

# Nurturing Challenge

# Neighbourhoods

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**In News:** The Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry on Thursday announced the names of the 25 cities selected for the Nurturing Neighbourhoods Challenge under the Smart Cities Mission.

## The Challenge

- The Nurturing Neighbourhoods Challenge aims to incorporate a focus on early childhood development (0-5-year-old children) in the planning and management of Indian cities.
- The Nurturing Neighbourhoods Challenge is a 3-year initiative that aims to work with Indian cities and their partners to pilot and scale ways to improve public space, mobility, neighborhood planning, access to early childhood services and amenities, and data management across city agencies.
- It will also build a platform for peer-to-peer learning and sharing best practices between cities.

## What cities can do

- Make streets safe and walkable for young children and their caregivers
- Reimagine public open spaces for play and interaction
- Adapt public spaces with early childhood amenities
- Improve access to early childhood services

## Objectives of the Challenge

- Promote early childhood centric approach among Indian cities
  - Equip city managers and governments with the

- language and rationale of early childhood-centric development to apply it in their decision making.
- Facilitate demonstration of early childhood centric solutions
    - Support selected city governments to adopt the principles in designing and implementing pilot projects for early childhood-centric infrastructure and services.
  - Catalyse cities to mainstream and implement solutions in long-term
    - Support scaling up of solutions by implementing policy interventions, multiple pilot projects, measuring the impact, and capacity building.
  - Develop peer – peer network of nurturing cities
    - Facilitate capacity building for officials within various city government departments and develop a network of champions for early childhood to engage with each other and share learnings on best practices.
  - Collect and analyse data related to young children and their caregivers
    - To inform decision-making, develop use cases and best practices, and disseminate the same through capacity building activities.

### **Why 0-5 matters**

- There is compelling evidence, from the fields of public health, neuroscience and economics, that investing in early childhood development can translate to better health, greater ability to learn and work with others, and higher incomes in adulthood.
- Research indicates that in the first years of life, a child's brain makes as many as 1 million new neural connections per second.
- The quality of experiences during the first 1,000 days of life is vital for a good start in life and depends on

a supportive ecosystem and physical environment that allows a child to maximise his or her potential.