

**ACTION** FOR  
HEALTHY  
KIDS 

Optimal Nutrition Series: Healthy Food at Schools-Social and Emotional Learning Opportunities

# Today's Presenters



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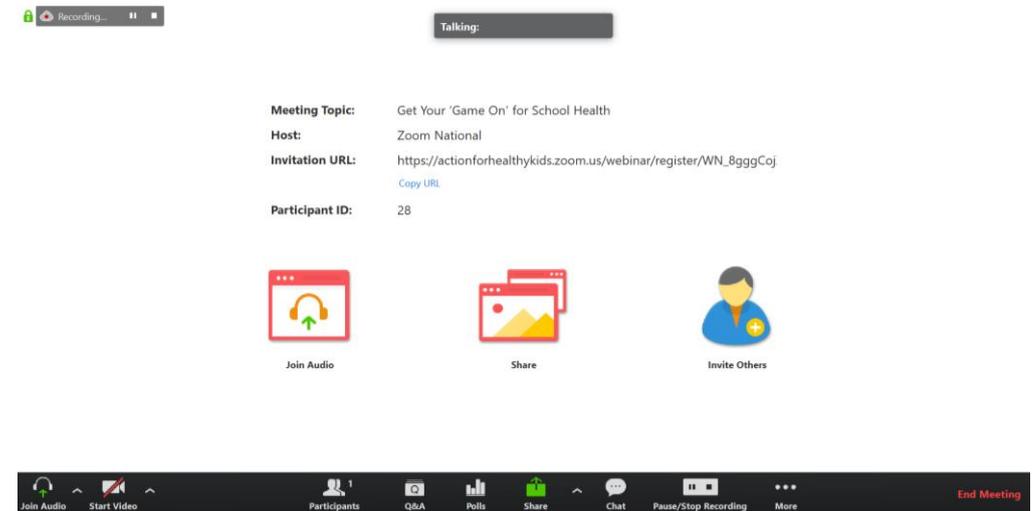


Grace Perry

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# Logistics

- » Listen in with your telephone or computer speakers
- » Everyone is muted
- » Submit questions in the question box
- » This call is being recorded
- » Link to recording and handouts will be sent out following the call



# Agenda

- » Action for Healthy Kids Overview
- » What Is Social and Emotional Health
- » How Healthy Foods Impact our Emotional Well Being
  - The Mood-Food Connections
- » Healthy Food at Schools
  - Improving Social and Emotional Health with School Meals
  - Create Social and Emotional Learning Opportunities with Nutrition
- » Resources to Support
- » Q&A

# Who Are We?

Action for Healthy Kids' (AFHK) vision is a world in which every kid is healthy, active and ready to learn. We work to mobilize school professionals, families and communities to take actions that lead to healthier schools where kids thrive.



# The Learning Connection



**1 in 3** U.S. children are overweight or obese

Overweight kindergartners had significantly lower math/reading scores than those at a healthy weight.<sup>2</sup>

Eating school breakfast positively affects student attendance, which leads to high academic achievement.<sup>3</sup>

Children who ate school breakfast increased their math grades by **+0.3 points** based on a 4.0 scale.<sup>3</sup>

Participation in breakfast programs is associated with:

- Increased grades and test scores
- Reduced absenteeism
- Improved cognitive function
- Memory and attention improvement!<sup>1</sup>



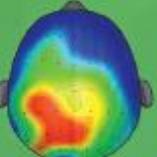
High quality diets (and increases in micronutrients<sup>1</sup>) improve cognition and the ability to perform well during short-term memory tests.<sup>5</sup>

Children with increased cholesterol intake had poor performance on short-term memory and cognition testing.<sup>6</sup>

A 20-minute walk demonstrates a brain that is activated and primed to learn.<sup>4</sup>



after 20 minutes of sitting quietly



after 20 minutes of walking



Physical activity is positively associated with students' cognitive functioning<sup>1</sup> which includes ability to pay attention, memory, and IQ test scores.



