

Hunger



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

If I could change one thing in the world, it would have to be childhood hunger in America. Children who are struggling with hunger are affected in many ways. We need to all be aware of how we can prevent this from happening. Did you know that more than 1 out of every 5 children is at risk of childhood hunger? Children that struggle with hunger have more health issues. A child that does not receive proper nourishment is more often to get sick and recover more slowly. They often experience headaches, stomachaches, colds, infections and fatigue.

Studies also show that a child who is hungry is more susceptible to obesity and its harmful consequences as children and adults. Childhood hunger affects children in their academics and cognition. Children that are undernourished between the ages of 0-3 years cannot learn as fast, or as well. The lack of nutrition impairs a child's ability to perform well in school or even concentrate. The emotional and social wellbeing of children who do not regularly get enough nutritious foods to eat have a higher level of behavioral, emotional, and academic problems. They may be more aggressive and anxious. In school, teens are affected by getting suspended from school or have trouble getting along with other kids. A lot of the problem with childhood hunger doesn't mean the parents do not want to feed their children.

They just lack the means to do so. There are child nutrition programs that make a positive difference. They were developed to help needy families get the nutritious foods they need. Some of the programs are, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, (SNAP), formally known as food stamps. Nearly half, 49.2% of American children will receive SNAP benefits at some point in

their lives, reports a study in the Archives of Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine, November 2009. Special Supplemental Nutrition Programs for women, infants and children, (WIC).

Over 7 million infants and children under 5 received WIC benefits per month in 2010. There is also a program with the National School Lunch program. On an average school day in 2010, 31.6 million kids ate a federally funded school lunch. 20.5 million of those were eating a free or reduced priced school lunch. There is also emergency food assistance available. Food pantries and soup kitchens which are intended to help out when there is an emergency rather than long term needs.

The application process is simpler than having to apply for a federally funded program. The only problem with this program is many communities do not even have a food pantry or if they do they aren't even aware that there is one available. Everyone needs to be aware that children here in the United States are struggling with hunger. We need to get involved and try to end childhood hunger. Ways we can help is donating to local food pantries.

Get the communities involved to help support feeding the hungry children. Contact local business owners, your employer, churches, schools, and social groups. They may help sponsor or even carry out fundraising events. Children are struggling with hunger every day.

It is affecting their lives and they cannot thrive because they are lacking nutrition. We all need to be aware and realize that if we could help out just a little, that little bit might just help feed a hungry child.