

How to Use the Global Nutrition Behavior Profiles

What are Global Nutrition Behavior Profiles?

The Global Nutrition Behavior Profiles describe a set of nutrition-specific behaviors considered to be closely linked to reaching the goal of reducing malnutrition in young children, with a focus on stunting and wasting. Meta-analyses done by the Lancet, Cochrane Reviews, and others substantiate the importance of these behaviors in reducing malnutrition. The Behavior Profiles were developed to help nutrition stakeholders select appropriate interventions that are most likely to bring about sustained behavior change.

Consensus discussion among USAID technical experts and a review of selected global research and project evidence provided the content for these Global Nutrition Behavior Profiles. These Behavior Profiles attempt to capture the steps, critical factors, and programmatic considerations known to be important to achieving positive nutrition outcomes. As Global Nutrition Behavior Profiles, they are not specific to any country or context.

The literature review supporting each Behavior Profile focused primarily on published research from 2009 to 2019, with some research published earlier and grey literature focused on the specific behavior included. The literature reviews are comprehensive, but not exhaustive. (Find the list of references for each Behavior Profile by clicking on the “view bibliography” button below the profile name on the [Global Nutrition Behavior Profile](#) page.)

How Are Global Nutrition Behavior Profiles Used?

The Global Nutrition Behavior Profiles can aid stakeholders in a variety of ways. These include developing context-specific Behavior Profiles, which are a critical tool to guide subsequent activities such as developing a research agenda, creating a program strategy, or aligning work plan activities to support behavior change. The Global Nutrition Behavior Profiles can assist program managers and other stakeholders by providing:

1. **Orientation:** Use the Global Nutrition Behavior Profiles to orient stakeholders to the behaviors generally considered important to reducing malnutrition. A program manager or small team will then select the behaviors appropriate for their context. A quick review of the Global Nutrition Behavior Profiles selected for the context will offer an idea of the range of factors that may need to be addressed as well as activities that might be required for an effective behavior change program. It will also indicate who should be engaged in developing the behavior change strategy.
2. **A Starting Point:** The Global Nutrition Behavior Profiles can serve as a base from which to build a context-specific Behavior Profile. They list all factors and actors found during the literature review and can prompt thinking as locally relevant and important behavioral factors are considered. Similarly, if local research on critical factors and supporting actors is not available, the Global Nutrition Behavior Profiles may contain regional or global research to use as proxy information until local research can be conducted or until learning from program implementation can be incorporated.

3. **A Check on the Local Behavior Profile Design Process:** Once the local team has developed its own Behavior Profile, a quick comparison with the Global Nutrition Behavior Profile for that behavior can highlight important issues that might have been overlooked or reassure the team that its Behavior Profile is complete.

What Else Is Important to Know about the Global Nutrition Behavior Profiles?

1. Each behavior is written from the perspective of the primary actor—the person who will carry out the behavior. In all of the Global Nutrition Behavior Profiles the primary actor is either the child’s caregiver or a pregnant or lactating woman. Each Behavior Profile lists the steps needed to successfully complete the behavior. The steps represent all of the actions the primary actor must take to practice the optimal behavior and are generally, but not always, sequential. Actions that need to be taken by someone other than the caregiver or woman are reflected in factors and supporting actor actions.
2. Infant and young child feeding is a complex set of behaviors. For example, complementary feeding, often viewed as a single behavior, is comprised of component behaviors such as offering diverse foods and feeding sufficient quantities of food. Global Nutrition Behavior Profiles have been developed for component behaviors of maternal dietary consumption, breastfeeding, complementary feeding, and feeding the sick child to help programs focus on the component behaviors most important in their context. Find tools to help determine which behaviors and component behaviors are the most important to focus on in your context at the [Focus and Analyze](#) tab under **Focus**.
3. As noted above, the Global Nutrition Behavior Profiles include all factors and actors identified in the literature review. When developing context-specific Behavior Profiles, draw from the Global Nutrition Behavior Profile, but select, revise, or add factors and actors relevant for the local context. To maximize investments and resources, and to obtain measurable results, limit the factor list to **no more than a manageable eight factors** in a Behavior Profile. As the program is implemented, factors might change based on progress or lack thereof, and new factors can be considered.
4. While the set of Global Nutrition Behavior Profiles covers nutrition-specific behaviors, references are made in the strategy sections of some of these Behavior Profiles to nutrition-sensitive actions within the WASH, agriculture, and health sectors that support the uptake or strengthen the impact of the nutrition-specific behaviors. Including them is intended to support program managers to integrate and coordinate nutrition-specific behavioral work within a broader, multi-sectoral nutrition program.
Within the health sector, three maternal and child health behaviors are closely tied to several of the nutrition-specific behaviors in the set of Global Nutrition Behavior Profiles. To aid program managers, these health sector nutrition-sensitive behaviors are included on the [Global Nutrition Behavior Profiles](#) page: [Caregivers appropriately manage diarrhea in children](#); [Caregivers complete a full course of timely vaccinations for infants and children less than 2 years](#); and [Pregnant women complete a full course of quality antenatal care](#).