

**Title of Intervention:** Increasing children's selection of low-fat foods during school lunch

**Intervention Strategies:** Campaigns and Promotions, Environments and Policies

**Purpose of the Intervention:** To increase selection of low-fat foods in school lunches

**Population:** Elementary school children and their parents

**Setting:** Elementary schools of the Bellevue (Washington) School District; school-based

**Partners:** None mentioned

**Intervention Description:**

- Campaigns and Promotions: A one-time mailing containing a labeled menu, Growing Up Healthy: Fat, Cholesterol, and More pamphlet and a one-page letter describing the availability of low-fat items was sent to parents in the intervention group. The monthly menus, which were usually brought home by the child, were modified in two ways to emphasize the low-fat entrees. The low-fat entrees were highlighted in bold type and the fat content of both daily entrees was listed.
- Environments and Policies: One of the two daily lunch options was low in fat.

**Theory:** Social Cognitive Theory

**Resources Required:**

- Staff/Volunteers: Not mentioned
- Training: Not mentioned
- Technology: Not mentioned
- Space: Not mentioned
- Budget: Not mentioned
- Intervention: Lunch menus, informational pamphlets, letters to parents, low-fat food options
- Evaluation: Individuals to call parents, lunch counts

**Evaluation:**

- Design: Randomized controlled trial
- Methods and Measures:
  - Kitchen order sheets to count the number of low-fat entrees ordered each day
  - Follow-up telephone survey to assess the recall and impact of the intervention on parents

**Outcomes:**

- Short Term Impact: A majority of parents remembered receiving the mailing and that low-fat entrée options were available. However, only a small number of parents asked children to choose the low-fat entrée option.
- Long Term Impact: There was an increase in low-fat entrée selection at schools that received the intervention compared to schools that did not.

**Maintenance:** Not mentioned

**Lessons Learned:** Dietary interventions involving the National School Lunch Program have the potential to impact a large number of children. An intervention can prove effective even if it only produces seemingly small changes in the child's diet, as long as these changes can be continued lifelong. Future work might focus on increasing parents' confidence to change their children's eating behavior rather than on increasing parents' knowledge about the relationship between diet and health.

**Citation(s):**

Whitaker, R. C., J. A. Wright, et al. (1994). "Randomized intervention to increase children's selection of low-fat foods in school lunches." *J Pediatr* 125(4): 535-40.