



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



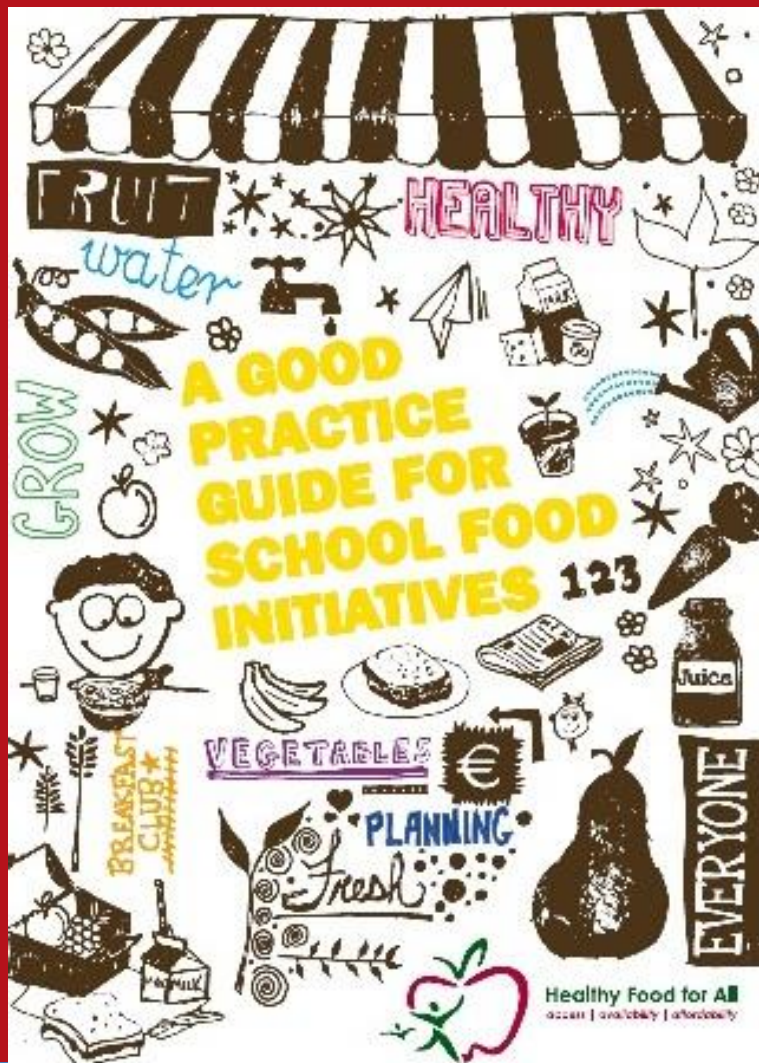
Positive effect on short-term hunger in children (Ní Mhurchú et al, 2013)

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 4th 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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