

Nutrition

Proper nutrition in schools is important to the kids and adults of America. Teachers believe that kids who do not have proper nutrition lack skills of focusing on school. Active lifestyles will come from being healthy, not obese or overweight. Obesity is our fastest growing health issue in America. Schools in America should follow the model of school lunches that France acquires to lower obesity rates and to provide healthier ways of living.

One and every three kids in the United States is obese or overweight, statistics show. America is ranked 1st on the obesity list while France is 23rd. That is three times more than France. Statistically equivalent to 30.6% for America and 9.4% for France. A recent USDA report from 2008 showed that 16.7 million children lived in households that hunger multiples throughout the year. School-age children are not eating the correct levels of fruit, vegetables, whole grains, and dairy products due to an Institute of Medicine report. For some students, the school breakfast and lunch that's provided is the only meal they eat a day. If they are being fed food that will only kill them in the end, what are we to do about that? It's a huge opportunity to improve nutrition standards for school meals and enlighten the students of what they eat everyday and the affects of it.

France school lunch programs have certified dieticians that create a menu that has a balanced diet that is needed in nutrients. It has the right requirements of protein, carbs, fruits and vegetables. All the food is prepared fresh in house from advanced chefs. Not containing prepackaged foods. Processed food and prepackaged meals contain toxic chemicals that add to the obesity rates and health issues. Locally sourced food is extremely important in society. It's fresh food that is locally grown food that is fresh and not moved long distance. In France the only drink offered in schools is filtered tap water, not drinks with high sugar and corn syrup. Children do not attend school on Wednesdays in France, but some examples of meals on certain days are cucumber and tomato salad for their first course, their main course is veal marinated with mushrooms, broccoli and cheese, and dessert is apple tart. Another example is potato and pickle salad as the first course, breaded fish, cauliflower and cheese for their main course, then peach as their dessert. Older student volunteers bring their courses to the kids sitting at the tables. France's quality of health care system is 88% more than United States. It's ranked 2nd in the world compared to America's ranking of 41st. The French have an 11.4% percent of the probability of not reaching 60 years old, while Americans have a 12.8% chance of not making it to 60.

School lunches need to involve more food preparation and real cooking. It needs to be prepared by food-service professionals that are certified and have statistics that will help these kids get a healthier life style. It needs more locally produced food that contains whole grains, fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy products. It is so important to give these kids this healthy diet and lifestyle. It's also a social issue and economic issue. Our taxes need to go to benefit our children and the future of America. Families can't always provide healthy home cooked meals for kids to bring to school, so they give kids money to buy lunch at school resulting in purchasing chicken fingers and french fries and a lemonade. School food protects children against hunger. Low-income children rely on their daily nutrients from lunches so if they're getting the wrong nutrients, the outcome will be poor. School meals are a huge gate to teach kids lifelong healthy eating habits. They need to be provided with how many sugars, calories, carbs, vitamins to expand their life expectancy. The children need to know the benefits of eating healthy and the downfall to eating unhealthy. They need to see what their life would be like when they're old and obese and not live as long. In a research study with Harvard School of Public Health in 2009 showed that children will eat healthy school lunches and more vegetables if they are prepared in a visually appealing way. 13 years of school kids are fed from school lunches, those 13 years

could impact the rest of your life. Health issues come into play day to day. Sickness can come from being hungry and could lead to hospitalization. Low-income children with unhealthy nutrient eating habits will have negative health impacts. Having a health breakfast is key to improving learning skills and to grow.

France not only focuses on what the kids eat, but how the kids eat. They properly give them a well balanced meal and enough time to digest it to avoid stomachaches and low energy. They also provide three set recess periods during the day in elementary schools, a 15 minutes run around in the morning, an hour long recess after lunch, then a 15 minute break in the afternoon. Many students bike to school and is encouraged to. They have two hourlong gym periods and field trips and walks to the library or local retirement homes. At home not everyone can provide for their children, but home cook meals, family walks, hikes, games are just little thing that impact a healthy life style and can change a child's life.

The statistics show it, America needs to look to France for school lunches. What America needs for their school lunches it to strive for a salad bar to get the fruits and vegetables in. In the vending machines provide healthier snacks as well as the snacks in the cafeteria line. The school needs to focus on the plate and where the food is coming from, specifically strive for only locally produced food. A plate full of all the nutrients the kids needs and a variety of different meals, not repeating itself where kids will get tired of the same lunch options. Lengthening lunchtime can provide a better form of digestion and a higher level of energy with kids learning abilities. Kids will have more time to eat and eat more if they aren't rushed. Classes about what to eat and why they need the right nutrients. Yes, schools have health classes and provide information of what to eat, yet they go to lunch after health class and get served sloppy joe's and french fries from the lunch lady. This needs to change. Although in 2012, the US government attempted to approve school menus by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids act which required meals to be lower in fat, calories and sodium, hasn't had the best outcome. Some say more kids bring their own lunches and end up throwing away more food that they buy from school. It did show some change with kids eating 16% more vegetables and 25% more fruits at lunch. Not comparable to results and low obesity rates of France.

The main key benefits to having healthy school lunches can create a future for your child to live longer. It provides key nutrients and a steady daily calorie count. School lunches provides one-third of their daily need for protein, vitamins A and C, iron and calcium, and nutrients that children lack. Children need to limit their fat intake that comes mostly from polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats. "A healthy school lunch limits fat to less than 30 percent and saturated fat to less than 10 percent of overall calories over the course of a week", stated by Michelle Fisk. A healthy school lunch will be an essential part to limit obesity rates and other health conditions like diabetes and high blood pressure. These are vital health conditions that can be preventable if we teach our children to eat the right way. If kids eat an unhealthy lunch, the energy level is lower. A study called "Journal of School Health" showed that children who ate more fruits, vegetables and profiterer and less calories from fat, scored higher on literacy tests compared to kids with an unhealthy diet.

America can learn a lot from France. It is possible to lower obesity rates and teach kids what a balanced healthy diet is, France is an example of that. For a Nation who has one of the highest obesity rates, it should be a priority. We have the power to make these changes. America needs to follow France's model to support the children of America and help them in the long run.

<http://www.collective-evolution.com/2014/10/01/what-french-kids-eat-for-school-lunch-puts-american-lunches-to-shame/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/adult.html>

<http://www.nationmaster.com/country-info/compare/France/United-States/Health>

<http://www.health.com/health/article/0,,20410518,00.html>

<http://www.projectbread.org/news-and-events/news/5-reasons.html>

<https://www.mindbodygreen.com/0-14845/what-french-kids-eat-for-school-lunch-it-puts-americans-to-shame.html>

<https://qz.com/515148/a-typical-week-of-school-lunch-for-kids-in-paris-vs-new-york/>

<https://www.livestrong.com/article/543890-school-lunch-ideas-for-high-school-athletes/>