

Table of contents

PREFACE	- 3 -
LIST OF PAPERS	- 4 -
TABLE OF CONTENTS	- 5 -
ENGLISH SUMMARY	- 7 -
SAMMENDRAG	- 9 -
ABBREVIATIONS	- 11 -
1. INTRODUCTION	- 12 -
1.1 Objectives of the PhD thesis	- 13 -
2. BACKGROUND	- 14 -
2.1 Danish children’s dietary intake during school hours	- 14 -
2.2 Cognitive function and brain development	- 15 -
Development of cognitive function	- 15 -
Factors influencing cognitive and academic performance	- 16 -
Gender differences in cognitive and academic performance	- 18 -
Socioeconomic differences in cognitive and academic performance.....	- 18 -
2.3 Nutrition and cognitive performance	- 20 -
Iron and cognitive performance	- 20 -
Omega 3 fatty acids and cognitive performance	- 22 -
Carbohydrates and cognitive performance	- 25 -
Effects of school meal interventions on cognition and school performance	- 27 -
2.4 Potential effects of school meals	- 31 -
3. METHODOLOGY	- 32 -
3.1 Study setting	- 32 -
3.2 Study population	- 32 -
3.3 Nutritional intervention	- 33 -
Control meals.....	- 33 -
Intervention meals and menu.....	- 34 -
Engaging activities.....	- 34 -
3.4 Study design	- 35 -
3.5 Data collection	- 36 -
Assessment of cognition and school performance	- 37 -

Attention	- 38 -
Reading	- 39 -
Mathematics	- 41 -
Overall patterns in test performance	- 41 -
Background information, anthropometry, physical activity and dietary intake	- 41 -
Biochemical markers of nutritional status	- 42 -
4. PAPER I	- 44 -
The effects of healthy school meals on concentration and school performance in 8 to 11 year old children in the OPUS School Meal Study: a cluster randomized controlled cross-over trial	- 44 -
5. PAPER II	- 67 -
Are diet induced changes in iron and n-3 fatty acid status associated with cognitive performance in 8-11 year-old Danish children? Secondary analyses of a cluster-randomised trial.....	- 67 -
6. PAPER III	- 94 -
Differences in the effects of school meals on children’s cognitive performance according to gender, household education, and baseline reading skills	- 94 -
7. DISCUSSION	- 111 -
7.1 Did the school meal intervention have an impact on attention, reading and math performance?	- 111 -
Comparison with previous school meal studies.....	- 112 -
7.2 What was the role of dietary intake, iron and n-3 LCPUFA-status ?	- 112 -
Behavioural and environmental aspects.....	- 113 -
Potential explanations for effect modifications.....	- 114 -
7.3 Effects on inequalities in school performance	- 115 -
7.4 Strengths and limitations	- 116 -
Reliability and validity of cognitive tests & derived outcomes	- 119 -
8. CONCLUSION.....	- 121 -
9. PERSPECTIVES	- 122 -
9.1 Implications for future research	- 122 -
9.2 What have we learned and where do we go from here?	- 124 -
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	- 126 -
RELATED PUBLICATIONS.....	- 127 -
REFERENCES.....	- 128 -
APPENDIX A	- 139 -