



# Malnutrition and Cognitive Milestones in Early Childhood: A Psychological Perspective on Angola's Challenges

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## Abstract

Malnutrition is a significant health issue affecting early childhood development in Angola. A mixed-methods approach combining qualitative interviews with anthropometric measurements of children under the age of five in rural areas of Angola. Malnutrition was found to significantly impair cognitive development, particularly in arithmetic skills, with approximately one-third of malnourished children showing delayed milestones compared to their peers without nutritional deficiencies. Psychological support and targeted nutrition programmes are crucial for mitigating the effects of malnutrition on early childhood development. Rural healthcare workers should be trained in assessing and addressing cognitive delays, while policymakers should prioritise community-based interventions that integrate psychological care with nutritional assistance.

**Keywords:** *Angolan, Anthropometrics, Cognitive Development, Mixed Methods, Nutritional Status, Psychological Factors, Early Childhood Development*

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