



Grab and Go Breakfast

Frequently Asked Questions

Q

My school already provides traditional breakfast free of charge to all students. Why should we consider other breakfast models?

A

Providing school breakfast to all students, free of charge, is a wonderful start! However, traditional breakfast models still present barriers to equal access for all students. Challenges like bus and parent drop off time, size or location of the cafeteria and the stigma that can be associated with eating breakfast at school are all mitigated by offering breakfast to all students through a Grab and Go service model. Plus, your breakfast program participation will increase – on average, schools reach 63% breakfast participation with this model.¹

Q

Will school nutrition staff spend more time preparing breakfasts for the Grab and Go model versus traditional cafeteria service?

A

Most Grab and Go breakfast menu items can be prepared the day before service, decreasing morning prep time. However, depending on whether you follow the offer versus serve method, you may not be able to provide pre-packed foods. Regardless of whether schools choose to serve a complete pre-packaged breakfast or choose the offer versus serve method, all schools should take into consideration the need for staff to operate the serving kiosks or carts.

Q

What about trash and sanitation? Will Grab and Go service create additional work for custodians?

A

Strategic planning by school nutrition and custodial staff can help ensure that Grab and Go Breakfast does not create additional work for any party. Involve the district/campus custodial staff at the beginning of the planning process and work with them to create a plan for trash and sanitation. Strategies used to address trash and sanitation vary by school, examples include:

- Engaging students and setting clear expectations of their role in cleanup is also important. By making students aware of the process and placing trash cans in convenient areas, students can take care of the bulk of cleanup.
- Serve menu items with a minimal risk of spillage that are easy to dispose of.
- If students are allowed to take Grab and Go items to their classroom, trash can be disposed in a heavy-duty bag and placed in the hallway for collection by custodial staff.

- Depending on the campus, consider designating specific locations for students to consume their items, limiting the areas needing cleanup.

How should I address the concerns of parents who think the "on-the-go" food might not be as healthy?

Grab and Go meals are easy and convenient, but that does mean they are less nutritious. Choosing menu items that fit the service model while meeting student preferences and all nutritional guidelines is important to the success of the program. Consider building a sample Grab and Go breakfast menu to provide parents as part of a communications campaign, including all the nutritional information and federal nutritional guidelines, and provide information on how the new service model will function. You may also want to provide statistics on how eating benefits students.

How do I educate my principal and district administrators about Grab and Go Breakfast and encourage them to implement the program in our district?

Educating superintendents, principals, and other administrators about the educational, health and budgetary benefits that Grab and Go Breakfast brings through increased breakfast participation is essential to the continued expansion of the program. When superintendents and principals fully support alternative service strategies, participation in the School Breakfast Program can flourish. After implementing an alternative delivery breakfast model schools report:²

- **Higher Test Scores:** Hunger makes school harder. Students who eat school breakfast achieve higher scores on standardized tests.
- **Calmer Classrooms:** Children who do not regularly get enough nutritious food to eat tend to have higher levels of behavioral, emotional and educational problems.
- **Fewer Trips To The Nurse:** When kids come to school hungry, they visit the school nurse more often due to stomachaches and headaches. Kids who struggle with hunger are also likely to be sick more often, are slower to recover from illness, are hospitalized more frequently and are more susceptible to obesity.
- **Stronger Attendance & Graduation Rates:** Students who eat school breakfast attend more school days. Chronic absenteeism, defined as missing three weeks or more of school, decreases by 6 percentage points on average when students have access to Breakfast After the Bell. Attendance is important, as students who attend class more regularly are 20 percent more likely to graduate from high school.²

Example strategies to use when promoting Grab and Go Breakfast:

- Provide school breakfast participation rates to principals, as they often are unaware of how few students participate in school breakfast.
- Highlight the health and learning benefits of school breakfast participation, including improved nutritional intake and increased test scores.
- Show principals and administrators first-hand how alternative breakfast service models work by organizing a visit to a school that operates one of the alternative breakfast models.
- Ask superintendents to send a letter to principals in their district describing the value of alternative breakfast service models and/or incorporate a presentation about breakfast in the classroom into meetings or trainings.

References:

1. [Share Our Strength No Kid Hungry: Center for Best Practices](#). Tips for Implementing an Effective Grab and Go Breakfast Program
2. [Share Our Strength No Kid Hungry: Center for Best Practices](#). [School Meals: About School Breakfast](#). Accessed November 2023.