

SPECIFIC JOB DESCRIPTION

I. Post Information	
POST NUMBER/ CASE NUMBER: 138554 POST/CASE NUMBER OF SUPERVISOR: 136502 Assistant Representative for Equitable and Resilient Services for Primary Health Care, P4 REASON FOR CLASSIFICATION: New post REGION/DIVISION: Multi-Country Office (MCO) for the Caribbean, LACR COUNTRY: Belize DUTY STATION: Belize City OFFICE: MCO for the Caribbean SECTION: Equity Access to quality Health & Education Services outcome UNIT: Programme	CATEGORY: National Officer PROPOSED LEVEL: Level 3 JOB TITLE: Education Specialist (Early Learning) Functional Code: EDU ICSC CCOG Code: 1F

II. Strategic Office Context and Purpose for the job
The fundamental mission of UNICEF is to promote the rights of every child, everywhere, in everything the organization does — in programs, in advocacy and in operations. The equity strategy, emphasizing the most disadvantaged and excluded children and families, translates this commitment to children's rights into action. For UNICEF, equity means that all children have an opportunity to survive, develop and reach their full potential, without discrimination, bias or favoritism. To the degree that any child has an unequal chance in life — in its social, political, economic, civic and cultural dimensions — her or his rights are violated. There is growing evidence that investing in the health, education and protection of a society's most disadvantaged citizens — addressing inequity — not only will give all children the opportunity to fulfill their potential but also will lead to sustained growth and stability of countries. This is why the focus on equity is so vital. It accelerates progress towards realizing the human rights of all children, which is the universal mandate of UNICEF, as outlined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, while also supporting the equitable development of nations. <u>Strategic office context:</u> As part of UNICEF's Future Focus Initiative (FFI), a corporate-wide transformation launched in 2025 to ensure UNICEF remains fit for purpose in an era of declining Official Development Assistance and increasing complexity, the offices in Belize, Jamaica, Guyana & Suriname, and the Eastern Caribbean Area (ECA) are consolidating into a new Caribbean Multi-Country Office, a regional platform combining policy influence, technical depth, and strategic partnerships across 12 countries, designed for systems-level impact and results at scale. The Caribbean MCO operates as one integrated office across all 12 countries: one Multi-Country Programme Document, one shared basket of resources, and one management structure. This means every post in the MCO, regardless of duty station, holds a 12-country mandate and contributes to

shared regional results rather than to a single-country portfolio. The Multi-Country Programme of Cooperation (2027–2031), aligned with the UN Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework (UNMSDCF) 2027–2031, establishes three shared programmatic outcomes for the twelve English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean countries: equitable access to primary health care, learning and skills; protection of children from all forms of violence; and child poverty reduction and resilience strengthening.

The Caribbean MCO's management strategy is governed by four principles that together translate the new business model into concrete ways of working:

- **Impact-driven:** technical expertise is organized in shared multi-country working groups rather than replicated in each country, with enabling functions aligned around UNICEF's strongest comparative advantages.
- **Effective and agile:** parallel country ecosystems are replaced by harmonized systems and flexible cross-country staffing, keeping management lean and decisions close to implementation.
- **Grounded:** regional scale is balanced with national depth through country-specific workplans, Heads of Office in each duty station, and matrix management that anchors authority and accountability at country level.
- **People-centred:** structural and managerial choices are guided by staff wellbeing, transparency and inclusion, with clear role definitions, meaningful consultation, and continuous investment in learning and development.

The operational expression of this model is the **working group model**. Rather than replicating similar roles across four separate country offices, technical and operational expertise is organized into 16 thematic and functional working groups, each distributed across different duty stations and each serving the full 12-country MCO, not just its host location. Roles are designed around three organizing principles: **shared regional service**, meaning every specialist contributes to the wider MCO; **complementary expertise**, meaning team capabilities reinforce each other rather than repeating the same profile in multiple places; and **agile presence**, meaning the workforce can be rapidly deployed across countries through travel, surge support or remote modalities in line with evolving needs and priorities. This working group model is the foundation of a fundamentally new way of working for UNICEF in the Caribbean: depth replaces duplication, and shared capacity replaces fragmented country-by-country coverage.

The Education Specialist (Early Learning) is part of the *Equitable and resilient services for primary health care, learning and skills* working group. This group leads the implementation of the CPD outcome on equitable and resilient services that boost children's nutrition, mental health, learning and skills, by strengthening health and education systems to deliver integrated PHC, nutrition, MHPSS and quality basic and secondary education for all children and adolescents. Its function is to translate this priority into integrated policy packages, service delivery models and scalable solutions across the subregion, ensuring that equity, inclusion and climate-resilience are embedded in the expansion of health and education services and that socio-emotional learning and future-ready skills are systematically advanced in all 12 countries.

