



Breakfast is Brain Fuel

North Carolina Guide to School Breakfast



Developed by the N.C. Nutrition Education and Training Program
N.C. Department of Public Instruction
N.C. Division of Public Health



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Breakfast is Brain Fuel

The North Carolina Nutrition Education and Training (NET) Program was asked by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Child Nutrition Services to develop a school breakfast promotional toolkit tailored for North Carolina offering resources to:

- Educate students, families and school staff about the importance and benefits of breakfast
- Encourage students to eat breakfast
- Gain support from school administrators, teachers and other staff for school breakfast
- Encourage students and families to take advantage of school breakfast
- Support the health and academic success of students and the needs of the school administrators, staff and families

Why breakfast?

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day because it...

- Strengthens the brain
- Helps establish healthy eating habits
- Offers an opportunity to try new foods
- Improves mood and behavior
- Gives you energy
- Keeps you healthy

Studies show that students who eat breakfast ...

- have improved attendance and less tardiness
- are able to pay attention longer
- demonstrate better behavior in the classroom
- perform better on tests
- make fewer trips to the school nurse
- have a better overall diet
- are more likely to be at a healthy weight

When a student eats a nutritious meal, he or she is ready to learn.¹⁻¹⁰

Why school breakfast?

School breakfast offers several connections to learning—students have the opportunity to eat a healthy breakfast each school morning closer to academic instruction time, students who eat a healthy breakfast are better able to focus on classroom lessons, and students can practice the nutrition lessons they learn in the classroom by making healthy choices with school breakfast.¹¹⁻¹⁵



"I like school breakfast, because it's tasty, it's good and it makes me feel good."

- JaQuaisa Williams, 4th Grade Student, Montlieu Elementary School

"I eat breakfast, because I'm more focused, and I can concentrate."

- Logan Riddle, 6th Grade Student, Rosman Middle School

"I get better grades on my tests."

- Sonia Noorani, 1st Grade Student, Montlieu Elementary School



Are students eating breakfast?

Despite considerable evidence that eating breakfast has beneficial impacts, few children consume a regular morning meal. These students are missing out on key nutrients needed for health and academic success.¹⁶⁻¹⁸

"My students have always been my priority. I love English literature, I love language studies, but I love my students. And I know there is not a person alive who can function without eating. There's not a person alive who would prefer to miss a meal consistently."

- Pearl Pratt, English Language Arts Teacher, East Montgomery High School

What's for school breakfast?

Meals served under the School Breakfast Program (SBP) must, by federal law, meet nutrition regulations based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and provide one-fourth or more of the daily recommended levels for key nutrients that children need for growth and development. School breakfasts are an excellent source of protein, vitamins A and C, calcium, and iron. Foods are often baked, not fried, made with low fat or lean ingredients, and include whole grains, fruit or 100% juice, and low fat or fat free milk that make each meal balanced and nutritious. Items offered as part of the School Breakfast Program are low in fat, sugar and salt (sodium) and are offered in portion sizes that are appropriate for children.¹⁹⁻²¹



Most North Carolina schools serve breakfast every school day including a choice of...

- Entrée
- Fruit or 100% fruit juice
- Low fat or fat free milk

Can all students eat school breakfast?

The national School Breakfast Program is a federally funded program available to all schools. All children can participate. Some students do qualify for free and reduced price meals, and others may pay a small fee.²⁰

What prevents students from eating school breakfast?

Fewer students eat school breakfast compared to school lunch. Of particular concern is that not all students who qualify for free and reduced price meals receive school breakfast each day. School meals may be the only source of nutrition these students receive each day; therefore, it is imperative to examine any barriers that may be preventing these students and others from taking advantage of the School Breakfast Program. In focus groups, interviews and surveys, school administrators and staff, teachers, Child Nutrition professionals, families and students reported the following common school breakfast barriers:

- Students are unwilling or unable to arrive at school early
- Buses do not arrive on time
- Insufficient time is provided for students to eat school breakfast
- Where breakfast is served (cafeteria) is too far away from the bus or carpool dropoff
- Other service options, e.g., breakfast in the classroom, are not allowed
- Belief that the School Breakfast Program is only for students who qualify for free and reduced price meals
- Students are not hungry first thing in the morning
- Families are unaware of the availability and/or benefits of the School Breakfast Program^{20,22-24}



Schools, families and communities can work together to overcome these barriers. First, support from school administrators, principals and staff is critical to successful implementation of the School Breakfast Program. School and bus schedules can be adjusted to allow students adequate time to eat breakfast. Changes in service methods and locations can improve accessibility of school breakfast. Everyone can work to ensure that all school staff, families and students are aware of both the benefits of breakfast and the availability of breakfast for all students each school day.²²⁻²⁴

How do schools serve breakfast?

