

Nourishing Partners Program at Children's Wisconsin helps combat food insecurity

For many children and families, challenges like food insecurity, financial strain, housing instability and unmet transportation needs impact their ability to achieve optimal health. Addressing all aspects of a child's health is critical to helping support the physical, emotional and social well-being of children and families.

More than 20 percent of children in Wisconsin are food insecure. This burden disproportionately affects households that have lower incomes, have lower education levels, are headed by a single parent or Black or Hispanic families. The disparity in food security between Black and white households in Wisconsin is among the largest in the country. Children's Wisconsin's Nourishing Partners Program includes a variety of initiatives across care settings and in partnership with the community to address food insecurity.

Children's Emergency Department began screening families for food insecurity in 2019 and incorporates results into the health record to help ensure all members of Children's care team can understand the impact on the child's care and support them in meeting their needs. Families who screen positive for food insecurity get connected with immediate access to food in our cafeteria, as well receive follow-up outreach and navigation to empower them in connecting with additional Children's and community resources.



Children's has partnered with Chorus Community Health Plans and several community organizations, including Friedens Food Pantries, Feeding America, Upstart Kitchen, Milwaukee Kitchen Cabinet, Sherman Phoenix, American Heart Association and more, to distribute healthy meals, assist with food benefits navigation and support families in obtaining fresh produce at local farmers markets.