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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 |