






# DIAPER NEED IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS

**Diaper Need:** a situation in which the purchase of diapers would or does result in reduced spending on other basic needs including food, housing, and utilities (Massengale, 2017)

Millions of families in the United States struggle to provide diapers for their infants. On top of paying for rent, utilities, food and other personal hygiene products, diapers often become a burden that low-income families cannot afford. The lack of money to buy diapers has stifling effects on the health of both caregivers and infants and puts a strain on childhood development (Smith, 2013).



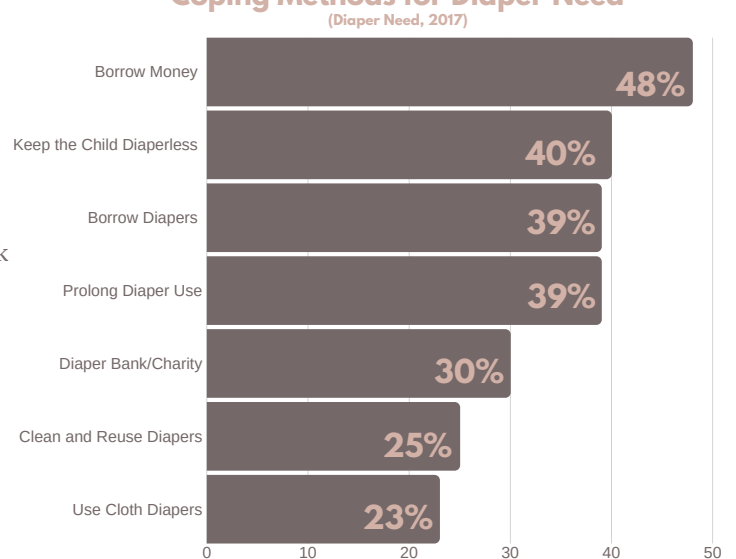
## Health, Social, and Economic Implications

-  Prolonged diapers use leads to **skin rashes, secondary infections**, and **UTIs** (Massengale, 2017).
-  Asking friends or family of the caregiver to provide money or diapers often places a **strain on these relationships** and further contributes to the stress of the family (Porter, 2015).
-  Most daycare facilities require parents to leave enough diapers for the day. 57% of parents in diaper need report **staying at home from work or school** for this reason. On average, parents in diaper need **miss about four days** of work or school per month (Diaper Need, 2017).
-  Infants use anywhere from **6-12 diapers per day**, adding up to around **\$125 a month** per child (Massengale, 2017).
-  Early bonding is vital for healthy child development; eliminating the stress of diaper need gives caregivers more energy to focus on **infant emotional development** (Low-Income, 2019).

### WHO IS AFFECTED?

- Almost **36% of U.S. families** report having diaper need (Smith, 2013).
- Families with diaper need report being an average of **19 diapers short** each month (Diaper Need, 2017).
- Families in the poorest threshold in the U.S. spend an average of **13.9% of their household income** on diapers, compared to only 1% spent by the highest threshold families (Massengale, 2017).
- **76%** of families with diaper need **experience economic hardship** and struggle to pay for other basic necessities (Diaper Need, 2017).
- **74%** of families experiencing diaper need report **reduced spending on other needs**, including food, clothing, hygiene items and utilities (Diaper Need, 2017).

### Coping Methods for Diaper Need





**Myth:** Diaper Banks operate out of government intervention.

**False:** No government assistance for diaper need currently exists. Diaper banks operate through volunteers and community donations, but are only accessible to certain regions (Massengale, 2017).

## How do we do this?

Gaining bipartisan support for this effort is key to passing the bill.

Addressing diaper need is important for both the Democratic and Republican party; low-income families can better contribute to the economy and rely less on welfare after their diaper need is addressed.

Contact your representative TODAY and advocate for the bill to be passed. We can work together to end diaper need and improve the lives of Americans across the U.S.

## What is the Solution?

Proposal: Pass the End Diaper Need Act of 2019 (H.R.1846). This bill (Federal Issues, 2019):

- Uses \$100 million to establish a demonstration program
- Would distribute free diapers to states and local communities and nonprofits across the U.S.
- Reduces diaper need for low-income families in underserved communities
- Increase the scale of current diaper banks to serve more families
- Define diapers as "medically necessary" so that families could use health savings accounts and HRAs to purchase diapers

## How do Diaper Banks help?

98% of respondents that used a diaper bank said that it helped them, while 68% said that it "helped a lot." Addressing diaper need will create better health outcomes and development for children and alleviate financial burdens on low-income families (Federal Issues, 2019).

### References

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