

# Homelessness in the early years can cause food insecurity that negatively impacts health, development, and learning, adding to the toxicity of constant stress for parents and children.



**BEFORE BIRTH:** Homelessness during pregnancy increases the likelihood of prenatal and delivery complications and developmental delays due to inadequate nutrition.



**INFANTS:** Homelessness during infancy negatively effects breastfeeding, access to formula, understanding sensitivities.



**TODDLERS:** Homelessness during toddlerhood limits exposure to a range of age-appropriate food items and opportunities for mastering body awareness, sensation, and preferences.



**PRESCHOOLERS:** Homelessness during the preschool years is associated with persistent hunger which impacts growth, attention, engagement, and learning.

Homelessness can result in:

Absence of ongoing access to child food items, snacks, and adaptations for special needs.

Lack of kitchen facilities, e.g., sink, stove, refrigeration, storage, utensils.

Barriers obtaining WIC/SNAP, medications, e.g., transportation, address changes, technology, etc.



Protective factors can minimize impact. Be aware of each family's nutrition challenges, educate pantries and partners on age-appropriate or special needs food items, create a food closet, food storage or preparation space families can easily access, address resource barriers.

For more information on serving young children experiencing homelessness in Pennsylvania, contact Tracy Duarte at [tradua@pakeys.org](mailto:tradua@pakeys.org).