

Child Nutrition Programs Reauthorization

Commonly Asked Questions from Capitol Hill

Q: How did the Academy develop recommendations for child nutrition programs' reauthorization?

A: The Academy called on the expertise of several dietetic practice groups including Public Health Community Nutrition, Pediatric Nutrition, Hunger and Environmental Nutrition and School Nutrition Services to nominate member experts. In addition, other members were recruited for their specific contributions to this issue, like food insecurity and child nutrition programs research.

Q: How many children and adults does this bill affect?

A: The purpose of all child nutrition programs is to reduce food insecurity and increase diet quality for our country's children. Currently, 15.8 million children, or 22%, of families in this country are food-insecure. This puts these families at risk for increased chronic disease and children's poor performance in school.

Current reach of Child Nutrition Programs:

- Summer Meals : 2.4 million children
- WIC : 8.0 million children and mothers
- School Lunch : 30 million+ children
- School Breakfast: 14 million children
- Child and Adult Care Food Program: 3.3 million children
- Farm to School: 23.6 million children.

Q: How often does Congress reauthorize these child nutrition programs?

A: These programs must be reauthorized, or debated and allowed to continue, on a five-year cycle. The last reauthorization was in 2010 with the historic Healthy, Hunger- Free Kids Act. This reauthorization is about a year behind schedule.

Q: I heard that schools do not like these changes in 2010 and most schools cannot implement these changes. Is this true?

A: Currently 98% of schools are meeting nutrition standards, and the Academy is very proud of our school nutrition directors who continue to find innovative ways to make healthy appealing meals. If you take a look at the Facebook or Twitter page School Meals that Rock you will see photos from around the country of a the fabulous meals that school nutrition directors are providing for students.

Q: How do your recommendations for child nutrition programs address our rising debt?

A: These programs are an investment in our future. Children test scores are higher when they are fed healthy foods, which leads to healthier adults. These programs can help build healthy habits that will last into adulthood, and decrease costs associated with diet-related chronic disease.

Q: What are some of the provision in these new Senate and the House bills that match the Academy’s recommendations?

SENATE ONLY

Provision	Benefits
Includes a review of nutrition education programming within child nutrition programs	Will provide a comprehensive view and dissemination of best practices in nutrition education programming coordination.
Allows children who are not enrolled in all-day kindergarten to be eligible for WIC up to age 6 and certifies infants in the WIC program for two years.	Supports the WIC program as an effective health and nutrition program that continues to examine new ways to help streamline administration, while at the same time ensuring children have access to this program during a time that is critical to growth and development.
Serves an extra snack to children who are in child care longer than 9 hours.	Eases working families’ minds knowing their children will receive proper nourishment as parents finish their full work day.
Provides increased funding and support for the Farm to School Program.	Provides children with local food, nutrition education and stimulates the local economy.
Maintains nutrition standards for school meals programs and directs USDA to make appropriate changes.	Continues to prioritize children’s health by utilizing science-based evidence and requires school meals to meet dietary guidelines.

HOUSE ONLY

Provision	Benefits
Provides additional reimbursement (2 cents/breakfast) for the School Breakfast program	Children who eat breakfast at school have a higher diet quality. This program did not receive any additional funding but is required to serve more fruits and vegetables.

INCLUDED IN BOTH THE HOUSE AND SENATE BILLS

Provision	Benefits
Increase authorizations for school kitchen equipment grants and training.	This will help schools update their kitchens to serve healthier meals. Nationwide, 88 percent of school districts need at least one piece of kitchen equipment, and 55 percent need kitchen infrastructure changes, such as electrical upgrades. ¹
Expands access in innovative and effective ways to reach children in rural, underserved and unsafe areas; and streamlines administrative functions with other programs	This underutilized program needs new ways to reach children throughout the summer months, especially those children in rural and suburban areas.
Allowing Residential Child Care Institutions to choose to participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program	This will provide Residential Child Care Centers the option to utilize a program that may be better suited to meet the needs of this unique population.

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