



Resource Collection: Family Inclusion in Nutrition

Nutrition programmers recognize that fathers, grandmothers, and other family members can have tremendous influence on decision-making and roles related to household purchasing, food allocation, and feeding practices. However, services and programs often focus on caregivers and place less emphasis on the critical role that family systems and family members play in improving nutritional outcomes. The growing body of evidence suggests the importance of engaging family members while also empowering and supporting caregivers. The documents compiled in this brief are organized by type of resource, with notes indicating the family member and global or country focus.



Review Articles	
<u>Engaging Family Members in Maternal, Infant and Young Child Nutrition Activities in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: A Systematic Scoping Review</u>	
Systematic review of interventions that engage fathers, grandmothers, and other family members in maternal and child nutrition in line with global guidelines. ⁱ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child and Maternal Nutrition • Whole Family • Global
<u>Experiences Engaging Family Members in Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Nutrition: A Survey of Global Health Professionals</u>	
Global health and nutrition professionals were invited to complete an online survey about their experiences engaging family members in nutrition activities. Along with documenting program experiences and lessons learned, this article discusses perceived barriers, facilitators, and recommendations. ⁱⁱ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maternal and Child Nutrition • Whole Family • Global
<u>Introduction: A Family Systems Approach to Promote Maternal, Child and Adolescent Nutrition</u>	
Introduces a special issue of <i>Maternal & Child Nutrition</i> . Examples of research included an ecological, family systems approach to investigate maternal, child, and adolescent nutrition issues; or interventions that engaged various actors within family settings. ⁱⁱⁱ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child and Maternal Nutrition • Whole Family • Global

Mixed-Methods Systematic Review of Behavioral Interventions in Low- and Middle-Income Countries to Increase Family Support for Maternal, Infant, and Young Child Nutrition During the First 1000 Days

Examines the impact to engage family members in maternal, infant, and young child nutrition in during the first 1,000 days of behavioral interventions.^{iv}

- Child and Maternal Nutrition
- Whole Family
- Global

Research Articles

Achieving Behaviour Change at Scale: Alive & Thrive’s Infant and Young Child Feeding Programme in Bangladesh

Describes scale-up of Alive & Thrive’s program to improve infant and young child feeding in Bangladesh from 2010–14, including through father engagement.^v

- Child Nutrition
- Fathers
- Bangladesh

Adherence Partners Are an Acceptable Behaviour Change Strategy to Support Calcium and Iron-Folic Acid Supplementation Among Pregnant Women in Ethiopia and Kenya

Assessment of acceptability of adherence partners; a behavior change strategy to improve adherence and support calcium and IFA supplementation in Kenya and Ethiopia.^{vi}

- Maternal Nutrition and Micronutrients
- Fathers, Grandmothers, Others

Associations Between Parents’ Exposure to a Multisectoral Programme and Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices in Nepal

A monitoring test of associations between maternal and male household head exposure program interventions and the adoption of infant and young child feeding behaviors.^{vii}

- Child Nutrition
- Fathers, Grandmothers, Others
- Nepal

Attitudes, Beliefs and Social Norms Regarding Infant and Young Child Feeding Among Nigerian Mothers, Fathers and Grandmothers Across Time

Findings from focus group discussions with mothers, fathers, and grandmothers on infant and young child feeding, over three time periods.^{viii}

- Child Nutrition
- Fathers, Grandfathers
- Nigeria

Barriers and Opportunities for Improved Exclusive Breast-Feeding Practices in Tanzania: Household Trials with Mothers and Fathers

Exploration of barriers and facilitators to exclusive breastfeeding in Tanzania. Assessment of parents’ willingness and ability to try practices plus strategies for men to support.^{ix}

- Child Nutrition
- Fathers
- Tanzania

Complementary Feeding Social and Behavior Change Communication for Fathers and Mothers Improves Children’s Consumption of Fish and Eggs and Minimum Meal Frequency in Kaduna State, Nigeria

Measures the effects of a social and behavior change communication intervention targeted at both mothers and fathers. Discusses fathers’ support of child feeding in Nigeria.^x

