



## Early Journey of Life NEWSLETTER

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**STRONG COMMITMENT FROM THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND LOCAL HEALTH AUTHORITIES MARKS *THE FIRST STEP* TOWARD THE SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION OF *EJOL EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT INNOVATION* INTO PROVINCE-WIDE IMMUNIZATION ACTIVITIES**

Following the successful launch workshop chaired by the Ministry of Health (Administration of Maternal and Child Health-AMCA), Research and Training Centre for Community Development - RTCCD, and Monash University, the Departments of Health in five provinces established management teams to initiate the implementation of the 'Enabling Mountainous and Rural Children from Five Provinces in Vietnam to Grow and Thrive' (EM-THRIVE) program.

### QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS

#### Launching Workshop Held

The EM-THRIVE workshop successfully convened nearly 100 participants from international, national, and provincial agencies.

#### 6 MOU Signed

The Ministry of Health (AMCA) and five provincial Departments of Health officially signed Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) to formalize their collaboration.

#### Training of Trainers was completed in three provinces

Quang Ninh, Binh Thuan (now Lam Dong), and Can Tho City - with 65 provincial trainers participating in intensive three-day courses.



# EM-THRIVE ENGAGEMENT AND OUTPUTS

An **interactive toolkit** was designed and produced to promote caregiver-child engagement through play.



**2** Silicone dolls



**2** Boxes of puzzles



**5** Sets of sensory books



**3** Fine motor skill development kits



**2** Boxes of wooden toys/blocks



**3** Sound-making kits



**8** illustrated storybooks



A healthcare worker handbook, and 25 instructional videos



## Early Success of Integration in Quang Ninh

In September 2025, provincial trainers conducted two three-day training courses for 40 commune health workers (CHWs) from 20 communes, who then successfully delivered parenting education sessions in 11 communes, integrated into routine Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) days. More updates are expected in Q4/2025 in Quang Ninh and other provinces.

## Need Assessment of Ethnic Minority (EM) Groups Completed

Home-stays and consultations in Ha Giang (Hmong, Dao, Nung) in 8-13 August and Soc Trang (Khmer) in 6–9 September helped restructure the parenting education agenda, forming the basis for adapting 25 educational videos.



## Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) established

EM-THRIVE adopted a streamlined MEL approach using a non-paper system. Supervision, monthly reporting and behaviour change survey forms were digitized through KoboToolbox to facilitate efficient data collection. Key questions were drawn from the WHO Nurturing Care Framework's indicator guidelines and UNICEF's MICS survey to ensure alignment with global standards. Caregiver participation in in-person parenting education sessions is tracked via the national immunization platform. These efforts aim to reduce the reporting burden on health workers while ensuring compatibility with international early childhood development indicators.

# 390

Interactive toolkits were distributed to health facilities across three provinces: Quang Ninh, Lam Dong, and Can Tho City.

# 288

Children in Quang Ninh province had caregivers who participated in in-person parenting education sessions.

# 24

Media features — including newspaper articles, television broadcasts, and blog posts — helped raise public awareness and visibility of the initiative.



## DIGITAL REACH



### Youtube

- The program's YouTube channel averaged **7,300 viewers** and **600 hours of watching per month**.
- The YouTube channel gained **470 new subscribers**.
- Audiences were **women (58%)**; 51% viewers aged 25–34.

### E-courses

- **6,950 new subscribers**.
- **68.6% of health workers** and **67% of caregivers** completed at least one e-course.
- **94.7% of participants** rated the e-courses as useful or very useful.

# INSIGHTS FROM THE FIELD

## STRENGTHENING COMMITMENT

### Leadership and Provincial Health Officials

#### Dr. Nguyen Hong Uyen

Deputy Director of Hai Ha District Health Center, Quang Ninh

"Parenting guidance is the **responsibility of all staff** at the Commune Health Station, not just the two health workers who attended the training. The District Medical Center is committed to better coordination and preparation for October's implementation."



#### Dr. Van Thuy Cam

Can Tho Obstetrics and Gynecology Hospital

"The training content is truly humane, and I feel fortunate to be part of this program. It is **a low-cost but high-impact investment** that brings great benefits and helps improve population quality. Every parent wants the best for their child, and **this program allows everyone to access the most effective yet simplest methods.**"

### Communal Health Workers (CHWs)

#### Ms. Nguyen Thi Hiep

Reproductive Health Officer, Quang Minh CHS, Quang Ninh

"At first, I was nervous, but thanks to **the training and materials**, the class went smoothly. Parents joined the session right after immunization, and I felt happy and motivated to continue because **this program truly benefits our community and children.**"



### Caregivers and Participants

#### Ms. Ha Thi Chuong

Caregiver, Quang Duc Commune, Hai Ha District, Quang Ninh

"Before, I thought raising a child only meant feeding and letting them sleep enough. After the session, I understood **the importance of observing developmental milestones and engaging in communication and play with my child to support their growth.** The lessons are very practical and easy to apply in our daily family life."