The team is led by the Assistant Representative for Equitable and Resilient Services for Primary Health, Learning and Skills (Belize) and includes seven NOC specialists. The specialist profiles have been defined directly against the CPD outputs under this outcome, so that each post is anchored in a specific strand of work (early learning, foundational learning, policy and public finance, PHC/MHPSS, PHC/nutrition and Early Childhood Development), while together they form a complementary skills mix that covers the full range of expertise required to achieve the intended results. The working group is comprised of the following: Education Specialist (Early Learning) in Belize, Education Specialist (ECD) in Suriname, Education Specialist (Foundational Learning & Skills) in Guyana, Education Specialist (Policy & Budget) in Barbados, Health Specialist (Primary Health Care

& Mental Health) in Suriname, Health Specialist (Policy & Budget) in Jamaica, and Health Specialist (Primary Health Care & Nutrition) in Barbados.

Purpose for the job:

The Education Specialist (Early Learning), reports to the Assistant Representative for Equitable and Resilient Services for Primary Health, Learning and Skills, P4., located in Belize, in close day-to day coordination with the in-country Lead in Belize. The Incumbent contributes to the achievement of education results across the Caribbean Multi-Country Programme (MCP) and supports collective action, knowledge exchange, innovation, and cross-country collaboration to advance shared programme priorities and outcomes throughout the Multi-Country Office.

The Education Specialist (Early Learning) provides specialised technical expertise in early childhood education, school readiness, and the foundations of quality learning for young children across the Caribbean MCO. The role contributes substantive depth in early learning systems, pre-primary curriculum, and teacher development, supporting UNICEF's contribution to improved educational outcomes for the youngest and most vulnerable children across the platform.

Based in Belize, the position leverages the context and early learning challenges to strengthen UNICEF's capacity to address critical issues affecting children, with a strong focus on pre-primary enrolment and school readiness among indigenous and rural children. The Education Specialist (Early Learning) will work in close coordination with the Education Specialist (Policy and Budget) in Barbados, the Education Specialist (ECD) in Suriname, and the Education Specialist (foundational Learning and Skills) in Guyana.

III. Key functions, accountabilities and related duties/tasks:

Summary of key functions/accountabilities:

1. Technical Leadership on Early Learning
2. Support to Early Learning Programme Development and Planning
3. Programme management, monitoring and delivery of results
4. Technical and operational support to programme implementation
5. Networking and partnership building
6. Innovation, knowledge management and capacity building

1. Technical Leadership on Early Learning

- Provide technical guidance on:
 - a) Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), with a focus on equitable access, quality, school readiness and holistic early learning and development
 - b) Early learning and teaching materials, including age-appropriate, inclusive, culturally and linguistically relevant materials and resources that support learning through play.
 - c) Assessment and use of early learning and development data, including data on pre-primary enrolment, attendance, participation, school readiness and early learning outcomes
- Promote evidence-based and scalable interventions that improve equitable access, participation, school readiness and learning outcomes, particularly for children furthest behind.

- Support early learning systems strengthening, including policies, planning, financing, standards, curricula, workforce development, quality assurance and monitoring systems necessary to expand equitable access and improve the quality of pre-primary education.
- Support governments to strengthen pre-primary education policies, standards and regulatory frameworks
- Support coordination between pre-primary education services and other child-focused sectors to strengthen school readiness and successful transitions into primary education.
- Promote integration of school readiness into education sector strategies
- Participate in the strategic positioning of UNICEF as the key knowledge and strategic partner for the Government and stakeholders in the area of Early Learning

2. Support to Early Learning Programme Development and Planning

- Contribute to the planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting of MCP-wide education priorities and results, ensuring alignment of country-level interventions with broader regional objectives and agreed programme outcomes.
- Support the preparation, design and updating of the situation analysis and assessments on early learning programmes to ensure that current and comprehensive data on education issues is available to guide UNICEF's strategic policy, advocacy, intervention and development efforts on education programmes within the Caribbean Multi-Country Office.
- Keep abreast of national, regional and international development priorities to identify opportunities where early learning can enhance inter-sector partnership, integration and linkages.
- Participate in strategic MCO programme discussion to determine areas for early learning integration/intervention. Contribute to the formulation, design and preparation of the Caribbean Multi-Country Programme to ensure integration of early learning in a holistic manner across programme areas and to ensure alignment with UNICEF's Strategic Plans and Country Programme and coherence/integration with the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), regional strategies and national priorities, plans and competencies.
- Contribute to defining the annual work plan in the area of early learning education, including proposing priorities/targets and performance measurement. Monitor work progress in line with defined schedules and performances standards.
- Establish specific goals, objectives and strategies and implementation plans for the early learning programmes/projects using results-based planning terminology and methodology (RBM). Prepare required early learning documentation for programme review and approval.
- Work closely and collaboratively with colleagues and partners to discuss strategies and methodologies and to determine national priorities/competencies to ensure the achievement of concrete and sustainable results in early learning
- Provide technical and operational support throughout all stages of programming processes and ensure integration, coherence and harmonization of programmes/projects with other UNICEF sectors and achievement of results as planned and allocated.

