



Q: What does this research tell us that we didn't know before? (Give all three answers in bold)

Answer 1: There is no “safe” level of inadequate nutrition for healthy, growing children.

Supporting facts

- This is based on human biology - bodies conserve the limited food energy that is available. First priority is for critical organ functions, then growth. The last *biological* priority is for social activity and learning.
- Short term nutritional deficiencies – a missed breakfast, an inadequate lunch—impair children's ability to function and learn.
- The school breakfast program helps low-income students to learn, reduces sick time and absenteeism, and enables appropriate classroom behavior.

Answer 2: Failure to fully utilize the federally-funded school breakfast program has substantial consequences for the individual students, society and the nation's economy.

Supporting facts

- 10 million eligible children do not receive a school breakfast despite funding being available and infrastructure being in place.
- Full utilization of the school breakfast program represents a key way to protect these children and to get a better return on educational investments as well.
- Scientific evidence indicates that doing so would be a win for children and a win for the nation.

Answer 3: When School children go hungry it jeopardizes the nation's investment in public education.

Supporting facts

- Failure to fully implement the school breakfast program contributes to the cycle of hunger and poverty in America.
- Hungry children robbed of their natural potential, including lost knowledge, brainpower and overall productivity.
- The longer and more severe the hunger is, the greater the loss and the greater the cost to our country.

Q: What are the specific benefits of a school breakfast?

1. Significantly improves students' cognitive or mental abilities, enabling them to be more alert, pay better attention, and to do better in terms of reading, math and other standardized test scores.
2. Children who get breakfast at school are sick less often, have fewer problems associated with hunger, such as dizziness, lethargy, stomach- and earaches, and do significantly better than their peers (who do not get a school breakfast) in terms of cooperation, discipline and inter-personal behaviors.

Q: How many children would benefit from a school breakfast that they are currently not getting?

1. 10 million eligible low income children do not receive a school breakfast despite funding being available and infrastructure being in place
2. Of the over 101,000 schools in America, 1 in 7 (15,000) do not participate in the school breakfast program.
3. The program is fully funded - congress provides reimbursement to local school districts who offer the program.
4. The infrastructure, facilities and equipment are all in place - virtually all school districts in the nation already offer the school lunch program.

Q: What are the consequences FOR THE STUDENTS of the failure to fully utilize the federally-funded school breakfast program?

- Significant negative impact on students' cognitive or mental abilities
- Prevents them from being alert and paying attention
- Hungry students:
 - do worse on reading, math and other tests
 - are sick more often
 - have more medical problems (dizziness, lethargy, stomach- and earaches)
 - have trouble with cooperation, discipline and inter-personal behaviors as a result of being hungry.

Q: What are the FINANCIAL consequences of the failure to fully utilize the federally-funded school breakfast program?

- Our educational dollars are not being maximized for these 10 million students; or the others in the classroom are impacted by slower teaching in order to assist hungry students and/or disruptive behavior by hungry students.
- Our failure to implement the school breakfast program is not only a detriment to the low income students
 - Nearly \$10 billion of the estimated \$90 billion America pays annually due to hunger are due to the costs of poorer education-related outcomes such as greater absenteeism and more grade retention related to hunger.
 - More than \$65 billion of the \$90 billion total is paid for poorer health and psychosocial dysfunction.

Q: What are the recommendations that come from this study?

- Fully implement the school breakfast program in districts across the country.
 - Doing so is one of the more cost-efficient things the nation can do to break the cycle of hunger and poverty

Q: What is the existing scientific evidence?

A: The combined and quite consistent message of more than 100 published research articles represents an undeniable body of evidence.

Q: Who conducted the study?

1. Dr. J. Larry Brown, Harvard School of Public Health
2. Dr. William H. Beardslee, Harvard Medical School
3. Dr. Deborah Prothrow-Stith, Harvard School of Public Health

Conducted this study on behalf of the Sodexo Foundation as part of its ongoing research into finding and addressing the root causes of hunger and poverty in America.

Q: What is the Sodexo Foundation?

The Sodexo Foundation (www.SodexoFoundation.org) is the charitable arm of Sodexo, Inc. (www.sodexoUSA.com) and is committed to being a driving and creative force that contributes to a hunger-free nation. The Sodexo Foundation has made more than \$11 million in grants to fight hunger and its root causes since its inception in 1999.

The Sodexo Foundation supports innovative programs to help children and families in the United States who are battling problems such as poverty, unemployment, lack of education, and food insecurity. Programs that the Foundation supports range from nutrition programs for children to job training for adults and affordable housing for families.

Q: Why does the Sodexo Foundation support research?

Raising awareness of the issues of hunger, poverty and their impact on the American people through scholarly research and public debate is a primary goal for the Sodexo Foundation in its mission to end hunger in America.

Q: What other research has the Sodexo Foundation supported?

This study is the third in a series sponsored by the Sodexo Foundation and conducted by the Center for Poverty and Hunger. The prior studies focused on the ECONOMIC IMPACT OF HUNGER (2007) and INNOVATIVE STATE POLICIES TO REDUCE POVERTY AND EXPAND THE MIDDLE CLASS (2005).