



Healthy Students Achieve More

3 Ways to Fuel Kids' Brains for Academic Success

**GIVE THEM A
BREAKFAST BOOST**

**GET SMARTER
AT LUNCH**

**SNACK THIS WAY
FOR A HEALTHY DAY**

GIVE THEM A BREAKFAST BOOST

Breakfast may be the most important meal of the day, but too many kids can't or don't eat breakfast. Three out of four teachers say they teach kids who regularly come to school hungry.

Why should your school make breakfast a priority? Students who regularly eat a good breakfast:

- score 17.5% higher on standardized math tests
- have better attendance
- are more attentive and have fewer behavioral problems
- have higher graduation rates
- are more likely to be at a healthy weight.

Given the challenges of offering traditional meal service in the cafeteria before the morning bell —such as changing bus schedules or school drop-off times—schools around the country are using these creative approaches to fit breakfast into the school day:

Breakfast in the Classroom

Breakfast trays are delivered to each classroom, allowing students to eat before or right after the final morning bell. This approach helped Fort Wayne Community Schools in Indiana increase breakfast participation from 25% to 70% in its elementary schools, and from 25% to 60% in middle schools.



"Every single kid who attends school in our country needs to eat breakfast, and not just any breakfast, but a good quality breakfast."

**– ROBERT MURRAY, M.D., PROFESSOR OF HUMAN NUTRITION,
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

Grab and Go

Grab and Go programs let students pick up "breakfast to go" at a central location and take it to their classrooms to eat. This approach has all the benefits of Breakfast in the Classroom without requiring staff or students to deliver the meals to individual classrooms. Breakfast participation more than doubled in the Granite City School District in Illinois after they instituted their grab and go system.

Second Chance Breakfast

What about the kids who don't want to eat that early in the morning? Some schools offer a "grab and go" style breakfast after first period or as a mid-morning nutrition break. El Monte City School District in California implemented a grab and go breakfast during its mid-morning passing period, allowing middle school students to pick up breakfast as they walk to their next class. Not only did breakfast participation increase from 32% to 82%, but also attendance increased 4% for the year. The financially sustainable program ended the year with a \$477,000 revenue surplus, due largely to increased breakfast participation.

ALTERNATIVE MEAL SERVICE MODELS

	WHERE IS IT SERVED	WHEN IS IT SERVED	HOW IS IT SERVED	WHO DOES IT WORK WITH	WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY
BREAKFAST IN THE CLASSROOM	Classroom	After the school day begins, immediately following opening bell	Transported to and from the classroom by school nutrition staff and/or student volunteers	Can work in any school setting. It is most commonly used in elementary school.	Highest success rates, can be as high as 98 percent of school enrollment
GRAB N' GO BREAKFAST	Cafeteria Hallways Common Areas (inside and outside of building)	Before the school day begins	Stations can be set up in a variety of locations including the cafeteria and other high-traffic areas such as hallways or entryways	Can work in any school setting. Works well for students who come to school too late to eat in the cafeteria.	In secondary schools, over 79 percent of schools experienced an increase in School Breakfast participation.
2ND CHANCE BREAKFAST/ BRUNCH	Cafeteria Hallways	After first period	Served in the same manner as traditional Breakfast in the Cafeteria or in the same manner as Grab n' Go	Can work in any school setting. It is most commonly used in secondary schools.	Average of 15-40 percent participation level increase

Source: No Kid Hungry. "Increasing School Breakfast Participation." Available at:

<https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/school-breakfast/increasing-school-breakfast-participation#Alternative Meal Service Models Summary>.

OVERCOMING OBJECTIONS

Schools have overcome challenges and objections by bringing teachers, food service and custodial staff together to create effective solutions:

- Breakfast menus are designed with easy clean up and minimal mess in mind: serving healthy cereal bars rather than bowls of cereal with milk, for example.
- Trash cans designated for food are distributed to classrooms and emptied each day after breakfast ends.
- The impact on classroom time is limited by requiring students to finish within 15 minutes of the final bell, conducting morning announcements during breakfast, or scheduling independent or small group activities during breakfast.

"But what about the mess...food in the classroom trash cans... demands on food service and custodial staff...intrusion into instructional time...?"



GET SMARTER AT LUNCH

Has your school created a “Smarter Lunchroom” yet? A smarter lunchroom is one that nudges kids towards nutritious foods. Schools are adopting creative techniques that have increased not only the consumption of fruits, vegetables and other healthy foods, but also food service revenue.

