



**Think
Breakfast!**



**CAFETERIA
CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS**



**A GUIDE FOR TEACHERS
AND SCHOOL NUTRITION
PROFESSIONALS**



**STANDARDS-BASED NUTRITION EDUCATION
FOR GRADES 6-8**

- EVENT IDEAS
- CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES
- SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT
- CAFETERIA CONNECTIONS



ABOUT THIS GUIDE

THIS GUIDE CONSISTS OF LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES THAT TEACH STUDENTS ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF EATING A HEALTHY BREAKFAST AND MAINTAINING A PHYSICALLY ACTIVE LIFESTYLE.



Research and experience has taught us that effective nutrition education programs begin with strong partnerships. The activities and resources in this guide can be used to engage the entire school community (students, teachers, school nutrition personnel, administrators, community organizations, and families) in support of this important health initiative.

Activities, lesson ideas, and subject-area tie-ins are organized around one service-learning project that can be led by any stakeholder. These activities can also take place anywhere in school such as a classroom, cafeteria, or at school-wide events.

EVENT IDEAS

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN AND BECOME INVOLVED IN EFFORTS THAT PROMOTE BREAKFAST AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY. IDEAS FOR ADMINISTRATORS INCLUDE:

- School Breakfast Week Activities
- **SCHOOL BREAKFAST DAY** – Ask all teachers to begin class with a short activity to teach students the benefits of eating a healthy breakfast and/or skills that support behavior change (time management, goal setting, etc.).
- Promote breakfast before special events – sports events, fundraisers, holiday celebrations, and/or school trips.
- Host morning meetings for the PTA, Parent Teacher Conferences, and promote school breakfast. Invite school nutrition professionals.
- Invite student government/student advisory boards to lead efforts to promote healthy breakfast habits.
- Organize volunteer/community service to serve breakfast at a local soup kitchen or organize a food drive for breakfast foods to be delivered to food pantries or local organizations.
- Plan a field trip opportunity to a local farm.

PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

IN THE NEXT SECTION, A SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT AND CREATIVE LESSON IDEAS FOR CONTENT AREAS ARE PRESENTED. TEACHERS FOCUS ON THE BENEFITS OF BREAKFAST AND HOW EATING BREAKFAST AND STAYING ACTIVE CAN HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY.



THE SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT AND LESSON IDEAS WILL EXPLORE THESE QUESTIONS, OBJECTIVES AND UNDERSTANDINGS.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- Why is breakfast an important meal?
- What are the benefits of eating breakfast?
- How does breakfast help us grow and stay healthy?
- How can eating breakfast and staying active have a positive impact on the community?

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO:

- Explain the short-term and long-term benefits of eating a healthy breakfast.
- Describe and identify the five food groups/components in various breakfast meals.
- Identify small changes that help ensure that students eat a healthy breakfast every day.
- Analyze the positive effects of breakfast for students, families, and schools (more energy, increased focus, reduced absenteeism, etc.).

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING

- Eating breakfast gives students the energy they need to start the day.
- Healthy students are better learners.
- A balanced, nutritious breakfast can help students focus and concentrate in class.
- Eating a well-balanced breakfast contributes essential nutrients needed to be healthy and grow.
- Most schools provide a convenient, quick, and healthy breakfast each day.

RESOURCES

- Video Connection
- *Think Breakfast!* video, available at www.thinkbreakfast.com, can be used as a hook to engage students in the topic.
- Video can also be used during school-wide events, meetings, and in the cafeteria to facilitate discussions and promote key messages.
- *Think Breakfast!* Posters
- *Think Breakfast!* Website: <http://www.thinkbreakfast.com>
- NYSED-CNPA: <http://www.cn.nysed.gov>
- USDA Team Nutrition: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/team-nutrition>

SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT

SERVICE-LEARNING is an educational approach that combines learning objectives with community service, thereby using experiential learning to create positive change. Through service-learning, everyone can be involved in a school-wide initiative to promote eating a healthy breakfast and learning. Students will build understanding through hands-on service activities that can take place anywhere such as in the classroom, cafeteria, or community.

PROMOTING AWARENESS

ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF BREAKFAST AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:

- **TEACHERS/STAFF TO YOUTH:** Assigned reading, class discussion, trips to the cafeteria, inviting school nutrition professionals to be guest speakers.
- **SCHOOL NUTRITION STAFF TO YOUTH:** Food demonstrations of healthy breakfast meals served in school and how they can be prepared at home, tastings to promote nutritious breakfast foods, presentations on health benefits of specific foods, participating in student interviews and surveys, explaining what constitutes a reimbursable meal when in school.
- **YOUTH TO YOUTH:** Creating community guidelines in advisory, gym class, or any class that support wellness and healthy choices; classroom presentations, posters/PSA, peer education about MyPlate and eating a healthy breakfast.
- **YOUTH TO FAMILY:** Teach family members about MyPlate and share healthy breakfast recipes.
- **SCHOOL TO COMMUNITY:** Afternoon announcements and reminders by school nutrition staff, administrators, and/or teachers promoting next day's breakfast.

GUIDING QUESTION: HOW CAN A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE CREATE POSITIVE CHANGE IN THE COMMUNITY?

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

In these activities you can teach students about the benefits of breakfast, about the school breakfast program, share breakfast recipes, and promote health and wellness resources. Invite school nutrition professionals to your class to support these activities.

