

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 6817

Introduced by **REP. JAVIER MIGUEL “JAVI” L. BENITEZ**

The first 1,000 days of life, from conception up to a child’s second birthday, represent a critical window of opportunity to lay the foundation for a child’s long-term health, cognitive development, and future productivity. Scientific literature, including the World Health Organization’s *Guiding Principles for Complementary Feeding of the Breastfed Child*, consistently highlights that inadequate nutrition during this period can cause irreversible damage to brain development, increase disease susceptibility, and increase the risk of stunting and underachievement later in life.¹

In the Philippines, adolescent and young parents (ages 15 to 24) are particularly vulnerable. According to the 2022 National Demographic and Health Survey, teen pregnancies are closely linked to limited access to healthcare, poor nutrition, and long-term economic disadvantage.² Moreover, first-time parents, regardless of age, often lack the knowledge, support systems, or means to make informed decisions about their children’s nutrition, especially during the early years.

¹ United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), *Early Moments Matter for Every Child*, (2017), <https://www.unicef.org/reports/early-moments-matter>. (Date last accessed: December 4, 2025).

² Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) and Department of Health (DOH), *2022 National Demographic and Health Survey*, <https://psa.gov.ph/content/national-demographic-and-health-survey-ndhs>. (Date last accessed: December 4, 2025).

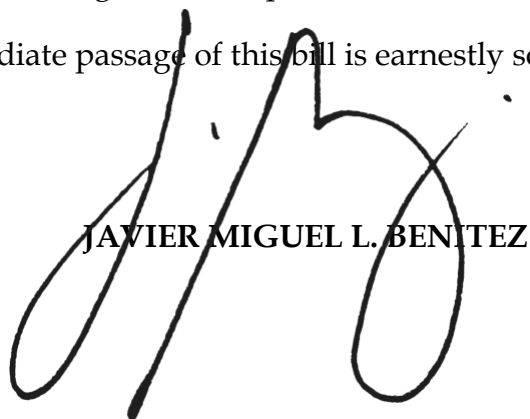
This bill seeks to address those vulnerabilities by offering conditional nutrition incentives through a Parent Incentive Card system, redeemable for nutrition-critical goods, to new parents who participate in government-accredited infant feeding and parenting classes. By linking these incentives to attendance in educational and health-focused programs, the State not only strengthens parental capacity but also promotes positive behavioral change, aligned with the Department of Health's *First 1,000 Days Program* under R.A. 11148.³

To ensure accountability and prevent abuse, only programs accredited by the Department of Health or Local Government Units are covered under this Act. Incentives shall be distributed exclusively through the Parent Incentive Card, in accordance with clear guidelines and privacy-compliant beneficiary-tracking systems.

The bill further aligns with the objectives of Republic Act No. 11223 (2018), the **Universal Health Care Act**, and the **National Nutrition Council's Philippine Plan of Action for Nutrition**, reinforcing the State's commitment to health equity, social protection, and early childhood care.

In sum, this proposed measure recognizes that supporting young and first-time parents, particularly those raising children during the first 1,000 days, is both a moral imperative and a strategic investment in the country's human capital. By coupling education with practical support, the State ensures that no child is left behind at the earliest and most critical stage of development.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



JAVIER MIGUEL L. BENITEZ

³ Republic Act No. 11148, *Kalusugan at Nutrisyon ng Mag-Nanay Act*, <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/downloads/2018/11nov/20181129-RA-11148-RRD.pdf>.

