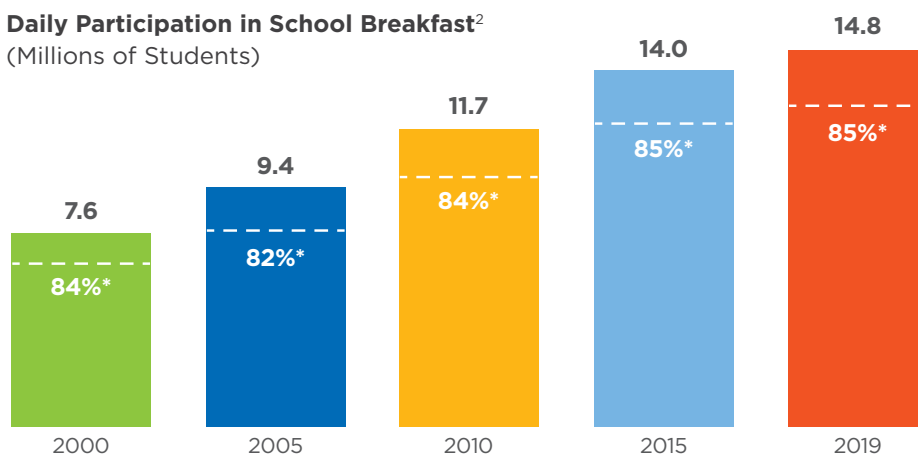


# School Breakfast Matters

## Reach of School Breakfast

School breakfast participation has doubled in just 20 years. By 2019, nearly 15 million children participated in school breakfast every day and 85% of them qualified for free or reduced price meals. One in seven children in the U.S. is food insecure<sup>1</sup> with much higher rates projected due to COVID-19. School breakfast reaches children who are most at-risk for food insecurity,<sup>2</sup> providing them vital nutrition to support mood, attention, and cognition.<sup>3</sup>

### Daily Participation in School Breakfast<sup>2</sup> (Millions of Students)



\*Percent of students who receive free or reduced price breakfast

## Looking at the Science

Breakfast is linked with numerous health and educational benefits — including improved academic performance, increased school attendance, more focused classroom behavior, and better dietary intake.<sup>4-7</sup>

### A systematic review of 45 breakfast studies<sup>8</sup> showed that:

Students who eat breakfast have positive outcomes, such as

- ▶ Improved math & memory
- ▶ Better satiety, and
- ▶ Increased attention in class.

Nutritionally vulnerable children demonstrated the most substantial outcomes on their

- ▶ Verbal skills,
- ▶ Memorization, and
- ▶ Matching tests.



## Breakfast & Brain Activation

Significantly higher brain activation is observed in the pre-frontal cortex when a nutritionally balanced breakfast is consumed. This area of the brain is involved in the control of emotion, mood, expectations, behavior, reward, decision-making, and cognition.<sup>9-10</sup> Thus, a child who is fed a nutritious breakfast is likely to be more calm, focused, organized, thoughtful and ready to learn.

**Call to Action: Help create awareness of the numerous health and educational benefits of school breakfast and encourage children to participate in the school breakfast program.**



## References:

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- <sup>4</sup> Anzman-Frasca S, Djang HC, Halmo MM, et al. [Estimating impacts of a breakfast in the classroom program on school outcomes](#). JAMA Pediatrics. 2015;169(1):71-77.
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- <sup>6</sup> [School meals are a back-to-school essential for students](#). FRAC ResearchWIRE. Summer 2019:1-4.
- <sup>7</sup> Sampasa-Kanyinga H, Hamilton HA. [Eating breakfast regularly is related to higher school connectedness and academic performance in Canadian middle- and high-school students](#). Public Health. 2017;145:120-123.
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- <sup>10</sup> Tataranni PA, Ois Gauthier J-F, Chen K, Uecker A, Bandy D, Salbe AD, Pratley RE, Lawson M, Reiman EM, Ravussin E. [Neuroanatomical correlates of hunger and satiation in humans using positron emission tomography](#). Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. 1999; 96: 4569-4574.