

# INFANT AND YOUNG CHILD FEEDING INDEX

Outcome indicator

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## Indicator Phrasing

**English:** % of children aged 0 - 23 months who receive optimal infant and young child feeding

**French:** % d'enfants âgés de 0 à 23 mois recevant une alimentation optimale pour les nourrissons et jeunes enfants

**Spanish:** % de niños de 0 a 23 meses que reciben una alimentación óptima para lactantes y niños

**Portuguese:** % de crianças entre 0 - 23 meses que recebem alimentação ótima para bebês e crianças pequenas

**Czech:** % dětí ve věku 0 - 23 měsíců konzumující optimální výživu

## What is its purpose?

Infant and Young Child Feeding Index is a composite indicator measuring the proportion of children receiving optimal feeding practices. "Optimal" is defined as 1) exclusive breastfeeding in children aged under six months and as 2) age-appropriate feeding practices (defined in terms of continued breastfeeding, dietary diversity, and meal frequency) in older children.

## How to Collect and Analyse the Required Data

Calculate the indicator's value by using the following methodology:

1) **Conduct individual interviews** with mothers of a [representative sample](#) of children aged 0 - 23 months, collecting the following data:

- the number of children aged **0 - 5 months** that during the previous day and night were [exclusively breastfed](#)

- the number of children aged **6 - 8 months** that during the previous day and night 1) were breastfed, 2) consumed at least two meals, 3) the consumed meals contained foods from at least two [food groups](#)

- the number of children aged **9 - 11 months** that during the previous day and night 1) were breastfed, 2) consumed at least three meals, 3) the consumed meals contained foods from at least three [food groups](#)

- the number of children aged **12 - 23 months** that during the previous day and night 1) were breastfed, 2) consumed at least four meals, 3) the consumed meals contained foods from at least four [food groups](#)

All the children who meet these age-specific criteria can be considered as having “optimal infant and young child feeding practices”.

2) To **calculate the indicator’s value**, divide the number of children receiving “optimal infant and young child feeding practices” by the total number of surveyed children. Multiply the result by 100 to convert it to a percentage.

## Disaggregate by

[Disaggregate](#) the data by gender.

## Important Comments

1) When reporting on the indicator's value, **always include the values of its sub-indicators** - % of children (exclusively) breastfed, % of children that consumed the required number of meals, and % of children that consumed foods from the required number of food groups. Such disaggregation helps to understand where the main gaps are in terms of feeding practices.

2) The Index allows you not only to calculate the percentage of children with optimal feeding but also the **exact value of the Index**. Read more at [ENN’s website](#).

3) Dietary diversity and frequency are prone to **seasonal differences**. Do your best to collect baseline and endline data in the same period of the year; otherwise, it is very likely that they will not be comparable.

4) 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.

## Access Additional Guidance

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