

HUNGER EDUCATION

TEACHING ABOUT FOOD INSECURITY

“How to teach children about food insecurity?”

The materials following are intended to provide some options for you to help educate your students what food insecurity is, who is hungry, and about why and how they, as student, can make a difference in their community.

With 1 in 8 people and 1 in 6 children in Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois experiencing food insecurity, it is likely that someone in your group or class will have experienced food insecurity and/or hunger at some point or will know someone who has.

Other people may live in an environment of plenty and have a difficult time understanding how hunger persists in the United States. It is essential not to judge or criticize different perspectives. It is our hope that these materials will help dispel myths and misconceptions that surround hunger issues and underscore the urgent need to get involved in the work being done to address hunger in our community.



While using these resources, it is important to realize that people will bring their own experiences and attitudes to these activities and discussions.

We all have a role to play in getting food to those in need. Sharing information and raising awareness about hunger and food insecurity is a great place to start. Children can make a positive difference in the lives of other kids in need.

It's important to talk to children about hunger and inspire them to take action to fight hunger. In this toolkit, teachers and parents can use the resources to teach young children about the River Bend Food Bank and how they can help us **'Feed People Today, and End Hunger Tomorrow!'**

HUNGER AND FOOD INSECURITY

Those words seem the same. But it may surprise you to learn that hunger and food insecurity mean different things.

Hunger is defined as a physical feeling of discomfort or weakness caused by lack of food.

- What does it feel like when you are hungry?
- How does your body feel? Do you feel like running, jumping and playing? or...Do you feel tired?

Food insecurity means not having access to enough nutritious food to lead an active, healthy life.

- How can not having enough food impact a person's life?

River Bend Food Bank works to end hunger by addressing food insecurity.

- With 1 in 6 children in Eastern Iowa & Western Illinois not having enough food to eat and needing to depend on an adult to get them food, **Why do you think it is important for each of us to help other families?**



A GOOD PLACE TO START, MAY BE TO WATCH A FEW GENERAL VIDEOS:

River Bend Food Bank videos: ["What's A Food Bank"](#) and ["Where do your Donations go"](#)

["Kids Respond to Child Hunger"](#) – a great introduction to hunger and how many kids are hungry. We recommend you start with this.

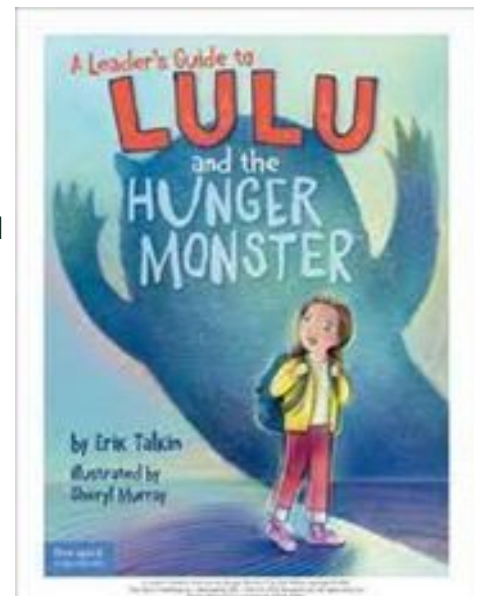
LET'S READ AND LEARN MORE....

Who is the Hunger Monster and how do we stop him?

Hunger is a monster that can strike anyone big or small, young or old. The following book list and Stop the Hunger Monster activities can help young children learn about who the Hunger Monster is; the meaning of food and the importance of it to different cultures; and build empathy and inspiration towards ending hunger.

Lulu and the Hunger Monster - Available on Amazon or on [YouTube](#). A story about the realities of food insecurity from a child's perspective. Lulu's hunger is made manifest as a literal monster trailing around behind her, as a constant burden she must bear. The hungrier she is, the larger the monster becomes. Available on Amazon, or on YouTube.

Lulu and the Hunger Monster can be downloaded as a PDF online. There is also a downloadable [Leader's Guide](#).



