



Inform and Advertise: Giving Parents the 411

Many parents may not be familiar with the school breakfast program or may know very little about it. Providing detailed information will ensure parents are informed about the benefits of breakfast, how their child(ren) can participate, and how they can feel positive about what their child(ren) is eating. Consider using the tips below when providing information to parents.

Additional insight regarding parents’ knowledge and perception of the school breakfast program can be found in the 2015 Parent School Breakfast Survey: Report of Findings, published by the University of Iowa. Access the full report through [Iowa Research Online](#).

Be Your BEST!
Breakfast Encourages Students to Thrive!

When, Where, and How Much

Inform:	Indicate the time and place where breakfast is served at each school. Many parents may be unaware that breakfast is available at school. Include pricing information, making note that some students qualify for free meals. Additionally, provide parents information on how to apply for school meal benefits. If the school offers free breakfast for all students, be sure to include that information in your communication.
Advertise:	Provide handouts or set up an information display when parents are at the school such as orientation, parent-teacher conferences, concerts, or other events. Handouts can be small in size and written simply to explain to parents where they can get more information, such as the school website. Ask the PTA for additional ways to reach parents.
Talking Point:	Did you know? A complete breakfast is available to students every school day from <i>(insert start and end time)</i> in the school cafeteria <i>(insert alternate location if applicable)</i>. Learn more here <i>(insert school webpage)</i>.

Menu Information and Nutritional Value

Inform:	Publish printed copies of menu information for parents as well as publishing on the school website. Include allergy and nutritional information whenever possible. Photos of breakfast menu items are helpful to include as well.
Advertise:	Highlight special menu items such as featured holidays or taste testing days so that parents can plan ahead, especially for students who eat breakfast only occasionally as they may want to participate.
Talking Point:	School Breakfast packs a powerful nutrient punch. By law, schools receiving federal meal reimbursement must serve a breakfast that meets national nutrition guidelines and nutrient standards. Often, the meals are made with healthier ingredients than similar items purchased elsewhere, such as breakfast pizza made with whole grain-rich crust.

Importance of breakfast

Inform:	Highlight that well-nourished students will be ready rather than thinking about when they will eat again.
Advertise:	Provide reminders a few times per year about the importance of eating breakfast. Emphasize the importance of helping students establish a habit of eating breakfast every day.
Talking Point:	Research shows that children who eat breakfast perform better in school, visit the school nurse less often, are absent from school less often, have a decreased risk of being overweight, eat better quality diets, and have better behavior. Just like our vehicles need gas – our bellies need nourishment in order to get us mentally and physically prepared for the day!

Benefits of eating at school

Inform:	Explain that school breakfast benefits students AND families.
Advertise:	Showcase that a school breakfast is a great value because it is a complete meal consisting of an entrée or grain item, fruit (or vegetable), and milk. It will be healthier and less expensive compared to competitive foods purchased at a coffee shop, convenience store, or fast food.
Talking Points:	Parents, you don't have to worry about preparing breakfast at home. Let your school do the preparation, serving, and cleanup. As an added bonus, children have time to be with friends and enjoy the time to socialize.

School breakfast is for everyone

Inform:	All students may participate in school breakfast, regardless of socioeconomic status. All students who qualify for free or reduced priced meals may eat breakfast at no cost. All kindergarten students in Minnesota may eat breakfast at no cost.
Advertise:	Explain where students in each grade can eat breakfast if there are multiple serving locations. For example, younger students may eat breakfast in the classroom and older students may have a grab and go option. Invite parents to stay and visit with their child during breakfast.
Talking Point:	Participation rates at schools across the country have increased dramatically over the last decade, making school breakfast the norm in many communities. Don't miss out on this important meal, because Breakfast Encourages Students to Thrive! Help your child be their BEST.

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