Schools can explore a variety of ways to serve school breakfast allowing more students the opportunity to eat a regular morning meal. The outcome is that students benefit from eating breakfast every school day.²²⁻²⁴



Traditional School Breakfast

Traditional school breakfast provides an option for students to eat a nutritious meal before the school day begins. Breakfast is served in the cafeteria at the same time for all students or in shifts. Students have an opportunity to socialize and interact with one another, even with students that may not be in their classes. An advantage to having all students eat in the cafeteria is that only one area needs to be cleaned. However, it can be difficult to get all students through the serving line and fed in the 15 minutes typically allotted for breakfast before school. To make service more efficient, multiple serving lines can be utilized.

Grab n' Go Breakfast

Hand-held breakfast items are served. Items can be bagged or packaged for quick pick up. Grab n' go items take less time for Child Nutrition staff to prepare than most traditional breakfasts. It is easier for students to pick up breakfast and make it to class on time. Also, students like hand-held breakfast items.



North Carolina Breakfast Champion



At Montelieu Elementary, buses dropped off students each morning at the door to the cafeteria. Students picked up their breakfast on their way to class. Child Nutrition staff noticed car riders dropped off at another location away from the cafeteria were missing out on breakfast and approached school administrators about implementing a satellite breakfast location. School administrators enthusiastically supported the idea. Guilford County Schools applied for and received an *Expanding Breakfast* grant from the Southeast United Dairy Industry Association, Inc.²⁴ The Child Nutrition program utilized the funds to purchase warming units. Now each morning, Child Nutrition staff prepare breakfast, place the hot items in the warming units and cold items in insulated coolers, and transport breakfast down to the satellite location by the carpool dropoff. Students come in, check their name off, pick up their breakfast and proceed to class. Breakfast participation increased by 50 percent.

"We knew what we had to do. The outcome was everyone eating breakfast and not taking away from the instructional time."

- Lamont McMillan, Assistant Principal, Montlieu Elementary



Satellite Breakfast or Breakfast Kiosk

Breakfast is served in a high traffic area away from the cafeteria (i.e., school bus or carpool dropoff, parking lot, entrance, or hallway). Multiple serving lines can be more efficient. This service option makes it easier for students to pick up breakfast and make it to class on time.

North Carolina Breakfast Champion

Asheville City Schools in Buncombe County applied for and received a *Fuel Up to Play* grant from the Southeast United Dairy Industry Association, Inc.²⁵ The Child Nutrition program utilized the funds to purchase a mobile cart and establish a “Fuel Up Station” outside between buildings at Asheville High School. The station, sporting the school colors and logo, catches the students’ attention each morning and offers tempting grab n’ go breakfast options. Students can pick up breakfast and take it with them to class or eat at the tables located nearby.



Breakfast Break

Breakfast is served after first period or at a scheduled time later in the morning. Breakfast break offers nutritious meals to students who do not have time to eat breakfast before school. It allows students to eat later in the morning when they are hungry and ready to eat. This service option not only provides students with a nutritious break, it also offers students a healthy choice versus snacks from vending machines, school stores or fundraisers. A later service allows more time for Child Nutrition staff to prepare breakfast.

Second Chance Breakfast

Breakfast is served after first period or at a scheduled time later in the morning for students who miss breakfast before school. Second chance breakfast offers nutritious meals to students who do not have time to eat or miss breakfast before school. It allows students to eat later in the morning when they are hungry and ready to eat. This service option not only provides students with a nutritious break, it also offers students a healthy choice versus snacks from vending machines, school stores or fundraisers. Students also have an opportunity to socialize and interact with one another.

