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In this brief, Innovations for Poverty Action has compiled evidence from randomized evaluations of programs that aim to support a child's first 1,000 days, in addition to evidence from academic reviews of high-quality

trials in maternal and child health and early childhood development.

While all the interventions in this brief have been rigorously tested, sometimes solutions that work in one context may not work as well in another. In addition, while many of these interventions have been demonstrated to improve child health and development in trial settings, delivery (especially to remote populations) at scale will be more challenging. Careful monitoring and evaluation as these programs are adapted to a new context will help stakeholders understand whether programs produce the intended results.

Based on this research, the following are key lessons to consider:

1. Supporting women's mental and physical health can improve both maternal and child health.
2. Providing multifaceted support to families, including parenting programs and a strong social safety net, can positively affect children's development in many areas.
3. Bundling interventions that increase consumption of vitamin-rich food in conjunction with interventions that facilitate nutrient absorption can improve program effectiveness.
4. Information on basic health practices alone does not seem to increase child weight or decrease anemia.
5. Financial incentives—for households to seek care and for workers to provide it—can lead to improvements in child health and/or development.
6. Water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) programs appear to have little to no impact on child growth and development; the ability of these programs to reduce diarrheal prevalence is more mixed.
7. Large cash grants can lead to rapid nutritional gains for children, as well as improvements on growth and development.
8. Simple behavioral interventions, such as home-based growth monitoring, may also be promising.

Reducing Malnutrition and Promoting Early Childhood Development: Evidence from Randomized Evaluations

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