

Overview of Mothers' Knowledge Regarding the Fulfillment of Nutritional Needs among Toddlers in Kapuk Village, Cengkareng Public Health Center Working Area, West Jakarta

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ABSTRACT

Nutritional status plays an important role in children's growth and development. Mothers' knowledge of nutrition is a key factor in meeting toddlers' nutritional needs. This study describes mothers' level of knowledge regarding the fulfillment of toddlers' nutritional needs in Kapuk Village, within the working area of Cengkareng Public Health Center, West Jakarta. This quantitative descriptive study involved 99 mothers of toddlers selected using accidental sampling. Data were collected using a questionnaire on toddler nutrition knowledge and analyzed using descriptive statistics. A total of 62.6% of mothers had good knowledge of toddler nutrition, 29.3% had moderate knowledge, and 8.1% had poor knowledge. In this study, 62.6% of mothers demonstrated good knowledge. Mothers are expected to continue improving their knowledge regarding the fulfillment of their toddlers' nutritional needs.

Keywords: Nutritional Status, Mothers' Knowledge, Toddlers.

I. Introduction

Nutritional status is an important determinant of children's growth, development, health, and future well-being. During the first five years of life, children experience rapid physical and cognitive development and therefore require adequate energy and nutrient intake to support these processes. Inadequate nutrition during this period can impair linear growth, immune function, cognitive development, and overall health. In Indonesia, child malnutrition remains a significant public health concern despite improvements in several nutrition indicators. The country continues to face a triple burden of malnutrition, including undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, and overweight and obesity. Inadequate dietary intake and feeding practices, together with limited access to appropriate health and nutrition services, remain important contributing factors (UNICEF Indonesia, 2024). The national nutrition situation demonstrates the continuing importance of addressing nutritional problems among children under five. According to the Indonesian Nutrition Status Survey (SSGI) 2022, the prevalence of stunting among children under five was 21.6%, wasting was 7.7%, and underweight was 17.1%. Although the prevalence of stunting had declined compared with previous years, these figures indicate that a substantial proportion of Indonesian children continue to experience nutritional problems (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022). The Indonesian government and UNICEF have emphasized that wasting and stunting remain important challenges because undernutrition can

negatively affect children's survival, physical growth, and development. Children experiencing wasting are also at greater risk of subsequently developing stunting, while severe wasting is associated with substantially increased mortality risk (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia & UNICEF, 2024).

The nutritional condition of toddlers is influenced by multiple interconnected factors, including dietary intake, disease, household socioeconomic conditions, access to health services, and caregiving and feeding practices. Among these factors, maternal knowledge is particularly relevant because mothers frequently play a central role in determining the type, quality, frequency, and preparation of food provided to children. Knowledge of nutrition can influence mothers' understanding of children's nutritional requirements and their ability to make appropriate decisions concerning food selection and feeding practices. Evidence from Indonesia indicates that maternal nutrition knowledge is associated with recommended child-feeding practices. A study of mothers in rural Indonesia found that exposure to interpersonal nutrition communication was associated with better knowledge of infant and young child feeding, and that greater knowledge was related to recommended meal frequency, dietary diversity, and adequate dietary practices (Sunguya et al., 2020). These findings suggest that strengthening maternal knowledge is an important component of efforts to improve child nutrition. However, maternal knowledge should not be viewed as an isolated determinant of nutritional status. Nutritional outcomes are also shaped by socioeconomic, environmental, health-service, and behavioral factors. UNICEF Indonesia reports that inadequate feeding practices remain an important contributor to child undernutrition, with many children under five not receiving the recommended diversity and quantity of food needed for optimal growth and development (UNICEF Indonesia, 2024). Consequently, assessing mothers' knowledge remains important because knowledge represents a potentially modifiable factor that can be addressed through health education, nutrition counseling, community-based interventions, and strengthening the role of mothers and caregivers in child nutrition monitoring.

