

Nigeria General Household Survey-Panel (Wave 5) 2023/2024

*Tracking Nigerian Households
to Understand Their Resilience Over Time*

Data Snapshot Series No. 1: Early Childhood Development in Nigeria



The General Household Survey – Panel (GHS-Panel) is Nigeria’s only nationally representative panel survey, allowing researchers to track the same households over time. Thus far, five waves of the GHS-Panel have been conducted: in 2010/11 (Wave 1), 2012/13 (Wave 2), 2015/16 (Wave 3), 2018/19 (Wave 4), and 2023/24 (Wave 5). The

GHS-Panel is the result of a partnership that the National Bureau of Statistics has established with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the World Bank. The ability to follow the same households over time makes the GHS-Panel a powerful tool for understanding income-generating activities and socio-economic outcomes in Nigeria.

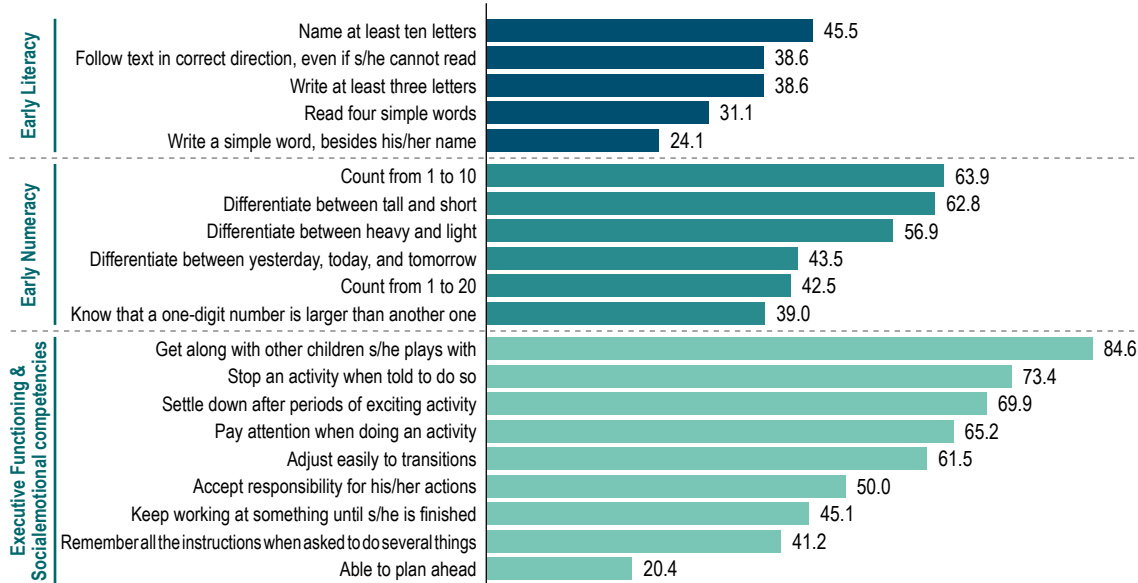
GHS-Panel Wave 5 included a survey module on Early Childhood Development (ECD) for children four to six years of age. It captured the Anchor Items for Measurement of ECD (AIM-ECD): 20 core development items across three key domains (early literacy, early numeracy, and executive functioning/social-emotional competencies)¹. The early years of a child's life are a critical time for rapid brain development, and the quality of children's home environment and interactions with caregivers significantly influence their development.

Key Results

Survey findings on Early Childhood Development indicate challenges across all domains, especially early literacy. Figure 1 illustrates performance on each item of the AIM-ECD, organized by domain. The data show that only 24.1 percent of Nigerian children ages four to six can write a simple word besides their name.

FIGURE 1 • Early Childhood Development Outcomes

(Share of children 4-6 years old who can...)



