



## Hunger at School



USDA photo by Lance Cheung

### Mini Fact:

One in six kids in the U.S. lives with food insecurity.

### What does hunger do?

Food is fuel. The food we eat is changed into energy that our bodies use to think, move and grow.

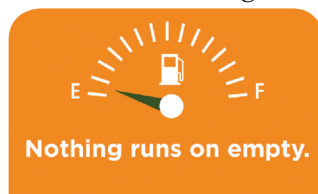


image courtesy Feeding America

Good nutrition is especially important during childhood, experts say. Kids who don't get healthy foods may be sick more and develop conditions such as Type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure. They also may struggle in school and have learning problems. And hungry kids may have a harder time getting along with other children and teachers.

### Helping hungry families

The U.S. government helps some families with money to buy food. Other people make more money and can't participate in these programs, but they still are food insecure because they live in an area where food is very expensive, or they have a larger family to feed.



USDA photo

Groups such as Feeding America, along with churches and other charitable organizations, help provide supplies through food pantries and food banks. These are places where people can go to get free or low-cost groceries to help nourish their family when they don't have enough money.

Think back to what you had for breakfast this morning. How about dinner last night? Did you get enough to eat? Was it healthy food to fuel your body?

For about 13 million kids in the United States, the answers to those questions aren't good. An organization called Feeding America has designated September as **Hunger Action Month**. The Mini Page worked with Feeding America to find out more about the problem of hunger.



image courtesy Feeding America

### What is food insecurity?

A home that is **food insecure** is one where adults and children don't have **consistent**, or regular, access to enough food. These homes are in every state and every community, but some states have more people who are food insecure.



USDA photo

In some families, there isn't money to buy enough food. Parents may be able to purchase plenty of food, but they can't afford or can't find healthier options, such as fresh fruits, vegetables and meat. Unfortunately, these foods cost more than frozen, canned or processed foods such as hot dogs or chicken fingers.

### Programs for students

You may know that some kids in your school get free lunches. Other kids may eat breakfast at school or take home a backpack full of food at the end of the week.



USDA photo by Lance Cheung

These kinds of programs are helping children get the nutrition they need to do better in school and stay healthy.

### Practice empathy

Some kids will feel sensitive or embarrassed about taking part in food programs. It's really important for them to be able to participate without being made fun of or bullied.

Do you know what **empathy** is? Empathy is the ability to imagine how someone else feels. If you know or see students who are getting help at school with food, there's no need to call attention to how they pay for lunch or where they eat breakfast.

Instead, offer them a seat at your table and include them at recess. Don't let food insecurity make any kid an outsider.

## Resources



### On the Web:

- [bit.ly/MPHunger](http://bit.ly/MPHunger)
- [bit.ly/MPactionplan](http://bit.ly/MPactionplan)

### At the library:

- "Poverty and Hunger" by Louise Spilsbury
- "Taking Action to Improve People's Health" by Eric Braun

## Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of hunger are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:



BANK, BREAKFAST, CHILDREN, CONSISTENT, EMPATHY, ENOUGH, EXPENSIVE, FAMILY, FOOD, FUEL, HEALTHY, HUNGER, INSECURITY, LEARNING, LUNCH, NUTRITION, PANTRY, SCHOOL, STUDENTS.

L U N C H T N E T S I S N O C  
 L E A R N I N G Q H U N G E R  
 T S C H O O L F O O D K I Y W  
 I H H E V I S N E P X E M L E  
 Y E R B B R E A K F A S T I N  
 R A F A Z W Y H T A P M E M O  
 T L I N S E C U R I T Y O A U  
 N T R K N O I T I R T U N F G  
 A H S T N E D U T S N G B S H  
 P Y L E U F C H I L D R E N N

## Mini Spy Classics

Mini Spy and her friends are enjoying a late summer picnic. See if you can find the hidden pictures. Then color the picture.



Mini Spy Classics appear in the first issue of each month.

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- word MINI
- number 3
- sailboat
- flyswatter
- net
- fish
- camel
- cardinal
- bowl
- snail
- question mark
- squirrel
- bell

## Mini Jokes



**Hank:** What did the mother ghost tell the baby ghost when he ate too fast?  
**Hannah:** "Stop goblin your food!"

## Eco Note



In developed countries such as the United States, most of the food is bought from supermarkets. These stores offer products grown all over the world, which means people can enjoy foods such as bananas all year round. But some of that food has traveled thousands of miles. This distance is called **food miles**. Transporting food around the world uses a lot of energy. Buying locally grown foods in season is kinder to the environment.

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## For later:

Think and talk about ways you can contribute to your local food pantry.

**Teachers:** For standards-based activities to accompany this feature, visit: [bit.ly/MPstandards](http://bit.ly/MPstandards). And follow The Mini Page on Facebook!



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