Previous studies have demonstrated that maternal knowledge of child nutrition varies across populations and settings. Research conducted among mothers of preschool children in Indonesia found that approximately half of mothers had relatively good nutritional knowledge, while others had moderate or poor knowledge. The study also identified gaps in mothers' understanding of specific aspects of child nutrition, including nutrient functions and the interpretation of child growth-monitoring information (Lestari et al., 2012). More recent research has continued to emphasize the importance of maternal knowledge in supporting appropriate nutrition-related caregiving. Haryanti et al. (2024), for example, identified maternal knowledge as an important area for investigation among mothers of children affected by stunting and noted that limited knowledge can constrain the development of effective interventions targeting caregiving practices.

The local context is also important because nutritional problems may vary substantially between communities. This study focuses on Kapuk Village, within the working area of Cengkareng Public Health Center, West Jakarta. Based on the preliminary data presented in the research setting, 1,284 cases of nutritional status problems were recorded among 7,332 toddlers in the area. This local situation highlights the need to understand factors that may influence the fulfillment of toddlers' nutritional needs. In a community setting, mothers' knowledge is particularly relevant because mothers are directly involved in selecting, preparing, and providing food and in recognizing changes in their children's nutritional condition. Community-based health services, including posyandu, also provide an important setting for disseminating nutrition information and strengthening mothers' capacity to monitor and fulfill their children's nutritional needs.

Although previous studies have examined maternal nutritional knowledge and its relationship with child-feeding practices or nutritional status, evidence describing the specific level of mothers' knowledge regarding the fulfillment of toddlers' nutritional needs in Kapuk Village remains limited. The available literature therefore does not sufficiently describe the distribution of maternal knowledge within this specific local population. Establishing such a baseline is important for identifying whether mothers' knowledge is predominantly good, moderate, or poor and for providing evidence that can support the development of more targeted nutrition education and community health interventions. Therefore, this study was conducted

to describe the level of mothers' knowledge regarding the fulfillment of toddlers' nutritional needs in Kapuk Village, within the working area of Cengkareng Public Health Center, West Jakarta. By providing a local description of maternal nutritional knowledge, this study is expected to contribute empirical information for community health workers and public health practitioners in designing appropriate nutrition education and counseling strategies for mothers of toddlers. The findings may also provide a baseline for subsequent research examining the relationship between maternal knowledge, feeding practices, and the nutritional status of children under five.

II. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Nutritional Needs and Nutritional Status of Toddlers

Nutritional status is an important indicator of child health because adequate nutrition supports physical growth, cognitive development, immune function, and overall well-being. The toddler period is particularly important because children experience rapid growth and require adequate energy, protein, vitamins, and minerals. Inadequate nutritional intake during this period can increase the risk of growth faltering and nutritional deficiencies. The World Health Organization (WHO) identifies the period from 6 to 23 months as a critical window for child nutrition because nutritional requirements increase substantially during this period, while the risk of growth faltering and nutrient deficiencies is also high (World Health Organization [WHO], 2023). Meeting toddlers' nutritional needs involves not only the quantity of food consumed but also dietary diversity, meal frequency, food safety, and appropriate feeding practices. WHO recommends that complementary foods introduced from around six months should be nutritionally adequate, safe, age-appropriate, and provided responsively. As children grow, the frequency, consistency, and variety of food should gradually increase according to their developmental needs (WHO, 2023). In Indonesia, nutritional problems among children remain an important public health concern. UNICEF Indonesia reports that the country continues to face a triple burden of malnutrition consisting of undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, and overweight and obesity. Inadequate diets and feeding practices are identified as important contributors to these problems. UNICEF further reports that many Indonesian children do not receive the recommended diversity and quantity of foods necessary for optimal growth and development (UNICEF Indonesia, 2024).

2.2. Maternal Knowledge of Toddler Nutrition

Mothers play an important role in determining the food provided to toddlers because they are commonly involved in food selection, preparation, portioning, and feeding. Therefore, maternal knowledge is an important factor in supporting appropriate nutritional practices. Knowledge enables mothers to understand children's nutritional requirements, recognize nutritious food choices, and make appropriate decisions concerning feeding practices. A systematic review of feeding practices among Indonesian children found that individual factors influencing feeding practices were largely related to maternal characteristics, including knowledge, perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and skills. The review emphasized that understanding these factors is important for identifying barriers and opportunities to improve child-feeding practices in Indonesia (Blaney et al., 2015). Empirical evidence also demonstrates an association between maternal knowledge and feeding practices. Utama et al. (2020) examined 1,734 mothers with children under two years of age in rural Indonesia and found that exposure to interpersonal nutrition communication was associated with increased maternal knowledge of infant and young child feeding. Furthermore, maternal knowledge was associated with recommended minimum meal frequency, dietary diversity, and minimum acceptable diet. These findings suggest that maternal knowledge may serve as an important behavioral pathway through which nutrition communication can contribute to improved feeding practices.

