Addressing Childhood Food Insecurity:
Increasing Screening, Referrals, and Resource Delivery

Vera Goldberg, MD, FAAP,
Illinois Partnership for Childhood Nutrition Security

ICAAP Webinar
June 28, 2022
I have no financial disclosures.
Project Sponsorship

This activity is part of an American Academy of Pediatrics Collective Impact Chapter Grant.
Objectives

- Inspire pediatricians and other healthcare providers who work with children to increase screening and referrals for food insecurity
- Increase comfort with asking hunger vital signs and discussing food insecurity with families
- Identify and provide food resources for families
Food Insecurity

● “A household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food” (US Dept Agriculture, 2019)

● Childhood food insecurity rate in Cook County
  ● 12.3% in 2019
  ● Projected 20.3% in 2020
  ● Projected 16.5% in 2021
  (Feeding America, 2021)

Image Courtesy of https://frac.org/aaptoolkit
Food Insecurity Ramifications

Image Courtesy of https://frac.org/aaptoolkit
Background

- Community Pediatrics Engagement Project at Loyola
  - “Universal Screening for Social Determinants of Health in a Pediatric Continuity Clinic”
  - Mentor: Dr. Julie O’Keefe

- American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Collective Impact Chapter Grant, “Building Pediatrician Capacity to Address Food Insecurity”
  - Illinois Chapter of AAP (ICAAP) was one of several chapters to receive the grant
    - Illinois Partnership for Childhood Nutrition Security
Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

- Non-profit
- Headquartered in Chicago
- 2,100+ members statewide
- Mission to promote and advocate for optimal child youth and family well-being and access to quality care
- CME, QI, public health, systems change, advocacy, collaboration

https://illinoisaap.org/
Illinois Partnership for Childhood Nutrition Security

https://illinoisaap.org/childhood-nutrition-security/

- Goal: Foster collaboration between pediatricians, state food delivery, and family support partners to improve pediatrician food insecurity screening, referral mechanisms, and resource delivery to families through a collective impact plan.

- 37 project partners including government agencies, healthcare organizations, local food initiatives, food banks, food pantries, public health organizations, and family advisors.

- Component is training pediatricians (grand rounds and recorded webinar).
## Project Partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government Agency</th>
<th>Healthcare System</th>
<th>Local Food Initiative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chicago Department of Public Health</td>
<td>ACCESS Community Health Network</td>
<td>Chicago Food Policy Action Counsel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago Public Schools</td>
<td>American Heart Association</td>
<td>Experimental Station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook County Health</td>
<td>Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital</td>
<td>Illinois 4-H Food Security Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois Department of Human Services</td>
<td>Erie Family Health Centers</td>
<td>Peoria Grown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois State Board of Education</td>
<td>Esperanza Health Centers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern 7 Health Department</td>
<td>Heartland Health Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNAP Education, University of Illinois</td>
<td>Illinois Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension</td>
<td>OSF Healthcare Children’s Hospital</td>
<td>Food Bank / Pantry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tazewell County Health Department</td>
<td>PCC Community Wellness Center</td>
<td>Beyond Hunger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Health</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois Public Health Association</td>
<td></td>
<td>Catholic Charities of Archdiocese of Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois Public Health Institute</td>
<td></td>
<td>Feeding Illinois</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home Visiting / Daycare</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Greater Chicago Food Depository</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start Early</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and</td>
<td>Heartland Health Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral Agencies</td>
<td>Illinois Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OSF Healthcare Children’s Hospital</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PCC Community Wellness Center</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proviso Partners for Health: Veggie Rx</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Southern Illinois University School of Medicine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UIC Office of Community Engagement and Neighborhood Health Partnership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Food Bank / Pantry</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Beyond Hunger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Catholic Charities of Archdiocese of Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Feeding Illinois</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Greater Chicago Food Depository</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Home Visiting / Daycare</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Start Early</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Referral Agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Screening by Pediatricians

- AAP & Food Research Action Center (FRAC) surveyed 327 pediatricians through AAP listservs

- Key findings
  - 74% screen some or all patients
    - Screening tools variable
  - Training and resources needed
    - 18.6% felt unprepared to screen
    - 21.7% felt unprepared to intervene
    - 81% do not know if family used resources provided
      (Montez, 2021)
AAP Toolkit to Screen & Intervene

- Three steps for success
  - Prepare - educate and train staff
  - Screen
  - Intervene

- Also crucial to evaluate and ask families for feedback
  - Input on screening process?
  - Are families using resources?
  - What changes would they recommend?

ImageCourtesy of https://frac.org/aaptoolkit
Screening
Screen: AAP recommends **Universal** Screening

YOU CAN’T TELL BY LOOKING

Image Courtesy of https://frac.org/aaptoolkit
Screen using Hunger Vital Signs

Use the AAP-recommended Hunger Vital Sign™:

1. “Within the past 12 months, we worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more.”

