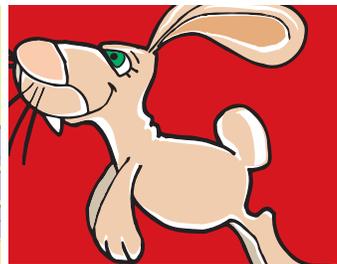
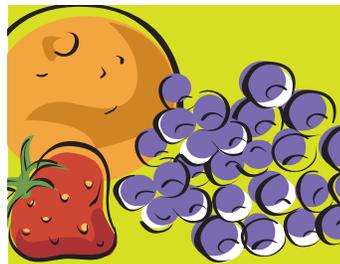
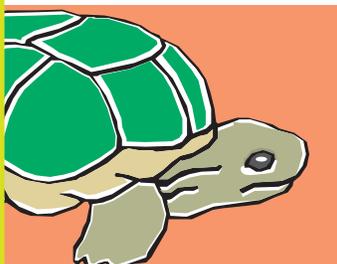
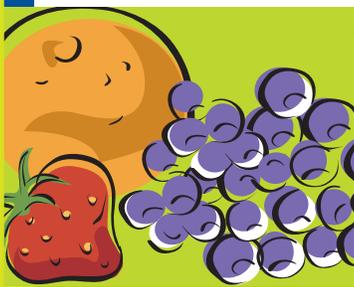


# Breakfast Tool Kit



Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary  
Education's Child Nutrition Outreach Program at Project Bread  
145 Border Street, East Boston, MA 02128 • phone: 617.723.5000  
fax: 617.248.8877 • [www.meals4kids.org](http://www.meals4kids.org)



# Keep Breakfast on Your Calendar

## Each Day:

**Food Service Directors:** Post the following day's breakfast menu in the cafeteria and on bulletin boards in the hallway so that students see it during lunch and between classes.

**Teachers and Nurses:** Ask students if they ate breakfast. Encourage them to take advantage of school breakfast daily.

**Principals:** Remind students of breakfast through morning or afternoon announcements.

## Every Week:

**Food Service Directors:** Make sure to include your breakfast menu wherever you submit your lunch menu for publication (newspaper, local cable station).

**Teachers and Nurses:** Invite students to join you at breakfast and emphasize the fact that eating breakfast directly impacts learning.

**Principals:** Greet students at breakfast and congratulate them for "starting smart" with a good breakfast.

## Every Month:

**Food Service Directors:** Hold a special event during breakfast, such as a raffle, contest, or special guest (local politician, musician, athlete, etc).

**Teachers and Nurses:** Post school breakfast information in your classroom, office or around the school.

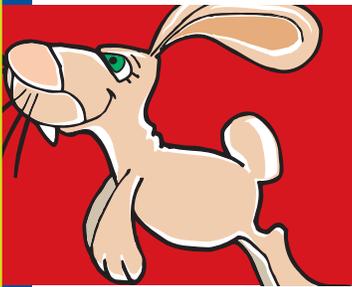
**Principals:** Remind parents about school breakfast. Have an open house, include an article in your newsletter, or send a flyer home. Remind teachers about the benefits of school breakfast for better behavior, attendance, and academic performance.

## Every Year:

**Food Service Directors:** Attend a principal and Parent Teacher Organization meeting to discuss the benefits of the School Breakfast Program and the importance of School Meals Applications. Request their support for increasing breakfast participation.

**Teachers and Nurses:** Present information about the School Breakfast Program at parent-teacher conferences and school open houses. Remind parents to return their School Meals Applications.

**Principals:** Share ideas and school breakfast success stories with other principals. Remind parents and students to return their School Meals Applications at the beginning of the school year.



