



Partnering with low-income mothers to address hunger:

Mariana Chilton, PhD, MPH

University of South Carolina March 29

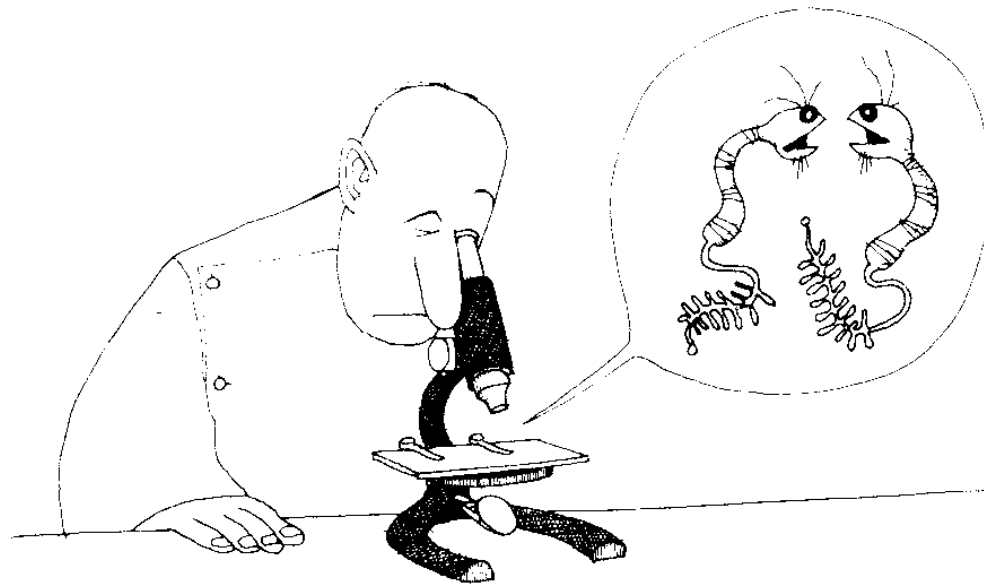


DREXEL UNIVERSITY
Center for
**Hunger-Free
Communities**





...How 'linking communities' brings trouble & opportunity





Overview

- Food Insecurity in US
- Health Impacts
- Participatory Research
Witnesses to Hunger
- The trouble
- The opportunity





