



Inland Empire United Way

Kids Pack Evaluation 2007-08

Outcomes Evaluation Results from Inland Empire United Way's Kids Pack Program

Inland Empire United Way



Kids Pack Program Outcomes Evaluation 2007-2008 School Year

Introduction

This report contains the outcomes evaluation results for the Inland Empire United Way's (IEUW) Kids Pack program for the 2007-08 school year. Self-administered surveys were analyzed to provide a measure of the effectiveness of the Kids Pack program, determine the need for the program, and participants' satisfaction with the program. This report includes an overview of the Kids Pack program, analysis of the participant survey, parent survey, teacher surveys, and a summary of the findings.

Description of the Kids Pack Program

IEUW's Kids Pack program is a weekend nutrition program designed to provide disadvantaged school children with easily prepared food. Weekends have been identified as a vulnerable time for these children because free meals provided by schools through the federal free and reduced meal program are not available. Also, many other programs, such as after school programs run by nonprofit organizations or schools, do not operate on weekends. Thus, IEUW's Kids Pack program addresses a need at a time when other assistance is unavailable. 1,148 children were served by the program at some time during the 2007-08 school year.

Kids Pack is a collaborative effort between IEUW, local school districts, and case management organizations working with disadvantaged children and families. The school districts, cities, and affiliated case management organizations are listed in the table below.

School District	City	Case Management Organization
Ontario-Montclair School District	Montclair	Montclair Community Collaborative
Ontario-Montclair School District	Ontario	Family Solutions Collaborative
Chino Valley Unified School District	Chino	CARE Program
Hesperia Unified	Hesperia	Coordinated by the district family liaison
Redlands Unified School District	Redlands	Healthy Start/Building a Generation
Yucaipa-Calimesa Joint Unified	Yucaipa	Coordinated by school personnel

The Kids Pack program also relies on many community volunteers. There is an advisory board composed of community volunteers who oversee the Kids Pack program as well as other children's programs at IEUW. In addition, groups of volunteers assemble bags of food each week at IEUW's program headquarters located in Rancho Cucamonga.

Five basic activities relate directly to accomplishing the goals of the Kids Pack program. Case management organizations and school personnel perform the first and fourth activities listed below. The remaining activities are joint efforts of IEUW staff, community volunteers, school staff, and case management personnel. These activities include:

1. Identifying students at-risk of hunger
2. Assembling 2-day supplies of nutritious food

3. Delivering the food packed by volunteers to school sites
4. Distributing backpacks to program participants
5. Collecting backpacks on Mondays to be refilled with food for the following weekend.

In addition to the normal operational activities required to operate the program, there is a significant amount of time and effort devoted to determining the effectiveness of the Kids Pack

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program. The Kids Pack program has one major outcome for program participants – low income children do better in school. This outcome has four indicators:

1. Attentiveness
2. Attitude
3. Participation
4. Academic Performance

The Kids Pack outcomes evaluation utilizes a pre-test/post-test model to measure the effectiveness of program intervention. Data is collected from program participants, participants' parents, and their teachers. Data is collected soon after a child enters the program and again at the end of the program year. This provides an opportunity to measure changes in behavior, situation, and academic performance for program participants. Finally, the information is systematically analyzed to provide a measure of the overall impact of the program.

Description of Evaluation Sample

There are 637 participants represented in the 2007-08 Kids Pack program analysis. The following analysis is based on what data is available regarding those 637 students. All of the program participants come from very low-income households. Some program participants live in extreme poverty. In many cases, the children's families are homeless and live with friends and/or relatives in overcrowded conditions, motels, or even in cars, necessitating easily prepared foods.

Grade Level

The table at right shows the number and percentage of students in each grade represented in the analysis sample. Grade-level information was not available for 12 twelve students in the sample.

Grade Level of Sample		
Grade	Number	Percent
Preschool / Kindergarten	90	14.4%
1st	94	15.0%
2nd	106	17.0%
3rd	95	15.2%
4th	98	15.7%
5th	79	12.6%
6th	46	7.4%
7th	9	1.4%
8th	8	1.3%
Total	625	100%

School Districts

Participants in the 2007-08 Kids Pack evaluation sample came from four school districts. One district, Ontario-Montclair Elementary, represented two-thirds (67.1%) of the sample. Of the remaining school districts, Redlands Unified School District accounted for 18% of the sample, Chino Valley Unified School District account for almost 12% and Yucaipa-Calimesa Joint Unified accounted for 3% of the sample. The data did not contain school district information for 4 of the students included in the analysis.

