

## ***Empowering Mothers: Relationship of Toddler Mother Class Participation on Maternal Knowledge of Toddler Nutrition in Karangjati Village***

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<b>Article Info</b>	<b>Abstract</b>
<p><i>Article History</i>  Submitted, 2026-01-20  Accepted, 2026-02-29  Published, 2026-03-13</p> <p><i>Keywords: Participation in Mother Toddler Class, Knowledge, Nutritional Status</i></p>	<p><i>The issue of toddler nutrition requires special attention based on the results of the 2022 Indonesian Nutritional Status Survey (SSGI), the prevalence of malnutrition in toddlers in Indonesia increased to 17.1%. Meanwhile, the Semarang Regency Health Office in 2023 the number of toddlers with cases of malnutrition increased to 3,878 toddlers (6.6%). At the Bergas Community Health Center, there were 81 toddlers experiencing malnutrition. From the results of a preliminary study of 5 respondents, 3 mothers who actively participated in the class for mothers of toddlers, 2 mothers were able to explain all indicators of nutritional status. Where 1 other mother who also attended the class did not fully understand the indicators of nutritional status. the aim of the research is to find out Meanwhile, the two mothers who did not attend the class showed varying results, where one of them only knew weight as an indicator and the other actually knew about nutritional status and how to monitor nutritional status. research purposes ti find Relationship Of Toddler Mother Class Participation On Maternal Knowledge Of Toddler Nutrition This study used a correlational analytical design. The population in this study was 582 respondents. The sample in this study was 85 respondents, determined using the Slovin formula approach with a 10% error rate. This determination was carried out to obtain a representative sample of the population. The sampling technique used was accidental sampling, and a questionnaire was used as the data collection tool. The analysis test used the chi-square test. Most respondents were not actively participating in the mother and toddler class, amounting to 43 respondents (50.6%). Most respondents had good knowledge, amounting to 54 respondents (63.5%). The results of the chi-square test with a degree of error of <math>\alpha = 0.05</math> obtained a p-value of <math>0.000 &lt; \alpha = 0.05</math>. Conclusion: There is a relationship between mothers' participation in toddler mother classes</i></p>

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*and knowledge about toddler nutrition.*

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## Introduction

Malnutrition remains a serious global problem. According to data from UNICEF, WHO and the World Bank in 2020, 45.5 million children worldwide suffer from malnutrition, reflecting the high rate of malnutrition in this vulnerable age group. This situation shows that efforts to combat malnutrition still face many challenges. In 2023, the global prevalence of malnutrition among infants reached 12.33%, indicating that nearly one in eight infants worldwide suffers from malnutrition. This high prevalence is a matter of great concern for all elements of global society (UNICEF, 2023). Nutritional problems among toddlers in Indonesia remain a national priority issue because they have a direct impact on the quality of human resources in the future. One of the main indicators of nutritional problems is underweight, a condition in which a child's weight is below the standard for their age. Based on the results of the 2022 Indonesian Nutrition Status Survey (SSGI), the prevalence of malnutrition among toddlers in Indonesia reached 17.1%, an increase from 17.0% in 2021. This means that nearly 1 in 6 toddlers in Indonesia are malnourished. This condition shows that improving children's nutritional status still faces major challenges despite various interventions that have been carried out (Kemenkes RI, 2022).

Health profile in Central Java Province in 2023 The achievement of the indicator for the percentage of toddlers monitored for growth and development in 2023 reached 96.8%, an increase compared to the achievement in 2022, which only reached 87.1%. The 2022 SSGI stated that the prevalence of undernourished infants in Central Java was 17.6%. The district/city with the highest percentage of undernourished infants was Tegal City at 9.24% (Dinkes Jateng, 2023). Meanwhile, according to the Semarang Regency Health Office in 2020 and 2023, the number of toddlers with malnutrition cases in 2020 reached 3,195 toddlers with a percentage of 5.9%. In 2023, the number of toddlers with malnutrition cases increased to 3,878 toddlers with a percentage of 6.6%. This indicates that malnutrition remains a problem that requires attention (Semarang, 2023). Data on the working area of the Bergas Community Health Centre in 2024 shows that the incidence of nutritional problems in toddlers reached 81 cases of malnutrition, which were found in several villages/sub-districts, including Karangjati Sub-district with 13 toddlers (2.2%), Bergas Lor Neighbourhood with 10 children (2.3%), Ngempon Neighbourhood with 8 children (2.1%), Bergas Kidul Neighbourhood with 9 children (2.1%), Geguban Neighbourhood with 10 children (2.8%), and Wujil Neighbourhood with 9 children (2.4%) (Data Laporan Gizi Puskesmas Bergas, 2024).

