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Young child survival and development

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Introduction



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In 2007, an estimated 9.2 million children worldwide under the age of five died from largely preventable causes. Some are directly caused by illness such as [pneumonia](#), [diarrhoea](#) and [malaria](#). Others are caused by indirect causes including conflict and [HIV/AIDS](#). [Malnutrition](#), poor hygiene and lack of access to safe [water and adequate sanitation](#) contribute to more than half of these deaths. Two thirds of both neonatal and young child deaths — over 6 million deaths every year — are preventable. Half a million women die in pregnancy each year, most during delivery or in the first few days thereafter.

Innovation in saving lives

Existing low-cost, low-technology and high impact interventions such as vaccines, antibiotics, micronutrient supplementation, insecticide-treated bednets, improved breastfeeding practices and adoption of safe hygiene practices can prevent unnecessary maternal and child deaths and reduce undernutrition.

By packaging services and implementing at scale, high impact and evidence-based maternal, newborn and child survival interventions, we can save millions of lives. By ensuring that all children have access to [basic education](#) and by focusing on children marginalized by [poverty](#), [HIV/AIDS](#), [conflict and discrimination](#), we can break the cycle of poverty that keeps children on the brink of survival.

UNICEF in action

[Sixty years](#) of experience tell us that we can turn back child mortality and meet the [Millennium Development Goals](#) by 2015. UNICEF's [Medium Term Strategic Plan for 2006-2009](#) identifies Young Child Survival and Development as the first right of the child. UNICEF works with governments, national and international agencies, and civil society to support effective and essential actions at each phase of the life cycle of the child, including in pregnancy, early childhood, preschool and school-going years, and in adolescence.

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