

Half of US kids will get food stamps, study says (w/ Video)

November 2 2009

Holidays and tables full of delicious food usually go hand in hand, but for nearly half of the children in the United States, this is not guaranteed.

"49 percent of all U.S. children will be in a household that uses food stamps at some point during their childhood," says Mark R. Rank, Ph.D., poverty expert at the George Warren Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis. "Food stamp use is a clear sign of poverty and food insecurity, two of the most detrimental economic conditions affecting a child's health."

According to Rank, the substantial risk of a child being in a family that uses food stamps is consistent with a wider body of research demonstrating that U.S. children face considerable economic risk throughout their childhood years. "Rather than being a time of security and safety, the childhood years for many American children are a time of economic turmoil, risk, and hardship," Rank says.

Rank's study, "Estimating the Risk of Food Stamp Use and Impoverishment During Childhood," is published in the current issue of the *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*. Other study findings include:

- 90 percent of black children will be in a household that uses food stamps. This compares to 37 percent of white children.

- Nearly one-quarter of all American children will be in households that use food stamps for five or more years during childhood.
- 91 percent of children with single parents will be in a household receiving food stamps, compared to 37 percent of children in married households.
- Looking at race, marital status and education simultaneously, children who are black and whose head of household is not married with less than 12 years of education have a cumulative percentage of residing in a food stamp household of 97 percent by age 10.

"Understanding the degree to which American children are exposed to the risks of poverty and food insecurity across childhood is essential information for the health care and social service communities," Rank says. "Even limited exposure to poverty can have detrimental effects upon a child's overall quality of health and well-being."

The study, co-authored with Thomas Hirschl, professor at Cornell University, is based on an analysis of 30 years of information taken from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID), and looks at children between the ages of 1 and 20. The PSID is a longitudinal survey of a representative sample of U.S. individuals and their families interviewed annually since 1968.

Source: Washington University in St. Louis

Citation: Half of US kids will get food stamps, study says (w/ Video) (2009, November 2) retrieved 28 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2009-11-kids-food-video.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.