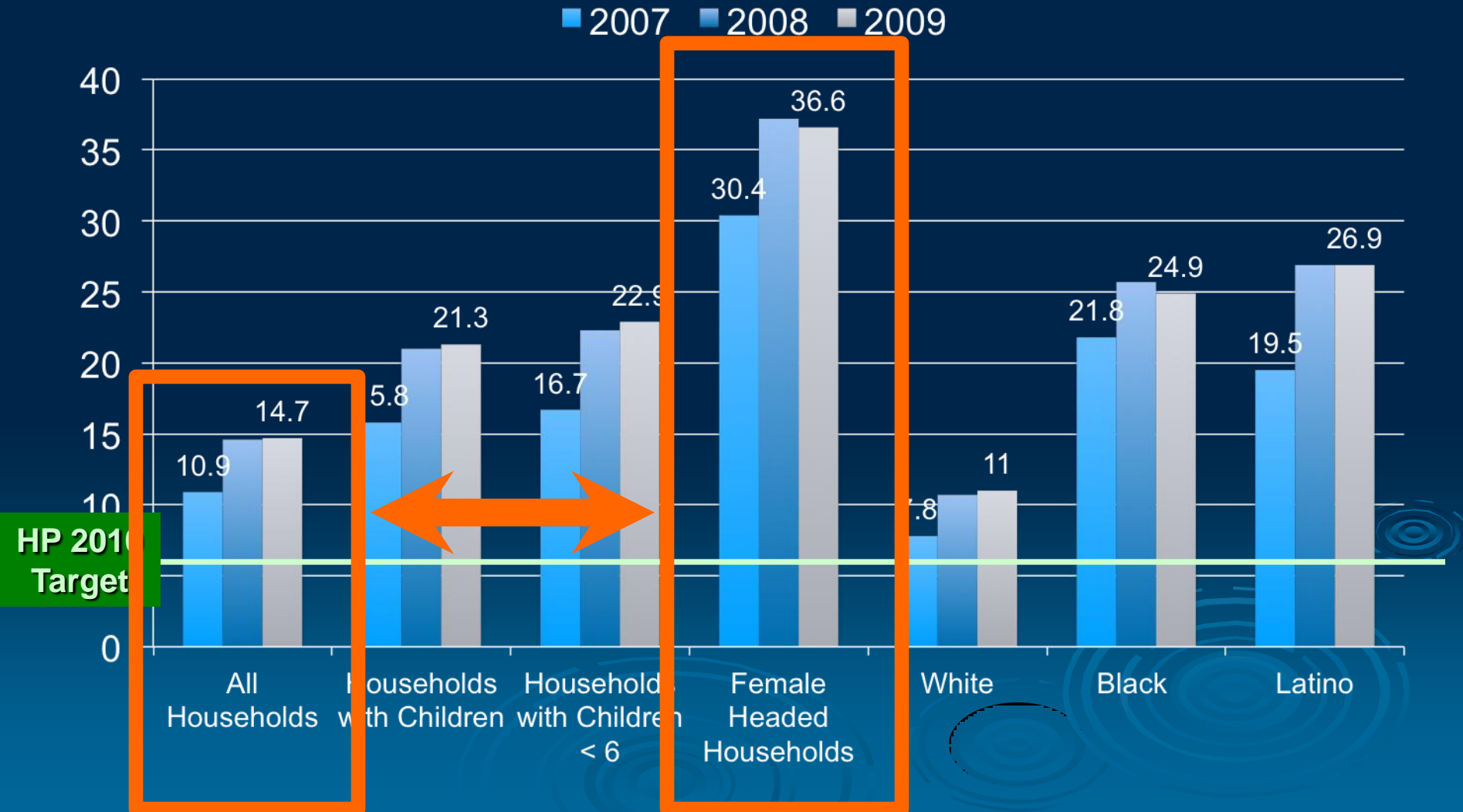
Food Insecurity Definition

- Lack of access to enough food for an active and healthy life

Rates of Food Insecurity 2011

- **General population**
 - **49 Million (14%)**
- **Children (under age 18)**
 - **17 Million (21%)**
- **Young Children (under 6)**
 - **9 Million (24.9%)**

Disparities in Food Insecurity by Household Type





Health & Social Impacts of Food Insecurity

- **Food Insecure children suffer more health problems compared to food secure children**
 - Poor development
 - Stomach aches, head aches, colds, ear infections
 - High hospitalization rates
- **Food Insecure children suffer more psychosocial and behavioral problems**
 - Aggression, hyperactivity, anxiety
 - Greater need for mental health services
- **Food Insecure children have more trouble with learning and academic performance**

