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A Behavior Change Approach for Advancing Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices and Early Child Development in Vulnerable West Bank Communities

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Background

The first 1,000 days are critical for nutrition, early learning, and healthy development. In the West Bank, movement restrictions, poverty, limited access to services, and chronic stress threaten children's development.

Study Objective

To assess changes in infant and young child feeding practices, responsive caregiving, early childhood development, and maternal psychosocial well-being following an integrated, community-based behavior change intervention in vulnerable West Bank communities.

Methodology

Quasi-experimental
pre-post design

449
mother-infant pairs

30
vulnerable west bank communities

0-4 mo
infant age at baseline

Feb 2024
Baseline Knowledge & Characteristics

11 Months
GBG intervention group sessions + home visits

Dec 2024 - Jan 2025
Endline feeding, wellbeing, practices

Analysis
Descriptive, paired tests, logistic regression

Results Layout

Holistic Child Development / Nurturing Care Framework

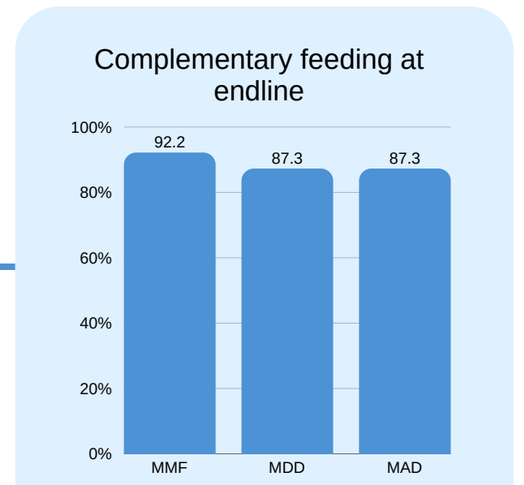
Left alone / with child <10 years

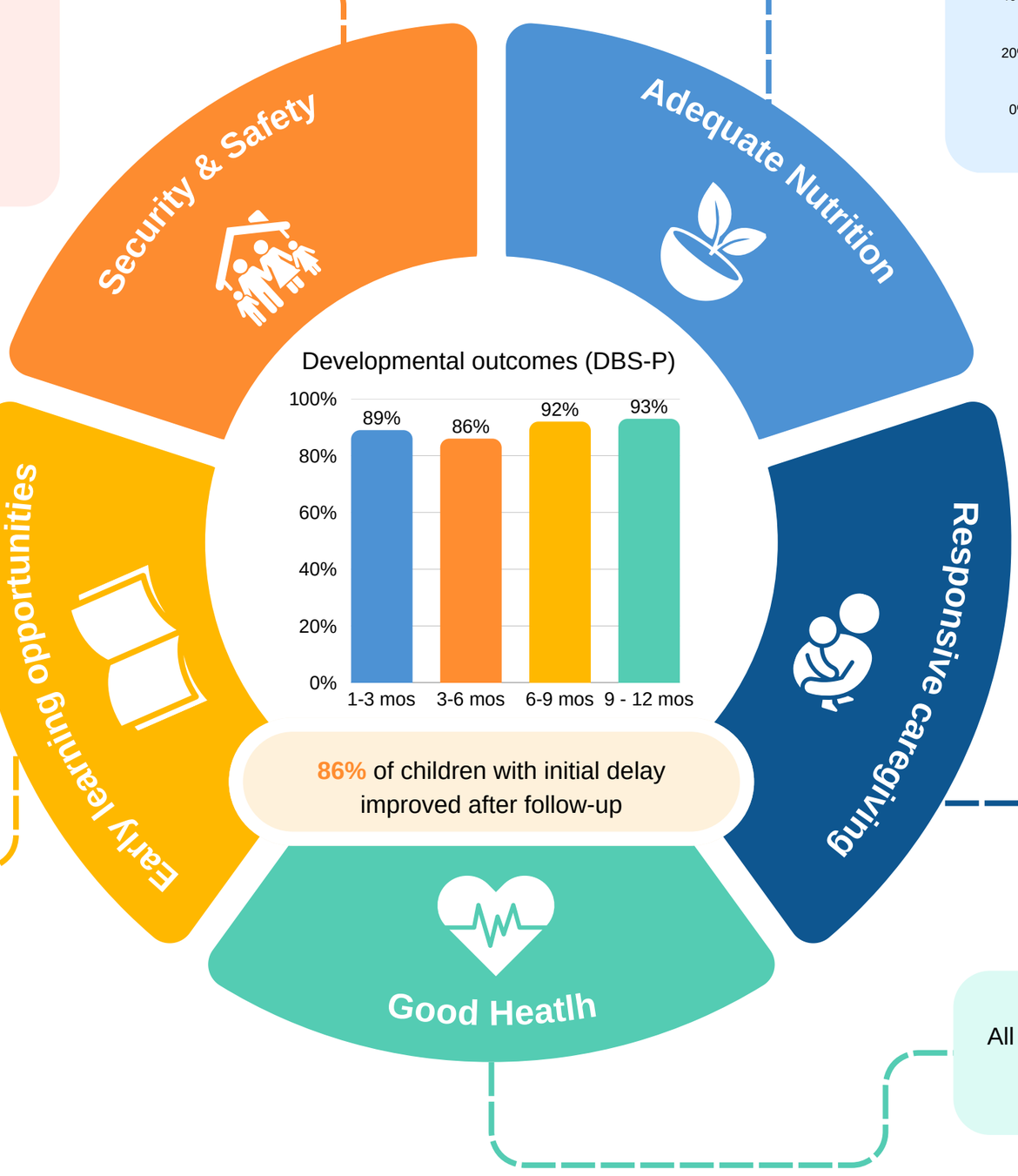
24.3%

21.8%

Statistical Result

McNemar–Bowker χ^2(3, N = 449) = 40.70; p < .001
N = 449 mother–infant dyads

