



Supporting Parents Ages 18 - 24

August 2023

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training

Millions of children across America live with parents aged 18-24.ⁱ These young parents, jointly navigating adulthood and parenthood, face obstacles such as disruption in education, unemployment, financial instability, and lack of access to child care. Despite these challenges, young families are incredibly resilient. Young adults are in critical phases of development as new parents can grow alongside their children, who are also in an important phase of early-childhood development. Investing in young families during this critical time with the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a chance to support family stability with food and nutrition supports, and long-term economic mobility with [SNAP employment and training](#) (SNAP E&T) services.

Parents & SNAP

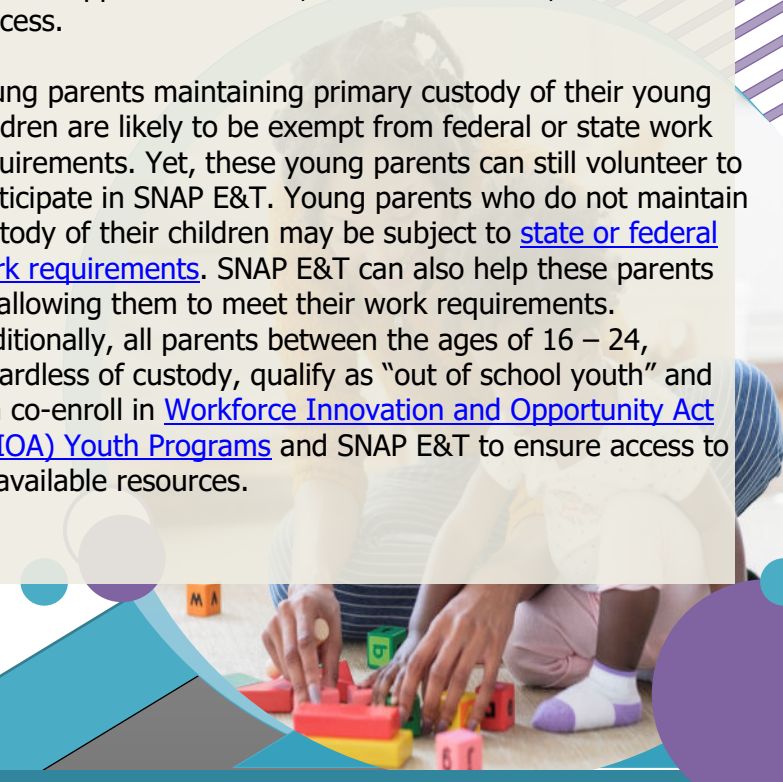
Parents ages 18-24 access the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) at a higher rate than both their childless peers and older parents. Just over half of all young parents access SNAP to support food assistance for themselves and their young children, compared to 39% of older parents.ⁱⁱ

Additionally, receiving SNAP tends to correlate with significant, long-term poverty reduction for young families.ⁱⁱⁱ As [food insecurity among young children increases](#), SNAP proves to be an effective support for young families to prevent food insecurity and promote child and family development.

Supporting Economic Mobility for Parents Ages 18 - 24

In addition to providing food supports, another way SNAP assists poverty reduction and economic mobility for young families is by providing meaningful employment and training supports. According to research conducted by the Urban Institute, having children young can cause major disruptions in school and education; however, access to quality childcare improves parents' success in education and work, and promotes positive early childhood development.^{iv} Regardless of challenges, with the right supports young parents can and do succeed. For young parents receiving SNAP, the SNAP E&T Program can provide workforce services such as employment-focused case management, job search and skills-based training, as well as supportive services, such as child care, to bolster success.

Young parents maintaining primary custody of their young children are likely to be exempt from federal or state work requirements. Yet, these young parents can still volunteer to participate in SNAP E&T. Young parents who do not maintain custody of their children may be subject to [state or federal work requirements](#). SNAP E&T can also help these parents by allowing them to meet their work requirements. Additionally, all parents between the ages of 16 – 24, regardless of custody, qualify as “out of school youth” and can co-enroll in [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(WIOA\) Youth Programs](#) and SNAP E&T to ensure access to all available resources.



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To support young families, states may consider following options for SNAP E&T

- Ensure program slots exist for parents ages 18-24 to voluntarily participate in SNAP E&T
- Promote SNAP E&T to non-custodial parents ages 18-24 as a meaningful opportunity to fulfill work requirements and avoid time limits.
- Partner with and onboard organizations as E&T providers who understand the unique needs of parents ages 18-24.
- Coordinate with state and local workforce systems to co-enroll parents ages 18-24 in [WIOA Youth Programs](#) when eligible to ensure continuity of services and access to all available supports.

Programs Across States Leading the Way

New Moms

[New Moms](#) is a SNAP E&T provider in **Chicago, Illinois**, that takes a comprehensive approach to supporting mothers ages 24 and younger. New Moms programing includes housing, job training, academic coaching, doula services, and home visiting to give young moms and their children a path to lasting success. Alongside supportive services such as transportation assistance and diaper distribution, New Moms offers individual and group coaching to support young mothers in attaining their academic goals. New Moms also offers comprehensive paid job training through its social enterprise candle company, Bright Endeavors.

Family Scholar House

[Family Scholar House](#) in Louisville, **Kentucky**, is a SNAP E&T provider serving single parents. Family Scholar House offers employment readiness training through one-on-one training and development of soft skills, financial skills, and other life skills. Participants are also connected with job shadowing opportunities in the community or with local business partners. Child care is provided to support participation in services. While young parents are not the exclusive target population of Family Scholar House, they make up a significant portion of those served. In 2018 Family Scholar House served more than 500 young parents, approximately 40% of its service population.^v

Learn & Earn to Achieve Potential (LEAP) Network

The Learn and Earn to Achieve Potential (LEAP) Network is an initiative to increase employment and educational opportunities for young people facing challenges on the path to adulthood. Three members of the LEAP network, The Door in **New York**, [Project for Pride in Living](#) (PPL) in **Minnesota**, and **Nebraska** Children and Families Foundation, [focused on capacity building and service delivery to young parents](#). While each of these organizations uses a variety of strategies to promote employment and training outcomes for young parents, PPL also [leverages SNAP E&T funds](#) as a 50/50 provider in MN. PPL provides education, job search services, and supportive services, including transportation, clothing, and supplies.

ⁱ Ann Flagg, Mary Nelson, Meg Dygert, [Working Together – A Roadmap to Human Services System Alignment for Young Families](#) (2021).

ⁱⁱ Jessica Carson, [The Poverty-Reducing Effects of the EITC and Other Safety Nets for Young Adult Parents](#), University of New Hampshire (2020).

ⁱⁱⁱ *Id.*

^{iv} Nathan Sick, Carolyn Vilter, Shayne Spaulding, [Young Parents Making Their Way: Combining Education and Work while Parenting](#), The Urban Institute (2019); Heather Sandstrom, Laura Sullivan, Cary Lou, Shayne Spaulding, and Gina Adams, [Balancing Work with School and Training while Raising Young Children](#), The Urban Institute (2020).

^v [Opening Doors for Young Parents](#), Annie E. Casey Foundation (2018)