

TDSB Students (Grades 7-12): Eating Habits and Nutrition

- This Census Fact Sheet examines the relationship between eating habits and nutrition and student and family demographic factors including: gender, ethno-racial background, sexual orientation, socio-economic status (SES), parental presence, and parental place of birth.
- The highlights in this Fact Sheet focus on the findings of the TDSB's 2011 Student Census in Grades 7-8 and Grades 9-12, as no questions related to nutrition or eating habits were included in the TDSB's 2012 Kindergarten-6 Parent Census. Where applicable, some comparison is made to the TDSB's 2006 Student Census questions related to eating habits.

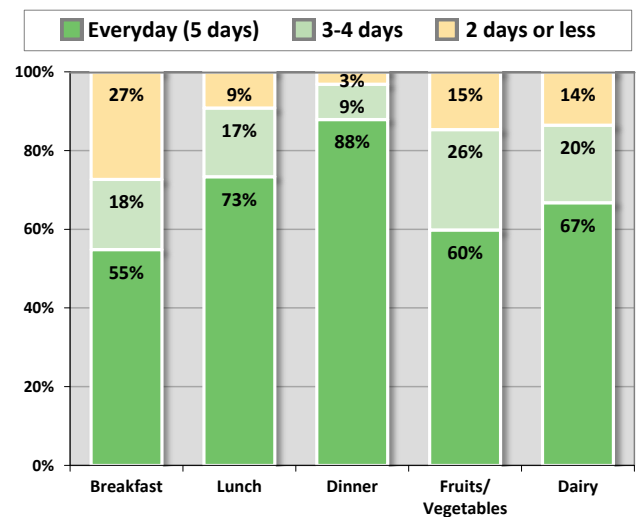
Overall Student Eating Habits and Nutrition

Overall Eating Habits

Overall, students in Grades 7-12 were much more likely to eat dinner every day, followed by lunch, and then by breakfast.

- During the school week, only 55% of students in Grades 7-12 ate breakfast every day and only three-quarters ate lunch daily (73%). This represents an improvement from the TDSB's 2006 Student Census.
- In addition, only about two-thirds (67%) consumed milk or dairy products daily and even fewer (60%) ate fruits and/or vegetables on a daily basis during the school week.

Weekly Eating Habits and Nutrition, Grades 7-12
(% reporting days per week)

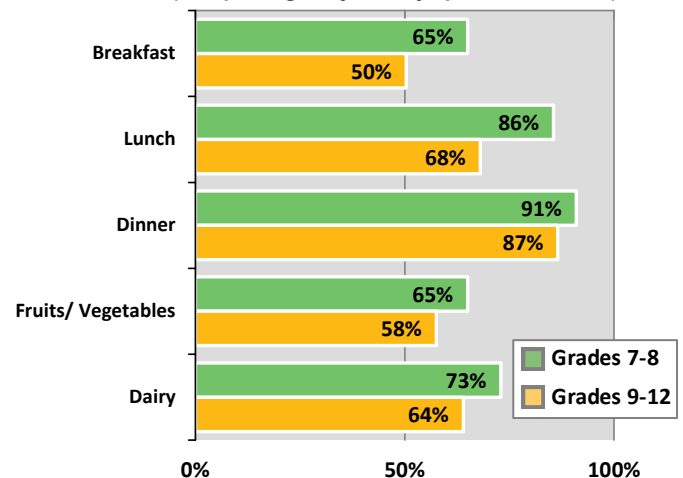


Grade

Students in Grades 7-8 were more likely than secondary school students to consume meals on a daily basis.

- Compared to secondary students, students in Grades 7 and 8 were more likely to eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner on a daily basis as well as to consume fruits and vegetables and milk or dairy products daily on school days.
- Only 50% of secondary students reported they ate breakfast daily and just over two-thirds (68%) ate lunch daily. In addition, less than two-thirds (64%) consumed milk or dairy products daily and even fewer (58%) ate fruits and/or vegetables daily.

