



**DJJ Employee Health Initiative:
National School Breakfast Week: March 7-11, 2011**

National School Breakfast Week (NSBW) is celebrated every year in March to remind you and your kids that eating a complete, healthy breakfast is an essential part of being prepared for the day.

The federally funded School Breakfast Program feeds more than 8 million children daily. For some, this breakfast is their most nutritious meal of the day. The week of March 7-11 is National School Breakfast Week. It is a time to recognize the important contribution of the school breakfast program to the health and well being of our children.



Children who eat breakfast have an easier time concentrating on learning, work faster, make fewer errors, score higher on tests and are more creative. Breakfast eaters are better behaved in the classroom and are less likely to be absent.

To eat for health, plan a breakfast with foods from at least three food groups. Show children where the breakfast foods are stored and use lower shelves and smaller containers children can handle. Teach kids the appropriate kitchen skills needed to prepare breakfast and above all be a good role model and join your children for breakfast. If you find fitting in a nutritious breakfast difficult at home, encourage your child to eat at school. Remember it's important to break-the-fast with breakfast because the evidence is strong on the importance of breakfast to academic achievement, yet too many children miss out on the most critical meal of the day.

Numerous investigations have shown that breakfast can improve a student's memory, test scores, school attendance and cut down on visits to the school nurse. Research has also shown that children who eat breakfast each day have a higher intake of vitamins and minerals and maintain a healthier weight than those who skip.

Fortunately, every school day, breakfast program offers students the healthy foods they need to keep on track during their busy school day. Every school breakfast served meets federal nutrition standards limiting fat and portion size.

The breakfast program is also a great option for kids who aren't ready for breakfast when they roll out of bed. "The morning routine for many families can be so hectic, and some children just aren't hungry before they leave for school," said Lisa Johnson, MD, the Chief Medical Director, Office of Health Services for the Department of Juvenile Justice. "Knowing that your child can eat a healthy breakfast once they get to school can be a huge relief for parents."

"The National School Breakfast Week was launched in 1989 to raise awareness of the availability of the School Breakfast Program (SBP) to all children and the links between eating a good breakfast, academic achievement and healthy lifestyles.

School Breakfast is proven to be good for children's bodies and their minds. Research shows that children who eat breakfast have improved memory, problem-solving skills, verbal fluency and creative abilities.

Why Eat Breakfast?



School breakfast *really* is the most important meal of the day for kids and provides the necessary fuel to start a day of learning and achievement. Research has shown that children who eat breakfast at school:

- ❖ Score better in standardized tests
- ❖ Have fewer health issues
- ❖ Behave better in class

Research also shows that kids who skip breakfast rarely make up for missed nutrients later in the day – so skipping breakfast could also affect the after school

activities that they really love!

School Breakfast: Good for your Kids

School breakfast provides 25% of the recommended daily allowance of protein, calcium and iron, vitamins A and C and calories for your kids as well as meeting federal nutrition guidelines based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.



What's in a meal?

Menus change daily, but are designed to meet a child's needs. The breakfast line-up includes this good stuff:

- Milk
- Fruits, 100% juice or vegetables
- Breads or other whole grains including
- cereal
- Meat and/or meat alternates



Planning is Key

The key to eating a healthy breakfast is planning. Keep easy-to-prepare, healthy breakfast items on-hand. Plan a few extra minutes each morning to prepare and eat breakfast. The following weekday ideas are quick and easy, and although it's preferable to sit down to breakfast, many can be eaten (or modified to be eaten) on-the-go.

Breakfast Idea #1: Quick, Easy, and Healthy (Weekday)

- ❖ Low-fat vanilla or fruit-flavored yogurt topped with unsweetened, whole grain cereal, and a piece of fresh fruit, such as an apple.
- ❖ An unsweetened, whole grain breakfast bar, fresh fruit (try a banana), and low-fat milk.
- ❖ Unsweetened, whole wheat (or other whole grain) frozen toaster waffles topped with low-fat vanilla or fruit-flavored yogurt, unsweetened applesauce, jam, or natural peanut butter (or other nut butter) and eaten like toast, rather than with a fork. Top with sliced fruit, such as peaches, or serve with easy-to-eat fruit, such as grapes or blueberries.
- ❖ Unsweetened, whole grain cereal with low-fat milk, topped with fruit such as banana or strawberry slices, blueberries, raisins, or dried cranberries.
- ❖ Brown rice cakes (unsalted or lightly-salted) with natural peanut (or other nut) butter or reduced-fat cream cheese, topped with slices of fresh fruit, such as strawberries or banana.
- ❖ Fruit and yogurt smoothie: blend low-fat vanilla or fruit-flavored yogurt with fresh or unsweetened frozen fruit. If necessary, add a splash of low-fat milk or 100% fruit juice, depending upon flavor and consistency. Use ice cubes, if needed, to reach the desired consistency.

Breakfast Idea #2: Fun and Nutritious (Weekends)



Homemade Whole Grain Pancakes or Waffles

Add fruit faces after they have finished cooking: 2 banana slices for the eyes, half of a strawberry for the nose, and an apple slice or half of a pineapple ring for the mouth. Throw fruit - such as banana slices or fresh or frozen blueberries - into the batter for added flavor and nutrition. Use cookie cutters to form pancakes into fun shapes. See below for topping ideas.

Homemade French Toast Sticks

Use whole grain bread, such as 100% whole wheat. You can cut the bread into strips to make the "sticks" either before or after cooking. For a healthier batter, use nonfat milk and egg substitute. Give each child a few small bowls of "dip" for their sticks (see below).

Topping Ideas

- For pancakes, waffles, and french toast sticks: unsweetened applesauce, low-fat vanilla or fruit-flavored yogurt, fresh fruit (try strawberries, banana slices, or blueberries), natural peanut (or other nut) butter, honey, apple butter, fruit syrup (try blueberry), reduced-

fat plain or flavored cream cheese, cinnamon

SNA Releases 2011 Legislative Issues Paper

[Permanent link](#)

- ❖ February 1, 2011 -- Each year, the School Nutrition Association presents Congress with critical issues facing school nutrition professionals and the more than 31 million children who depend on safe, healthy meals through the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. [Download a complete copy of the 2011 Legislative Issue Paper \(pdf\)](#).

Sources for this Article:

- Largest Nutrition Site Run by Registered Dietitians; HealthCastle.com;
- School Nutrition. Org <http://www.schoolnutrition.org/nsbw/>
- School Breakfast. Org - <http://www.Schoolbreakfast.org>