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**AN ACT PROVIDING NUTRITION INCENTIVES AND SUPPORT
PROGRAMS TO YOUNG AND FIRST-TIME PARENTS PROMOTING
EARLY CHILD NUTRITION, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House Representatives of the Philippines in
Congress assembled:*

SECTION 1. *Short Title* – This Act shall be known as the “*NutriStart Act.*”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy* – It is the policy of the State to promote the health and well-being of the Filipino people and instill health consciousness across all sectors of society. Recognizing the vulnerability of early parenthood in the health sector, the State shall equip young and first-time parents with targeted education, nutrition programs, and support mechanisms to ensure healthy pregnancies and early childhood development.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms* – As used in this Act, the following terms shall be defined as follows:

1. *“Early Parenthood”* refers to the stage of parenting from pregnancy through the child's second (2nd) year of life.
2. *“Young Parent”* refers to a mother or father aged fifteen (15) to twenty-four (24) years old who is pregnant or has at least one child aged two (2) years and below.
3. *“Collusion”* refers to an act committed by the organizers, health workers, or government personnel who conspire to falsify attendance or verification records in exchange for financial or material gain.
4. *“Community-Based Feeding and Parenting Classes”* refers to structured, community-based sessions on breastfeeding, infant nutrition, child development, and responsible parenting, accredited by the DOH and LGUs.
5. *“Falsification or Misrepresentation”* refers to the act of knowingly providing false information or documents to gain access to the benefits under this Act.
6. *“Failure to Report Disqualification”* refers to the act of failing to report any change in eligibility status, including but not limited to the death of the child, attainment of ineligible age, or acquisition of similar benefits from other government programs that may constitute duplication.
7. *“First-Time Parent”* refers to an individual raising their first child aged zero (0) to two (2) years;
8. *“Nutrition-Critical Goods”* refers to items such as dairy products, fruits, vegetables, vitamins, iron-folate supplements, and other essential food and hygiene products approved by the DOH and DSWD.
9. *“Parent Incentive Card”* means the physical or digital card issued by the government under this Act to eligible parents to earn and redeem points for attendance at accredited parenting sessions.
10. *“Processed Junk Food”* refers to pre-packaged food products that are high in saturated fats, trans fats, refined sugars, or sodium, and provide little to no essential nutritional value. These include, but are not limited to, packaged snacks such as chips, instant noodles, sugary baked goods, candy, sweetened breakfast cereals, and other ultra-processed foods with low dietary quality, as defined by the DOH and the Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI).
11. *“Sugar-Sweetened Beverages”* refer to non-alcoholic beverages that contain added sugar or other sweeteners, whether natural or artificial, intended to

enhance flavor. This includes, but is not limited to, carbonated soft drinks, flavored juice drinks, sweetened tea and coffee, sports and energy drinks, and other beverages with caloric sweeteners such as sucrose, high-fructose corn syrup, glucose, or fruit juice concentrates.

12. *“Unauthorized Use or Transfer of Benefits”* refers to selling, transferring, or using the incentives or vouchers for items or purposes not authorized under the implementing rules.

SEC. 4. Coverage – The provisions of this Act shall apply to young parents, as defined in Section 3(a), and first-time parents of children aged zero (0) to two (2) years, regardless of age. A beneficiary may qualify under either category but not under both simultaneously.

Only community-based feeding and parenting classes that are recognized and accredited by the Department of Health (“DOH”) and/or the Local Government Units (“LGUs”) shall qualify for incentive eligibility under this Act. Non-accredited, unverified, or unmonitored programs shall not entitle participants to any benefit or incentive.

SEC. 5. Parent Incentives Card Program – There shall be a Parent Incentives Card Program established under this Act to provide conditional support to qualified beneficiaries in the form of nutrition assistance, linked to their participation in accredited community-based feeding and parenting programs.

The DOH shall implement the program in coordination with the DSWD and the concerned LGUs, which shall serve as the central mechanism for delivering incentives under this Act.

SEC. 6. Nature of Benefits – The incentives shall be provided as non-cash, performance-based benefits strictly tied to participation in government-accredited parenting and infant nutrition programs. These benefits are conditional and time-bound, not a permanent entitlement program or welfare transfer, but rather developmental tools to promote public health outcomes.