North Carolina Breakfast Champion

At East Montgomery High School in Montgomery County, school administrators and Child Nutrition staff noticed that students were not taking advantage of breakfast served before school. Recognizing that their students were in need of a nutritious morning meal, school administrators, Child Nutrition staff, and teachers worked together to strategize how they could increase participation in the School Breakfast Program. A break was already incorporated into the schedule later in the morning. The principal added ten minutes to the school day to extend this break, from 9:30 to 9:45 am, for a second chance breakfast. Students that miss breakfast before school have the opportunity to eat breakfast at that time. Second chance breakfast is preferred by students. Participation doubled with implementation of the new service option.

“We added 10 minutes to the school day so that we were able to implement the second chance breakfast. Took no time away from instruction whatsoever. Gave the kids the opportunity to have some social time. But more importantly it gave our children an opportunity to have a good meal in the morning. And it’s been extremely successful.”

- Donna Kennedy, Principal, East Montgomery High School



Breakfast in the Classroom

Breakfast is delivered to the classroom by Child Nutrition staff or students. Students eat breakfast before school or during announcements, roll call or morning work. Breakfast in the classroom offers students the opportunity to eat breakfast with their classmates in a familiar setting. This service option provides nutritious meals to students who do not have time to eat breakfast before school. It encourages students to make breakfast a part of their daily routines. More students can participate if the cafeteria is too small or crowded. Principals and teachers do not have to organize supervision for students eating breakfast in the cafeteria before school.²⁶⁻²⁸

North Carolina Breakfast Champion

Transylvania County Schools examined the logistics of feeding all students in the cafeteria before school and determined that it was impossible to do in the allotted time. The Child Nutrition director presented the research on the benefits of breakfast and alternative service options to the superintendent and school board. The school administration decided that breakfast in the classroom was the only way to ensure that all students were being served breakfast each morning. School administrators, teachers, staff, students, families and even the community were in support of the breakfast initiative. Transylvania County Schools' efforts were recognized by the U.S. Department of Agriculture with the Best Practices Award.²⁹

"I consider myself an 'old school' teacher. I've been in the profession for a long time. And initially I was resistant to change. I was resistant to the idea of having daily breakfast with my students in the classroom. But the minor challenges of having the daily breakfast in the classroom can easily be overcome, and the positives of the program strongly outweigh any challenges that you have to face."

- Rhonda Chapman, Language Arts and Social Studies Teacher, Rosman Middle School

Breakfast on the Bus

Breakfast is served and eaten on the bus on the way to school. The Child Nutrition program coordinates with the bus drivers about routes and schedules. A bagged or packaged breakfast is handed to students as they step on the bus in the morning. Hand-held food items are individually wrapped and easy to eat. Students throw out the trash upon leaving the bus. Students who ride the bus for long periods of time are able to get the nutrition they need. The hand-held breakfast can be enjoyed before arriving at school.



Universal Breakfast

School districts with a higher percentage of students who are eligible for free and reduced price meals are able to balance expenses and reimbursement to offer breakfast at no charge to all students regardless of income. Universal breakfast removes the stigma of participating in the School Breakfast Program for low income children and dramatically increases school breakfast participation. This service option makes eating breakfast at school the healthy choice for all students every day.³⁰⁻³³

North Carolina Breakfast Champion

Thomasville City Schools has the longest running universal School Breakfast Program in North Carolina. For almost 20 years, the local education agency has offered universal breakfast to kindergarten through 12th grade students. By delivering breakfast to the classroom each morning, all students have the opportunity to participate and take advantage of the free breakfast. School breakfast participation is almost 100 percent across the district.

"We don't feel like we're losing academic time, in fact, we feel like we're gaining academic time, because the teacher throughout the day, especially throughout the morning has to focus less on other needs of the student if they've got a student that is well fed."

- James Carmichael, Associate Superintendent, Thomasville City Schools



How can schools serve up success with school breakfast?

Commit and Support

Gaining and maintaining commitment and support from all levels is critical to the success of the School Breakfast Program. Administrators at the district and school level, teachers, other school staff, nurses, Child Nutrition staff, students and families are all stakeholders. In August 2011, the North Carolina State Board of Education adopted a Resolution to Promote School Breakfast that encourages all local education agencies (LEAs) to seek multiple and innovative ways of increasing school breakfast participation in their schools as an additional means of caring for and nurturing our public school children.³⁴ School breakfast must be integrated into the school day and become an established routine for students and staff. Having students that are well fed and ready to learn should be a mutual goal for everyone.

