A photograph of two young children, a girl on the left and a boy on the right, looking down at a brown paper bag they are holding together. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter. The text is centered over the bag.

Hunger Matters for Families

June 2024

The Survey

Childhood hunger is an urgent, and growing, problem across the United States. This issue comes into hyperfocus in the summer months, and during other school breaks, when the meals that millions of kids receive at school are no longer on the table.

HelloFresh commissioned the *Hunger Matters for Families* report, a nationally representative survey of parents, to better understand this issue. The research covered:

- Children's access to food when they are out of school
- Parents' concerns about putting food on the table during school breaks
- Food insecurity among friends and relatives
- Resources and support for families facing food insecurity
- Actions taken by parents to provide food for their families



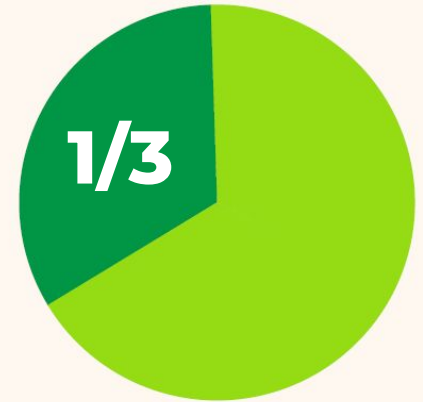
Key Finding #1: The cost-of-living crisis makes providing food financially stressful for parents.

- Nearly half (44%) of parents are more worried today than they were this time last year about putting food on the table for their children.
- 41% of parents struggle in some way to provide food for their household when kids are out of school.
- Among parents who struggle to provide for everyone in the household:
 - Almost half (42%) reported skipping meals or reducing food intake for themselves to ensure their children had enough food.
 - 75% are at least somewhat concerned about the ability to afford food when their children are on school breaks.
 - The majority said they have either budgeted more carefully (60%) or cut back on other expenses (52%) to address concerns about providing food for children during school breaks.



Key Finding #2: School breaks are a particularly hungry time for many families.

- More than a third (36%) of parents with children under the age of 18 have a friend or relative who has experienced food insecurity when their children don't receive in school meals.
- Among parents who struggle to provide for everyone in the household:
 - More than half (53%) are concerned about being able to provide the meals children typically receive during the school year when on summer vacation.
 - Almost half (45%) are concerned about being able to provide the meals children typically receive during the school year during shorter gaps during the school year (winter, spring break, etc.).



Key Finding #3: Greater support is needed.

- Parents who struggle to provide food for everyone in the household cited the following as the most helpful potential resources for keeping kids fed during breaks:
 - Government programs (e.g. cash assistance for school breaks (48%)
 - Education on meal planning and nutrition (35%)
 - More support from community organizations or businesses (33%)
- Of those parents, over half (59%) are concerned about the discontinuation of meals when their child(ren) are on school breaks.



Key Finding #4: The hunger gap is a universal problem—with distinct regional concerns.

- Almost half (48%) of parents living in rural communities have a friend or relative who has experienced food insecurity when their children don't receive in school meals—compared to 36% of parents overall.
- Among parents who struggle to provide for everyone in the household:
 - Almost all (92%) of those living in rural areas said they are concerned about the ability to afford food when their children are on school breaks.
 - 3 in 4 (77%) parents living in rural areas are concerned about being able to provide the meals children typically receive during the school year when on summer vacation.
 - 82% of those living in the South and 81% of those living in the Midwest said they are concerned about the ability to afford food when their children are on school breaks.
 - 2 in 3 (66%) of those living in the South are concerned about being able to provide the meals children typically receive during the school year when on summer vacation.

Methodology

A YouGov omnibus survey of 459 U.S. parents with children under the age of 18 was commissioned by meal kit brand HelloFresh then designed and fielded online between May 22 and May 24, 2024.

This survey was conducted using an online interview administered to members of the YouGov panel of individuals who have agreed to take part in surveys. Emails are sent to panelists selected at random from the base sample. The email invites them to take part in a survey and provides a generic survey link. Once a panel member clicks on the link, they are sent to the survey that they are most required for, according to the sample definition and quotas. Invitations to surveys don't expire and respondents can be sent to any available survey.



