

Jimmy Mehl

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My name is Jimmy Mehl, Executive Director of the Columbus Diaper Bank. We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization incorporated here in Columbus, Ohio. The Columbus Diaper Bank works to improve the lives of Central Ohio families by supplying disposable diapers to different programs and organizations that provide assistance to families in need.

The National Diaper Bank Network defines diaper need as the lack of a sufficient supply of diapers to keep an infant or child clean, dry, and healthy. The National Diaper Bank Network reports the following facts about Diaper Need nationally:

- 1 in 3 American families reports experiencing diaper need.
- 5.2 million Children in the U.S. aged three or younger live in poor or low-income families.
- Infants require up to 12 diapers per day, toddlers about 8.
- Disposable diapers can cost \$70 to \$80 per month per baby.
- No state or federal child safety-net program allocates dollars specifically for the purchase of diapers.
- Without transportation, buying diapers at a convenience store rather than a large “big box” store can significantly increase the monthly cost of diapers.
- Most childcare centers, even free and subsidized facilities require parents to provide a day’s supply of disposable diapers. * (National Diaper Bank Network Website)

Ohio Diaper Facts-Compiled by the National Diaper Bank Network

We believe that diapers are as essential to a baby's healthy development as a parent’s love. Keeping infants and toddlers clean, dry, and healthy is key to building a solid foundation for all children to reach their full potential. But one in three families struggles to provide clean diapers for their baby.

There are 416,395 Ohioans under age of 3. 20% of those children live in families earning less than 100% of the Federal Poverty Level.

Ohio's babies need strong foundations. Children in low-income families are at greatest risk of suffering the effects of diaper need. Current public support programs—such as SNAP, WIC and TANF—help some, but young children have additional needs necessary for healthy growth and to reach their full potential.

Currently, 42% of Ohio births are covered by Medicaid, meaning that nearly half of all infants in Ohio are born to low-income families. In Ohio, 12% of SNAP recipients are under age 5. 24% of WIC recipients are Infants. 24% of TANF Families have at least one child under the age of 3.

Most child care facilities require parents to provide diapers for their child. Nationally, 57% of parents who are experiencing diaper and rely on child care facilities, reported that they missed an average of four days of school or work in the past month because they didn't have diapers. The cost of infant Care in Ohio accounts for 11% of income in two-parent households and 44% of income in single-parent households.

TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) and Diapers in Ohio.

The only federal assistance program that can be used for diapers is TANF(Temporary Assistance For Needy Families). Cash assistance provided by TANF can be used to purchase diapers. However, TANF has to cover many other expenses, including utility bills, rent, clothing, transportation, and other basic needs. Little, if any, money is available to purchase enough diapers to keep a baby clean, dry, and healthy. An average monthly supply of diapers costs approximately \$80. The max benefit for a family of 3 (1 parents and 2 children) in Ohio is \$474 per month.

Ohio's Diaper Banks help fill the gap between the federal assistance programs I've just described and diaper need. Ohio has 8 diaper banks that are members of the National Diaper Bank Network. These 8 diaper banks distribute 1,411,247 diapers annually. All diaper banks require community support and donations of diapers and dollars to improve the well-being of children and families in our communities.

The Columbus Diaper Bank is proud to be recognized as one of those 8 Diaper banks. In 2018, we worked with 12 different programs and organizations by distributing over 181,000 disposable diapers. Programs like the Columbus Early Learning Center, Maryhaven's Stable Cradle, St. Stephen's Community House, Academy for Urban Scholars, Community Refugee & Immigration Services, and CelebrateOne Columbus, Ohio, and Nationwide Childrens Hospital Palliative & Hospice care unit.

Without community support, our organization would not be able to provide this growing need

to struggling families here in Central Ohio. By designating a week to Diaper Need Awareness Week here in Ohio, it will raise awareness and support to this growing need.