

Age determination for preschool children under 6 years of age where a clear date of birth is not available

Using a calendar of events (Adapted from FAO <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/011/aj984e/aj984e00.pdf>)

- i. Begin by asking the mother if she remembers when the child was born
- ii. This estimate is used as a starting point, and should be followed up with a series of before and after questions until you have isolated an event (religious/political/climate/etc.) that occurred before and another event that occurred after the birth of the child.
 - o When a month and year of birth have been established, verify this date using a before and after question related to a major yearly event – *use the 15th of that month as the birth date.*
- iii. If the period between events in (ii) is 2 months (for example, the birth could be anytime during May or June). *Select the first month and use the 30th day of that month (e.g.; 30th May).*
- iv. If the period between events in (ii) is 3 months (for example, the birth could be anytime during February to April). *Select the middle month and use the 15th day of that month (e.g. 15th March).*
- v. If the period between events in (ii) is more than 3 months, or it is not possible to link the birth with any events, use the index technique.

Using the index technique

- i. To use the index technique, there must be another child of a similar age in the household or in the compound (when several families with close ties live in the same place) with a recorded or known date of birth. The accuracy of this date should be verified.
- ii. The mother can be asked if she remembers being pregnant or giving birth “at the same time” or “just before” or “just after” the birth of the child whose date of birth is known. If she does remember this, she is then asked about the number of months between the birth of her child and the birth of the other child.
- iii. Work from this known date to try to establish the month and year when the child was born.

If the possible period for the date of birth cannot be reduced to 3 months or less, then the date of birth and anthropometry for that child should usually not be used in the survey dataset.

Using sibling age to check dates provided

This technique can be used when there is more than one child under five years of age living in the household. It is not valid to estimate the month or year of birth, but to check among the ages of all children of the same mother for coherence and accuracy.

- i. After all the ages have been estimated using the calendar of events or index technique, the sequential ages of each sibling child can be reviewed with the mother. An obvious error of a birth interval less than nine months can be detected in this way, but the mother may also be able to verify the number of months or years between the births.
2. The survey form is designed with a space to record that the respondent is not eligible. It is important for the overall survey results to monitor the number of ineligible children due to this problem