

Nutrition and Academic Success

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The role of nutrition in academic success

Academic success means different things to different people. For one person it might mean good grades, but to another it might mean finishing school with the tools needed to be a productive member of society. However you choose to define it, good nutrition can be an important factor because it contributes to a student's ability to learn.

Turn the page to learn more about nutrition and academic success!



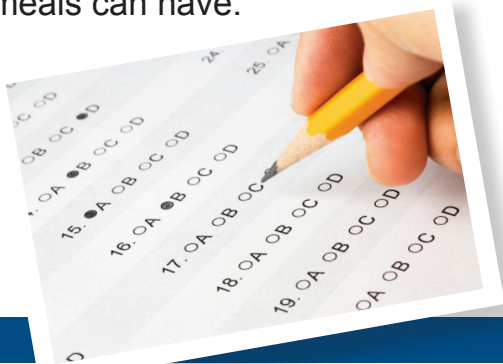
Did you know?

Iron deficiency can make it harder for children to learn.



Healthy Foods and Learning

We know that healthy meals help students learn, but how? First, they provide the nutrients students need to fuel their brains and bodies. Hungry students may be distracted while well-fed students are more likely to show up ready to learn. Healthy eating may even lead to better tests scores! Of course, school breakfast and lunch are a great way for students to get the healthy foods they need to learn. Last year, over five billion school lunches and over two billion school breakfasts were served nationwide. That's a lot of meals served to kids! It just goes to show how much of an impact school meals can have.



Spotlight on Iron and Zinc

Iron is one of many nutrients that are important for learning. Not enough iron in the diet can lead to anemia. Anemia means that red blood cells aren't able to move enough oxygen around in the blood. Some of the symptoms of anemia are lightheadedness, muscle weakness, and fainting, which can make it harder for students to learn.

Zinc is another nutrient than can have an impact on student success, but for a different reason. When a person's diet doesn't have enough zinc, this might result in their immune system not working as well as it could. When that happens to a student, it could lead to more illnesses and missed days of school.

Encourage students to choose foods that are good sources of these nutrients, including meat, beans, and dark green veggies for iron, and whole grains, nuts, and legumes for zinc.

Getting Your Message Out

Sharing how school meals can contribute to student health, well-being, and academic success is one way to help promote your program. Different members of the school community will have different priorities. That's why it's important to tailor your message when promoting school meals. For example, you might explain

to teachers that school meals improve concentration during class time. But for parents, you might want to tell them about how school meals contain nutrients that help students learn. Being able to share the connection between nutrition and academic success can help you advocate for your school meal program.

Test your knowledge with the nutrition and academic success quiz!

1. Which of these nutrients is important in preventing anemia?
 - a. Iron
 - b. Carbohydrates
 - c. Vitamin D
 - d. Thiamin
2. How many lunches were served in the National School Lunch Program last year?
 - a. 200,000
 - b. 8 million
 - c. 50 million
 - d. 5 billion
3. True or false: Nuts are a source of zinc.
 True
 False



The Results are In!

If you got all three right:

You really know the connection between nutrition and academic success!

If you got two right:

You're on the right track! Try finding the information you missed in the other pages of the newsletter to become a nutrition master.

If you got one or less right:

It just means you have more chances to learn! Try reading through this newsletter again to learn more about what you missed.

Check your answers at the bottom of the page!

1. a; 2. d; 3. True