

Being a mum is  
hard enough;  
Imagine doing it  
without diapers.



## 1 in 5 Canadian mums has experienced diaper need.

Diaper need is the struggle to provide babies and small children with clean diapers. Some households are faced with having to choose between buying diapers or other basic necessities, like food. Babies may be kept in wet, dirty diapers for extended periods of time. In extreme cases, babies may

wear the same diaper for more than a day or used diapers that have been cleaned or dried out. Babies kept in wet or dirty diapers are more likely to experience signs of irritation and discomfort. They cry more often, suffer from more severe diaper rash, and are at greater risk of developing infection. The

likelihood of abuse increases when a child cries more often. Cloth diapers are not generally a realistic option for families experiencing diaper need. Daycare facilities do not typically allow cloth diapers and many public laundry facilities do not allow cloth diapers to be washed for sanitary reasons.

### LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF DIAPER NEED

The experience of diapering a child is a source of confidence and pride for mothers. A lack of diapers contributes to higher stress and anxiety levels and can strain the bond between caregiver and child, impacting both of their long-term physical and mental health. A lack of adequate clean diapers also results in mothers staying home when they need to go out. This perpetuates the cycle of poverty as families cannot access other necessary social services and mothers often miss work or school.

### CHILD POVERTY IN TORONTO

The GTA is home to half of all children living in poverty in Ontario. In Toronto, 1 in 4 children live in low-income households. Child poverty is highest and growing most rapidly in Toronto's inner suburbs. Diaper need is a particular challenge for families in these areas as public transportation can be limited and they do not often have proper or discount grocery stores. Diapers must be purchased at local convenient stores where prices are often inflated and families cannot take advantage of bulk purchasing discounts.

### DIAPERS AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

A month's worth of diapers can cost up to \$100. Ontario Works provides basic needs support to families in need to a maximum of \$344 a month. This amount is to help pay for things like food, clothing, personal needs . . . and diapers. The amount allotted per month does not increase with the number of children in a household. For families with babies and small children, the cost of diapers makes it nearly impossible to stretch this support across all of the family's basic needs.