

Supporting Students Experiencing Food Insecurity

Recognizing Needs and Providing Support

Food insecurity is a challenge that affects learners of all ages and backgrounds. Concerns about where their next meal will come from can create barriers to academic success, engagement, and overall well-being. Schools play an important role in helping create environments where students can access the resources they need to thrive.

Potential Indicators

Although every student's experience is different, some common indicators may include:

- Frequent comments about being hungry or skipping meals
- Difficulty concentrating during class activities
- Fatigue, irritability, or low energy
- Increased absences or tardiness
- Concerns about financial hardship
- Hesitation to participate in activities involving food costs



Creating a Supportive Learning Environment

Students are more likely to seek assistance when they feel respected and supported. Educators can help by:

- Using inclusive language that acknowledges diverse life circumstances
- Avoiding assumptions about students' access to food, transportation, or financial resources
- Sharing available campus or community resources regularly with all students
- Normalizing conversations about seeking support services
- Maintaining confidentiality when discussing personal circumstances

Connecting Students with Resources

One of the most impactful ways to support students is by becoming familiar with available resources.

These may include:

- Campus food pantries
- Emergency assistance programs
- Meal voucher initiatives
- Community food banks
- Supplemental nutrition programs
- Student support and case management services
- Local nonprofit organizations

Try This!

Create a Quick-Access Resource Guide

Develop a resource guide in either print or digital format that can be easily shared with students when needs arise. Keep the guide updated and readily available so you can access it in just a few clicks.

Having resource information organized and accessible allows staff to respond quickly and confidently, reducing the need to search for information in the moment. This simple step can streamline the support process and help students connect with assistance more efficiently.

Supporting students experiencing food insecurity begins with empathy. Small actions, such as listening without judgment, providing flexible support when appropriate, and sharing resources, can make a meaningful difference. Students who feel seen and supported are more likely to remain engaged and connected to their educational journey.

By fostering awareness and building resource-rich learning environments, educators can help remove barriers that may otherwise prevent students from achieving their goals.

Additional Resources

<https://www.feedingamerica.org>

<https://www.nokidhungry.org>

