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MEDIA CONTACT

Jennifer Gioia

919-967-3272

jenniferg@childcareservices.org

Child Care Services Association Releases Report on Food Insecurity in the Triangle's Children

Child Care Services Association (CCSA) releases "Food Insecurity in Children Ages Birth to Five: An Analysis of Childhood Food Insecurity in Wake, Durham and Orange Counties" report

Chapel Hill, N.C., January 13, 2020: In North Carolina, one in five children is at risk of hunger, according to Feeding America, and according to Inter-Faith Food Shuttle, North Carolina is the tenth hungriest state in the U.S. Child Care Services Association (CCSA) is working to change that by combating food insecurity in young children. Although food insecurity is an extensively researched topic, detailed community-level data on food insecurity in children aged birth to 5 is nonexistent. Therefore, CCSA has released "Food Insecurity in Children Ages Birth to Five: An Analysis of Childhood Food Insecurity in Wake, Durham and Orange Counties" on its [website](#).

"There is a need for better data on food insecurity among children birth to 5 in the Triangle as well as an understanding of the causes and effects of food insecurity on early learners," according to the report, because introducing nutritious foods at the youngest age possible is crucial to building lifelong healthy eating habits. Children who experience food insecurity are also more vulnerable to cognitive, developmental, social-emotional and academic delays. Unfortunately, sometimes the meals children eat in child care are the only food they get that day.

This report outlines the realities of food insecurity in young children in the Triangle. There are many root causes of food insecurity in children ages birth to 5. The report identifies eight driving factors of food insecurity in Durham, Orange, and Wake counties: (1) low minimum wage; (2) ease of access to unhealthy foods; (3) systemic racism; (4) lack of affordable housing; (5) citizenship status; (6) transportation; (7) poor physical and mental health of parents; and (8) low access to healthy foods. Included in the report is an interactive GIS map measuring food insecurity based on a selected set of indicators that quantify the main root causes of food insecurity, which is explained in further detail in the report.

CCSA addresses food insecurity through its Meal Services Program, which provides two nutritious meals and one snack per day to nearly 1,400 children at participating child care centers in the Triangle. In operation for nearly 30 years, CCSA's Meal Services Program provides scratch-made meals that meet or exceed all USDA requirements for child care and

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comply with the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

This report, created by students in UNC-Chapel Hill's Department of Public Policy, provides a detailed look at food insecurity in the Triangle and shows why we should ensure every child receives the high-quality, nutritious meals they need to meet their growth and developmental needs. Understanding why food insecurity matters for young children and where it is concentrated in the Triangle will also guide how and where CCSA expands its Meal Services Program.

Many children experiencing food insecurity also experience homelessness. In early January, CCSA released the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) State Plans for 2019-2021 "Families with Children Experiencing Homelessness" on its [website](#), with North Carolina's plans to combat homelessness in families with children outlined on pages 58-60. CCSA provides further resources for child care professionals, community members and families to learn more and combat early childhood homelessness [here](#).

Child Care Services Association

Founded in 1974, Child Care Services Association's mission is to ensure affordable, accessible, high-quality child care for all young children and their families. Using a holistic approach, CCSA supports children and families, helps child care professionals improve the quality of early education children receive and ensures all families can afford and access the high-quality early care and education that is so important for a child's early development. Through its Meal Services Program, CCSA also provides nutritious meals to children at child care centers, where they may eat 50-100 percent of their meals. Our T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood[®], Child Care WAGE\$[®] and Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$ programs give child care professionals the means to obtain an education and supplement their salary based on that education. CCSA also licenses T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE\$ across the U.S. and conducts early childhood systems research and policy development statewide and nationally. For more information, visit www.childcareservices.org.

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