3. Programme management, monitoring and delivery of results

- Plan and collaborate with internal and external partners to establish monitoring benchmarks, performance indicators and other UNICEF/UN system indicators to assess/strengthen performance accountability, coherence and delivery of concrete and sustainable results on early childhood education programmes.

- Participate in monitoring and evaluation exercises, programme reviews and annual reviews with government and other counterparts to assess progress and to determine required action/interventions to achieve results.
- Prepare and assess monitoring and evaluation reports to identify gaps, strengths/weaknesses in programme management with specific emphasis on early childhood education, identify lessons learned and use knowledge gained for development planning and timely intervention to achieve goals.
- Actively monitor early childhood learning programmes/projects through field visits, surveys and/or exchange of information with partners/stakeholders to assess progress, identify bottlenecks and potential problems and take timely decisions to resolve issues and/or refer to relevant officials for timely resolution.
- Monitor and verify the optimum/appropriate use of early learning programme resources (financial, administrative and other assets) confirming compliance with organizational rules, regulations/procedures and donor commitments, standards of accountability and integrity and ensuring timely reporting and liquidation of resources.
- Prepare regular and mandated programme reports for management, donors and partners to keep them informed of programme progress.
- Apply robust monitoring and evaluation systems for the health and learning portfolio, ensuring clear theories of change, indicators and periodic reviews that capture changes at child, household, community, service-delivery and system levels and inform course corrections and learning.

4. Technical and operational support to programme implementation

- Provide technical guidance and operational support to government counterparts, NGO partners, UN system partners and country office partners/donors on interpretation, application and understanding of policies, strategies, processes and best practices and approaches on early learning to support programme management, implementation and delivery of results.
- Participate in relevant early childhood education and learning meetings including programme development and contingency planning to provide technical and operational information, advice and support
- Draft early childhood education and learning through policy papers, briefs and other strategic programme materials for management use, information and/or consideration.
- Support surge requirements and provide technical assistance across programme countries during emergencies, transitions or priority corporate initiatives, as requested by the Multi-Country Office.

5. Networking and partnership building

- Support engagement with regional institutions and strategic partners, as appropriate, to advance harmonized policy approaches and collective action on shared education priorities.
- Build and sustain effective close working partnerships with relevant government counterparts, donors, private sector, national stakeholders and global partners/allies/academia through active networking, advocacy and effective communication to build capacity, exchange knowledge/expertise and to reinforce cooperation to achieve sustainable and broad results on early learning programmes.
- Prepare communication and information materials for early learning programme advocacy to promote awareness, establish partnership/alliances and promote increased investments in early childhood education and learning programmes and projects.
- Under the guidance of the Assistant Representative for Equitable and Resilient Services for Primary Health, Learning and Skills, contribute to the strengthening of partnerships with ministries of Education, Health and Social Protection, as well as with civil society organizations, academia and development partners, to advance universal and

equitable access to essential health and nutrition services, inclusive and safe schools, and multisectoral responses that address developmental, learning and well-being gaps.

- Participate and/or represent UNICEF in appropriate inter-agency (UNCT) discussions and planning on early childhood education and learning related issues to collaborate with inter-agency partners/colleagues on UNDAF planning and preparation of programmes/projects ensuring organizational position's, interests and priorities on early learning are fully considered and integrated in the UNSDCF process in development planning and agenda setting including emergency preparedness.
- Participate in, as assigned, lead regional communities of practice, technical working groups and cross-country initiatives that promote collaboration, peer learning and coordinated implementation across programme countries.

6. Innovation, knowledge management and capacity building

- Apply and introduce innovative approaches and good practices to build the capacity of partners and stakeholders and to support the implementation and delivery of concrete and sustainable programme results with regards to early childhood education and learning.
- Keep abreast, research, benchmark and implement best practices on early education learning. Assess, institutionalize and share best practices and knowledge learned.
- Track research developments in the area of early childhood education and learning, collate and analyze data (lessons learned, best practices, reviews and evaluations) so as to inform the revision of results frameworks, capacity building and reporting.
- Contribute to the development and implementation of policies and procedures to ensure optimum efficiency and efficacy of sustainable programmes and projects.
- Organize and implement capacity building initiatives to enhance the competencies of clients/stakeholders to promote sustainable results on early childhood education and learning.
- Identify, document and promote innovative approaches, lessons learned and promising practices, facilitating their adaptation and replication across programme countries to strengthen collective education results.
- Contribute to the generation of regional public goods, technical guidance, knowledge products and evidence that support education programming across the Caribbean Multi-Country Office.

