SCHOOL-BASED FEEDING PROGRAM FOR UNDERNOURISHED CHILDREN

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Health is one of the major factors for students to perform well in school; if they’re not physically and mentally fit enough they might not catch up with the every day’s lesson or worse they might receive a failing grade. Fortunately, schools nowadays, in partnership of Department of Education (DepEd) and Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) supports students in need with their physical development through school based feeding program.

This program aims to enhance children’s health by serving and supplementing them with healthy meals that complements their needs for a normal nutritional status. The pupils from kindergarten to grade six will have to determine their Body Mass Index (BMI, weight/height). Pupils who will have BMI of wasted to severely wasted will be qualified for the school based feeding program for 120 days with a budget of P18.00 each per day (formerly P16.00 per day). The P16.00 budget is allocated for the children’s meal while the remaining P2.00 is for operational expenses that includes cooking materials, drinking water, cleaning materials and transportation.

In San Pablo Elementary School, Dinalupihan Bataan for example, there are 71 pupil-beneficiary for the current school year (SY 2017-2018) with 17 pupils diagnosed as severely wasted and 54 pupils diagnosed as wasted. The school follows a 20-day cycle menu in which focuses more on vegetable meals to develop the children’s health and boost up the nutrients their bodies are receiving.
Handling the program for six school years (SY 2014-present) the results of each program per year were not always the same. Unfortunately, children involved in the program do not always succeed to have a normal BMI due to personal factors. Other pupils are not supported with healthy meals at the comfort of their own houses; others do not have enough resources to come to school while others end up catching diseases from family members who have contagious illnesses (eg. tuberculosis).

On the brighter side, each year-end report marks a positive result like in S.Y. 2014-2015 79.46% out of 121 beneficiaries got normal in their BMI, in S.Y. 2015-2016, 85.25% out of 122 beneficiaries got normal in their BMI, in S.Y. 2016-2017 79.17 % out of 72 beneficiaries got normal in their BMI, in S.Y. 2017-2018, 77.46% out of 71 beneficiaries got normal in their BMI, in S.Y. 2018-2019, 79.49% out of 78 beneficiaries got normal in their BMI. At present the SBFP beneficiaries trimmed down to 64 pupils with wasted and severely wasted BMI. Feeding program also lessens the number of absentees in each grade level because pupils especially parents no longer worry for their children’s meal and that they are assured that the food their children eating are healthy and nutritious.

References:

DepEd Order 54, s.2013. Guidelines for the Implementation of School Feeding Program