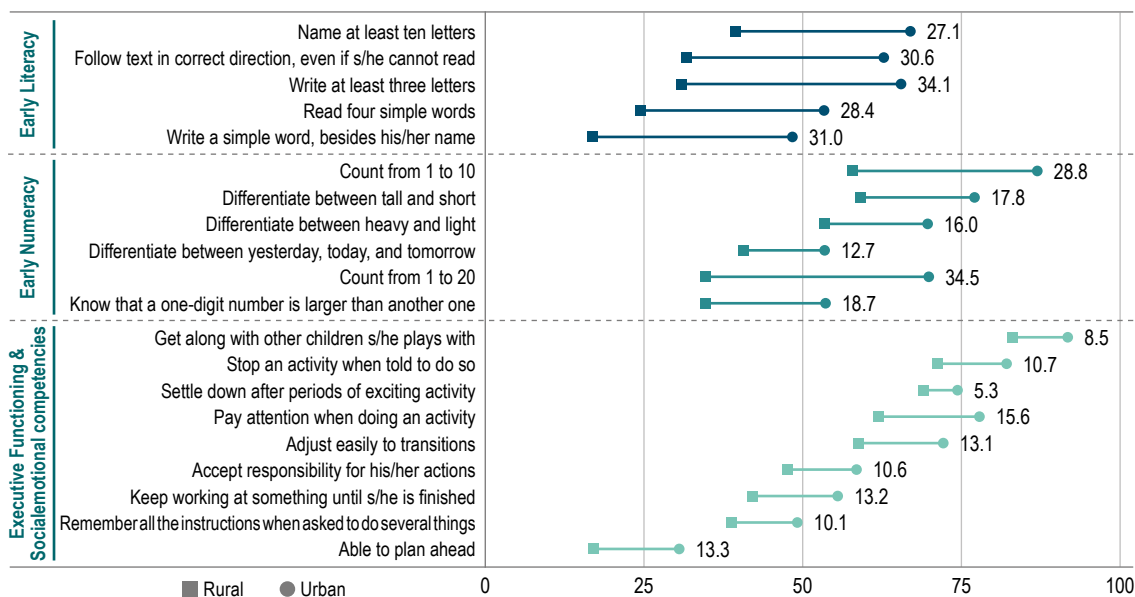
¹ World Bank (2022). Anchor Items for Measurement of Early Childhood Development (AIM-ECD). Brief, July 2022. World Bank, Washington DC. <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/a287b45096de1ac7b02fda8783491294-0200022022/related/A-1-AIM-ECD-Brief.pdf>

A higher proportion of children successfully perform tasks in the early numeracy domain than in early literacy. Between 39 and 64 percent of children are reported to be able to perform early numeracy tasks, though challenges remain. For example, while 63.9 percent of children can count from 1 to 10, only 42.5 percent can count from 1 to 20.

The executive functioning and social-emotional domain show significant variation in children's abilities, highlighting disparities in their developmental progress. Children's caregivers report that 84.6 percent of 4- to 6-year-olds can get along with other children when playing. However, this domain also presents challenges, as only 20 percent of children were able to plan ahead, the lowest performance on any task across all ECD domains.

FIGURE 2 • Differences Between the Urban and Rural Outcomes²

(Share of children 4-6 years old who can...)



² Note: Numbers on right indicate percentage point differences in successful performance for urban vs. rural children.

Differences between urban and rural areas are significant. Urban areas significantly outperform rural areas on all items (Figure 2). The largest differences are in early literacy, where the share of children in urban areas who can complete tasks is 27 to 34 percentage points higher than for rural counterparts. The item with the largest gap in this domain is the ability to write at least three letters. Urban children surpass rural children by

34 percentage points on this task. The early numeracy domain shows greater variability, with urban-rural gaps ranging from 13 to 35 percentage points. The widest gap is in the ability to count from 1 to 20, where the share of children who can complete this task in urban areas is 35 percentage points higher than in rural areas. Sectoral differences in executive functioning and social-emotional competencies are smaller, ranging between 5 and 16 percentage points.

Takeaways for Policy

- Measuring ECD can help policy makers identify key child-development domains for support.
- Nigerian children excel in executive functioning and social-emotional competencies; suboptimal results in early literacy call for intervention.
- Policy design and investment can target ECD shortfalls in rural areas, expanding opportunities for all Nigerians.

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