

Translating Research For Federal Food And Nutrition Policy: The Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act

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What Researchers Do

(What I Do)

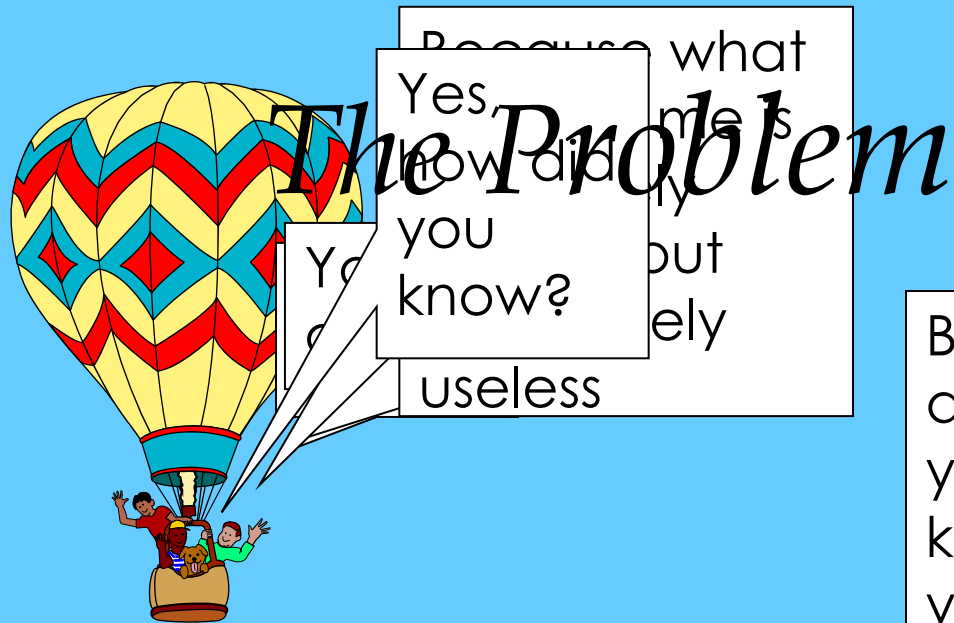


- Use evidence-based research to inform policies that improve health and wellbeing
- Run analyses from public-use datasets
- Provide estimates/statistics for infographics
- Evaluate the adequacy of studies that are being cited by other organizations
- Determine the validity of statements made from opposing stakeholders

What Policymakers Do



- Policymakers are individuals elected or appointed to office at some level of government
 - Includes executive branch chiefs of staff and staff assistants
- Sell, argue, and advocate for specific interest issues
 - Interests are often shorter term and keyed to election cycles
- Make decisions that are often the result of compromise



Because you don't know where you are, you don't know where you're going, and now you're blaming me



What is policy?

- Policies are “laws, regulations, formal and informal rules and understandings that are adopted on a collective basis to guide individual and collective behavior”



What do policy makers want/need from researchers?

- Policymakers want answers to the following questions:
 1. Is there a problem (what fuels it)?
 2. Do we know how to fix it (intervention)?
 3. How much will it cost (financially, politically)?

Translating Research to Policy: The Challenges

1. Poor timing
2. Ambiguous findings
3. Balancing objectivity and advocacy
4. Lack of relevant data
5. Mismatch of randomized thinking with nonrandom problems

Translating Research to Policy: The Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act of 2015



Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010

- To combat rising childhood obesity rates Congress passed the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act (HHFKA) of 2010
- HHFKA developed stronger school nutrition standards
- Was unanimously supported in the Senate and received bipartisan support in the House

School Nutrition Standards Before and After HHFKA Implementation

School Standard	Before HHFKA	After HHFKA
Fruits and vegetables (F&V)	Minimum amount of F&V required, but no specifications to what type served	Increase the amount and variety of F&V served; students required to select ½ serving of F&V in order for school to receive federal reimbursement for meal
Whole-grain products	No requirements; schools encouraged to serve whole-grain products	All grains served must be whole grain rich (50% whole grains)
Milk	No requirements for milk options	Milk must be lower-fat, such as fat-free or low-fat
Sodium limits	No requirements	Lowered gradually in 3 phases over : Target 1, Target 2, and Target 3
Competitive foods	No requirements, with the exception of “foods of minimal nutritional value”	Items must contain >50% whole grains OR have them as the 1st ingredient OR have the 1st ingredient be fruits, vegetables, dairy or protein OR be a combination food that contains at least ¼ cup fruit and/or vegetable

After HHFKA Implementation...