SEC. 7. Qualifications – To qualify, a beneficiary must meet all the following requirements:

1. Must be a Filipino citizen;
2. Must either be:
 1. A young parent as defined in Section 3 (b) of this Act; or
 2. A first-time parent of a child aged zero (0) to two (2) years, regardless of age;

3. Must be a resident of the barangay or municipality/city where the accredited Community-based Feeding and Parenting Class is conducted;
4. Must be registered with the LGU or DOH-accredited program organizer and enrolled in a recognized Community-based Feeding and Parenting Class;
5. Must regularly attend and participate in the scheduled sessions of the accredited program, with at least eighty percent (80%) attendance required to qualify for ongoing benefits;
6. Must comply with routine health check-ups and child growth monitoring as may be prescribed by the DOH, LGU health office, and other program partners;

SEC. 8. *Incentives and Benefits* – Eligible beneficiaries who attended at least eighty percent (80%) of the scheduled Community-based Feeding and Parenting Classes and completed prescribed prenatal/postnatal check-ups shall be entitled to a digital or physical “Parent Incentive Card,” validated per session by class organizers.

Each session shall earn the participant a fixed number of Nutrition Points, which may be redeemed exclusively for purchasing nutrition-critical goods from accredited vendors.

SEC. 9. *Incentive Management System* – The DOH, in coordination with the DSWD and DILG, shall establish the Nutrition Incentive Management System (“NIMS”) to ensure secure registration, benefit tracking, and redemption validation of each beneficiary. The system shall be interoperable with LGU databases and compliant with data privacy protocols.

SEC. 10. *Verification and Monitoring* – The local health office, in partnership with the class organizers, shall verify attendance and monitor program compliance. Validated sessions shall be logged into the NIMS or manually certified in areas with limited digital access.

A manual verification system or paper-based alternatives shall be allowed in LGUs with limited digital infrastructure.

SEC. 11. *Redemption of Points* – Points earned via the Parent Incentive Card may only be redeemed from accredited vendors, stores, public markets, and pharmacies as designated by DOH, DSWD, and DTI, and only for approved goods. Strict prohibitions shall be imposed on the use of nutrition points for non-qualified items, including, but not limited to, tobacco, alcohol, sugar-sweetened beverages, or processed junk food.

SEC. 12. *Termination of Incentives and Benefits* – Benefits and incentives received under this Act shall terminate under the following circumstances:

1. For young parents, the entitlement to benefits shall cease upon reaching the age of twenty-five (25);
2. For first-time parents, the entitlement of benefits shall cease upon the completion of the child’s first 1,000 days of life, measured from conception until his or her second birthday.

The incentives and benefits under this Act are non-renewable and non-transferable to persons other than the parent beneficiary.

In the unfortunate event that the child dies before the circumstances mentioned under this section, the parent shall immediately report the fact of death to the local Social Welfare and Development Office (“SWDO”) where they are registered, for verification, cancellation, and removal of their Parent Incentive Card.

SEC. 13. *Penalties and Liabilities* – Any beneficiary who is proven to have willfully committed any of the following shall be subject to immediate disqualification and may be required to refund any improperly used benefits under this Act:

1. Falsification or Misrepresentation;
2. Failure to Report Disqualification;
3. Unauthorized Use or Transfer of Benefits;
4. Collusion.

Public officials or implementers who engage in the foregoing offenses shall be liable under existing laws.

SEC. 14. *Appropriations* – Funds necessary to implement this Act shall be sourced from the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA) and shall be included under the budgets of DOH and DSWD.

SEC. 15. *Implementing Rules and Regulations* – Within 90 days from effectivity, the DOH, in coordination with DSWD and other relevant agencies, shall promulgate the IRR of this Act.

SEC. 16. *Separability Clause* – If any part or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remaining provisions shall remain in force and effect.

SEC. 17. *Repealing Clause* – All laws, orders, rules, and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 18. *Effectivity* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,