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Title: Working together in the Western Cape: The First 1000 Days Initiative

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Important facts are known about the first 1000 days period including the profound influence of nutrition. Science has shown that lifelong health is influenced by what happens in the earliest years of life. A nurturing, responsive relationship between a child and caregiver during this period influences a child's physical, social and emotional health throughout the lifespan.

The Western Cape Province (WCP) is facing a series of interrelated challenges and as government developed plans to ensure that the vision of an "open-opportunity society to all" is put into action.

Provincial Strategic Goals (PSGs) and several game changers have been prioritised for implementation to bring about change. A First 1000 Days Initiative is one of the key priority areas in process and the Health Department is leading processes with participation of Internal and external stakeholders.

The First 1000 day's initiative is to ensure optimal wellness for children, families and the community at large. Key concepts have been adapted for the context into a first 1000 days project initiative framework. A life course approach has been applied and 3 key foundation areas have been grouped as follows; Nutrition and Health, Nurture, Care and Support, Safety, Protection and Stimulation.

The initiative provides opportunities for lifelong health and wellness for children in the WCP through the implementation of health specific interventions, intersectorial interventions and a communication strategy underscored by Monitoring and Evaluation. Internal operational oversight and coordinating structures are in place to and accountability is ensured through a high level transversal management system.