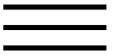


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Research Brief

Food Waste in a School Nutrition Program After Implementation of New Lunch Program Guidelines

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Abstract

Objective

To assess the amount of food waste by meal components according to the new National School Lunch Program guidelines among pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students.

Methods

For 5 consecutive school days in 1 elementary school, the research team collected school lunch trays and separated meal components into bins relative to each food or beverage appearing on the school's daily menu. Bins were weighed in grams and converted to ounces and cups at the end of each lunch period.

Results

The researchers examined 304 meals from 1 pre-kindergarten class and 5 kindergarten classes. Of 4,988 oz of food and beverages served, 2,261 oz (45.3%) were wasted during 1 full school week, totaling 141 lb. The greatest amount of food waste was generated from vegetables, the main entree, and milk, respectively.

Conclusions and Implications

Strategies to reduce food waste in school lunch should be researched and implemented.



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Key Words

National School Lunch Program; food waste; plate waste; nutrition; children

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