

## Making a Mother's Day Promise to Every Child

Every day new moms around the globe make a promise to their newborns — they vow to protect and nurture them so they can live healthy, fulfilling lives. Mother's Day is a celebration of the dedication and determination of moms everywhere to deliver on this promise. But no matter how hard some moms try, the resources just aren't there to provide the basic nutrition needed for their babies develop properly. So each year, 5.9 million children still die of mainly preventable and treatable causes before their fifth birthday, and nearly half of these deaths are linked to undernutrition. And one in every four children are permanently stunted because they didn't receive proper nutrition during the critical window before their second birthday. But smarter policies and greater investment can help change this — if our leaders hear that it needs to be a priority.

## How 1,000 Days Decides Everything

About [one out of three](#) people globally are malnourished, suffering from either undernutrition, obesity, deficiencies in essential vitamins and minerals, or some combination of the three. But it is children who suffer most. Almost [half](#) of all early childhood deaths are linked to some form of malnutrition. And a staggering [one out of every four](#) children globally is stunted. Stunting happens in a child's earliest days and months, but its consequences last a lifetime.

Proper nutrition during the window starting with a woman's pregnancy and ending with a child's second birthday sets children on a path toward reaching their full potential. These "[1,000 days](#)" have a profound impact on a child's life, from their brain development, to their IQ, to their immune system, to their growth. During pregnancy, infancy, and early childhood, the nutrition a child receives has an irreversible effect — for good or for bad. Once this essential window for physical and cognitive development closes for an individual child, it does not reopen.

[Kids with proper nutrition](#) in the first 1,000 days are far more likely to overcome the most common childhood illnesses. They go farther in school. They earn an average of 20% more over the course of their lifetimes. They are more than 30% more likely to move out of poverty. And they're more likely and able to raise healthy families of their own. What happens in those first 1,000 days starts either a vicious or a virtuous cycle. That's why what world leaders commit to doing now on nutrition will impact the world for years to come.

## What World Leaders Can Do This Year

No single event in the foreseeable future will play a bigger role in global nutrition than the "Nutrition for Growth" summit later this year. World leaders will gather to make specific financial and policy commitments to childhood nutrition, and their level of ambition in those commitments can change the trajectory of global childhood malnutrition — for better or for worse.

Investment and focus has long lagged far behind the opportunity on nutrition. World leaders — the U.S. included — have woefully underinvested in critical nutrition programs for years, collectively failing millions of the world’s most vulnerable children. A smart response to the enormous challenge of malnutrition is about more than planting crops. Investing in the proven, high-impact strategies like a nutrient-rich prenatal diet, exclusive breastfeeding, growth monitoring, and the availability of nutrition-rich foods for a child’s first two years will pay off over a lifetime.

President Obama now has a chance to show real leadership, stepping up to commit \$500 million to nutrition in the final year of his Administration, setting this country and the next Administration on a new path to supporting healthier futures all around the world.

## Write a Letter to the Editor or Oped Calling for Action on Nutrition

1. For a letter to the editor, reference a **recent article in the paper**, and write in a way that will appeal to your community. Mother’s Day (May 8) is a great “hook” everyone can relate to.
2. Tell readers **about the opportunity to secure** a healthy, bright future for every child.
3. Ask your **members of Congress** and the **President** to take action at Nutrition for Growth.
4. Use the “EPIC” format, like the sample below. Remember to keep it short (100-200 words).
5. If your letter or oped gets published, amplify its impact by sending it to your members of Congress, explaining why this issue matters, and asking them to take action. Share it on social media as well, mentioning your member of Congress and the newspaper that published you. Then be sure to share your letter with your fellow advocates and RESULTS staff.

<b><u>E</u>ngage</b>	When we were born our moms made a promise to protect and nurture us so we could reach our full potential. Mother’s Day is when we celebrate the efforts of moms everywhere to deliver on this promise.
<b><u>P</u>roblem</b>	But no matter how hard some moms try, they don’t have the knowhow or wherewithal to ensure that their babies get the nutrition they need to grow and develop properly. Lacking proper nutrition during the critical 1000-day window between pregnancy and age two, many children die. Others are “stunted”, meaning their brains and bodies are irreversibly underdeveloped.
<b><u>I</u>nform about the solution</b>	Ensuring kids get a healthy start to life is about more than food aid or adding calories to their diet. It’s about making sure pregnant women, infants, and toddlers have access to the essential nutrition — not just the calories — they need. This year world leaders will come together to commit to doing a better job at just that.
<b><u>C</u>all to action!</b>	When world leaders gather at the Nutrition for Growth summit later this year, President Obama should be there to commit \$500 million toward nutrition-specific efforts in the last year of his administration. And Congress should support this investment as well. What better gift to ask for this Mother’s Day?