"In order for it to be a successful program you have to have the backing of everybody. The students, the teachers, the principals, the administrators, our school board, everybody has to be on board and know how important it is for these children to have this nutritious meal."

- Brenda Watford, Child Nutrition director,
Thomasville City Schools

North Carolina Breakfast Champion

After hearing a presentation by the Child Nutrition director on the potential for increasing school breakfast participation, the Lincoln County school board endorsed the universal breakfast idea. Implementation started with the elementary schools followed by the middle and high schools. The Child Nutrition program employed different service option strategies based on what would work best for the individual schools. The response was overwhelming and Lincoln County Schools were asked to present their success story at a North Carolina School Boards Association meeting.



Assess

Completing an assessment will yield invaluable information regarding the current situation with school breakfast and potential areas for improvement. The assessment should include an analysis of the current school environment, schedule, and policies or practices regarding school breakfast; a survey or mechanism for input from school staff, students and families; and collection and examination of existing data regarding school breakfast participation, percentages of paid students and students who qualify for free and reduced price meals, reimbursement rates, revenues, and expenditures for equipment, food, supplies and labor. The assessment can guide school administrators and the Child Nutrition program to recommend actions to improve the accessibility of school breakfast and increase participation in the program. The assessment results can also serve as a baseline for evaluation.

School meal point of sale software can provide a Child Nutrition program with an estimate or average per plate cost for school breakfast. The toolkit offers a cost calculating worksheet from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, a financial management guide from the National Food Service Management Institute, and survey templates to collect feedback on school breakfast from school staff, students and families.^{23,35}





North Carolina Breakfast Champion

Montlieu Elementary in Guilford County utilized a portion of their *Expanding Breakfast* grant funds to survey parents and students about breakfast participation, reasons students did or did not participate in the program, and suggestions and preferences regarding the breakfast menu and service.²⁴ The Child Nutrition program adapted the breakfast operation at the school to reflect the feedback. For example, the menu item that both students and families most wanted to see offered was pancakes. As a result, the Child Nutrition program added whole grain pancakes to the menu.



Plan

School administrators, teachers, staff, students and families should work together with Child Nutrition programs to develop an action plan for breakfast that is tailored to their local education agency and individual schools. The assessment results can guide the development of the action plan. In the action plan, measurable strategies and steps should be identified for both short-term and long-term goals along with who is responsible for each step, resources needed, dates for implementation and how the strategies will be evaluated. Results or outcomes should be recorded along the way to monitor progress and any need for revision of the plan or strategies.

Goals and strategies should be:

S = Specific
M = Measurable
A = Achievable
R = Realistic
T = Time-oriented
E = Evaluated
R = Re-evaluated³⁹

Train

One of the guiding principles of the U.S. Department of Agriculture *School Meals Initiative* is to invest in people, providing the necessary training and technical assistance to school districts, schools and Child Nutrition staff needed to support healthy school meals and build nutrition skills of students.²¹ Resources and training are offered at both the national and state level to Child Nutrition administrators that can and should be shared with staff at the district and local level regarding school meal regulations, preparation and service of quality school meals, food safety and sanitation, accountability of meal counting and claiming, nutrition education, and marketing of school meals.

School leaders can support the initiative by allowing Child Nutrition staff to present information on the benefits of breakfast and how the School Breakfast Program operates at a school board meeting, principals' meeting, or school staff meeting. School staff and teachers can assist by not only teaching students about the importance of breakfast, but also sharing information with students and families about the availability of the School Breakfast Program and what a school breakfast includes while at the same time ensuring that students choose or receive a complete, reimbursable school breakfast whether they eat in the cafeteria, classroom or other location.

The toolkit offers a powerpoint, brochure, fact sheets and other resources that can be utilized in training Child Nutrition professionals and school staff.

Recruit and Involve

For a School Breakfast Program to be successful, all stakeholders must be involved. Diverse representation from all levels encourages input, involvement and shared ownership of the School Breakfast Program. The School Health Advisory Council can lead efforts at the district level and improvement teams can champion the program at the school level.³⁷ School administrators, teachers, staff, students and families can assist with promoting and supporting school breakfast in a variety of ways.





