

Eat Right

Food, Nutrition and Health Tips from Kids Eat Right

Academic Success

What every administrator, educator, and parent should know about academic success and the school wellness environment



Every school wants academic success for its students. A healthy school environment is key to students reaching their full potential, both in learning and in wellness.

Nutrition and physical activity can affect¹:

- Attendance
- Test scores
- Concentration
- Behavior
- Long-term health

Want to decrease absenteeism?

Encourage students to eat school breakfast. Students who eat breakfast at school are tardy or absent less often.²

Good Nutrition Helps Students Learn

Students who eat healthier **perform better** in school.¹ A wide variety of nutrients are important for normal childhood growth and development.³

The best place to start for academic success is breakfast.¹

As we have all heard, breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Unfortunately, many kids skip breakfast. In a recent survey, 62% of students skipped breakfast at least once in seven days prior, and 13% of students skipped breakfast on all seven days.^{3,4}

Skipping breakfast can decrease test scores, even in well-nourished, higher income students.⁵

Students who **eat breakfast** have **better attendance rates and score higher on tests**. Students who eat **school breakfast** have **fewer nurses' office visits and improved behavior**.⁶

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Physical Activity Helps Kids Learn

Physical activity helps improve⁷:

- Brain development
- Grades
- Learning
- Classroom behaviors

Even short bursts of physical activity in the classroom help improve⁸:

- Problem-solving skills
- Attitudes
- Academic achievement
- Behavior

Want better test scores? Increase physical activity time!

Research shows that students who are **more physically active** during school and on weekends excel! They score **higher on reading, math, and spelling standardized tests.**⁹

Help improve your school's wellness environment:

- Be a school wellness champion! Promote access to healthy food choices, increased physical activity time and nutrition education at school.
- Share information about the link between nutrition, physical activity, and academic success with others leaders in your district.
- Establish a wellness committee/council.

True or False?

- Q:** To increase test scores, students need more academic time and less physical activity time.
- A:** False. Research shows that more PE time actually may increase test scores, and does not decrease them. Increased recess time shows improved problem-solving skills, attitudes, and academic behavior. Recent studies show that students need more physical activity and playtime to develop the problem-solving part of the brain.¹⁰

Implement a revised wellness policy to meet the requirement of the 2010 Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act.

- Involve students in school wellness decisions and activities.
- Encourage and expand school breakfast. Options include service outside the cafeteria, like breakfast in the classroom or grab-n-go breakfast after the bell.
- Ensure all foods served or sold at school are healthy and appealing to students. Starting in the 2014–15 school year, all items sold during the school day will have to meet USDA's Smart Snacks in School Rule.

For tips, articles, recipes and videos to help you shop smart, cook healthy and eat right, visit: www.kidseatright.org

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