Program Participants by School District		
District	Number	Percent
Chino Valley Unified	75	11.8%
Ontario-Montclair Elementary	425	67.1%
Redlands Unified	114	18.0%
Yucaipa-Calimesa Joint Unified	19	3.0%
Total	633	100%

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Outcomes Evaluation Methodology

The IEUW Kids Pack program evaluation utilizes a pre-test/post-test model to determine if participation in the Kids Pack program is associated with changes in students' behavior, performance, and circumstances, as defined by the program outcomes. The pre-test/post-test model is the closest available to the experimental model outside of a laboratory or clinical setting. In this case, the program participants' circumstance is evaluated before entering the program and again when the program ceases at the end of the school year. This analytical model provides an opportunity to measure change associated with program participation.

The data used for IEUW's Kids Pack program outcome evaluation was collected using self-administered surveys. Data was collected regarding each participant from a total of four surveys, two by teachers and one each completed by parents and students. The teacher surveys which are used to measure the program outcome were administered prior to program participation and repeated at the end of the school year. Teachers filled out surveys regarding each student participating in the program.

Because of changes in the program outcome methodology that were implemented during the school year, only a post-program parent survey was used in this year's analysis. Future evaluations include a pre-program and post-program survey of parents so that changes in food security status that might be associated with participation in Kids Pack can be observed and compared to program outcomes. There will be only one program participant survey that will be conducted at the end of the school year.

The parent and student surveys were designed in both English and Spanish, the two most common languages among the population served by the Kids Pack program. In some instances, students and parents who had trouble reading or understanding the surveys were provided assistance completing the surveys by school or case management personnel.

Completed surveys were collected by school and case management personnel and returned to IEUW Kids Pack program staff. Staff and volunteers at IEUW entered the data into a database. The data were then checked for accuracy before the analysis was conducted.

We begin the analysis by examining the parent surveys since the information from this survey provides some background information that informs us of the extent of the hunger/nutrition problem faced by program participants. The result of the parent survey, a determination of food security status, is used to enhance the analysis of the other surveys. We then examine the results of the program participant survey and finally, we examine the teacher survey results which provide the program outcomes data.

Parent surveys

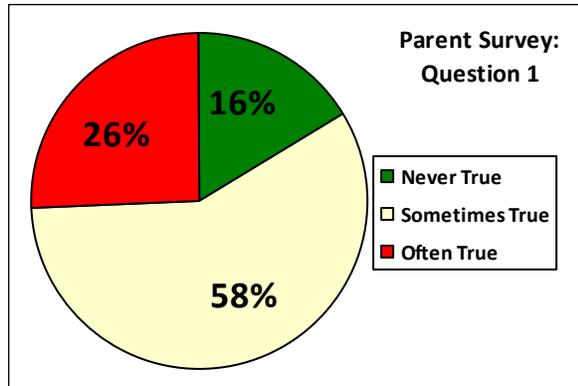
Parents of the program participants were asked to fill out a 5-item survey that was adapted from the USDA short form food security scale. A copy of the parent survey can be found in Appendix I. Each response to a question is assigned a numeric score. These scores from the five questions are then used to calculate a food security scale score ranging from 0 to 6. The food security scale scores determines placement into one of three food-security categories: food secure, food-insecure without hunger, and food-insecure with hunger. A simple definition of

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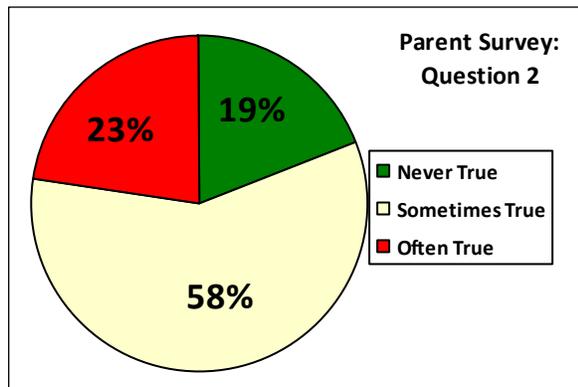
food insecurity used by the USDA is a situation a household has, “at some time during the year, had difficulty providing enough food for all their members due to a lack of resources.” A total of 602 participants’ parents provided fully completed food security surveys.

