

DIAPER DESERTS

PRIORITY AREAS FOR CHILD DIAPER ACCESS: LOW-INCOME NEIGHBORHOODS WITH LIMITED RETAIL ACCESS TO THE BASIC NEED OF DIAPERS

Massengale, KEC, Jones MA, Liao J, Park C, Old M (2022). Priority areas for child diaper access: Low-income neighborhoods with limited retail access to the basic need of diapers, *Health Equity* 6:1, 767-776, DOI: 10.1089/heq.2021.0192.



1 IN 4 CENSUS TRACTS IN DURHAM COUNTY IS A DIAPER DESERT

Of the 59 Durham County, NC census tracts, 29 (49%) had median household incomes \leq 200% of the poverty guideline (i.e., low income). Of these, 13 (45%) provided low-access to diapers meaning that **no retailer in the census tract sold all of the most common diaper sizes**.



LOW INCOME FAMILIES PAY MORE FOR DIAPERS

An assessment of Durham County, NC retailers selling diapers in low-income census tracts found that low-income families shopping near their neighborhoods **pay the highest diaper prices** compared to families with more income, leaving less money for other needs.



LOW INCOME FAMILIES HAVE TO SPEND MORE TO GET THE LOWEST PRICES

To shop at the stores offering the best prices, it takes **more time and money to travel** to these stores from lower income census tracts than it does for families coming from nearby high income census tracts.



BIG BOX STORES OFFER SAVINGS, BUT ALSO BIG UP FRONT COST

"Big Box" stores offering diapers at the lowest cost per diaper require families to **spend more money at once on diapers**. Families may not be able to spend this much money at one time.



LOW INCOME FAMILIES OFTEN PAY A "POVERTY PENALTY"

Low-income families often pay a "poverty penalty" when they purchase diapers because they may pay more per individual diaper than families with more income. **On average, diaper prices at small retailers in low access census tracts are 36% higher than at "big box" stores.**