



CHILD SURVIVAL FACTSHEETS

GROWTH MONITORING

Children need to be weighed and measured regularly from birth to adulthood, while parents need to understand the results and learn what action to take.

Likewise, growth data of populations of children must be readily available to health authorities and policy makers so that the nutritional needs of children for whom they are responsible can be addressed by public health interventions. In order for growth monitoring data to promote child survival, it must be:

- **Accurate**
- **Correctly interpreted and understood**
- **Acted upon!**

In 2007, the World Health Organization released new International Child Growth Standards for children ages 0-19 **which apply to all populations**. The WHO states that the growth standards “depict normal childhood growth under optimal environmental conditions and can be used to assess children everywhere, regardless of ethnicity, socio-economic status and type of feeding.”

Practical Application

Understanding the science of “Anthropometry” and using the growth charts to assess children can be complicated for mothers, volunteers, and even Health Workers and other professionals. Therefore, MAMA Project created tools and systems, including easy to use interpretation charts to facilitate the application of these standards. The information gained and rapidly interpreted can help child survival efforts by helping to focus community-based nutritional rehabilitation efforts.

The basic data utilized when possible are accurate age, weight, length or height mid upper arm circumference, and, for women and children 5-19, Body Mass Index.

What tools can be used to monitor growth?

- **Lap Infantometer:** While mother holds young child, Health Worker measures length and gives instant interpretation with either congratulations or counsel on steps to take for growth faltering.
- **Health Flagpole:** Child age 2-19 steps on scale, then stands at flagpole. From the charts, the mother can be told immediately if her child is normal or acutely or chronically malnourished and to what severity.
- **Nutrition Ruler:** Children 12-60 months, can be screened for malnutrition and women of child-bearing age for higher maternity risk.