- Child Nutrition
- Fathers
- Nigeria

<u>Effects of Engaging Fathers and Bundling Nutrition and Parenting Interventions on Household Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Rural Tanzania: Results from EFFECTS, a Five-arm Cluster-randomized Controlled Trial</u>	
The study tested the independent and combined effects of engaging couples and bundling nutrition and parenting interventions on gender equality and women’s empowerment in Tanzania. ^{xi}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Nutrition • Fathers • Tanzania
<u>Engagement of Husbands in a Maternal Nutrition Program Substantially Contributed to Greater Intake of Micronutrient Supplements and Dietary Diversity During Pregnancy: Results of a Cluster-Randomized Program Evaluation in Bangladesh</u>	
Evaluated the impact of a nutrition-focused maternal, newborn, and child health program, compared with the standard services, on husbands’ awareness, knowledge, self-efficacy, and support of maternal nutrition behaviors. ^{xii}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maternal Nutrition • Fathers • Bangladesh
<u>Engaging Fathers and Grandmothers to Improve Maternal and Child Dietary Practices: Planning a Community-Based Study in Western Kenya</u>	
A quasi-experimental, non-equivalent comparison group tested the hypothesis that families participating in activities that engage fathers or grandmothers have better knowledge of and practices related to maternal nutrition and complementary feeding than families focused only on mothers. ^{xiii}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Nutrition • Fathers, Grandmothers, Others • Kenya
<u>Engaging Fathers to Improve Complementary Feeding Is Acceptable and Feasible in the Lake Zone, Tanzania</u>	
Through trials of improved practices with mothers and fathers with children 6–18 months, examined the acceptability and feasibility of tailored complementary feeding recommendations and engaging fathers in complementary feeding. ^{xiv}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Nutrition • Fathers • Tanzania
<u>Engaging Fathers to Support Child Nutrition Increases Frequency of Children’s Animal Source Food Consumption in Rwanda</u>	
Baseline and endline surveys of fathers of children under 5 years were used to evaluate the effects of a social and behavior change communication intervention on their child’s consumption of animal source food. Also addressed fathers’ knowledge, awareness, and support of this intervention. ^{xv}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Nutrition • Fathers • Rwanda
<u>Family Influences on Health and Nutrition Practices of Pregnant Adolescents in Bangladesh</u>	
Research by peer interviewers aimed at understanding experiences and decision-making of pregnant adolescents in Bangladesh related to antenatal care and nutrition practices. ^{xvi}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adolescent Nutrition • Family Systems • Bangladesh

<u>Fathers and Grandmothers Experiences Participating in Nutrition Peer Dialogue Groups in Vihiga County, Kenya</u>	
Evaluation of a quasi-experimental study with grandmother and father peer dialogue groups to support maternal, infant, and young child feeding practices in western Kenya. ^{xvii}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Nutrition • Fathers, Grandmothers, Others • Kenya
<u>Fathers' Complementary Feeding Support Strengthens the Association Between Mothers' Decision-Making Autonomy and Optimal Complementary Feeding in Nigeria</u>	
Examines the moderating effect of fathers' complementary feeding support on mothers' decision-making autonomy with complementary feeding indicators. ^{xviii}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Nutrition • Fathers • Nigeria
<u>Grandmothers as Change Agents: Developing a Culturally Appropriate Program to Improve Maternal and Child Nutrition in Sierra Leone</u>	
The results of qualitative research in southern Sierra Leone on the roles and influence of family members on maternal and child nutrition and how those findings informed the design of a culturally appropriate program. ^{xix}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Nutrition • Grandmothers • Sierra Leone
<u>Opportunities and Barriers for Maternal Nutrition Behavior Change: An In-Depth Qualitative Analysis of Pregnant Women and Their Families in Uttar Pradesh, India</u>	
Qualitative study examines the influence of family members on the adoption of maternal nutrition behaviors as well as pregnant women's experience with maternal nutrition-related behaviors, barriers, and facilitators. ^{xx}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Nutrition • Fathers, Grandmothers • India
<u>Participation in Indoda Emadodeni Male Champion Groups Supported Improved Male Engagement in Child Feeding, Care, and Household Chores in Western Zimbabwe</u>	
Review of a male champions pilot study, which improved child feeding, care, and domestic chores through a male-engagement-focused behavior change approach. ^{xxi}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Nutrition • Fathers • Zimbabwe
<u>Role of Social Support in Improving Infant Feeding Practices in Western Kenya: A Quasi-Experimental Study</u>	
This six-month study tested the effectiveness of increased social support by key household influencers engaged in separate dialogue groups on improving mothers' complementary feeding practices. ^{xxii}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Nutrition • Fathers, Grandmothers • Kenya
<u>Storytelling for Persuasion: Insights from Community Health Workers on How They Engage Family Members to Improve Adoption of Recommended Maternal Nutrition and Breastfeeding Behaviours in Rural Bangladesh</u>	
Discussion of community health workers (CHWs) about their experiences garnering family support for improving maternal nutrition and breastfeeding practices. ^{xxiii}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Nutrition • Fathers, Grandmothers, Others • Bangladesh