☐ OFTEN TRUE   ☐ SOMETIMES TRUE   ☐ NEVER TRUE   ☐ DON’T KNOW/REFUSED

2. “Within the past 12 months, the food we bought just didn’t last and we didn’t have money to get more.”

☐ OFTEN TRUE   ☐ SOMETIMES TRUE   ☐ NEVER TRUE   ☐ DON’T KNOW/REFUSED

Patients screen positive for food insecurity if the response is “often true” or “sometimes true” for either or both statements.

Document and code the administration and results of screening in medical records.

Image Courtesy of https://frac.org/aaptoolkit
Sensitivity When Screening

- Normalize
  - Physical environment cues (e.g., posters, brochures)
  - Wording
    - “Food is important to health. I want to make sure you have enough food ..., so I ask all my patients these questions.” - Hilary Seligman, MD, MAS, UCSF Center for Vulnerable Populations
    - “A lot of families are struggling [financially] right now [with the pandemic], so I ask all families because I care about your child and your family”
    - For a negative screen: If anything changes, please let us know, we are here for you.

- Consider addressing response and next steps when child not in room or distracted with something else

- Be mindful of immigration status
  - National Immigration Law Center has info on eligibility and rules
    https://www.nilc.org/issues/economic-support
Example Screening Form

Name: ___________________________  DOB: ____________

Changes have happened during the pandemic. We care about your child and family, so we are asking all families these questions. Please answer the following questions.

☐ No thanks  ☐ Done at recent visit
Resources for Food Insecure Households
Federal Nutrition Programs

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
  - Formerly known as “food stamps”
  - Benefits provided on Illinois Link Card
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- Child Care Meals
- School Breakfast and Lunch
- Afterschool meals
- Summer Nutrition Program
- Pandemic-EBT
WIC underutilized

- Not maintaining enrollment until 5 years of age
  - Consider asking families if on WIC at each well child visit for children under 5 year old.
  - Healthcare providers are trust messengers.

- Time commitment
  - Nutrition education

- Stigma
WIC

- Income-eligible if $\leq 185\%$ federal poverty guidelines
- Families on Medicaid or SNAP are automatically income-eligible for WIC
- Serves:
  - Pregnant
  - Breastfeeding up to 1 year after delivery
  - Postpartum up to six months after delivery
  - Infant or child from birth to 5 years of age
WIC and the Formula Shortage

- Waiver to allow flexibility with formula size and type
- Updates
  - Available at: https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=144296
  - Contact the WIC state office at (217) 782-2166
- If families have difficulty finding formula:
  - WIC enrolled/eligible families can contact local WIC office
  - Anyone can call the DHS hotline at 1-800-843-6154
  - HealthyChildren.org “With the baby formula shortage, what should I do if I can't find any?”
    - Last updated today, 6/28/2022
Experimental Station

- Link Match Program doubles the value of Link purchases of fresh fruits and vegetables at participating farmers markets, farm stands, food co-ops, and independent grocery and corner stores
  - Participating markets: https://experimentalstation.org/markets

- Link Up Illinois provides training and technical assistance for participating markets and stores to implement the program
School Nutrition

- Only 11.7% of students receiving meals through the school lunch program during the school year in Illinois received meals during summer 2019 (https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/summer-tables-2019/tab1-sn-partic.html)
Beyond Federal Nutrition Programs

- Estimated that **33% of children with food insecurity in Cook County were ineligible for federal nutrition programs in 2019** (i.e. household income > 185% of poverty)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COOK COUNTY</th>
<th>FOOD INSECURE CHILDREN: 140,400</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FOOD INSECURITY RATE (CHILD)</td>
<td>ESTIMATED PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY AMONG FOOD INSECURE PEOPLE (CHILD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>33% Likely ineligible for federal nutrition programs (incomes above 185% of poverty)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>67% Income eligible for federal nutrition programs (incomes at or below 185% of poverty)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Image courtesy of https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2019/child/illinois/county/cook
Other Resources

● Feeding America
  ○ https://www.feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-foodbank

● Illinois Extension - Eat. Move. Save. & Find Food Illinois
  ○ https://eat-move-save.extension.illinois.edu/#find-food-il

● Greater Chicago Food Depository
  ○ https://www.chicagosfoodbank.org/find-food/

● 211.org
  ○ https://www.211.org/get-help/finding-food

● MyPlate
  ○ https://www.myplate.gov/eat-healthy/healthy-eating-budget
The Feeding America nationwide network of food banks and food programs helps millions of people find food and grocery help in their communities every year. Connect with your local food bank to learn about upcoming free food distributions and to apply for national food programs.

Search by Zip Code or State

- Zip Code
- State

GO

View Feeding America’s full Member Food Bank Network

7 Feeding America Food Banks that serve Illinois

Feeding America food banks serve large areas and will be able to find a feeding program in your local community.
Feeding America - Healthy, Low Cost Recipes

- Available in English, Spanish, and Chinese
Illinois Extension

- Includes recipes on a budget

https://eat-move-save.extension.illinois.edu/
Find Food

Click the Google Translate button at the top right of the map below to translate into another language.

