



Successful PA Child Abuse Symposium

PFSA's second annual PA Child Abuse Prevention Symposium took place virtually this year on Nov. 5, 2020. This training for awareness and prevention is PFSA's core mission — and, for those of us who work in this profession, our calling.

This year's symposium inspired participants to become a catalyst for change with the programs and work we do with children. Our morning started out with Erin Gruwell and two original Freedom Writers who challenged us to become a catalyst for change.

Breakout sessions in the afternoon focused on topics surrounding equity, diversity, and inclusion for children:

► Todd Snovel, former Executive Director of PA LGBTQ Affairs, led a session addressing the unique needs and challenges faced by LGBTQ+ students in the school, home, and community settings.

► Chris Glover from Joining Forces for Children hosted a session focused on how children experience substance abuse disorders.

► Jane Straub, a senior victim assistance specialist with the Zero Abuse Project, presented ways to enhance student safety during the pandemic, specifically addressing the risks to children who may be confined at home with someone who abuses them. Straub also addressed how to support children and families during the pandemic, as this has the potential to be a traumatic event for children.

Thank you!

WE ARE THANKFUL FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

On Dec. 1, PFSA is proud to participate in #GivingTuesday. This day of giving invites you to celebrate the holiday season by giving back and creating change in your community.

Together, we can continue to make a difference by keeping PA safe for all children!

Every dollar raised directly contributes to efforts to:

- ▶ Strengthen parenting
- ▶ Provide services and support to families in need
- ▶ Educate communities about awareness and advocacy

All of these initiatives help children and families reach their fullest potential. We are grateful to you and for you! Your support on Giving Tuesday, and every day, allows us to fulfill our mission to #ProtectPAkids.

You can make donations by contacting Ann Moffitt, Development Director, at 717-238-0937 or through our website at pafsa.org.

UPCOMING TRAINING

Mandated Reporter Train-the-Trainer

For curriculum titled "Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse"

This is an opportunity for organizations to develop their own quality, cost-efficient, in-house training program on child abuse recognition and reporting for employees. With the three-year contract, PFSA provides two days of initial instruction for approved applicants, reporting of CEs directly to the PA Departments of State and Education, and offers ongoing technical assistance.

Cost: \$1,000 per trainer entering into a three-year contract with PFSA. (Payment can be broken down by year: \$400/year one, \$300/years two and three.)

Dates: Dec. 7 & 8, 2020 • 8:30 a.m.—3 p.m. Both days include a half-hour lunch break.

Register: You must pre-register for this training by emailing Haven Evans at hevans@pa-fsa.org to register.

Childhood Hunger & Food Insecurity

November is upon us, and for most Americans, that means one thing: Thanksgiving. This holiday is a time to spend with family and friends, giving thanks for the things in our lives that we often take for granted. Yet there are many this year who will have to forgo the turkey dinner and pumpkin pie, though not because they want to.

One in four children in the United States struggle with hunger, also known as “food insecurity;” that’s over 11 million in our own nation. In Pennsylvania alone, there are over 400,000 children facing food insecurity, and the closer the holidays get, the more many parents struggle to provide for themselves and their families.

According to the USDA, hunger is defined as a “household that doesn’t have enough food for every family member to lead a healthy life.” But hunger doesn’t always look the same. While we usually think of it as malnourishment, hunger can also be seen in overweight and obese children.

Whether children aren’t getting enough to eat or are eating too many unhealthy options, often the only food they can afford is cheap and easy to get — like McDonald’s takeout. While okay in moderation, foods high in fat, calories, and sodium don’t have the nutritional value children need in their diets.

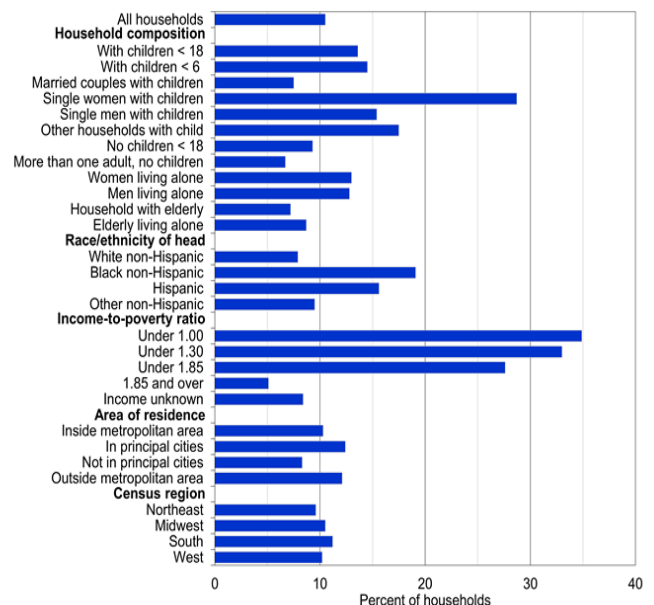
Feeding America reports that 69% of low-income families are forced to choose between food and paying utilities, 67% between transportation and food, 66% between medical care and food, and 57% between food and housing. And that is only the beginning. Many families have to stretch their budgets even further and water down drinks or sell personal property in order to afford basic dietary needs.