Weekly Eating Habits and Nutrition, Grades 7-12
(% reporting daily—5 days per school week)

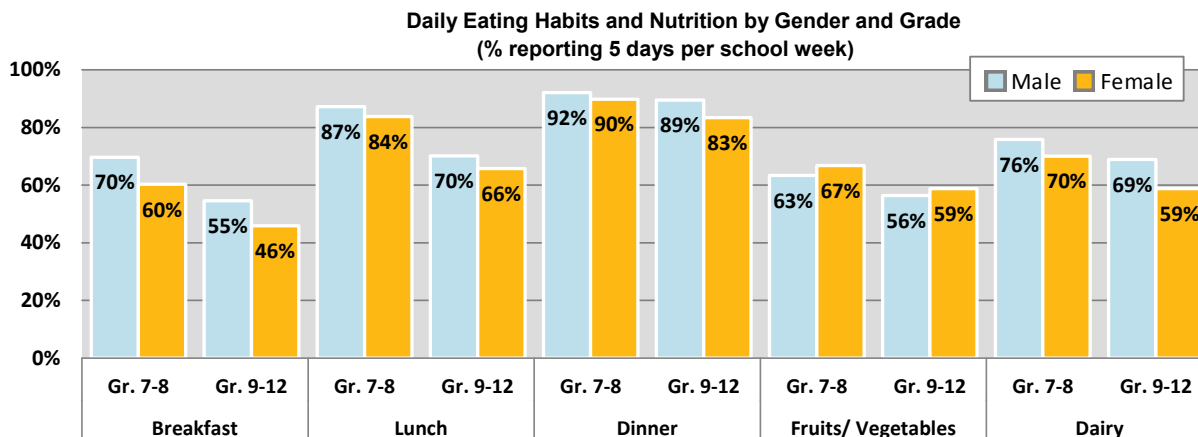


TDSB Students (Grades 7-12): Eating Habits and Nutrition

Gender

Females in Grades 7-12 were less likely to eat daily meals compared to males.

- Female students were less likely to eat breakfast every day, particularly those in Grades 9-12. In Grades 7-8, only 60% of girls ate breakfast each morning compared to 70% of boys, while in the secondary school panel, less than half of the girls (46%) ate breakfast daily compared to 55% of boys. Girls in secondary school were also less likely than boys to eat dinner daily (83% versus 89%)
- While girls are slightly more likely to eat fruits/vegetables daily compared to boys generally, they are less likely to consume milk or dairy products daily, particularly girls in Grades 9-12 (59% versus 69%).

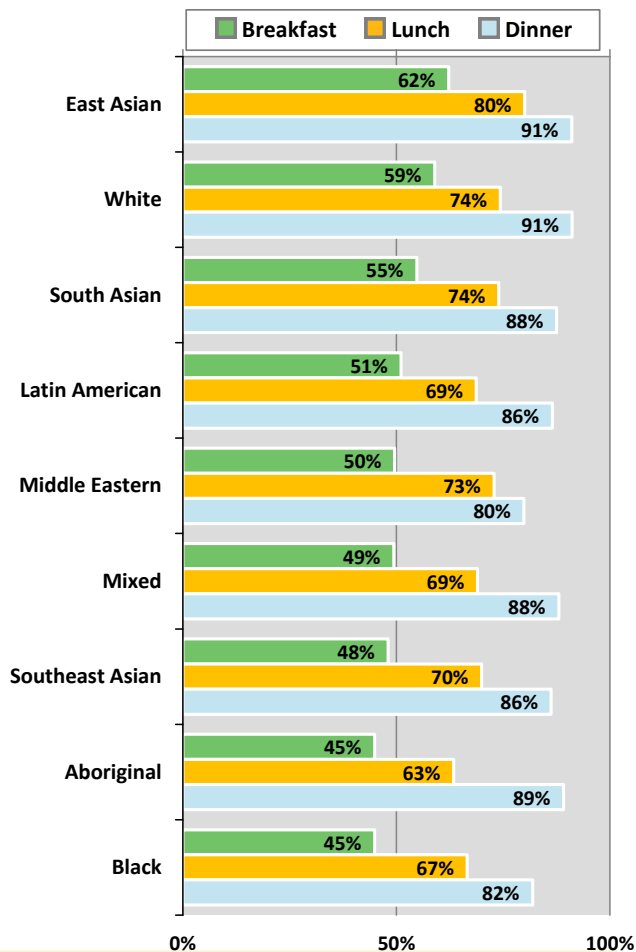


Ethno-racial Background

There were differences among students in eating habits and nutrition according to self-identified ethno-racial background.