Food Hardship for Families with Children 2009-2010

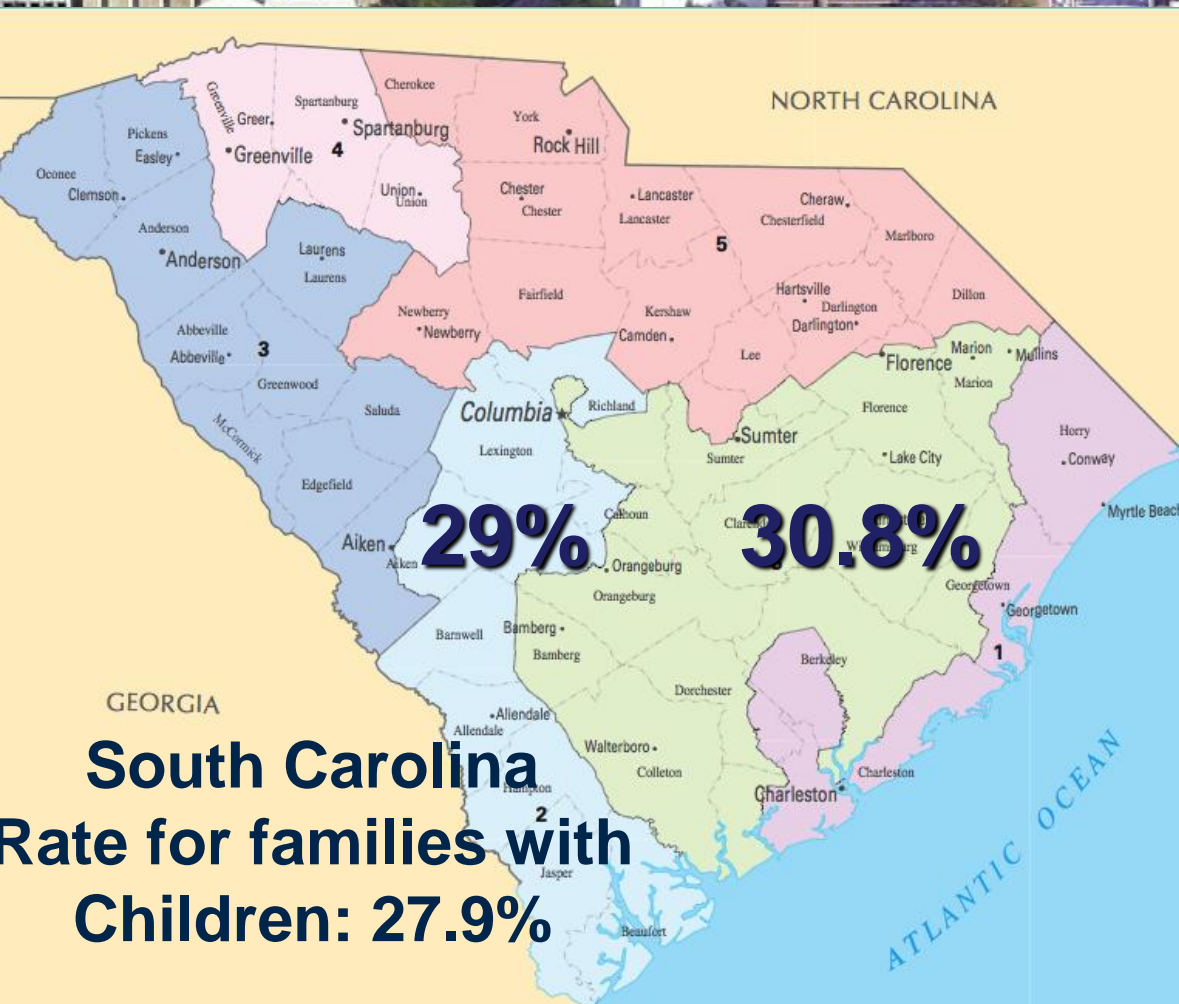


Nationally 23.4%
Ranked 2nd



49.5 %

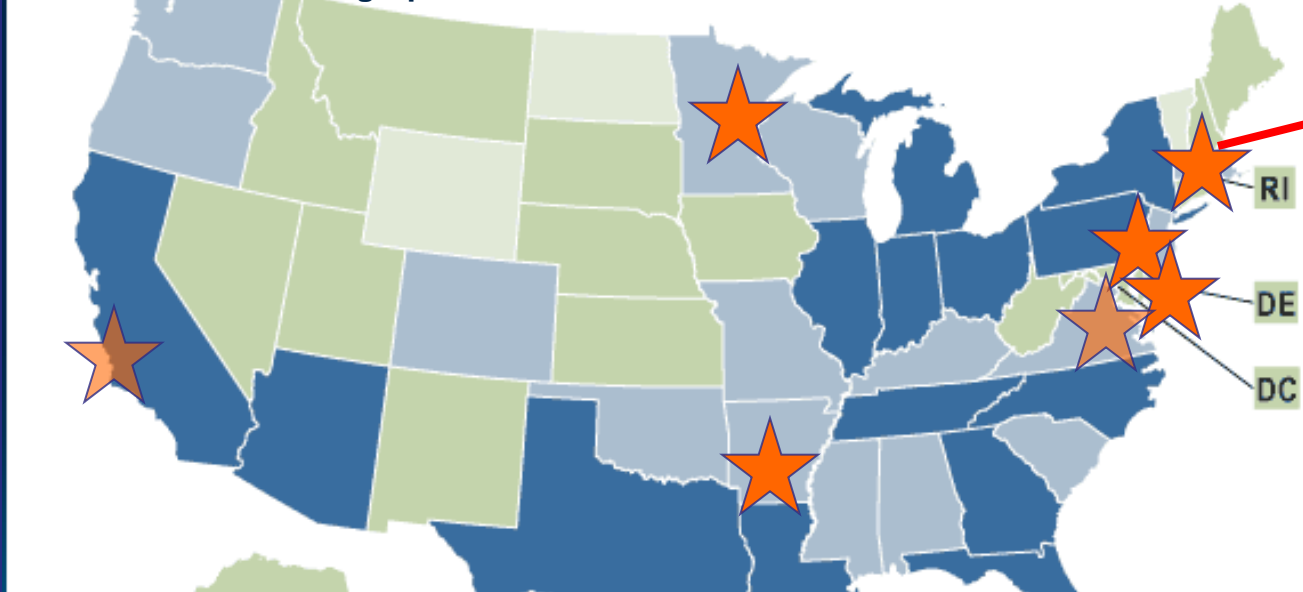
Food Hardship rates: Families with children 2009-2010



