



# Childhood Hunger

## the effects on our students



District Student Services  
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What happens when a child faces hunger? Children who do not get enough to eat, especially during the first three years, begin life at a serious disadvantage. Children facing hunger are more likely to be hospitalized and they face higher risk of health conditions like anemia and asthma. As they grow, children who missed meals are more likely to have problems in school and other social situations. (Feeding America, 2021)

In Florida, 2,567,300 people are facing hunger – and of them 723,540 are children.



1 in 8 people face hunger.



1 in 6 children face hunger.

(Feeding America, 2021)

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in Florida, formally food stamps, provides temporary help for people going through hard times – providing supplemental money to buy food until they get back on their feet. SNAP and charitable programs are able to work together to help bridge the meal gap for our hungry population. Food insecurity refers to the United State Department of a measure of lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members and limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate food. In 2019, 22,460 Citrus County residents were food insecure; 72% were met SNAP eligibility.

(Feeding America, 2019)

### Possible Effects on Students in Our Classrooms

If a child arrives at school hungry at least once a week for a school year, 36 hours of learning time would be lost.

- Aggressive behaviors, Hyperactivity
- Lethargic, Irritable
- Impacting physical growth
- Depression/Anxiety
- Impaired focus
- Developmental delays leading to possible learning disabilities
- 50% of hungry students repeat a grade
- Experience developmental impairments in areas like language and motor skills
- Increased social and behavioral problems
- Headaches/Stomachaches/Colds
- May contribute to toxic stress
- Increased chance of chronic diseases; high blood pressure, diabetes, etc.
- Limiting the size and function of the brain

(American Psychological Association, 2014)

### How We Can and Are Helping

We can identify students in need for the following programs

<a href="#">Citrus eSchool Meal Pre-order</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5-day meal kit – breakfast and lunch</li> <li>Pre-order completed weekly</li> <li>Must be a Citrus eSchool student</li> <li>Meal pickups at Citrus High School on Monday's 4:15pm-5:15pm</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Weekend Snack &amp; Super Snack</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distribution on Friday's from 12:15pm – 1:15pm</li> <li>Distribution sites: PGE, FRE, FCE, HOM, CRH, LHS, CSE and RCE</li> <li>Weekend Snack and Super Snack meals are for enrolled brick and mortar students, enrolled Citrus eSchool students and Citrus County Homebound Students</li> <li>Parents are encouraged to complete <a href="#">this</a> form prior to pick-up</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Citrus County Blessings</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6-meals provided to take home every Friday of the school year at participating schools</li> <li>Students given additional food over long weekends and school breaks</li> <li>Referral program by a school employee to the school guidance office</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Free School Breakfast and Lunches</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All students are currently eligible to receive free school breakfast and lunch during school days</li> </ul>

### Survival Guide for Holiday Eating

brought to you in partnership with: Kelly Niblett  
District Wellness Committee Chair

The holiday season is upon us. The combinations of feasts and celebrations can tax the arteries and put a strain on the waistline.

- Be Realistic** – do not eat to lose pounds during the holidays, instead, try to maintain your weight.
- Do Not Skip Meals** – do not skip breakfast or lunch because you are going to a “big dinner”. Eat a light meal or snack like apples with peanut butter, hummus, and crackers. This will help curb your appetite and you will be less tempted to over-indulge.
- Avoid Overeating** – eat until you are satisfied, not stuffed. Savor your foods while you are eating them. Avoid standing by the buffet table to avoid mindless eating. Once you have eaten, chew gum or put a mint in your mouth to avoid eating more.
- Be Careful with Beverages** – certain beverages can lessen inhibitions to include overheating. Other beverages can be packed with sugars and fats.
- It's Okay** – if you overeat at one meal, go light on the next. It takes 500 additional calories a day or 3,500 calories above your maintenance consumption to gain a pound. You will not gain weight from one piece of pie.
- Practice Healthy Cooking** – prepare favorite dishes using substitutes or cutting back on ingredients to lower fat and calories.
- Move!** – plan time for exercise. Exercise helps relieve holiday stress and can help prevent weight gain. Try 10–15-minute walks twice a day.
- Take the Focus Off of Food** – have holiday parties or get together focused on non-edible projects like making wreaths, dough art decorations, make an ornament, decorate a gingerbread house.



### Resources

Title	Description	Level	Educator	Family
<a href="#">Hunger Pains: Teaching Hungry Students</a>	Resilient Educator; tips for teachers and classrooms	All	X	X
<a href="#">Starving Young Minds: How Hunger is Hurting Our Children at School</a>	The Hunger Site – Greater Good News	All	X	X
<a href="#">The State of America's Children 2021</a>	Children's Defense Fund – Leave No Child Behind	All	X	X
<a href="#">Facts about Child Hunger in America</a>	Feeding America	All	X	X
<a href="#">Citrus Resource Directory</a>	Anti-Drug Coalition and the Community Alliance of Citrus County	All	X	X
<a href="#">The Path of Citrus County Resources</a>	Resources across Citrus County for Adults and Children	All	X	X

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