Early Childhood Development and Nutrition Programming

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KEY MESSAGES

- While scientific evidence is limited at this time, theoretical, empirical, and logistical evidence does confirm the feasibility and effectiveness of integrating child development and nutritional interventions. *Black, M., and Dewey, K., (2014).*
- Combining nutritional and child development activities are likely to have additional benefits for young children

Definitions

Mother-Child Interaction= Talking, showing love, playing

Infant Stimulation- activities that stimulate infant's senses and improve their attention span, memory and development.

Growth: the change in weight, height, and circumference of head

Child Development: the process of change in which a child comes to master more and more complex levels of physical activity, thinking, feeling, communicating and interactions with people and objects. This is sometimes expressed as physical, cognitive, emotional and social development

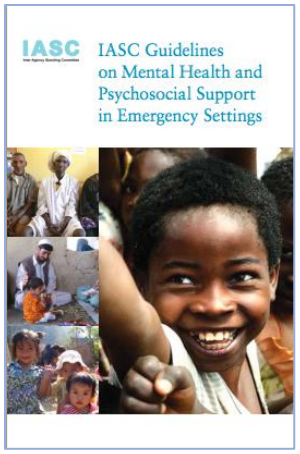
Early childhood: the period between birth and eight years of age. In this document the focus is on children attending emergency feeding programmes, the majority of whom are three or under but who may be up to five years old

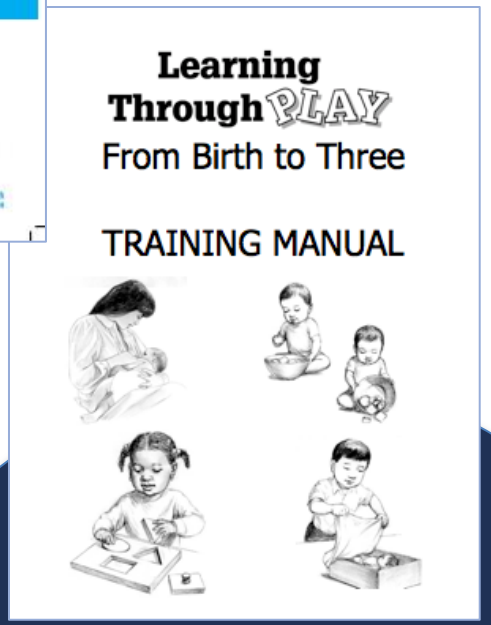
Responsiveness: parenting that is prompt and appropriate to the child's immediate behaviour, needs and developmental state

Care: attention to body, health, nutrition, emotional, social, language and intellectual development

Guidelines & Resources

- UNICEF/WHO. Guidance Note for Integrating Early Childhood Development Activities into Nutrition Programs in Emergencies
- IASC MHPSS Guidelines in Emergency Settings (development)
- Hincks Del-Crest (HDC), Learning Through Play (LTP)





The World Health Organization (WHO) advocates the implementation of combined psychosocial and nutritional programming in food shortage situations.

