



Project Overview

The Project

Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit organization behind *Sesame Street*, in partnership with UnitedHealthcare and The Merck Company Foundation, has created **Food for Thought: Eating Well on a Budget**.

This bilingual, multimedia outreach program is designed to help support families with young children who are coping with uncertain or limited access to affordable and nutritious food. **Food for Thought** provides families the materials and resources they need in order to positively address the social, emotional, and nutritional concerns that are part of food insecurity.

The Need

Food insecurity is an invisible crisis in the United States. Sixteen million American children are food insecure.* For young children, food insecurity has lifelong consequences that affect their health, school readiness and performance, as well as their growth and development.

Project Goals

- * **HELP CHILDREN AND FAMILIES** achieve a healthy diet by educating them about nutritionally sound foods.
- * **SUPPORT CAREGIVERS** facing economic challenges as they encourage children to eat healthy foods and be physically active, and model these behaviors.
- * **PROVIDE RESOURCES** that allow children and adults to make healthy food choices based on simple and familiar messages, including choosing between “sometime” and “anytime” foods and eating a rainbow of colors.
- * **EMPOWER FAMILIES** with a “can-do” attitude, along with practical strategies to help them make healthier food choices.

Project Components

Bilingual Outreach Kit including:

- * **DVD:** an original *Sesame Street* story featuring Elmo, the Super Foods, and friends, along with real families as they try new foods, learn about the importance of healthy snacks, and discover that sharing a meal together is the perfect opportunity to connect as a family.
- * **CAREGIVER GUIDE:** containing tips, strategies and resources to help food-insecure families make healthy choices within a limited budget.
- * **CHILDREN'S STORY:** in which Big Bird's family visits a local food pantry and discovers that shopping for food and cooking a meal together are important ways to remain connected as a family.
- * **RECIPE CARDS:** providing healthy ideas for meals and snacks.

Digital Media Experience (sesamestreet.org/food) including:

- * **PROVIDER GUIDE:** with strategies on how to use the outreach kit in volunteer and/or service organizations that work with food-insecure children and families.
- * **ONLINE GAMES AND RESOURCES:** promoting healthy habits.

Distribution Plan

A total of 1 million outreach kits have been produced for this initiative and distributed through Sesame Workshop's partnership with UnitedHealthcare, The Merck Company Foundation, other key organizations, and members of the initiative's advisory board. Materials are available free online at **sesamestreet.org/food**. Video content, titled “Learn Along with Sesame,” is available for free on Amazon.com VOD and iTunes (iTunes.com).