Factors influencing toddler nutrition according to (Timur, Irianto and Rahayu, 2023) include exclusive breastfeeding, maternal education, parenting practices, family income, and maternal knowledge. The results of the study indicate that there is a relationship between exclusive breastfeeding ( $P = 0.000$  and  $OR = 8.143$ ), maternal education ( $P = 0.029$  and  $OR = 3.474$ ), parenting style ( $P = 0.010$  and  $OR = 3.715$ ), family income ( $P = 0.000$  and  $OR = 7.875$ ), and maternal knowledge ( $P = 0.000$  and  $OR = 7.405$ ). Based on the results of research there is a relationship between exclusive breastfeeding and the nutritional status of toddlers with a  $P = 0.000$ . In line with the research (Conterius and Avelina, 2022), There is a relationship between the level of maternal knowledge and the nutritional status of toddlers with a  $P = 0.030$ . Research (Rahmadani *et al.*, 2023) found a relationship between family income and toddler nutritional status with a  $P$  of 0.003. In line with the research (Khadijah dan Dheska, 2022) there is a relationship between the parenting patterns of older respondents and toddler nutritional status with a  $p$ -value of 0.324. In line with the study (Mardiana and Yunafri, 2021) there is a relationship between the mother's education level and the nutritional status of toddlers, with a  $P$  of 0.012.

The level of knowledge of older respondents regarding nutrition can influence the

eating patterns of young children and ultimately affect their nutritional status. If older respondents have good knowledge, they are able to choose and provide appropriate food for children, both in terms of quality and quantity, so that they can meet the nutritional needs of young children and have an impact on their nutritional status. Knowledge about nutrition will greatly affect attitudes and choices in selecting food, which in turn will affect the nutritional status of the individual. Lack of knowledge about nutrition or inadequate application of nutritional knowledge in daily life can lead to nutritional problems in the individual (Jannah, 2023).

Supported by research findings (Sutrisno and Tamim, 2023) there is a significant relationship between mothers' knowledge of nutrition and the nutritional status of toddlers, with a p-value of 0.000. In line with the research (Dwi Ertiana and Shafira Berliana Zain, 2023) there is a relationship between mothers' knowledge and the nutritional status of toddlers with a P of 0.018.

Government programmes aim to improve mothers' knowledge of nutritional status through various programmes such as Supplementary Feeding (PMT) (Kemenkes RI, 2023), Nutrition Counselling (Ummah, 2019), Infant and Young Child Feeding (PMBA) (Kementerian Kesehatan RI, 2018), Integrated Health Posts (Posyandu), Pregnant Women's Classes (Ummah, 2019), and Toddler Mothers' Classes (Kemenkes RI, 2019).

The Toddler Mother Class is a session where women with children aged between 0 and 5 years gather to discuss, share views and experiences regarding the provision of health services, nutrition and stimulation for the growth and development of their children under the guidance of a facilitator, with reference to the KIA Book (Kemenkes RI, 2019). The benefits of toddler mother and family classes are: obtaining important information on how to care for children according to their age, obtaining important information on growth and development, immunisation, nutrition, infant and toddler care, and common illnesses, finding friends to discuss and exchange opinions and experiences on health services, nutrition, and stimulation for growth and development. The objective of these toddler classes is to improve mothers' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour by using the KIA Book to achieve optimal toddler growth and development. The organisers of the toddler mother classes target mothers with toddlers aged 0 to 5 years and then group them into age groups of 0-1 years, 1-2 years, and 2-5 years. The toddler mother class is held three times, with each session lasting 45-60 minutes. The material covered includes the concept of toddler growth and development, the stages of development and stimulation for children aged 1-2 years, and the stages of development and stimulation for children aged 2-5 years (Kemenkes RI, 2019).

