

## 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 because it's FREE. If you qualify for the lunch program, you also qualify for the breakfast program, with no additional paperwork. Payment for lunch is based upon parent income and is confidential. If you pay for lunch, you will find that breakfast is a cost you do not have to pay. Nowhere else will you find a balanced breakfast at that 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 at school. Serving breakfast not only satisfies their hunger but helps students focus during the morning school hours.

## **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.

## **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.”**

**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**

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

**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**

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

**Breakfast at school resulted in significant:**

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

**“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.”**

**“This institution is an equal opportunity provider”**