Since providing food is the central activity of the Kids Pack program and a lack of food is the underlying problem the program addresses, the distribution of responses to each survey item is presented in detail below.

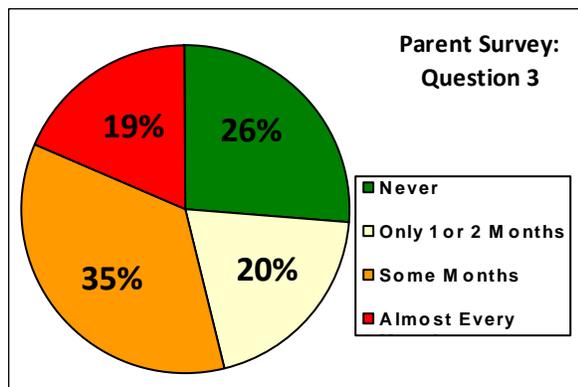
The first question on the parent survey is “In the past 12 months, the food that my family bought just didn’t last, and we didn’t have money to get more. How often was this true?” The response options were “Never true,” “Sometimes true,” and “Often true.” The chart at right shows the distribution of survey responses. Only 16% of the parents responded that they never run out of money for food, 58% indicated that it happened sometimes, and 26% indicated that it happened often. Overall, 84% of the respondents indicated that their family has run out of food and had no money to buy more food sometime in the last 12 months.



The second question on the parent survey is “My family could not afford to eat balanced meals. How often was this true in the last 12 months?” The response options were “Never true,” “Sometimes true,” and “Often true.” The distribution of the survey responses, which is very similar to that of the previous question, is shown in the table at right. Only 19% of the parents responded that they always able to afford balanced meals, 58% indicated that it happened sometimes, and 23% indicated this is often the situation their family faces. Overall, 81% of the respondents indicated that their family has problems affording balanced meals.



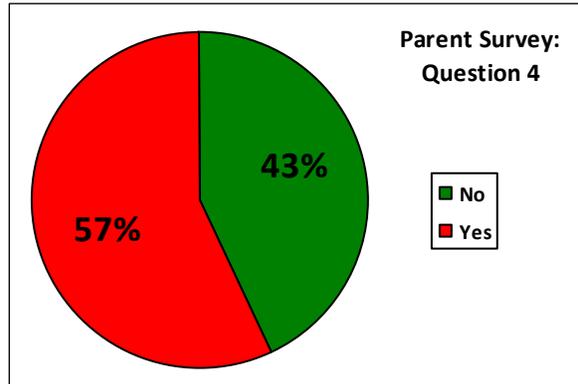
The third question on the parent survey is “In the past 12 months, how often did you or other persons in your household cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn’t enough money for food?” The response options were “Never,” “Only 1 or 2 months,” “Some months, but not every month,” and “Almost every month.” The chart at right shows the distribution of survey responses. About one-fourth of the parents



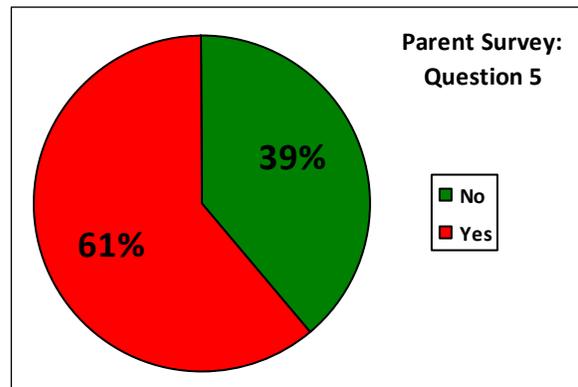
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responded that they never cut or skip meals, 20% indicated that it happened during only 1 or 2 months, over one-third of the respondents indicated that it some months, and 19% of the respondents indicated that having to cut or skip meals is a chronic problem. Overall, 74% of the respondents indicated that in the past 12 months they have had to cut or skip meals because they could not buy more food.

