



**WHAT CANADIANS KNOW, THINK, AND WANT WHEN IT COMES TO FOOD INSECURITY AND CHILDREN  
FROM SMALL CHANGE, COMES BIG CHANGE**

**TORONTO – February 3, 2014**— Eighty one per cent of Canadians believe children in their community are going without breakfast and nearly as many believe Canada’s ability to feed its hungry children is directly tied to the future prosperity of our country. Yet, the results of a one-of-a kind study on food insecurity found many Canadians lack clarity on this fundamental issue, including as it relates to school-nutrition programs, the average cost of a nutritious breakfast and the age of children entitled\* to receive them.

These insights are among those uncovered by the “*The Toonies for Tummies Survey*” of 1,500 Canadians conducted by Leger Canada and sponsored by [The Grocery Foundation](#) a not-for-profit organization which, to date, has donated over \$75M to hundreds of charities; with a focus on child welfare.

Among the stark contrasts revealed was the range in perceptions around the average cost of a nutritious breakfast for school-aged children. Sixty per cent of Canadians believe the cost starts at \$3, ranging upwards to \$10. Only 1 in 5 respondents (18%) of those surveyed think that a Toonie can provide a nutritious breakfast. The study also found that more than three in four Canadians (76%) believe children 5-7 years of age are eligible for school-nutrition programs as compared with one in four (26%) who believe children 13 years and older are also eligible\*.

In reality, one in six Canadian children goes to school hungry<sup>1\*\*</sup>. In 2013, funding from Breakfast for Learning and Breakfast Clubs of Canada provided support for 355,000 children between the ages of 4 and 18 benefitting from school-nutrition programs coast to coast. The average cost of a nutritious breakfast provided by these programs is just under \$2 according to [Breakfast Club of Canada](#) and [Breakfast for Learning](#), Canada’s two largest national organizations which combined helped serve 56 million meals and snacks this school year.

On the good news front, despite the differences uncovered, the study found agreement among Canadians in two important areas: 88 per cent report they are inclined to help a charity if they know they are making a difference and 89 per cent agree that even \$1 or \$2 can.

Tapping into these insights, the Grocery Foundation is set to launch its *Toonies for Tummies* campaign which will see participating retailers in Ontario\*\*\* and Atlantic Canada\*\*\* collect funds February 6-20 with all proceeds going toward feeding hungry children. This year’s campaign: “*Small change. Big change*” aims to bring clarity to Canadians on the impact of a Toonie and their ability to make a difference, namely: fill a tummy. Research confirms even moderate under-nutrition (inadequate or sub-optimal nutrient intake) can have lasting effects and compromise cognitive development and school performance<sup>2</sup> so the impact of each donation is both immediate and lasting.

A microsite ([www.TooniesforTummies.ca](http://www.TooniesforTummies.ca)) will enable consumers in Ontario to track their donations back to local schools and, in Atlantic Canada, will showcase the organizations involved in providing nutrition locally. This interactive platform addresses another key finding from the survey: 87.5 per cent of Canadians say they are inclined to give more to a charity if they know where their donation is going.



A Facebook badge has also been created for consumers to upload to their profile status during the campaign to call attention to the importance of feeding Canadian children along with a [video](#) on the impact of a Toonie, highlighting that when it comes to hunger and Canadian children, small change represents big change.

**Quotes:**

“Canadians know there is a need and that programs exist, but beyond that, we’ve uncovered a black hole that we’re intent on closing by connecting Canadians to the local programs and kids in their community who are making big strides enabled by a Toonie,” says, Michelle Scott, Executive Director of the Grocery Foundation.

“There has been a lot of recent dialogue about ensuring the wellness of our children and mechanisms to protect their wellbeing including on the Internet. This is vital and important work. It’s equally vital that we put the same degree of attention on the role of feeding their bodies and fuel their minds. We must nurture the whole child and it’s evident Canadians see this as an important need.”

**FOOD INSECURITY FACTS:**

- In 2012 it was estimated that almost 2 million Canadians are living in food insecure households. <sup>3</sup>

**The Impact of School Nutrition Programs:**

- Children who suffer from poor nutrition during the brain's most formative years score much lower on tests of vocabulary, reading comprehension, arithmetic, and general knowledge. <sup>4</sup>
- Morning fasting has a negative effect on cognitive performance, even among healthy, well-nourished children. A test of the speed and accuracy of response on problem-solving tasks given to children who did or did not eat breakfast found that skipping breakfast had an adverse influence on their performance on the tests. <sup>5</sup>
- Six-to eleven-year-old children from food-insufficient families had significantly lower arithmetic scores and were more likely to have repeated a grade. Families were classified as food-deficient if they self-reported as sometimes or often not having enough food to eat. In addition, food-insufficient teenagers were more likely to have been suspended from school, and children in this category were more likely to have seen a psychologist and to have experienced difficulty interacting with their peers. <sup>6</sup>

**About the Grocery Foundation:**

[The Grocery Foundation](#) is an Ontario-based not-for-profit, representing leaders from Canada’s grocery industry. It was established in 1979 to enrich the lives and wellbeing of children; providing them a hand up so they can learn and succeed. To date the Grocery Foundation has raised in excess of \$75 million which has gone towards over 250 organizations across the province meeting a number of health and wellness needs including providing nutritious breakfasts and snacks for school-aged students across the province. Many Grocery Foundation companies and their employees also work as volunteers alongside countless community groups nourishing dreams, abilities and brighter futures. 2014 marks the 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Grocery Foundation. Like us on [Facebook](#). Follow us on Twitter @GroceryFndtn and @Toonies4Tummies.



About the Survey:

A survey of 1505 Canadians was completed online between December 2 and December 5, 2013 using Leger's online panel, LegerWebA probability sample of the same size would yield a margin of error of +/- 2.5%, 19 times out of 20.

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*Editor's Note:*

An infographic accompanies this release.

\* Canada is currently the only G8 country without a national nutrition program in schools. Nutrition programs that currently exist are funded by sources including Breakfast for Learning and Breakfast Clubs of Canada, whose funding supports universal programs where every child within the school is eligible to attend.

\*\* According to a 2011 report, *Household Food Insecurity in Canada*, household food insecurity affected one in every six children in Canada.

\*\*\* Participating stores in Ontario and Atlantic Canada:

- Colemans
- Co-op Atlantic
- Food Basics
- Foodland
- Freshco
- Galati Market Fresh
- Highland Farms
- Longo's
- Metro Ontario
- Michael Angelo's
- Price Chopper
- Rabba Fine Foods
- Sobeys and more than 100 independent stores across Ontario and Atlantic Canada