

## 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.*

School nutrition programs have been recently highlighted in the news and on national television programs. Peer-reviewed articles and data from *The Journal of Child Nutrition and Management* can assist school nutrition professionals and researchers in responding to critics and supporters of school nutrition programs. This issue covers a wide range of topics from school gardens to food preferences. The articles address important issues in managing nutrition programs for children of all ages including high school students, elementary school students, and children in child care centers.

Now that spring is here, we think of gardening; Oxenham and King have described the role of school gardens as a strategy for increasing fruit and vegetable consumption. They also provide tips and recommendations for implementation of school gardening programs.

Cashman and colleagues explored food consumption among elementary school children and found that Caucasian children had better consumption patterns than Hispanic children. They concluded that school nutrition professionals can provide familiar nutritious meals by surveying students, gathering recipes from parents, and allowing students to be involved in selecting new menu items. Adjusting school schedules and providing nutrition education can also improve consumption patterns.

Researchers from the University of Kansas designed two studies to determine the effects of visible cheese on the consumption of fruits, vegetables, and whole grain foods by middle school students. The addition of cheese in various forms (slices, shredded, and cubed) was well received by middle school students and resulted in an increased consumption of fruits, vegetables, and whole grain foods.

Peterson conducted a descriptive analysis of supply factors and prices for USDA Foods in the National School Lunch Programs using price and supply consistency of USDA Foods from the school district perspective. She recommended that school districts consider monitoring more closely the commodity and commercial supply outcomes in their local areas to facilitate informed food purchase decisions.

Asperin and colleagues developed and validated a survey that will enable school nutrition directors and managers to identify and address issues affecting the non-participation of high school students in the National School Lunch Program. Their research will assist school nutrition professionals in identifying opportunities to serve nutritious meals to high school students.

Lofton and Carr identified perceptions, practices, and training needs of child care center directors in creating and maintaining wellness environments in child care centers. Directors surveyed rated opportunities for active play, healthy foods, and safety as the most important components of a wellness environment. This research provides a foundation for the development of a best practice resource to assist child care center professionals in implementing or assessing wellness initiatives.

Molaison and Nettles determined the prevalence of special food and nutrition needs in school nutrition programs. As the prevalence of food allergies continue to increase, both district-level and school-level school nutrition employees will need to be trained on appropriate foods to be avoided.

Their research will assist school nutrition directors and managers to prepare for the issues they will face and take action in their roles in meeting the special needs of children in the program.

This issue also includes Endahl's summary of child nutrition research conducted by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service. I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Amber King, MS, RD, assistant editor, and Kyunghee Choi, MS, RD, copy editor, both from Eastern Michigan University. They have

contributed their expertise to ensure the continued success of the Journal. I look forward to your feedback on the Journal.

**Alice Jo Rainville, PhD, RD, CHE, SNS  
Editor**