# Get Everyone Involved

## Food Service Directors

**Members of the school community are committed to students' success. Enlist their help to strengthen and promote your School Breakfast Program by meeting regularly and implementing the following strategies.**

- Ask student leaders to advise you on breakfast choices, promotions, and ways to attract their peers.
- Recognize supportive teachers and ask them to talk to their colleagues about promoting school breakfast.
- Ask nurses to work with cafeteria staff to ensure that children with repeated hunger related nurse's visits are encouraged to eat breakfast at school.
- Partner with involved parents to highlight the importance of school breakfast among principals, teachers, and other parents.
- Invite a supportive principal to share his or her school breakfast successes with other principals.

## Teachers

**Reinforce the importance of school breakfast by incorporating the message into classroom lessons and other school activities.**

- Have students create and conduct breakfast surveys. Use the information gathered to study percentages in math class or to study trends in social studies.
- Promote breakfast using posters and songs created by students. The activities can be part of art or music classes or serve as an educational school wide contest.
- When learning about different countries, look at what different cultures eat for breakfast. Relate particular breakfast foods to a country's climate, agriculture, customs, and exports.
- Reinforce the MyPyramid Food Guidance System by showing how it relates to breakfast. MyPyramid is the government's new tool to help Americans choose a healthy diet and MyPyramid for kids is a special program specifically designed for children. Display a pyramid in your classroom ([mypyramid.gov](http://mypyramid.gov)).

## Principals:

**Demonstrate your commitment to academic success. Enlist the school community to maximize the benefits of school breakfast.**

- Team up with food service directors to explore creative breakfast scheduling and assess meal quality.
- Ask nurses to keep you informed of hunger related visits to their office. Develop a plan to promote breakfast to students and parents.
- Work with teachers to incorporate school breakfast into lesson plans and participate in school wide promotions. Encourage teachers to meet with students for tutoring or conferences during breakfast.
- Invite parents to an open house held during school breakfast and routinely send home information about the School Breakfast Program.
- Ask bus drivers, custodians, and para-professionals to encourage kids to go to breakfast. Invite them as special guests.

# Make Breakfast a Regular Part of the School Day

Because stigma, scheduling, and other logistics often limit participation, making breakfast a regular part of every school day will ensure that all students start each day ready to learn.

## The Best Way:

Breakfast in the classroom, after the bell, ensures that every student has the opportunity to take advantage of this important resource.

### Food Service Directors:

- Pilot the program in one school or one classroom to show principals and teachers it can work in your district.
- Work with staff to develop a system for pre-packing, delivery, and point of service accountability.
- Communicate with principals and teachers to let them know that breakfast in the classroom is an option.

### Teachers and Nurses:

- Eliminate your need for snack drawers by allowing students to eat breakfast in the classroom.
- Teach responsibility by requiring students to pick up the food from the cafeteria and clean up their individual eating areas following breakfast.
- Encourage students to eat during morning announcements and attendance, read aloud time, or class work.

### Principals:

- Restructure the school day to ensure that all students have the opportunity to eat breakfast after the first bell.
- Allow students to eat breakfast in the classroom to minimize disruptions later in the day due to hunger such as headaches and stomachaches, poor concentration, and bad behavior.

## A Great Way:

A Grab n' Go breakfast bag allows kids the flexibility to eat their morning meal in the school courtyard, on the playground, or in the classroom. With Grab n' Go, students can eat breakfast whenever they arrive at school.

### Food Service Directors:

- Work with principals, teachers, and custodial staff to offer breakfasts that are easy to transport, eat, and clean up.
- Distribute student favorites such as bagels and juices from a vending cart in courtyards, hallways, and meeting spaces.
- Survey students to make sure that the breakfast menu includes items that they like.

### Teachers and Nurses:

- Encourage students to eat breakfast when they arrive at school so that they don't interrupt class with hunger related symptoms or behavior problems.
- Work with other school staff to remind students that breakfast is available to everyone, even if they arrive late.

### Principals:

- Start the morning with breakfast in the cafeteria for students who arrive at school early.
- Offer Grab n' Go breakfast bags to students who do not arrive in time for the cafeteria meal.

