



HELP A MOTHER OUT.ORG

HELP A MOTHER OUT (HAMO) was formed in the spring of 2009 in reaction to media reports about the economic crisis's effect on young children, families, and mothers, in particular the growing numbers of homeless children and families in California. Reaching out to San Francisco Bay Area shelters, cofounders Lisa Truong and Rachel Fudge learned that the number-one need was not baby blankets, clothing, or even food but diapers—which are not covered under social-safety net programs like WIC or food stamps.

So they decided to organize a Mother's Day diapers-and-wipes donation drive to benefit a dozen agencies serving low-income and homeless families throughout California. Using the free, social-networking and internet technologies they mounted a campaign that generated over 15,000 diapers for families in need. Surprised and awed by the outpouring of support from across the country, they decided to turn the one-time drive into an ongoing year-round campaign both to encourage diaper donations and to raise awareness.

"We are seeing more and more families coming to HPP for their basic needs for survival – food, clothing, and shelter. We are hearing families being forced to make difficult decisions, choosing whether to buy food or diapers for their children." ~ Martha Ryan, Founder & Executive Director, Homeless Prenatal Program

FACTS

- California has 2.2 million children living below the poverty level*
- More than 292, 624 California children experience homelessness each year. The state ranks in the top 3 of worst states on the extent of family homelessness*

*According to the National Center on Family Homelessness (www.familyhomelessness.org)

GET INVOLVED

- Host a diaper drive using our free Diaper Drive Toolkit
- Donate diapers online and ship them directly to one of our partners
- Drop off open and new packs of diapers at one our drop bin locations

San Francisco: Natural Resources 1367 Valencia St
Oakland: SadieDeys Café 4210 Telegraph Ave.
San Jose: Baby Buzz 1314 Lincoln Ave, #1A

ABOUT HAMO

Our mission is to help improve the lives of mothers, children, and families in need one diaper at a time. We believe that direct action, advocacy, and raising awareness go hand in hand. We currently coordinate a network of diaper donation drives throughout California and maintain a regularly updated blog that addresses issues of poverty, economics, children, families, and mothers. Contact us:

INFO@HELPAMOTHEROUT.ORG

FACEBOOK.COM/HELPAMOTHEROUT

TWITTER.COM/HELPAMOTHEROUT

DIAPERS 101

DID YOU KNOW that diapers are not covered by public assistance programs like WIC or food stamps? And did you know that diaper companies do not make big donations to shelters or outreach programs? Until we started Help A Mother Out, we didn't know it either. It was a revelation to us that something so basic as a diaper could have such a big impact.

If you're not a parent, you might be surprised to realize that a jumbo pack of Pampers costs from \$10 to \$15—that's 20 to 30 cents per diaper, depending on the size of the diaper. And if you can't shop at discount stores like Target or Costco and instead have to rely on corner stores or drugstores, you'll often end up paying even more per diaper. For reference, a newborn baby goes through 60 or more diapers a week. When money's tight, that's a lot of dough to drop. For families in need, having to choose between buying food or buying diapers is a terrible option—yet an all-too-common one.

LET'S BREAK IT DOWN.

1. While safety-net programs such as SNAP (food stamps) and WIC (Women, Infants and Children) cover the cost of infant formula, they do NOT cover diapers.
2. Diaper companies do NOT give diapers away (unless you are Jon and Kate Plus 8 or the California octuplets).
3. Infant formula companies donate formula and the government subsidizes it under SNAP and WIC.
4. Diapers cost exponentially more at an inner-city convenience store than they do at a big box store or online.
5. Most laundromats do NOT allow you to wash cloth diapers. If you are poor, you probably don't own a washing machine.
6. Most licensed daycare centers (especially free or subsidized) do not accept cloth diapers. Parents must provide disposable diapers.
7. If a family can't afford diapers (e.g., they need that money for shelter, food, transportation), a baby will spend extended periods of time, sometimes days at a time in the same soiled diaper.
8. Washing and reusing disposable diapers is unhealthy and unsanitary.
9. Unhappy babies are crying babies. Crying babies are more likely to be abused by an already stressed-out caregiver.
10. If you cannot afford diapers, you cannot take your child to free/subsidized childcare. Therefore, you cannot make your commitments such as work, school, or job training.
11. Start over.

It's a vicious cycle, but we at **HAMO** are trying to help break it. By doing something so simple as donating a pack of diapers, you can help make a real difference in someone's life.