

# SNAP Plays A Critical Role In Early Child Nutrition

Nutrition and food are top worries for low-income parents. SNAP is viewed as a critical program for feeding kids.

## Overview

Good nutrition in the first 1,000 days of a child's life helps to ensure they reach their full potential. **The Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP) is a critical tool to ensure children get the nutrition they need in early childhood.**

No Kid Hungry partnered with the research firm APCO Insight to conduct a national survey among low-income families with children five years old and younger. 1,000 Days separately conducted in-depth interviews and ethnographies to hear from mothers in their own words about their experiences in nourishing their young children.



## The Findings

**According to the survey, food and nutrition are top concerns for low-income families with young children.**

- More than **two out of three (68%)** say they regularly worry that food will run out before there is money to buy more.
- **More than half (56%)** say that, within the past year, the food they were able to buy did not last and they did not have money to buy more.
- A large number – **42%** - say they struggle to afford enough food to consistently feed their child balanced meals.

**When parents were asked to specify which program is most helpful in caring for children, SNAP topped the list. But the program may not meet the actual need.**

- The program is underutilized. **One out of five** low-income families making less than 135% of the poverty rate say they have never participated in SNAP, even though most would meet the income eligibility requirements.
- Among those families who do participate, **6 out of 10** say there is a gap between the SNAP benefit and actual food needs.

### 10 months

The average amount of time a family spends on SNAP.<sup>1</sup>

### \$1.40

The average SNAP benefit per person, per meal.<sup>2</sup>

### 20 million

Total number of children in the United States who rely on SNAP

*“We like having more fresh things. But you can't buy a month's worth of fresh things (on SNAP).”*  
– Wanda, mother of three, Kentucky

1. USDA, “[Dynamics of SNAP Participation 2008-2012](#),” Accessed October 2017

2. USDA, “[Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Households: Fiscal Year 2015](#)”

3. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “[SNAP Works for America's Children](#),” 2016

4. White House Council of Economic Advisers, “[Long-Term Benefits of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#),” 2015



## The SNAP Impact

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) helps families afford food by providing benefits on an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card. These benefits can be used to purchase food items from grocery stores, farmers' markets and other food retailers.

### **SNAP helps to end hunger.**

SNAP makes sure kids in low-income families get the food they need. It has a direct and significant impact on child food insecurity rates.

### **SNAP helps to end poverty.**

SNAP lifts more than 2 million children out of poverty every year.<sup>3</sup>

### **SNAP promotes stronger learning.**

Low-income kids who received SNAP benefits were 18% more likely to graduate from high school than low-income kids who didn't.<sup>4</sup>

### **SNAP promotes better physical health.**

SNAP benefits are linked to a lower risk of anemia, lower levels of obesity, fewer doctor visits and fewer hospitalizations.<sup>4</sup>

Read The Full No Kid Hungry Report Here: <http://bit.ly/2hYVNf2>

Read The Full 1,000 Days Report Here: <http://bit.ly/2yLg95j>



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*“SNAP was very helpful. With it, I didn't have to wonder how we were gonna eat.” —Kim, mother of a 2-year-old, Oklahoma*

*“Trying to eat healthy is hard (on SNAP). Once you get to the end part, you're like what are we going to eat now?” – Dontae, mother of a 17-month-old, Mississippi*

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### **METHODOLOGY**

From December 8, 2016 to January 6, 2017, APCO Insight conducted a nationally representative survey among 1,000 low-income families in the United States with children five years old and younger. The margin of error is  $\pm 3.1$  percentage points. In 2016, 1,000 Days partnered with two qualitative research organizations to interview 57 women from across the United States.

### **ABOUT NO KID HUNGRY**

No child should go hungry in America, but 1 in 6 kids will face hunger this year. Using proven, practical solutions, No Kid Hungry is ending childhood hunger today by ensuring that kids start the day with a nutritious breakfast, are able to get the nutrition they need during the summertime, and families learn the skills they need to shop and cook on a budget. When we all work together, we can make sure kids get the healthy food they need. No Kid Hungry is a campaign of national anti-hunger organization Share Our Strength. Join us at [NoKidHungry.org](http://NoKidHungry.org).

### **ABOUT 1,000 Days**

1,000 Days is the leading organization working in the U.S. and around the world to improve nutrition for mothers and children, particularly during the critical 1,000 day window between a woman's pregnancy and her child's 2nd birthday. 1,000 Days works to promote action and investment in nutrition in order to build a strong foundation for children and their families to thrive. Learn more at <https://thousanddays.org>.