IV. Impact of Results

The Education Specialist (Early Learning) has a significant impact on Caribbean Multi-Country Office's ability to strengthen equitable, inclusive and quality early learning systems across the 12 English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean countries. Through the high-quality technical leadership, policy support, workforce development, curriculum improvement, learning assessment and partnership building, this position will support governments to expand access to quality pre-primary education and improve school readiness and early learning outcomes for all children, particularly those most vulnerable. The position directly contributes to MCPD Output 1.3 by strengthening national capacities to deliver quality, inclusive and resilient education systems that improve early learning and prepare children for successful progression through the education system.

The ultimate impact this position contributes to is:

Children and adolescents thriving in the 12 English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean countries with: healthy bodies and minds (being developmentally on track, well-nourished, with good mental health and well-being); essential learning, knowledge and skills; protection from all forms of violence;

equitable access to opportunities and social protection; and enhanced capacity to manage shocks, including those associated with the changing climate.

By 2031: Children and adolescents have more equitable access to high-quality, inclusive and resilient primary health care and education systems, enabling them to be both physically and mentally healthy, learning and acquiring the skills they need for the future.

VI. Technical Requirements

Technical Knowledge and Skills required:

- Substantive knowledge of how to support the development of effective early learning programmes.
- Strong **knowledge of evidence-based approaches to improving early childhood education and learning.**
- **Understanding of early childhood learning systems strengthening** and demonstrated ability to translate evidence into policies, strategies and scalable government-led interventions. **Understanding of the overall global education context**, including issues such as protection, health, poverty, conflict and the impact of these factors on education and vice-versa; and inter-sectoral approaches to address such issues in collaboration with other sectors
- **Knowledge of global trends in Education and international engagement strategies**, including the application of the equity lens and human rights perspectives to programming with a focus on Early Childhood Education and Learning
- **Ability to support policy dialogue:** translation of analytical findings and evidence into development programme and policy discussions around early childhood education and learning, including government, development partners, CSOs and academia in relevant areas.
- A good understanding of gender and inequity issues in general in relation to early learning education
- Programme management in education, including programme design, costing, monitoring and evaluation and reporting with specific experience with regards to Early Childhood Education and Learning
- Strong **analytical and technical writing skills**, including preparation of policy briefs, technical guidance, programme documents and evidence-based recommendations.
- Strong **coordination and communication skills**, with the ability to work effectively across multiple reporting relationships and geographic contexts.

VI. UNICEF values and competency Required (based on the updated Framework)

i) Core Values

- Care
- Respect
- Integrity
- Trust
- Accountability
- Sustainability

iii) Core Competencies for Staff without Supervisory Responsibilities

- Demonstrates Self Awareness and Ethical Awareness (1)
- Works Collaboratively with Others (1)
- Builds and Maintains Partnerships (1)
- Innovates and Embraces Change (1)
- Thinks and Acts Strategically (1)
- Drives to Achieve Impactful Results (1)
- Manages Ambiguity and Complexity (1)

VII. Recruitment Qualifications	
Education:	An advanced university degree in one of the following fields is required: education, economics, social sciences, public administration, public health, human development, child development, or another relevant technical field.
Experience:	A minimum of five years of professional experience in programme planning, management, and/or research in Early Childhood Education, Early Learning, Pre-primary Educations required. Desirables: • Previous experience in design, implementation, monitoring and/or evaluation of Early Learning programmes • Experience supporting the integration of early learning within sectoral and multi-sectoral policies, programmes, and systems, including collaboration across education, health, nutrition, social protection, and child protection sectors is highly desirable • Experience improving school readiness and early learning outcomes • Experience in a similar function across geographically dispersed duty stations is considered an asset. • Relevant experience in a UN system agency or international organization is considered an asset.
Language Requirements:	Fluency in English is required. Knowledge of another official UN language (Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian or Spanish) or a local language is an asset.

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VIII. Child Safeguarding	
Is this role a representative, deputy representative, chief of field office, the most senior child protection role in the office, child safeguarding focal point, or investigator (OIAI)?:	No
Is this post a direct contact role in which incumbent will be in contact with children either face-to-face, or by remote communication, but the communication will not be moderated and relayed by another person?:	No
Is this post a child data role in which incumbent will be manipulating or transmitting personal-identifiable information on children such as names, national id, location data, or photos?:	No
The selected candidate for this position will be required to engage with vulnerable children:	No