



Nordic Network NTP– Healthy Choices

Nordic National Technology Platforms – Food for Life

Quality school meals for children



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Quality meals for children is an investment for the future

Introduction

The Nordic countries have a common goal to improve eating habits and physical activity and motivate „Healthy Choices“ for children (Nordic Plan of Action, 2006). Current practices in school lunch systems in the Nordic countries vary. Many factors can influence the delivery of meals in schools, both as hot lunches and lunchbox. Ongoing research and the view of stakeholders has been explored to identify common obstacles and key success factors to promote healthier choices for school children.

Aim

To integrate available knowledge from different disciplines, with experience and common understanding, to promote attractive choices of healthier food for young people.

Collaboration in schools

School-based dietary programs have a potential to promote healthier eating among children and adolescents. The combination of school meal modifications and classroom education has demonstrated positive effects (WHO, 2009)^b.

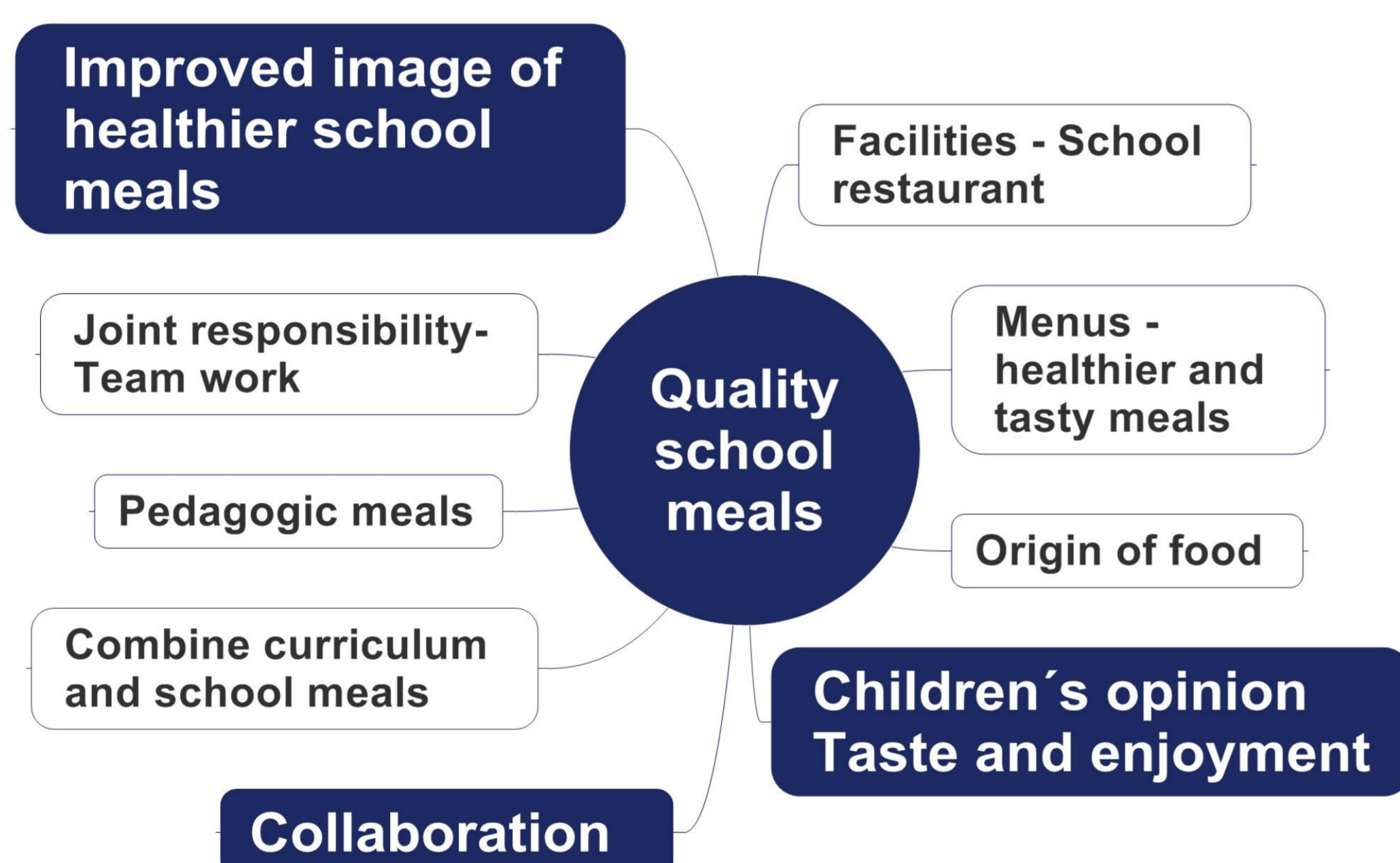


Figure 1. Recommendations to school authorities to enhance collaboration and take into account the view of the children, to ensure quality meals in schools and promote healthier choices.

Numerous projects and initiatives in the Nordic countries have promoted healthy eating among school children and given examples of *key success factors*:

- Take into account the opinion of children and treat school meals with due respect to improve their image (Fig. 1).
- Quality meals in schools are a joint responsibility of a number of stakeholders (Fig 2).

