

Child And Adolescent Nutrition

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Introduction

Child nutrition programs administered by the United States Department of Agriculture are started to make sure that nutritious meals are provided to children. This institute works through proper mechanisms because its research and actions centre works on making partnerships and improving public policy to remove hunger. They work on a “No Kid Hungry” policy that gives them strength. The details of these assistance programs are described in the discussion.

Discussion

The total program of the USDA spent about 22 billion dollars in 2016. They play a major role in the well-being and food security of children. This system works through an application process where benefits are granted to schools after fulfilling eligibility requirements. Some of the programs administered by the USDA are here.

National School Lunch Program

It is the second-largest assistance program working in the nation. They offer low-cost lunches to students in schools. All the students of schools participating in this program are eligible to get these free and low-cost lunches. The criteria include free lunches for students having an income level below 130% poverty. However, lunches at reduced prices are for children whose income lies between 130% and 185% poverty. Even in 2016, 60% of the program’s total budget was allocated to the lunch program. The public response was positive, as they favoured it because of the effective approach to menu planning (Federal Register, 2012). The schools that are high in poverty are given access to these programs. The lunch is provided with a mix of vegetables that is healthy for students. However, this increased amount of vegetables was not of any significant benefit because many children do not eat this healthy food. So, USDA encourages schools to use locally produced meals so that students will be willing to try new things.

School Breakfast Program (SBP)

It is a program founded under the Child Nutrition Act in 1966. In this program, participating schools offer free breakfast to their students. The number of schools participating in this increased after 1990, and every year, the annual increase is about 9%. Even there are about 3000 residential institutes of

child care participating in this program. Even the number of students participating in this program has also increased. This step was taken because obesity in children increased drastically in the period of 1980s to 90s, so the food needed for a healthy diet included proteins, fruits, vegetables and grains (Anon., 2014). Diet quality should be good for preventing diseases and promoting health. Even the research has also measured the effect of these projects on learning. The results were in favour of serving an appealing and healthy breakfast while remaining within the cost constraints.

Child and Adult Care Food Program

It is a program that serves snacks and meals to the children who are spending their day at daycare homes, homeless shelters, child care centres, after-school programs, and even adult care centres where adults or physically impaired people are present. This program is really helpful for the working parents. It makes it affordable for them as well, and the quality of daycare is improved. 50% of students coming to these centres are eligible for these meals. The standards for the meal were updated in April 2016, and the daycare centres should comply with them starting in October 2017. These standards included whole grains, fruits, and vegetables. The reimbursement structure used in this program is similar to the one used in school meals. The rates are set on two tiers; tier one is for high reimbursement. The number of students participating in this system is increasing in spite of the decrease in students attending daycare services.

Summer Food Service Program

This SFSP provides food in the peak months of summer. It supplied food to 48,619 sites catering to the needs of 2.8 million children. The areas that are covered by this program include camps, schools, parks, housing projects, churches, community centres and other sites for the public. The places where children gather in the days of summer are the main focus of this program. The emphasis is kept on areas where students come from an income level of 185% or below according to the Federal poverty level.

After – School Snacks and Suppers

It is a program for providing snacks to children of school through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). The schools where 50% of students are eligible under this program qualify for area-eligible schools. The 92% of snacks under this program are given to eligible area schools. These snacks are served with the help of sponsors coming from a third party. The areas at risk are also allowed to deal in after-school suppers with the help of community programs.

Conclusion

These programs are offered for the support of disadvantaged and low-income students who cannot afford nutritious food. It is specially designed because those students are at risk, and offering their needs through community programs will help in fulfilling their health needs at the time. The breakfast and lunch programs are the main components of these programs. Food coming under these programs had vegetables, fruits, and even milk programs designed after consultation with specialists. The main focus is to fight obesity and hunger, which are becoming common in communities because of unhealthy food. It is a low-cost, nutritionally balanced program for students administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

References

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