

Editor's Note

Please note that this study was published before the implementation of Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, which went into effect during the 2012-13 school year, and its provision for Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards for Competitive Food in Schools, implemented during the 2014-15 school year. As such, certain research may not be relevant today.

The Journal of Child Nutrition & Management is a refereed electronic journal providing communication among child nutrition professionals, staff working in state and federal agencies administering child nutrition programs, school administrators, educators, researchers, university students, individuals involved in public policy, industry members with an interest in child nutrition, and others.

In addition to research articles on significant issues relating to child nutrition programs, three other categories of articles are encouraged: *commentaries* expressing opinions on a timely subjects, to stimulates thought, challenge the status quo, and provide suggestions for action or areas for research; *current issues* providing a review of literature or a discussion of a subject of current interest or controversy; *practical solutions* describing a problem or challenge and discussing how the problem was solved, leading to enhanced operational effectiveness and efficiency, or offering suggestions for possible future research.

In this fall issue, an example of the current issues category is provided by Rosen and colleagues. Useful information is provided on the use of whole-grain pasta in school nutrition programs. Findings related to the incorporation of pasta products in school meals are presented, as a result of interviews and focus groups with school nutrition professionals addressing the selection, preparation, and service of pasta products. The authors discuss the need for increased availability of quality, whole-grain pasta products in schools, in addition to the communication of preparation methods for whole-grain versus refined-grain pasta products in school settings.

Research contributions in this issue provide practical information as a result of studies in child care, elementary, and middles school settings. Child nutrition programs studied include the School Breakfast Program, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), and the offer versus serve component of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). Other studies address standards for foods offered in vending machines and nutrition education programs for preschool-aged children.

Sabol and colleagues used student and parent focus groups to examine the factors impacting participation in the school breakfast program. The belief that breakfast is important emerged as a positive factor while dislike of or sensitivity to the foods offered, timing and scheduling, cost of the school breakfasts and stigma were identified as factors negatively impacting participation in the school breakfast program.

Elementary school students participating in the NSLP have a higher intake of fruits and vegetables than nonparticipants. However, their intake still remains below national recommendations. One promising area to improve children's dietary habits is the investigation and identification of the barriers to fruit and vegetable consumption. Goggans and colleagues addressed this issue by using plate waste methodology to determine whether fruit and vegetable consumption was significantly different among children participating in the NSLP offer versus serve option compared to the serve only option. Although no differences were observed in fruit and vegetable consumption, less plate waste was measured in the school using offer versus serve compared to the school not using this option.

Fruit and vegetable consumption was also the theme of the study by Bai and colleagues. Facilitators and challenges to the successful implementation of the FFVP were determined in one New Jersey elementary school. Analysis of responses by program stakeholders provided evidence that morning snack time, role-modeling by teachers, and discussion of the snack served were factors contributing to program success. An insufficient number of volunteers, funding, coordination of nutrition education among FFVP partners, and ineffective communication between families and school staff were challenges to FFVP implementation. The authors suggest that engaging children in a successful FFVP may encourage and sustain healthy eating.

Hartstein and colleagues report on the impact of the middle school-based HEALTHY study on intervention school vending machine offerings. Using a randomized control intervention study design, these authors report that more successful adherence to beverage and snack nutrition goals was achieved in the intervention schools. While the effect of vending machines changes on students' dietary intake, energy balance, and growth is not known, it is clear that healthier snack options may be offered in school vending machines.

As we work towards improving the dietary intake of children, the importance of nutrition education at an early age is addressed by Scherr and colleagues. A project resulting in nutrition education competencies and a competency-based resource guide for preschool-aged children is described. Child care center staff and care home providers found the resources valuable in integrating nutrition-related lessons in their daily routines, and also reported the resources provided an opportunity for parental involvement in nutrition education.

This issue also includes research abstracts from the 2011 School Nutrition Association Annual National Conference and Nettles' summary of child nutrition research conducted by the National Food Service Management Institute, providing valuable insight into current trends and issues. In addition we acknowledge the reviewers who volunteered their time and expertise to provide thoughtful feedback on manuscripts to authors and the editor.

This issue marks the transition of Journal editors. We would like to acknowledge the many contributions of Alice Jo Rainville, PhD, RD, CHE, SNS, and her team at Eastern Michigan University. Their expertise and commitment to excellence was evident in their assistance as the Journal office was moved to the University of California at Davis. We also acknowledge the contributions of all past editors who helped to shape this publication, since its first issue in the fall of 1977.

We encourage researchers, educators and practitioners to take advantage of this Journal as a vehicle for advancing the field of child nutrition, communicating and disseminating new approaches that have been tested through scientific methodologies. In addition, we invite you to use any of the manuscript categories described above to contribute to Journal contents. We also encourage you to contact us if you are interested in serving as a manuscript reviewer, or if you have suggestions and feedback relating to the Journal.

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