



You can get more kids to eat at school and earn more money for your breakfast

program! Read how it is being done in some California schools. This brochure aims to help improve your **school breakfast program** to draw in more customers.

What are your big dreams for the school breakfasts you offer? Make a plan and work with others so you can make these dreams come true. Start with small changes and soon you will have made a big change!

Breakfast



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Feed More
Kids for School
Breakfast
Success

Breakfast



Why Breakfast?

Parents and teachers know it and research confirms it: eating breakfast helps students do their best in school. More than one million California children qualify for a free or reduced-price breakfast. Yet more than 1,400 California schools do not offer a school breakfast program.

MYTH

Offering school breakfast isn't worth it because there is more state and federal money for the school lunch program.

FACT

School breakfast programs are so important that schools receive up to \$1.75 for each breakfast served. Most California school districts can also apply for \$15,000 per school in start-up or expansion funding.

- Busy families in the morning rush may skip breakfast.
- Kids may not be hungry before they reach school.
- Eating breakfast at school can help kids do better in school.
- Offering free breakfast to all students increases participation and improves school attendance and classroom behavior.
- At schools that serve breakfast, fewer students arrive late or go to the nurse's office.
- Kids who eat school breakfast are twice as likely to meet the "5-a-Day" goal for fruits and vegetables.



Be Flexible

A healthy school breakfast will help students be ready for the day only if the students eat it. So school breakfasts have to look, taste, and smell good. They also have to be served at handy times and places for today's busy students.

MYTH | Kids do not want to eat breakfast.

FACT | Kids will eat breakfast if it is provided for them on their terms.

- Involve students, teachers, and parents in food tasting and menu development on a regular basis.
- To eliminate tickets, pricing, and long lines for breakfast, investigate alternative meal counting and claiming options with your child nutrition consultant.
- Think about different ways to offer breakfast at school:
 - ◆ Universal classroom breakfast—served to every child in the classroom
 - ◆ Second-chance breakfast—offered at morning recess

- ◆ Grab-n-go breakfasts—all items are prepackaged
- ◆ Breakfast on the bus—for those students with long morning commutes

Example: Moreno Valley Unified School District offers a second-chance breakfast for their middle school students. Two 10-minute "nutrition breaks" are offered each morning. One-quarter of the breakfast sales occur before school and the other three-quarters occur during the second-chance breakfast. At both of these times, reimbursable meals are offered. The program has reduced behavior problems and has allowed the school to capture all students for a morning meal.

Try Classroom Breakfast

Imagine that all children are offered a breakfast, at no charge, at their desks as school begins. Select students bring the food in red wagons from the cafeteria to the classroom. Students choose their meal, take it to their desks, and eat.

MYTH | Breakfast in the classroom is too complex and messy.

FACT | Classroom breakfast can be simple and successful with a team effort.

- Teachers can take roll, announce daily news, or read stories during classroom breakfast.
- Students can complete their homework during classroom breakfast.

- Students can help with service and clean-up.
- Custodians can spend their time collecting trash bags from hallways instead of setting up and cleaning the cafeteria between breakfast and lunch.

Example: Hawthorne School District started its Universal Breakfast in the Classroom program three years ago. Breakfast includes an entrée, milk, and fruit. Staff serve two to three hot breakfast entrées each week and cold breakfasts the rest of the week. To prevent messes, they package all breakfast entrées individually. Students have 15 minutes to eat while teachers continue with lessons. Once breakfast time is up, a bell sounds, and the students clean up. Hot breakfasts may be a sausage or beef biscuit, French toast (served without syrup), or breakfast burritos. Cold breakfasts might be fruit muffins, whole-wheat honey buns, and peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. The entrées are reimbursable and often use commodity foods.

Make Breakfast a Priority

You can be the nutrition leader at your school. Because no meal is as important as a healthful breakfast, consider making the school breakfast program the top priority—for your program and for your district.

Under your leadership, schools can serve breakfast to more students. Here's how:

- Talk with other food services directors who have set up successful school breakfast programs.
- Set up a team (such as the principal, teachers, and custodial staff) from your district to visit a school where breakfast is served in the classroom.



- Work with California Nutrition Network staff (if available) to use consistent breakfast messages in classroom education programs and parent education materials.
- Invite your school board member and legislator to eat school breakfast with students. Show and tell them how important school breakfast is and draw attention to your program.



Resources

- For information on school breakfast start-up and expansion grants, contact Rae Dalimonte, California Department of Education, at (916) 445-6775 or at rdalimon@cde.ca.gov. Grants for up to \$15,000 are available for each school site (you need only a 20 percent free and reduced-price meal population).
- Breakfast First—Healthy Foods for Hungry Minds <http://www.breakfastfirst.org>
- Moreno Valley Unified School District Linda Hayes, (951) 571-7500, ext. 17267
- Hawthorne School District Anna Apoian, (310) 676-2276, ext. 209