



The Benefits of Healthy School Lunches and How They Impact Performance

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Regardless of your age, healthy eating goes a long way. As adults, we know the feeling of sitting in a meeting and not being able to concentrate because we missed lunch. Now imagine a child who has also missed breakfast and is waiting for lunch.

Their concentration is off, and their energy and enthusiasm are lacking.

Providing children with three well-balanced meals a day is vital to their health and overall well-being. The benefits of healthy school lunches can go beyond the school environment. This happens more when children come from communities with food insecurities.

School meals have been the topic of conversation in communities and government. Some initiatives have given schools the option to address the [nutritional value of school meals](#). On the flip side, there have been challenges to those initiatives based on the cost of such programs.

Keep reading for more on the correlation between healthy school lunches and student performance.

Benefits of Healthy School Lunches are Outlined in the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act

[The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act \(HHFKA\)](#) is an initiative that was enacted into law to address the nutritional value in school meals. The goal of the act was to provide healthier alternatives to school lunches.

By doing so, children could learn about healthy eating. In turn, the information could lead to better food choices.

The program was integrated into schools during the 2012-13 school year. Addressing the issue on the educational level was attributed to kids receiving two of their three main meals at school.

Since the policy went into action, there have been numerous studies done to measure its effectiveness. For the most part, researchers agree the move has been beneficial. Healthy school lunch statistics support improved school performance.

On the downside, additional policies have been put into place removing mandatory requirements. If implementing HHFKA poses a financial hardship on school districts, they are not required to comply.

Ensure Kids Have at Least One Healthy Meal a Day

Some people believe that children can't learn if they haven't eaten. Schools that serve healthy lunches address this notion. Since school lunch and academic performance are interwoven, it is important that kids have the option of healthy food choices.

When it comes to students coming from populations dealing with food insecurities, schools want to help combat the problem. In doing so, they ensure these students have at least one healthy meal each day, during the school week.

These meals are shown to have impacted [the cognitive development of children](#).

Kids with food challenges at home see the correlation. If they recognize the school as a source of food, they will not want to miss a day. Responding in a positive manner to better food choices can positively impact their views on education.

Healthy Foods Boost the Immune System

Children are more susceptible to viral infections like the common cold. Their immune system isn't as developed as adults. Therefore, they are at greater risk of picking up germs in public places.

Schools are a breeding ground for germs that lead to these infections. One way to reduce the chances of getting a cold is by eating foods that boost the immune system. The healthier kids are, the fewer sicker days they will miss from school.

The benefits of healthy lunches that include vitamins C, E, and Omega 3 fatty acids will contribute to achieving this goal. There are countless fresh fruits and vegetables that contain these properties like strawberries, broccoli, and certain fish.

Instituting practices that improve the immune system of students reduces their health risks. Schools making the connection between what kids eat and their health need to serve healthier meals.

Key Nutrients Improve Concentration

In order for kids to concentrate on their schoolwork, they need a healthy brain. What we eat contributes to our brain function. Foods high in vitamins B, C, D3, and Magnesium help improve our concentration and productivity.

Most children can benefit from healthy food that improves academic performance. If the brain is focused kids are less likely to be distracted by other students and external forces.

Serving green beans and spinach along with fresh fruit gives students key nutrients. If your school also offers breakfast, oatmeal, and real eggs can get kids off to a good start.

What a child eats can also play a part in their level of creativity. Children who enjoy school perform well and are more engaged.

Produce a Better Attitude

The lack of food, as well as the types of food we eat, can have an adverse impact on our attitude. A student who is in a bad mood could be deficient in certain nutrients or simply hungry. Healthy food improves academic performance, and it also improves a student's attitude.

Eating lunch at the same time every day can positively impact a student's mood. Knowing that a hot, healthy lunch is on the horizon gives the student something to look forward to.

Schools should avoid sugar-infused foods high in carbohydrates. These items can give students a temporary boost of energy but shortly after they may become tired and cranky.

Healthy meals that keep them in a better mood have long-lasting effects on their overall performance.

Healthy Lunches Address Obesity

Other benefits of healthy school lunches are their impact on school-age obesity. Showing kids healthy alternatives will help them make better choices in their out-of-school food selections. Even if they only eat healthier during school, it can help control their weight.

Obesity can cause depression in some students, which carries over into their academic performance.

Serving healthier meals will decrease access to foods that are rich in calories and attribute to weight gain. Plus, removing junk food from schools reduces the temptation of unnecessary snacks.