SCHOLASTIC

HUNGRY TO HELP

FAMILY ACTION PLAN

TAKE ACTION TODAY TO HELP FIGHT HUNGER.

Dear Parents,

Imagine if your child missed a snack, or worse a meal. What would his or her attitude be like? It could certainly make focusing in school much harder. Roughly 1 in 6 children don't have enough to eat in the United States—that's around 13 million kids. Some of these kids may live in your neighborhood or go to school with your child. Despite the severity of this problem, it often gets overlooked.

This guide will help your family talk about the issue of hunger and ways to address it in your community. Here's what you will find:

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Experiences with hunger are widespread, and no one should hesitate to seek help. If you or someone you know could use assistance, visit **FeedingAmerica.org/foodbank** to find a local food bank and other resources. Food banks and food pantries have hundreds of locations nationwide and provide billions of meals every year.

Take this opportunity to learn about hunger in your community and take action together as a family to help fight hunger!

FEEDING AMERICA

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READ AND REFLECT

Read this passage together and discuss the questions that follow.

"My mom works really hard to make sure me and my brother have a roof over our heads and enough to eat. When we're eating, she'll make sure we eat first and are full. Then if there's leftovers she'll make dinner for herself. I get free lunch and breakfast at school, which helps my mom make sure we have enough food for the weekends.

Without the lunch program, I would be sad. To everyone who makes it possible I want to say thank you. Because you're making kids like me happy and our parents happy too, by making it easier for all of us to get enough to eat."

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the connection between the mom's job and food on the family's table? **Answer:** Food costs money, and the mom receives money by working. When there is not enough money available, it's hard for the mom to buy food.

Talk about other things that cost money—for example: clothes, toys, entertainment and school supplies. Some of these things are necessities, and some aren't. Food is perhaps the biggest necessity of all. When a family can't afford food, it causes many problems.

Photo: © jbigmanhewitt/iStock

2. Why does the mom wait to eat only after the kids have eaten first and are full? **Answer:** Because when there's not enough food to go around, the mom cares more about her kids' full bellies than her own.

3. What do you think might happen if the kids couldn't take advantage of the free lunch program? **Answer:** They would be sad because they may experience hunger more often, and it doesn't feel good to be hungry.

PICTURING HUNGER

Sometimes it can be difficult to talk about a big issue like hunger. Pose the following questions to your child:

- What does it feel like to be hungry?
- What would you do if you couldn't eat for a whole day?
- What things might be harder to do while hungry?

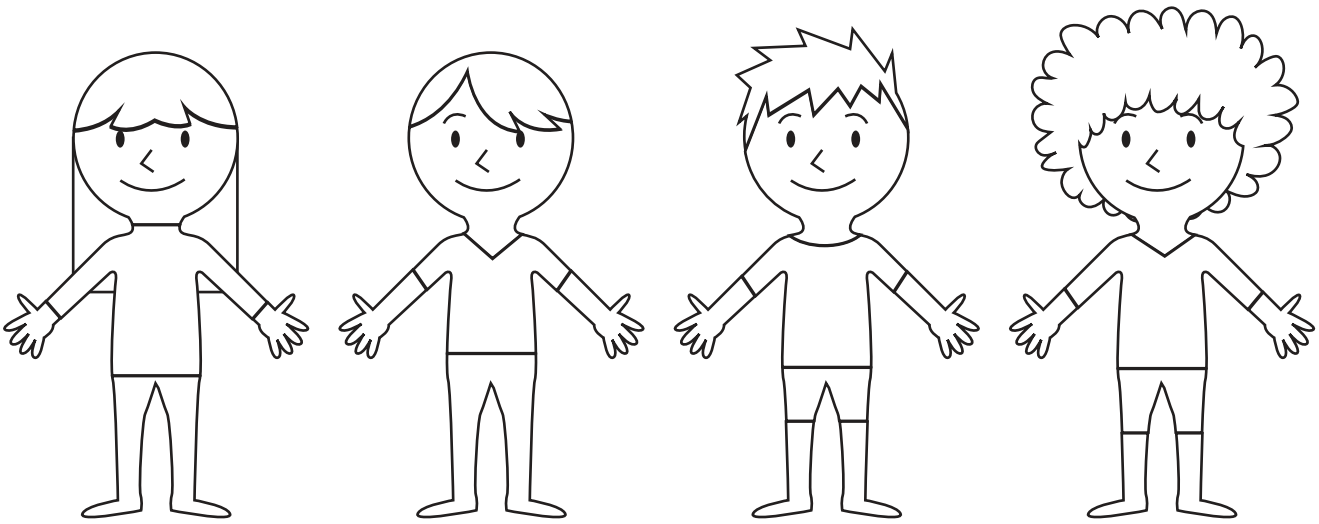
In the space below, work together to draw or write the story of someone who is facing hunger. If more direction is needed, ask a question, such as: What if you came home from school and there wasn't any food for a snack or dinner? What would you think and feel?

