

Nutrition Guidelines in Kansas Elementary Schools

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Childhood obesity is a nation-wide epidemic. Although the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) guidelines are designed to regulate students' caloric intake and nutritional needs, ambiguous snack guidelines may be counteracting NSLP efforts. Our study assessed components of school lunches and snack guidelines in public elementary schools across Kansas. A question set was developed to evaluate these items. Answers were obtained from public information on school websites. Schools were qualitatively evaluated and compared based on size and socioeconomic status as defined in the study. Our data found that Kansas public elementary schools are following the NSLP guidelines; however, snack guidelines vary greatly. Our data do not identify any patterns in number of lunch meal options or snack guideline similarities amongst schools. A set of national or state snack guidelines may help to establish basic nutrition knowledge and encourage healthy eating in schools to combat the complex epidemic of childhood obesity.