Participation in PE class is associated with better grades, test scores, and classroom behavior.<sup>1</sup>

# Healthy Eating and Social Emotional Health

# WHOLE

» SCHOOL

» COMMUNITY

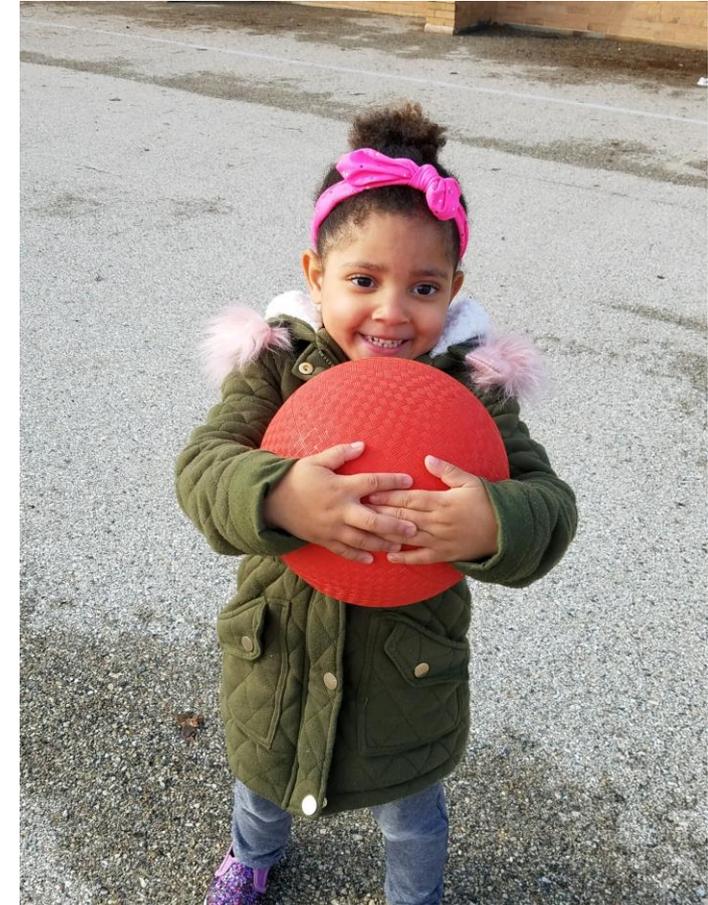
» CHILD



# Whole Child

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*The health of a child is multi-dimensional.*



# Tell Us About Yourself

What is your role?

- a. School nutrition staff
- b. School administrator
- c. Teacher
- d. Parent
- e. Community Partner
- f. School Nurse
- g. Other



# Tell Us About Yourself

What is your primary objective for participating in this webinar?

- a. I want to better understand social and emotional health and learning.
- b. I want to discover resources to integrate nutrition and social/emotional learning in school.
- c. I want to better communicate the need for healthy food and its impact on student social and emotional wellbeing to others.
- d. Other.





# Social and Emotional Health

It is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (CASEL, 2019)

# Social and Emotional Learning Core Competencies



# Food-Mood Connection



# Food and Brain Function

Brain function works best when nutrient dense foods are consumed.

» High quality

- Contain lots of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants.
- Foods with beneficial nutrients without too many calories.
- Foods with health related benefits.



» Low quality

- Can be harmful
- Cause inflammation
- Cause stress
- Consist of processed and refined foods

# Food and Digestive System

## Connection between food and gut health

- » Serotonin-neurotransmitter that helps regulate sleep and appetite, dictate your moods, and prevent pain.
  - 95% of your serotonin is produced in your gastrointestinal tract
  - serotonin is highly influenced by “good” bacteria
    - protect against toxins, limits inflammation, improves how well you absorb nutrients from your food; and they stimulate connections between the gut and the brain.
- » Good bacteria = mood and energy level.



# Healthy Eating and Performance

» Healthy eating can help reduce the risk of:

- High blood pressure.
- Heart disease.
- Type 2 diabetes.
- Cancer.
- Osteoporosis.
- Iron deficiency.
- Dental caries (cavities).



» Schools provide students with opportunities to learn about and practice healthy eating behaviors.

» Eating a healthy breakfast is associated with improved cognitive function (especially memory), reduced absenteeism, and improved mood.

» Adequate hydration may also improve cognitive function in children.

