



Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)

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India's flagship Integrated Child Development Services has completed 50 years since its launch in 1975, prompting renewed evaluation of its impact as a lifeline for child nutrition, early learning and maternal health.

What it is?

- ICDS is **India's largest early childhood care and nutrition programme**, providing a package of health, nutrition and pre-school services through Anganwadi Centres to children (0–6 years), pregnant women and lactating mothers.

History:

- Launched on **2 October 1975** in two pilot blocks—**Dharani (Amravati)** and **Dharavi (Mumbai)**—as a centrally sponsored scheme to combat childhood malnutrition and mortality.
- Over five decades, it has expanded nationwide, becoming one of the world's largest community-based child development initiatives, with nearly **14 lakh Anganwadi Centres**.

Aim:

- Improve nutritional and health status of children (0–6 years).
- Lay foundation for psychological, physical and social development.
- Reduce child mortality, morbidity, malnutrition and school dropouts.
- Ensure inter-departmental coordination for holistic child development.
- Empower mothers through nutrition and health education.