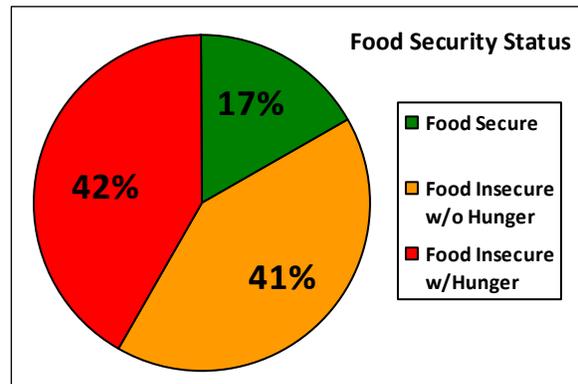
The fourth question on the parent survey is “In the last 12 months, did you ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn't enough money to buy food?” The response options were “Yes” and “No”. The chart at right shows the distribution of survey responses. 57% of the respondents indicated that they had eaten less than they felt they should because they could not afford to buy food while 43% indicated that this had not occurred.



The fifth and final question on the parent survey is “In the last 12 months, were you ever hungry but just didn't eat because you could not afford enough food?” The response options were “Yes” and “No”. The chart at right shows the distribution of survey responses. 61% of the respondents indicated that sometime in the past 12 months they went hungry because they could not afford to buy food.



The result of the parent survey is a food-security classification for the program participant's family. The chart at right shows the distribution of program participants regarding food security. 42% of the Kids Pack participant's families are food insecure with hunger, another 41% are food insecure without hunger, and only 17% are food secure. Overall, 83% of the program participants' families are food-insecure.



Participant Surveys

The Kids Pack program participants completed surveys about their experience with Kids Pack. The participant survey focuses largely on client satisfaction with Kids Pack in general and the clients' preference for specific categories of food. The survey also included questions regarding the quantity of food provided by Kids Pack, if participants share the Kids Pack food with family,

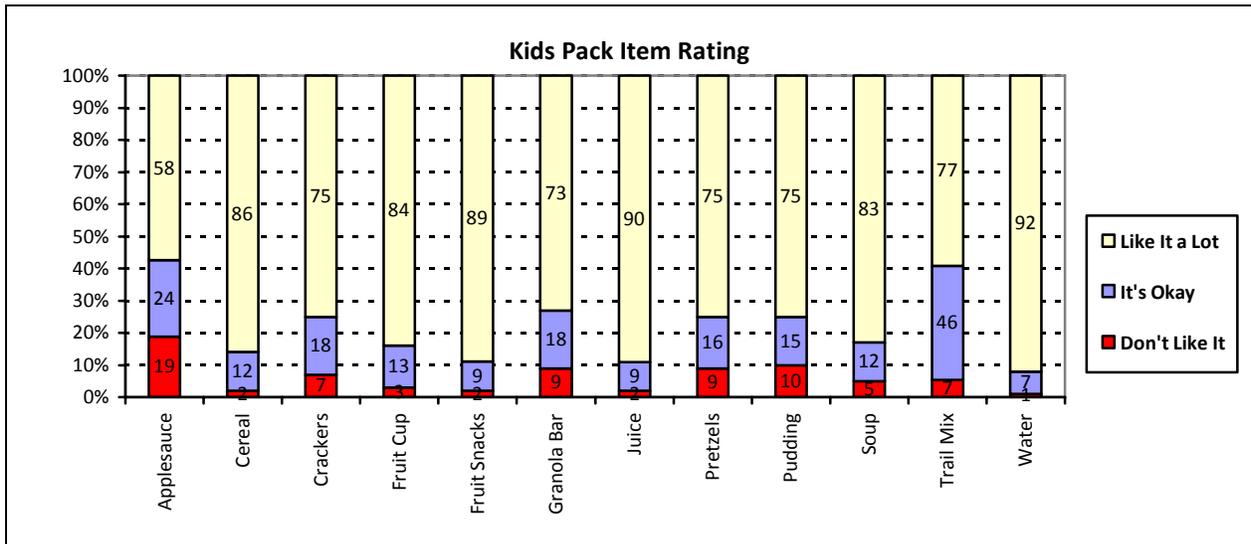
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and the availability of food at home other than what is provided by Kids Pack. A copy of the participant survey can be found in Appendix II.