# Take Action

- » Literature suggests that good regular dietary habits are the best way to ensure optimal mental and behavioral performance.
- » Children with poor nutritional status are exposed to alterations of mental and behavioral functions that can be corrected by dietary measures.
- » Learn about your children's nutrient requirements
- » Make half of plate fruits and vegetables
- » Choose healthy sources of protein, such as lean meat, nuts, and eggs
- » Serve whole-grain breads and cereals because they are high in fiber. Reduce refined grains.
- » Broil, grill, or steam foods instead of frying them
- » Limit fast food
- » Offer water or milk instead of sugary fruit drinks and sodas





# School Meals & SEL

- ❖ Community Eligibility Provision
- ❖ Breakfast in the Classroom
- ❖ Salad Bars and Smarter Lunchrooms
- ❖ Share Tables/Carts



# Community Eligibility Provision

What is it?

Provides all meals at no cost for all students

## Benefits to Social/Emotional Well Being

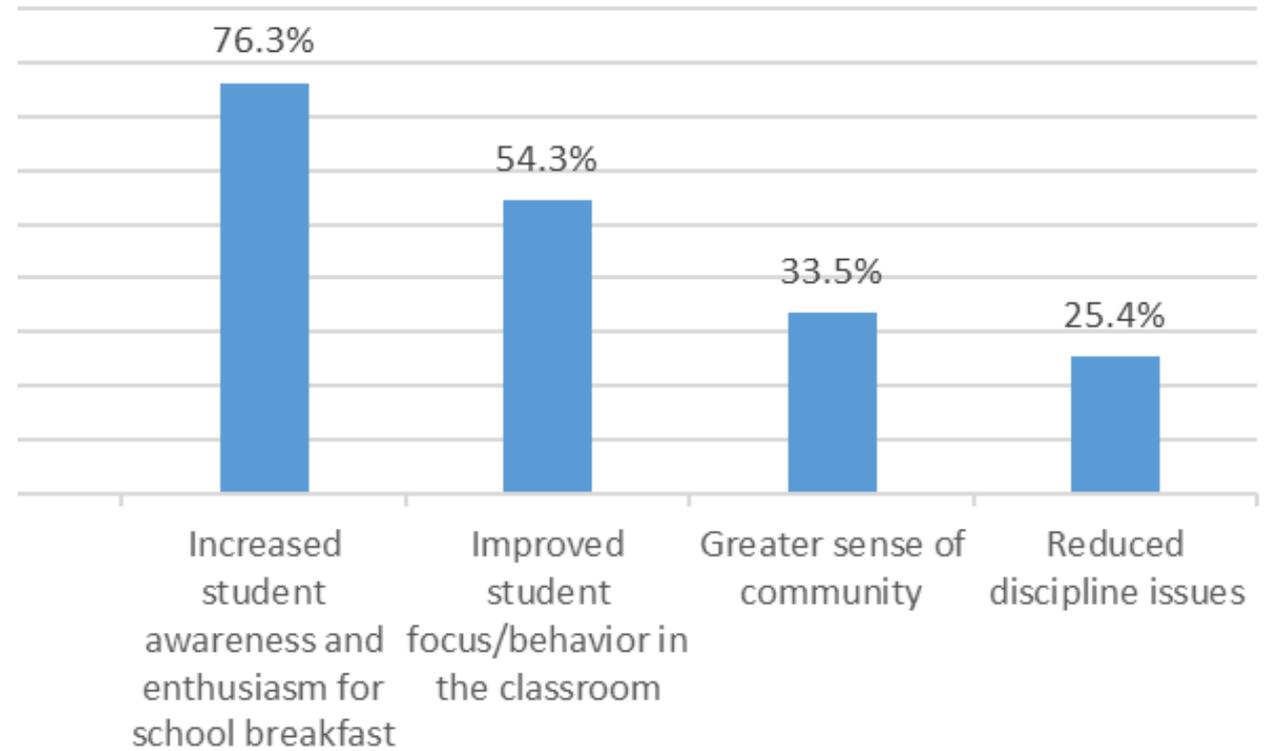
- » Reduces stigma
- » Ensures kids that may not have healthy food at home have access to breakfast and lunch
- » Increases participation
- » Eliminates meal debt and Lunch Shaming



# School Breakfast and SEL

- School Breakfast data from 2018-2019
- 261 Total Schools

## Breakfast Impacts



# SEL Competencies

- Self Awareness
- Responsible Decision Making
- Self Management



# SEL Competencies

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- Social Awareness
- Relationship Skills



# What we hear from educators...

A good quality breakfast can impact our students in such a positive way, as it's the most important meal of the day. Students who come in on an empty stomach lack energy and are unfortunately unable to thrive. This can attribute to being in a bad mood...School Resource Officer, MA



# Social Emotional Learning and Nutrition

## A Resource for Schools and Parents

- » Game On Activities
- » Nutrition focus
- » Social and Emotional Competencies and Learning Opportunities



**MAKING THE CONNECTION**

**Social Emotional Learning and Nutrition**

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is a continuous learning process that plays a role in every aspect of a healthy, happy life. It is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (CASEL, 2019). More often than not, our lessons and activities already have social emotional learning built into them. Instead of thinking of SEL as a secondary topic, find intention behind the activities you're already implementing and integrate opportunities for children to develop these competencies.

