

Background on *Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act*

In 2010, Democrats and Republicans worked together to pass the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act. One goal of the law was to help reduce childhood obesity and increase the health of children across the country by providing balanced meals. This law helps ensure that every American child has access to healthy foods and good nutrition through programs such as the National School Lunch Program.

Schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program receive money from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for each meal they serve. In return, they must serve lunches that meet Federal requirements. All students can participate in the school lunch program, and students from low-income families qualify for free or reduced-priced lunches. The National School Lunch Program serves over 31 million students on a typical day, and about 60% of the participants nationwide qualify for free or reduced cost lunches.

The new standards began to go into effect in 2012. The law works to enhance school nutrition in a number of ways, including:

- Setting nutrition standards for all foods sold on the school campus throughout the school day, including foods from vending machines and school stores.
- Offering only lower-fat milk options.
- Requiring that water is available for free during meal service.
- Providing schools money for farm-to-school programs.

The law sets limits for the total number of calories available to students based on their ages (up to 850 calories for a high school student), and requires that more of these calories come from whole grains, fruits, and vegetables, and fewer calories come from fats and sugars. The use of salt is also limited.

Sources:

United States Department of Agriculture, *Fact Sheet: Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act School Meals Implementation*, Washington, D.C., viewed June 9, 2014 <<http://www.fns.usda.gov/pressrelease/2014/009814>>

United States Department of Agriculture, *Fact Sheet: National School Lunch Program*, Washington, D.C., viewed June 9, 2014 <<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/NSLPFactSheet.pdf>>

Food Research and Action Center, *Summary of School Nutrition Program Provisions in the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010*, Washington, D.C., viewed June 9, 2014.
< http://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/cnr_school_nutrition_program_provisions_summary.pdf>