

BIRTH SPACING

Impact indicator, Outcome indicator

Indicator Phrasing

English: % of children aged 0-23 months who were born at least 24 months after the previous surviving child

French: % d'enfants âgés de 0 à 23 mois nés au moins 24 mois après l'enfant survivant précédent

Portuguese: % de crianças com idades entre 0-23 meses que nasceram pelo menos 24 meses depois da criança sobrevivente anterior

Czech: % dětí ve věku 0-23 měsíců, které byly narozeny alespoň 24 měsíců po narození předchozího přeživšího dítěte

What is its purpose?

The indicator assesses the proportion of caregivers whose two youngest children were born at least two years apart. Doing so enables the woman's body to recover from the last pregnancy and reduces the risk of dying during birth, having a miscarriage or delivering an undernourished baby.

How to Collect and Analyse the Required Data

Collect the following data by conducting individual interviews with a [representative sample](#) of the mothers of children aged 0-23.99 months:

RECOMMENDED SURVEY QUESTIONS (Q) AND POSSIBLE ANSWERS (A)

Q1: *How many children did you deliver?* (twins must be counted as one child in this case)

A1: 2 or more children / less than 2 children (or twins)

(ask the following question only if the previous answer is 2 or more children)

Q2: *Are the two youngest children who you delivered alive?*

A2: yes / no

(ask the following question only if the previous answer is YES)

Q3: *Do you have a birth certificate or other official document stating the age of your youngest child?*

A3:

1) yes -> record the youngest child's age: months

2) no -> determine the youngest child's age by using Local Events: months

Q4: *Do you have a birth certificate or other official document stating the age of your second youngest child?*

A4:

1) yes -> record the youngest child's age: months

2) no -> determine the youngest child's age by using Local Events Calendar: months

To **calculate the indicator's value**, divide the number of children aged 0–23 months who are at least 24 months younger than their older sibling by the total number of surveyed children aged 0-23 months who have an older sibling. Multiply the result by 100 to convert it to a percentage.

Disaggregate by

Disaggregate the data by the mother's age, location (rural/ urban) and socio-economic characteristics (education, [wealth](#) quintile).

Important Comments

1) Keep in mind that **your target sample** is not “mothers of children aged 0-23 months” but “mothers of children aged 0-23 months who have an older sibling”. They are identified by conducting individual interviews with mothers of children aged 0-23 months. Therefore, the number of “mothers of children aged 0-23 months” must be so high that even if some are dropped due to the children not having an older sibling, the resulting number of children aged 0-23 months who have an older sibling still meets the minimum sample size.

2) This indicator relies on an accurate age assessment. Since people often do not remember the exact dates of their children's birth, the data collectors should **always verify the child's age**. This can be done by reviewing the child's birth certificate, vaccination card or another document; however, since many caregivers do not have such documents (and since they can include mistakes), it is essential that your data collectors are able to **verify the child's age by using local events calendars**. Read FAO's Guidelines (see below) to learn how to prepare local events calendars and how to train data collectors in their correct use.

E-Questionnaire

- [XLS form for electronic data collection - indicator Birth Spacing](#)

Access Additional Guidance

- FAO (2008) [Guidelines for Estimating the Month and Year of Birth of Young Children](#)

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