- Compared to the overall TDSB average of 55%, the groups less likely to eat breakfast daily were Aboriginal (45%), Black (45%), Southeast Asian (48%), Mixed (49%), and Middle Eastern (50%) students. East Asian students were more likely to eat breakfast daily (62%).
- Compared to the overall TDSB average of 73%, the groups less likely to eat lunch daily were Aboriginal (63%) and Black (67%) students. East Asian students were again more likely to eat lunch daily (80%).
- There was less variation with respect to eating dinner daily, although compared to the TDSB average of 88%, Middle Eastern (80%) and Black students (82%) were less likely to eat dinner daily.
- With respect to eating fruits and/or vegetables daily, compared to the system average of 60%, Black (45%), Southeast Asian (49%), South Asian (52%), and Latin American (53%) students were less likely to eat fruits and/or vegetables daily, while East Asian (69%) and White (70%) students were more likely.
- A somewhat different pattern held for consuming milk or dairy products daily. Compared to the system average of 67%, Southeast Asian (56%), Black (57%), East Asian (60%), Middle Eastern (60%) and Aboriginal (61%) students were less likely to consume milk or dairy products daily, while White students were more likely (78%).

Daily Meals by Ethno-racial Background
(% reporting 5 days per school week)

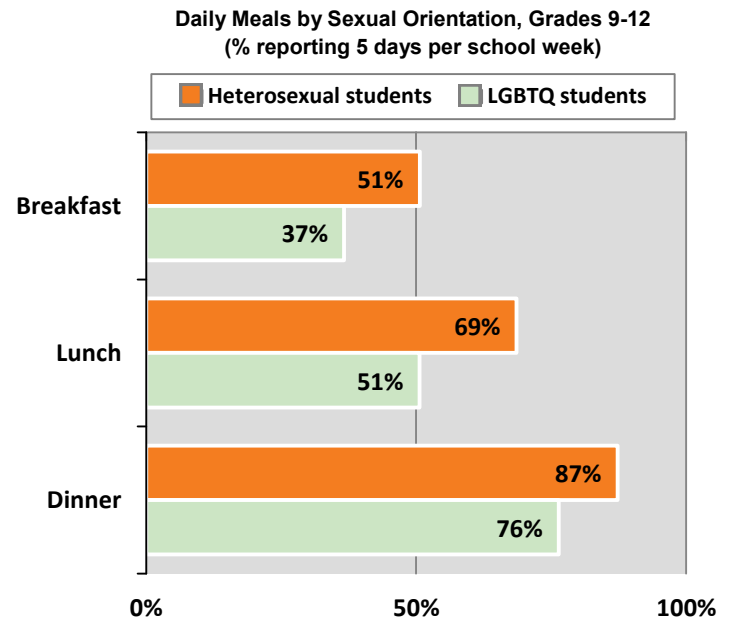


TDSB Students (Grades 7-12): Eating Habits and Nutrition

Sexual Orientation (Grades 9-12)

LGBTQ students were less likely to eat daily meals during the school week compared to heterosexual students.

- Students in Grades 9-12 who identified as LGBTQ were less likely to eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner each day during the school week compared to students who identified as heterosexual.
- While 51% of heterosexual students ate breakfast each morning before school, only 37% of LGBTQ students did. In addition, they were more likely to say they “never” ate breakfast before coming to school (21% versus 12%).
- The largest difference was with respect to eating lunch, where 69% of heterosexual students reported that they ate lunch daily, compared to only 51% of LGBTQ students.

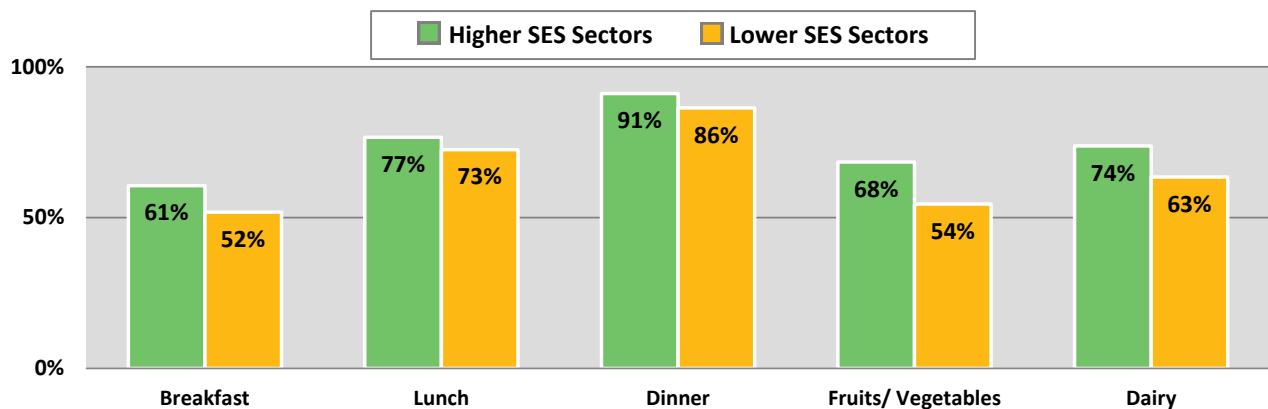


Socio-economic Status (SES)*

Students from lower socio-economic backgrounds were less likely to eat daily meals during the school week compared to students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds.

