UNDERSTANDING SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

by:
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There are existing childhood nutrition problems in our schools today. These nutrition problems may include obesity, malnourishment, mindless eating, and other conditions related to poor food preferences.

Some have been addressed adequately and appropriately while others still need additional management to lessen them if not to totally eradicate them. These concerns led to planning and implementing various school-based nutrition programs which are crucial tools to fight these problems.

Nutrition programs that combine physical activity and nutrition education which can address the issues can be implemented by the school health and nutrition division. One method is skill-building approach to motivate school children to eat better and stay active. This kind of program was initiated by Harvard School of Public Health and Baltimore Public Schools through a joint research project. To date, there are 50 states and more than 20 countries using the said program which is called Eat Well & Keep Moving. The Department of Education – School Health and Nutrition Section may consider adopting this program if it can help address local health problems among school children.

The program utilizes the entirety of the school environment. It is a complicated program comprised by the classroom, canteen, gymnasium, and tools utilized by the school, family, and community. It aims to target nutrition and physical activity simultaneously. It has proven its worth among obese children as it fights major factors that contribute to obesity. That factor is spending too much time in front of the television and munching mindlessly on unhealthy finger foods.
What the program did was guide children to eat more of fruits and vegetables, decrease intake of saturated and total fat, spent less time in front of the TV, and improve the children’s knowledge about the importance of physical activity and nutrition. The program provided the children with fun physical activities that they can enjoy with their classmates, siblings, and neighborhood friends. This is in addition with the healthy foods presented in more palatable and creative presentations resulting to making the children crave for more healthy foods instead unhealthy junk foods and snacks.

Another significant feature of the program is the motivational activities and “real talks” with children about their over-all health and physical appearance. Children are motivated to feel good about themselves. This helps them gain self-confidence. The result is that the children begin to realize how it is better to look physically fit by taking care of their bodies and choosing the right foods.

References:
