

Parents



Parents are important decision makers in the school environment. You want the best possible educational experience for your children. However, not every child is prepared to learn in the morning for various reasons, including lack of sleep, bussing schedules or lateness. Parents are also busier than ever with more and more working outside the home. One way to prepare these students for a successful day at school and help parents is for schools to provide breakfast. Parents can use this option to prepare their children for the school day.

This section shows you how you can prepare students for a successful day at school by using the School Breakfast Program. Cited studies prove the importance and impact of breakfast on a child's ability to learn. Sample menus are included to show the healthy breakfast options available for your child at school.

A parent may be concerned about...

CHILD ALREADY EATS AT HOME

It is wonderful if your family has time to eat breakfast together, but if not and your children eat breakfast on the run, it may not be as much or as wholesome as you would like. Further, if your children have a long bus ride, they may be hungry by the time the bus arrives at school. Whether or not your children have time to eat at home, the School Breakfast Program ensures a healthy option is always available.

PARENT ROLE

Mornings can be really crazy! School breakfast is an option when family schedules are rushed or a child is unable to eat early in the morning. Parents can ensure their children are fed before school by using the School Breakfast Program.

COST

Breakfast at school is affordable. A full breakfast costs less than convenience store items. If you qualify for the lunch program, you also qualify for the breakfast program, with no additional paperwork. Payment is based upon parent income and is confidential. If you must pay, you will find that breakfast often costs less than a dollar. Nowhere else will you find a balanced breakfast at such a low cost.

LACK OF TIME

Time is an issue for many people, especially parents. One way to increase the amount of time in your day and to ease worries is to provide breakfast at school for your children. Also, children may find themselves waking up late for school and skipping breakfast altogether because they are racing to the bus stop or to school. By providing breakfast as an option for students, they will be able to have a healthy and nutritious meal before the start of their day, even if it didn't start out as planned.

CHILD NOT HUNGRY

Maybe your child is not hungry when breakfast is served at home. Children may have different hunger cycles, so they may not be ready to eat breakfast when parents are. Some of these children go to school and are ready to eat when they arrive or after 1st period. Serving breakfast not only satisfies their hunger but helps students focus during the morning school hours.

BREAKFAST ALTERNATIVE

Children, just like adults, base their food choices on what is available. They may make unhealthy choices if vending machines are the only option. Although some schools may have good breakfast vending options, these foods are often high in sugar and fat. Convenience stores and fast food locations are similar in providing high calorie choices. School breakfast is a value for parents and students alike. Students receive $\frac{1}{4}$ of their daily nutrients at a very low cost for parents. What a value!

SOCIALIZING

School breakfast offers an opportunity for students to eat with their siblings and classmates in a non-threatening environment. This time of socializing allows children to learn from one another by talking and conversing. Students are usually eager to arrive at school to meet with their friends. Breakfast is a time for them to do so without interruption in the classroom.

Why School Breakfast?

- Because there is a link between breakfast and learning, students experience an improved learning environment.
- When breakfast is available at school, students have improved attendance, decreased tardiness and discipline referrals. The few minutes it takes to add breakfast to the school day are offset by students' active participation once their brains are fueled.
- Parents are pleased when breakfast is available at school for those mornings when their student is unable to eat when he or she first gets up or when breakfast at home is just not possible or convenient.
- School breakfast may reduce the need for you to keep snacks in the classroom for hungry students.

There's More Than One Way to Serve Breakfast

Besides the traditional serving in the cafeteria, breakfast can be served in the classroom. This option (which takes approximately 10 minutes) allows students to eat breakfast while the teacher takes attendance or checks homework. Students serve and clean up themselves.

Another option is Breakfast After 1st Period. This option would replace the "milk break" which is not reimbursed by USDA.

Particularly popular in high schools is the Grab 'n Go breakfast. Bagged breakfasts can be placed in high traffic areas throughout school so students can pick them up and eat them between classes.

