CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A nutritional composition for a pediatric subject, comprising:

a fat source;

a carbohydrate source;

a protein source; ~~and~~

from 1.0 to 10.0 g/L of a prebiotic composition comprising a plurality of oligosaccharides such that the overall fermentation rate profile of the prebiotic composition provides an increased population of beneficial bacteria in the gut of the pediatric subject; and

a source of microparticulate β-1,3-glucan derived from yeast.

2. The nutritional composition according to claim 1, wherein the source of β-1,3-glucan in the composition provides between ~~about~~ 0.010 g and ~~about~~ 0.050 g β-1,3-glucan per 100 g of nutritional composition.

3. The nutritional composition according to claim 1, wherein the composition is nutritionally complete.

4. The nutritional composition according to claim 1, further comprising at least one probiotic.

~~5. The nutritional composition according to claim 1, further comprising at least one prebiotic.~~

~~6~~5. The nutritional composition according to claim 1, further comprising the administration of at least one long chain polyunsaturated fatty acid.

~~7~~6. The nutritional composition according to claim ~~6~~5, wherein the long chain polyunsaturated fatty acid is selected from the group consisting of docosahexaenoic acid, arachidonic acid, or combinations thereof.

~~8~~7. The nutritional composition according to claim 1, which comprises an infant formula.

~~9~~8. The nutritional composition according to claim 1, which comprises a children's nutritional product.

~~10~~9. A nutritional composition for a pediatric subject, comprising a milk-based matrix ~~comprising~~, wherein the milk-based matrix comprises:

a fat source;

a carbohydrate source;

a protein source; ~~and~~

from 1.0 to 10.0 g/L of a prebiotic composition comprising a plurality of oligosaccharides such that the overall fermentation rate profile of the prebiotic composition provides an increased population of beneficial bacteria in the gut of the pediatric subject; and

a β-glucan source comprising microparticulate, β-1,3-glucan derived from yeast.

~~11~~10. The nutritional composition according to claim ~~10~~9, wherein the β-glucan source comprises β-1,3;1,6-glucan.

~~12~~11. The nutritional composition according to claim ~~10~~9, wherein the composition is nutritionally complete.

~~13~~12. The nutritional composition according to claim ~~10~~ 9 further comprising at least one probiotic.

~~14. The nutritional composition according to claim 10, further comprising at least one prebiotic.~~

~~15~~13. The nutritional composition according to claim ~~10~~9, further comprising the administration of at least one long chain polyunsaturated fatty acid.

~~16~~14. The nutritional composition according to claim ~~15~~13, wherein the long chain polyunsaturated fatty acid is selected from the group consisting of docosahexaenoic acid, arachidonic acid, or combinations thereof.

15. The nutritional composition according to claim 1, wherein the nutritional composition comprises from 2.0 g/L to 8.0 g/L of the prebiotic composition.

16. The nutritional composition according to claim 9, wherein the milk-based matrix comprises from 2.0 g/L to 8.0 g/L of the prebiotic composition.