National Rate 23.4%

Informing Evidence-Based Policy Decisions that
Prevent Child Hunger & Promote Children's Health

State Costs of Growing Up Poor in the U.S.



Boston
Medical
Center

**55,000 children & families
(~5,500 in Philadelphia)**

Federal Assistance Programs--

monitored by  CHILDREN'S
HealthWatch

- Food Stamps
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
- Medicaid
- Federal Housing Subsidies
- Energy Assistance

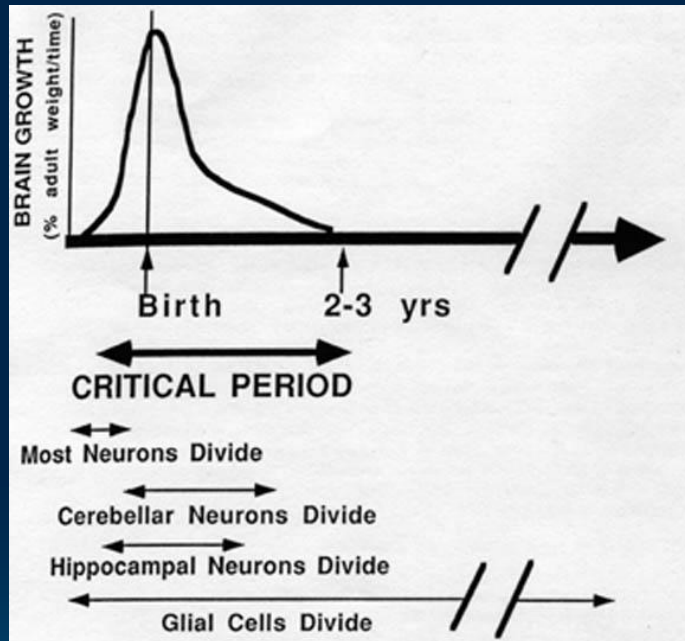


Health

- Food Insecurity
- Hospitalizations
- Child Wellbeing
- Maternal Depression
- Child Growth
- Child Development

Why children 0-3?

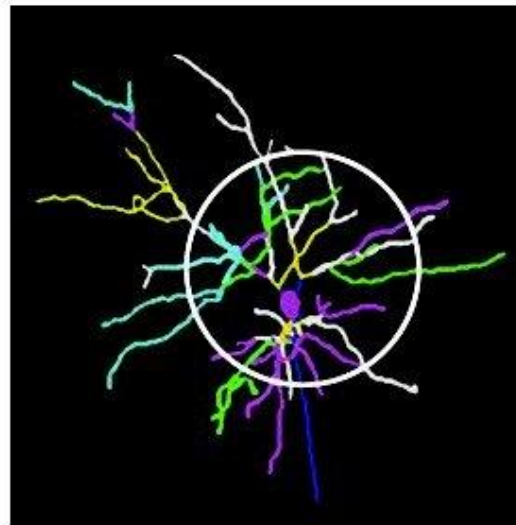
- rapid brain growth, essential for cognitive, social and physical development



