**Breakfast at School**

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

**What is the link between eating a healthy breakfast and academic gains?**

Children who eat breakfast when compared to those who rarely eat breakfast:

* Learn faster and have better memory skills.
* Achieve better math and reading scores & better standardized test scores. Have increased attentiveness in the classroom and less anxiety.
* Behave better, have fewer incidences of disciplinary actions and are more socially developed.
* Attend school more often with fewer absences & tardiness.
* Visit the school nurse less often.

**Can I start a breakfast program mid-year?**

Yes! You may have better success implementing a breakfast program after routines have been established at school. Try piloting breakfast in a building or classroom with established support. You may also want to stagger start-up dates for your building and/or start-up after school breaks.

**Who can help me get started?**

Find champions from your district that will support your efforts. Share successful breakfast programs from other districts with the superintendent, business manager, teachers, custodians and other staff. Create momentum by starting small and building upon your success.

Key players include:

* Superintendent **•**  Principals **•**  Business Manager
* Teachers **•**  Custodians **•**  Transportation Director

**Isn’t it the parents’ responsibility to feed their children breakfast at home?**

Mornings can be hectic! School breakfast is an option when family schedules are rushed, commuting or bus schedules interfere with an early breakfast, or a child is not hungry early in the morning but has a better appetite later in the morning. Serving breakfast at school provides all students with the morning nutrition they need to start their day.

**Does an Alternative Meal Service Model mean lost instructional time?**

Lost instructional time is one of the most common misconceptions about serving Breakfast in the Classroom. Teachers’ report that Breakfast in the Classroom does not take away from instructional time since breakfast usually takes place during morning announcements and attendance, time that previously was not being used for regular classroom instruction. In fact, students eating breakfast at school results in fewer nurse visits, less tardiness and absenteeism and fewer disciplinary problems, which take away from instructional time. Alternative Meal Service Models can often lead to *gained*instructional time.

**We don’t have extra staffing in our school to support an Alternative Meal Service Model; will it create additional work for teachers?**

Many schools have successfully implemented Alternative Meal Service Models, such as Breakfast in the Classroom, without additional help. For schools already serving school breakfast, schedules adjustments and reallocation of job duties may help to assist with implementing an alternative meal service model. A common myth is that teachers work load will increase with Breakfast in the Classroom. In reality, instruction or administrative activities can occur during breakfast. Some teachers may also choose to integrate school breakfast and nutrition education into their curriculum.

**How do Alternative Meal Service Models fit in with my school’s Integrated Pest Management Plan?**

Breakfast in the Classroom does not have to be at odds with Integrated Pest Management (IPM). The secret to success is clear, consistent communication between custodial and food service staff to ensure that breakfast foods are easy to serve, eat, and clean up. For example, food service staff may want to serve foods like bagels or tortilla wraps instead of muffins to minimize crumbs. Equip your classroom with paper towels or wipes so students can clean desks before and after breakfast. Use large trash bags with stands or rolling trash bins to facilitate easy disposal of trash from breakfast service. If your school does not have an IPM plan, talk to your school administrator about putting one in place.

**Is it hard to apply for the USDA breakfast program?**

Not at all!  For schools already on the National School Lunch Program, applying for the School Breakfast Program is simple. More information about the school breakfast program can be found at the [Ohio Department of Education](http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Other-Resources/Food-and-Nutrition/National-School-Lunch-and-Breakfast/School-Breakfast-Program). For helpful tools and resources visit [Ohio School Breakfast Challenge](http://www.ohioschoolbreakfastchallenge.com/).

Reference

FAQ Page 19, NEA Health Information Network. Breakfast in the Classroom School Breakfast toolkit.

http://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/school-breakfast/frequently-asked-questions-0

FAQ Page 13, 14, Breakfast at School Toolkit. Ohio Action for Healthy Kids

http://www.ohioactionforhealthykids.org/resources/breakfast/breakfast-tools-and-resources/