

THE PROBLEM

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



14.1% of children under age 18 live in a food-insecure household compared to **17.4%** nationally.¹



16.4% 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

	High Weight-for-Length Among WIC Infants Ages 3–23 Months (2014)	Obesity Among WIC Children Ages 2–4 Years (2014)	Low Birthweight Rate (2017)
MASSACHUSETTS	14%	17%	8%
NATIONAL	12%	14%	8%

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

THE DATA

In Massachusetts, many young children and their families benefit from the federal nutrition programs.⁶

- 24,193 infants, 60,576 children, and 23,824 women received nutrition counseling and nutritious foods through WIC in the average month. (\$48.7 million in healthy WIC food benefits in FY2018.)
- 74,411 children received healthy meals and snacks on an average workday in child care participating in CACFP. (38.8 million CACFP meals and snacks were served in FY2018.)
- 54,000 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.?

WIC Coverage Rates⁷

	MASSACHUSETTS	NATIONAL
Eligible Infants	75%	77%
Eligible Children	48%	44%
All Eligible Participants	54%	53%

SNAP Participation Among Young Children Living in Low-Income Households⁸

MASSACHUSETTS	NATIONAL
67%	66%

Children Participating in CACFP: Five-Year Trends⁹

	MASSACHUSETTS			NATIONAL
	Children Participating FY 2018	Five-Year Percent Change FY 2013–FY 2018	State Ranking On Percent Change	Five-Year Percent Change
Homes	22,105	-16%	22	-9%
Centers	52,306	50%	13	36%
Total	74,411	22%	18	26%

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

¹ FRAC analysis of 2014–2016 Current Population Survey–Food Security Supplement (CPS–FSS) data. | ² FRAC analysis of 5-year American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample (ACS–PUMS) data (2012–2016). | ³ Freedman et al., Pediatrics, 2017 (supplemental table published on CDC website); Pan et al., MMWR, 2016; Martin et al., National Vital Statistics Reports, 2018. | ⁴ FRAC's The Importance of the Federal Nutrition Programs for Infants and Toddlers. | ⁵ USDA FY2018 WIC and CACFP data; FRAC analysis of USDA FY 2017 SNAP Quality Control data. | ⁶ USDA 2015 WIC coverage rates: the percentage of eligible individuals receiving WIC benefits (published 2018). | ⁷ FRAC analysis of ACS–PUMS data (2012–2016): young children (0–3 years old) living in low-income SNAP households (below 130% of poverty). | ⁸ FRAC analysis of USDA CACFP average daily participation data.

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.