

Research Rundown

Article:

Impact of Summer Mobile Feeding Sites on Increasing Children's Access to Food

What did this study examine?

This study evaluated the effectiveness of a summer mobile feeding program and its ability to reach a new population of children who otherwise would not attend a summer feeding site. This study also assessed barriers to participation and how to use mobile feeding sites in the future.



How was the effectiveness and reach of mobile feeding sites during the summer assessed?

During summer operations, mobile feeding sites administered two surveys on separate days to children participating in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) after receiving a meal.

- The survey questions sought to identify whether the addition of the mobile feeding sites helped in reaching a new population of children who previously had not attended a stationary site, as well as gather feedback for future program improvements.

Key findings:

Participation

- Meals served per day as part of the SFSP increased by **21.6%** in summer of 2018 when compared to 2017.
- An average of **71%** of children eating at a mobile feeding site reported never previously attending a SFSP feeding site.

Barriers

- **22%** of children reported transportation to be the main barrier to participating at a stationary SFSP feeding site.
- **100%** of the children who were surveyed at a mobile feeding site stated that they would like to see mobile feeding unit continue in future summers.

Put it into practice!

- Aim to implement a mobile feeding unit during the summer and for remote learning days to feed students.
 - Meet students where they are by implementing mobile feeding sites at parks, apartment complexes, and other venues where students live/play.
 - Try to visit brand new venues with your mobile units to reach new populations of children that you would not have normally reached at a stationary feeding site.
 - Advertise and promote your mobile feeding site through flyers, social media, announcements at local schools, etc.
 - Provide enrichment and social activities that children may be interested in order to draw attention to your mobile feeding site such as guest appearances, games/crafts, themed days, and outdoor physical activities.
 - Survey your student population and your community to learn more about their food preferences and work towards serving foods that your population will be excited about!

Reference:

Sather, S., Schumacher, J., Lanier, J., Fehrenbacher, J., & Bardwell, A. (2021). IMPACT OF SUMMER MOBILE FEEDING SITES ON INCREASING CHILDREN'S ACCESS TO FOOD. *Journal of Child Nutrition & Management*, 45(1), n1.



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