

School Breakfast FAQ

Frequently asked questions about the School Breakfast Program!

Why is school breakfast necessary? Don't students eat at home?

There are many reasons why children may not eat a nutritious breakfast at home. Many children are simply not ready or able to eat when they first wake up. If they do eat, it may be an unsupervised meal with little nutritional value. A long bus ride may leave a child hungry again by the time they arrive at school. Finally, many families with limited resources cannot afford to provide a nutritious breakfast at home.

What are the nutritional benefits of students eating breakfast at school?

Nutritionally speaking, school breakfast is a healthy start for students. School breakfast must meet strict USDA guidelines and contain a serving of fluid milk, a fruit or vegetable or full-strength fruit or vegetable juice, as well as the grain/meat (or meat alternative) requirements. Since school breakfast is required to contain one-fourth of the Recommended Dietary Allowances for protein, calcium, iron, vitamin A and vitamin C, recent studies show that school breakfast eaters have higher nutritional intakes than non-school breakfast eaters.

What are the academic benefits of school breakfast?

Studies have shown that when students eat school breakfast, academic performance improves. This can be partially attributed to the timing factor. Studies show that when breakfast is eaten at school—closer to instructional and test-taking time—they actually perform better on tests and at various tasks.

Why serve breakfast in the classroom? Isn't that what the cafeteria is for?

Conflicting bus schedules and short breakfast periods prevent students from going to the cafeteria for breakfast. Additionally, even though school breakfast is available to all students regardless of family income, there is a stigma associated with the program that says only poor students eat breakfast at school. Many students choose not to go down to the cafeteria to avoid being labeled "poor" by their peers. Serving breakfast in the classroom is a good solution because it alleviates time constraint issues and removes the stigma. Studies show that the number of students who eat school breakfast more than doubles when breakfast is served in the classroom.

What are the academic benefits of classroom breakfast?

A wide body of research supports the benefits of serving breakfast in the classroom. Classroom breakfast programs reduce student tardiness, absenteeism and discipline office referrals. Teachers report greater student alertness and fewer complaints of hunger. Please see the Nutrition Consortium's Final Report on the Academic and Breakfast Connection Classroom Breakfast Pilot at www.hungerNYS.org.