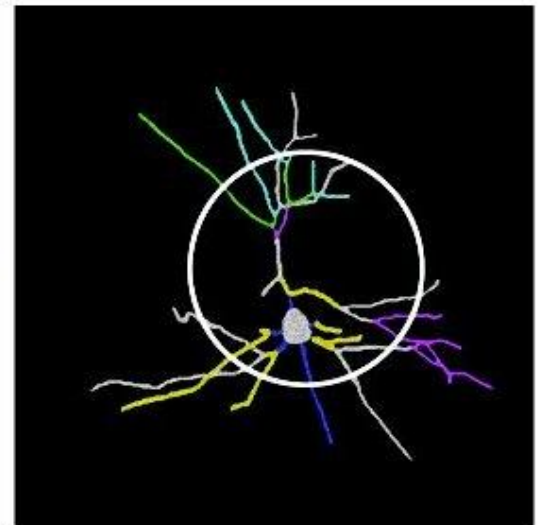
- Any interruption in good nutrition, or other hardship may have lasting effects

CORE CONCEPTS IN THE SCIENCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Toxic Stress Damages Developing Brain Architecture



*Typical neuron:
many connections*



*Neuron damaged by toxic stress:
fewer connections*

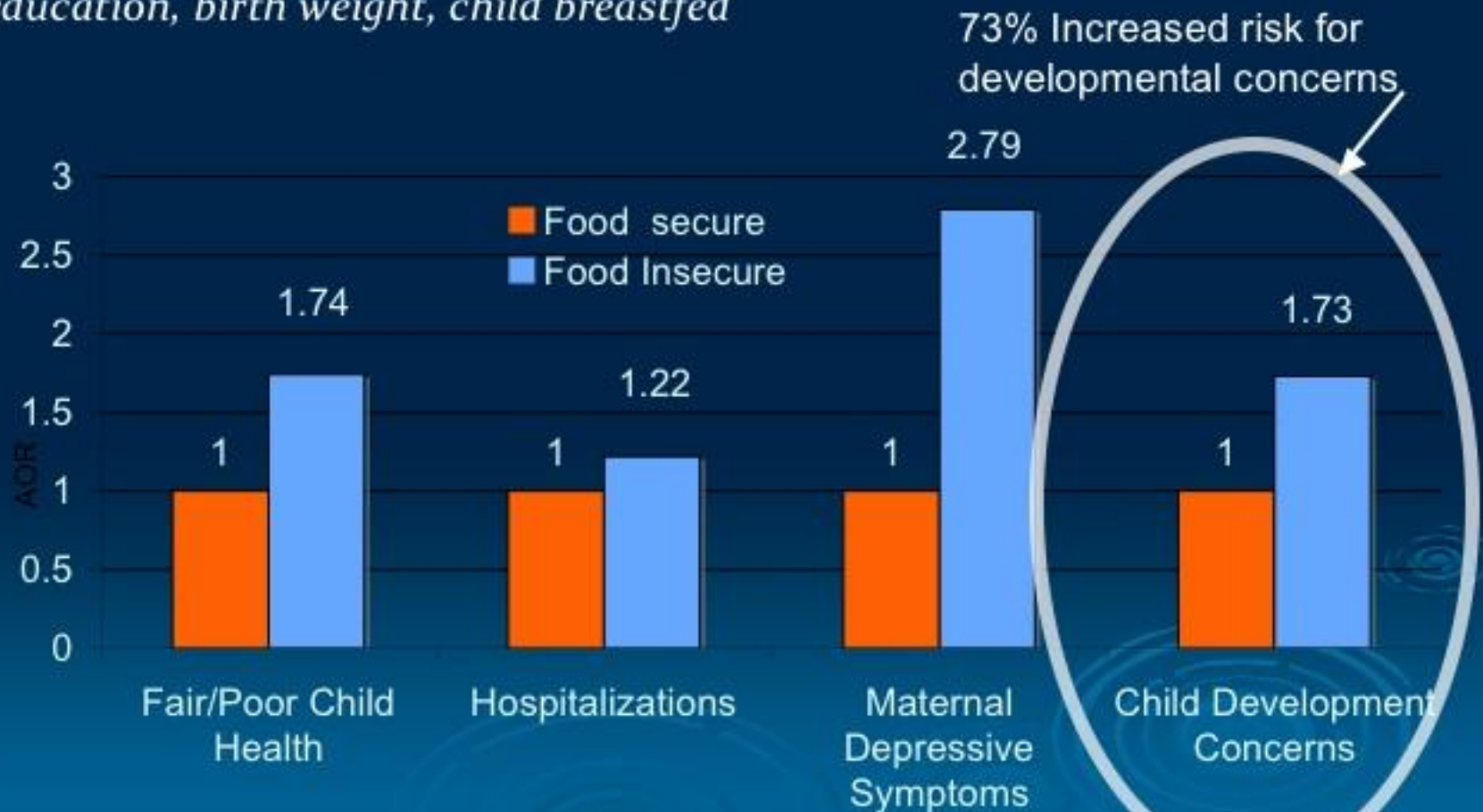


Food Insecurity & Health Outcomes

Adjusted Odds Ratios*



Controlled for site, race, child age, caregiver age, marital status, education, birth weight, child breastfed



* All differences p value < .0001

Economic Hardship



Housing Insecurity



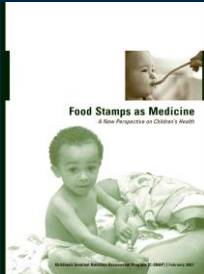
Energy Insecurity



Food Insecurity



Evidence for Policy Solutions



- Food stamps improve child health and prevent food insecurity



- WIC protects against underweight, and promotes child health and development



