



Q&A

School Breakfast Program

Parent Fact Sheet

Why is breakfast important?

Children who eat breakfast start the day with food in their stomach so they are not distracted by hunger. They also behave and perform better in school. Breakfast provides nutrients like calcium and fiber that many children lack. Eating breakfast improves health and helps to prevent children from getting sick.

Many teens skip breakfast because they are concerned about gaining weight, but teens who eat breakfast are less likely to be overweight. Experts recommend eating breakfast to help prevent and treat obesity.

Q Why should children eat breakfast at school?

- Many children skip breakfast at home because they are rushed or not hungry before they leave for school.
- Eating breakfast at school saves time during the busy morning and allows children to eat later, when they are hungrier.
- A later breakfast at school may prevent children from becoming hungry mid-morning.
- School breakfast encourages children to get to school on time.
- School staff report improved attendance, attention and behavior when breakfast is served at school.
- Children do better on tests when breakfast is served at school, closer to test time.

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Q&A

School Breakfast Program Parent Fact Sheet

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Q *What is the School Breakfast Program?*

The School Breakfast Program receives money from the Federal government to provide breakfast in school. Schools must serve breakfasts that meet Federal nutrition requirements. They also must offer free or reduced-price breakfasts to eligible children.

Q *What types of foods are offered for school breakfast?*

School breakfast contains foods like milk, fruit, juice, breads, cereals, eggs, yogurt and meat. Popular items include cereal and milk, breakfast sandwiches, pancakes, fresh fruit, string cheese, yogurt, and muffins.

Breakfast may be served in the classroom, cafeteria, or packaged in bags to “grab ‘n’ go”. Some middle and high schools serve breakfast in cafeteria after 1st period. More children eat breakfast at school when it is served in the classroom or in “grab ‘n’ go” bags.

Q *Who can participate in the program & how much does it cost?*

Any child who attends a school with a breakfast program can participate. Some children will be eligible for free or reduced-priced breakfast. The cost of school breakfast is very low, even for students that pay full price. Schools that

participate in the School Breakfast Program are required to tell families how to apply at the beginning of the school year. Families may also apply on-line at www.COMPASS.state.pa.us.

Q *What if my child's school doesn't offer breakfast?*

Let your principal know you would like your school to start a breakfast program. Gather support from other parents through your PTA/PTO.

Some schools think they cannot start breakfast due to costs or school schedules. But, there are many ways to provide breakfast that can meet the needs of different schools. Food service directors from schools that serve breakfast can help.

For more information:

Pennsylvania Department of Education

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Phone: 1-800-331-0129

Web: http://www.pde.state.pa.us/food_nutrition

