

Making Diapers More Affordable for Illinois Families

SB 3461 (Sen. Villa)

Caregivers in poverty are faced with many difficult decisions to provide for their family - pay the electric bill or rent or medical bills or buy food. How to pay for diapers is yet another difficult choice. Diaper poverty is a serious issue experienced by **approximately 1 in 3 parents**.¹ Caregivers experiencing diaper poverty cannot afford to keep their child clean and dry, often stretching for hours without a diaper change or using inadequate options as a substitute.

Issue

Costs for Families

Infants and toddlers go through up to **12 diapers per day** which can cost families between **\$80 to \$100 per month** per child.² This cost is a huge burden for struggling families. Additionally, between June of 2019 and July of 2021, the **price of diapers rose 12 percent** putting an even greater strain on family caregivers during a devastating pandemic.³

Impacts on Health

When children wear diapers for too long or wear diaper substitutes, they can experience irritation, prolonged diaper rash, or even UTIs. These issues can lead to longer-term, expensive health complications. A 2019 study found that clean diapers from a diaper bank saved families **\$1,448 a year in medical costs**.⁴ Parents often know exactly how many diapers they have left for their child and this "diaper math" leads to added caregiver stress on mental health and well-being.

The Policy Solution

For Illinois to be one of the best states to raise a family, we must enact policies providing access to clean diapers. The Ahlquist Center at Children's Home & Aid is leading legislation to create a monthly allowance for families of certain incomes to purchase diapers. With SB 3461, **families at or below 100% of the FPL would be eligible to receive a diaper allowance of \$70/month** per child up to three years of age. The diaper allowance, similar to California legislation, would provide resources through EBT cards directly to families needing it most for clean diapers. **Over 114,000 children** would benefit from this diaper allowance.

1 Diaper Need and its Impact on U.S. Families." National Diaper Bank Network. Diaper-Need-and-Its-Impact-on-US-Families.pdf (nationaldiaperbanknetwork.org), pg 1

2 National Diaper Bank Network. NDBN_DiaperNeed_Overview_February_2020.docx.pdf (nationaldiaperbanknetwork.org), pg 1

3 Terlep, S. "Rising Diaper Prices Prompt States to Get Behind Push to Pay." The Wall Street Journal. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/states-get-behind-push-to-pay-for-diapers-11627045200>

4 Carstensen, F. & Gunther, P. "Better Health for Children and Increased Opportunities for Families: The social and economic impacts of the diaper bank of Connecticut." Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis. <https://nationaldiaperbanknetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/The-Social-and-Economic-Impacts-of-the-Diaper-Bank-of-Connecticut.pdf>, pg 9

5 see 4, pg 6

6 see 5, pg 6



Nationally, **1 in 3** parents report experiencing a diaper need

12

Diapers needed on average per day for infants and toddlers



\$80-\$100

Every month per child for diapers



\$1,448

money saved on medical bills for families who were able to access diapers from a diaper bank

57%

of families who received diapers from the Diaper Bank of Connecticut reported avoiding child care due to lack of diapers

resulting in, on average,

4 days

of work being missed⁵

\$11

increase in family income for every \$1 of diaper aid received⁶