- Energy Assistance protects against food insecurity and poor child health

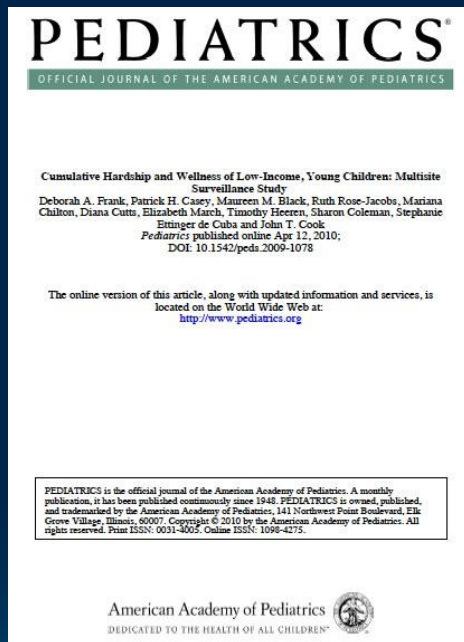


- Housing subsidies protect against underweight and promote child health and development

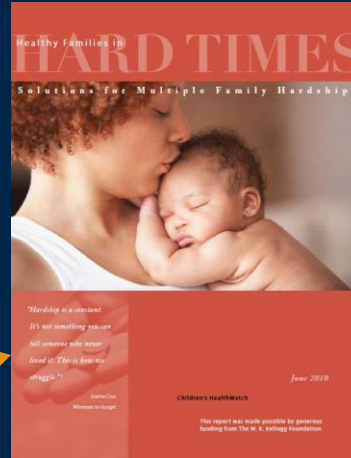
“Expert” Witnesses



Translating Science Into Action



Research Article



Policy Brief

Posted on Thu, Apr. 29, 2010

Poor childhood takes lifelong toll, study shows

By Alfred Lubrano

Inquirer Staff Writer

Sebastian burped and gurgled on his mother's lap Monday morning, three months into his Philadelphia life.

Because his family is poor, he's unlikely to get the food, housing and living conditions he'll need for his brain to develop properly over the next three years.

The circumstances of his just-begun journey could turn him into a bad student, an ineffective worker, and a poor man for the rest of his days, according to a new study on the cumulative effects of a deprived early childhood.



