systems across the region.



Africa will account for over 40% of school-age children in low- and middle-income countries by 2050.

ABOUT EDC

EDC works with partners worldwide to advance every person's journey to learn, work, and be well. Since 1958, we have been a catalyst for community-led initiatives that promote sustainable change and advance solutions to the world's most pressing challenges.