Fun Events To Pack Them In

Making the cafeteria a fun and interesting place where kids want to spend time is essential to the success of the School Breakfast Program. Cafeteria atmosphere is almost as important as the quality and taste of the breakfast served. The following events are designed to help draw more children to School Breakfast every day.

ENTERTAINMENT
Allow the kids to choose music to play on the radio or a CD during breakfast. Brief videos and cartoons can be a real bonus as well.

INVITE GUESTS FROM SCHOOL
Have principals, teachers, coaches, nurses, friends, or the school mascot attend School Breakfast on certain days. If time permits, teachers could be available to provide extra help with homework, or older students could read to younger students during breakfast. Invite those students celebrating birthdays that month to sit at a table decorated with balloons and serve them at their table.

ACTIVITIES
Involve students in decorating the cafeteria by allowing them to hang drawings, posters and paint murals on the walls. If time allows, crafts and games will serve to draw more children to School Breakfast. Drama and music teachers could organize kids for brief performances during breakfast. Another fun activity is letting children design their own menus and act as taste testers for new items.

INCENTIVES
Give out as prizes in conjunction with the activities and theme days listed below, through weekly raffles or as random rewards issued to kids who find a special dot/sticker on the bottom of their milk carton/tray. Incentive items could be toys or books solicited from vendors or local businesses, or dessert items which children would receive with their lunch.

INVITE GUESTS FROM THE COMMUNITY
Police officers, business people, parents and other family members, local sports stars, celebrities, and cartoon characters can all enliven a breakfast.

SPECIAL THEME DAYS
Have students dress up to fit the theme for the day, decorate the cafeteria accordingly, and adjust menu items and/or names of meals to suit the occasion. Choose from among the following theme days or make up your own days! Holiday Celebrations, Backwards Day, Bahama Beach Day, Sports Team Days, Ethnic Food Days

Massachusetts
Department of Education
Sample School Breakfast Article

District-wide newspapers, school newsletters, and other such publications are great places to promote the School Breakfast Program and the work you are doing to make it a success. Parents and other community members should know that your school system is committed to making sure students are nutritionally prepared for the school day. The following is a sample article for your publication. You can print this article next to your monthly breakfast menu in the next issue that goes out!

SCHOOL BREAKFAST: HEALTHY, CONVENIENT, AND SMART
If your children aren't starting their day with a nutritious breakfast, then they are not starting their day ready to learn. Many studies show that hungry children have a hard time concentrating in class, they have more behavior problems, and they even score lower on standardized tests than do their counterparts. That's why our school district is launching a new campaign to promote School Breakfast.

Superintendent and the rest of the faculty are excited about the School Breakfast Program, because they know it improves students' performance in school.

"I can't say enough to encourage all families to take advantage of the School Breakfast Program," says (superintendent). "If children don't start the day with breakfast, they don't have the attention span to concentrate, the energy to participate, or the composure to behave. Breakfast makes all the difference."

There are many reasons why students come to school hungry. Many parents don't have time to make sure their children eat a good breakfast. Children often end up eating unhealthy breakfasts when they are home alone making their own decisions or given money to buy breakfast on the way to school. Some children aren't hungry when they first wake up, but by the time class begins, they feel the effects of not eating breakfast.

Food Service Director reports that percent of students in (city) Public Schools are eating School Lunch, while only percent are eating School Breakfast. "We need to make parents and students more aware of the breakfast program," says (FSD). "Every year we serve more students than the year before. I think parents are learning that our well-balanced breakfasts are a perfect option when they don't have time to monitor what their children eat in the morning."

School Breakfast is open to all students and is served from to . Menus are sent home with students regularly and are listed in local newspapers and on local access cable television.

Families who are eligible for free or reduced price School Lunch are also eligible for free or reduced price School Breakfast.

For more information about the School Breakfast Program call ___________.

The School Breakfast Program is supported by the Massachusetts Department of Education.
The Facts about School Breakfast

Use these "quotables" to encourage teachers to promote school breakfast:

The following statements are excerpted from: Statement on the Link Between Nutrition and Cognitive Development in Children (1994) by the Center on Hunger, Poverty and Nutrition Policy at Tufts University.

- "Children who attend school hungry have diminished attention spans and are unable to perform tasks as well as their nourished peers. In these cases, the full value of the education provided is lost."

- "Nutritionally deprived children are unable to benefit fully from schooling which, in turn, diminishes their potential as adults."

- "The benefits [of the School Breakfast Program] include higher performance on standardized tests, better school attendance, lowered incidence of anemia, and reduced need for costly special education."


- "Children from families that report multiple experiences of food insufficiency and hunger are more likely to show behavioral, emotional, and academic problems..."

- "Chronic under-nutrition is associated with increased anxiety, attention deficits, increased prevalence of school absence and tardiness..."

