

THE PROBLEM

Far too many young children in the United States experience food insecurity and poverty.

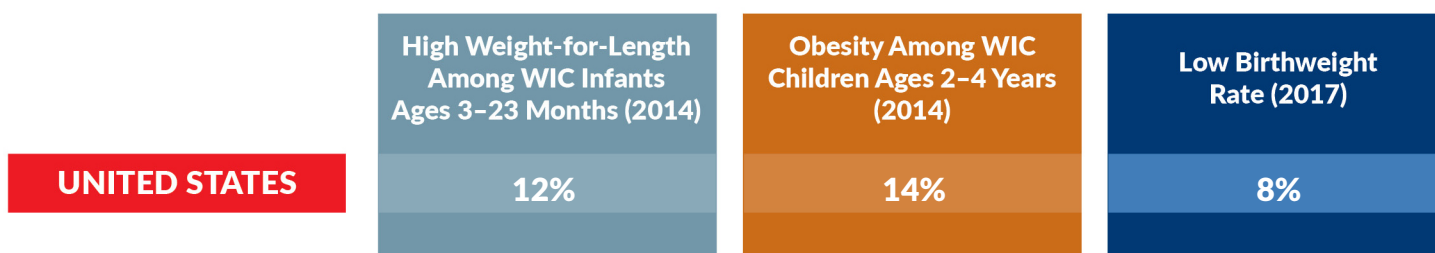


17.4% of children under age 18 live in a food-insecure household.



23.7% of children 0-3 years old live in poverty.

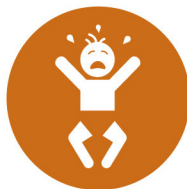
In addition, far too many young children do not have a healthy start in life.³



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 the United States, many young children and their families benefit from the federal nutrition programs.⁶

- 1,712,274 infants, 3,523,863 children, and 1,633,991 women received nutrition counseling and nutritious foods through WIC in the average month. (\$3.4 billion in healthy WIC food benefits in FY2018.)
- 4,488,790 children received healthy meals and snacks on an average workday in child care participating in CACFP. (2 billion CACFP meals and snacks were served in FY2018.)
- 4,461,000 children age 0-3 received SNAP food benefits to support good health and food security.

National Participation in the Federal Nutrition Programs

WIC Coverage Rates⁷

	UNITED STATES
Eligible Infants	77%
Eligible Children	44%
All Eligible Participants	53%

SNAP Participation Among Young Children Living in Low-Income Households⁸

UNITED STATES
66%

Children Participating in CACFP: Five-Year Trends⁹

	UNITED STATES	
	Children Participating FY 2018	Five-Year Percent Change FY 2013–FY 2018
Homes	720,597	-9%
Centers	3,768,193	36%
Total	4,488,790	26%

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. | ^{4,5} FRAC’s The Importance of the Federal Nutrition Programs for Infants and Toddlers. | ⁶ USDA FY2018 WIC and CACFP data; FRAC analysis of USDA FY 2017 SNAP Quality Control data. | ⁷ USDA 2015 WIC coverage rates: the percentage of eligible individuals receiving WIC benefits (published 2018). | ⁸ FRAC analysis of ACS–PUMS data (2012–2016): young children (0–3 years old) living in low-income SNAP households (below 130% of poverty). | ⁹ 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.