

Key Informant Module 1

Foods for Infants and Young Children

Background

This module uses the “free listing” method. You will find a general discussion about free listing in Part II in the section on research methods. The specific purpose of this module is to generate the lists of foods that are given to infants at different stages of complementary feeding. This information will be used for several purposes in the rest of the study, including deciding what foods you will use for the rating exercises with mother-respondents.

Over the 18-month period from about six months, when complementary foods are first introduced to infants to 24 months, when most children are eating family foods, there are many changes in what kinds of foods are given. Therefore, it is important to ask about foods for specific age groups. Based on previous research on complementary feeding, we have divided this period into four different age groups: (a) 6-8 months; (b) 9-11 months; (c) 12-17 months; and (d) 18-23 months. How to obtain information from your key informants about each of these different age groups is described below at the beginning of the procedures section.

Procedures

All of your key informants will have an IYC because that was a criteria for selecting them. With 8 key informants you should have all of the 4 age groups represented, with 2 in each age group. However, relying on only 2 women for an age group to give you a list of the foods for that age group is not a good idea because this is such a small number. Therefore, you should start by asking your respondent first about the age group of children who are the same age as her own IYC, and then ask “backward in time” and “forward in time” for the other age groups. For example, for the two women with children 6-8 months of age you will start with this age group and then ask them about the older age groups, sequentially. For the 2 women whose children are already 18-23 months, you start with this age group and ask “backward.”

You will see, below, that the way you phrase the request for a list needs to be modified, depending on the age of the respondent’s child. If the child is very young, you use the present tense when asking about young infants, whereas you will have to put that suggestion in the past tense if the child is older, and vice versa. If the child is very young you will use the future tense for 3 age groups, asking about what she is likely to give and what she knows about what children of these ages are given. In any case the goal is to get as large a list as possible. Later you will select which foods to focus on.

Be sure to get as complete a list as possible by asking the respondent whether there are any other foods she can think of before going on to the next age group.

Questions

(a) For infants 6-8 months of age

1. *“To begin my questions about how babies are fed, I would like to know about the kinds of foods that babies are given when they are first starting to eat something in addition to breastmilk, babies of about 6-8 months. As you think about that you could start by listing the foods that you give (gave) your own baby.*

2. *Anything else?*

3. *Are there any foods you don't give your child, but some people give to their babies when they are first starting to eat?*

(b) For infants 9-11 months:

1. *When you think about children who are about 9-11 months of age, what kinds of foods are they given to eat? (You can start with your own child...)*

2. *Anything else?*

3. *Are there any foods you don't give (didn't give) your child, but some people give to their babies when they are 9-11 months?*

(c) For infants 12-17 months:

1. *Let's talk now about children 12-17 months of age. What kinds of foods are given to children of this age? As you think about that you could start by listing the foods you give (gave, are likely to give) your own child.*

2. *Anything else?*

3. *Are there any foods you don't give your child, but some people give their children when they are 12-17 months?*

(d) For infants 18-23 months:

1. *Please tell me about the kinds of foods that are given to young children over a year and a half, and up to two years of age. You don't have to tell me about all the regular foods that are made for everyone in the family. I would just like to know about any foods that are made specially for young children or family foods that are prepared differently before they are fed to young children. Do you think of any foods like that? You could start by thinking about how you feed (will feed) your own child.*

2. *Anything else?*

3. *Are there any foods you don't give or prepare for your child, but some people give their children when they are 18-23 months?*

Use the age-appropriate Key Informant Module 1 Free Listing data-recording forms to write down the information the respondent gives you. Put the answers down in the sequence she uses. Be sure to note any comments she makes as she gives you her lists.