WHAT DO YOU THINK IT FEELS LIKE TO BE HUNGRY?

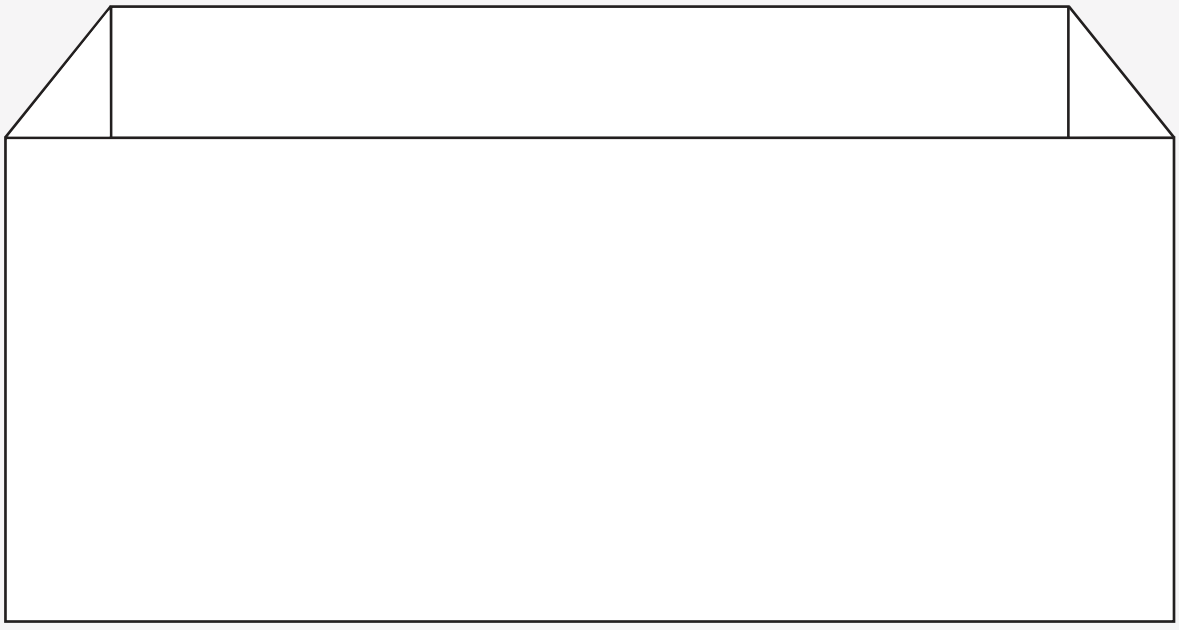
HUNGRY TO HELP

A food bank is a place that collects and stores food for people in need. Food donations are key to their success. Dried and canned goods such as peanut butter, soup and beans are some of the best foods to donate. What other items do you think would be good to contribute?

Using a pencil or marker, have your child draw the food item that he or she can bring to the food bank.

