

Support HB 3895

The Happy, Healthy Babies Bill

(Gabel-Harper-D. Burke-Currie-Davis, Soto, Lang, Flowers, Mah, Slaughter, Fine, Willis, Lilly, Halpin, Conroy, Moeller, Riley, Welch, Greenwood, Stratton, Hernandez, Feigenholtz, Mayfield, Rita, Zalewski, Cassidy, Wallace, Evans, Ford, Moylan, Ammons)

49,200 infants and toddlers (0-3) in Illinois live in deep poverty	A family of three living in deep poverty lives on \$850 monthly or less	The average infant needs 240 diapers every month	Providing diapers for an infant costs an average of \$80 monthly
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Families in deep poverty have income at or below 50% of the federal poverty line. Addressing the high cost of diapers for families in deep poverty would:

- **Keep babies healthy:** forced to choose between buying diapers and paying for food or shelter, families stretch the use of diapers by not changing them as often as necessary, or drying and re-using them, risking diaper rash, urinary tract infections, oral-fecal contamination and other serious health issues, some of which can lead to hospitalization.

Promote maternal and toddler health: diaper need is a stronger predictor of stress for mothers than neighborhood crime and food insecurity, and an adequate supply of diapers may reduce parent stress, a critical factor influencing child health and development and maternal depression. Moreover, due to the unaffordability of diapers, many parents try to toilet train young children at too young an age, before it is developmentally appropriate, which can lead to chronic holding, bladder problems and urinary tract infections. Toilet training before a child is ready can cause anxiety and [parent-child conflict](#).

- **Protect public health:** dirty diapers spread hepatitis A, viral meningitis and bacterial diarrheas.
- **Increase early education and care participation:** a supply of clean diapers is often required to attend childcare, which means infants and toddlers in deep poverty can miss valuable time in quality early education and care settings when they do not have clean diapers. And children staying home from child care means parents miss work, which leads to decreased income and disruptions in employment.

HB 3895 would create a program that supports Illinois families living in deep poverty with a monthly diaper allowance of \$80 towards the purchase of diapers for each child under age three. The state-funded allowance would be distributed on an EBT card and restricted to the purchase of diaper

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