To gauge the overall impression of the Kids Pack program on program participants, participants were asked to rate how well they liked Kids Pack. Their options were “I love getting my Kids Pack,” “I like getting my Kids Pack,” “I don’t like getting my Kids Pack,” and “I hate getting my Kids Pack.” Only 1% of the respondents indicated that they “hated” or “don’t like” Kids Pack. 30% of the respondents indicated that they like getting Kids Pack and 69% indicated that they loved getting Kids Pack. Overall 99% of the program participants indicated positive feelings towards Kids Pack.

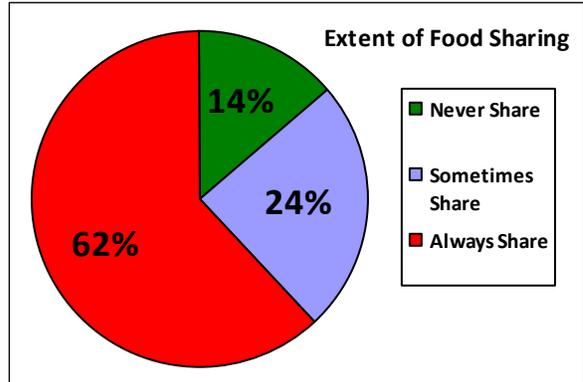
Program participants were asked a general question about how well they liked the food provided by Kids Pack. The overall response distribution was very similar to the general question regarding the program. Only 1% indicated that they either “hated” or “don’t like” the food. 37% indicated that they liked the food and 62% indicated that they “loved” the food. Overall, 99% had a positive opinion of the food provided by Kids Pack.

Program participants were asked to rate 12 food items that are often provided by Kids Pack. The chart on the following page shows how the items were rated. Some items were clearly more preferred than others. The items with the highest ratings, water and juice, were rated “Like it a lot” by more than 90% of the program participants. Fruit snacks, cereal, fruit cups, and soup were highly rated by at least 83% of the program participants. At least 73% of the program participants rated trail mix, crackers, pretzels, pudding, and granola bars very highly. The item with the lowest rating was applesauce, which was “liked a lot” by 58% of the program participants. Overall, the ratings for the food items were very high; the vast majority of participants like each of the food items.



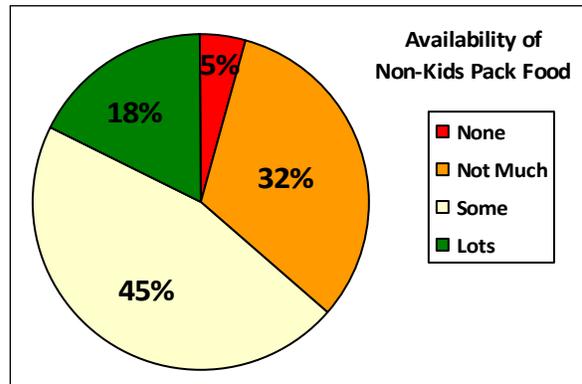
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Children were asked the extent to which they shared their Kids Pack food with family members. The chart at right shows the range of responses. 62% indicated that they always share their Kids Pack food and 24% indicated that they sometimes share their Kids Pack food. Only 14% said they never shared their Kids Pack food. Overall, 86% indicated that they shared their Kids Pack food with family members.

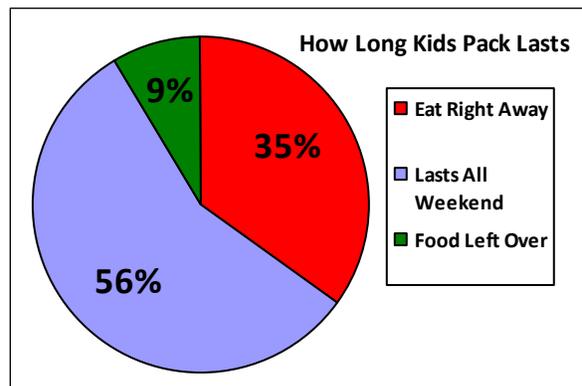


Further analysis into the relationship between food sharing and food security revealed that there is no correlation between food security and sharing their food. In other words, all program participants are equally likely to share their food regardless of the food situation at home.

Program participants were asked about the availability of food at home other than what is provided by Kids Pack. 5% of the program participants indicated that there is no other food and 32% indicated that there is not much food other than Kids Pack. 46% of the program participants indicated that there is some other food and 18% indicated that there is lots of food.