Call before you go to confirm hours and requirements.
Greater Chicago Food Depository

- Need additional help? Please call the Food Depository at 773-247-3663.
- Our network is here to help anyone in need of food. Learn more about visiting a food program.
- For services outside of Cook County, please visit Feeding America’s directory of food banks.

**Need free diapers?**

Click the “More” filter, select “Diaper distribution” and then “Done” to find a site near you giving away free diapers!

**Need SNAP and Medicaid benefits?**

We can help you apply for SNAP (food stamps) or Medicaid benefits.

GET BENEFITS HELP
MyPlate App: “Shop Simple with MyPlate”

- Enter zip code and will list stores accepting SNAP EBT
- Tips for shopping and preparing food on a budget
Incorporating Resources in Clinic

- Posters
- QR codes with websites and resources
- Dot phrases for the after visit summary or handouts with lists of resources
  - Limitation - making sure up-to-date
Posts in Clinic

Free downloadable posters are available at https://frac.org/research/resource-library
Example QR codes

Greater Chicago Food Depository: Find Food

Find Food Illinois Community Map
Food Insecurity Projects at Other Clinics

- Esperanza Health Center
  - Partners with Windy City Harvest VeggieRx to provide produce box with food items, coupons, information on virtual cooking demos and nutrition information
  - Referred to program through pediatrician (using hunger vital signs screen) or can enroll by bring LINK card
Food Insecurity Projects at Other Clinics

- Erie Family Health Centers
  - Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) team/program
    - 1 coordinator, 3 SDOH navigators, 1 AmeriCorps service year member
    - Ask if need help and how would like help (text/email or phone call)
      - text/email includes commonly requested resources and link to NowPow
    - Enroll patients in SNAP
    - Partners with Top-Box to send 1-time food delivery to patient home when food insecurity identified
Food Insecurity Projects at Other Clinics

- Loyola University Medical Center Pediatrics
  - Screening form at front desk
  - Medical assistant enters data into EMR
  - Resident provides resources in AVS using dot phrases
Upcoming Food Insecurity Pilot Projects at Other Clinics

● Heartland Health Services, Knoxville Clinic

● Aunt Martha’s Health & Wellness, Chicago Heights Pediatrics
  ● Laminated posters and QR codes
  ● Hunger vital signs administered on paper at intake
  ● If positive screen, “Food Assistance Referral Program” placed in EMR
    ○ Care Coordination Team reaches out to family with resources
Evaluate and Track

- Follow up with families on access to resources
  - Can occur via phone - volunteers, care coordinators, medical students
- Ask families for feedback
- ICD10 codes
  - Z59.4 Lack of adequate food and safe drinking water
  - Z59.9 Problem related to housing and economic circumstances, unspecified
Acknowledgements

- American Academy of Pediatrics
  - Illinois Chapter, AAP including Jennie Pinkwater and ICAAP intern Alka Meresh
- CPEP Project Team Members:
  - Dr Julie O'Keefe, Director of Loyola Community Pediatrics Engagement Program (CPEP)
  - Dr. Pyone David and Dr. Lina Ha, CPEP Project Partners
  - Erin McCune, Jennifer Wojtowicz, and Katlyn Sullivan - medical students who helped with CPEP project
  - Dr. Nadia Qureshi
  - Dr. Gary Sigman for statistical assistance
- Staff and residents in Loyola Pediatrics Continuity Clinic
- ICAAP Food Security Work Group Team
  - Maggie Chen, Family Advisor, ICAAP MPH Intern
  - Dr. Amy Christison, Associate Professor, Department of Pediatrics University of Illinois College of Medicine, Medical Director, Healthy Kids U, Children’s Hospital of Illinois
  - Mary Elsner, JD, ICAAP Director of Health Equity Initiatives
  - Dr. Zohra Moeenuddin, University of Illinois College of Medicine-Peoria, Heartland Health Services
  - Dr. Alisa Seo-Lee, Cook County Health
  - Jabari Taylor, ICAAP Intern
  - Mrs. Alexandra Vaughn, Family Advisor
- Illinois Partnership for Childhood Nutrition Security 35 project partner organizations
Questions?

Please feel free to contact me:
Email: veragoldberg327@gmail.com
Twitter: @Dra_Vera_G

Please visit the Illinois Partnership for Childhood Nutrition Security website:

https://illinoisaap.org/childhood-nutrition-security/

References

- Abrams, Steven. With the baby formula shortage, what should I do if I can't find any? https://www.healthychildren.org/English/tips-tools/ask-the-pediatrician/Pages/Are-there-shortages-of-infant-formula-due-to-COVID-19.aspx last updated June 28, 2022