^aNordic Plan of Action on better health and quality of life through diet and physical activity, 2006. Nordic Council of Ministers, ISBN 92-893-1345-5 .

^bWorld Health Organization (2009). *Interventions on diet and physical activity: what works*. Summary report. Geneva: World Health Organization.

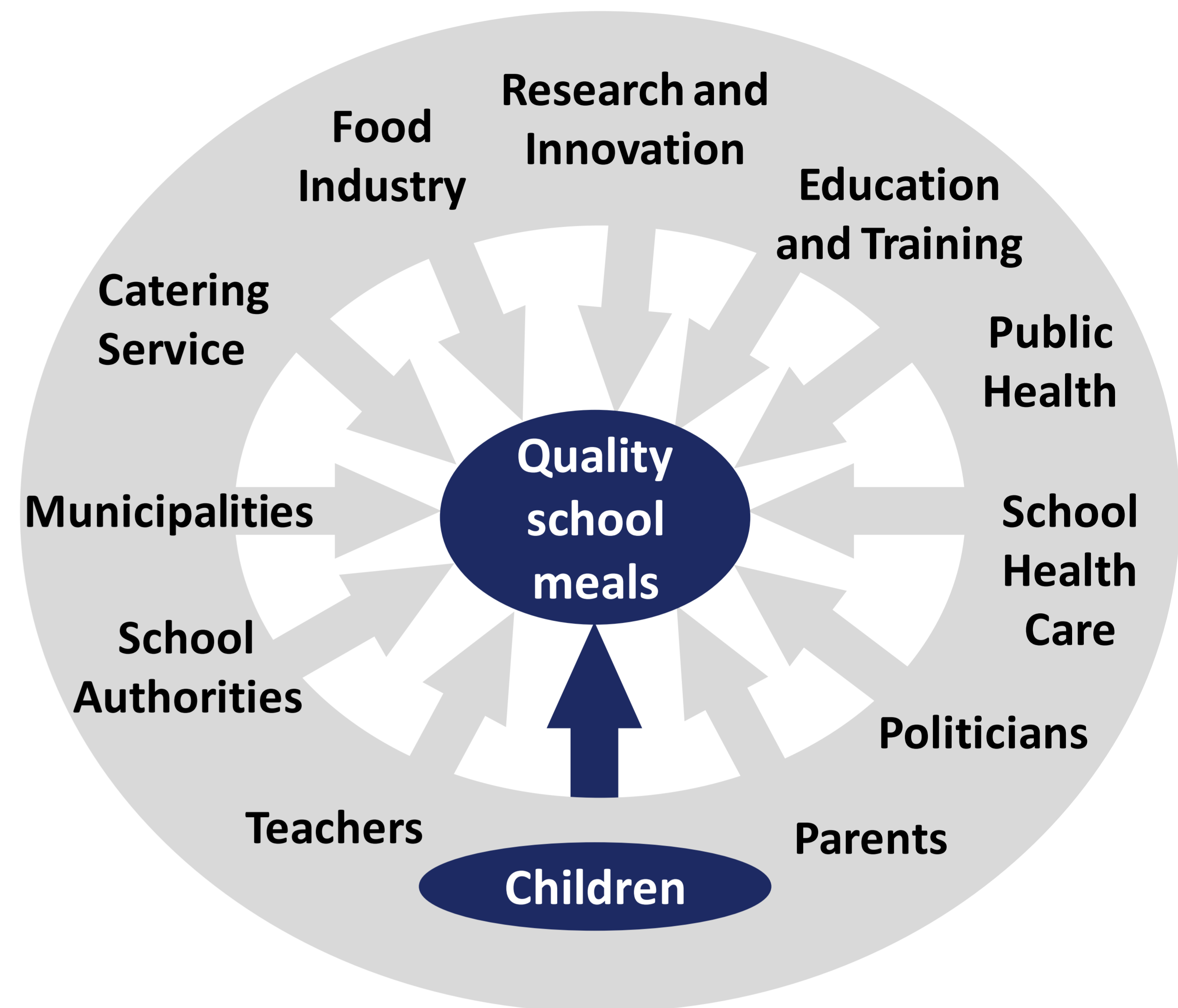


Figure 2. Various stakeholders share responsibilities in the delivery of quality meals in schools with healthier food choices.

Nordic recommendations for quality meals and healthier choices

Education and training

- Further education of canteen staff
 - ✓ Communication and interaction / Use of technology / Nutrition / Taste factors of food / Cleaning and hygiene
- Improved management of the canteen staff
- Atmosphere, attitude and physical environment
- Improve general image of “healthier school meals”

Open innovation

- Create an arena with stakeholders (see Fig. 2) to improve a variety of attractive, healthier and tasty products and meal combinations.
- Take into account children’s preferences
- Translate nutritional guidelines for schools into products with specified quality and create recipes of healthier choices for children

Nordic priorities

to influence the research strategy of ETP Food for Life and EC (KBBE FP7)

- Factors determining children’s food choices
- Promote the development of healthier products and meals
- Effect of food service and procurement systems on quality meals

Children eat food, not nutrients!

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