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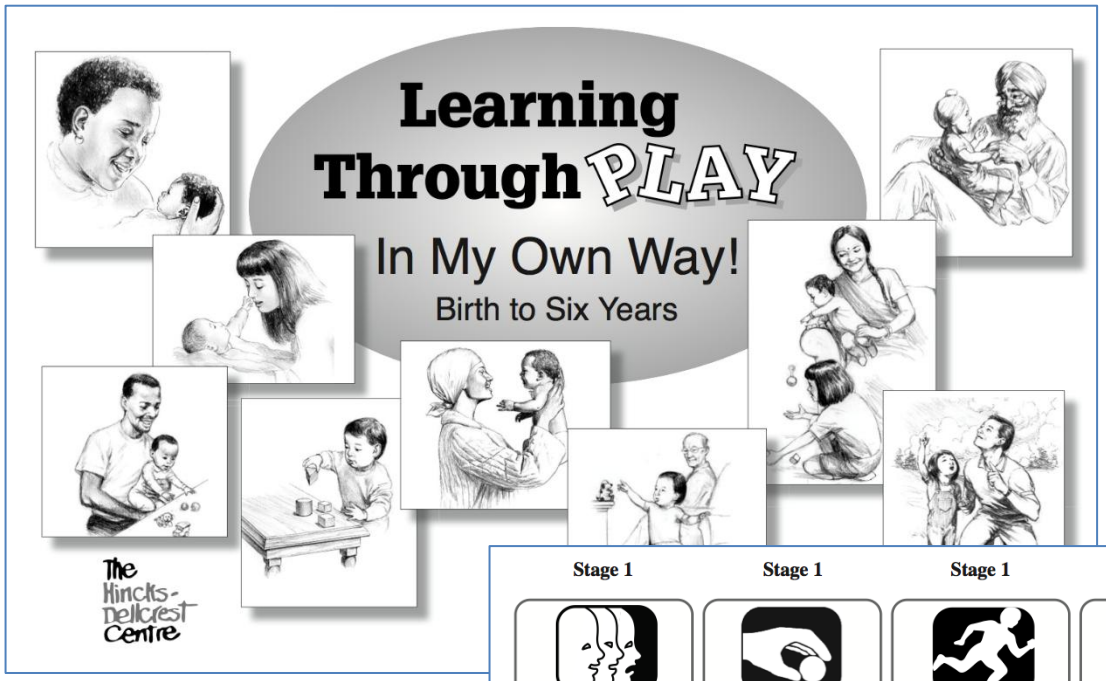