North Carolina Breakfast Champion

Rowan-Salisbury Schools applied for and received *Expanding Breakfast* grants from the Southeast United Dairy Industry Association, Inc. for all four high schools.²⁴ A committee was established to work on promotional strategies for school breakfast. The Child Nutrition program worked with students and a local chef to develop new breakfast recipes: a vanilla yogurt, cherry and homemade granola parfait; a soft tortilla taco with eggs, salsa and cheese; and a casserole with eggs, potatoes and cheese. The new menu items went over well with students because they were involved in the creation. The new breakfast items were submitted to the Recipes for Healthy Kids Challenge as part of First Lady Michelle Obama’s *Let’s Move!* initiative.³⁸



At West Middle School in Montgomery County, students have adopted “Breakfast Buddies”. The buddies encourage and remind each other to eat a healthy breakfast every morning. Child Nutrition staff capture photos of the buddies eating school breakfast together and post the pictures on a bulletin board in the cafeteria for everyone to see. Students are excited to see their photo featured in the cafeteria and point out their recognition to peers. The personal promotion and one-on-one interaction of the students is the most powerful motivational tool.

Educate

Schools place an emphasis on eating breakfast during end of grade and end of course tests. Eating a healthy breakfast every day all year long will help when children are learning the concepts they will be tested on so that they can understand and retain the knowledge and information. Proper nutrition enhances learning. Both direct observation and scientific research supports the concept that hungry children cannot learn well.³⁹⁻⁴⁴



Educators need to engage as well as educate students. Children who enjoy themselves through discovery and experimentation with nutrition will be more likely to listen and learn information. Every part of the school can be reached. For example, bulletin boards placed throughout the school can be colorful, engaging visuals that stimulate the minds of students and school staff. These educational tools also have the power to reinforce the healthy lifestyle messages presented in the classroom and cafeteria.

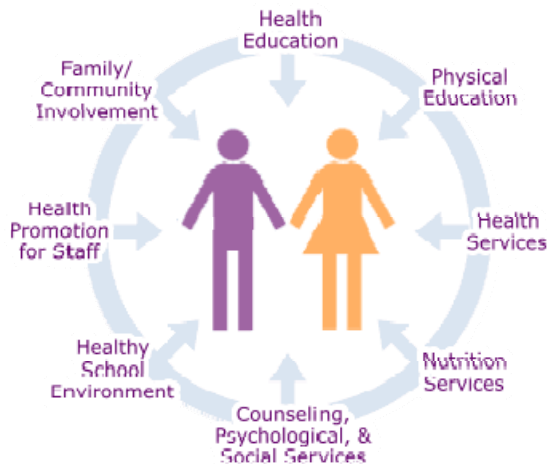
The message should also be taken home. Information can be shared with families at a kindergarten health assessment, open house, health fair or PTA meeting; posted on the web; or sent home. The toolkit offers the *Breakfast is Brain Fuel* K-12 integrated nutrition curricula, bulletin board, display, powerpoint, brochure and fact sheet educational resources for schools.

Effective nutrition education can motivate and enable students to adopt healthful dietary patterns and healthy lifestyles. The focus of nutrition education should not just be about learning, it should also aim for behavior change. Students are more likely to adopt healthy lifestyle behaviors when they are given the opportunity to apply what they learn in the classroom to the decisions they make in the cafeteria and at home. Learning to make healthy food choices contributes to student success. School breakfast can make a difference in the lives of students.



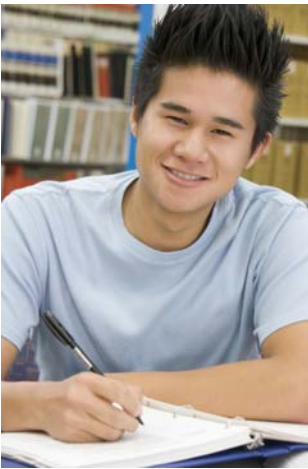


What about Coordinated School Health and Local Wellness Policy?