Press



Congressional Testimony

Policy Change



Public knowledge

Digging Deeper



Witnesses to Hunger



Witnesses to Hunger

Research

Exploring difficult to understand associations

- Ethnographic research
- Participatory action research / photovoice
- Investigate associations between food insecurity and
 - Public assistance
 - Poor health
 - Maternal depression

Advocacy

Changing the Dialogue about Hunger & Poverty

- Exhibit
- Speaking engagements and testimony
- informing the press
- Website
- Blog
- YouTube
- Social networking (Twitter/Facebook)

Photovoice Methodology & participatory action research

- One-one-One semi structured interviews
 - **Why** did you take the picture?
 - **What** do you want people to **see**?
 - **What** do you want people **to do**?
- Focus Groups to share photos and choose themes for exhibit
- Reciprocal ethnography with (24 / 45) women



Witnesses
to Hunger

Analysis


> 10,000 Photos, > 200 videos, >1,000pp transcription

- All interviews transcribed
- Interviews & Photos managed through *Atlas.ti*
- Coding, family codes, supercodes, and network analyses (clustering).
- Phenomenological approach

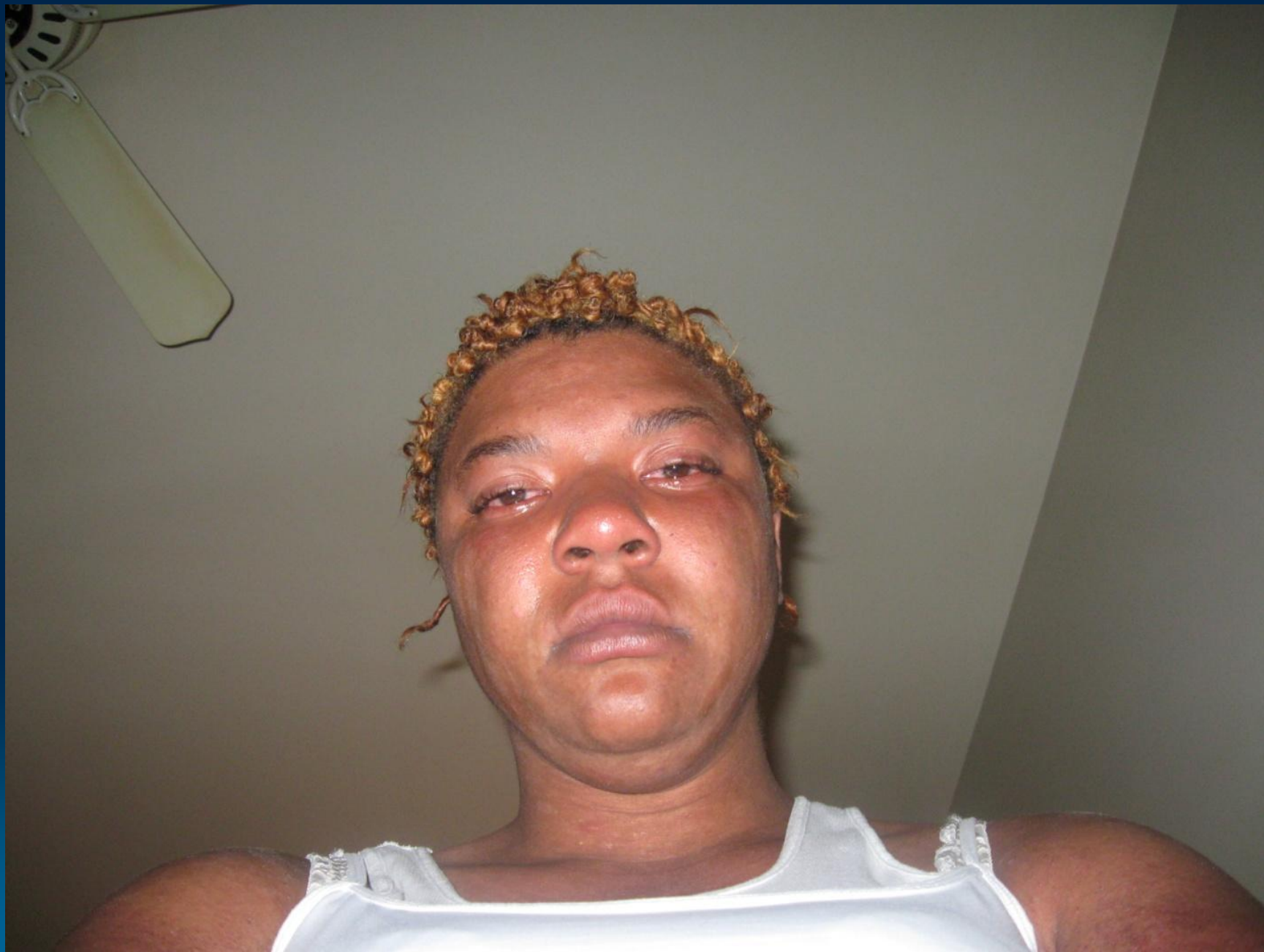


Examples of Primary Topics

> 10,000 Photos, > 200 videos, >1,000pp transcription

- Children
 - Motherhood
 - Neighbors & Neighborhood
 - Jobs and Education
 - Housing & Homelessness
 - Food & Hunger
 - Health
 - Child care
 - Isolation
 - Pain / Depression
 - Violence and Safety
 - Breaking the cycle
- 





Erica S.











Informing The Press

Informing Policy Makers

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LOCAL/STATE **Exhibit displays womens' struggle with hunger - Philadelphia News**

Wednesday, December 10, 2008 | 6:35 PM

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VIDEO: Student Photographer
Click "Watch Video" for Denise James' report

1 of 4

ly.com
The Philadelphia Inquirer
id on Thu, May 7, 2009

Philadelphia poverty rivets D.C. witnesses to Hunger" women take photos to Capitol Hill.

By Lubrano
Staff Writer

HINGTON - On a bus trip that was part of a mission, 21 poor and working-poor women from North Philadelphia rode to the Capitol yesterday to tell the country about the life above Spring Garden Street.

In fall, Drexel University's School of Public Health gave the women, along with 21 others, a grant to chronicle their lives and hard times in a project known as "Witnesses to Hunger." Since then, the women and their photos have been featured in newspapers and on Web sites in Japan, the Middle East, and Europe.

