

Intervention in first 1000 days vital to fulfilling childhood potential

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Safeguarding the healthy development of the next generation is vital for the long term success of the United Nation's Millennium Development goals. New research in *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* highlights the need to integrate global strategies aimed at tackling nutrition and cognitive development within the first thousand days of childhood.

"Global estimates by UNICEF reveal that over 165 million children below the age of five suffer from stunted growth," said Professor Dr. Maureen Black from the University of Maryland School of Medicine and editor of the special issue. "Early stunting is an indicator which helps us estimate the number of children who do not reach their developmental potential."

Published via Online Access, the freely available special issue reveals how poverty, nutritional deficiencies, and a lack of responsive caregiving and learning opportunities combine to undermine childhood potential. The result is the estimated 200 million children in developing countries, under the age of five who are not reaching their developmental potential.

Professor Black and Professor Kathryn Dewey, from the University of California-Davis, highlight the importance of combining intervention strategies which focus on both nutrition and early learning. They highlight several implementation recommendations detailed in the special issue, including:

- Effects of integrated [child development](#) and [nutrition interventions](#) on child development and nutritional status, by Sally M. Grantham-McGregor, Lia C. H. Fernald, Rose M. C. Kagawa and Susan Walker
- Advantages and challenges of integration: opportunities for integrating [early childhood](#) development and nutrition programming, by Ann M. DiGirolamo, Pablo Stansbery and Mary Lung'aho
- Issues in the timing of integrated early interventions: contributions from nutrition, neuroscience, and psychological research, by Theodore D. Wachs, Michael Georgieff, Sarah Cusick and Bruce S. McEwen
- Measures and indicators for assessing impact of interventions integrating nutrition, health, and early childhood development, by Edward A. Frongillo, Fahmida Tofail, Jena D. Hamadani, Andrea M. Warren and Syeda F. Mehrin

A launch event for the special issue, "Every Child's Potential: Integrating Early Childhood Development and Nutrition Interventions," will be co-hosted by The Sackler Institute for Nutrition Science at the New York Academy of Sciences and UNICEF at the United Nations on February 6th 2014.

"This collection of papers contributes not only a number of perspectives on best-practices for realizing optimal [childhood development](#) through various interventions—especially [nutrition](#)—but also new ideas to foster increased study of problems that prevent health and well-being of children," said Annals Editor-in-Chief, Douglas Braaten.

More information: M. Black, K. Dewey, "Promoting equity through integrated early child development and nutrition interventions", Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, Wiley, January 2014, [DOI: 10.1111/nyas.12351](#)

Read the special issue here: [onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10...
&dmmspid=0&dmmsuid=0](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/dmmspid=0&dmmsuid=0)

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