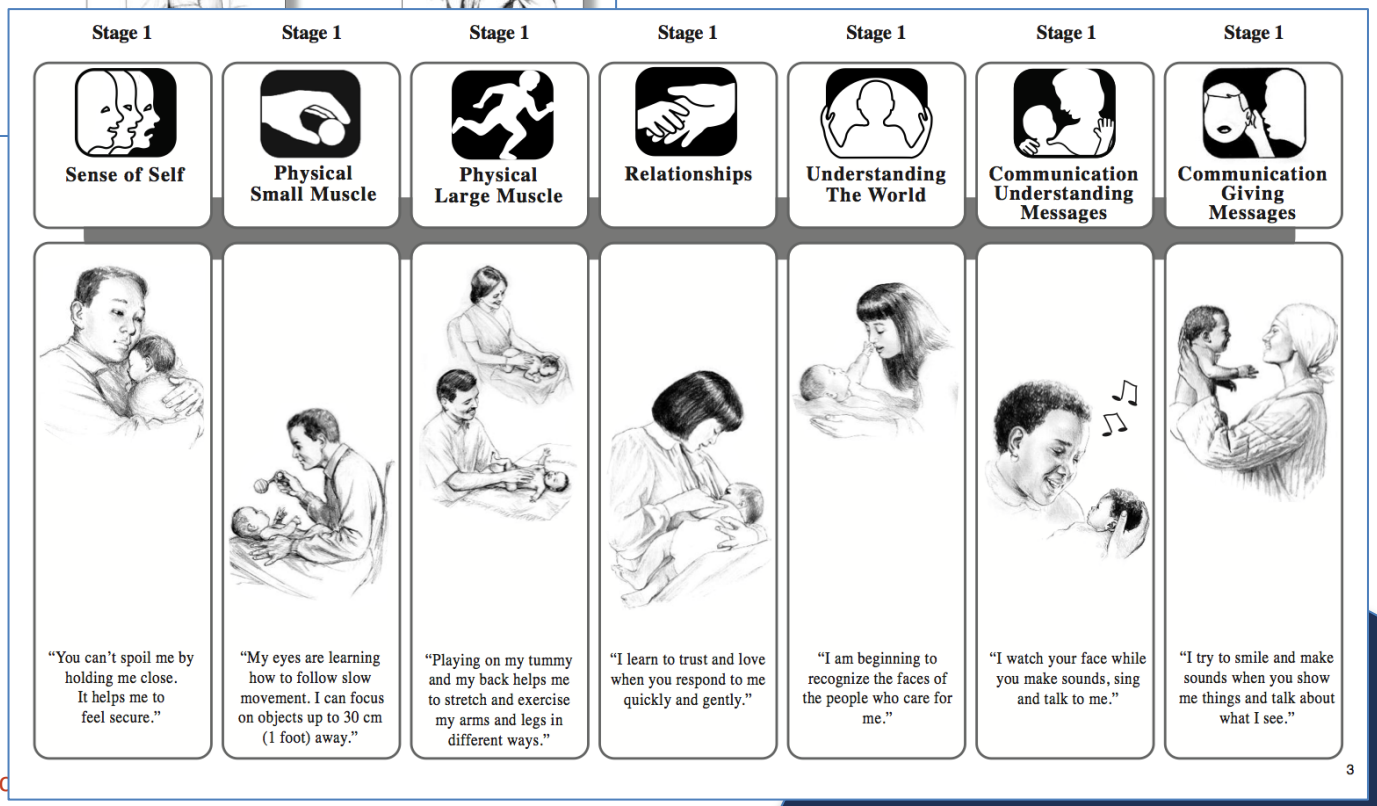

5 Areas of Child Development

- Sense of self
  - "You can't spoil me by holding me close. It helps me to feel secure."
- Physical development (small and large muscle)
  - "My eyes are learning how to follow slow movement. I can focus on objects up to 30 cm (1 foot) away."
  - "Playing on my tummy and my back helps me to stretch and exercise my arms and legs in different ways."
- Relationships
  - "I learn to trust and love when you respond to me quickly and gently."
- Understanding of the world
  - "I am beginning to recognize the faces of the people who care for me."
- Communication (understanding and giving messages)
  - "I watch your face while you make sounds, sing and talk to me."
  - "I try to smile and make sounds when you show me things and talk about what I see."

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IMC Experience

A Controlled Evaluation From Northern Uganda "Does Combining Infant Stimulation With Emergency Nutrition Improve Psychosocial Outcomes for Displaced Mothers and Babies?" Jones 2012. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry 2012, Vol. 82, No. 3, 349–357

Means and Comparison of Mean Changes Between Groups: Intent-to-Treat

	Contrast group (CG)		Intervention group (IG)	
Outcome measures	Pre mean (*SD*)	Post mean (*SD*)	Pre mean (*SD*)	Post mean (*SD*)
Home subscales				
Maternal involvement	23.88 (2.69)	24.10 (3.03)	24.38 (2.65)	26.27 (2.24)
Play materials	8.35 (1.27)	8.38 (1.31)	9.28 (1.67)	10.73 (2.05)
Maternal mood				
Sadness/worry	10.59 (3.65)	10.56 (3.98)	10.61 (3.55)	8.42 (2.95)

Integrated ECD Nutrition Counseling Tool

3 to 6 months

Early Childhood Development

1. Communication

Sing, read and talk to your baby so she can hear different words and sounds. The expressions on your face help her stay interested. Your baby will begin to recognize her name when you use it often.

2. Sense of Self

Your baby tries to comfort herself by putting her hand in her mouth, making sounds, looking at you, listening to familiar sounds and music and looking away when over excited. If she cannot comfort herself, pick her up and hold her close.

3. Physical Development

Provide daily "tummy time" for your baby to practice rolling, moving and lifting her head. This will help her prepare for sitting and crawling.

4. Relationships

Your baby is part of the family. She likes to see and hear what is going on around her. Change her position frequently and place her where she can see everything.

5. Understanding the World

Your baby needs to explore with her mouth. This is a good way for her to learn about her world. Keep her safe by giving her clean toys that are big enough, so she will not choke.

