



## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q Will my workload increase?**

**A** Teachers may be concerned that their workload will increase with breakfast in the classroom. This breakfast serving method usually takes 10 minutes, a time that can be used to take attendance, give morning announcements, read to students, or begin the first lesson. Some teachers may be asked to do a meal count, however if the count is done while taking attendance, teachers find that their workload does not change. Some teachers also choose to integrate school breakfast and nutrition education into their curriculum.

**Q Will Classroom Breakfast cause disruption and mess?**

**A** When breakfast is served in the classroom, food service staff can provide garbage bags, paper towels and other cleaning supplies for students to help clean. Students can assist with clean-up of their own desks, or a few students can be assigned daily or weekly to help with cleaning. Experience shows that classroom breakfast does not make a big difference in classroom cleanliness because students are provided a structured routine for clean-up.

**Q Shouldn't parents feed their child breakfast at home?**

**A** Parents who choose to have their children eat breakfast at school are responsible parents. Busy family lifestyles and bus and commuting schedules can make it difficult for children to eat breakfast at home. Many children also report not feeling hungry before school starts. Serving breakfast after the school day starts provides all students with the nutrition they need to start the day.

## Breakfast in the Classroom A Quick Guide for Teachers

Teachers are important to the implementation of breakfast in the classroom so that the program is successful for students, teachers themselves, and their school. This quick guide is intended to provide teachers with the resources they need to implement a breakfast program in their classroom.

Extensive research shows that children who eat breakfast at school have improved classroom performance, better test scores and grades, increased ability to concentrate, better attendance, and less disciplinary problems, tardiness and visits to the nurse.

Students can't concentrate or learn when they are hungry so the time that it takes to serve breakfast is an investment in their education. While teachers are initially concerned that breakfast in the classroom might cut down on class time, they find that students settle down faster when breakfast is served in the classroom. In schools that have implemented Breakfast in the Classroom, teachers have found that concerns are easily addressed and the benefits far outweigh the costs.

Studies have also demonstrated that many teachers tend to spend their own money purchasing foods for their students that are hungry during the school morning and have not had access to breakfast. Breakfast in the Classroom is a great way to have children start the day off nourished and ready to learn.

# Breakfast in the Classroom

## Step-by-Step

### Step 1~ Breakfast Delivery to Classroom

Teachers can talk with the school principal and food service staff about how breakfast meals will be delivered to the classroom and they should have the opportunity to provide input on creating a structured routine for delivery of breakfast, activities that can take place during breakfast, and breakfast clean-up. There are four typical methods of getting meals to the classroom:

- Nutrition service staff deliver the meals
- Teachers pick up meals prior to class starting
- A few students are assigned to pick class meals up on the way to class
- All students grab their bagged breakfast from a central location before going to class

Talk with the principal and food service staff about which delivery option is best for your school.

### Step 2~ Serving Meals in the Classroom

Serving meals in the classroom depends on the type of delivery method your school uses. If breakfast is delivered by food service staff, teachers, or assigned students, serving options include:

- Teachers can lay breakfast out for each student at their desk or meal table
- Assigned students can serve meals to each student
- Each student can grab a meal before going to their desk

If students grab their bagged breakfast from the cafeteria, they can go directly to their desk.

### Step 3~ Activities While Eating Breakfast

Breakfast in the morning counts as instructional time and there are many useful ways to fill those 10-15 minutes! Usually it takes time for students to get settled in to starting the school day and many teachers find that classroom breakfast is a great activity to transition to the first day's lesson.



Here are some activities you can do in your classroom that count as instructional time:

- Take attendance, read aloud (check out some book options on Page 4), grade homework, start the first lesson
- Students can listen to school morning announcements, have silent reading time, engage in a nutrition lesson, do math and language arts exercises, turn in homework

## Step 4~ Classroom Breakfast Time

There are a variety of easy strategies that schools can use to conclude classroom breakfast time, which usually takes 10-15 minutes. Common strategies include:

- School administration has a school-wide bell ring when breakfast is complete
- School-wide morning announcements conclude at the same time as breakfast
- A timer or bell is set up in your classroom to ring when breakfast is complete

Work with the principal and administration to decide which option works best, how much time to allot (no less than 10-15 minutes; may be longer for younger students), and use that method starting the first day of classroom breakfast.

## Step 5~ Cleaning Up

Classroom breakfast clean-up takes coordination between school administration, food service and custodial staff, as well as teachers. It's important that you have the materials needed in the classroom for breakfast clean-up. Talk with your administration about your school's breakfast clean-up plan. Tips for breakfast clean-up in your classroom:

- Inform students of how clean-up will take place and use that method starting the first day of breakfast in the classroom
- For younger students, teachers may need to show them how to initially clean up and dispose of their breakfast
- Students can use wet-wipes to clean their hands and personal desk or a few students can be assigned weekly to clean student desks with a sponge
- Students can throw their trash in a trash bag/bin provided by custodial services
- Assigned students can put the trash bag/bin outside the classroom or bring it to a central location for custodial staff to pick up
- Assigned students can return unopened, leftover food to the cafeteria

## Step 6~ Stick with it!!

Some challenges may come up during the first few days of breakfast in the classroom. Once a routine is developed in your classroom, breakfast will run smoothly and you will witness the benefits of the program. After a few days or weeks, students will participate in the planned routine, eliminating initial issues.

**“I wish I could afford to bring in snacks every day. The kids in my class are so young. They are not able to provide for themselves. If they are always worried about their basic needs, how can they grow and learn?”**

**from Hunger in Our Schools, Share Our Strength's Teachers Report**

## More Resources for Teachers

- Share Our Strength, Hunger in Our Schools Teachers Report: [www.strength.org/teachers](http://www.strength.org/teachers)
- Dairy Max works with schools to implement Fuel up to play 60, a program that increases student access to physical activity and nutrient-rich foods. To learn more about Fuel Up to Play 60 and other resources available through Dairy Max, go to [www.dairymax.org](http://www.dairymax.org)
- Kids Health in the Classroom has great nutrition curriculum resources for teachers: [classroom.kidshealth.org](http://classroom.kidshealth.org)
- Got Breakfast? Foundation has tools to assist schools and teachers in implementing a breakfast in the classroom program: [www.gotbreakfast.org](http://www.gotbreakfast.org); find videos here: <http://www.gotbreakfast.org/video.php>

# Books at Breakfast Time

## Up to Age 8

- Blueberries for Sal *by Robert McCloskey*
- Bread and Jam for Frances *by Russell Hoban*
- Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs *by Judi Barrett*
- If You Give a Mouse a Cookie *by Laura Joffe Numeroff*
- The Vegetables We Eat *by Gail Gibbons*

## Ages 9 through 12

- Blue Potatoes, Orange Tomatoes: How to Grow a Rainbow Garden *by Rosalind Creasey*
- George Washington's Breakfast *by Jean Fritz*
- The Omnivore's Dilemma for Kids *by Michael Pollan*
- The Chocolate Touch *by Patrick Skene Catling*
- Eating the Plates: A Pilgrim Book of Food and Manners *by Lucille Recht Penner*



“Hunger is a real problem in our country and I believe there are steps we can take to help ensure that hunger doesn’t keep our children from succeeding in school.”  
from Hunger in Our Schools, Share Our Strength’s Teachers Report

## Have Additional Questions? Contact Us!

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### New Mexico Public Education

Department Student Nutrition

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**the new mexico collaboration  
to end hunger**