

SALAD BARS IN SCHOOLS AND FRUIT AND VEGETABLE SELECTION AND CONSUMPTION: A REVIEW OF RECENT RESEARCH

Kari Slawson, MS, RD and Alice Jo Rainville, PhD, RD, CHE, SNS, FAND

ABSTRACT:

Peer-reviewed research on the effectiveness of salad bars for increasing fruit and vegetable (F/V) intake is limited. This commentary discusses current evidence regarding the effectiveness of salad bars in increasing F/V selection and consumption, thereby reducing food waste. Key findings from this review of the research are that salad bars in schools: (1) are increasing in prevalence; (2) are more prevalent in schools participating in assistance and resource programs; (3) increase selection of F/V; and (4) have an inconclusive effect on F/V consumption and waste.

To maximize potential for salad bars in schools to positively influence F/V consumption, additional strategies have been recommended. These strategies include encouragement for F/V intake via marketing, education, signage, and family/peer support. The use of salad bars as a strategy to improve F/V selection and consumption should be continuously evaluated to determine efficacy and identify potential improvements.

Key words: salad bars, fruit and vegetable consumption, plate waste, school lunch.

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