



Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics Announces Participation in National Learning Collaborative to End Childhood Hunger in Illinois

Contact: Mary Elsner, Director, Health Equity Initiatives, melsner@illinoisAAP.com

March 8, 2022, Chicago, IL: Right now, nearly 1 in 8 children in Illinois face hunger. This National Nutrition Month, Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics is excited to announce their participation in a national learning collaborative with American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry Campaign to end childhood hunger in Illinois.

Food insecurity – the limited or uncertain access to enough food – is a critical child health issue that impacts millions of infants, children, youth, and families in all communities across the US. Children who live in households with food insecurity are more likely to be sick, recover from illness more slowly, and be hospitalized more frequently.

ICAAP built the Illinois Partnership for Childhood Nutrition Security, engaging more than 30 organizations in the food system across Illinois. ICAAP is developing a collective impact plan to incorporate the expertise and increase connectivity with food system partners. As part of that plan, ICAAP is creating and launching training to build pediatrician capacity to improve childhood nutrition security in Illinois and to better link patients to local food resources.

“To me the Childhood Nutrition Security Partnership means hope,” stated Alexandra Vaughn, a Family Advisor to the project. “It means for those that are struggling, no matter what side you fall on, you’ll have someone here that will find a way to help you and others like you. It means progression in that we aren’t stopping where the line says ‘you don’t make enough’ or ‘you make too much’ because we know those numbers don’t say everything. We care about family’s health and nutrition, and we care about you. This is what the Childhood Nutrition Security Partnership means to me.”

“Hunger has an immediate and devastating impact on the very young, whose brains are busy building motor skills as well as cognitive, social, and emotional capacity,” said Caron Gremont, director for the No Kid Hungry campaign. “Health professionals are in a unique position to help diagnose food insecurity in young children and provide essential information about resources that can help.”

Through a competitive grant process, Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics was awarded funds through a national collaboration between AAP and Share Our Strength to address food insecurity through strategic initiatives aimed at eliminating state food systems gaps and increasing pediatricians’ capacity to screen, refer, and follow-up with families experiencing food insecurity.

###



Illinois Chapter

INCORPORATED IN ILLINOIS

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



About State AAP Chapter

The Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (ICAAP) is a statewide organization with 2,100 pediatrician members whose mission is to promote and advocate for optimal child, youth and family well-being, and access to quality healthcare.

About American Academy of Pediatrics

The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 67,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety, and well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults. For more information: visit www.aap.org and follow us on Twitter.

About No Kid Hungry

No child should go hungry in America. But in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, 1 in 6 kids could face hunger this year. No Kid Hungry is working to end childhood hunger by helping launch and improve programs that give all kids the healthy food they need to thrive. This is a problem we know how to solve. No Kid Hungry is a campaign of Share Our Strength, an organization committed to ending hunger and poverty.