Program participants were asked how long the Kids Pack food lasts them. The chart at right shows the distribution of responses. 35% of the participants indicated that they eat all of the Kids Pack food right away, 56% indicated that the food lasts all weekend and 9% indicated that they have food left over. Further examination shows that how long the Kids Pack food lasts is related to the household food security level and the amount of other available; food lasts longer in households that are more food secure or have more non-Kids Pack food available.



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Outcomes Analysis

The Kids Pack program has one overarching program outcome – Low-income children do well in school. To measure this outcome four indicators, which were used to develop a composite scale, were chosen. Each teacher survey item, or indicator, was presented as a Likert-type

scale and coded from 1 to 5, with 5 representing the most positive score or most agreement with the statement on the survey. These numbers were used to calculate the statistics presented below. Results from each item were examined individually and as a grouped scale score. A copy of the teacher surveys can be found in Appendix III.

Outcome Indicator 1: Students are attentive during class

For indicator 1 of the program outcome (based on item #1 on the teacher survey), the mean score increased from 3.35 on the pre-program item to 3.81 on the post-program item. A paired-samples T Test shows that the differences in means were statistically significant, indicating that students, overall, were more attentive while at school after involvement with the Kids Pack program. The median score was 4 on both the pre-program and post-program.

The table at right, based on teacher surveys with the first item completed for both the pre-program and post-program shows that 45% of the students in the Kids Pack program were more attentive, 36% showed no change in attentiveness, while the remaining 19% were less attentive.

Indicator 1: Attentiveness	
Result	Percent
Negative Change	19%
No Change	36%
Positive Change	45%

Outcome Indicator 2: Student has positive attitude toward school

For indicator 2 of the program outcome (item #2 on the teacher survey), the mean score increased from 3.80 on the pre-program item to 4.12 on the post-program item. A paired-samples T Test shows that the differences in means were statistically significant, indicating a positive change in attitude toward school. The median score was 4 on both the pre-program and post-program.

The table at right, based on teacher surveys with the second item completed for both the pre-program and post-program shows that 40% of the students improved their attitude toward school while 18% of students participating in the Kids Pack program were rated as having a worse attitude towards school. The remaining 42% experienced no change in their attitude.

Indicator 2: Attitude	
Result	Percent
Negative Change	18%
No Change	42%
Positive Change	40%

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Outcome Indicator 3: Students actively participate in class

For indicator 3 of the program outcome (item #3 on the teacher survey), the mean score increased from 3.42 on the pre-program item to 3.82 on the post-program item. A paired-samples T Test shows that the differences in means were statistically significant, indicating that teachers perceived an increase in Kid Pack program participants participation in class. The median score was 4 on both the pre-program and post-program.

The table at right demonstrates that teachers rated 44% of students higher in class participation while 23% were rated lower. The remaining 33% showed no change in participation.

Indicator 3: Participation	
Result	Percent
Negative Change	23%
No Change	33%
Positive Change	44%

Outcome Indicator 4: Students Academic Performance is Satisfactory

For indicator 4 of the program outcome (item #4 on the teacher survey), the mean score increased from 3.06 on the pre-program item to 3.42 on the post-program item. A paired-samples T Test shows that the differences in means were statistically significant, indicating that teachers perceived an increase in Kid Pack program participants academic performance. The median score increased from 3 to 4.

The table at right shows the changes in academic performance. Overall, 41% of the students showed an improvement in grades, 42% showed no change, and only 17% had worse grades.

Indicator 4: Academics	
Result	Percent
Negative Change	17%
No Change	42%
Positive Change	41%

Teacher Survey Combined Scale Score

Outcome scale scores were created by adding the score from related individual survey items for the pre and post-tests. Data from each survey item were tested for their inclusion in a single scale using reliability and principal components analysis. Reliability analysis (Chronbach's Alpha) showed that these survey items were well-suited to inclusion in a scale. The Chronbach's Alpha statistic for the pre-test survey items was .862 while the post-test items had a reliability score of .864, well above minimally accepted standards. Principal components analysis showed that these items appear to be related to the same underlying construct. The research findings are presented below.

Teachers' evaluation of a students' attentiveness, attitude toward school, and participation in class were combined into a single scale that provides a summary measure of progress on the program outcome. A comparison of pre-program and post-program ratings indicated an increase in the mean score from 13.6 to 15.2. A paired-samples T Test shows that the differences in means are statistically significant. The median score increased from 14 to 16. This means that Kids Pack participants experienced an increase in overall teacher perception of students.