Causes

What causes hunger in America? The misconception is that hunger only arises from poverty, or a lack of money. Though low wages play a large role, they’re not the only source of frustration. The following also contribute to the number of children that go hungry:

- ▶ Single-parent homes, or homes in which only one parent/guardian is able to work
- ▶ Job instability
- ▶ Lack of water or sanitation
- ▶ Being in a food desert, where there are no grocery stores within a mile of the home
- ▶ Food shortages and waste
- ▶ Nutrition quality
- ▶ Climate change
- ▶ Discrimination
- ▶ Late start to the school year

2019 PREVALENCE OF FOOD INSECURITY BY SELECTED HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS



Source: USDA, Economic Research Service, using data from the December 2019 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Necessary Nutrition

Within the first three years of life, a child's diet is essential for promoting a healthy lifestyle. Those who don't get enough to eat or eat food that lacks nutritional value are put at a huge disadvantage compared to those who get the proper nutrition.

Children who suffer from hunger are more likely to be hospitalized or face serious health issues, like asthma or anemia. As they get older, they can also have behavioral issues, poor grades, or developmental impairments, such as with language and motor skills.

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased rates of childhood hunger. Many parents and guardians are out of work or have had their hours cut because of budget restrictions. Places that are hiring are offering low wages that most cannot live on. And the fact that most rental communities are not offering rent freeze or forgiveness doesn't help, either.

Additionally, schools started late this year, and often children and parents rely on school breakfast and lunch for food, which they have not been able to access.

How You Can Help

KNOW WHAT TO LOOK FOR

There are children in all communities, urban or rural, who suffer from hunger. Maybe it's your next-door neighbor, your child's friend from school, or the kids you see riding their bikes up and down the street.

Hunger isn't always easy to identify, and not all parents or children will reach out for help or know-how. Though not an exhaustive list, here are a few signs that could mean a child is chronically hungry:

- ▶ Anxious behavior before and during lunchtime
- ▶ Eating all the food they are given and asking for seconds

- ▶ Disciplinary behavior, including hyperactivity, aggression, withdrawal, or anything that would result in disciplinary action
- ▶ Difficulty getting along with other students
- ▶ Short attention span or inability to concentrate
- ▶ Weight issues, such as being overweight or underweight, especially if the weight gain/loss is sudden
- ▶ Dry, cracked lips, dry eyes, puffy or swollen skin, teeth decay

STAY EDUCATED

There are organizations dedicated to helping end childhood hunger, and many are accessible from your computer or via a community branch. Learning what is available will help you better assist others. The following are resources you can use if you or someone you know is suffering from hunger:

- ▶ **Free/Reduced school lunches.** Most districts offer this program as well as summer meals
- ▶ **SNAP/EBT.** States offer a program you can apply for online or in person at your county location. These programs provide monthly funds you can use strictly for groceries. Visit the website for info: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program>
- ▶ **Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).** A program for pregnant mothers or families with children 5 years and younger. It provides funds for healthy food choices, including formula, milk, vegetables, and whole grains. Visit the website to apply or for more info: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic>

DONATE/VOLUNTEER

Whether you want to give money, time, or nonperishable food items, you can find a multitude of companies and organizations that reach out to children in need.



Volunteer and get involved with:

- ▶ Feeding America
- ▶ No Kid Hungry
- ▶ Save the Children
- ▶ Food banks and food drives in your area
- ▶ Meals on Wheels

FUNDRAISE

No matter what your strength is, you can use your talents and your time to help raise money for organizations like those listed above or for children affected by hunger in your area. Open a lemonade stand, raise money by running a marathon, or hold a bakeoff to make a difference and support those in need.

DINE, SHOP & SHARE

Many restaurants, chain stores, and businesses are giving back. When you purchase online or in stores, a portion of the proceeds goes to organizations that help children across America. For a list of participating companies in your area, visit: <https://www.nokidhungry.org/ways-you-can-help/dine-shop-share/support-locally>.

SPEAK UP

Many children facing hunger don't know how to ask for help or are too embarrassed or

ashamed to do so. You have the power to be their voice and make a change in their lives.

- ▶ Contact your local elected officials to inform them about children facing hunger in your area. Advocate for policies or programs if there are none available.
- ▶ Raise awareness in your community about the real threats that hunger poses to children.
- ▶ Help teach families and children about healthy eating or cooking, especially ways that are budget friendly.

FRONT PORCH PROJECT®

The Front Porch Project is a community-based prevention initiative based on the belief that everyone can — and should — become more aware of how to help protect children and support families in their own communities. It provides community members with the knowledge, training, and encouragement they need to take an active role in preventing abuse and neglect before it occurs.

To learn more about this project, please join one of our informational sessions during the month of December by using this link to pre-register: <https://us02web.zoom.us/joining/register/tZMlcuqvqT4qH9wLJXkmr-uRTWfYGWAVaW9j>