



www.ChildrensHungerAlliance.org

National School Breakfast Program

Benefits of Breakfast

Breakfast and Learning

Recent scientific research on the link between children's nutrition and academic performance proves that children need food and nutrition to perform well in school! Studies show that eating breakfast gives children the nutritional boost they need to jump start the learning process as well as many other benefits.

Financial Benefits of an Effective Breakfast Program

Don't miss the opportunity to collect federal reimbursements for your school. School Business officers interested in increasing food service department revenue should strongly consider the financial benefits gained from improving breakfast participation.

By maximizing participation in the breakfast program, food service directors are able to receive the greatest amount of federal reimbursement. The additional revenue generated by breakfast can offset the fixed costs of kitchen equipment that is used for both breakfast and lunch.

As breakfast participation increases, so does the efficiency of cafeteria staff. Staff are required to prepare more meals per labor hour, thereby decreasing the per breakfast labor cost. Considering the fact that labor costs are only second to food in terms of food service expenditure, this is a significant benefit of high breakfast participation

Breakfast and Student Health

Studies show that children who eat breakfast when compared to those who rarely eat breakfast visit the school nurse less.

Basics of Breakfast

What is the National School Breakfast Program

The School Breakfast Program is one of several Child Nutrition Programs sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and administered by The Ohio Department of Education. These programs reimburse schools and other youth-serving organizations for providing nutritious meals to children. The School Breakfast Program in Ohio provides nearly 1 million breakfast meals served daily at over 2,500 buildings through the School Breakfast Program.

What Schools Can Participate

- Any school of high school grade or under that is recognized by the State of Ohio as operating under public or non-profit private ownership
- Any public or non-profit class of pre-primary grades that is recognized by the State of Ohio
- Any public or non-profit, private license Residential Child Care Institution (RCCI)

How Much do Children Pay for School Breakfast

Based on a household's size and income, a child may be eligible for free meals or meals at reduced price. Schools may charge no more than \$0.30 for a reduced-priced breakfast. Schools set their own prices for meals served to students who pay the full meal price, though all schools must operate meal services as non-profit programs.

What are the Breakfast Meal Requirements?

Schools must offer a wide variety of healthy foods that meet USDA requirements and supply 1/4 of the recommended daily nutrient values children need.

Sample Cold Menu:

Muffin
String Cheese
Juice 100%
Milk

Sample Hot Menu:

Breakfast Pizza
Juice 100%
Milk

Two servings of Meat/Meat Alternate (1 ounce per serving or 1/2 egg) or two servings of Grains/Bread or one serving of Meat/Meat Alternate and one serving of Grains/Breads.

Delivery Methods

Breakfast in the Classroom

Breakfast items are available to all students in a central location or within each classroom. Students eat in their homeroom during attendance and announcements. This strategy provides the benefit of having all students in their seats, ready to begin the school day. It also significantly increases participation in the School Breakfast Program and leads to a stronger community within the school.

Grab N' Go Breakfast

Students stop at the cafeteria or other designated location to pick up breakfast items to take to their classroom before school starts. This approach works especially well in middle and high schools.

Breakfast After 1st Period

Some schools opt to take a break later in the morning. These schools make breakfast available on carts in the hallways at a designated time. Students can pick up a nutritious breakfast to eat between classes. This approach also helps build stronger school community and greatly increases student participation.

No Cost Breakfast

All students receive a breakfast meal at no cost to the student, regardless of income eligibility. Individual student participation is counted via an approved counting system, and the school claims the meals based on the income eligibility of the participating student. This strategy often increases participation by removing a stigma that might keep low-income children from participating.

Strategies that Increase Participation

For School Administrators

Superintendents and principals have a strong interest in the academic success of their students. For instance, some schools serve breakfast on test days because studies show an improvement in performance when students have eaten breakfast. However, breakfast is important every school day. Students must be alert and learn skills throughout the school year to do well on standardized tests.

For Food Service Staff

Food service operates as part of the educational team in schools; therefore, you do more than just serve food to children. You help to support a healthy learning environment for students. By making breakfast an option, you provide parents a choice to feed their children at school. For parents of low-income kids, you're providing a contribution to the success of students in your school by making breakfast available.

For School Health Professionals

Many school nurses have been the catalyst for expanding breakfast to more children in school. Nurses see first hand the correlation between nutrition and performance when they treat students at school for headaches, nausea, stomach cramps and fatigue.

For Secondary School Participation

Studies from the U.S. Department of Agriculture have shown that more and more students are missing breakfast, starting around 6th grade and continuing through their senior year in high school.

Breakfast Success Stories

Columbus Public Schools

No Cost Breakfast

Children's Hunger Alliance worked closely with the district's superintendent to implement a **Breakfast at No Cost** program during the 2005-2006 school year, which now serves approximately **22,000 free breakfasts** each day, compared to 17,514 breakfasts the previous year. From September 2004 to September 2005, the district reported an approximate **increase of 24%** in school breakfast participation. Also new to the school day is a **closed lunch period**, which has significantly increased student participation in the **National School Lunch Program**.