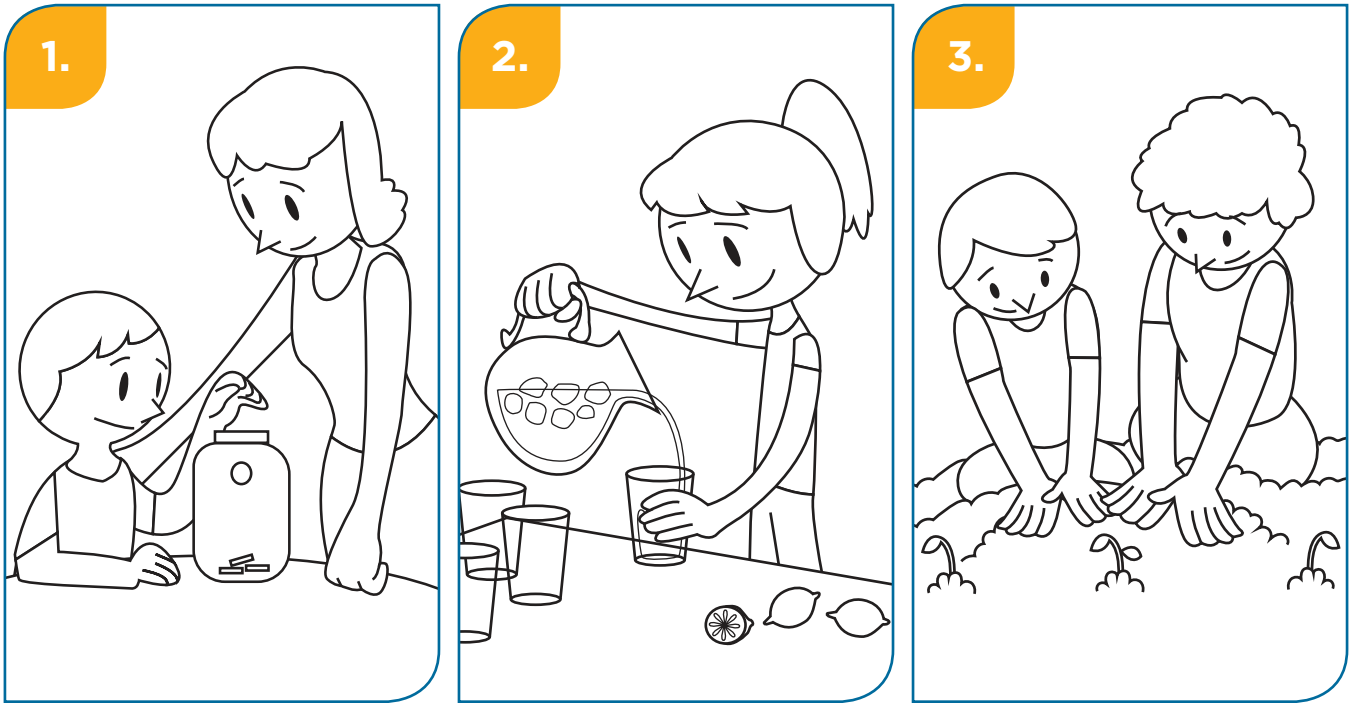


DONATION BOX



COMMUNITY ACTION IDEAS

By encouraging empathy at home and in your community, you can inspire and empower your kids to take action. Use this activity sheet to explore ways your family can take action to help fight hunger.



1. START A DONATION JAR

Find a spot in your house to collect donations for your local food bank or food pantry. Involve your child in the process by inviting him or her to decorate the jar, decide where the jar should be placed or when the donations may be brought to the receiving organization. You can also work with your child to come up with a plan on how to collect donations, such as collecting the change from every grocery run.

2. HOST A LEMONADE STAND OR BIRTHDAY PARTY

Raise funds for Feeding America or your local food bank with a lemonade stand or host a birthday party where guests are asked for donations instead of presents. Visit **FeedingAmerica.org/fundraise** for online tools to organize your fundraiser, spread the word and track your progress.

3. PLANT A FAMILY GARDEN

Use your outdoor space to plant seeds and collect a harvest to donate to a local food pantry. This project will engage your child in efforts to fight hunger as well as promote sustainability. If your family would like to expand this idea, consider working with others in your area to create a community garden. If weather is a concern, small indoor gardens are also possible.

JUST FOR FUN! Get artsy and color the comic above.

