



Nineline **1-800-999-9999** it's free!

basic needs

Are you concerned about a child or teen that lacks basic needs like food, clothing, housing, employment, or is troubled at school?

what are the basic needs of young people today?

Everyone has basic needs. If you are concerned about a child or teen with a **lack of food, clothing, housing, and employment** or who is having **trouble at school** this is the place to talk to someone who can help.

We all have basic needs that need to be met so we can live a healthy, productive life. Basic needs include adequate food and clothing, a safe home, a good education and, as you grow older, a job. If one or more basic needs are not met you may find the youth you are concerned about struggling to just get through the day.

If their basic needs are not being met be sure they do not feel embarrassed to find help. There are people and agencies that can help - whether they need food, clothing or a foster home, group home or shelter. There are even agencies that will help make sure they finish school and find a decent job.

The most needy people are often ashamed or embarrassed because they lack what many of us take for granted: three meals a day; proper clothing, a nice apartment or house and other basic necessities. Many people in this situation blame themselves for being poor, or for not being successful enough to provide for themselves or their families. There is also a tendency in society to blame others for not being self-sufficient. There is a tendency to see individuals who are struggling just to survive as being lazy, or shiftless, or on drugs, or alcoholic or worse –immoral. We don't believe any of this. We believe that there are people: men, women, children and families that simply need a hand.

A lack of food affects ones health, growth and ability to learn. Not eating well can lead to health problems like anemia, obesity, eating disorders and dental problems. And missing meals can make it hard for one to focus and concentrate in school. Breakfast is especially important. When one isn't eating well one is more likely to get sick, miss school and fall behind.

Good nutrition is important. So important that some schools offer the School Breakfast Program, the School Lunch Program, the Summer Food Service Program and the Child and Adult Care Food Program all of which provide families in need with meals. There are also community-based food programs like food stamps, local food pantries, and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). If you are concerned about a child or teen getting proper nutrition, contact Nineline or one of these organizations.

A lack of clothing can leave a child or teen feeling embarrassed – not to mention hot and cold! If you find a youth you know does not have appropriate clothes for the changing seasons, school or work, there is someone who can help. Get them proper clothing or contact the Nineline to help you and them acquire proper clothing.

A lack of housing is also a serious problem. Whether the youth you care about is homeless or lives in housing that is unsafe or lacks heat or water there is someone who can help. Talk



Going to school every day is the best way to keep up with classes and get good grades so one can graduate and find a good job. If the child or teen you are concerned about is having trouble just getting to school, identify the problem. Are they having trouble waking up on time? Finding reliable transportation to school? Feeling safe at school? Staying interested once they get there? Once you've identified the problem or problems with them, help them to get help from someone they feel comfortable talking to. Try your parents, relatives, a teacher, a coach, a counselor or a friend's parent.

If they are having **trouble concentrating** in school consider the physical causes. Are they sleeping enough? Eating good breakfasts? A balanced diet? If not, take care of the situation. It's hard to pay attention in class if one is tired or not getting the proper nutrition. Is something bothering them? If so, help them counter the root-problem.

Is the youth you know getting **bad grades** in school? Try to figure out the problem. Is the class too advanced? Are they neglecting their homework? Do they just need help doing their homework? Ask their teacher for help and keep asking – and encourage them to as well. It is a teacher's job to teach them and to help them when they are struggling. Persuade them to study with a friend who is good in that class. Remember, struggling with school does not mean they are bad or stupid – help them to realize that! Talking to parents and teachers is a great way to come up with a solution or to start taking steps toward a solution. Make sure they stay in school. Their education is their future -- it deserves everyone's best effort - so keep looking for help if they are having a problem.

A good job can be difficult to find – especially as a teenager. And, once they find a job, they may have concerns about how to balance work hours, school hours, homework/study hours, and personal or household chores. Talk to them about their concerns and be available to answer any and all questions they may have. Call Nineline and one of our crisis counselors can help them access what they need in their community.



what are the warning signs?

If you suspect that the child or teen you are concerned about lacks basic needs, pose a few questions. If they answer yes to even one of these questions it would be advisable to intervene in their situation:

1. Do they often go to school or work without breakfast?
2. Are they constantly hungry and/or look malnourished?
3. Do they eat less than three meals a day?
4. Do they ever go a day without eating at all?
5. Do they have water or heat in your home?
6. Are they temporarily or permanently homeless?
7. Is their clothing often inappropriate for the weather/school/work?
8. Do they move frequently? Is their living situation unstable?
9. Do they miss a lot of school?
10. Do they have trouble concentrating in school? Trouble keeping good grades/ or a job?



what can I say or do to help the child or teen I care about?

There are many private – not for profit – social service agencies that provide assistance with basic needs like food, clothing and shelter.

Just call the **Covenant House Nineline** at **1-800-999-9999**; TTY: 1-800-999-9915 or follow this link to the [Nineline Forum on basic needs](#). The Nineline staff is ready to talk with you *any time* of day. You talk. We'll listen.

Nineline can help you locate other local agencies that can help including Catholic Charities, The Catholic Worker, Lutheran Social Services, The Salvation Army, the YMCA, YWCA, YMHA, YWHA, to name a few.

Many churches assist people with some or all of these services; many smaller, local, community based programs also assist people in need. In addition, many state and city governments have departments of social services, which exist to help the most needy individuals and families with basic services.