Food Systems for Children and Adolescents

Working Together to Secure Nutritious Diets

#foodsystemsmatter

UNICEF Office of Research
Innocenti
Florence, Italy
5 – 7 November 2018

With the support of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
Why do food systems need a special focus on children?

Top 10 reasons to call this meeting

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Reason 1: The number of stunted children has declined in all regions, except in Africa.
Reason 2: The number of overweight children has increased in all regions, including in Africa.
Reason 3: The diets of children in infancy and early childhood are vastly inadequate.

Percentage of children aged 6-23 months in low- and lower-middle-income countries fed with a minimum meal frequency, minimum diet diversity and minimum acceptable diet, 2017
Reason 4: The inadequacy of children’s diets continues through school-age and adolescence.

Only 1 in 4 toddlers are fed a minimum number of food groups per day (diet diversity).

- 50% of adolescent girls in low- and middle-income countries do not eat 3 meals per day; most skip breakfast.
- 40% of adolescent girls in Latin America and the Caribbean consume fast foods daily.
- 46% of adolescents in East Asia and the Pacific do not eat enough fruits and vegetables daily.
Reason 5: The complexity of the food system narrative is overwhelming.
Reason 6: Children’s nutritional needs are not a priority in the food system.
Reason 7: Food environments do not support nutritious diets for children
Reason 8: Children are influenced by others but can also be agents of change.
Reason 9: Most child labour is associated with food production and the food system.

Of the 152 million children in child labour

**AGE PROFILE**
- 48% 5-11 years-olds
- 28% 12-14 years-olds
- 24% 15-17 years-olds

**GENDER**
- 58% 88 million
- 42% 64 million

**ECONOMIC ACTIVITY**
- 70.9% Agriculture
- 11.9% Industry
- 17.2% Services

Reason 10: Children are affected by the consequences of adult food choices.

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Stock of environmental assets

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