According to research (Diii & Ery, 2023) there is a relationship between maternal participation and maternal knowledge of nutrition, with a P of 0.02. Research (Ayu, 2020) concluded that there is an effect of participation in joint education groups on the nutritional status of toddlers, with a P of 0.000. In line with the study there is a relationship between mothers' participation in toddler mother classes and mothers' knowledge, with a P-value of 0.002. The study (Sifa, 2024) found a significant relationship between mothers' knowledge and participation in toddler mother classes, with a P of 0.000.

Based on interviews with the coordinating midwife (Bikor) for children at the Bergas Community Health Centre, the target number of toddler mother classes that must be implemented is 95-100%. Toddler mother classes are held three times a year, or even more, depending on the number of toddlers in each area, with each package consisting of 10 toddlers. The implementation of toddler mother classes in the Bergas Community Health Centre working area still faces a number of challenges in the field. One of the obstacles that is often encountered is the low level of direct participation from toddler mothers. Many mothers are unable to attend toddler mother classes because they have to work outside the home to help support the family economy. This situation means that the role of mothers in child health education activities is often replaced by grandmothers or other family

members. Although the presence of grandmothers indicates family support in childcare, this has the potential to reduce the effectiveness of the programme because the information and skills provided are not directly received by mothers as the primary caregivers. This phenomenon requires a more adaptive implementation strategy so that the objectives of increasing mothers' knowledge and skills in monitoring the nutritional status and growth of toddlers can be optimally achieved.

In the Bergas Community Health Centre working area, the toddler class programme has been 90% implemented, and midwives are making various efforts to maintain and increase the participation of mothers with toddlers. One of the efforts made is to invite mothers with toddlers directly through village midwives. This is done by providing information about the implementation of toddler classes. This method is considered quite effective because village midwives have close relationships with the community. When information is conveyed directly by midwives, mothers usually feel more comfortable and trusting.

The toddler mother class programme is a programme run by the community health centre to promote mothers' knowledge about toddler growth and development and to address toddler nutritional health issues in the Karangjati sub-district. Participants in the toddler mother class are mothers who have children aged 0-5 years in the Karangjati sub-district. All mothers with children aged 0-5 years are invited to participate in the toddler mother class, which is announced the day before the class is held via a WhatsApp group for those who will attend the toddler mother class.

Karangjati Village is one of the villages in the Bergas Community Health Centre with a high incidence of nutritional problems among toddlers compared to other villages. Based on data from the Bergas Community Health Centre, Karangjati Village shows a fairly high prevalence of nutritional problems with 13 cases of toddlers suffering from malnutrition (2.2%), while the incidence in other villages is lower, namely Bergas Lor Village with 10 cases of malnourished toddlers (2.5%), Bergas Kidul village and Wujil village each had 9 cases of malnutrition (2.1%), Gebugan village had 10 cases of malnutrition (2.8%) and Ngempon village had 8 cases of malnutrition (2.1%).

A preliminary study conducted in March in Karangjati Village involving five mothers with toddlers found that two mothers who attended toddler mother classes had good knowledge of nutritional status, including its definition, causes, and how to monitor it. However, one mother who also attended the class was not fully aware of the indicators of nutritional status. Meanwhile, of the two mothers who did not attend the classes, one only knew about weight as an indicator, and the other knew about nutritional status and how to monitor it because she had obtained the information from health workers. This shows that participation in toddler mother classes is not always directly proportional to the level of knowledge of mothers, and that there are other factors that influence mothers' understanding of toddler nutritional status. The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between mothers' participation in toddler mother classes and their knowledge of toddler nutritional status.

## Method

This study used a correlational analytical design. The study was conducted in Karangjati Village, Bergas Subdistrict, in July 2025. The study population consisted of all mothers with toddlers in Karangjati Village, totalling 582 people. The study sample consisted of 85 respondents, obtained using the Slovin formula with a 10% margin of error. The sampling technique used accidental sampling who came during the integrated health post. The data collection instrument was a questionnaire that had been tested for validity and reliability with a calculated  $r$  value  $> 0.444$  and Cronbach's Alpha  $> 0.60$ . Data analysis was performed using the Chi-Square test with a significance level of  $p < \alpha$  (0.05). The study

obtained ethical approval from the Research Ethics Committee of Ngudi Waluyo University with letter number 376/KEP/EC/UNW/2025.

