

Pick a Better Snack

An evidence-based nutrition and physical activity program for youth

About Pick a Better Snack

Pick a Better Snack (PABS) encourages children to eat more fruits and vegetables and be more physically active. Nutrition educators teach short, interactive lessons once a month in kindergarten through 3rd grade classrooms. Students taste a fruit or vegetable, learn where and how fruits and vegetables grow and different ways to eat them. The program has been in place for over 20 years.

Benefits of PABS:



Increased fruit and vegetable consumption



Increased physical activity



Helpful resources for parents

The 2022-2023 Pick a Better Snack Evaluation

During the 2022-2023 school year, the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services provided PABS lessons in 118 schools across 22 school districts in Iowa. Parents of second and third graders receiving PABS in school were invited to take surveys about the program. Overall, 288 parents took a survey before and after their child received PABS. We heard from the majority of schools.

Pick a Better Snack Supports Iowa Families Most in Need

Of parents who responded to the surveys:



24%

Participate in the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program

37%

Participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly known as food stamps)

60%

Have a household income below 185% of the federal poverty level

Results From the PABS Evaluation

The data below are key findings from the surveys completed by parents before and after their child received PABS.

Children are eating more fruits and vegetables!

**Survey data indicated:*

- 45% of children ate more fruits and vegetables each day.
- 32% of children increased their willingness to try new fruits and vegetables.
- 40% of children increased the variety of fruit they ate and 43% of children increased their variety of vegetables.
- Approximately 40% of children increased the number of days that they ate fruits or vegetables at snack time or for dinner or dessert.



Children are more physically active!

**Survey data indicated:*

- 77% of children increased the number of days they were active for 60 minutes or more in the past week and in a typical week.
- 35% of parents increased the frequency they took their child to places to be active.
- Over 40% of parents increased their confidence for making sure their child was active, even when they are tired, busy, or the weather is bad.



Parents found the materials sent home useful!

**Survey data indicated:*

- Over 80% of parents received the bingo cards sent home and almost all used them sometimes or often.
- 66% of parents received most or all of the family newsletters and all thought they were easy to read.
- Over 80% of parents thought the information on the bingo cards and newsletters helped them get their child to eat healthier foods or be more active.

