



# 1,000 Conversations to Improve Nutrition



**breadfortheworld**  
HAVE FAITH. END HUNGER.

As women of faith, we join the 1,000 Days movement in the United States and around the world to “scale up nutrition” for women and young children during the 1,000 days from pregnancy to a child’s second birthday.

Our goals are to spread the word about the importance of proper nutrition and to impress on our government leaders the importance of supporting and protecting programs that prioritize nutrition for women and children during this critical 1,000-day window.

To that end, we pledge to have 1,000 conversations about maternal and child nutrition in 1,000 days, including conversations with our representatives in Congress. We will invite our conversation partners to carry the discussion into their communities and gather groups that will in turn pledge to have 1,000 conversations.

## How to Start a Conversation about the 1,000 Days Movement

The key to a good conversation is to share what moves you. Of the information you’ve read, what made you want to do something about nutrition? Once you’ve figured this out, these tips will help you shape your conversation.

### The Opportunity

Explain to your friend or group that you’re trying to raise awareness about the important opportunity we have to give children a better start in life. By improving nutrition for mothers and young children during the 1,000 days between pregnancy and age 2, children grow taller, have better vision, and have stronger immune systems that improve their ability to survive disease throughout their lives. Their intellectual capacity is greater, which leads to better success in school and work. They also earn 10 percent more income throughout their lives, which contributes to a 2-3 percent increase in a country’s GDP.

### The Problem

Without proper nutrition during this critical 1,000 days, children can suffer permanent cognitive and physical delays. They can be shorter, and have poor eyesight and weaker immune systems. With diminished intellectual capacity, they achieve less in school and work, and earn less income— which ultimately impacts a country’s GDP.

### The Solution

Internationally, simple cost-effective measures such as supporting breast-feeding mothers, improving farming techniques, and sharing basic information about nutrition can have a lasting impact on nutrition and health.

- Promoting good nutritional practices, including exclusive breastfeeding for six months, complementary feeding after that, and improved hygiene practices.
- Providing micronutrients for young children and their mothers, including vitamin A supplements, therapeutic zinc supplements for managing diarrhea, de-worming drugs to reduce the loss of nutrients, iron-folic acid supplements for pregnant women to prevent and treat anemia, and iodized oil or salt. Food fortification in staple foods is an effective method of improving access to micronutrients.



Laura Sheahen/Catholic Relief Services

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- Therapeutic feeding for malnourished children with special foods, including ready-to-use therapeutic foods.

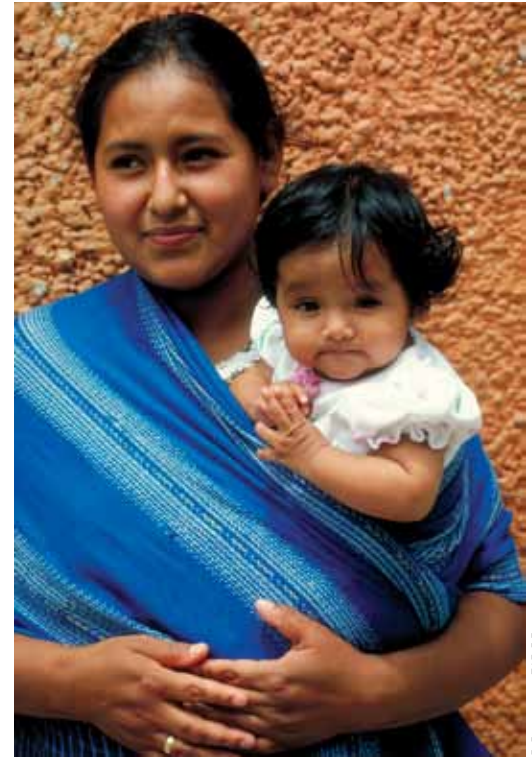
The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U.S. State Department have two flagship programs that incorporate nutrition in their measurements of success. The Global Health Initiative focuses on the health of women and children in a holistic way, as proper nutrition—especially in the 1,000-day window—drastically improves long-term health outcomes.

Feed the Future focuses on improving the productivity of small farmers in developing countries, the majority of whom are women. Programs promote the production and consumption of foods that are rich in nutrients and can lead to more variety in a family’s diet. Increased crop production and greater infrastructure and markets can lead to more income so families can acquire foods that are more nutritious.

In the United States, breast-feeding is promoted. Iron-fortified formula is an alternative. There is emphasis on consuming fruits, vegetables, and whole grains for increased vitamins A, B, C, and E, folate, potassium, magnesium, zinc, and fiber. Milk, cheese, tuna, and eggs provide protein, calcium, vitamins A and D, folate, and riboflavin.

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) improve families’ access to nutritious food. WIC is a federal program that provides nutritious foods, nutrition education, and referrals to health and other social services to participants at no charge. WIC serves low-income pregnant, post-partum, and breast-feeding women, and infants and children up to age 5 who are at nutritional risk. For more information about WIC, visit <http://nwica.org>.

SNAP provides crucial support to needy households and to those making the transition from welfare to work. The program supplements the food budgets of the neediest people through a card that can be used at grocery stores or other authorized locations.



Margaret W. Nea

## The Call to Action

Share ways people can get involved and make a difference:

- Join the conversation on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/womenoffaith1000days](http://www.facebook.com/womenoffaith1000days).
- Pledge at [www.bread.org/go/1000days](http://www.bread.org/go/1000days) to have 1,000 conversations.
- Engage members of Congress in conversation.
- Pray for women and children who struggle for access to nutritious food, and for the 1,000 Days Movement.

## Creative Ways to Hold a Conversation

- Hold a brunch, Tupperware party, scrapbooking party, or barbecue, and give a presentation about maternal and child nutrition.
- Include a letter about maternal and child nutrition in your holiday cards.
- Give a sermon or “minute for mission” at church, or a presentation at a Wednesday night supper or during a Sunday school class.
- Share information in posts on your Twitter or Facebook account or write an article on your blog. Include links to websites where more information is available.
- Invite a friend to coffee to share what you’ve learned.
- Have a conversation with parents at your child’s play group or “Mommy and Me” program.
- Have a baby shower—with or without a baby—using a 1,000 days theme.