## Results and Discussion

### Participation of Toddler Mothers' Classes

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Participation in Toddler Mother Classes in Karangjati Subdistrict

Participation in Toddler Mother Classes	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Inactive	43	50.6
Active	42	49.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>100</b>

The participation of mothers of toddlers in toddler mother classes in Karangjati Village was mostly inactive, with 43 respondents (50.6%). According to the researchers, this was because most of the respondents were working. Of the total 43 respondents (50.6%) who were inactive in attending toddler mother classes, most were working, with 22 respondents (51.1%). According to the researchers, working mothers often forget the class schedule held by the community health centre and the time the classes are held on weekdays, so they cannot attend. This is supported by (Jannah and Afifah, 2023) who stated that mothers who work outside the home do not have time because toddler mother classes are held on weekdays. Supported by research (Mamlukah, Harmilah and Febriani, 2022) shows that there is a significant relationship between employment and participation in mother classes with a P of  $0.011 < 0.05$  with an OR value of 0.189, so that respondents who work are 0.189 times less likely to participate in toddler mother classes.

Mothers' participation in inactive toddler classes was also observed based on their age. Of the total respondents who were inactive in toddler classes, 43 respondents (50.6%) were mostly in the 20–35 age range, with 26 respondents (60.4%). According to the researcher, the number of mothers with toddlers in Karangjati sub-district is dominated by those aged 20–32 years because this age is optimal for female reproduction. According to theory (Cahyono, 2018) mothers aged 20–35 years are in good physical condition and are mentally mature in caring for their pregnancies and children. This is in line with the research (Agustina and Novita, 2025) that the respondents were aged 21–35 years, with 15 visiting and 42 not visiting toddler mother classes. The chi-square test yielded a P of  $0.035 < 0.05$ , indicating a significant relationship between maternal age and attendance at infant mother classes, with an OR value of 5.795, meaning that respondents aged 21–35 were more than five times more likely to attend.

The results of this study also show that a small proportion of respondents in the category of actively attending toddler mother classes numbered 42 respondents (49.4%), while the majority of respondents were unemployed, numbering 23 respondents (54.7%). According to the researchers, mothers who do not work tend to have more time to attend toddler mother classes. According to theory (Ersila *et al.*, 2025) mothers who do not work have more time to provide care and guide independence so that they are able to attend toddler mother classes. This is supported by research (Isnoviana, Yudit and Wijaya, 2020) which found that there is a relationship between mothers' employment and their attendance at mother and baby classes, with a Spearman's rank correlation coefficient of 0.465.

The participation of respondents in toddler mother classes has a significant impact on toddler growth and development. Efforts to increase mother participation can be carried out through various strategies, such as increasing the frequency of socialisation on the benefits of toddler mother classes, providing non-material incentives (e.g. symbolic awards), improving the implementation system to be more flexible and friendly to working

mothers, and involving community leaders or health cadres as driving forces. It is hoped that with increased participation, more mothers will gain useful knowledge and skills in optimally nurturing and supporting their children's growth and development.

#### Mothers' Knowledge of Nutritional Status

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Mothers' Knowledge of Nutrition in Karangjati Subdistrict

Knowledge	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Good	54	63.5
Fair	24	28.2
Poor	7	8.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>100</b>

The results of the above study indicate that most respondents in this study had good knowledge of toddler nutritional status, numbering 54 respondents (63.5%). According to the researcher, the respondents' knowledge was good because most of them had a secondary education. In this study, of the 54 respondents (63.5%) who had good knowledge, most had a secondary education, namely 30 respondents (55.5%). Twelve respondents (22.2%) had a higher education. This is because the higher the level of education, the better mothers are at receiving information from health workers. This is supported by (Prasetyaningrum, Irmawati and Supriyadi, 2024) Respondents with higher levels of education were more receptive to the information provided. This was supported by research (Sitanggang and Werdana, 2021) which found a significant relationship between education level and the nutritional status of toddlers, with a chi-square test result of 0.019 or  $p < 0.05$ . Supported by research (Narishma, Roselina and Budiarto, 2022) statistically there is a relationship between mothers' education and the nutritional status of infants and toddlers ( $P = 0.01$ ).

Mothers' knowledge of good toddler mother classes can also be seen from the highest number of correct answers to the positive question in number 1 in the nutritional status definition indicator with the question '*Nutritional status is the condition of the respondent's body that is influenced by food intake and the use of nutrients in the body*' by 84 respondents (99%). This shows that most respondents have good knowledge of the definition of toddler nutritional status. This finding is in line with (Septiawati, Indriani and Zuraida, 2021) which states that nutritional status is a condition of the body that is influenced by food consumption and nutrient utilisation, and can be measured using anthropometric methods.