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The table at right shows that 57% of the students improved their overall performance in school, 16% remained steady, while 27% had decreased overall school performance.

Outcome 2 Results: Scale Score	
Result	Percent
Negative Change	27%
No Change	16%
Positive Change	57%

Summary of Outcomes Analysis

Overall, the outcome results for the Kids Pack program are positive. The majority of the program participants (57%) showed overall improvement. The results are consistent across indicators all indicators. The number of participants showing improvement outnumbers those with negative change by greater than a 2-to-1 margin.

Association of Food Security with Program Outcomes

This section examines the association of food security with the Kids Pack program outcome indicators. This is an important topic for discussion since the Kids Pack program attempts to improve school performance by removing hunger as a barrier to student learning. There has been a great deal of published research showing the link between student learning and nutrition and hunger. In this section of the report we examine the relationship between a students' household food security status at the end of the school year and the change in students' performance on the program outcome indicators. A preliminary analysis showed that there was no difference between the two food-insecure groups (with or without hunger) regarding outcomes. Therefore, they were combined into a single group to facilitate further analysis.

The following table shows the relationship between food security and the change in the outcome indicators related to school performance. With the exception of student participation, a statistically significant and positive relationship exists between food security status and the school performance indicators. A closer examination of the tables shows that for every indicator, including the combined scale score, that a smaller percentage of the students in the food secure category show negative change and that a larger percentage of the students showing positive change. Even though this does not demonstrate causality, it does demonstrate a large difference in outcomes between food secure and food-insecure students.

Cross Tabulation of Outcome Indicators by Food Security Status			
Food Security Status by Change in Student Attentiveness			
	Food Security Status		
	Food Insecure	Food Secure	Total
Negative Change	21%	7%	19%
No Change	35%	36%	35%
Positive Change	44%	57%	46%
Total	100%	100%	100%
Chi-Square = 7.808		Sig. = .020	
Food Security Status by Change in Student Attitude			
	Food Security Status		
	Food Insecure	Food Secure	Total
Negative Change	19%	10%	17%
No Change	43%	35%	42%
Positive Change	38%	55%	41%
Total	100%	100%	100%
Chi-Square = 7.675		Sig. = .022	

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Food Security Status by Change in Student Participation			
	Food Security Status		
	Food Insecure	Food Secure	Total
Negative Change	22%	10%	19%
No Change	35%	39%	36%
Positive Change	43%	51%	44%
Total	100%	100%	100%
Chi-Square = 4.744 Sig. = .093			
Food Security Status by Change in Student Academic Performance			
	Food Security Status		
	Food Insecure	Food Secure	Total
Negative Change	26%	10%	23%
No Change	32%	38%	33%
Positive Change	42%	52%	44%
Total	100%	100%	100%
Chi-Square = 7.915 Sig. = .019			
Cross Tabulation of Food Security Status by Change in Student Attentiveness			
	Food Security Status		
	Food Insecure	Food Secure	Total
Negative Change	30%	13%	27%
No Change	16%	16%	16%
Positive Change	54%	71%	57%
Total	100%	100%	100%
Chi-Square = 8.682 Sig. = .013			

Summary of Findings

This program outcomes evaluation has shown that the program is achieving its goal of low-income students doing better in school. The majority of participants (57%) are showing improvement. However, about one-fourth of the participants (27%) are doing worse in school. This underscores the challenges facing the program participants and their families. Considering the situation of most of the program participants, it is a demonstration of the Kids Pack program's effectiveness that more children are not falling further behind.

The findings from the parent surveys underscore the need for Kids Pack. A food-insecurity rate of 83% shows the vulnerability of this population. In fact, 41% of the program participants' families have experienced hunger in the past year. Examining the association between food security and program outcomes demonstrates the degree of association between food security and academic performance for program participants.

Finally, the program participants' survey shows that the children are very positive about the program and like the food the program provides. The participants' survey also corroborates the parents' survey findings household food situations and shows that Kids Pack benefits participants' families through the sharing of food.

In summary, it is safe to conclude that Kids Pack is having a positive impact on participants, Kids Pack is well-liked, and that the challenges faced by program participants will not end soon.