

School Lunch Program Policy and Dietitian's Role

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I. Introduction

The mission of school foodservice is to provide necessary nutrients and balanced diets for students' growth. The school foodservice is executing overall world for contributing better dietary lives of people and national food policies.

Korean school foodservice has made rapid progress in spite of very difficult financial conditions. Reasons for this progress are government's effective policies, education/community concerns, economic development, and womens' social activity increases. In 1993, only 19.7% of elementary schools had school foodservice systems but in 1998 almost 100% of elementary schools have school foodservice system. Specially, middle and high school foodservices are increasing because of allowing contract foodservice management by law. By the end of this year, high school foodservices are increasing up to 70% and by the first half of next year, 100% high schools will have school foodservice systems.

Korean school foodservices have made satisfactory development in the view of quantity but they have made unsatisfactory progress in the view of quality. So, we need efficient operating management. School foodservice managers must meet students' needs. Recently, obesity and child's disease of adult people have increased due to westernization of dietary life and oversupply of foods. School foodservices have been more important than ever because of social and educational environment changes.

Therefore, dietitian's roles and responsibilities are expected for qualitative

progress and productivity improvement at school foodservices toward 21st century.

II. Background of School Foodservice systems in Korea

1. School Foodservice System

Korean school foodservice system is specified in the law. The School Foodservice Law was made in Jan. 29, 1981. And then the revision has been made six times; the last revision was made in Dec. 13, 1997.

The Enforcement Ordinance was made in Sept. 8, 1981. The Second Revision was made in May 13, 1997.

A. Mission (Art. 1 of the School Foodservice Law)

Missions are promoting students' health and contributing dietary lives of people

B. Type of school foodservice system (Art. 2 of the School Foodservice Law)

There are two types; self-operating and contracting type

C. A nation and self-governing body duty (Art. 3 of the School Foodservice Law)

A nation and a self-governing body must provide policies for improving dietary habits by nutrition education and efficient school foodservice operation.

D. Subjects of school foodservices (Art. 4 of the School Foodservice Law)

There are students of schools (which are compulsory education organizations by the Art 8. of Education Organic Law), special schools, special classes for working juveniles, attaching schools by industries, and other schools (which are approved by the Minister of Education).

E. Operation principles (Art. 6 of the School Foodservice Law)

A school foodservice program provides nutrition education; foods that

contributing students' growth and health; and meals by sanitary and safe methods.

F. Staffing full-time employees for school foodservices (Art. 7 of School Foodservice Law)

All schools and contract management companies that were operating school foodservice systems must hire full-time employees for this system.

G. Cost allocation (Art. 8 of School Foodservice Law)

For facility and operating costs, school administrators must pay but School Foodservice Aid Organizations or parents can support parts of costs. For food costs, parents of subjects must pay. Specially, in the case of elementary schools, a nation or a self-governing body can support all meal costs for island type, 1/3 of costs for rural type, and parts of costs for destitute elementary/middle/high-school students in the city.

2. School Foodservice System Operating Status

In July, 1998, a total of 6,568 schools (63.5%) of 10,345 elementary and middle schools is operating school foodservice systems and 3,780,000 (41.1%) students are eating lunch at school foodservice programs.

A total of 5,625 elementary schools (98.9%) is operating school foodservices; a total of 397 middle schools (14.5%) and a total of 546 high schools (28.4%) are operating.

In the view of type of school foodservice systems, a total of 6,057 schools (92.2%) is managed by the self-operating type and a total of 511 schools (7.8%) is managed by the contracting type. However, the proportion of contracting type is tending to increase because of the middle and high school foodservice program enlargement.

III. Directions of High School Foodservice Enforcement

1. Plan for quality improvement

Korean school foodservice has recorded the rapid growth since 1953. Middle and high school foodservice is toward to increase by the year 2002. Specially, high school foodservice is planning 100% enforcement by the next year.

2. Enforcement

Problems for increasing the number of middle and high school foodservice system are lack of facility cost budgets and spaces at each school. Proposals in the School Foodservice Law are a commissary system with center and satellite kitchen concepts; school administrators and parents association's self-decisions; and a contract management system.

The Ministry of Education decides to support costs for middle and high school foodservice programs for enlargement by the 2002 because of city/province education hall's financial burden for school foodservice programs and higher costs (\$1.77-\$1.92; 2,300-2,500won) with contract management.

IV. Dietitian's Role

1. Status

Dietitian's system have introduced since the food poisoning accident of breads at school foodservices which had occurred in 1977 (an attack of 5,575 students at 53 schools; death of one student). Dietitians manage sanitation and menu for school foodservice programs. Part-time dietitians had employed at schools since 1978 but they had lots of limitations for managing. So, dietitians have employed at schools as a public service personnel since 1982.

In June 1998, for school foodservice programs, 3,975 dietitians and 27,015

cooks are working at 5,184 schools. For contract management systems, 131 dietitians and 880 cooks are working at 137 schools.

2. Dietitian's Roles for Improving School Foodservice Quality

A. Roles of foodservice managers

According to the Art. 5 of the School Foodservice Law, dietitians' jobs as a middle manager are nutrition management, menu management, work management, sanitation management, purchasing management, human resource management, and facility management. Also, they should be a professional for getting new information and managing computer works in the future foodservice industry.

B. Roles of educators

Nutrition education in school foodservice programs are divided into two methods: lecture at classes and eating practices at the lunch time. Dietitians teach students and consults teachers for correction of unbalanced diets and formation of right dietary habits, diet etiquettes, and sanitation methods before/after meals. Also, they train cooks and cook assistants and educate parents and community residents.

C. Roles of school health nurses

School health is promoting students' and teachers' health status and safe lives. Dietitians educate them about nutrition and health.

D. Roles of nutrition and health counsellors

Dietitians need to research effective health educating methods, solution of nutrition problems with food processing and eating out. They counsel students, parents, and teachers about nutrition, menu planning, decrease of absences, growth of weight/height, and promotion of school records.

V. Conclusion

Dietitians' roles are very important for the success of school foodservice

programs. The Minister of Education will provide efficient staffing plans for corresponding to the purpose of school foodservice programs with job analysis and work activity investigation. Dietitians' efforts for implementing the school foodservice policies should be the most important factor for school foodservice programs and dietitian hiring system improvement.