

# The School Breakfast Program: *A Smart Investment for Student Success*

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Too many children start their school day on an empty stomach. Whether they miss this vital meal simply due to a hectic morning schedule, or because there is not enough to eat at home, skipping breakfast comes at a high price for all students – research shows this habit negatively impacts academic performance.

Investing in school breakfast makes sense (and cents!). By contributing to improved student achievement and wellness, the federal School Breakfast Program (SBP) offers a worthy return on investment.

## **Research demonstrates that school breakfast consumption:**

- ✓ Boosts students' academic performance, grades and test scores
- ✓ Increases concentration, alertness, comprehension and memory
- ✓ Improves classroom behavior
- ✓ Reduces absenteeism and tardiness

## **School breakfast participation is also linked to:**

- ✓ A lower body mass index (BMI)
- ✓ Lower probability of being overweight or obese
- ✓ Improved diet quality



Federal nutrition standards ensure school breakfast offers nutritious choices including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein and low fat milk while meeting limits on calories, unhealthy fat and sodium.

*SBP serves 14.7 million students each school day in approximately 90,000 public and private schools nationwide.*



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

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



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