A Coordinated School Health Program (CSHP) model consists of eight interactive components. At least two of the components directly link to breakfast: Nutrition Services and Health Education. The remaining components support wellness for students, staff and the school.⁴⁵

Nutrition Services is defined as the integration of nutritious, affordable and appealing meals, nutrition education, and an environment that promotes healthy eating. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) regulations for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program require that schools “ensure that participating children gain a full understanding of the relationship between proper eating and good health.” Integrating mealtime and learning experiences can help children make informed food choices as part of a healthy lifestyle.^{19,46}



Health Education is defined as classroom instruction that addresses the physical, emotional, mental and social aspects of health. It is designed to help students improve their health, prevent illness, and reduce risky behaviors.⁴⁵

The North Carolina State Board of Education passed the Healthy Active Children Policy in January 2003 and amended it in April 2005. It recommends 225 minutes of Healthful Living education per week for middle and high schools. The N.C. Healthful Living Standard Course of Study contains age and grade-appropriate objectives and goals for nutrition education.⁴⁷

Recognizing that schools play a critical role in promoting student health, preventing childhood obesity, and combating problems associated with poor nutrition and physical inactivity, Congress passed a law (P.L. 108-265) as part of the Child Nutrition Reauthorization of 2004 requiring that each local educational agency (LEA) participating in a program authorized by the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act or the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 establish a local wellness policy. This requirement reaches beyond USDA-funded meal programs to influence childhood health. In the local wellness policy, school districts must set goals for nutrition education, physical activity, campus food provision, and other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness. Once the policy has been adopted, the district and each school must put the policy language into action to truly impact school wellness practices. That means that everyone has a part to play. School breakfast can be incorporated into the local wellness policy with the intent to promote overall wellness for students and staff. Along with families, school staff play a critical role in teaching, role modeling and encouraging students to build habits for a healthy lifestyle.⁴⁸





North Carolina Breakfast Champion

Teachers at Candor Elementary in Montgomery County provide nutrition education to students about the importance of eating a healthy breakfast every day. Efforts have paid off in that participation in the school breakfast program has increased (from 74 to 93%), the Child Nutrition program now serves more breakfasts than lunches each school day, and the principal reports that the students are ready for class and reading sooner.

Thomasville City Schools recognizes the importance of both health and education to student success. All students start each day with a healthy breakfast in the classroom as part of the district universal School Breakfast Program. At Thomasville Primary, teachers take it one step further by integrating nutrition education, including lessons about the importance of breakfast, into all subjects. For example, students learn about the food groups in physical education class, practice nutrient calculations in math, and write about nutrition in English language arts. The White House and the U.S. Department of Agriculture recognized Thomasville Primary's efforts with the HealthierUS School Challenge Gold Award.⁴⁹



"We have a nice integration of skills which helps us to build a healthy child. All of that feeds back into our breakfast program where we get started with a good breakfast."

- Paula Gaylord, Principal, Thomasville Primary School

Communicate, Promote and Celebrate

Communication is key to the success of the School Breakfast program. No assumptions should be made regarding whether all school staff, families and students know about school breakfast. Information should be shared regarding the availability of school breakfast and how the program operates – what is offered for school breakfast; when, where, and how it is served; and the cost of a meal. The Child Nutrition program and administration should convey both their concern for the health of students and their commitment to serving all children quality school meals.

National School Breakfast Week can be celebrated each March.⁵⁰ A number of promotional resources are provided by the national School Nutrition Association. The School Nutrition Association of North Carolina (SNANC) offers an annual poster competition for students involved in Nutrition Advisory Councils across the state. The theme for the contest is the current *National School Breakfast Week* theme. Winners of the contest are invited to and recognized at the annual SNANC conference.

Child Nutrition programs do not have to wait until March to promote school breakfast. A back to school kickoff can promote awareness and excitement that may carry throughout the year encouraging students to eat a healthy breakfast each and every school day. Family members can be invited to join students for school breakfast, for example, "Muffins for Mom" to honor Mother's Day. A class or individual challenge can be held to see which students eat a healthy breakfast most often. The kickoff and other school breakfast promotional activities can be marketed through the Web, email, phone messages, fliers, signs,

Ways to Promote School Breakfast
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Post information on the district website ▪ Include information in the student handbook ▪ Present at a school board meeting ▪ Talk with the superintendent ▪ Meet with principals ▪ Present at a principals' meeting ▪ Talk with teachers ▪ Present at school staff meetings ▪ Include information in staff orientation, professional development, or other training ▪ Collaborate with school nurses, school guidance, social workers, etc. ▪ Present at PTA meetings ▪ Share information at a kindergarten health assessment, school open house(s) and school health fair(s) ▪ Promote breakfast on school menus ▪ Send letters home to families ▪ Include information in the district, school or PTA newsletter ▪ Distribute fliers ▪ Post signs in schools and around the community ▪ Put up a breakfast display or bulletin board ▪ Celebrate National School Breakfast Week ▪ Work with students (a Nutrition Advisory Council or other group) to promote school breakfast



posters, newsletters, menus, school announcements, staff meetings, PTA meetings and any other school event or communication.

