Hunger starts in the womb. Malnutrition in the first 1,000 days can lead to irreversible damage to minds and bodies. WFP nourishes children through the whole life cycle, investing in the next generation for a world with zero hunger.
Providing the Right Food at the Right Time

Scientists now know that malnutrition in the first two years of life (the first 1,000 days from conception) can affect mental and physical development into adulthood. Undernourished children are more likely to get sick, have trouble concentrating in school, and may earn less as adults.

Mothers who were undernourished as girls are 40 percent more likely to give birth to children who do not survive to age five. And malnourished mothers are more likely to die in childbirth. This is called inter-generational undernutrition – a cycle that’s hard to break.

WFP provides good, nutritious food and specialized nutrition products to pregnant women and young children, to ensure that whole families reach their physical and mental potential. And pass on a good start in life – to the next generation.

Changing Lives with School Meals

School meals and take-home rations help children grow, thrive and concentrate better. They provide an incentive to families to send children to school and keep them there. They help keep girls, in particular, attending classes.

An extra year of primary school boosts girls’ eventual wages by 10 to 20 percent. An extra year of secondary school: 15 to 25 percent.

Keeping adolescent girls in schools gives them a better education and contributes to raising the age at which they marry or have children. Teenage girls need nourishing food for themselves – and for the day they will become mothers themselves, completing the cycle.