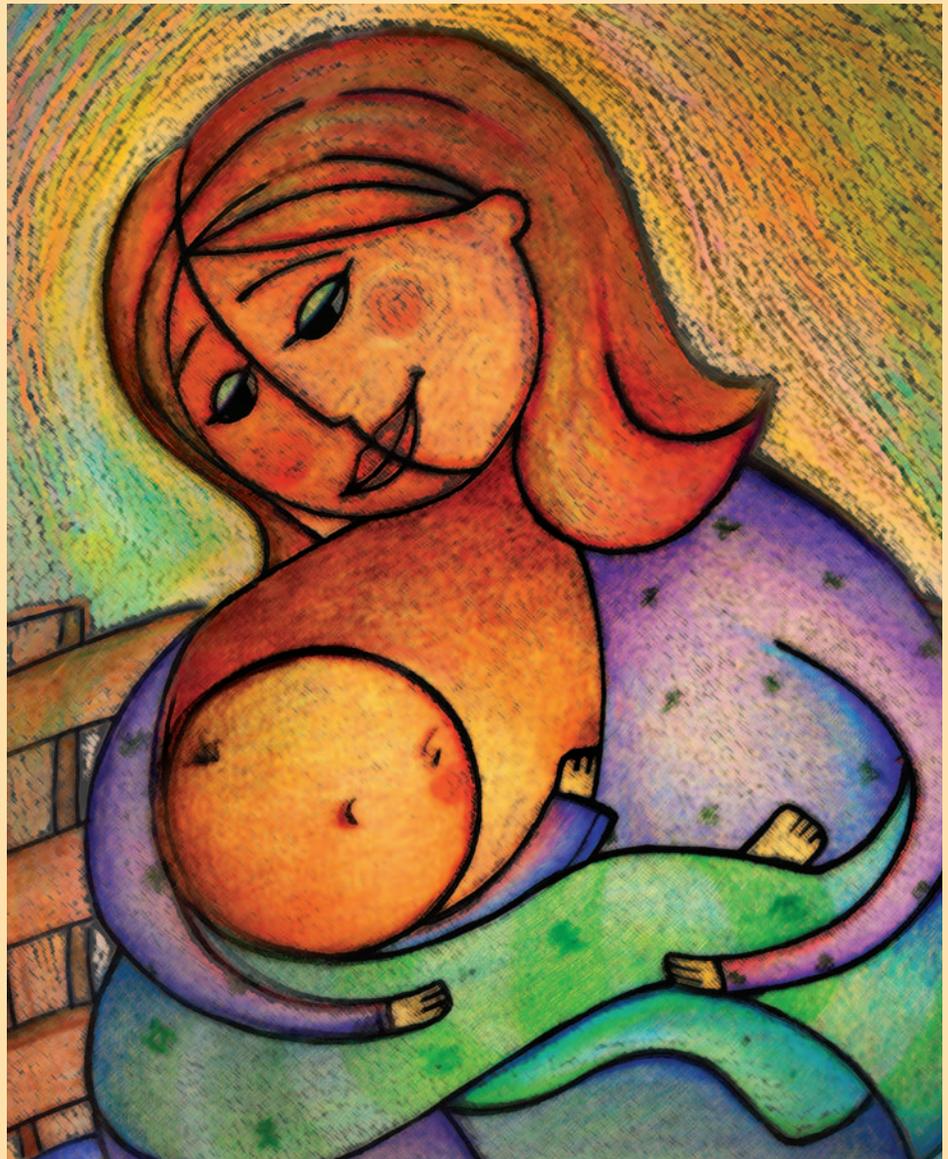


Key Family Practices

for the healthy growth and development



WHO and UNICEF, on the basis of scientific evidence and available experience, are promoting through the Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI) strategy, key practices designed to foster the healthy growth and development of children under five years of age. These practices, presented on the reverse, will contribute to:

- Stimulate physical growth and mental development
- Prevent diseases
- Provide appropriate home care, and
- Identify early signs and symptoms for parents to seek care outside the home



For physical growth and mental development

1. Breastfeed infants exclusively for at least six months. (Mothers found to be HIV positive require counseling about possible alternatives to breastfeeding on the basis of norms and recommendations by WHO/UNICEF/UNAIDS about HIV infection and infant feeding).
2. Starting at six months of age, feed children freshly prepared energy and nutrient-rich complementary foods while continuing to breastfeed up to two years or longer.
3. Ensure that children receive adequate amounts of micronutrients (vitamin A and iron in particular), either in their diet or through supplementation.
4. Promote mental and social development by responding to a child's needs for care through talking, playing, and providing a stimulating environment.

For disease prevention

5. Take children as scheduled to complete a full course of immunizations (BCG, DPT, OPV, and measles) before their first birthday.
6. Dispose of feces, including children's feces safely; wash hands after defecation, before preparing meals, and before feeding children.
7. Protect children in malaria-endemic areas by ensuring that they sleep under insecticide-treated bednets.
8. Adopt and sustain appropriate behavior regarding prevention and care for HIV/AIDS affected people including orphans.

For appropriate home care

9. Continue to feed and offer more fluids, including breastmilk, to children when they are sick.
10. Give sick children appropriate home treatment for infections.
11. Take appropriate actions to prevent and manage child injuries and accidents.
12. Prevent child abuse and neglect and take appropriate action when it has occurred.
13. Ensure that men actively participate in providing childcare and are involved in the reproductive health of the family.

For seeking care

14. Recognize when sick children need treatment outside the home and seek care from appropriate providers.
15. Follow the health worker's advice about treatment, follow-up and referral.
16. Ensure that every pregnant woman has adequate antenatal care. This includes having at least four antenatal visits with an appropriate health care provider, and receiving the recommended doses of the tetanus toxoid vaccination. The mother also needs support from her family and community in seeking care at the time of delivery and during the postpartum and lactation period.