



HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN FOCUSED SUPPLEMENT TO FOOD SECURITY EVIDENCE REVIEW

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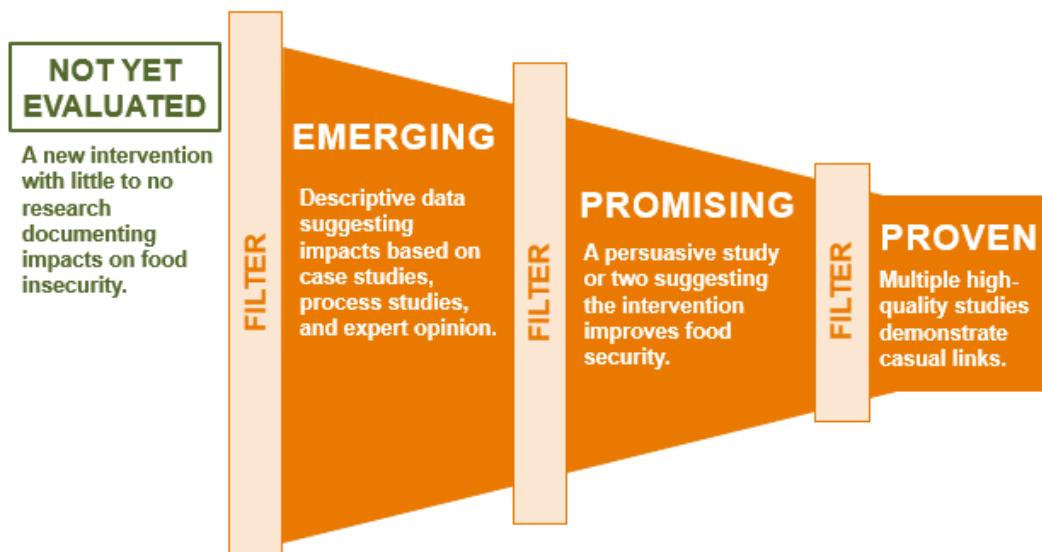
Note to Readers

This Supplement includes evidence about what works to alleviate food security in households with children. This resource is a complement to Feeding America’s [Food Security Evidence Review: Key Drivers and What Works to Improve Food Security](#). Refer to the Food Security Evidence Review for information regarding household characteristics that may increase the risk of food insecurity, key drivers of food insecurity, and additional information about the Feeding America Levels of Evidence Framework.

WHAT WORKS TO ALLEVIATE FOOD INSECURITY IN HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN

METHODS | In this Supplement, we identify and rate the evidence of three categories of interventions that have been clearly linked to improvements in food security in households with children: 1) Federal Nutrition Programs, 2) Charitable Food Assistance, and 3) Healthcare and Health Promotion.

The interventions are rated using Feeding America's **Levels of Evidence Framework**, which reflects the quality and quantity of accumulated research examining the effectiveness of each intervention. The image below represents the four rating levels as a filtered funnel:



Before reading the results of the results of this review, it is important to note that:

- 1) If an intervention is not yet rated as Proven, it may still be effective. The other ratings only mean that more research is needed to understand the program's effectiveness. **A rating of Not Yet Evaluated, Emerging or Promising does not suggest that the intervention is ineffective.**
- 2) **The interventions in this review were rated based on their effectiveness in addressing the outcome of food insecurity on households with children only.** There may be ample literature that demonstrates their effectiveness for addressing other important outcomes (e.g. dietary and health outcomes, poverty, etc.).
- 3) **The information in this report was collected during the summer and fall of 2019** and the evidence ratings within the report reflect published literature and information available up to this point. The food security literature is rapidly growing, and new evidence may be available since the publication of this review.

Please see Feeding America’s [Food Security Evidence Review: Key Drivers and What Works to Improve Food Security](#) for more detail on the Levels of Evidence Framework.

RESULTS

Food Provision and Access | The solutions in this section directly provide food to families (e.g. food pantries, school lunch) or provide benefits that can be used to purchase food (e.g. SNAP, WIC). Government programs have undergone more evaluations than programs in the charitable food space.

Level of Evidence	Federal Nutrition Programs
Proven	<p>The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is by and large the most rigorously studied intervention and the most effective in addressing food insecurity, compared to all other interventions outlined in this review.¹</p> <p>Multiple studies have found that participants receiving SNAP are 5-20 percentage points less likely to be food insecure than those who are eligible but unenrolled in the program.²</p>
Proven	<p>National School Lunch Program (NSLP) participation decreased food insecurity among households with children in school by a range of 2-9 percentage points across multiple studies.³</p>
Proven	<p>The School Breakfast Program (SBP) has been shown to reduce food insecurity for children in elementary, middle, and high school.⁴</p>
Proven	<p>The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides supplemental foods and other supports during pregnancy and early life stages and has been shown to improve food security.⁵</p>
Promising	<p>The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) likely improves food security for households with children, but more robust investigations are needed.⁶</p>
Promising	<p>The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) likely improves food insecurity among low-income households by providing food at key life stages when support is needed.⁷</p>
Emerging	<p>The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed), the education arm of the SNAP program, has been shown as a promising approach to improving food insecurity among adults. However, more research is required on its potential impacts on food insecurity among children.⁸</p>

Level of Evidence	Charitable Feeding Programs ^a
Promising	Food pantries: To date, few robust studies have assessed the impact of food pantry use on either short-term measures (e.g., acute food budget shortfalls), or longer-term measures (e.g., chronic food insecurity over weeks and months). ⁹
Promising	BackPack programs: Participation has been shown to reduce food insecurity in certain settings, though further research should examine its effectiveness across geographies and the benefit-cost ratio of implementing the program. ¹⁰
Not Yet Evaluated	School pantries provide convenient access to food for children and their families, though to date no research has been published about whether school-based pantries improve food security. ¹¹

Level of Evidence	Pediatric Screen and Intervene
Emerging	Screening for food insecurity in outpatient, inpatient and emergency room settings, collectively known as screen and intervene , ^b have been shown to reduce food insecurity among households with children. ¹²

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^a Many of these programs receive food and/or funds from The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP).

^b Screen and intervene programs are being used in health care organizations to identify patients who are food insecure and connect them with a solution to support improved access to healthy food. That might be 1) referrals to existing food bank programs & agencies; 2) creation of new programs for accessing healthy food (e.g. on-site pantries, mobile distributions at the clinic, or even some new home-delivered grocery programs); and 3) support for SNAP enrollment. For additional information, see Feeding America's *Evidence Review of Food Bank - Health Care Partnerships and Related Interventions* at <https://www.feedingamerica.org/research/program-evaluation>

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