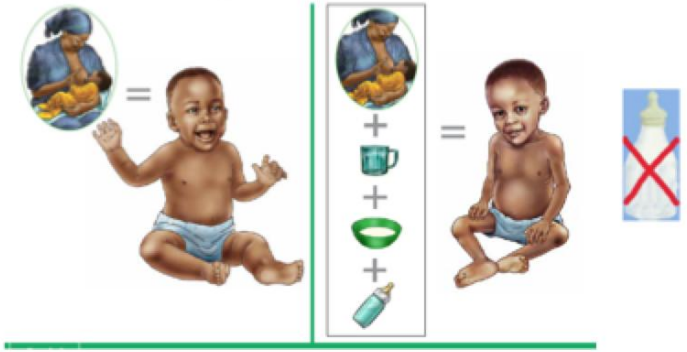
- Mixe… liquid… chan… pneu…
- Neve… will c…
- Breas… prote…
- Exclusively breastfeed on demand, at least 10 times day and night, to produce enough milk and provide your baby with enough food to grow healthy.
- Ensure proper positioning and attachment so your baby gets adequate breast milk and to avoid breast problems such as sore and cracked nipples.
- In the event of nipple and breast problems, seek immediate care from a Health Worker.
- Breastfeeding increases bonding between you and your child.
- Attend regular growth monitoring and promotion sessions to make sure your baby is gaining weight each month. If your baby is not gaining weight or is losing weight, the health staff will help diagnose and find a solution to the problem.

3 to 6 months

Early Childhood Development

Nutrition

During the first 6 months



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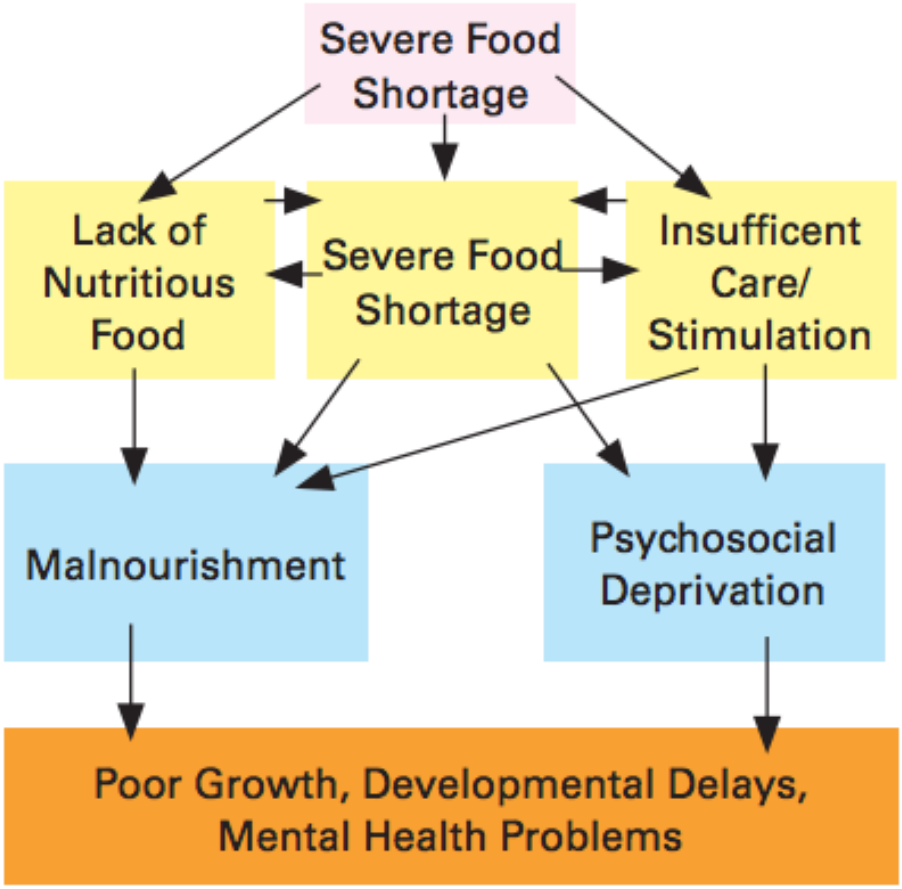
The interaction between lack of food and lack of stimulation



- **Nutritional deficiencies** limit the intellectual and physical development and growth of the child
  - » growth can be stunted
  - » child does poorly at school
- **Deficiencies in affection and psychosocial stimulation** stunt emotional, physical and intellectual development with long term effects
  - » limits potential in school
  - » poor employment chances
  - » lifelong disability
  - » mental problems
- **Nutritional and psychosocial deficiencies interact**

