

The National School Lunch Program: *Supporting Healthy, Well-Nourished Students*

Balanced nutrition throughout the day contributes to student success in and out of the classroom. The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) offers students fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein and fat free or low fat milk with every school lunch. Updated federal nutrition standards also ensure these meals are within age-appropriate calorie levels and limit both unhealthy fats and sodium.

Multiple studies show that NSLP plays an important role in supporting obesity prevention and overall student health by improving children's diets and combatting food insecurity:

Children receiving school lunches consume fewer empty calories and more milk, fruit, vegetables and fiber than their peers - they are also more likely to have appropriate intakes of calcium, vitamin A and zinc.

School lunches are healthier than typical packed lunches - school lunches contained fewer calories, fat, saturated fat and sugar than lunches brought from home.

School lunch participation is associated with a lower body mass index (BMI) - school and child care meals help children maintain a healthy weight.

NSLP reduces food insecurity, which is linked to negative health, development and educational outcomes such as slower progress in math and reading and a higher likelihood of repeating a grade.

NSLP serves nearly 30 million students each school day in approximately 95,000 public and private schools nationwide.



Learn more at
schoolnutrition.org


**Feeding Bodies.
Fueling Minds.™**
**SCHOOL
NUTRITION
ASSOCIATION**

Key Sources:

Arteaga, Irma, and Colleen Heflin (2014). "Participation in the National School Lunch Program and food security: An analysis of transitions into kindergarten," *Children and Youth Services Review*, 47 (2014): 224-230.

Caruso, M.L. & Cullen, K.W. (2015). Quality and cost of student lunches brought from home. *JAMA Pediatrics*, 169(1), 86-90. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2014.2220

Condon, E. M., Crepinsek, M. K., & Fox, M. K. (2009). School meals: types of foods offered to and consumed by children at lunch and breakfast. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 109(2 Supplement 1), S67-S78.

Condon, Elizabeth, Susan Drilea, Carolyn Lichtenstein, James Mabli, Emily Madden, and Katherine Niland (2015). Diet Quality of American School Children by National School Lunch Participation Status: Data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 2005– 2010. Project Officer: Jenny Laster Genser. Prepared by Walter R. McDonald & Associates, Inc. and Mathematica Policy Research for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.

Cullen, K.W., and T.-A. Chen (2017). "The contribution of the USDA school breakfast and lunch program meals to student daily dietary intake," *Preventive Medicine Reports*, 5:82-85.

Farris, Alisha R. et al. (2014). Nutritional comparison of packed and school lunches in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten children following the implementation of the 2012-2013 National School Lunch Program standards. *Journal of Nutrition Education & Behavior*, 46(6), 621-625. doi:10.1016/j.jneb.2014.07.007

Gundersen, C., Kreider, B., & Pepper, J. (2012). The impact of the National School Lunch Program on child health: a nonparametric bounds analysis. *Journal of Econometrics*, 166, 79–91.

Huang, Jin, and Ellen Barnidge (2016). Low-income children's participation in the National School Lunch Program and household food insufficiency," *Social Science and Medicine*, 150: 8-14.

Johnston, C.A., Moreno, J.P., El-Mubasher, A. & Woehler, D. (2012). School lunches and lunches brought from home: A comparative analysis. *Childhood Obesity*, 8(4), 364-367. doi:10.1089/chi.2012.0012

Kimbro, R. T., & Rigby, E. (2010). Federal food policy and childhood obesity: a solution or part of the problem? *Health Affairs*, 29(3), 411–418.

Ralston, Katherine, Katie Treen, Alisha Coleman-Jensen, and Joanne Guthrie (2017). Children's Food Security and USDA Child Nutrition Programs, EIB-174, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service.

**For more information,
call (703) 824-3000 and ask for the
Government Affairs and Media Relations Center.**

Learn more at
schoolnutrition.org

Feeding Bodies.
Fueling Minds.™

