

**Healthy Food for All**

*access | availability | affordability*

## **INTO & Educational Disadvantage Centre**

# **A National Strategy for Hunger Prevention in Schools**

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# Food Poverty

*The inability to afford or access healthy food*



# Why?

Affordability

Accessibility

Availability

Awareness



# What do we know about the affordability of healthy food?

- *Low-income households twice as likely to experience food poverty*
- *Low-income groups spend disproportionately more on food*
  - $\frac{1}{4}$  of weekly spend on healthy basket (2015)
- *Impact of austerity – social welfare dependent households have experienced drop in income of between 5-8% since 2008 (VPSJ, 2014)*

1 in 8

people in  
Ireland are  
living in food  
poverty



# 1 in 5



Children  
go to  
school or  
to bed  
hungry  
because  
there is  
not  
enough  
food in  
the home  
(HBSC, 2012)

# 1 in 6

Children  
never eat  
breakfast  
on a  
weekday  
(HBSC, 2012)



# 1 in 5

Primary Principals  
observed an  
increase in  
children coming to  
school hungry  
(IPPN, 2013)





# Obesity in Irish Children

***1 in 4 9-year olds are overweight or obese***

*(Growing Up in Ireland 2011)*

***Girls and children in lower social classes  
were more likely to be overweight or obese***

*(Growing Up in Ireland 2011)*

## ***Impact of obesity:***

- Respiratory, cardiovascular, musculoskeletal and metabolic effects including increased chances of heart disease and Type 2 diabetes
- Poor self-image and poor quality of life

# Impact of poor nutrition on children

***Education*** – academic development, school performance, concentration, attendance and leaving school early without qualifications

***Physical*** – health and well-being

***Emotional*** – disruptive behaviour

***Social*** – life skills

# Schools as a setting to address Food Poverty



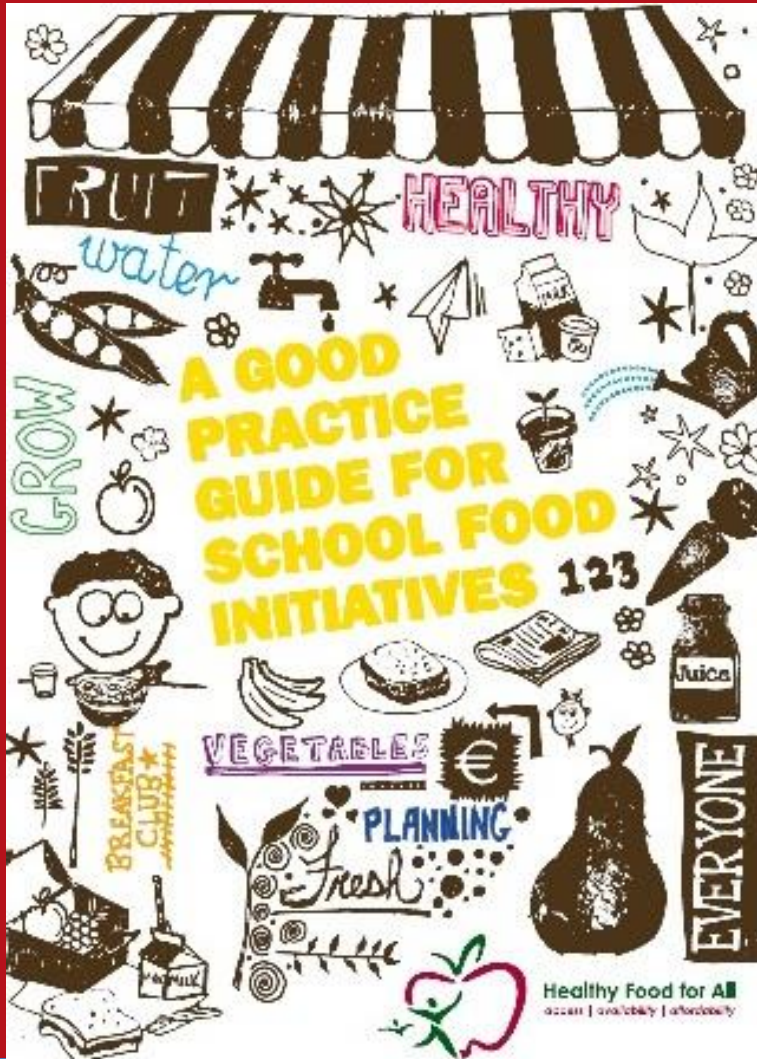
*Positive effect on short-term hunger in children (Ní Mhurchú et al, 2013)*

*Positive impact on:*

- *punctuality at school (Foley, 2011)*
- *eating habits (Murphy et al., 2007)*
- *educational attainment (Children's Food Trust, 2008)*

*Fourth most effective intervention of the School Completion Programme (NEWB, 2009)*

# HfFA Resources



# HFfA Pilot Programme of Breakfast Clubs



January 2013 – June 2015

2 DEIS Schools

2 non-DEIS Schools

Small Grant €5,000

Training Programme

Technical Support

120 pupils

# Pilot Programme for Breakfast Clubs



*Children are a lot more settled once they come into class...I think it winds the kids down so they are ready to start their work (Teacher)*

*There have been a couple of things that have come out of what kids have said in breakfast club...a few home issues that have been brought to light (Breakfast Club Coordinator)*

*(they) are having their breakfast with 4<sup>th</sup> class children and this is brilliant for their confidence...as they are mixing with the older ones (Breakfast Club Coordinator)*

*"She is more likely to ask questions about food and understands the importance of a healthy breakfast." (Parent)*

# Challenges at School Level

*Adequate space and facilities*

*Funding for food item only*

*Administrative burden*

*Lack of training and capacity*

*Concerns re food waste*

*Stigma*

*Parental involvement*

*Volunteer management*

*DEIS Review – consider the reasons why 100 DEIS schools are not availing of SMP*

# School Food Provision – A Fragmented Approach

***Dept of Social Protection*** – School Meals Programme (€42 million in 2016)

***Dept of Education & Skills*** – school infrastructure; links with curriculum

***Dept of Agriculture, Food & Marine*** – EU School Milk Scheme & Food Dudes

***Dept of Children & Youth Affairs*** – School Completion Programme

***Dept of Health*** – Healthy Eating Guidelines



# Policy Context

- *Healthy Ireland (DH 2013)*
- *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures (DCYA 2014)*
- *DEIS Strategy Review (DES 2015)*

# HFfA Policy Recommendations

## National Food in Schools Forum

- **National Food in Schools Strategy**
  - **Expand School Meals Programme**
  - **Improve school infrastructure to ensure appropriate facilities**
  - **Provide training and support for school staff**
  - **Link food provision with education curriculum**

**Focus on educational, health & social outcomes for children**

# Thank you



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