CULTIVATING EMPATHY

GET READING

Reading stories is a great way for children to understand the complex realities of other people's lives. Consider adding these books to your family's read-aloud list. Picture books that deal with hunger include:

- *Maddi's Fridge*, by Lois Brandt
- *One Potato, Two Potato*, by Cynthia DeFelice
- *Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen*, by DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan

IN SOMEONE ELSE'S SHOES

One of the ways to get kids thinking about others is to define and encourage empathy. Tell them that empathy is the ability to understand situations different from their own—in other words, what it's like to be someone else. When we have empathy, we are more thoughtful and caring. For example, if your friend loses a favorite bracelet and is very upset, you can try to understand how that feels. Or if your friend's family is going through a hard time, imagine what it is like for them. When you have empathy for others, you want to help them more.

FEELING FACES

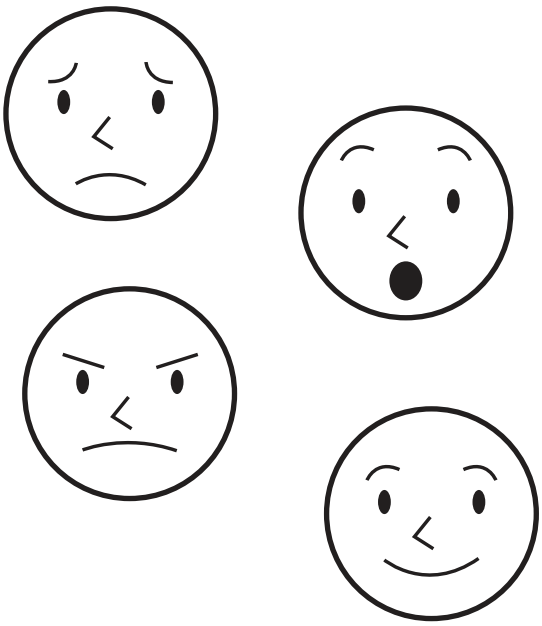
Match the face with the right descriptor and have your child share an example of when he or she has experienced that emotion. You can repeat the activity with examples of when others may have experienced those emotions.

SURPRISED

ANGRY

SAD

HAPPY



FEEDING AMERICA

FAMILY ACTION CHECKLIST TO HELP END HUNGER

- [ ] **Create** a donation jar and start contributing money.
- [ ] **Buy** extra food items to donate to the food pantry.
- [ ] **Share** food with someone in need.
- [ ] **Contact** your local food bank to ask how you can help.
- [ ] **Invite** a friend to volunteer with you at a food bank.
- [ ] **Read** a book or a news article that deals with hunger or other issues.
- [ ] **Organize** a community food drive or a local fundraiser.
- [ ] **Your family's own idea:** _____

Visit FeedingAmerica.org to learn more about hunger and how you can help.

FEEDING® AMERICA

Feeding America® is the largest domestic hunger-relief organization in the United States. Through a network of 200 food banks, 21 statewide food bank associations, and over 60,000 partner agencies, food pantries and meal programs, we helped provide 6.6 billion meals to tens of millions of people in need last year. Feeding America also supports programs that prevent food waste and improve food security among the people we serve; brings attention to the social and systemic barriers that contribute to food insecurity in our nation; and advocates for legislation that protects people from going hungry.

Mission

Our mission is to advance change in America by ensuring equitable access to nutritious food for all in partnership with food banks, policymakers, supporters, and the communities we serve.

HOW FEEDING AMERICA PROVIDES MEALS

DONATIONS ARE MADE: Feeding America secures donations from national and local retailers, food service locations, food companies and government agencies.

FOOD IS MOVED: The Feeding America network of food banks moves donated food and grocery products to where they are needed most.

FOOD IS DISTRIBUTED AND STORED: Member food banks ensure the safe storage and reliable distribution of donated goods to local feeding programs.

FOOD REACHES PEOPLE IN NEED: Food banks provide food and grocery items to people in need at food pantries, soup kitchens, youth programs, senior centers and emergency shelters.

Impact

The Feeding America network helped provided **6.6 billion meals** to children, families and individuals last year.

Every dollar donated helps provide at least **10 meals** to families in need through the Feeding America network of food banks.

To learn more, visit FeedingAmerica.org
or follow us on social media @FeedingAmerica on