NUTRITION

Why Some Schools Are Saying 'No Thanks' to the School-Lunch Program

By Alexandra Sifferlin @acsifferlin | Aug. 29, 2013 | 223 Comments



Brent smith @bhambrent · 18 Dec 2015

Eating lunch with my 1st grader...this is \$4.50!?! #thanksmichelleobama



CONGRESS BLOG

THE HILL'S FORUM FOR LAWMAKERS AND POLICY PROFESSIONALS

Congress Blog 

Congress Blog feed 

September 17, 2015, 12:30 pm

Should Congress trash Michelle Obama's lunch program?

By Michelle Minton

 355    

COMMENTS 15



Arguments for & against HHFKA

Arguments for
HHFKA

Arguments
Against
HHFKA

Better food = better
health

"Smart Lunchroom
Design" =
increased revenue

NSLP participation
increases

Plate waste was an
issue before HHFKA

Loss of revenue

NSLP participation
decreases

Plate waste



Using Research to Guide Policy: Lessons from the Lunchroom

- Dietary habits of kids enrolled in free & reduced price (FRP) meal programs vs. those not enrolled
- 5th grade FRP-meal participants consumed F&Vs 3 more times/week than non-participants
- 8th grade FRP-meal participants consumed F&V 1.5 more times/week than non-participants
- FRP-meal participants consumed sugary beverages & fast food more often than non-participants—on average, 1 more time/week than non-FRP participants
- FRP participants more likely to be overweight than non-FRP participants



Lessons from the Lunchroom: Policy Recommendations

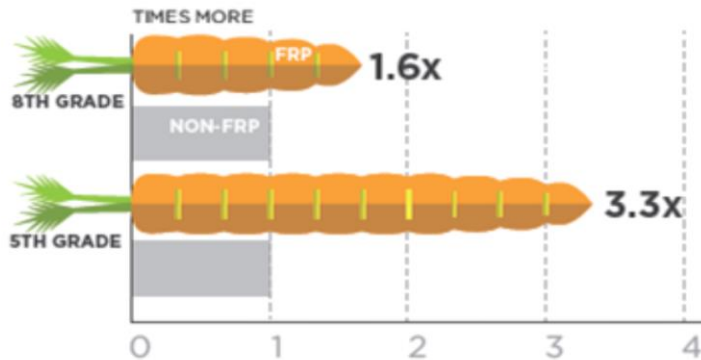
- Protect gains made in 2010
- Increase the federal meal reimbursement rate
- Improve nutrition education
- Finance school cafeteria kitchen equipment
- Prioritize fruits and vegetables
- Not allow politics to trump science

Lessons from the Lunchroom: Challenges

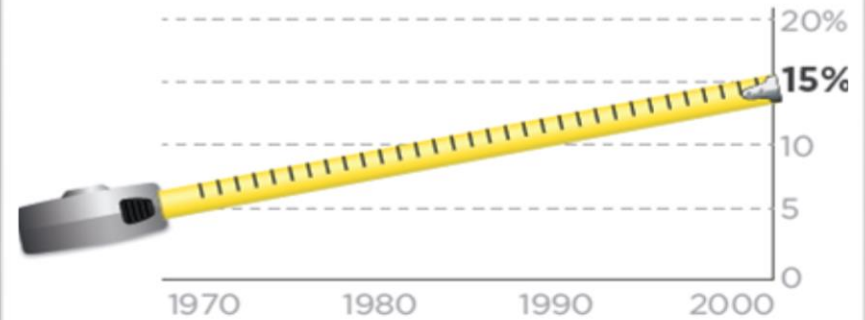
- Lack of relevant data
 - Used data from 2004–2007 (before HHFKA implementation)
- Ambiguous findings
 - Mixed results on eating patterns for children enrolled in FRP compared to non FRP-meal participants
- Poor timing
 - Report released in February 2015 with the expectation that bill would be reauthorized before September 30, 2015 deadline

Research and Infographics

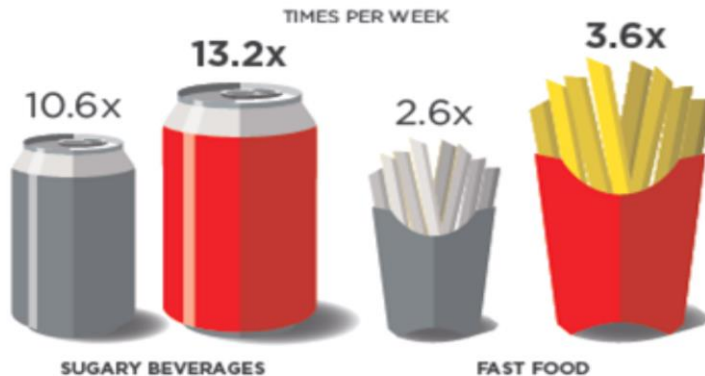
Students receiving **free or reduced price (FRP) school meals** in 2004–2007 ate **more fruits and vegetables** than non-FRP students.