2.3. Maternal Knowledge and Child Nutritional Status

The relationship between maternal knowledge and child nutritional status has been examined in several Indonesian studies, although the findings are not entirely consistent across settings. Sundari and Khayati (2020), in a study involving 80 mothers and toddlers in Semarang Regency, found that 48.8% of mothers had good nutritional knowledge and reported a statistically significant relationship between maternal nutritional knowledge and toddler nutritional status ($p < 0.001$). The findings indicate that mothers' understanding of balanced nutrition may contribute to differences in children's nutritional conditions. However, other studies demonstrate that maternal knowledge alone does not necessarily determine nutritional status. A study in Padaan Village, Semarang Regency, involving 68 mothers and toddlers found that most mothers had poor nutritional knowledge, but the statistical analysis did not identify a significant relationship between maternal knowledge and toddler nutritional status ($p = 0.169$). This finding suggests that nutritional status is multidimensional and may also be influenced by socioeconomic conditions, food availability, health conditions, and environmental factors (Journal of Holistics and Health Sciences, 2023). The variation in findings reinforces the importance of examining maternal knowledge within its specific community context rather than assuming that knowledge alone determines nutritional outcomes. For descriptive studies, identifying the distribution of mothers' knowledge provides an important baseline for determining areas requiring nutrition education and further investigation.

2.4. Nutrition Education and Community-Based Intervention

Nutrition education is an important strategy for improving mothers' understanding of child nutrition and supporting appropriate feeding practices. WHO emphasizes that evidence-based complementary feeding guidance should be integrated into programs involving caregivers, health professionals, community workers, and public health institutions (WHO, 2023). Evidence from Indonesia also supports the potential value of nutrition education. A randomized controlled trial conducted in Indonesia evaluated a nutrition education program designed to improve mothers' knowledge, self-efficacy, and complementary feeding practices and to reduce undernutrition among children under two years of age. The study demonstrates the relevance of educational interventions as part of community-based strategies addressing child undernutrition (Mardani et al., 2024). Community-based nutrition services such as posyandu therefore represent an important setting for delivering nutrition information to mothers. UNICEF Indonesia has emphasized strengthening community-level services and the role of community health workers in addressing nutrition vulnerabilities among mothers and children (UNICEF Indonesia, 2024).

2.5. Research Position and Gap

Previous research has established that maternal knowledge is an important component of appropriate child-feeding practices, while several studies have also reported an association between maternal knowledge and toddler nutritional status. Nevertheless, findings differ across populations, indicating that maternal knowledge should be examined according to the characteristics and context of each community. Existing studies have also focused predominantly on relationships between knowledge and nutritional status or feeding practices, whereas descriptive evidence concerning the distribution of maternal knowledge in specific urban communities remains important. The present study addresses this gap by describing mothers' level of knowledge regarding the fulfillment of toddlers' nutritional needs in Kapuk Village, within the working area of Cengkareng Public Health Center, West Jakarta. The study provides a local baseline regarding whether mothers' knowledge falls into good, moderate, or poor categories. This information can support the development of more targeted nutrition education and counseling programs and provide a basis for future research examining the relationship between maternal knowledge, feeding practices, and toddler nutritional status.

III. Research Method

3.1. Research Design and Participants

This study employed a quantitative descriptive research design. The study population consisted of mothers who had toddlers and lived in Kapuk Village, within the working area of Cengkareng Public Health Center, West Jakarta. A total of 99 mothers with toddlers participated in the study. Respondents were selected using accidental sampling.