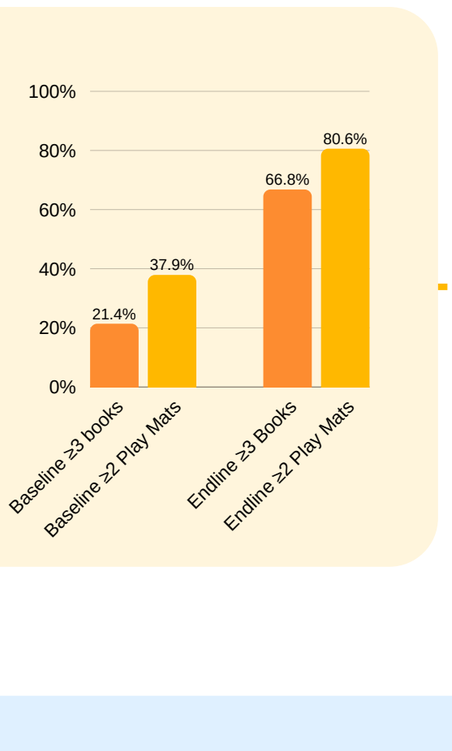




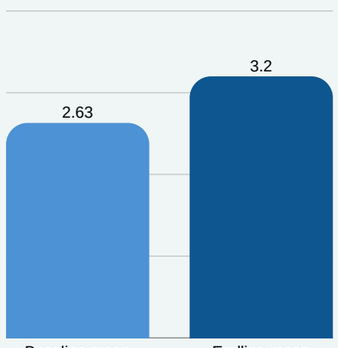
86% of children with initial delay improved after follow-up

Significant improvements in caregiver–child interaction and stimulation ,Reading, storytelling, singing, playing, and outings increased significantly (all p < .001).

All children monitored for age-appropriate immunizations



Enabling Caregiver Factors



Mothers' Mental Wellbeing

Mean difference:
−0.57; 95% CI: −0.65 to −0.49; t(448) = −13.87; p < .001

Maternal knowledge of early child development

Baseline 11.24 (SD 4.15)

Endline 21.25 (SD 2.13)

Paired t-test

Mean difference = -9.93; 95% CI [-10.38, -9.48]; t(448) = -43.29; p < .001

Discussion & Conclusion

The intervention was associated with positive changes in maternal knowledge, wellbeing, complementary feeding, caregiving practices, and developmental screening outcomes. CHW-led nurturing care models may offer a practical and promising strategy to support holistic child development in vulnerable West Bank communities.

Recommendations

Scale up integrated nurturing care programmes through community-based platforms to promote holistic child development in fragile and underserved communities where access to services is limited. Pilot and adapt this approach in other fragile settings across countries to assess its effectiveness, sustainability, and scalability.

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