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HEALTH | POLICY BRIEF

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Poster Child for Healthy Growth

In rural Zambia, simple, low-cost growth charts reduced malnutrition.



Key Findings

- Simple growth charts, which allowed parents to see if their child had a normal height for their age, did not reduce growth deficits on average among the 547 children in the study, but among malnourished children, reduced stunting by 22 percentage points.
- In contrast, inviting caregivers to quarterly meetings to learn if their children had a normal height and weight and providing food supplements to malnourished children had no impact on rates of stunting.
- Neither home-based growth charts nor community-based monitoring were found to impact children's cognitive development.
- Home-based growth charts appear to be a cost-effective tool to reduce physical growth deficits in this context. For every dollar that was invested in growth charts, children who otherwise would have been stunted gained an estimated \$16 in additional lifetime wages.

RESEARCHERS

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COUNTRY

Zambia

FUNDING

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

SAMPLE

127 villages (547 children 6-24 months old)

SOURCE

Fink, Günther, Rachel Levenson, Sarah Temble, and Peter C. Rockers, "Home and community-based growth monitoring to reduce early-life growth faltering among infants: a cluster-randomised controlled trial." *The American journal of clinical nutrition* (2017) apn107545.

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