3.2. Research Instrument

The research instrument was a structured questionnaire used to collect data on mothers' knowledge regarding the fulfillment of toddlers' nutritional needs. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section collected respondents' demographic characteristics, including age, highest educational attainment, and occupation. The second section consisted of 21 multiple-choice questions assessing mothers' knowledge of toddler nutrition. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire were tested before the instrument was used for data collection. The knowledge variable examined in this study was mothers' knowledge regarding the fulfillment of toddlers' nutritional needs.

3.3. Study Setting

The study was conducted in Kapuk Village, within the working area of Cengkareng Public Health Center, West Jakarta. Kapuk Village was selected as the study setting because of the reported high prevalence of nutritional problems among toddlers. The study area recorded 1,284 cases of nutritional problems among a total of 7,332 toddlers.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

Data collection began by contacting the head of the nutrition section at Cengkareng Public Health Center to obtain permission to participate in community health service activities (posyandu). The questionnaires were subsequently distributed directly to mothers of toddlers who participated as respondents. Before completing the questionnaire, each respondent was provided with informed consent and was asked to give consent to participate in the study. Respondents who agreed to participate completed their demographic information and answered all questions in the questionnaire. After the questionnaires had been completed, the researcher collected them and thanked the respondents for their participation.

3.5. Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Frequency distributions and percentages were calculated to describe respondents' demographic characteristics and their levels of knowledge regarding the fulfillment of toddlers' nutritional needs. Mothers' knowledge was categorized into three levels: poor, moderate, and good.

IV. Result and Discussion

Data were collected from 99 mothers of toddlers in Kapuk Village, within the working area of Cengkareng Public Health Center, West Jakarta. The characteristics examined in this study included age, educational level, and occupation. These characteristics were described to provide an overview of the respondents and to contextualize their level of knowledge regarding the fulfillment of toddlers' nutritional needs.

4.1. Respondents' Characteristics

The distribution of respondents according to age, educational level, and occupation is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Characteristics in Kapuk Village, Cengkareng Public Health Center Working Area (n = 99)

Variable	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age		
25–30 years	41	41.4
31–35 years	22	22.2
36–40 years	20	20.2
>40 years	16	16.2
Education		
Elementary education (SD)	20	20.2
Junior secondary education (SMP)	25	25.3
Senior secondary education (SMA/K)	52	52.3
Higher education	2	2.0
Occupation		
Employed	25	25.3
Unemployed	74	74.7

The results show that the largest proportion of respondents were mothers aged 25–30 years, accounting for 41 respondents (41.4%). This was followed by respondents aged 31–35 years (22.2%), 36–40 years (20.2%), and over 40 years (16.2%). Thus, most respondents were in the early adult age group. Age is one of the demographic characteristics that may influence a person's exposure to information and experience in caring for children. However, because this study used a descriptive design, the distribution of age cannot be interpreted as evidence that age determines maternal nutritional knowledge. The predominance of mothers aged 25–30 years is consistent with the findings of Lanuddin et al. (2023), who reported that the largest proportion of mothers in their study were 26–35 years old. The relatively young age of the mothers in the present study may indicate that most respondents were in a period in which they were actively involved in childcare and household decision-making. Nevertheless, knowledge is influenced by multiple factors, including formal education, access to information, previous experience, interaction with health workers, and exposure to nutrition programs.

Educational level was dominated by senior secondary education, with 52 respondents (52.3%). Twenty-five respondents (25.3%) had completed junior secondary education, 20 respondents (20.2%) had completed elementary education, and only 2 respondents (2.0%) had higher education. This distribution indicates that the respondents generally had a moderate level of formal education, with more than half having completed senior secondary school. Education is often considered an important contextual factor in health literacy because formal education can facilitate an individual's ability to obtain, understand, evaluate, and apply health-related information. Nevertheless, formal education should not be considered the only source of

nutritional knowledge. Mothers may also obtain information from health workers, posyandu activities, family members, mass media, social media, and other community-based sources. Therefore, the relatively low proportion of mothers with higher education does not necessarily indicate low nutritional knowledge.

The occupational characteristics showed that 74 respondents (74.7%) were categorized as unemployed, while 25 respondents (25.3%) were employed. The high proportion of unemployed mothers suggests that most respondents were likely to spend considerable time within the household environment. This situation may provide greater opportunities for mothers to participate directly in food preparation and childcare. However, being unemployed does not automatically imply greater or lower nutritional knowledge because access to information and health education can occur regardless of employment status.

