



FIGHTING FOOD INSECURITY

ARKANSAS
FOOD BANK

Lesson Plan for Elementary School (K-5)

Objective:

Students will understand and identify food insecurity and discover how to participate in the fight against hunger in Arkansas

Essential Questions:

- What is food insecurity?
- What does the Arkansas Foodbank do?
- How can I help those who are facing food insecurity?

Resources:

- Backpack Lesson printables (pages 5-8)
- Letter to parents/guardians (page 9)
- [Summer Cereal Drive Playbook](#)
- *Maddi's Fridge* by Lois Brandt
- [Fighting Food Insecurity Presentation](#)

Setup:

Gather supplies:

- Five backpacks
- Printed report cards (see attached printable)
- Snacks for four backpacks
- Hygiene products for four backpacks
- School supplies
- Printed lunch money (optional - see attached printable)
- Packed lunch (optional)
- Activity flyers (optional - see attached printable)

Prepare the backpacks:

- Fill four of the backpacks with hygiene products, snacks, activity supplies/flyers, school supplies, and positive report cards, etc.
- Fill one of the backpacks with Jeremiah's report card, minimal school supplies, and overdue lunch bill

Activity 1: Explore Backpacks

- Ask for five volunteers OR divide the class into five small groups
- Give each volunteer or group one of the backpacks
- Tell the students to investigate the backpacks and decide what they can learn about each backpack's owner.
- If working in groups, have each group share what was in their backpack, and what they believe they have learned about that student.
- Regather all the students and explain the contents of four of the backpacks:

Activity 1: Explore Backpacks (cont)

Regather all the students and explain the contents of four of the backpacks:

- Snacks: Most students can expect that they will have a good snack ready for them after school or available during the day.
- Positive report cards: When needs are met at home with food, safety, rest and support, children can be the best students they can be. This report cards reflects a learning student with good grades.
- Activity flyers and supplies: most families have the resources to allow their children to participate in activities outside of school (soccer, dance, etc.), but these things cost money
- Lunch box and/or lunch money: Most students don't worry about if or how they will get lunch each day
- Hygiene products: Most students don't even think about having their toothbrush, deodorant, or other hygiene products

Explain the contents of the one "food insecure" backpack:

- No snacks: This child does not have snacks at home - before or after school
- Negative report card: When our bodies are hungry and thinking about where our next meal is coming from each day, we are not able to process information and learn. We are unable to be the best student we can be. Thus our grades and behavior do not reflect our abilities.
- Lunch bill: Even free and reduced lunch programs do not cover any extra food. When you don't have food at home, you stock pile food from the school lunch room to take home to eat in the evenings. When you have too many charges, they stop letting you get extra food to take home and hunger occurs.
- Lack of extra-curricular supplies: When you don't have money for groceries, you probably don't have money for extra things like sports or hobbies. Kids who are facing food insecurity may also feel left out and lonely.
- Explain that what we've just seen is real in Arkansas. In Arkansas, one in five kids faces food insecurity each day.

Activity 2: Discover Food Insecurity

Read [Maddi's Fridge](#)

Ask:

- What did Sofia notice when she looked in Maddi's fridge?
- Why do you think Maddi's refrigerator was almost empty?
- How do you think Maddi felt when Sofia saw her empty refrigerator?
- Why do you think Maddi asked Sofia not to tell anyone?
- How did Sofia try to help? Why didn't it work?
- Why do you think Sofia finally told her mom about Maddi's fridge?
- What happened after Sofia told about Maddi's fridge?
- What does the word insecurity mean?

Activity 2: Discover Food Insecurity (cont)

Food insecurity is when a person just isn't sure how they're going to get food, where they might get it, or if they're going to have enough.

- Sometimes this is a long-term problem. Families may just not make enough money to feed each member, and it's something they deal with all the time.
- Sometimes it happens every once in a while. Families might have a big bill that month, or they may have a natural disaster, and suddenly money is tight, even to buy food.
- Kids aren't the only ones who face food insecurity! Senior adults are another group who often face food insecurity.

How does the Arkansas Foodbank help?

The Arkansas Foodbank works with partners all around the state to fight hunger. They have over 400 partner agencies, which may be churches, food pantries, soup kitchens, schools or anywhere families can go to get food for free! The Arkansas Foodbank works to get food for partner agencies, stores it, and often delivers it to them.

All the food and money that the Arkansas Foodbank raises goes to three programs: Food for Families, Food for Seniors, and Food for Kids. Food for Families works with local food pantries to give food to families in need. With Food for Seniors, volunteers deliver groceries to homebound seniors each month. One of the ways the Foodbank helps kids is through the Backpack program. Just like Sofia packed food for Maddi, the backpack program provides snacks and meals that can be tucked into students' backpacks and taken home over the weekend.

Activity 3: Join the Fight!

