Does Breakfast Club Attendance Benefit Children’s Social Relationships?

Pamela Louise Graham, Margaret Anne Defeyter & Riccardo Russo

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Introduction:
Prior research into school breakfast clubs has linked participation to numerous benefits including improvements in nutrient intake at breakfast (Murphy et al, 2010) and fruit intake (Shemilt et al, 2004).

Evaluations of school breakfast clubs have predominantly focused on the effect of the breakfast meal, while the potential impact of the social environment has received little attention.

Aim of Current Study:
The aim of the current study was to investigate whether breakfast club attendance facilitates children’s relationships with their peers in school.

Method:
Participants: 268 primary school children (mean age=8.4 years; age range=6.3 years to 10.11 years) from 8 primary schools in the UK.

Participants were divided into 3 groups based on their out of school club participation:
- 94 breakfast club attendees
- 86 after school club attendees
- 88 controls – attended no school clubs

Materials:
- Friendship quality was measured using the Friendship Qualities Scale (Bukowski, Hoza & Boivin, 1994).
- Peer victimisation was measured using the Multidimensional Peer Victimisation Scale (Mynard & Joseph, 2000).

Discussion:
- Breakfast club attendance facilitates the quality of children’s friendships with their best friend across time.
- Spending time in an out of school club, before or after school, can reduce children’s exposure to victimisation across time.
- Research is currently being conducted to investigate whether out of school club attendance influences the social relationships of secondary school pupils.

References:

