

Nat'l feeding program to target undernourished kids nationwide

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The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), in partnership with the Department of Education (DepEd), will implement a National Feeding Program among children nationwide in a bid to eradicate undernourishment cases in the country.

The program will be implemented through the “Masustansyang Pagkainpara sa Batang Pilipino Act” or the Republic Act No. 11037, recently signed into law by President Rodrigo Duterte mandating the DSWD to establish a Supplementary Feeding Program for undernourished children age three to five.

Through this, the DSWD, in coordination with concerned local government units and recognized parents' organizations, will provide at least one fortified meal to daycare children for a period of not less than 120 days in a year.

Meanwhile, DepEd will be implementing a School-Based Feeding Program which will provide similar meal plan for undernourished public school children from kindergarten to grade six.

Social Welfare Secretary Virginia Orogo said that the passage of the said law will ensure that Filipino children will grow up healthy following the directive of the President to focus on their proper development as they are the nation's future.

Aside from the meals to be provided, both DSWD and DepEd are also instructed to coordinate with the Department of Agriculture, the National Dairy Authority, the Philippine Carabao Center, and the Cooperative Development Authority to include fresh milk and fresh milk-based food products in the fortified meals.

Both agencies will also have to provide micronutrient supplements to children beneficiaries including the use of iodized salt, and conducting of simultaneous health examinations including deworming and vaccinations in coordination with the Department of Health and concerned LGUs.

DSWD and DepEd are also tasked to encourage their respective component units to devote a portion of their land or space for the cultivation of vegetables and other nutrient-rich plants as identified by the National Nutrition Council.