Figure 2: Adapted from WHO [9]

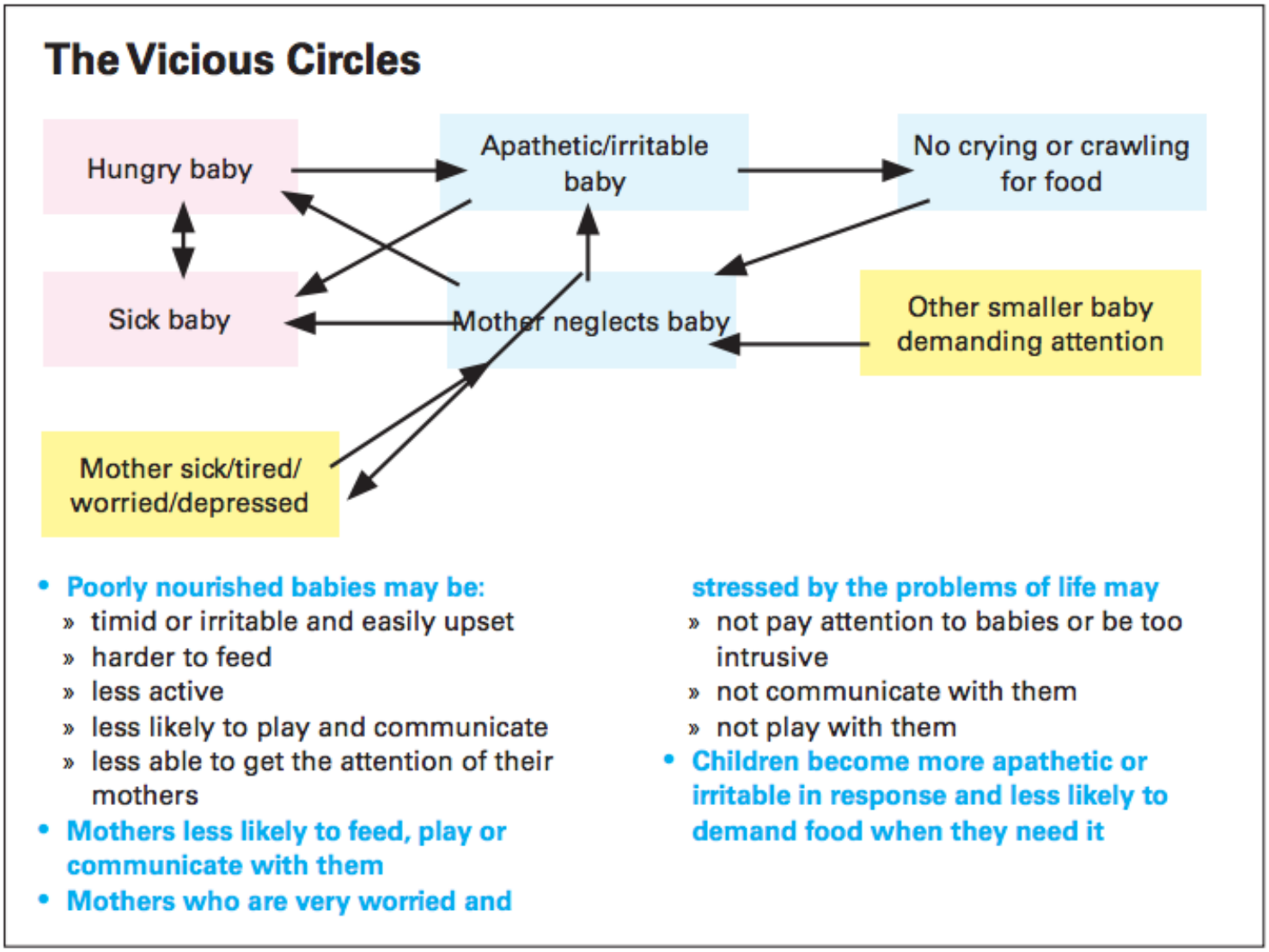


Figure 4: How mother and infant problems in stressful environments may interact

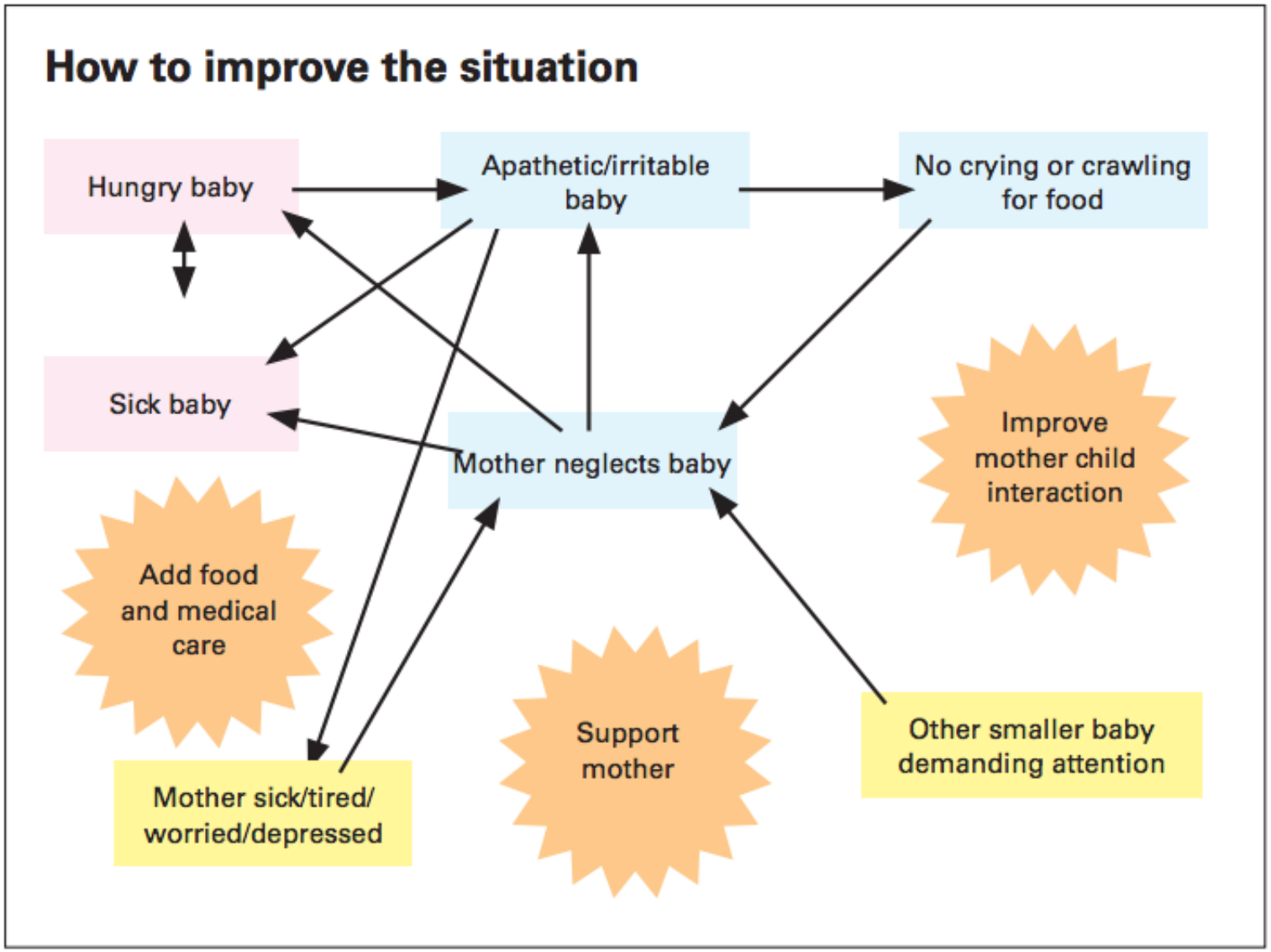


Figure 5: Intervention points

KEY POINT SUMMARY: WHY SHOULD EARLY CHILD DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES BE COMBINED WITH EMERGENCY FEEDING PROGRAMMES?