- Be a good friend: One of the best ways you can help is to be a good friend to people who are facing food insecurity!
 - Tell a trusted grown-up. Remember, telling someone who can help is never a bad thing!
 - Ask your parent or guardian if you can offer your friend a snack or pack some extra lunch.
 - Encourage your friend. Some people feel embarrassed that they don't have enough food. Remind them that it's ok to ask for help and that they are still awesome!
- Notes for Seniors: Draw a picture or write a happy note to be delivered to one of our homebound seniors along with their monthly groceries. All cards can be mailed or delivered to the Arkansas Foodbank at 4301 W 65th Street, Little Rock, AR 72209.

Activity 3: Join the Fight! (cont)

- Summer Cereal Drive: Create a team with your school and join the Summer Cereal Drive competition. See the Summer Cereal Drive Playbook for more information
- Food and fund drive: Join forces with your class, your clubs, or your whole school to host a food and fund drive!
 - Collect non-perishable, nutritious food to be delivered at the Arkansas Foodbank or one of your local pantries and given to people around the state.
 - Collect money for the Arkansas Foodbank that can be used to purchase food for people around the state. One dollar given to the Foodbank provides five meals!
 - Make posters to encourage students to donate.
- Volunteer: If you're eight years old or older, you can come volunteer at the Arkansas Foodbank! Gather your friends and a grown-up or two and come help sort and repackage food at our warehouse.

Other Resources

- [Maddi's Fridge lesson plan by Anti-Defamation League](#)
- [Maddi's Fridge lesson plan by SAF-AFTRA Foundation](#)
- [Other books that deal with food insecurity](#)
- [Map the Meal Gap \(food insecurity information from Feeding America\)](#)
- [Hunger 101 \(more lesson plans on food insecurity from the Atlanta Area Food Bank\)](#)



STUDENT REPORT CARD

Little Rock Elementary School

Name: *Jeremiah*

Grade: *4*

Subject

Grade

**Teacher's
Comments**

Reading ----- D
 Writing ----- C
 Math ----- F
 Science ----- D
 Technology ----- F

*Jeremiah often
 sleeps in class. He
 has been very rude
 to teachers and
 other students.
 Jeremiah is a smart
 young man, but he
 doesn't seem to try
 very hard at school.*



STUDENT REPORT CARD

Little Rock Elementary School

Name: *Jordan*

Grade: *4*

Subject

Grade

**Teacher's
Comments**

Reading ----- A
 Writing ----- A
 Math ----- A
 Science ----- B
 Technology ----- A

*Jordan loves to
 talk, but responds
 well when
 redirected. Jordan
 has greatly
 improved in
 science!*



STUDENT REPORT CARD

Little Rock Elementary School

Name: *Carter*

Grade: 4

Subject

Grade

**Teacher's
Comments**

Reading ----- A
 Writing ----- A
 Math ----- A
 Science ----- A
 Technology ----- A

Carter is a great student! He is also very kind and helpful in the classroom.



STUDENT REPORT CARD

Little Rock Elementary School

Name: *Adriana*

Grade: 4

Subject

Grade

**Teacher's
Comments**

Reading ----- A
 Writing ----- A
 Math ----- C
 Science ----- B
 Technology ----- A

Adriana is a hard worker. She struggles in math, but she has tried her best and has improved a lot!



STUDENT REPORT CARD

Little Rock Elementary School

Name: *Hannah*

Grade: 4

Subject

Grade

Teacher's Comments

Reading ----- B
 Writing ----- B
 Math ----- A
 Science ----- A
 Technology ----- A

Hannah is doing great in math and science, and loves to help teachers in the classroom.

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Dear parent or guardian of Jeremiah Smith,

As of today, your child has a negative balance of \$15.00. While Jeremiah is eligible for free lunch, this does not cover extra meals or snacks. We strongly encourage you to pay this amount as soon as possible. Your response to this request is important. Please contact your school counselor if you have questions.

Thank you for your quick payment.
Sincerely,

Principal Jones

Letter to send home for food drive

Dear Grown-ups,

Today we learned there are children in our state that do not have enough food in their homes even though their grown-ups work hard to provide for them. We looked through five backpacks to learn that 1 in 5 Arkansas children go hungry. We learned how hunger causes children to not learn to the best of their abilities. Even though we are young, we want to help the Arkansas Foodbank serve as many kids in need as possible. Each day I would like to bring food and/or money so they can buy food to feed families. We are trying to raise \$_____ as a group.

Here are items that we would like to donate:

- Pop-Tarts
- Granola bars
- Individual boxes of cereal
- Beanie Weenees
- Vienna Sausages
- Noodle cups
- Peanut butter in small containers
- Slim Jims
- Gummy/Fruit snacks
- Cheez-It crackers
- Pretzels
- Chex Mix
- Cheese crackers
- Peanut butter crackers
- Small bags of peanuts
- Chips of all types
- Fruit cups
- Raisins
- JELL-O cups with fruit
- Juice boxes
- Capri Sun
- Gatorade/PowerAde
- Kool-Aid single mix
- Bottled water

Thank you for helping me feed our neighbors in need!