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| **Hard Facts**   * 18.5% of U.S. children are obese * School lunches vs. Home lunches:   -38.2% of students who eat school lunches are likely to be obese or overweight while only 24.7% of students who pack their lunch are likely to be obese or overweight.  -39.9% of students who ate school lunches were likely to have two servings of vegetables a day while 50.3% students were likely to have two servings of vegetables a day.   * New nutrition standards since the 2012-2013 school year required schools to increase whole grains, fruits, and vegetables served through the National School Lunch Program. | **So What?**   * Children who live in poverty are more vulnerable to environmental, educational, health, behavioral, and socioemotional difficulties. * They are also more vulnerable to safety risks, more likely to have cognitive difficulties, more likely to experience more years of unemployment, and complete fewer years of school. * 2 million students are receiving free lunches (children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the poverty level are eligible). * 5 million students are receiving reduced- price lunches (children from families with incomes between 140 percent and 185 percent of the poverty level are eligible). * 7 million students pay full price (School districts set their own prices for paid meals). * 19.2 million students are receiving free lunches due to their socioeconomic status, school lunch could be their only opportunity for a nutritious meal each day. | **Issues**   * Test scores were improved when students were getting a healthier lunch. The quantity of food does not matter it is the quality that matters. * Mental and behavioral problems can be linked to unhealthy nutrition and poor eating habits. * There is a direct link between not having the motivation necessary for school success and getting proper nutrition. * Students that eat unhealthy foods are more likely to become sick, which can lead to missing school and falling behind. |

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| **Healthy School Lunches** | **Benefits**   * Healthy school lunches provide sound nutrition to establish a lifetime of healthy habits. * Healthy school lunches also provide the energy students need for the rest of their busy day. * If you want to do your best in school, a healthy diet can improve your performance in school's social, physical and mental areas. * Getting adequate protein, vitamins and minerals can prevent students from illness and missing out on daily lessons. * Healthy eating has been linked to better grades, memory, increasing alertness, faster information processing, and improved health. | **How can you help?**     * Support parents and caregivers to better support children. * Support and advocate for family-supportive work policies. * Support families through tax policy. * Donate to foundations that support healthy school lunches. * Websites:   -healtyschoolfood.networkforgood.com  -cspinet.org  -centerforgreenschools.org  -actionforhealthykids.org |