Working with school and local media can extend outreach. For example, breakfast information or a school breakfast video can be shared via the school television network. If a local newspaper regularly prints the school lunch menu, ask to have the school breakfast menu included.

Many Child Nutrition employees are creative and skilled in promoting school meals. Their talents should be recruited in marketing school breakfast. Art teachers, technology teachers and other educators can also be useful resources. In addition, students are very artistic and imaginative and can be recruited to assist with planning a school breakfast promotional campaign and developing posters, banners, scripts for school announcements, etc. PTAs can help with outreach as well as planning and recruiting volunteers to assist with school breakfast promotional events.

The toolkit offers a video featuring North Carolina school breakfast success stories; posters; suggested promotional strategies for schools; school breakfast talking points; tips on working with the media; and templates for a school breakfast flier, event invitation, proclamation, press release, and feature article.



North Carolina Breakfast Champion

Cabarrus County Schools are promoting breakfast as part of implementing *Fuel Up to Play 60*. The initiative is a partnership of the National Dairy Council, National Football League and local schools.²⁵ As a result, students participated in a pep rally with Carolina Panthers football players. Information about the initiative, the pep rally and school breakfast were included in the PTA newsletter.

"We promoted the school breakfast program a number of ways. We had our students involved in creating some banners and posters that we had displayed in the school. We made several alert phone call messages to parents to inform them of our program. We had some information in our local paper. And again, I think one of the things was that the students took hold of it and the students had a part in helping this."

- Donna Kennedy, Principal, East Montgomery High School

In addition, students were involved with promoting school breakfast through the Nutrition Advisory Council.

At Montlieu Elementary in Guilford County, the principal sent letters home and utilized ConnectEd phone messages to inform families about the School Breakfast Program. The school hosted a pep rally and special breakfast kickoff. On the day of the satellite station breakfast kickoff, students were greeted by a costumed cow at the car and bus dropoff points.

Students at East Montgomery High in Montgomery County, created banners, posters and a bulletin board to display around the school to promote the School Breakfast Program and remind fellow students to eat a healthy breakfast every day.

Wake County Public Schools applied for and received an *Expanding Breakfast* grant for Wakefield Elementary from the Southeast United Dairy Industry Association, Inc.²⁴ The school Child Nutrition manager presented on breakfast at a back to school staff meeting and PTA meeting, provided one-on-one promotion with teachers, and conducted nutrition education in the classroom with students. For the *Walk to School Day* kickoff in October, the Child Nutrition staff offered a special breakfast celebration for students with milk mustache photos.⁵¹ In March, National School Breakfast Week was celebrated. For *Read Across America* and Dr. Seuss's birthday, a breakfast of green eggs and ham was delivered to the classrooms. Students enjoyed eating breakfast while reading the book, "Green Eggs and Ham," by Dr. Seuss.⁵²



Document, Monitor and Evaluate

Meals served under the School Breakfast Program must, by federal law, meet nutrition regulations prescribed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Each state agency assumes responsibility for ensuring compliance under the federal guidelines. Each local education agency (LEA) must serve meals that meet the regulations. Issues sometimes of concern with school breakfast include accountability of meal counting and claiming, food safety and sanitation, collection of meal payments, and confidentiality and prevention of overt identification of students' free or reduced eligibility. Noncompliance with Child Nutrition regulations can affect reimbursement and the ability of schools to continue to offer breakfast to students.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) requires menu and food production records to support meal reimbursement and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) monitoring. Production records document that requirements for meal components are met and adequate amounts and required serving sizes are provided. Production records must be completed in order for accurate nutrition analysis to be performed. Lack of complete and current production records can result in withholding or reclaiming federal funds.

