

# The School Breakfast Program



Breakfast literally means ‘breaking the fast’ and is thought by many to be the most important meal of the day. After a long night’s sleep, it’s critical to replenish our bodies every morning with a meal - but can breakfast actually help kids learn better? This notion dates back to the early 1900’s and research evidence says yes; skipping breakfast can diminish school performance. Breakfast skippers often experience headache, fatigue, sleepiness, and restlessness - do you think that you could learn under those circumstances? Kids who eat breakfast have improved memory and increased problem-solving skills, verbal fluency, and creative abilities.

Good nourishment doesn’t necessarily come in a fancy package or take long to prepare - even last night’s leftovers will give you and your family the healthy head start they need. For many children and teenagers who don’t eat at home, the School Breakfast Program serves breakfast to 6.6 million kids in more than 65,000 schools nationwide. Meals offered at school are available to ALL students. These meals must include several food groups and are designed to sustain students’ energy throughout the day. School breakfasts are economical as compared to home or commercial choices. They are also cost effective for schools, because they are supported by federal funds. Based on new research, eating school breakfast was even found to reduce tardiness, absenteeism, and visits to the nurse - good-bye headaches! Be sure to check out if your school offers a breakfast program. If you are an interested parent or community member, get involved and support the *Eat Healthy. Eat Breakfast.* effort in your schools.

- Encourage principals, superintendents, and school boards to support breakfast programs.
- Help establish a School Breakfast Program if one does not exist.
- Help to improve a School Breakfast Program if it needs a boost.
- Volunteer to help plan fun events and activities in your school that promote breakfast.

**Whatever you do...eat breakfast.**