



# Parent Blocks

NEWSLETTER



“Providing resources to parents throughout West Virginia”

Volume 18, Issue 2, Spring/Summer 2022

## West Virginia Feed to Achieve Program

### Childhood Hunger in West Virginia

According to Feeding America, more than 1 in 5 children in West Virginia live in a household that is food insecure. Over 67 percent of school-aged children qualify for free or reduced-priced meals.

That translates to over 183,000 children whose family household income is below or nearly below the federal poverty level. Without adequate access to food, these children are at risk for health problems, obesity, nutrient deficiencies, and difficul-

ties with learning that can echo throughout a lifetime.

### What is West Virginia Feed to Achieve?

The West Virginia Legislature passed Senate Bill No. 663 in April 2013, creating the West Virginia Feed to Achieve Act. It focuses on improving the nutrition and health of West Virginia’s children. The need for the bill was simple: Every child needs nutritious meals in order to achieve his or her potential. The bill not only focuses on ensuring that all students have equal access to nutritious meals during the school day, but also allows for the creation of partnerships to provide meals outside the school day.

As West Virginians, we rise to the occasion to help others in need. There are countless individuals and organizations at the grassroots

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level who are working to combat poverty and feed hungry families. A key component of WV Feed to Achieve is to establish partnerships outside the school system to ensure children have access to food outside the school day: after school, weekends, during the summer months, holidays and snow days.

The West Virginia Department of Education Office of Child Nutrition was given the responsibility to oversee West Virginia Feed to Achieve. The initiative has been administered in two parts:

### **Part 1: Feeding children during the school day**

The West Virginia Department of Education serves as the State Agency responsible for operating the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program in West Virginia and enters into an agreement with the USDA for this task. The WVDE then enters into agreements with each of the 55 county boards of education for program administration at the local level. Breakfast and lunch served at the local level remains the largest source of nutrition for students during the school day.

### **Part 2: Feeding children outside the school day**

#### National School Lunch Program Afterschool Snack

The afterschool snack component of the National School Lunch Program is a federally assisted snack service that fills the afternoon hunger gap for school children. USDA's Food and Nutrition Service administer the snack service at the federal level. At the state level, it is administered by state agencies. In West Virginia, this

is the West Virginia Department of Education. Snack service through this option is operated through agreements with local school food authorities (SFAs). SFAs are ultimately responsible for the administration of the snack service. The NSLP Afterschool Snack Service offers cash reimbursement to help schools provide a nutritional boost to children enrolled in afterschool activities. Participating SFAs receive cash subsidies from the USDA for each reimbursable snack they serve (up to one reimbursement per participant per day). In return, they must serve snacks that meet federal requirements and must offer free or reduced price snacks to eligible children. Thirty-four county school systems participated in the NSLP afterschool snack option last school year for a total of 775,302 nutritious snacks offered through this federal child nutrition option.

#### Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Afterschool Meals

CACFP meals and snacks give a nutritional boost to children, including teenagers through age 18, in eligible afterschool programs in lower income areas. When school is out and parents or guardians are still at work, children need a safe place to be with their friends, with structured activities, and supportive adults. There are no application forms for parents or guardians to complete. All afterschool meals and snacks are served in group settings, at no cost to the child or the child's family. USDA provides reimbursement for meals and snacks served in afterschool programs that are located at sites where at least half of the children in the school attendance area are eligible for free and reduced price school meals; educational and/

or enrichment activities are offered after the regular school day ends – or on weekends, holidays, or during times of the year when school is not in session; and serves nutritionally balanced meals and snacks that meet USDA's nutrition standards. For the 2016-17 school year, 250 feeding sites across West Virginia accessed this meal option to serve children through this federal child nutrition program.

#### Backpack Programs and Non-Traditional Feeding Support

The West Virginia Department of Education recognizes that non-traditional feeding programs are methods of providing food to students outside the school day. This is accomplished in communities across West Virginia in numerous capacities – through social and civic groups, faith-based initiatives, corporate partnerships, food pantries and food banks, and volunteer efforts. The West Virginia Feed to Achieve Act allows the WVDE to be part of the solution of feeding students in these non-traditional efforts. School-based food pantries and backpack programs are options for schools to make shelf-stable food available to students.