- Moving and highlighting fruit increased sales of fruit by up to 102%
- Naming vegetables and displaying the names with the foods increased selection of vegetables from between 40% - 70%
- The number of students consuming “healthy items” increased by 35% after the introduction of a “healthy choices only” convenience line

Here's a look at some favorite strategies:



Salad or Garden Bar

A well-stocked fruit and veggie bar that includes raw and cooked produce and a variety of dips and dressings lets students create combos to their own liking. At Cardinal Ritter High School in Indianapolis, a popular salad bar is front and center in the cafeteria. The school moved from a menu that was 90% processed foods four years ago to one that today is 40% fresh. Kids' favorite salad bar items: tomatoes, hard boiled eggs, shredded carrots, and jalapenos.

Hide the Veggies

Sneaking vegetables into kids' favorite meals has long been popular at home and is now making its way into school kitchens—like mashed potatoes with hidden cauliflower, a big hit with students and staff in Warren Township Schools in Indianapolis. Other ideas: sweet potatoes in the mac and cheese and pureed pumpkin in the spaghetti sauce. For more ideas, check out: [Culinary Techniques for Healthy School Meals](#).

Smoothies or Yogurt parfaits

Smoothies made with spinach, strawberries, bananas, and apple juice are a big hit for the students in East Hampton, New York schools. Smoothies can be premade and offered as side dishes or as main entrees – particularly popular with high school students. The [USDA provides guidelines on incorporating smoothies into your school's meal plans](#).

Engage the Students

Do some market research to see what your students like. Try some taste tests, such as sugar snap peas paired with carrots and dip, or pass samples of yogurt topped with blueberries and nuts. Create a focus group of students, school staff and parents and allow them to weigh in on menu choices. Or do a broader survey of students' tastes. Get [tips and survey forms](#) to use for your own taste testing events.



SMARTER LUNCHROOM™ TECHNIQUES

Use these strategies to increase the consumption of fruits and vegetables:

- Make sliced or cut fruit available daily
- Display daily fruit options in the line of sight and reach of students
- Give all available vegetable options creative or descriptive names
- Bundle daily vegetable options into all grab and go meals available to students
- Train all staff members, especially those serving, to politely prompt students to select and eat the daily vegetable options with their meal
- Place white milk in front of other beverages in all coolers
- Highlight alternative entrée options (e.g., salad bar, yogurt parfaits, etc.) on posters or signs within all service and dining areas
- Create a reimbursable meal in any service area available to students (e.g., salad bars, snack rooms, etc.)
- Use student surveys and taste testing opportunities to inform menu development, dining space décor, and promotional ideas
- Display student artwork in the service and/or dining areas
- Use [daily announcements](#) to promote and market menu options

SNACK THIS WAY FOR A HEALTHY DAY

The new Smart Snacks in School rule goes a long way to ensure that students get healthy snacks during the school day. But the rule doesn't cover celebrations like birthdays and holiday parties. "Well, a birthday is just once a year," we think—but if you have 25 or more student birthdays, and add in Halloween, winter break, Valentine's Day, the last day of school...you can easily accumulate 7 full weeks of sugary treats.

Many schools have extended their healthy snack policies to parties and celebrations by taking these steps:

- Communicate with parents and caregivers by sending a letter home, such as [this one](#) from Action for Healthy Kids.
- Provide parents, caregivers, and classroom volunteers with a comprehensive [list of healthy snacks](#), like Chicago Public Schools did.
- Use [healthy celebration ideas](#) in the classroom, such as dance parties, active games, extra play time, and non-food treats like prize bags, stickers or pencils.





READY FOR MORE?

Jump IN for Healthy Kids is a community-wide initiative that works to give children and families real opportunities to make healthy choices. We are here to support schools in their efforts to serve healthy meals and snacks.

- [Subscribe to our Healthy Kids Blog.](#)
Get weekly tips and strategies to eat healthy, get active and teach healthy habits. Our articles showcase real people and organizations in central Indiana that are implementing innovative ideas and best practice policies.
- [Visit our Resource Hub.](#)
This database is continually updated and puts a wide variety of helpful toolkits, printable flyers, research studies, and other resources at your fingertips.
- [Take the Jump IN Pledge for Healthy Kids.](#)
Join schools around the area that have taken the Pledge to promote their students' health. Pledge signers will receive our most robust, comprehensive, and coordinated level of support.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

[Celebrations that Support Student Health](#)

[Get a Salad Bar: Resources and Tools for Getting a Salad Bar Grant](#)

[Healthy Food Ideas for School Snacks, Celebrations, and Family Events](#)

[How it Works: Making Breakfast Part of the School Day](#)

[Ideas for Teachers, PTOs and Teachers: Non-Food Rewards and Celebrations](#)



Jump IN for Healthy Kids
www.jumpinforhealthykids.org
info@jumpinhealth.org