- "Problems such as fighting, stealing, and anxiety are more common in hungry... school-age children in our sample 5 to 10 years before they seem in society as increased rates of violence, underachievement, and substance abuse."

Massachusetts Department of Education
Ten Simple Suggestions
To Increase Participation in School Breakfast

1. Make regular announcements on the PA on the importance of breakfast and tomorrow's menu;

2. Place posters on bulletin boards throughout the school (posters and flyers are available through Project Bread);

3. Run articles in the school paper and promote School Breakfast in your local media: radio, cable, TV and newspaper (form articles and PSAs enclosed);

4. Display breakfast literature in your office, guidance center, cafeteria or other high-traffic areas;

5. Explore menu changes with surveys (parent and student survey forms enclosed);

6. Create an ongoing breakfast promotion: weekly raffle, free ice cream at lunch to those attending breakfast that day, etc.;

7. Send breakfast flyers and menus home;

8. Decorate the cafeteria and play hip music;

9. Have a Breakfast Poster Contest for students to design their own breakfast advertisements;

10. Promote the importance of breakfast in the classroom: posters, visits by FSD and/or principal.
Elementary School Breakfast Activities for the Classroom and the Whole School

While providing activities and event days in the cafeteria is fun for the kids who consistently eat School Breakfast, it is important to extend breakfast promotion into other parts of the school in order to attract new students to the program. First and foremost, teachers should educate children about the importance of breakfast and remind them that School Breakfast is available.

*Here are a few more ways you can remind students about School Breakfast and get them excited about being a part of it.*

**THE BREAKFAST CLUB**

Start a Breakfast Club in your school; all children have to do to join is eat breakfast. Teachers can work with students to create Breakfast Club Charts to record the number of days a month each child eats breakfast whether it be at school or at home. By incorporating the breakfast chart into the morning classroom routine, teachers will be giving students a constant reminder about the importance of breakfast. The PTA can help solicit donations for Breakfast Club membership-wear (tee shirts, hats, etc.) and other prizes. On the last day of each month, you can turn School Breakfast into a Breakfast Club membership party. Cafeteria staff may be able to decorate the cafeteria and play music. All children can be encouraged to come and the healthiest class or student with the most consistent breakfast attendance can be presented with an award. Why not reward that student by letting him/her read the School Breakfast menu over the PA?

Massachusetts
Department of Education
BREAKFAST POSTER CONTEST

Give your students a chance to show you what they've learned about breakfast by holding a school-wide poster contest. Teachers can direct students to design posters that illustrate and promote how they feel when they eat breakfast. Choose a winner from each class and then from each grade. Cafeteria staff can use the design and slogan from the winning poster to promote their School Breakfast Program.

EVERY WEEK IS BREAKFAST WEEK

Assign one class to decorate the cafeteria for School Breakfast each week. Teachers can work with students to come up with a theme for the week and banners and decorations that are both fun for children, and also teach them more about the importance of eating breakfast. The cafeteria manager can tally the number of School Breakasts served each week, and post the numbers on a chart in the cafeteria. At the end of the year, the class who attracted the most students to breakfast can win a field trip or special activity time.

STUDENT CHEFS PREPARE BREAKFAST

Challenge students to use what they've learned about balanced breakfasts by helping them prepare a class breakfast for their parents. Teachers can work with students to choose a nutritious menu, create invitations, and prepare the meal.

Massachusetts
Department of Education
Nutrition Peer Leadership Group
For High School Students

Of course the best way to convince young people to do anything is through their peers. If more high school students come to School Breakfast, it will most likely be because their peers have told them it's the thing to do. A group of students interested in nutrition may be your biggest asset in promoting the School Breakfast Program. Through a Nutrition Peer Leadership program, your school can build leaders and increase School Breakfast participation simultaneously.

The following are only some of the activities your school's Nutrition Peer Leadership program can pursue with the help of a faculty advisor.

DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A SURVEY TO ASSESS THE ATTITUDES OF YOUR STUDENT BODY

Students should push their peers to evaluate their morning habits. "What are the barriers to eating School Breakfast? What are the most popular breakfast foods? Do students come to school hungry? Is there a stigma associated with School Breakfast?" Questions like these are important for Peer Leaders to ask if they are going to effectively approach the problem of helping more students start the school day with a well-balanced meal. The enclosed student surveys can serve as a good starting point.

DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A PLAN TO PROMOTE SCHOOL BREAKFAST

Once Peer Leaders have evaluated student attitudes, they should be ready to promote School Breakfast. Students can make posters and PA announcements addressing issues found in their survey. They can work with the food service director, cafeteria manager, and principal to change School Breakfast according to the survey. They can even taste test breakfast selections and post reviews in the school newspaper or announce them over the PA.