Good record keeping is part of any successful food service operation and provides a valuable written history for future reference. Documentation assists in spotting trends, evaluating what works best with customers and deciding what changes need to be made. Evaluation will provide information that can be used to modify how school breakfast is served and promoted to better meet the needs of students (process measures) and measure whether students' attitudes, behaviors and other indicators (i.e., attendance, tardiness, disciplinary referrals, reports to the school nurse's office, test scores, etc.) have changed as a result (impact measures). Process measures can include participation numbers; satisfaction of students, staff and families with school breakfast; and tracking of changes in school schedules, bus routes or school breakfast practices. Outcome measures can include pre/post quizzes with students to assess knowledge gained about the importance of breakfast and what is a healthy breakfast, breakfast challenge logs, aggregate student academic and health data, and a comparison of program costs versus return on investment. School meal point of sale software along with the survey templates and financial management guide in the toolkit can assist with evaluation. ^{19-21,23,35,46}

School breakfast makes a difference

Learning to make healthy food choices contributes to student success. School breakfast can make a difference in the lives of students. School breakfast is a healthy, convenient choice for families.



What can school staff and families do?

Child Nutrition Staff

- Be an advocate for school breakfast.
- Make sure school staff, students and families know about school breakfast.
- Talk to teachers, other school staff and families about the benefits of school breakfast.
- Encourage students to eat breakfast every day.
- Prepare and serve quality school meals that are tasty and appealing.
- Offer taste tests of new school menu items.
- Teach and role model healthy eating, including eating a healthy breakfast every day.
- Get students involved with school breakfast through a Nutrition Advisory Council.
- Promote school meals and healthy eating through bulletin boards, displays or other creative ideas. Celebrate National School Breakfast Week.

"I think that anyone who works in public education loves children. And we want to see our children succeed, and the 4,000 children in this county are my children. And I have a vested interest in their success and in their health."

- Carolyn Barton, Child Nutrition Director, Transylvania County Schools



"One of the key components of being successful is making sure that you equip your students to be successful, and starting the day with a breakfast and something in their stomach, gets their brains working, it helps them to focus, they're not worrying about being hungry and we think it adds to our success."

- Jeff McDaris, Superintendent,
Transylvania County Schools

School Administrators and Principals

- Be an advocate for school breakfast.
- Let your students, school staff, parents, and community know that you value and support school breakfast.
- Make sure students and families know about school breakfast.
- Talk to students and families about the benefits of breakfast.
- Encourage students to eat breakfast every day.
- Establish school practices and the classroom schedule to support school breakfast.
- Allow students to eat breakfast in the classroom.
- Eat school breakfast, spend time with students and staff, and encourage staff to eat school breakfast with students.
- Teach and role model healthy eating, including eating a healthy breakfast every day. Encourage school staff to recognize that they are role models for students.
- Encourage nutrition education for students to teach about eating breakfast every day as part of an overall healthy lifestyle.
- Invite Child Nutrition staff to come to a school board, staff or PTA meeting to talk about school breakfast and how school meals are prepared.
- If you have questions about school breakfast, talk with your Child Nutrition director.



Teachers

- Be an advocate for school breakfast.
- Talk to students and families about the benefits of breakfast.
- Make sure students and families know about school breakfast.
- Encourage students to eat breakfast every day.
- Allow students to eat breakfast in the classroom.
- Teach and role model healthy eating, including eating a healthy breakfast every day.
- Eat school breakfast, spend time with students, and encourage other teachers to eat school breakfast with students.
- Review the school breakfast menu with your students and discuss healthy options.
- If you have questions about school breakfast, talk with your Child Nutrition director.



Families

- Make sure that your child eats a healthy breakfast every day. If your child does not have time to eat breakfast at home, encourage him or her to eat school breakfast.
- Make arrangements for your child to eat school breakfast.
- Review the school breakfast menu with your children and discuss healthy options.
- Eat school breakfast with your child.
- Teach and role model healthy eating, including eating a healthy breakfast every day.
- Promote and support school breakfast.
- If you have questions about school breakfast, talk with the Child Nutrition director for your school system.



Students

- Fuel your body and brain with a healthy breakfast every morning.
- If you do not have time to eat breakfast at home, try school breakfast.
- Encourage other students to eat a healthy breakfast every morning.
- Promote and support school breakfast.
- If you have questions about school breakfast, talk with the Child Nutrition director for your school system.





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