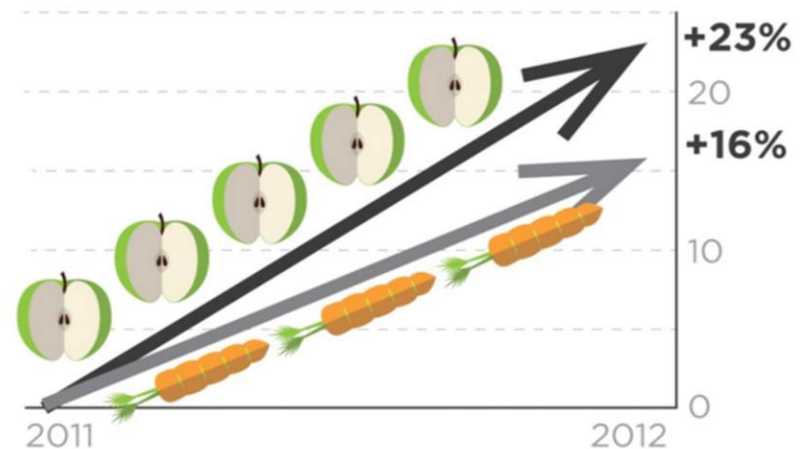
Childhood obesity **nearly tripled** between 1970 and 2000.



FRP students eat more healthy foods in school. They also eat **more unhealthy foods everywhere...**



Stronger nutrition standards in the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 **increased fruit and vegetable consumption at school.**



Researcher Turned Blogger?



School Lunch: Food Waste or Clean Plates?

March 9, 2015 4:50 PM EDT

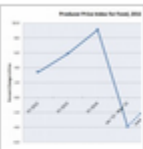
If you give kids more fruits and vegetables, do you get less food waste? This is a key question facing Congress as it gears up to reauthorize the National School Lunch Program. A new study from the University of Connecticut suggests the answer is yes.



School Lunch Costs: What the Kiwi Are They Talking About?

April 21, 2015 11:30 AM EDT

Last week, Congress hosted the first of several [hearings](#) about the upcoming Child Nutrition Reauthorization act. This act includes the [National School Lunch Program](#), which is reauthorized every five years. In 2010, a bipartisan Congress passed the Healthy Hunger-Free Act (FHCA)—which brought nutrition standards for schools into line with federal dietary guidelines. As implemented by the Department of Agriculture (USDA), the law also requires schools to serve at least 1/2 cup of fruits and vegetables. [Read more >](#)



School Lunch: Have Healthier Standards Driven Up Food Costs?

July 10, 2015 3:53 PM EDT

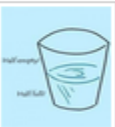
Yesterday, my colleague [Karen Perry Stillerman](#) debuted our [blog series](#) on the School Nutrition Association's campaign for why Congress needs to roll back healthier school food standards.



School Lunch: The Half Truth about Whole Grains

May 7, 2015 9:51 AM EDT

As the debate over school lunch nutrition standards continues in Congress, I've heard a number of [claims](#) that don't ring true. Today I'll focus on one argument I've been hearing about the challenge of getting more whole grains into children's lunches. [Read more >](#)



National School Lunch Program: Glass Half Empty or Half Full?

March 19, 2015 5:44 PM EDT

A March 13 [article](#) in *U.S. News & World Report* on the federal school nutrition standards barely gets a passing grade. Beyond misinterpreting the law, the article offers a narrow, glass-half-empty perspective for readers. For an increasingly politicized debate involving our nation's children, it's necessary to look at all the evidence. [Read more >](#)

Update: Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act of 2015

- Senate Agriculture Committee will vote tomorrow on Child Nutrition Reauthorization (CNR) Act
- The new bill is called “Improving Child Nutrition Integrity and Access Act of 2016”
- Generally, nutrition standards from 2010 remain intact, except for the following:
 - HFFKA rules requiring all grains be 100% whole grain rich has been scaled back to 80% whole grain rich HHFKA rules required all grains served to be “whole grain rich”
 - Schools get more time to implement sodium Target 2 limits, and there is a hold on the final sodium target limits until further research
- Public health advocates will likely call CNR a win!

Questions?

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