We encourage you to help serve your local students and communities by volunteering your time and efforts with organizations and charitable causes that seek to end childhood hunger in West Virginia. For more information on how you can help, contact the Office of Child Nutrition.

*-Reprinted from West Virginia Department of Education, <https://wvde.us/student-support-well-being/child-nutrition/feed-to-achieve/>*

# Gardening with Children

Throughout the last several years...with COVID, supply chain issues, and the increase cost of groceries...there has been a movement to grow our own food through home gardens.

Gardening with young children has many advantages. Not only will you have the opportunity to grow nutritious food, but children will also have the opportunity to learn about and explore the world around them.

Through gardening, children will:

## 1. **Learn about living things.**

Children will learn how to help take care of growing plants, compare and contrast different kinds of seeds, and explore sensory development through the texture of dirt and leaves.

**2. Practice motor skills.** By digging dirt, using tools, and watering plants, children will practice motor skills.

**3. How to work together as a team.** By gardening together as a family, children learn how to work together, helping to accomplish a common goal of creating a successful garden.

## Roasted Asparagus with Balsamic Vinegar

Submitted by Renee Y. Stonebraker, RS, Child Care Health Educator,  
West Virginia Early Childhood Training Connections and Resources



### Ingredients:

- 1 pound fresh asparagus, trimmed
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon honey
- salt and pepper to taste

### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 450 degrees F.
2. Place asparagus in a gallon zip lock bag.
3. Add vinegar, oil, honey, and salt and pepper to bag. Toss asparagus around in the bag to coat well.
4. Place asparagus on cookie sheet. Bake 10-15 minutes.

Reference: [www.justapinch.com](http://www.justapinch.com)

# Concerned about Development?

## How to Get Help for Your Child



Talking to the doctor is the first step toward getting help for your child if you are concerned about his or her development (how your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, or moves). **Don't wait.** Acting early can make a real difference!

### 1 Make an appointment with your child's doctor

- When you schedule the appointment, tell the doctor's staff you have concerns about your child's development that you would like to discuss with the doctor.

### 2 Complete a milestone checklist

- Before the appointment, complete a milestone checklist by downloading CDC's free [Milestone Tracker mobile app](#) from the App Store or Google Play or printing a paper checklist from [www.cdc.gov/Milestones](http://www.cdc.gov/Milestones).
- Write down your questions and concerns; take these with you to the doctor's appointment.

### 3 During the doctor's appointment

- Show the completed milestone checklist to the doctor**
  - If your child **is** missing milestones, point them out, and share any other concerns that you have.
  - If your child **is not** missing milestones but you still have concerns, tell the doctor about them.
- Ask the doctor for developmental screening for your child**
  - Developmental screening is recommended whenever there is a concern. It gives the doctor more information to figure out how best to help your child.
  - For more information about developmental screening, go to [www.cdc.gov/DevScreening](http://www.cdc.gov/DevScreening).
- Ask the doctor if your child needs further developmental evaluation**
  - If your child does, ask for a referral and call right away. If you have difficulty getting an appointment, let the doctor know.

### 4 Make sure you understand what the doctor tells you, and what to do next

- Before you leave the appointment, check the notes you have written and make sure all of your questions have been answered.
- If you do not understand something, ask the doctor to explain it again or in a different way.
- When you get home, review your notes and follow the steps the doctor has given you. Remember, you can always contact the doctor's office if you have any questions.

## You Know Your Child Best

If your child's doctor has told you to "wait and see," but you feel uneasy about that advice:

Talk with others (doctor, teacher, another provider) to get a second opinion

### AND

Call for a free evaluation to find out if your child can get free or low-cost services that can help.

- If your child is under age 3:** Call your state's early intervention program. Find the phone number at [www.cdc.gov/FindEI](http://www.cdc.gov/FindEI).

- If your child is age 3 or older:** Call the local public elementary school.

**You do not need a doctor's referral to have your child evaluated for services.**

Find more information, including what to say when you make these important calls, visit [www.cdc.gov/Concerned](http://www.cdc.gov/Concerned).

**Don't wait.**  
Acting early can make a real difference!



[www.cdc.gov/ActEarly](http://www.cdc.gov/ActEarly)

1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)

Learn the Signs. Act Early.



Download CDC's free Milestone Tracker app

