

The midday meal system is a unique feature of the Kajoli Model. The system was developed through discussions with mothers during the early phase of the action research that led to the development of the model. It was agreed by the mothers that if all the mothers of the children at a center would feed the children once a month by turn then the children would be fed everyday at a given time and this would be good for their health. They felt that such an arrangement would not be a big burden for the mothers since they will be able to save the amount of rice and lentil that their children would have consumed had they eaten at home. The accumulated rice and lentil could then be used to feed all the children once a month. Based on this arrangement, it was also agreed that ideally there would be only 26 children at a center since there are 26 class days a month and mothers would have an easy task of remembering that their turn to feed would only come once a month.

Despite some initial difficulties at new centers to institute the midday meal system, soon it becomes well accepted by the mothers since they see the visible signs of improvement in the health of the children after the system has been on for some time. The system also provides an opportunity to the mothers to acquire a sense of ownership of the centers. The children too like the system since the day a mother feeds the children her child becomes the class captain which means, among other things, that she/he leads the physical exercise and serves as the host of the children by bringing them the plates, glasses and the food.