- **GROUP WORK:** Assign readings about the benefits of breakfast and ask students to keep a journal and/or log, to see how eating or not eating breakfast affects them.
- **RESEARCH:** Assign a group to research the positive effects of breakfast and physical activity on student behavior, energy level, attention span, and performance in school.
- **GROUP DISCUSSIONS:** Screen *Think Breakfast!* video. Identify the benefits of breakfast, discuss the barriers to eating breakfast and develop strategies to promote breakfast. Include school nutrition staff, parents, administrators, school nurses, etc., in discussions.
- **SMALL GROUP WORK:** Assign students to review the nutrition food label for breakfast foods and analyze the nutrition information. Use MyPlate to discuss a balanced breakfast and analyze breakfast recipes displayed in the *Think Breakfast!* posters.
- **SELF-ASSESSMENT:** Have students answer the following questions: Am I eating a balanced breakfast that includes foods from different food groups? What is one change I can make to make my breakfast is healthier, or to make sure I eat breakfast every day?

BREAKFAST FUN IN THE CLASSROOM

LESSON IDEAS FOR SUBJECT AREA TEACHERS

These breakfast-themed activities make real-world connections that enhance learning while building skills in specific content areas. Students will examine what they eat for breakfast and how it helps them grow and stay healthy. Use the *Think Breakfast!* Posters and Video to introduce these activities to your students.

CAFETERIA CLASSROOM CONNECTION

Students can learn through nutrition staff presentations that touch on different topics, including the process of preparing breakfast for a school, nutritional value of breakfast, seasonal foods, farms and the origin of fresh ingredients, food safety, food tastings, or food demonstrations.

CONCLUDING ACTIVITIES

After participating in the learning activities, students can reflect and apply their new understanding to set personal health goals.

REFLECTION AND ASSESSMENT

Create and distribute a questionnaire, invite students to provide feedback on the activity, and share a takeaway from the experience.

INDIVIDUAL GOAL SETTING

- Encourage students to set a goal to eat breakfast everyday for a week.
- Help students make a plan to reach their goal.
- School nutrition staff, administrators, and teachers can motivate students by planning an incentive or award for students who eat breakfast every day.

MATH: Assign students to plan a healthy breakfast for the entire school. Calculations for recipes, budgeting, and nutrition information will apply algebraic principles and develop problem-solving skills. Invite school nutrition professionals to class to help explain meal costs.

ELA: Write personal narratives about breakfast food. What do they eat for breakfast? Where do they eat? What is their favorite breakfast food or favorite memory involving breakfast? Ask school nutrition professionals to post these narratives in the cafeteria.

BIOLOGY: Explain how food moves through the digestive system. Explain how nutrients in a balanced breakfast help us grow and maintain healthy brain function. An in-depth look could focus on the series of chemical reactions and how food is digested to form new molecules, support growth, or release energy. Ask a school nutrition professional to share school breakfast recipes to show how they contribute to good health.

SOCIAL STUDIES: Research a breakfast item and explain how it came to be from an economic, social, historical, and geographical perspective. Share cultural recipes and stories with school nutrition staff and identify ways to make items a part of a healthy, balanced breakfast.

ART: Create posters with positive messages about breakfast food, or still life drawings of breakfast foods. Ask school nutrition staff to display artwork in the cafeteria.

A BREAKFAST CELEBRATION

ORGANIZING A BREAKFAST DAY OR BREAKFAST WEEK

PREPARATION

- Create announcements about a special meal to be served.
- Announce incentives or group challenges to win prizes for classes and individuals who regularly eat breakfast.
- Create awareness of the benefits of breakfast through student leaders, student council, club activities and sports teams.
- Promote the week's breakfast menu.
- Arrange for spirit week activities to begin in the cafeteria with breakfast.

ON BREAKFAST DAY

- Display *Think Breakfast!* Posters.
- Decorate the entrance to the cafeteria or grab-and-go cart location.
- Share a fact about breakfast using display screens, morning announcements, and classroom announcements.
- Screen the *Think Breakfast!* video available at <http://www.thinkbreakfast.com> and discuss the benefits of breakfast.

FOLLOW-UP

- Help students set a breakfast goal using a goal setting prompt such as "I will eat breakfast ____ times a week in school or at home for the next ____ weeks."
- Have students write thank you notes to staff.
- Distribute "One thing I liked about breakfast day..." cards, and place completed cards on display.
- Organize a classroom challenge to see how many students eat breakfast this week.

BREAKFAST WEEK ACTIVITIES

MONDAY

- **KICK-OFF:** Host a meet-up inviting students to learn about the breakfast-related activities in school. Announce a morning breakfast food contest where students use a creative outlet of art, photography, video, etc. to promote eating a healthy breakfast.

TUESDAY

- **BREAKFAST SOCIAL:** Announce that teachers, coaches, and students will eat breakfast in school and catch up before the school day begins.

WEDNESDAY

- **BREAKFAST RAFFLE:** Enter all students who eat breakfast at school in a raffle for a prize.
- **FUELED UP FOR SUCCESS TOURNAMENT:** Organize a pick-up game or basketball tournament.

THURSDAY

- **DEMO DAY:** Preview the breakfast menu or organize a demonstration showing of the recipe.

FRIDAY

- **MORNING INSPIRATION:** Plan or provide arts and crafts that can be completed during breakfast like making bracelets with positive messages or creating artwork to decorate the cafeteria.

THANKS FOR BRINGING *THINK BREAKFAST!* INTO YOUR CLASSROOM!

Visit www.surveymonkey.com/r/ThinkBreakfast to participate in a quick survey about your experiences using these materials.

We'd love to hear from you!