



NUTRITION SERVICES



Access to a variety of nutritious and appealing meals that accommodate the health and nutrition needs of all students. School nutrition programs reflect the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans and other criteria to achieve nutrition integrity. School nutrition services offers students a learning laboratory for classroom nutrition and health education, and serve as a resource for linkages with nutrition-related community services. ¹

School Nutrition Services positively impact student achievement by:

- Increasing academic achievement and performance
- Improving student attention to academic tasks
- Decreasing behavioral problems
- Improving absenteeism and tardiness

THE EFFECT OF HUNGER ON COGNITIVE, ACADEMIC, AND PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ²

The associations between food insufficiency and cognitive, academic, and psychosocial outcomes among children and teenagers, ages 6-11 and 12-16 years were investigated. Scores on achievement tests and intelligence scales for children were 1.3 to 2.5 points lower on a scale of 20 for food insufficient children. Food insufficient children, ages 6-11, had lower arithmetic scores, were more likely to repeat a grade, and nearly twice as likely to see a psychologist. Food insufficient teenagers, ages 12-16, were twice as likely to have seen a psychologist and three times as likely to have been suspended from school. Food insufficient teenagers were also more likely to have difficulty getting along with other teenagers as evidenced by their being four times as likely to have no friends.

SCHOOL BREAKFAST AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE ³

Participation in the school breakfast program (SBP) by low-income children was associated with improvements in standardized achievement test scores, as well as absenteeism and tardiness rates. Participants had greater changes in academic scores over one academic year. Scores were compared with the students' own scores prior to participation in the SBP and with students who qualified for the SBP program but did not participate. The participants scores improved between 5 and 8 points more than eligible non-participants thus demonstrating that participation in the SBP is associated with significant improvements in academic functioning among low-income elementary school children.

SCHOOL BREAKFAST AND PSYCHOSOCIAL AND ACADEMIC FUNCTIONING ⁴

Strong evidence exists that higher rates of participation in school breakfast programs are associated with improved student psychosocial and academic functioning. Students who increased their participation in the school breakfast program had greater increases in their mathematics grades and greater decreases in their rates of absenteeism and tardiness. Child and teacher ratings of psychosocial problems also decreased among students who increased their participation in the school breakfast program. Additionally, providing a universally free breakfast program nearly doubled participation among the three schools evaluated.

REFERENCES

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