



## Introduction

Child Nutrition Programs are offered in over 101,000 school districts, providing over 10 million breakfasts and 31 million lunches to children daily.

Food safety is particularly important within this environment. Congress added specific food safety requirements in the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 in an effort to improve the safety of school meals.

There has been previous research done on school food safety programs and employee behaviors, however, this study provides specific insight from practitioners within the school nutrition environment about food safety research priorities.

## Purpose

The purpose of this study was to gain insight about current school foodservice research priorities and to provide guidance for future research.

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# RESEARCH PRIORITIES IN SCHOOL FOODSERVICE

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## Methodology

The two-phase Delphi technique was used to collect anonymous data from 50 school nutrition professionals.

### Phase 1

- Qualitative
- Open-ended questions regarding school food safety
  1. *Based on your knowledge of food safety programs in your district and others, are there specific areas that need to be improved?*
  2. *Are there any vulnerabilities in schools related to food safety?*
  3. *What challenges or barriers do you believe exist to having an effective food safety program in schools?*
  4. *What do you need to know more about in order to improve food safety in your schools?*
  5. *What specific research is needed related to school food safety?*
- A triangulated review was conducted independently by three researchers to identify emerging themes from phase one.

### Phase 2

- Emerging themes from phase 1 were sent out for professionals to rank in order of importance.

## Results

### Phase 1 Themes (n=40)

- Time and temperature control
- Cross-contamination
- Cooling of food
- Current condition and use of equipment and facilities
- Customization of HACCP plans
- Training

### Phase 2 Results (n=36)

Ranking of Food Safety Research Priorities	n
1 – Training	13
2 – Time & Temperature Control	10
3 – Cross-contamination	4
4 – Cooling of Food	4
5 – Customization of HACCP Plans	3
6 – Condition of Equipment & Facilities	2

## Applications

- This study provides valuable insight about research priorities in school foodservice.
- Food safety training is an important and multi-faceted priority for child nutrition programs.