



Smoothies

Standard Operating Procedures

Smoothies are a trendy, student-friendly menu option that can increase student participation. They can count for multiple food components and can be incorporated during breakfast, lunch, or supper service as a part of a reimbursable meal or served as an a la carte option.

Adding smoothies into your district's menus can help increase revenue, averaged daily participation (ADP) and student satisfaction. Creating a strategy for implementing a smoothie program will help ensure success. To help you get started, National Dairy Council prepared a comprehensive list of Standard Operating Procedures.

Roles and Responsibilities

A successful smoothie program involves multiple stakeholders, all playing different but equally important roles, outlined below:

- **School Nutrition Supervisors:**

School nutrition supervisors can help deliver staff trainings and help create smoothie promotion plans for students and parents. During the initial rollout, they can play an important role in monitoring campus-wide/district-wide food preparation, service, teacher/student reception and cleanup.

- **Menu Planner:**

Menu planners are responsible for recipe development of smoothies that will appeal to students while meeting nutritional standards. They also play an important role in managing food costs and marketing of the new smoothie program.

- **Cafeteria Staff:**

Cafeteria staff will be responsible for prepping the components of the smoothies, follow the recipes, and serving the finished items in the standardized serving sizes.

- **Students:**

Involve students at an early stage to get them excited about the new smoothie program. Polling students about flavor preference can also help you obtain buy-in and determine recipes.

- **Custodians:**

Custodians play one of the most important roles in any food service model. They can also provide valuable input when designing the program procedures, such as trash pickup locations and times and what, if any, additional custodial supplies are needed.

Additional Resources:

[USDA Memo: Smoothies Offered in Child Nutrition Programs](#)

[USDA Guide to offering Smoothies as Reimbursable Meal](#)

[Smoothie Meal Deal](#)

[Implementation Guide - Smoothies](#)

Implementation and Logistics

Rollout Timeline: 3-6 Months Prior to Rollout

Equipment and Service:

- Determine what serving method you will use for smoothies — Will they be served as part of a reimbursable meal? Sold as a la carte items? Or both?
- Determine what equipment is right for your smoothie program (if applicable). Be sure to consider electrical needed for each piece of equipment and availability of outlets in your kitchen/campus.
 - Immersion Blenders (\$): When preparing a large quantity of smoothies, such as those served as part of a reimbursable meal, commercial immersion blenders are a great, budget-friendly option. Immersion blenders allow your staff to easily prepare large batches of smoothies prior to meal service.
 - Countertop Commercial Blender (\$\$): Good for a la carte lines, especially made-to-order a la carte lines.
 - Smoothie Machines (\$\$\$): Depending on your budget and service/staffing needs, a smoothie machine is an efficient way to serve many students. Countertop smoothie machines can produce around three (12-ounce) servings in one minute. Floor models can produce up to twelve (16-ounce) smoothies in one minute. This could be a good option for central kitchens as well.
 - Blenderless Smoothies: These are smoothies made from pureed fruits/vegetables so that you don't need a blender! Many yogurt companies that service schools have great recipes on their websites.
- Obtain bids for your desired equipment and initiate purchase.
- Determine where equipment will be located within your kitchen/campus. Will smoothies be prepared in a central kitchen, back of the house or on the line?
- Apply for grants when available

Recipes and Menus:

- Ensure Smart Snacks and nutritional guidelines are met.
- When planning recipes, try to integrate items that are already on your bid.
- If new items are needed to complete desired recipes, initiate bids and purchasing.
- Items to consider:
 - Use commodity individual quick-freezing fruits instead of ice for a great smoothie consistency and cost savings.
 - Drain and freeze canned fruit for smoothies.
 - Allocate commodity processing pounds toward yogurt for extra food cost savings.
- Consider working with culinary students from high schools in your district – hold a recipe contest or develop seasonal menus.

Management and Staffing:

- Consider your labor costs/needs and if anything will need to be adjusted to ensure appropriate coverage.
- Ensure staff has all the supplies they will need.
 - Blenders / smoothie machine, cups, straws, napkins, ingredients, etc.
- Train your staff on new recipes and best practices, such as:
 - Partially thaw fruit prior to blending
 - Weigh/measure ingredients the day before service
 - Overnight storage of smoothies is not recommended due to breakdown of the product

2-3 Months Prior to Rollout

Marketing:

Develop a marketing campaign to get students/staff excited about the new offering.

Consider items such as:

- Posters and announcements
- Posting on the school/district social media
- Seasonal menus
- Punch card / loyalty club, etc.
- Holding taste tests with students
- Have a contest with students to name a smoothie that will be added to the menu or create new recipes and feature a student recipe once a month

Many Local Dairy Councils have Smoothie Programs and materials developed along with training materials. Check out [your local dairy council's website](#) to see if they have ideas to help jumpstart your marketing efforts.

1-4 Weeks Prior to Rollout

- Execute marketing campaign to promote smoothies and/or parfaits to students and staff.
- Consider providing samples during meal service to advertise new offering and generate student/staff excitement for rollout.
- Ensure all necessary supplies are ready for rollout.

Throughout Rollout

- Continue marketing campaign.
- Observe each campus serving smoothies and/or parfaits during first month of rollout.
- Make immediate adjustments to the program as needed to troubleshoot issues.
- Solicit feedback from campus stakeholders to identify areas for improvement.

1-6 Months After Rollout (Ongoing)

- Check ADP numbers for improvements. Evaluate any increases and develop plan to sustain participation and/or continue increases.
- Check all equipment regularly to ensure performance and any maintenance needs.
- Continue to poll students for flavor preferences. Adjust recipes/menu accordingly.

Equipment Guide

The equipment needed to produce smoothies varies and will depend on how your campus/district chooses to implement the program. Below is a list of equipment to consider: (costs are estimates only, contact your equipment provider for a quote)

Immersion Blender	\$500-\$600 per unit
Tabletop Blender	\$1,700 per unit
Yogurt Pump	\$270 per unit
Food Storage Containers	\$30-\$35 per unit
Insulated Cooler Bags	\$50-\$150 per unit
Cooler Bag Travel Carts	\$50 per unit
Cooler Bag Dividers	\$45 per unit

Equipment Purchasing Resources:

[Hubert and Waring Smoothie Equipment](#)

[Fresh Beverages SaniServe Equipment](#)

[Sterno Equipment](#)

[Norris School Nutrition Systems](#)

Additional Resources:

[K-12 Blenderless Smoothie Recipes](#)

[Yoplait Meal Makers](#)