## A Good Way:

Make the cafeteria a morning gathering place.

### Food Service Directors:

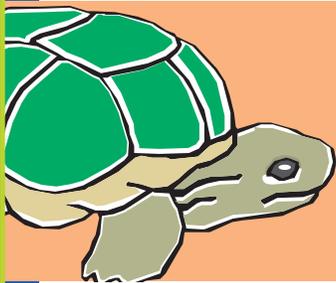
- Give the cafeteria a facelift with a new paint job, mural, or colorful pictures and posters.
- In order to serve breakfast more quickly, run two serving lines, create a self-service breakfast bar, and offer foods that are easy to grab.

### Teachers and Nurses:

- Host celebrations, special events, and club meetings at school breakfast, and invite your students to join you.
- Promote school breakfast to parents and students with posters and other outreach materials.

### Principals:

- Require all students to enter the building through the door closest to the cafeteria or make the cafeteria the mandatory morning gathering place for students.
- Ensure that there is enough time for students to eat breakfast before heading to class.
- Speak to transportation companies to ensure that buses arrive early enough for students to eat breakfast. Unload the buses at the cafeteria door.
- Ask clubs and teams to hold morning meetings in the cafeteria and request that teachers schedule tutoring sessions during breakfast.



# Strategies To Increase School Breakfast Participation In Middle and High Schools

Unlike elementary school children, middle and high school students have more freedom to purchase food from local corner stores and fast food restaurants each morning before arriving to school. These food vendors offer students the variety, taste, eating environment, and convenience that they seek. Therefore, schools need to work extra hard to compete for older students' business. Below are some concrete suggestions to reach this challenging audience.

## **Get Students Involved**

- Create a school breakfast advisory group consisting of middle and high school students. Ask the group to research student perceptions of school breakfast and the barriers to eating at school. After gathering this information, request that the group propose solutions and help the food service staff and school administrators implement changes.
- Ask marketing and/or health students to devise a School Breakfast Campaign to promote the program to older students. Have them design and administer promotional activities, posters, slogans and broadcast announcements. Ask local businesses to fund any incurred expenses.
- Hold taste tests for students and have them vote on their favorite items. Be sure to add these foods to the menu.
- Ask student club advisors, including music, chorus, orchestra, drama, chess, etc., to hold their meetings in the cafeteria during breakfast.

## **Change the Atmosphere**

- Provide entertainment during breakfast by playing music or showing "news-oriented" TV programs or videos.
- Give the cafeteria a facelift with a new paint job, mural, or colorful pictures and posters.

## **Offer Incentives and Activities**

- Solicit stores or vendors to donate a bike, boom box, or gift certificate for a monthly raffle. Allow middle and high school students to administer the raffle.
- Arrange for a local radio station to conduct a live broadcast from the cafeteria.
- Ask student bands or singing groups to perform during breakfast.

## **Make Breakfast More Convenient**

- Institute a Grab n' Go breakfast by placing breakfast carts around the school where students hang out. These easy to access kiosks can compete with the quick service of outside competition.
- In order to serve breakfast more quickly, run two serving lines, create a self-service breakfast bar, and offer foods that are easy to grab.
- Keep the cafeteria open later in the school day so that students who arrive later or have morning free periods can still eat breakfast.

## **Partner with Staff Leaders**

- Encourage coaches to hold team breakfasts to promote team unity and health.
- Get active teachers to participate in school breakfast in order to influence more students to attend.

## **Involve Academics**

- Ask home economics, health education, and physical education teachers to promote the School Breakfast Program and possibly incorporate breakfast messages into their lesson plans.
- Link language instruction to breakfast by having students translate menus into the languages they are studying.
- Have science classes perform a nutritional analysis of the breakfast menu. The metabolic effects of different breakfast menus could also be presented as part of a biology lesson.
- Encourage teachers to use breakfast time for tutoring, conferences, etc.