



Child Nutrition Reauthorization

The American Heart Association's Position

National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs (NSLP and SBP)

- Protect and strengthen evidence-based school nutrition standards to ensure the health and wellbeing for all children and the success of the programs.
- Strengthen the sodium standards in the school nutrition standards to align with the updated sodium Dietary Reference Intake.
- Include added sugars in the nutrition standards for breakfast, lunch, and Smart Snacks.
- Make healthy school meals for all permanent.
- Increase investments in kitchen equipment and infrastructure that can help schools serve healthier meals.
- Increase investments in Farm-to-School programs.
- Increase the commodities allowance for school breakfast.
- Report on the technical assistance being provided to schools for sodium reduction.
- Release information on implementation of the sodium standards.

Fast Facts:

1. Prior to the pandemic, more than 99 percent of schools that participate in the NSLP were meeting the nutrition standards, up from 14 percent in 2009-2010.^{1,2}
2. Children who participate in the NSLP eat greater amounts of healthy foods and have an overall better-quality diet.³
3. More than 90 percent of school-age children consume too much sodium, a risk factor for high blood pressure and many other health problems.⁴ Children who eat school meals consume 26 percent of their sodium from cafeteria foods.⁵
4. Most schools exceed the Dietary Guidelines for Americans limit for added sugars at breakfast (92%) and lunch (69%).⁶
5. WIC served about 7.3 million participants per month in 2017, including almost half of all infants born in the United States.⁷

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

- Address a crucial gap in nutrition assistance for young children by extending WIC eligibility through age six.
- Permit states the option to certify infants for two years instead of one year, eliminating duplicative paperwork and encouraging families to continue to connect their children with WIC's nutrition supports.
- Extend eligibility for postpartum women to two years, building upon the program's nutrition support and efforts to improve diets.
- Increase the WIC's cash value voucher for fruits and vegetables to \$35 a month for women and children.

Child and Adult Care Food Program

- Continue to support implementation of the updated standards/meal pattern.
- Support more technical assistance through targeted CACFP grants through Team Nutrition.
- Invest in CACFP to increase participation.

Summer Food Service Program

- Update nutrition standards to align with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)

- Maintain the integrity of the FFVP by only allowing only fresh fruits and vegetables to be offered.

For more information and resources from the American Heart Association's policy research department and nutrition policy positions please visit: <https://www.heart.org/en/about-us/policy-research>.

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¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture. Percent of School Food Authorities (SFA) certified for the performance-based reimbursement as of June 2016. 2016. Retrieved from: https://fns-prod.azurespace.net/sites/default/files/cn/SFACert_FY16Q4.pdf. Accessed February 2019.

² U.S. Department of Agriculture. School Nutrition Dietary Assessment Study IV. 2012. Available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-nutrition-dietary-assessment-study-iv>. Accessed on February 2019.

³ Farris, AR et al. (2014). Nutritional comparisons of Packed and School Lunches in Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Children Following Implementation of 2012-2013 National School Lunch Program. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*. 46(6): 621-626.

⁴ Appel et al. (2015). Reducing Sodium Intake in Children: A Public Health Investment. *Journal of Clinical Hypertension*. 17-9; 657-662. Retrieved from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5034752/pdf/JCH-17-657.pdf>

⁵ Cogswell M, et al. (2014). Vital signs: sodium intake among U.S. school-aged children – 2009-2010. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. 63(36):789-797. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6336a3.htm>

⁶ Fox MK, Gearan EC, Schwartz C. (2021). Added Sugars in School Meals and Diets of School-Age Children. *Nutrients*. 13(2):471. <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu13020471>

⁷ U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2018). WIC Program. Retrieved from: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/wic-program/>. Accessed February 2019.