- In famines and food shortage situations, providing food alone is not enough
- Child growth and brain development depend on good nutrition AND stimulation and caretaker emotional responsiveness
- The brain is most responsive in the first three years of life. This is when it grows and develops fastest
- There is strong evidence that combined programmes improve growth and developmental outcomes in short and long term
- Early child development activities improve maternal mood if conducted using groups and home visits
- Regular mother and baby groups to do ECD activities build resilience and increase networks of social support. They provide a non-stigmatizing way of supporting vulnerable women and children exposed to violence
- Combined programmes are fun to do!

The Evidence Around Integration

1. Evidence from low resource settings shows that combined infant stimulation and nutrition programs have additive effects on children's growth and development outcomes in the long term. *Jamaica Study (2005)*

1. Research also shows that programs focusing on improving maternal-child interaction through mother-to-mother support groups and home visits improved maternal mood, enhanced maternal well-being and improved the child's nutritional status and growth outcomes. *Dybdahl, R., (2001)*

The Evidence Around Integration, Cont'd

3. A recent systematic review of studies that examined the effect of interventions combining a child development component with a nutrition one, shows that nutritional interventions usually benefit nutritional status and sometimes benefit child development.

Key Messages

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Other Readings and Resources

3 article Lancet series: Early child development.

Vol 378 October 8, 2011

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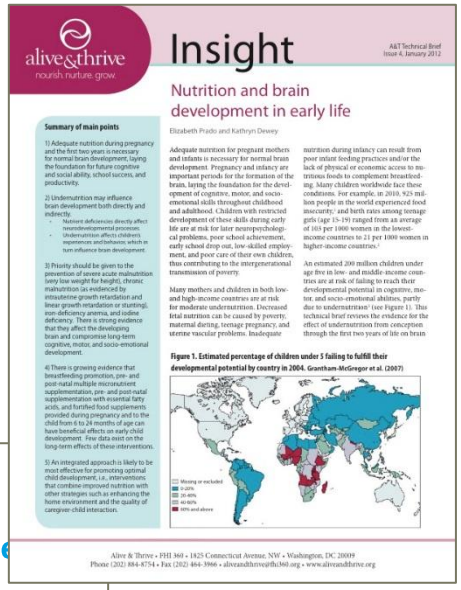
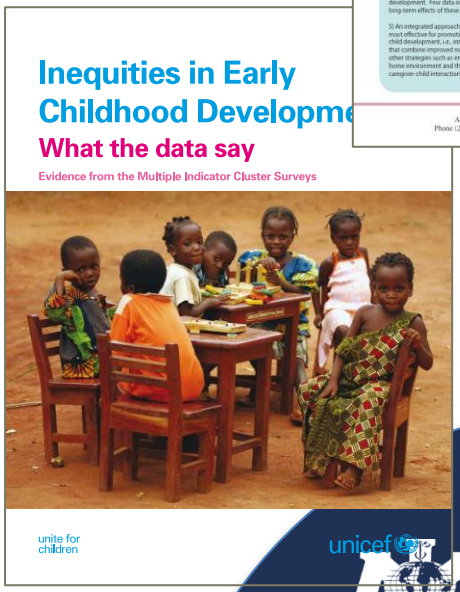
Other Readings and Resources

- Nutrition and brain development in early life. Insight. A&T Technical Brief Issue 4, January 2012

- UNICEF: Inequities in Early Childhood Development: What the data say





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Other Readings and Resources

- Walker, S., Chang, S., Powell, C., & Grantham-McGregor, S., (2005). Effects of early childhood psychosocial stimulation and nutritional supplementation on cognition and education in growth-stunted Jamaican children: prospective cohort study. *Lancet,* 366**:** 1804-1807.
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Thank you!

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