

RESEARCH

Poverty in New Brunswick

In New Brunswick there are impoverished rural communities as well as larger cities, so it is essential to mould a program that fits your school. Each breakfast program should reflect what is realistic for the school to undertake. Some statistics and research concerning poverty in New Brunswick, low-income families, and children's health and education to take into consideration before developing a school breakfast program are:

Government of New Brunswick:

- Based on the 2006 Census, 729,995 people live in New Brunswick and approximately 100,740 (13.8%) of them are living in poverty.
- Approximately 38,984 New Brunswickers are receiving social assistance.
- There are 35,100 New Brunswickers looking for a job.
- In 2007 approximately 92,755 adults (age 18+) and 26,353 youth (under the age of 18) are served by New Brunswick food banks in a year.

Retrieved September 20, 2011 from,
http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/esic/overview/content/fact_check_povertyinnewbrunswick.html#1

Human Development Council:

Government programs do make a difference—without them the family poverty rate would be 27% in New Brunswick, instead of 15%.

Retrieved September 20, 2011 from,
<http://www.humandevlopmentcouncil.nb.ca/NBChildandFamilyPovertyReportCard.pdf>

Single mother families and their children continue to be one of the most economically vulnerable groups in New Brunswick with half (49.5%) living below the poverty line in 2006.

Retrieved September 20, 2011 from,
<http://stopatlantica.org/?q=node/260>

The latest Statistics Canada data, from 2008, shows that more than 17,000 New Brunswick children (12.0% or 1 in 8) are living in families with incomes below the poverty line.

How does poverty affect a child's health?

- Low income children are more likely to have low birth weights, asthma, type 2 diabetes and suffer from malnutrition.

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- Low income children are more likely to have learning disabilities, emotional difficulties and behavioural problems.
 - Children who grow up in poverty are, as adults, more likely to experience addictions, mental health difficulties, physical disabilities and premature death.

Food bank usage in NB increased 4% between 2009 and 2010, and a third of those assisted in March of this year (34%) were children. Meanwhile the cost of buying healthy food has also risen and is largely unaffordable for low income consumers.

Addressing food insecurity involves moving along a continuum of three strategies: 1) Short Term Relief Strategies: food banks, school feeding programs, soup kitchens, food vouchers; 2) Capacity Building Strategies: cooking clubs, community gardens, community kitchens, farmers' markets, food purchasing clubs; and 3) Systems Change Strategies: poverty reduction initiatives, examining minimum wage and social assistance rates, food and nutrition policies, etc.

Retrieved September 20, 2011 from,
<http://www.campaign2000.ca/reportCards/provincial/New%20Brunswick/2010Childand%20FamilyPovertyReportCardEnglish.pdf>

“A man sized boy in grade 9, arrived late and began to be his usual uncooperative self. Exasperated, the T.A said, “What is wrong with you this morning?” He responded, “I’m hungry.” She gave him a granola bar and he said, “Now I can think about work,”and he did.”



HUNGER AND LEARNING

World Health Organization:

Good nutrition strengthens the learning potential and wellbeing of children: Multiple studies report significant findings between the nutritional status and cognitive test scores or school performance. Consistently, children with more adequate diets score higher on tests of factual knowledge than those with less adequate nutrition; independent of family income, school quality and teacher ability” (WHO, p.10). Thus, good nutrition is needed to strengthen the learning potential of children, to enable them to learn effectively and maximize investments in education (WHO, p.12)

Retrieved September 20, 2011 from,
http://www.who.int/school_youth_health/media/en/428.pdf

Breakfast for Learning:

When a child is hungry, it’s hard to learn. In fact, undernourished students are less able to concentrate on the tasks at hand, have lower self-esteem and are absent from school more often. In comparison, when children have healthy meals and snacks throughout the day, teachers and principals report less in-class disruptions, less conflict between students and overall, a happier and healthier school environment.

Retrieved September 20, 2011 from,
<http://www.breakfastforlearning.ca/en/how-to-help/31-of-elementary-school-and-62-of-secondary-school-students-do-not-eat-a-healthy-breakfast-daily>

Other Resources:

Some benefits of breakfast for children include:

- higher test scores;
- a healthy immune system;
- higher class attendance;
- more vitamin and mineral intake;
- healthy energy levels;
- helps with weight control;
- better attitude towards school.

Retrieved November 8, 2011 from,
<http://www.thedietchannel.com/5-important-reasons-your-child-should-eat-breakfast.htm>