<u>The Contribution of Grandmother Involvement to Child Growth and Development: An Observational Study in Rural Pakistan</u>	
A cross-sectional and longitudinal examination of grandmother years of life in rural areas. ^{xxiv}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Nutrition • Grandmothers • Pakistan
<u>The Role and Influence of Grandmothers on Child Nutrition: Culturally Designated Advisors and Caregivers</u>	
A review of child nutrition research from numerous sociocultural settings in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Discusses the need to expand the focus beyond the mother–child dyad to include grandmothers, given their role as culturally designated advisers and caregivers. ^{xxv}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Nutrition • Grandmothers • Global
<u>“The Role of the Man Is to Look for Food:” Lessons from Men’s Involvement in Maternal and Child Health Programmes in Rural Central Malawi.</u>	
This case study sought to understand the complementary role of men in maternal and child nutrition. ^{xxvi}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child and Maternal Nutrition • Fathers • Malawi
Program Material	
<u>Engaging Grandmothers: A Manual and Guide to Improve Nutrition for Dialogue Group Mentors</u>	
This manual is designed to train grandmothers to initiate dialogue as group mentors. ^{xxvii}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child and Maternal Nutrition • Grandmothers • Kenya
<u>Enhanced Community Conversations for Nutrition (Amharic) SBCC Resource</u>	
A guide to enhanced community conversations on nutrition for separate and combined groups of men, elders, and women. Support a whole household approach (Amharic). ^{xxviii}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child, Maternal, and Adolescent Nutrition • Fathers, Grandmothers • Ethiopia
<u>Facilitator’s Guide for Father-to-Father Support Groups</u>	
Step-by-step guidance for facilitating 15 community father-to-father support group sessions of an infant and young child feeding and gender curriculum, with counseling cards. ^{xxix}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Nutrition • Fathers • Ghana
<u>Family Commitment Card for Nutrition in the First 1000 days</u>	
This commitment card is designed to engage family motivation and action on nutrition during the first 1,000 days. It was used in community dialogues to express commitments, mobilize “helping hands” (community members willing to support families), and recognize families who made changes. ^{xxx}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child, Maternal, and Adolescent Nutrition • Fathers, Grandmothers • Cambodia

<u>Implementation Manual: Community-based Maternal Nutrition Program</u>	
Resources provide maternal, newborn, and child health program leaders and implementors with tools for delivering effective maternal nutrition programs. ^{xxxix}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maternal Nutrition • Fathers, Grandmothers • Bangladesh
<u>Leaflets on Nutrition for Pregnant Women in Burkina Faso</u>	
Leaflet for community and religious leaders to engage family support for pregnant women's nutrition. (French) Leaflet for future grandmothers to support women's nutrition during pregnancy (French). ^{xxxix} <i>*Sign into the resources to see these materials.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maternal Nutrition • Fathers • Grandmothers • Burkina Faso
<u>Leaflet on Nutrition for Pregnant Women in India: Husbands, Your Care Matters!</u>	
Leaflet on early antenatal care, including women's nutrition in India. ^{xxxix}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maternal Nutrition • Fathers • India
<u>Nurturing Connections</u>	
The curriculum encourages family members to work together to confront and overturn gender-based discrimination. Involves a series of 2–3 hour, community-based facilitated discussions among peer groups of women (beneficiaries), their husbands, and influential elders. ^{xxxix}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child, Maternal, and Adolescent Nutrition • Fathers, Grandmothers • Kenya
<u>Stop, Reflect, Improve: Using CLA to Engage Men to Improve Women and Children's Health</u>	
A case study engaging men through a male change agent approach as part of collaborative learning and adaptation. ^{xxxix}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Nutrition • Fathers • Zimbabwe
Guides	
<u>Focus on Families and Culture: A Guide for Conducting a Participatory Assessment on Maternal and Child Nutrition</u>	
Designed for program managers and planners, this guide provides a comprehensive blueprint in conducting a maternal and child nutrition assessment to investigate intrahousehold roles and influence. ^{xxxix}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child and Maternal Nutrition • Grandmothers • Global
<u>Program Guidance: Engaging Family Members in Improving Maternal and Child Nutrition</u>	
Translates research findings into practical recommendations for interventions that effectively engage family members in the care and feeding of children, including involving family members at key points in the program cycle to support mothers and other primary caregivers and avoid negative consequences. ^{xxxix}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child and Maternal Nutrition • Whole Family • Global

