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Share Our Strength

**NO KID
HUNGRY** | center for BEST
PRACTICES

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About No Kid Hungry

No Kid Hungry is a national campaign launched by the non-profit Share Our Strength in 2010. Our goal is to end child hunger in the United States.

BREAKFAST



AFTERSCHOOL



SUMMER MEALS



NUTRITION EDUCATION

NUTRITION PROGRAMS ALREADY EXIST TO FEED KIDS.

NO KID HUNGRY GENERATES THE WILL AND SKILL TO MAKE SURE THESE PROGRAMS REACH EVERY CHILD WITH HEALTHY FOOD, EVERY DAY.

The Program: School Breakfast



Replicable and Scalable



Positive, with no additional burden on families



A key strategy in the fight to end childhood hunger

The School Breakfast program plays an essential role in ending childhood hunger in the United States.

Research has shown that when children consistently get the morning nutrition they need, it can have an impact classroom focus, test scores and general health.

No Kid Hungry supports schools and districts to increase access to breakfast, ensuring it reaches more of the students who need it.

The Issue: Chronic Absenteeism

- 16% of students in America are considered “chronically absent,” meaning they miss 3 weeks or more of school in a year
- Chronic absenteeism can lead to decreased academic achievement, increased dropout rates, weakened social development, and worse future employment prospects.
- Students at higher risk include those in low-income households and students of color (including American Indian and Pacific Islander; African-American, and Latinx students)



The Study: Is there a link between Breakfast After the Bell and chronic absenteeism?

- No Kid Hungry commissioned a study to answer the question, “Can serving breakfast as a part of the school day, commonly known as Breakfast After the Bell, reduce chronic absenteeism rates?”
- The study was conducted in 2019 by leading education researchers at the University of California Santa Barbara: Dr. Michael Gottfried and Jacob Kirksey. The study consists two analyses:
 - A state analysis in Colorado and Nevada, which had passed legislation requiring higher-poverty schools to serve breakfast after the bell.
 - A national analysis of young elementary school students that looked at access to breakfast served after the bell and in the classroom

The Primary Finding: Breakfast served after the bell can significantly reduce chronic absenteeism rates.



Serving breakfast after the bell can **reduce absenteeism by an average of**

6 percentage points

Study Methods: State Analysis

- Scope: Colorado and Nevada elementary, middle, and high schools. State policy required certain schools (those where 70% or more of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals) to provide breakfast after the bell
- Analysis: Regression Discontinuity Design and Difference-in-Differences
- Data Sources:
 - CO and NV school-level chronic absenteeism data (U.S. Department of Education) and school breakfast administrative data (state agency)
 - School Year 2013-2014 and 2015-2016



State Findings

Main research question: Does Breakfast After the Bell contribute to improvements in absenteeism?

- Chronic absenteeism rates were on average 6 percentage points lower for schools that served breakfast after the bell
- Breakfast After the Bell was particularly helpful in reducing chronic absenteeism in elementary and rural schools.
- Additionally, schools with relatively high breakfast participation rates tended to have a larger decrease in chronic absenteeism rates.

New research shows that when schools adopt "breakfast after the bell" programs, they can potentially see chronic absenteeism rates drop by **6 percentage points.**

Study Methods: National Analysis

- Scope: A nationally representative sample of young elementary school students that included information on access to Breakfast in the Classroom (a particular approach of serving breakfast after the bell)
- Analysis: Difference-in-Differences
- Data Source:
 - Nationally representative student-level data on Kindergarteners and 1st Graders from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Survey (ECLS-K)
 - Data originated in School Year 2010-2011 and was compared to 2011-2012



National Findings

Secondary research question: Does Breakfast in the Classroom contribute to improvements in other student outcomes?



Exploratory analysis found that Breakfast in the Classroom can improve reading test scores (1.5 percentage point higher reading test scores)



Breakfast in the Classroom can improve internalizing behaviors (6 percentage point improvement on a 4-question scale that asks teachers about the extent that the student exhibited anxiety, loneliness, low self-esteem, and sadness)

Study Conclusions

- Taken together, the study analyses show that Breakfast After the Bell can decrease chronic absenteeism.
- There may be additional benefits to reading test scores and social-emotional development.
- While school breakfast is often viewed as something separate from school performance, these findings suggest that it can be very much intertwined with student success in schools where Breakfast After the Bell is implemented.



QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

