

**NUTRITION,**

**HEALTH AND EDUCATION!**

*Making the right food choices, together.*

**The Colorado School Nutrition Association is partnering with Senator Sandoval and Representative Solano to eliminate the reduced price lunch for Early Childhood Education through – 2<sup>nd</sup> grade**

Everyone should have access to healthy food, and children in particular need a better chance for a healthy start in life. A stronger, better, higher quality system of early childhood services and programs is one of the legacies that our Governor and Lt. Governor want their administration to leave. This is why we are supporting SB – 033. This program just adds ECE kids to the bill that was passed last year that eliminates the lunch co-pay of \$0.40 for students in grades K-2 and will help ensure that these students have access to a healthy, nutritious school LUNCH. **AND IT DOES NOT COST THE STATE ANY MORE MONEY**

**Why Lunch?**

- Colorado has greatly increased preschool Programs fulfilling a 2003 goal of the Children’s Campaign.
- Lunch refuels the glucose levels which is essential for the brain and is the main energy source; it also helps fuel the muscles needed for physical activity later in the day.
- Data indicates that the 40 cent fee for a school lunch is a barrier to participation for low income families. Especially in this economy, this is corroborated by evidence that lunch participation decreases towards the end of the month.
- In Colorado, children living in poverty are more than **three** time as likely to be overweight than children in higher-income families.
- To many Colorado children are overfed but under nourished, because they are not getting the nourishment they need.
  - A school lunch provides 1/3 of the RDA for calories, iron, calcium, protein, vitamins A and C.
  - A school lunch has the right portion size for various age/grade groups, encouraging Smart consumption.
- Research indicates that prevention initiatives in the youngest of children would be most helpful in reducing overall childhood obesity.
- Colorado is one of many states striving to link early learning, health, mental health, family support and parent education so that families and children experience a predictable, high quality continuum of services and support.
- The issues of childhood hunger and school nutrition is occupying a top spot in Colorado and the Nations’ political agenda. Unfortunately, one answer is sitting right in front of us not being fully utilized to its fullest potential, **INCREASE SCHOOL LUNCH PARTICIPATION!**
- SB – 033 is an explicit effort to build and link systems that will guarantee the State’s early childhood work has long lasting, positive impacts on our young children and their families.

**Lunch and Nutrition:**

- Research indicates that students who eat a school lunch eat more fiber, Vitamin A & C , calcium, whole grains, iron and less added sugar than non-participants, and were more than twice as likely to eat a serving of fruit or vegetable.
- It is critical to start children on the right path at an early age – to make every effort to help them understand the importance of eating properly and staying healthy.
- One element in achieving success in Colorado’s educational system is simple: **School Lunch.**
- Child Nutrition programs have a direct economic impact of over **\$190 million** each year in Colorado.
- **\$12.7 million** in USDA donated foods (many from Colorado Farmers) are distributed to the lunch programs.

**SB – 033 will:**

- Work to immediately and drastically increase lunch participation in Colorado’s schools.
- Work to improve student’s health, help address childhood hunger, and help increase academic achievement.
- Help transform the school environment to provide healthier choices.
- Will add significant value to the Early Childhood Colorado framework.
- Provide a model for the nation to follow.

**A Hungry Child Cannot Learn!!**

