

## Providing Children with Basic Needs – Diapers

*MASSCAP, and its partner organizations, advocate for a statewide diaper program, providing free diapers to low-income children and families, plugging a glaring gap in the social safety net.*



“Participants widely reported the diaper distribution pilot led to improved mental health and reductions in stress, anxiety, and depression.”

- Diaper Pilot Program  
Focus Group Facilitator

### Overview


#### **For low-income families, diapers are a basic need that often goes unmet –**

With an estimated 19.2% of MA households with children that are food insecure, diapers often take a backseat, and families are unable to keep up with the costly necessity of roughly 8-10 diapers per day. A recent study found that 36% of MA families with young children could not afford enough diapers during the pandemic even with federal stimulus payouts. This can lead to missed days of work and school and an increased likelihood of painful rashes and infections.

Throughout MASSCAP’s recent federal diaper pilot program (via the Office of Community Services of the Department of Health and Human Services), 15 distribution sites, including both Community Action Agencies (CAAs) and diaper banks, have provided free monthly diaper pickups to enrolled families for the last 18 months. By providing diapers, clients reported being able to pay bills, stay in school, and cover other expenses which would have fallen to the wayside without this support.

 **+2.8M diapers distributed**

 **+2,800 children served**

 **Integrating diaper distribution with other critical services (including WIC, Head Start, etc.)**

### Program Evaluation – Initial Caregiver Data

MASSCAP has partnered with Children’s HealthWatch to analyze data from client surveys and focus groups. Preliminary info below; further analysis forthcoming.



**55% lacked enough diapers to adequately change children**



**11.5% of children had diaper rash that required medical attention due to lack of diapers**



**15% reported children missing childcare due to lack of diapers**



**51% experienced stress over being able to afford diapers**



**7% reported having to miss work due to lack of diapers**



**54% experienced struggles to have enough diapers**

# Partner Organizations

Boston Children's Hospital

Community Action, Inc. (CAI)

Children's HealthWatch

Citizens for Citizens (CFC)

Cradles to Crayons (C2C)

Community Action Agency of Western Connecticut (CAAWC)

Diaper Bank of CT

Greater Lawrence Community Action Council (GLCAC)

LEO, Inc. (LEO)

Neighbors in Need (NIN)

North Shore Community Action Programs (NSCAP)

People Acting in Community Endeavors (PACE)

Self-Help, Inc. (SHI)

Springfield Partners for Community Action (SPCA)

TEAM, Inc.

United Way of Franklin and Hampshire County

Valley Opportunity Council (VOC)

Worcester Community Action Council (WCAC)