

Infant and young child feeding

Counselling cards for health workers



WHO/HEP/NFS/21.24

Director's guide, second edition – Trainer's guide, second edition (including Web Annex A. Guidelines for follow-up after training; Web Annex B. Supportive supervision/mentoring and monitoring; and Web Annex C. Toolkit for supportive supervision/mentoring and monitoring) – Participant's manual, second edition – Counselling cards for health workers – Guidance on the use of counselling cards – Course handouts.

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Positive counselling skills

This set of cards was developed for you to help counsel mothers and other caregivers about infant and young child feeding. Positive counselling skills are important for your success. Some basic counselling skills presented below include LISTENING AND LEARNING SKILLS, as well as SKILLS FOR BUILDING CONFIDENCE AND GIVING SUPPORT.

LISTENING AND LEARNING SKILLS

1. Use helpful non-verbal communication:
 - Keep your head level with the mother/caregiver
 - Pay attention
 - Remove physical barriers
 - Take time
 - Use appropriate touch
2. Ask open questions
3. Use responses and gestures that show interest
4. Reflect back what the mother/caregiver says
5. Empathize – show that you understand how the mother/caregiver feels
6. Avoid using words that sound judging

SKILLS FOR BUILDING CONFIDENCE AND GIVING SUPPORT

1. Accept what a mother/caregiver thinks and feels
2. Recognize and praise what a mother/caregiver and baby are doing right
3. Give practical help
4. Give a little, relevant information
5. Use simple language
6. Make one or two suggestions, not commands

IYCF three-step counselling

The following THREE-STEP COUNSELLING will help you to counsel, problem-solve and reach an agreement with mothers/caregivers about infant and young child feeding. The three steps are ASSESS, ANALYSE and ACT.

Step 1: ASSESS – ask, listen and observe

- Greet the caregiver, using friendly language and gestures.
- Ask some initial questions that encourage them to talk.
- Listen to what is being said and observe what is going on, using your LISTENING AND LEARNING SKILLS, and SKILLS FOR BUILDING CONFIDENCE AND GIVING SUPPORT.
- Assess the age-appropriate feeding practice(s) and the condition or health of the child and caregiver.

Step 2: ANALYSE – identify difficulty and if there is more than one, prioritize the difficulties

- Decide whether the feeding you observe is age-appropriate and whether the condition or health of the child and caregiver is good.
- If there are no apparent difficulties, praise the caregiver and focus on providing the information needed for the next stage of the child's development.
- If one or more feeding difficulties are present, or the condition or health of the child or caregiver is poor, prioritize the difficulties.
- Answer the caregiver's questions (if any).

Step 3: ACT – discuss, suggest a small amount of relevant information, agree on do-able action

- Depending on the factors analysed above, select a small amount of information to share with the mother or caregiver that is most relevant to their situation.
- Be sure to praise the caregiver for what they are doing well.
- Present options for addressing the feeding difficulty or condition of health of the child or caregiver, in terms of small do-able actions. These actions should be time-bound (within the next few days or weeks).
- Share key information with the caregiver, using appropriate Counselling cards and/or pamphlets and answering questions as needed.
- Help the caregiver select one option that they agree to try, in order to address or overcome the difficulty or condition that has been identified. This is called “reaching an agreement”.
- Suggest where the caregiver can find additional support. Refer if appropriate, and/or encourage participation in educational talks or infant and young child feeding support groups in the community.
- Confirm that the caregiver knows where to find a community volunteer and/or other health worker.
- Agree on when you will meet again, if appropriate.
- Thank the caregiver for their time.

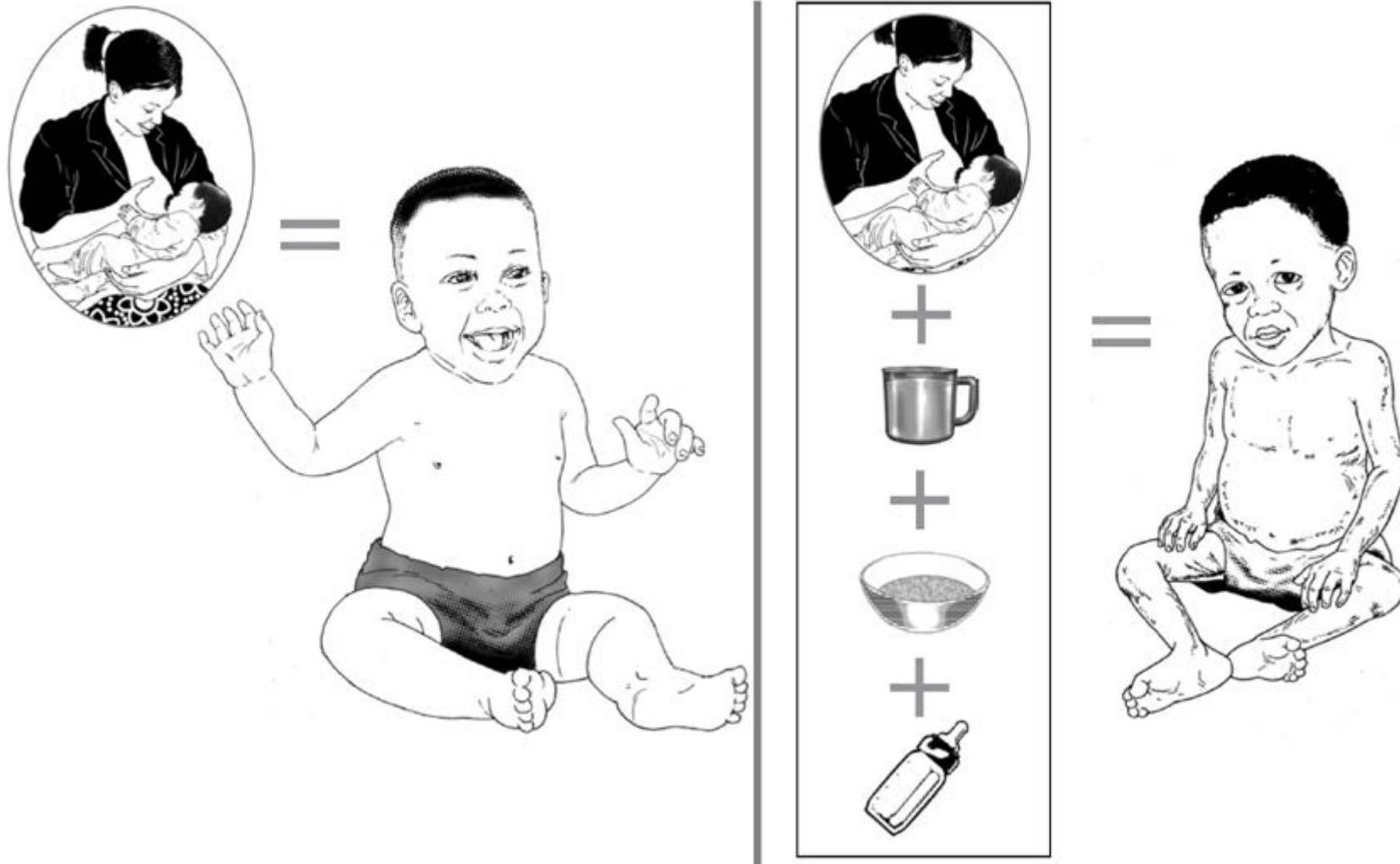
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**During the first 6 months, your baby needs
ONLY breast milk**



The importance of exclusive breastfeeding during the first 6 months



Good attachment



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