4.2. Mothers' Knowledge Regarding the Fulfillment of Nutritional Needs

The distribution of maternal knowledge is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Mothers' Knowledge Regarding the Fulfillment of Nutritional Needs in Kapuk Village, Cengkareng Public Health Center Working Area (n = 99)

Mothers' Knowledge	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Poor	8	8.1
Moderate	29	29.3
Good	62	62.6
Total	99	100

The findings indicate that the majority of respondents had good knowledge regarding the fulfillment of toddlers' nutritional needs. A total of 62 mothers (62.6%) were categorized as having good knowledge, 29 mothers (29.3%) had moderate knowledge, and 8 mothers (8.1%) had poor knowledge. Therefore, although the largest proportion of respondents demonstrated good knowledge, 37.4% of mothers remained in the moderate or poor knowledge categories. This finding is important because it indicates that nutrition education should continue to reach mothers who may still require additional information and support. The relatively high proportion of mothers with good knowledge may reflect the availability of nutrition information through community-based health services. In Indonesia, posyandu provides an important platform for health promotion, growth monitoring, and communication concerning maternal and child nutrition. Evidence from rural Indonesia demonstrates that interpersonal communication interventions delivered through community health services, including posyandu, were associated with increased maternal knowledge of infant and young child feeding. Maternal knowledge was also associated with recommended feeding practices, including minimum meal frequency, dietary diversity, and minimum acceptable diet (Utama et al., 2020).

The findings are also relevant to current recommendations concerning the nutritional needs of young children. The World Health Organization emphasizes that the period from 6 to 23 months is particularly important because children experience rapid development and face an increased risk of growth faltering and nutrient deficiencies. Appropriate complementary feeding requires adequate quantity and quality of food, dietary diversity, safe preparation, appropriate meal frequency, and responsive feeding practices (World Health Organization [WHO], 2023). Therefore, mothers' knowledge needs to encompass not only an understanding of the concept of nutrition but also practical knowledge concerning food selection, preparation, frequency, diversity, hygiene, and responsive feeding. The finding that 62.6% of respondents had good knowledge is broadly comparable with previous research conducted in Indonesia. Lufianti and Rahmawati (2021) reported that 77% of mothers had good knowledge of nutrition among toddlers, while 22% had moderate knowledge and 1% had poor knowledge. Although the proportions differ, both studies demonstrate that good maternal nutritional knowledge represents the largest category. Such consistency suggests that maternal knowledge of toddler nutrition may be relatively adequate in some Indonesian

communities, while a smaller but meaningful proportion of mothers still require additional educational support.

The present findings also correspond with Sundari and Khayati (2020), who reported that maternal knowledge of nutrition was associated with toddler nutritional status. Their findings indicate the potential importance of maternal understanding of nutritional requirements in supporting appropriate child nutrition. However, the present study did not measure toddlers' anthropometric nutritional status or test the statistical relationship between maternal knowledge and nutritional status. Therefore, the current findings should be interpreted specifically as a description of maternal knowledge rather than evidence that good knowledge directly results in better nutritional status. The high proportion of mothers with good knowledge may also be related to their educational background. More than half of the respondents had completed senior secondary education. Education can facilitate the acquisition and processing of health information, although knowledge is not exclusively determined by formal schooling. In the present study, only 2.0% of mothers had higher education, yet 62.6% overall demonstrated good nutritional knowledge. This suggests that nutrition-related knowledge can be acquired through sources other than higher formal education, including community health services, health promotion activities, family experience, and access to information.

Another important finding is that 29.3% of respondents had moderate knowledge and 8.1% had poor knowledge. These groups represent 37 respondents, or more than one-third of the sample. Their presence indicates that information about toddler nutrition has not necessarily been received or understood equally by all mothers. The WHO emphasizes that appropriate complementary feeding depends on accurate information and skilled support from families, communities, and health systems. Thus, the existence of mothers with moderate and poor knowledge highlights the continued need for accessible, practical, and context-specific nutrition education. The findings concerning knowledge should also be considered in relation to the specific content assessed by the questionnaire. The original study reported that approximately 16.7% of mothers demonstrated knowledge concerning healthy foods and the nutrients contained in food. This finding suggests that although the overall classification of knowledge was predominantly good, knowledge may not be equally strong across all specific aspects of toddler nutrition. A mother may understand the general concept of healthy nutrition while still having limited knowledge of nutrient composition, dietary diversity, or the specific nutritional requirements of toddlers. Consequently, nutrition education should not focus solely on general messages but should address practical aspects of food selection and meal planning.