SBC Strategy

[A Gender Analysis of the Socio-Cultural Contexts of Iringa, Morogoro and Rukwa Regions and the USAID/Lishe Endelevu Activity](#)

Describes gender-related issues relevant to implementing gender-sensitive and gender-transformative interventions in Lishe Endelevu, a nutrition program in Tanzania. Includes opportunities and constraints to integrate gender for improved nutrition outcomes. Also identifies expectations for men's and women's roles of an "ideal man" and an "ideal woman" from the perspective of women, men, boys, and girls.^{xxxviii}

- Child, Maternal, and Adolescent Nutrition
- Fathers
- Tanzania

[Maternal and Child Nutrition During the First 1000 Days and Adolescent Girls' Nutrition SBCC Strategy](#)

Used for the implementation of the USAID Growth through Nutrition's social and behavior change communication (SBC) programming in Ethiopia, this strategy utilizes a "whole-household" approach as a core strategy. SBC communication includes messaging that encouraged all household members to increase their access to and consumption of diverse, safe, and quality foods.^{xxxix}

- Child, Maternal, and Adolescent Nutrition
- Whole Family
- Ethiopia

Theory of Change

[Integrating Gender into Nutrition Programs](#)

The normative theory of change outlines gender-related or normative drivers, intervention strategies and illustrative approaches, anticipated changes, and outcomes. This theory of change helps to design a nutrition program, activity, policy, or service that aims to integrate gender or strengthen family engagement.^{xl}

- Child, Maternal, and Adolescent Nutrition
- Whole Family
- Global

Presentation Recordings

[Engaging Family Members in Formative Research](#)

In this panel, Mackson Maphosa (Zimbabwe), Tulani Matenga (Zambia), and Dr. Siddharudha Shivalli (India) discussed engaging family members in formative research.

- FINE CoP

[Engaging Men: Experiences from Mozambique](#)

Danette Wilkins, Sexual and Reproductive Health Program Officer, Johns Hopkins Center for Communication, provided an overview of the dos and don'ts for engaging men and boys. Edgar Bernando, national coordinator of Rede Hopem, a network that promotes positive masculinities and provides men with skills to overcome gender inequities, shared his work engaging men and boys in Mozambique. Dr. Richmond Aryeetey, professor of Public Health, University of Ghana, facilitated a question-and-answer session.

- FINE CoP

Family Systems Approach to Strengthen Maternal and Child Nutrition Research, Services, and Community Programs

Dr. Judi Aibel, co-founder and executive director of the Grandmother Project, talked about taking a family systems approach as a foundation for strengthening nutrition research, services, and programming.

- FINE CoP

Implementation Lessons from Engaging Family Members in Nutrition

In this meeting, Sujata Singh (Suaahara II) spoke about implementing family-engaged programs in Nepal, and Dr. Lydia Clemmons (Manoff Group) shared her work translating research into a social and behavior change communication strategy in Tanzania and Ethiopia.

- FINE CoP

Learning to Better Engage with Family Members

Morgan Boncyk shared research findings from the Engaging Fathers and Bundling Nutrition and Parenting Interventions on Household Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Rural Tanzania (EFFECTS) Trial on sibling caregivers' role in child nutrition in Tanzania.^{xii}

- FINE CoP

Tailoring Nutrition Activities to Family Dynamics

Along with sharing experiences from her research, Gargi Wable Grandner, ACDI/VOCA director of Nutrition and Food Systems, talked about how community health workers engage family members to improve adoption of nutrition behaviors.

- FINE CoP

Endnotes

- ⁱ Martin, Stephanie L., Juliet K. McCann, Emily Gascoigne, Diana Allotey, Dadirai Fundira, Katherine L. Dickin. 2021. "Engaging Family Members in Maternal, Infant and Young Child Nutrition Activities in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: A Systematic Scoping Review." *Maternal & Child Nutrition*. 17: e13158.
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