

Charity Writer: Social Examiner

Over 65,000 Idaho children may not have enough to eat.

A study done by [Feeding America](#), the national network of food banks, indicates that over 65,517 food-insecure children in Idaho are unsure they will have access to enough nutritious food to live complete, healthy lives.

Many of these kids go hungry, often over the weekend and holiday breaks when they don't have access to school food programs. These children stuff themselves at school on Monday and frequently hide food in their pockets to take home. Eating healthy five days a week is not enough for a child.

Some of these children are from low-income families that do not have enough money to buy enough food. Others may have parents working, and the children lack the resources to provide for themselves when left on their own.

Most agree that helping kids succeed in school is important, but they may not realize that hunger is a danger threatening the educational success and well-being of so many Idaho youth. Hungry or undernourished children often have difficulty concentrating in school and may not be able to fight off infection, causing them to miss school.

The [Idaho Foodbank](#) is working with Idaho public schools, including several in the Treasure Valley, to identify hungry children and provide for them when they are not in school through the *Backpack Program*.

This program targets schools with the highest levels of children receiving free and reduced lunch. With the help of school staff, children at risk are provided with a backpack filled with six nutritious meals, all things that can be safely eaten without cooking, to take home every Friday. The empty backpack is returned to school on Monday, and the Foodbank and local volunteers refill it and return it to school by the following Friday.

This program is currently helping feed 1,400 hungry children in Idaho. But there are many more in need. It costs \$7 a week to fill each backpack and \$250 to sponsor a child for the year.

- [Click here](#) for more statistics about hunger in Idaho.
- Visit www.idahofoodbank.org for more information about the Idaho Foodbank.