The role of information access is particularly relevant in the current digital environment. Mothers can obtain nutrition information from social media and other online sources in addition to formal health services. However, the availability of information does not necessarily guarantee that the information is accurate, understandable, or appropriately applied. For this reason, health workers remain important in providing evidence-based nutrition information and helping mothers distinguish reliable information from inappropriate recommendations. Community-based counseling can complement information obtained through digital media by providing opportunities for mothers to ask questions and receive explanations based on their children's needs. The results also need to be interpreted within the broader context of child nutrition. Good maternal knowledge is an important resource, but nutritional outcomes are influenced by multiple factors. Household food availability, economic resources, food preferences, sanitation, illness, access to health services, and actual feeding practices may influence the nutritional status of toddlers. Thus, the finding that 62.6% of mothers had good knowledge should not be interpreted to mean that 62.6% of toddlers necessarily have good nutritional status. Knowledge represents one component of the pathway between nutrition information and child health outcomes.

From a public health perspective, the findings provide a useful baseline for nutrition promotion in Kapuk Village. The predominance of good knowledge is a positive finding, but the 37.4% of mothers with moderate or poor knowledge should remain a target group for further education. Interventions can focus on practical topics such as dietary diversity, age-appropriate meal frequency, nutrient-dense foods, food hygiene, responsive feeding, and recognition of signs of nutritional problems. WHO recommendations emphasize gradually increasing food variety, consistency, and frequency according to the child's age and developmental

needs, while maintaining safe and responsive feeding practices. Overall, the results demonstrate that most mothers in Kapuk Village had good knowledge regarding the fulfillment of toddlers' nutritional needs. This finding is encouraging because adequate nutritional knowledge may support mothers in making informed decisions about their children's diets. Nevertheless, the presence of moderate and poor knowledge categories indicates that nutrition education remains necessary. The results also highlight the importance of strengthening community-based nutrition services and providing consistent, evidence-based information to mothers. Because this study used a descriptive quantitative design, the findings are limited to describing the distribution of maternal knowledge and respondent characteristics. No causal inference can be made regarding the influence of age, education, occupation, or knowledge on toddlers' nutritional status. Future studies should consider examining the relationship between maternal knowledge and objectively measured nutritional status, dietary diversity, feeding practices, socioeconomic characteristics, and exposure to nutrition education. Such research would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing toddler nutrition in the Kapuk Village community.

V. Conclusion

This study described the level of mothers' knowledge regarding the fulfillment of toddlers' nutritional needs in Kapuk Village, within the working area of Cengkareng Public Health Center, West Jakarta. Among the 99 respondents, the largest proportion of mothers were 25–30 years old (41.4%), had completed senior secondary education (52.3%), and were unemployed (74.7%). Regarding nutritional knowledge, 62 respondents (62.6%) had good knowledge, 29 respondents (29.3%) had moderate knowledge, and 8 respondents (8.1%) had poor knowledge. The findings indicate that most mothers demonstrated good knowledge regarding the fulfillment of toddlers' nutritional needs. Nevertheless, 37.4% of respondents were still categorized as having moderate or poor knowledge, indicating that nutrition education and counseling remain important, particularly to strengthen mothers' understanding of healthy food choices, nutrient requirements, dietary diversity, and appropriate feeding practices. Community-based health services, including posyandu, can continue to serve as an important setting for providing accessible and evidence-based nutrition education. Because this study employed a descriptive quantitative design, the findings describe the distribution of maternal knowledge and do not establish causal relationships between respondent characteristics, maternal knowledge, and toddlers' nutritional status. Further research is recommended to examine the relationship between maternal knowledge and objectively measured nutritional status, dietary practices, and other factors that may influence the fulfillment of toddlers' nutritional needs.

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