



## What is SNAP?

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps) is the nation's largest and most effective anti-hunger program. In 2016, the program served about 45 million Americans, including about 20 million children, by providing families benefits to purchase food at grocery stores, farmer's markets, and other food retailers

Participation in SNAP reduces hunger and leads to healthier and more academically successful children.

During the reauthorization of the Farm Bill and the federal budget process, Congress should protect and strengthen SNAP and reject any attempt to change the current structure of the program.

## SNAP and Kids

### Overview

SNAP is a targeted, powerful tool for ending childhood hunger. It works in concert with other child nutrition programs, like school meals and the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), to ensure children have access to the healthy meals they need to grow and thrive.

Independent research shows that SNAP reduces food insecurity and poverty among children. Specifically, food insecurity among children falls by one-third after families have been receiving benefits for about six months.<sup>1</sup>

SNAP also reduces poverty for children and their families. In 2012, SNAP kept nearly 5 million children out of poverty and kept an estimated 2.1 million children from experiencing deep poverty, defined as 50 percent or less of the poverty threshold.<sup>2</sup>

### By the Numbers

In 2015, seventy-five percent of SNAP households included a child, an elderly individual, or an individual with a disability, and these households received 82 percent of all benefits issued.

Nearly one-half of SNAP participants were under the age of 18.<sup>3</sup>

Overall, 67% of SNAP dollars go to families with children.

SNAP serves children across all age groups. Across the country, 32% of all children ages 0-4, 30% of children 5-11, and 21% of children ages 12-17 participate in SNAP.<sup>4</sup>

The families of children on SNAP overwhelmingly live in deep poverty. More than 80% of families on SNAP with children have incomes below the poverty line, about \$20,000 for a household of three.<sup>5</sup>

## ABOUT SHARE OUR STRENGTH

No child should go hungry in America, but 1 in 5 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 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.

For more information, please contact Lucy Melcher at [LMelcher@strength.org](mailto:LMelcher@strength.org)

## SNAP Leads to Healthier Kids

SNAP improves health for children from low-income families starting in utero and continuing through their childhood. Studies show that when pregnant moms participate in SNAP, it reduces the likelihood of low birth weight by 23%. Low birth weight is linked to infant mortality, cognitive development and chronic disease later in life.

Additionally, when low-income children had access to food stamps while in utero and before the age of five, there was a significant reduction in “metabolic syndrome,” which leads to obesity, high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes, including a 16 percentage point reduction in the likelihood of being obese.<sup>6</sup>

Among older children, those receiving SNAP are less likely to be underweight and their families are less likely to make tradeoffs between food and housing or heating. Research shows that hospital admissions among low-income Americans for diabetic complications rise by 27% at the end of the month, which they believe is linked to “exhausted food budgets” tied to SNAP benefits running out.<sup>7</sup>

## SNAP Leads to Improved Education Outcomes

Hunger has a direct impact on a child’s ability to succeed in school. The timing of SNAP benefits can directly impact children’s test scores. A research project in North Carolina tracked student test scores against when their families received their SNAP benefits. Scores were highest among students whose families got their SNAP benefits 2-3 weeks before a standardized test (meaning the kids had food during the learning and test prep). At the same time, scores were lowest among kids who were trying to study during the last days of their family’s SNAP benefit cycle (or when food budgets were most likely to be exhausted).<sup>8</sup>

Additionally, research suggests that SNAP has a positive effect on child outcomes that extend into adulthood. For example, early access to SNAP leads to an 18 percentage point increase in the likelihood of high school graduation.<sup>9</sup>

The inadequacy of the SNAP benefit amount impacts student behavior. In a study, the incidence of disciplinary events among students in families on SNAP was nearly 50 percent higher at the end of the month, when benefits have typically run out, than at the beginning of the month.<sup>10</sup>

## RESOURCES

<sup>1</sup> White House Council of Economic Advisers, “Long-Term Benefits of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program,” 2015

<sup>2</sup> Schanzenbach, Diane, et al. “Twelve Facts About Food Insecurity and SNAP,” The Hamilton Project, 2016

<sup>3</sup> USDA, “[Characteristics of Households on SNAP, 2015](#)”, Accessed February 2017

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “[SNAP Works for America’s Children](#),” 2016

<sup>6</sup> White House Council of Economic Advisers, “Long-Term Benefits of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program,” 2015

<sup>7</sup> Health Affairs, “Exhaustion Of Food Budgets At Month’s End And Hospital Admissions For Hypoglycemia,” 2014

<sup>8</sup> Council of Economic Advisers, “Long-Term Benefits of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program,” 2015

<sup>9</sup> Schanzenbach, Diane, et al. “Twelve Facts About Food Insecurity and SNAP,” The Hamilton Project, 2016.

<sup>10</sup> Council of Economic Advisers, “Long-Term Benefits of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program,” 2015