

Breakfast in the Classroom

Breakfast in the Classroom is just one of the ways to increase participation in your school's breakfast program. Breakfast in the Classroom is an excellent option if your cafeteria is too small or crowded and this service option provides a faster, more convenient nutritious breakfast to students. Students enjoy eating with their friends in their classroom. Some schools offer students the option to eat in different classrooms with siblings or friends. Students may enjoy visiting a teacher they had a previous year while they enjoy breakfast. Students who arrive to school late still have the opportunity to enjoy a nutritious breakfast.

There are several ways to operate Breakfast in the Classroom. Here are examples:

- Students arrive at school and go to their classrooms to drop off their coats and books. The students then proceed to the cafeteria to pick up their individually wrapped breakfast items, place on a tray, and go back to their classroom.
- Individually wrapped breakfast items can be placed in a bag and served from a cart to students in the classroom. Teachers record the meals as they are served to the students and student volunteers help distribute the breakfast bags.
- Trash cans are placed outside the classrooms for trash pick up immediately after breakfast and to eliminate mess in the classroom.
- Teachers are given moist towelettes to clean up spills and sticky fingers after mealtime.

Benefits:

- Serving breakfast in the classroom significantly increases breakfast participation.
- Students are more prepared to learn after eating in a small group setting.

Getting it started:

- A great time to implement breakfast in the classroom is during standardized testing time. Approach the administration during this time to emphasize the academic and nutritional benefits of breakfast.

To Make Breakfast in the Classroom Happen:

- Before implementation of Breakfast in the Classroom, ask the principal to mail an introductory letter to parents to explain Breakfast in the Classroom as well as the nutritional and academic benefits of eating breakfast.
- Meet with the teachers to review procedures and address their questions and concerns.
- Give teachers a form with step-by-step instructions to help in the daily operation of Breakfast in the Classroom in the event the classroom teacher is absent and replaced with a substitute teacher.

Who Will Serve the Breakfast?

- Custodians
- Student "self-managers"
- Aides
- Food service staff
- Volunteers
- Parents

Follow-Up:

- After start-up of Breakfast in the Classroom, continue communications with teachers and other school staff about successes or concerns of the program.
- Write periodic 'thank you' notes to staff to let them know about the positive benefits of the program. Include a coupon, redeemable in the cafeteria, for a free food item or breakfast.

Linking Breakfast with Other Activities in the Classroom:

- Post menus in class and review with students.
- Promote reading - ask the principal to select students to read menus on the public address system.
- Students can do periodic formal surveys of their peers' breakfast food and service preferences, tabulate results, and discuss with the Food Service Director for possible menu or program changes. Chart before and after Breakfast in the Classroom participation rates.

How to Get Teacher's Involvement:

- Allow teachers to talk to other teachers who have successfully implemented Breakfast in the Classroom to point out the positives they have experienced.
- Emphasize the positive behavior and academic benefits of breakfast.
- Offer promotional free breakfasts to teachers who eat breakfast with their students.
- Pilot a program with motivated teachers.
- Guarantee that teachers can try Breakfast in the Classroom for one month, with the understanding that they can discontinue if not pleased. Once they observe the improvement in their students' behaviors, they will want to continue with Breakfast in the Classroom!
- While students eat breakfast, teachers can talk about plans for the day, read a book or complete administrative functions (check in library books, take attendance).

This information is from **Expanding Breakfast Manual & Video Kit - Second Edition** from the National Dairy Council and the Child Nutrition Foundation; to order call (800) 728-0728.