#### Relationship between Mother Participation in Toddler Mother Classes and Mother Knowledge about Nutritional Status

Table 3. Relationship between Mother Participation in Toddler Mother Classes and Mother Knowledge about Nutritional Status in Karangjati Subdistrict

Participation in Mother Classes	Participation in Mother Classes				Total		P-Value
	Poor		Good		F	%	
	F	%	F	%			
Inactive	27	31.8	16	18.8	43	63.5	0.0001
Active	4	4.7	38	44.7	42	36.5	
Total	31	36.5	54	63.5	85	100	

The chi-square test result showed a  $P = 0.0001 < \alpha = 0.05$ , indicating a significant relationship between participation in toddler mother classes and knowledge of toddler nutritional status in Karangjati sub-district. It also showed that toddler mothers in

Karangjati sub-district who actively participated in toddler mother classes had good knowledge of toddler nutritional status, with 38 respondents (44.7%) having good knowledge and 27 respondents (31.8%) having poor knowledge. These findings indicate that active participation in toddler mother classes contributes positively to knowledge of toddler nutritional status. (44.7%), while 27 respondents (31.8%) who did not actively participate in toddler mother classes had a lower level of knowledge. These findings indicate that active participation in toddler mother classes contributes positively to increasing mothers' knowledge about the nutritional status of their toddlers. Thus, toddler mother classes can be an effective strategy in increasing mothers' awareness and understanding of the importance of monitoring and fulfilling their children's nutritional needs in order to support optimal growth and development. Toddler mother classes are positively related to mothers' knowledge about nutritional status. By attending classes, toddler mothers will obtain information and education about balanced nutrition, thereby increasing their understanding of how to meet their children's nutritional needs.

According to theory (Noordiati, 2018) toddler mother classes are classes where mothers with children aged 0-5 years discuss, exchange opinions, and share experiences on health, nutrition, and growth and development stimulation, guided by a facilitator using the KIA book. This is supported by (Riana *et al.*, 2024) who explain that toddler mother classes are organised using a participatory learning approach, in which mothers are not merely recipients of information but also active participants in the learning process. Mothers are encouraged to share experiences and learn together, while facilitators act as companions who help participants obtain the right information. Improving mothers' nutritional knowledge plays an important role, as mothers with a good understanding are expected to be able to apply more optimal parenting and feeding practices to their toddlers.

Low education can affect an individual's ability to receive, understand, and apply information obtained during toddler mother classes. According to the theory (Mamahit *et al.*, 2022) education is one of the important factors that influence the acceptance of health information because it is related to a person's cognitive ability to understand the message being conveyed. This finding is supported by research (Sitorus and Suprianto, 2024) which found a significant relationship between the mother's level of education and knowledge about nutrition related to stunting with a chi-square test result of  $P=0.038 < 0.05$ .

This is in line with research conducted by (Indrayani *et al.*, 2019) which shows that toddler mother classes have an effect on increasing mothers' knowledge and skills in stimulating toddler growth and development, including nutritional status. According to (Hapsari, Hastuti and Winarso, 2020) good knowledge about toddler mother classes can influence mothers' activity in participating in toddler class activities. Furthermore, according to (Rosidin *et al.*, 2024) the cause of nutritional health problems in toddlers is mothers' knowledge about food intake to avoid disease and achieve balanced nutritional needs. This is supported by research by (Sundari and Khayati, 2020) which found a relationship between mothers' knowledge about toddler nutritional status and a value of  $P=0.000 < 0.005$ . The limitation of this research is that it uses an accidental sampling technique, so there may be an imbalance in the samples that attend the mother and toddler class.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations Simpulan dan Saran**

Most respondents did not actively participate in toddler mother classes (43 respondents, 50.6%). Fifty-four respondents (63.5%) had good knowledge of toddler nutrition. There was a correlation between participation in toddler mother classes and knowledge of toddler nutrition in Karangjati sub-district ( $P = 0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$ ). It is hoped that mothers of toddlers can be more active in attending toddler mother classes as a means to improve their knowledge and skills in caring for and meeting their children's nutritional needs.

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