OTHER BOOKS TO CONSIDER

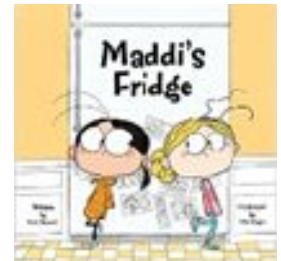


Saturday at the Food Pantry – Available on Amazon or on [YouTube](#).

Molly and her mom don't always have enough food, so one Saturday they visit their local food pantry. Molly's happy to get food to eat until she sees her classmate Caitlin, who's embarrassed to be at the food pantry. Can Molly help Caitlin realize that everyone needs help sometimes?

Maddi's Fridge by Lois Brandt – Available on Amazon, or on [YouTube](#).

Maddi and her family are struggling to make ends meet; despite their best efforts, Maddi's parents are unable to provide fresh and wholesome food for their family. Upon finding out that Maddi and her parents are hungry, Sofia, Maddi's best friend, must face the choice of whether to speak up (and help her friend) or remain silent.



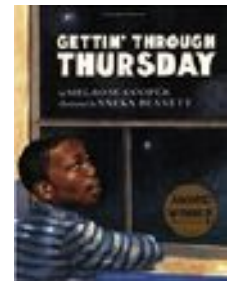
Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen by DyAnne DiSalvo – Available on Amazon or on [YouTube](#).

A young child visits his uncle at his job, a local soup kitchen. Under the guidance of his uncle, the boy begins to learn about the services provided by the soup kitchen and the stories of those who receive these services.

Gettin' Through Thursday by Melrose Cooper

Available on Amazon or on [YouTube](#).

It is Thursday, and Andre and his mother want to commemorate his position on the honor roll. However, his mother is not paid until Friday. Unfortunately, because she has not been paid yet, Andre has to push back the celebration.



A Bike Like Sergio's by Maribeth Boelts –

Available on Amazon or watch it on [YouTube](#).

Ruben and his family live in poverty and often have a difficult time paying the bills and shopping for groceries. Ruben really wants a bike like his best friend Sergio has, but his parents do not have the resources to buy him one. On the way to the local corner store, Ruben finds a \$100 bill. Ruben must now make the choice whether to return the money, help his parents with bills or buy himself a bike



IN EASTERN IOWA & WESTERN ILLINOIS:



126,930 people experience food insecurity in our service area, including over **35,000** children



In 2022, children and adults in our region missed out on **23,863,600** meals



River Bend Food Bank has over **400 hunger-relief partners** - pantries and meal sites in schools, senior complexes, and community organizations - in **23 counties** in eastern Iowa and western Illinois



During the school year, every week River Bend Food Bank distributes **3,000 backpacks** with weekend meals for children



1 in 6 children and **1 in 8 adults** struggle with food insecurity everyday nationwide



Every year, the U.S. throws away **119 BILLION** pounds of food



Every day, people experiencing hunger make tough choices between their most basic needs:

- **57%** choose between paying rent/mortgage and food
- **66%** choose between medical care and food
- **67%** choose between gas for transportation and food
- **79%** compromise nutrition and long-term health to buy the cheapest food available



Every **\$1** donated can provide UP TO **FIVE** meals



No one should go hungry. River Bend Food Bank works with 400+ partner agencies in 23 counties to make sure people facing hunger have reliable access to healthy food. The Food Bank distributes over 20 million meals each year through food pantries, schools, senior residences, and community organizations.

Together, we will feed people today and end hunger tomorrow.

MISSION:

River Bend Food Bank **LEADS** the community-wide effort to end hunger in eastern Iowa and western Illinois.

- Leveraging partnerships to help people in need stabilize their lives;
- Engaging the public in hunger issues;
- Advocating on behalf of hungry people;
- Distributing surplus food through a network of hunger-relief agency partners and programs;
- Striving to end hunger.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

- **Advocate:** Encourage legislators and community leaders to adopt policies that work to help people experiencing hunger.
- **Educate:** learn how hunger is impacting our community; share education and ways to help with your networks.
- **Volunteer:** Get involved at River Bend Food Bank or your local pantry.
- **Give:** Make a monetary gift of any size to make sure no one goes hungry in our community.

Learn more about River Bend Food Bank programs, sign up to volunteer, and make a gift online at:

riverbendfoodbank.org