**Self-Awareness**

The ability to identify one's strengths and limitations and to maintain a well-grounded sense of confidence, efficacy, and emotional awareness.

**Self-Management**

The ability to effectively manage stress and impulses through self-discipline and goal-setting.

**Social Awareness**

The ability to understand various perspectives of others and one's interaction with diverse communities.

**Relationship Skills**

The ability to communicate, cooperate, and negotiate in socially acceptable methods with others in social situations.

**Responsible Decision Making**



# Mindful Eating

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## Overview

Mindful eating is a mindfulness practice that helps children develop a deeper connection with food and begin to create lifelong, healthy habits. It encourages children to focus on the present - noticing thoughts, feelings and physical sensations. Connecting this with the food that fuels our bodies helps children to recognize feelings of hunger and fullness, slow down when eating, better digest and fully enjoy snacks or meals!



## Take Action

**Discover new foods.** Mindful eating can be a great time to develop a deeper appreciation for food favorites while also branching out and trying something new. Leverage the [produce of the season](#) for the most nutrient dense (and tasty) treat. By using the five senses, this sensory activity supports children in making "[progress towards produce](#)" - introducing them to a variety of foods to help them develop healthy habits as they continue to grow.

# SMART Goals for Health and Wellness

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## Overview

Goal setting is a great way to help children build self-confidence and help them create healthy habits. Encourage children to dream big while practicing goal-setting through small, attainable stepping stones to reach a larger focus. Use the SMART goal template to simplify the goal-setting process for children and ask them to think of all of the different things they can achieve and ways they can grow as a healthy and kind human being!

## Take Action

**Brainstorm health and wellness goals with students - individually and goals that the class can achieve together. Next, break them down by using the SMART goal template!**

- S- Specific. It is important to be specific with what you would like to achieve and how you think you can achieve it.
- M- Measurable. A measurable goal is a goal that has clear deadlines and expectations of what the final product will look like.
- A- Achievable. Your goal should be achievable, even if that means starting with a smaller goal that may help you to achieve your more ambitious goals later.
- R- Relevant. Make sure your goal is relevant to your larger aspirations.

# Healthy Eating Toolkit

- Recipes
- Creative School Gardens
- Healthy Fundraising
- Nutrition Education
- Staff Role Modeling
- Taste Tests
- And more!

## Healthy Eating Toolkit

Feast on these nutrition resources—for use at home or at school—to get your kids or students inspired to eat better and build healthy habits.

I'm a parent

I'm an educator

### ABOUT THE TOOLKIT

## Encourage healthy eaters

This interactive toolkit, sponsored by Dole, is your one-stop shop for all things nutrition. Eating better helps improve kids' learning, behavior, and emotional health, so start building healthy habits with these recipes, resources, and ideas on a variety of topics. Check back regularly for new and updated content.



# Join our Upcoming Webinars

**Optimal Nutrition Series: Parents and School Nutrition How to Engage Support** (3/18 @ 4 ET/3 CT/2 MT/1 PT)



# Follow Us for More Resources

Stay up to date on Success Stories, health tips, physical activity games, fun recipes, volunteer opportunities, and ideas for action!

 Action for Healthy Kids shared a link.  
Posted by Jacqueline Periman [?] · December 14



Spice up your classroom and play the Game On! 12 Days of Fitness Challenge. #SmilesAllAround



12 Days of Fitness  
[www.actionforhealthykids.org](http://www.actionforhealthykids.org)



Healthy and Fun Snack Ideas



72 Pins



Edit

Healthy Treats for Kids



38 Pins



Edit



# Connect to Your School

It is super helpful for us to know not just the people interested in our resources but the schools using them, too.

Connect to your school(s)

<https://actionforhealthykids.secure.force.com/affiliation/#affiliation>

# Questions?

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