Healthier School Food fuels Children for Life

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PHA Conference, 5 September 2012
“Nag 5 removed, nutrition funding redirected..... Nutrition takes a back seat for schools”

“National Standards focusing on numeracy & literacy”

Schools focus on raising student achievement.....

Healthier school food helps raise student achievement!

SCHOOLS ARE AN IMPORTANT SETTING FOR INTERVENTION
Project Aims

- Summarise the evidence healthier food choices in the school setting impacts children’s:
  - Diet and nutrition outcomes
  - Education outcomes

- Disseminate evidence to encourage action from:
  - Schools
  - Community
  - Stakeholders
  - Government
Method & Findings

- Literature search of reviews and empirical studies - August 2001 - July 2011.
- Quantitative research studies in high income countries
- Randomised and non randomised design
- Primary and secondary school setting
- Participants included children 4-18 years

- 66 relevant studies
- 6 focused on education outcomes
- 60 focused on diet and nutrition outcomes
Key Findings: Education Outcomes

- Limited evidence to show healthier food choices in the school setting have a direct effect on education outcomes
- Partially due to poor study design

- UK studies showed the introduction of nutrient standards for school food menus contributed to:
  - Short-term observed learning behaviour
  - Children’s academic achievement
  - Improved School attendance
- Generalisability to N.Z school food environment is limited
New Zealand research, Quigley & Watts, 2005

Indirect relationship between Nutritional Status, School Attendance, Behaviour and Academic Performance
Take Home Message, Clinton et al, 2010

- “Improving nutritional status improves children’s physiological, psychological and social well being, increasing their ‘opportunity to learn’.
Key Findings: Diet & Nutrition Outcomes

- Good evidence comprehensive nutrition policies/guidelines are effective in improving school food environment.
- Must include all food available or consumed
- Supported by curriculum
- Supported by staff, parents and students.
Multicomponent Interventions

- Evidence shows the most successful school interventions on dietary behaviour are multifaceted and include:
  - School wide policies
  - Nutrition Education
  - Coordination between school food service and nutrition education
  - Family and Community Involvement
  - Evaluation
Hastings Intermediate: Fresh Tastes Cafe
Canteen Menu

- Chicken/ Vegetable Sushi (6pieces) $3.50
- Wraps (Chicken or Ham): $3.50
- Half Wrap (Chicken or Ham): $2.00
- Salad: $3.00
- Filled Roll: $2.50
- Sandwiches: $2.50
- Yoghurt: $1.00
- Macaroni Cheese: $3.50
- Spaghetti Bolognese: $3.00
- Calzone Pizza: $2.00
- Toasted Sandwiches: $2.50
- Hot Burrito: $3.50
- Chicken Burger: $4.00
- Soup and Bun: $1.50
- Calci-Yum: $1.50
Creating healthier nutrition environments for children and young people
fuelled4life & Facebook
WHAT'S ON THE MENU?

WELL, HON, WE'VE GOT SALADS, FRUIT AND WHOLE GRAINS, OR YOU CAN CHOOSE A LIFETIME OF OBESITY AND RELATED HEALTH PROBLEMS SUCH AS DIABETES, HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE AND HEART DISEASE...