

Feed Your Brain: For Academic Success

Healthy students do better at all levels of academic achievement: academic performance, education behavior, and cognitive skills and attitudes.¹ Healthy eating habits are a critical component of overall health and support the well-being of the whole child—physically, mentally and emotionally.



What are healthy eating habits? There are many, including:

- **Eating breakfast**—breakfast, particularly school breakfast, has been linked to *higher academic grades and standardized test scores, reduced absenteeism, and improved cognitive performance* (like concentration, alertness, comprehension and memory).¹
- **Consuming a balanced diet rich in vegetables and fruits**—higher diet quality is associated with *increased academic performance*.²
- **Drinking water, and limiting sugary drinks**—proper hydration may *improve cognitive function* in children. Hydrating with water instead of sugary drinks can reduce risk of obesity, heart disease, tooth decay and other health conditions.³

How can your school support healthy eating habits? There are many ways!

- Promote school breakfast and lunch to students and parents.
- Encourage healthier foods at classroom celebrations, school events and concession stands.
- Discourage food rewards, food fundraising and junk-food marketing.
- Allow access to free drinking water before, during and after the school day.
- Form a wellness council that includes administrators, teachers, the school nurse, parents, students and community members.

References:

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Health and Academic Success*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2014.
2. Diet Quality Reference: Florence MD, Asbridge M, Veugelers PJ. Diet quality and academic performance. *Journal of School Health*. 2008;78(4):209-215.
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Increasing Access to Drinking Water in Schools*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2014.