- Students from lower SES backgrounds, based on student reporting of their parents’ occupation(s), represented 50% of the Grade 7-12 student population.
- Students with parents in lower SES sectors were less likely to eat breakfast in particular compared to those whose parents worked in higher SES sectors (52% versus 61%), but were also less likely to eat lunch (73% versus 77%), and dinner (86% versus 91%) daily. These students were also less likely to eat fruits and/or vegetables (54% versus 68%) or to consume milk or dairy products every day (63% versus 74%).
- Results were similar for parent education, another measure of socio-economic status.

Daily Eating Habits and Nutrition by Socioeconomic Status, Grades 7-12
(% reporting 5 days per school week)



* Parent(s) occupation was coded into one of five occupational categories and used as a measure of socio-economic status. Higher SES sectors include parents of students working in professional and senior management sectors, and parents working in semi-professional and middle management sectors. Lower SES sectors include parents who work in skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled clerical and trades occupations, and parents who are non-remunerative, including homemakers, and those who are unemployed or retired

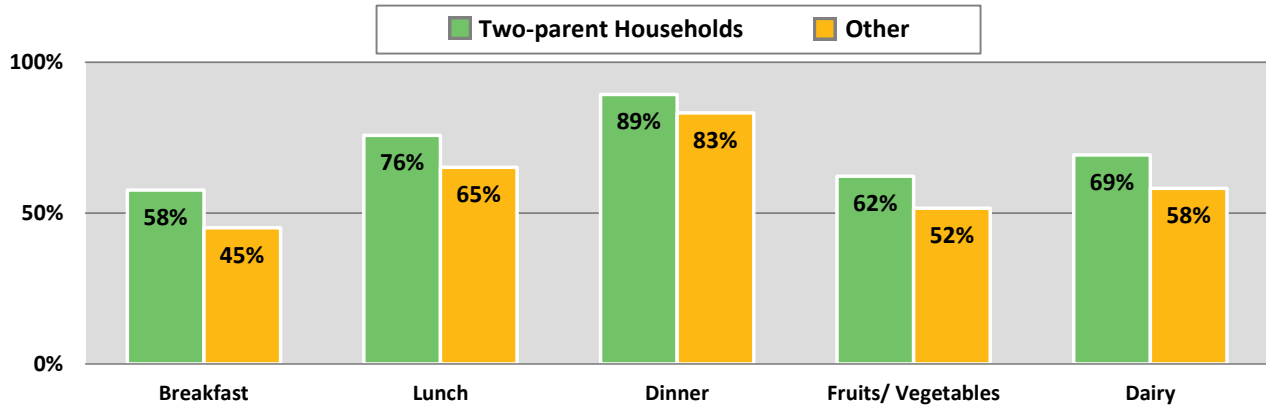
TDSB Students (Grades 7-12): Eating Habits and Nutrition

Parental Presence

Students from two-parent households were more likely to eat daily meals during the school week compared to students from single-parent and other households.

- Students who were living in single-parent households, either with their mother or father, or with others such as grandparents or other relatives, were less likely to eat breakfast compared to students who were living with two parents (45% versus 58%), lunch (65% versus 76%), and dinner (83% versus 89%) daily during the school week.
- These students were also less likely to eat fruits and/or vegetables (52% versus 62%), or to consume milk or dairy products on a daily basis (58% versus 69%).

Daily Eating Habits and Nutrition by Parental Presence, Grades 7-12
(% reporting 5 days per school week)



Parental Place of Birth

Students from immigrant families, with both parents born outside of Canada, were less likely to eat fruits and/or vegetables or to consume milk/dairy products on a daily basis.

- Students from immigrant families, with both parents born outside of Canada, were less likely to eat fruits and/or vegetables or to consume milk/dairy products on a daily basis during the school week compared to students with one or both parents born in Canada.
- This was especially true for secondary school students. Only 54% of secondary school students from immigrant families ate fruit and/or vegetables daily, compared to 65% of students with one foreign-born parent and 67% of students with Canadian-born parents. And, only 60% consumed milk or dairy products daily compared to 72% of students with one foreign-born parent and 76% of students with Canadian-born parents.

Daily Eating Habits and Nutrition by Parental Place of Birth, Grades 7-12
(% reporting 5 days per school week)

