



ECHAD

Arab-Israeli Children: A Population at Risk

Arab-Israeli children are among the most disadvantaged of all of Israel's citizens. Some 50% live below the poverty line, and many grow up in large families – a fact that exacerbates poverty and increases parents' difficulties in providing adequate conditions for their healthy development. At the same time, there is a conspicuous gap in early childhood services between the Arab-Israeli and Jewish populations, both in terms of scope and quality. Consequently, a large proportion of very young Arab-Israeli children face serious obstacles to reaching their full potential.

ECHAD Partnership for Early Childhood Achievement and Development

ECHAD was born out of a deep-seated commitment to the promotion of equal opportunity among Arab-Israeli children under the age of six, to minimize the risk factors that threaten their development, and to improve the quality of Israel's early childhood services for the Arab-Israeli population. ECHAD works to develop the knowledge and skills as well as provide the resources and support systems – to effect significant changes in how young Arab-Israeli children are educated, related to, and cared for in their communities.

ECHAD works at creating change and making an impact by working with three main groups:

1. Professionals: Providing training for professionals working in early childhood and family programs, specifically in the areas of education, health and social welfare
2. Parents: Developing support and training programs for parents
3. Children: Improving language and literacy skills among Arab-Israeli young children

In its initial stages of operation, ECHAD programs were implemented in 42 Arab-Israeli cities, towns and villages across Israel, and thousands of professionals, families and children benefited from these programs. Since 2006, the ECHAD Partnership has concentrated its focus on six Arab-Israeli communities in order to cultivate a more comprehensive, tailor-made response to specific local needs, including the opportunity to create and implement new programs to respond to needs that are, as yet, unmet. In these six locations, ECHAD has benefited 8,600 children, and has provided guidance for 3,600 parents, ongoing training to some 700 preschool teachers and assistants, as well as professional and leadership training activities for an additional 350 health, education, and welfare personnel.

Program Partners

ECHAD is a partnership between JDC-Ashalim, the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, and Sonoma Counties and the Israeli Government (the Ministries of Health, Education, Social Affairs, Finance and the National Insurance Institute).