Profile of Infants and Toddlers in California
Hunger, Poverty, Health, and the Federal Nutrition Programs

THE PROBLEM

Far too many young children in California experience food insecurity and poverty.

16.4% of children under age 18 live in a food-insecure household compared to 17.4% nationally.¹

22.9% of children 0-3 years old live in poverty compared to 23.7% nationally.²

In addition, far too many young children do not have a healthy start in life.³

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High Weight-for-Length Among WIC Infants Ages 3-23 Months (2014)</th>
<th>Obesity Among WIC Children Ages 2-4 Years (2014)</th>
<th>Low Birthweight Rate (2017)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CALIFORNIA</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATIONAL</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THE IMPACT⁴

- Poor health
- Iron deficiency anemia
- Developmental delays
- Hospitalizations
- Less prepared for school

THE SOLUTION⁵

The federal nutrition programs for young children — the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) — support health, nutrition, and well-being during early childhood and beyond.

The programs IMPROVE...

- Overall health
- Birth weight
- Infant feeding practices
- Breastfeeding initiation
- Dietary quality
- Cognitive development
- Educational attainment & income in adulthood

The programs REDUCE...

- Poverty
- Food insecurity
- Hospitalizations
- Preterm birth
- Infant mortality
- Stunting
- Anemia & nutritional deficiency
- Overweight & obesity
In California, many young children and their families benefit from the federal nutrition programs:

- 213,940 infants, 571,440 children, and 224,112 women received nutrition counseling and nutritious foods through WIC in the average month. ($524.8 million in healthy WIC food benefits in FY2018.)
- 600,252 children received healthy meals and snacks on an average workday in child care participating in CACFP. (221.9 million CACFP meals and snacks were served in FY2018.)
- 496,000 children age 0-3 received SNAP food benefits to support good health and food security.

How does your state's participation in the federal nutrition programs compare to the U.S.?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WIC Coverage Rates'</th>
<th>SNAP Participation Among Young Children Living in Low-Income Householdsb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CALIFORNIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligible Infants</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligible Children</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Eligible</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Children Participating in CACFP: Five-Year Trends9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CALIFORNIA</th>
<th>NATIONAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children Participating FY 2018</td>
<td>Five-Year Percent Change FY 2013–FY 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homes</td>
<td>108,751</td>
<td>-5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centers</td>
<td>491,501</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>600,252</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: State ranking scale from (1) for the state with the highest rate of growth to (51) for the lowest rate of growth (or highest rate of decline) in the number of children participating on an average workday.

Endnotes


FRAC wishes to thank the Think Babies™ campaign for their generous support of this fact sheet. ZERO TO THREE created the Think Babies™ campaign to make the potential of every baby a national priority. Funding partners for Think Babies™ include the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, which supports the campaign’s public education aspects, and the Perigee Fund, which supports the campaign’s public education and advocacy aspects. Learn more at www.thinkbabies.org.