



Access to Sufficient, Safe, and Nutritious Food

Children without food in Canada

- 1.15 million children are food-insecure. That is about 1 out of every 6 children.
- Food insecurity is higher in households with children under 18.
- Food insecurity affects single mothers 6 times more than two-parent households.
- Food insecurity is higher among First Nations, Metis, Inuit, Canadians who identify as black, and students on post-secondary school campuses.

Missing nutritious food in the growing years can have life-long effects and it increases the costs of health care for the long-term.

Duty to Provide and Protect

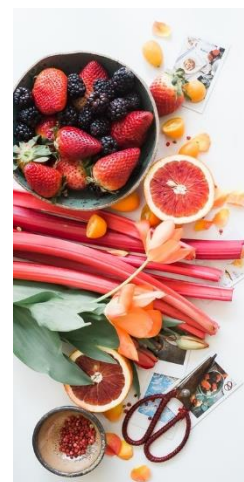
The right to health in the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, at Article 24, includes “the provision of adequate nutritious foods and clean drinking water.” It includes access to “knowledge of child health and nutrition and the advantages of breast-feeding...”. Duties bridge prevention, provision, and protection.

Poverty

Poverty is a major cause of food insecurity. Canada has responded to earlier calls to develop a national poverty reduction strategy. The CCRC proposes annual, ambitious targets for reducing child poverty, including major gains in food security, given the importance of healthy nutrition in childhood. Budget 2019 included some funds to develop a national food policy, including consideration of a national school lunch program. Food security for children needs to be a top priority for the new food policy.

Restrict Advertising Junk Food to Children

In response to high rates of childhood obesity Canada was also asked to “ensure greater regulatory controls over the production and advertisement of fast food and unhealthy foods, especially those targeted at children.” Proposed legislation to limit the advertising of junk food to children under age 13, Bill S-228, was introduced in 2016 and then deliberately allowed to die in the Senate in June 2019, after pressure from the advertising industry. This also violates the duty of Canada to give the rights of children priority over other interests in shaping public policy.



Identified Areas of Action

National School Food Program

Other countries have shown the effectiveness of school food programs to combine teaching about healthy eating with one good meal during the school day.



Restrict Advertising of Junk Food to Children

Re-introduce Bill S-228 and pass it quickly.
Evidence shows that obesity rates are lower where similar laws are in place.
Addressing obesity by promoting physical activity, on which Canada spends millions, will not be effective without regulating the powerful negative influences on children as they develop their eating habits.

Household Food Security

Access to affordable, nutritious food for all children needs urgent, coordinated attention under both the national food strategy and the national poverty plan. Children in northern, isolated communities and children in single-parent families need focused attention immediately.

Breastfeeding

Restrict the promotion of breastmilk substitutes as most countries do. Implement the [Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative](#). Canada endorsed but has not implemented the World Health Organization's *International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes*, adopted in 1981.



Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children and the Centre for Health Science and Law

Share this with others and add your voice to support children's rights across Canada.

For more information on these issues, see the [alternative report prepared by the Centre for Health Science and Law on the CCRC website](#), posted with permission.