

School Breakfast Program (SBP)

The School Breakfast Program is a federally funded meal program operating in schools across the country. The School Breakfast Program allows low-income children to access free or reduced-price breakfasts at their school. Schools receive a reimbursement for each eligible meal served. Students not eligible for free or reduced-price meals can pay to receive meals. All meals must follow a specific set of nutritional guidelines established by the USDA.

Schools with a high rate of students qualifying for free or reduced-price meals have the option of providing free breakfast to all students by operating a universal free breakfast model. Universal free breakfast has resulted in decreased overhead costs for schools and increase utilization for students. Universal free meals can be the result of operating under the Community Eligibility Provision or Provision 2.

School Breakfast Program Best Practice Models

There are several models aimed at increasing participation in school breakfast that can be utilized by schools. Depending on the age of your students, the schedule of transportation and start times, and space available you can find a model that will work best for your school. It is important to consider all of the different staff people that will be affected by each model and include them in discussions when considering making a change. Models proven successful include: Grab 'n' Go, Breakfast in the Classroom, and Second-Chance Breakfast.

- **Grab 'n' Go- Breakfast**

Breakfast is packed in easy to distribute packaging. Students pick up the breakfast packs from carts located in the hallway or as they enter the doorway before the school day begins. Students bring their breakfast into the classroom or consume it elsewhere on school grounds before heading to class.

- **Breakfast in the Classroom**

Breakfast is served in the classroom after the school day officially begins. Breakfasts are delivered to the classrooms using a variety of methods. Students consume their meals within 15 minutes while the teacher takes care of tasks like attendance, morning announcements, etc.

- **Second-Chance Breakfast**

Breakfast is served after first period is over, or during a mid-morning break. Students who were not hungry earlier in the morning or those who would be unable to arrive before school in time to receive and eat breakfast can benefit from this model. This model is particularly effective with middle and high schools because these students tend not to be hungry as early in the morning.

Promotion and Outreach Strategies

Offering breakfast at school, even using a best practice model, is not enough to ensure your program will be successful and widely used. You also need to promote the program to both students and parents. It is especially important if you are offering free breakfast to students that parents are also aware of this great resource. Parents who don't know about the program will be more likely to feed their children breakfast at home and not take advantage of the program. This is also a great opportunity for you to share examples of the delicious, healthy meals Nutrition Services works so hard to provide.

In some cases the students' and parents' perceptions of school meals can be a barrier to participation. This can be challenging, but the good news is perceptions can change and tools exist to help with this process. The Nutrition Navigator can help you develop a plan to create positive perceptions of meals among students and families. Many schools have successfully found ways to improve awareness and opinions of school meals including taste tests, breakfast weeks, and inviting parents to breakfast with the kids.

Visit the School Breakfast Program page of the Food + You program portal for tools and examples that can be used to create develop an outreach plan for your school.