



# NUTRITION AS PART OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

**A child's earliest years are an important window of opportunity to improve a wide range of development outcomes.** Yet today, an estimated 200 million children each year fail to meet their developmental potential in their first five years – these children can benefit from interventions to promote child growth and development, including nutrition.<sup>1</sup>

**Early childhood development (ECD) programmes focus on delivering an integrated package of interventions from a range of sectors to promote child growth and development,** starting from the beginning of a woman's pregnancy through to the child's entry into primary school.<sup>2</sup>

By providing children with the nutrition they need in their first 1,000 days of life, the world can ensure that investments in ECD are achieving the highest returns possible.

**ECD interventions are among the most cost-effective investments a country can make in its population.** Evidence suggests that annual rates of return for many ECD interventions are as high as 7 to 16%.<sup>3</sup>

A review of the outcomes of integrated nutrition and ECD interventions found that integration is likely to achieve synergies that improve multiple outcomes for young children. ECD components benefit a child's development, while nutrition components can benefit both the child's development and nutrition-related outcomes such as growth and weight gain.<sup>4,5</sup>

## NUTRITION IS A FOUNDATIONAL ASPECT OF ECD INTERVENTIONS

### NUTRITION

#### WATER & SANITATION

A child who receives vitamin A supplementation has a 15 percent lower chance of developing diarrhoea\*.



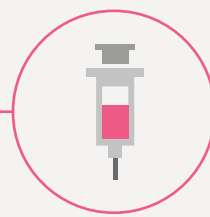
#### SOCIAL PROTECTION

Nutrition is a form of social protection, as it builds resilience – a key aim of social protection programmes.



#### HEALTH

Good nutrition helps to develop the immune system, protecting children from infectious diseases.



#### EDUCATION

Reductions in undernutrition in young children can increase school attainment by at least one year\*\*.



\*Mayo-Wilson, Evan et al., 'Vitamin A supplements for preventing mortality, illness, and blindness in children aged under 5: systematic review and meta-analysis', BMJ, vol. 343, 2011

\*\*Haddad, Lawrence, 'Child growth = sustainable economic growth: why we should invest in nutrition', 2013.



Investments in nutrition will help bolster those investments committed to ECD and drive success towards SDG 4 – “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” – and especially the target on ensuring that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development.

The Nutrition in the Global Agenda Series, issued by The Power of Nutrition, aims to clarify why and how investments in nutrition can maximise other development objectives and be a major pathway towards the achievement of the world's shared Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.



The Power of Nutrition is a charitable foundation whose primary focus is improving the nutritional welfare and care of young children and adolescent mothers in Africa and Asia. Visit [www.powerofnutrition.org](http://www.powerofnutrition.org) and follow @gofundnutrition to learn more about our work.

<sup>1</sup> Yousafzai, Aisha K and Arabi, Mandana, 'Bridging Survival and Development in the Post-2015 Agenda: Partnerships in Nutrition and Early Child Development', Early Childhood Matters, June 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Denboba, Amina Debissa et al., 'Stepping up Early Childhood Development: Investing in Young Children for High Returns', Washington DC., World Bank Group, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Denboba et al., 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Yousafzai and Mandana, 2015.

<sup>5</sup> Grantham-McGregor, Sally M. et al., 'Effects of Integrated Child Development and Nutrition Interventions on Child Development and Nutritional Status', Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, vol. 1308, pp. 11-32, 2014.