Caldwell Exempt Village School District

No Cost Breakfast

In 2004, Children's Hunger Alliance worked with the district to pilot a **Breakfast at No Cost** program in grades K-4. The success of free breakfast in grades K-4 led the district to implement the program in grades 5-8. By September 2005, the district had increased program participation by approximately **339 breakfasts** each day. From September 2004 to September 2005, the district reported an approximate **increase of 280%** in school breakfast participation.

Noble Local School District

No Cost Breakfast

Before February 2004, the district did not offer breakfast to its schools. That month, the district worked with Children's Hunger Alliance to implement **Breakfast at No Cost** in grades K-4. By April, the district had expanded the program to include grades 5-8 and the high school. The district now serves free **Breakfast in the Classroom** for all students in grades K-4, breakfast in the cafeteria in grades 5-8 and **Grab N' Go Breakfast** in grades 7-12. From September 2004 to September 2005, the district reported an approximate **increase of 29%** in total breakfasts served.

Breakfast Menu Ideas

Breakfast Meal Patterns

Schools must offer a wide variety of healthy foods that meet USDA requirements and supply 1/4 of the recommended daily nutrient values children need.

Sample Cold Menu:

Muffin
String Cheese
Juice 100%
Milk

Sample Hot

Breakfast Pizza
Juice 100%
Milk

Menu:

Two servings of Meat/Meat Alternate (1 ounce per serving or 1/2 egg) or two servings of Grains/Bread or one serving of Meat/Meat Alternate and one serving of Grains/Breads.

Breakfast Cereals

Breakfast cereals should be selected with consideration of their sugar content per serving. Acceptable cereals will contain 40% or less of their weight as sugar.

Breakfast FAQ

1. *Shouldn't parents be feeding breakfast to their children before sending them to school? Is breakfast only for low-income students?*

First of all, let's remember that all children need a nutritious breakfast to start their day! In our changing culture and families, schools that offer breakfast can help out busy two-parent-working families, making for a less hectic morning. In other families, we know that the food availability tends to move from feast to famine at the end of the day.

2. *Why should I start a breakfast program, especially if I don't have high free and reduced numbers?*

Breakfast is often considered the most important meal of the day! It provides up to ¼ of the RDA for children, assuring that children have the fuel in the morning to learn instead of concentrating on an empty stomach. It can be especially helpful in rural areas and other districts where children might have to get up EARLY to catch buses.

3. What is the link between eating a healthy breakfast and academic gains?

Children who eat breakfast when compared to those who rarely eat breakfast:

- a. Learn faster and have better memory skills
- b. Achieve better math and reading scores & better standardized test scores
- c. Have increased attentiveness in the classroom and less anxiety
- d. Behave better, fewer incidences of disciplinary actions and are more socially developed
- e. Attend school more often with fewer absences & tardies
- f. Visit the school nurse less often.

4. As the Food Service Director, what things will I have to consider in operating a successful program?

Don't try to do it all by yourself! You will need the support of your superintendent, business manager, teachers and custodians to make it a success. The key is that the children's needs should be at the center of all that we do. You will have to convince them that the effects of the 2 – 10 minutes can last an entire school day by preparing children to learn.

5. What is the average cost for breakfast in the state and what's the current reimbursement for breakfast?

The average food cost is \$0.70. USDA reimbursements are \$1.40 (Free), \$1.10 (Reduced) and \$0.25 (Paid).

6. What's "severe need" and how do I know if my district is eligible to receive it?

A school must have served 40% of their lunches to free or reduced priced students in the second preceding year in order to receive severe need assistance. Check with your ODE consultant.

7. Can I start mid-year?

Yes!!! Some districts have delayed the start of new programs until the beginning of the school year routines have been established. The best way to start is with a pilot in one building to get the kinks worked out. If you have several buildings that are interested in starting, you might want to stagger the start-up dates. Other districts choose to start up after a vacation or break.

8. Who can help me get started?

Children's Hunger Alliance would be happy to discuss your district's individual needs/concerns. But there are other key players whose support you will need. Don't forget the following;

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| * Superintendent | * Principals |
| * Teachers | * Custodians |
| * Business Manager | * Transportation Director |

9. What are some nutritious meat alternatives?

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| * Hard-boiled eggs | * peanut butter |
| * Cottage cheese | * yogurt |
| * String cheese | |

If you need more information or have any questions, please feel free to contact Charlie Kozlesky, Senior Vice President of School & Summer Nutrition, at 614-341-7700, ext. 221 or CKozlesky@ChildrensHungerAlliance.org.

www.ChildrensHungerAlliance.org