With Breakfast on the Bus, bagged breakfasts are handed to students as they step on the bus in the morning.

Studies show...

“Children who ate breakfast at school scored notably higher on most of the tests than children who ate breakfast at home and children who did not eat breakfast.”

-- Archives of Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine, October, 1996

Students eating school breakfast resulted in:

- **Higher scores on assessment tests**
- **Findings that support previous research**
- **Positive effects from eating breakfast in the classroom vs. the cafeteria**

Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School

“Maryland Meals for Achievement”

www.msde.state.md.us/programs/foodandnutrition/mmfa.pdf

“Children in the School Breakfast Program were shown to have significantly higher standardized achievement test scores than eligible non-participants.”

-- Tufts University School of Nutrition Science and Policy, 1998

School breakfast resulted in:

- **Increased math and reading scores**
- **Fewer nurse’s office visits**
- **Improved classroom behavior**
- **Improved attentiveness reported by teachers**
- **Improved performance reported by parents**

Minnesota Dept. of Children, Families and Learning & University of Minnesota

“School Breakfast Programs/Energizing the Classroom”

<http://cfl.state.mn.us/energize.pdf>

“Students who ate school breakfast often had math grades that averaged almost a letter grade higher than students who ate school breakfast rarely.”

-- *Pediatrics*, Vol. 101 No.1, January 1998

Breakfast at school resulted in significant:

- **Increases in math grades**
- **Decreases in student absences**
- **Decreases in student tardiness**
- **Decreases in ratings of psychosocial problems**

Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School

“The Relationship of School Breakfast to Psychosocial and Academic Functioning”

<http://archpedi.ama-assn.org> (search “past issues” for 1998 vol. 152 no. 9)

http://www.findarticles.com/cf_0/m2250/n2_v37/20576437/p1/article.jhtml?term=psychosocial+functioning

“The benefits [of the School Breakfast Program] include higher performance on standardized tests, better school attendance, lowered incidence of anemia, reduced need for costly special education.”

-- Tufts University Center on Hunger, Poverty and Nutrition Policy, 1994

Some of the nutritious foods your children can eat at school:

Meat/Meat Alternate	Grains/Breads	Fruit/Vegetable	Mixed Dishes
Hard-boiled eggs	Dry cereal	Apple wedges	Toasted cheese sandwich
Sausage links or patty	Pita bread	Banana	Cheese and egg omelet
Ham slice	Hot cereal	Grapes	Peanut butter on toast
Cottage cheese	Biscuits	Orange wedges	Breakfast pizza
Turkey sausage	Muffins	Applesauce	Cheese and egg casserole
Canadian bacon	Bagels	Peaches	Breakfast burrito
String cheese	Raisin toast	Fruit cocktail	Egg and bagel sandwich
Peanut butter	Waffles	Pineapple	Peanut butter and apples
Yogurt	French toast	Pears	Pancake and sausage kabob
Scrambled eggs	Pancakes	Fruit cup	
Cheese cubes	French toast sticks	Melon	
	Granola	Raisins	
	Coffee cake	Strawberries	
	Quick breads	Vegetable juice	
	Graham crackers	100% fruit juice	
	Sweet rolls	Hashbrowns	

Sample Menus:

Cold:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Assorted cereal Granola bar	Assorted cereal Fruit and grain bar	Assorted cereal Toaster pastry	Assorted cereal Banana bread	Assorted cereal Muffin
Orange smiles or 100% juice	Apple or 100% juice	Banana or 100% juice	Melon or 100% juice	Assorted fruit or 100% juice
Milk	Milk	Milk	Milk	Milk

Hot:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Oatmeal w/ toast	Canadian bacon, cheese and biscuit	French toast sticks sausage patty	Bagel w/ egg and cheese	Pancakes Sausage
Raisins or 100% juice	Apple or 100% juice	Banana or 100% juice	Melon medley or 100% juice	Assorted fruit or 100% juice
Milk	Milk	Milk	Milk	Milk