

Myths about School Breakfast

Myth #1: School breakfast is unhealthy.

Fact: School breakfast is healthier now than ever. The 2010 Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act significantly updated nutrition standards for meals served in schools. Today, breakfasts include whole grain cereals, yogurt, warm egg sandwiches, fresh fruit, juice, and milk. Increasing variety is available for after the bell programs including cafeteria baked muffins made with local, and school garden sourced ingredients.

Additionally, the formulas used for the “school breakfast market” are of higher nutritional quality than those used for the “retail (grocery store) market.” For example, the #1 ingredient in cereals served to the school market is whole grain wheat.

Myth #2: School breakfast, especially breakfast in the classroom, is disruptive and takes away valuable teaching time.

Fact: Breakfast in the classroom has proven to be a successful model in many schools across the nation. Some teachers report they have gained instructional time due to fewer disruptions such as visits to the school nurse, tardiness, and absenteeism. They now take attendance, engage students in “chew and do” and housekeeping activities during classroom breakfast time. In addition, teachers report that the quality of instruction improves when students eat breakfast because the children are more alert and ready to learn.

Myth #3: Eating in the classroom will make a mess.

Fact: Teachers establish breakfast routines and cleaning protocols; students learn their roles and clean up after themselves. Custodians are also involved to identify school-specific clean-up protocols. With the need to clean the cafeteria between breakfast and lunch eliminated, custodians have time to remove classroom trash.

Myth #4: My school has many students with allergies and so we cannot serve breakfast in the classroom.

Fact: Managing food allergies in the classroom is no different than managing food allergies in the cafeteria. School nutrition staff work with school nurses and teachers to ensure allergies are identified and appropriate steps, such as special meal labels for students with allergies, are taken.

Myth #5: Eating in the classroom will bring pests.

Fact: Schools have not reported an increase in pests due to breakfast eating in the classroom. If a classroom had pests before implementing an after the bell eat in the classroom program and does not address the problem before implementation, those pests will remain. Teachers are known to establish cleanliness routines and teach students to follow them.