LAURENCE KESTERSON / Staff Photographer
Tamika Haynesworth, a participant in "Witnesses to Hunger," views her work with Sen. Robert P. Casey Jr., who sponsored the Capitol Hill showing.

1 of 15 View Images

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updated 6:37 p.m. EST, Mon February 2, 2009

Tough choices for America's hungry

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- More than 1 in 10 Americans are hungry
- Some people say it is a crisis
- President Obama's wife, Michelle, visited a food bank
- CNN's Sean Galloway

Next Article in Living

READ VIDEO INTERACTIVE

By John D. Butler
CNN

(CNN) - As Walter Thomas knows, it's hard to look for a job when your stomach is rumbling.

The 52-year-old from Washington, D.C., started skipping meals in early January when his savings account was running dry and his kitchen cabinets were almost empty.

Thomas at first didn't want to turn to the United States' food safety net, the food stamp program, for help.

But after being laid off in July from what seemed like a steady job in sales at a furniture store, Thomas swallowed his pride and applied for the monthly food aid.

Witnesses exhibit to show at the Russell Senate Building in Washington, D.C. May 4-8

5/4/2009



Watch CBS Videos Online



Participant

(advocate)

Policy Maker

Research









**Digging
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“My Little Tiny Pay Check”



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LOCAL/STATE 

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Wednesday, December 10, 2008 | 6:35 PM

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The anguish of families: "It makes me feel like less of a mom not to have food."



Brianna Scott, 10, brother Joey, 8, and siblings wait for sloppy joes in Juniata Park. Their mother filled cups halfway with punch, telling them: "Please don't drink before you eat. There's no more."

A Portrait of Hunger

"It makes me feel like less of a mom not to have food"



10 part series

Photos by Sharon Gekoski-Kimmel







Blood on the street from shooting the night before

Mother beats 20yr old daughter



Intimate partner violence



...The opportunity.



Enrich what's already there

Desire to Help
Others

- Peer Mentoring,
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Entrepreneurship

- Asset Building:
Changing the system





**BEYOND
hunger**

- Real People
- Real Solutions

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