



METABOLIC REVOLUTION

OUR HEALTH, OUR RIGHT

Let's Give Our Children a Healthier Future

Dear Friends and Advocates,

The food we serve our children today shapes their health, development, and future well-being. Yet, school meals across the country are heavily reliant on ultra-processed foods (UPFs)—products linked to poor metabolic health, cognitive decline, and rising rates of childhood obesity and mental health issues. Despite growing awareness, meaningful changes have been slow, and families are left without options that truly support their children's health.

The Urgent Need for Change

The *Mental State of the World Report* by Thiagarajan (2023) identifies a causal link between excessive ultra-processed foods (UPF) consumption and mental health issues. While more research is needed to pinpoint the exact components driving this link, the report advises individuals to proactively reduce UPF intake, shifting diets toward fresh grains, meats, and vegetables.

Recognizing these concerns, the CDC's Community Preventive Services Task Force (CPSTF) prioritized mental health, nutrition, obesity, and social determinants of health (SDoH) among its key intervention areas for 2020-2025. Specifically, the SDoH initiative promotes providing free, healthy school meals universally, irrespective of economic status.

Recommendations to encourage healthy eating and reduce waste include:

More varied menu options; Recipes tailored to students' tastes and cultural backgrounds; Pre-sliced fruit servings; Rewards for trying fruits and vegetables; Extended lunch periods for sufficient eating time; and Limiting the availability of competitive (UPF) foods.

However, emphasizing fruits and vegetables does not sufficiently address underlying issues of hunger, nutrient deficiency, and mental health, as plant-based foods contain lower protein levels and incomplete amino acid profiles compared to animal-source foods, consistently shown to provide profound benefits for physical and cognitive health.

According to a documentary by More Perfect Union (2024), UPFs constitute over half of the American diet, and even minor reductions in their consumption significantly threaten food conglomerate profits. A mere 7% reduction in UPF consumption could trigger substantial economic repercussions, including job losses, reduced corporate innovation, and disrupted supply chains.

Additionally, recent policy changes under the Trump Administration have compounded economic and nutritional concerns, notably:

- A \$2 billion cut to the U.S.AID Food for Peace Program, stalling food aid and jeopardizing agricultural exports and the resiliency of small family farms and local economies. Proposed solutions include transferring management to USDA for better efficiency.
- **Termination of the \$1 billion USDA Local Foods for Schools Program, initially expanded under Biden to enhance local food sourcing and supply chain resilience.** The termination represents a deprioritization of child nutrition and local farming support.

Current CPSTF recommendations aim to counter declining demand by strengthening school meal programs, the nation's largest food service operation but **may worsen nutritional deficits and mental health issues if overly reliant on plant-based proteins.**

Metabolic Revolution - Empowering Families, Schools, and Communities to Demand (and Receive) Better Food

We have been actively advocating for change and working to raise awareness of the role that UPFs play in triggering metabolic dysfunction and chronic disease through our [petition to remove UPFs from school meals.](#)

While we push for systemic change, we know that families need real solutions—and they need them now.

That's why a dedicated team of volunteers is leading our School Meal Modification Preference Program, working to empower families to request—and school administrators to serve— nutrient-dense foods that support metabolic health. By developing a multistakeholder permission structure along with educational materials outlining the program's benefits, families and school administrators will have the power to transform school meals, ensuring they align with the nutritional needs of students.

This initiative is a crucial step toward a future where every child has access to meals that enhance cognitive function and create a pathway toward lifelong well-being.

Thank you for your support in making this vision a reality. Together, we can transform school nutrition and give our children the foundation they need to thrive.

In health and hope,

Kim Platt

Volunteer, Metabolic Revolution

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