Does School Breakfast Club Attendance Facilitate Children’s Peer Relationships?

Pamela L. Graham, Greta Defeyter and Riccardo Russo
What is a Breakfast Club?

- Safe place to go before the start of the school day
- Opportunity to meet with friends and staff
- Nutritious breakfast
- Activities to take part in
Benefits of Breakfast Club

School breakfast participation has been linked to improvements in:

- Classroom behaviour (Bro et al, 1994)
- Maths grades (Murphy et al, 1998)
- School attendance (Simeon, 1998)

Benefits associated with school breakfast participation have been attributed mainly to the breakfast meal.

Potential impact of the social environment has received little attention.
More Than Just a Meal?

**Family Mealtimes**
- Community and belonging (Fulkerson et al, 2006)
- Facilitate interaction (Cason, 2006)
- Teach social skills (Eisenberg et al, 2004)

**Out of School Activities**
- Positive peer interaction (Bartko & Eccles, 2003)
- Development of friendship (Bartko & Eccles, 2003)
- Protection from victimisation (Hodges et al, 1999)
Aim of Present Study

To investigate whether breakfast club attendance facilitates children’s peer relationships in school.

- Friendship quality
- Peer victimisation
Participants

8 primary schools
n = 268
163 females 105 males
Mean age = 8.4 years
Age range = 6.3 years – 10.11 years

Breakfast Club
n = 94
59 females 35 males
Mean age = 8.24 years

After School Club
n = 86
47 females 39 males
Mean age = 8.75 years

Control
n = 88
57 females 31 males
Mean age = 8.24 years
Friendship Qualities Scale
(Bukowski, Hoza and Boivin, 1994)

+ Companionship – free time spent together
+ Help – mutual help, assistance and protection
+ Security – reliance and conflict resolution
+ Closeness – emotional bond between friends

- Conflict – fights, arguments and disagreements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>False</th>
<th>Partly False</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
<th>Partly True</th>
<th>True</th>
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</thead>
</table>
Multidimensional Peer Victimisation Scale
(Mynard and Joseph, 2000)

- Physical victimisation – punching and kicking
- Verbal victimisation – name calling
- Social manipulation – turning friends against each other
- Attacks of physical property – damage or theft of possessions

Not at all  Once  More than once
Breakfast clubs started

Time 1

2 months

Friendship Qualities Scale
& Peer Victimisation Scale

Time 2

6 months

Friendship Qualities Scale
& Peer Victimisation Scale
Results: Friendship Qualities Scale

Breakfast Club

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Friendship Quality Dimensions</th>
<th>Time 1</th>
<th>Time 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Companionship</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Help</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>5.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closeness</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p<0.01
Results: Friendship Qualities Scale After School Club

Friendship Quality Dimensions

- Companionship
- Conflict
- Help
- Security
- Closeness

Mean Score

* * * * *

* p<0.01
Results: Friendship Qualities Scale Control

Friendship Quality Dimensions

Companionship
Conflict
Help
Security
Closeness

Mean Score

Time 1
Time 2

*p<0.01
Results: Peer Victimisation Scale

Breakfast Club

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of Victimisation</th>
<th>Time 1</th>
<th>Time 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean Score

- Physical: *
- Social: *
- Verbal: * p<0.01
- Property:
Results: Peer Victimisation Scale After School Club

Dimensions of Victimisation

- Physical
- Social
- Verbal
- Property

Mean Score

Time 1

Time 2

* p<0.01
Results: Peer Victimization Scale

Control

Time 1
Time 2

0
0.5
1
1.5
2
2.5
3
3.5

Mean Score

Dimensions of Victimization

Physical
Social
Verbal
Property

* p<0.01
Discussion

- No significant differences between groups at time 1
  - Findings cannot be ascribed to inherent differences between groups at time 1

- Breakfast club attendance did appear to facilitate children’s relationships with their peers in school
  - Small group meal might be the driving force

- Out of school club attendance led to a reduction in victimisation across time
  - Out of school clubs might provide a protective peer group