



BENEFITS OF BREAKFAST OPPORTUNITIES AT LAUSD

The Benefits of Breakfast: Academics and Health

Breakfast is often said to be the most important meal of the day. Research shows that students benefit from eating breakfast in two primary ways. First, **students' overall dietary health is positively affected** by breakfast consumption, particularly meals provided through the School Breakfast Program¹. Second, there is significant evidence of **positive academic effects due to breakfast consumption**. Schools experience improvements in standardized test scores and improvements in school attendance in addition to other outcomes that create positive learning environments. Serving school breakfast to all students helps ensure that they are well nourished and ready to learn.

Academic Success

- Studies have also shown eating breakfast results in higher test scores.²
- Students who eat breakfast earn, on average, a letter grade higher in math than those who don't according to *Pediatrics* Magazine.
- Children who participate in the School Breakfast Program are tardy and/or absent from school less often.³
- Testing the potential value of a "universal free" School Breakfast Program at six pilot schools, researchers found better concentration and patterns of alertness among children who were fed.
- A USDA review of existing literature noted that studies find better academic performance on a variety of measures on the part of children who receive school breakfast as compared to those who do not.

Nutritional Benefits

- After the implementation of universal school breakfast, school nurses report a decrease in student complaints of stomachaches and headaches.
- In a nationally representative sample of children in grades 1 – 12, participation in the School Breakfast Program was significantly associated with healthier body weights and lower BMI.
- Children who eat school breakfast are more likely to meet the Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDA) for vitamin A, vitamin D, calcium, magnesium, thiamin, riboflavin and zinc as compared to students who eat breakfast at home.
- Compared to those who do not eat breakfast, children and adolescents who do eat breakfast tend to make healthier food choices throughout the day.
- Students in schools with universal school breakfast programs are less likely to skip breakfast due to concerns of body image or stigma of eating in the cafeteria.



¹ Child Nutrition Foundation/National Dairy Council*

² www.schoolnutrition.org

³ "School Breakfast Scorecard 2006"; Food Research and Action Center; www.frac.org

be a healthy role model for children

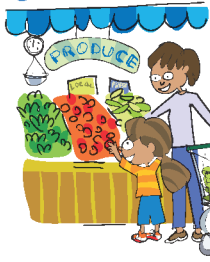
10 tips for setting good examples

You are the most important influence on your child. You can do many things to help your children develop healthy eating habits for life. Offering a variety of foods helps children get the nutrients they need from every food group. They will also be more likely to try new foods and to like more foods. When children develop a taste for many types of foods, it's easier to plan family meals. Cook together, eat together, talk together, and make mealtime a family time!

1 show by example

Eat vegetables, fruits, and whole grains with meals or as snacks. Let your child see that you like to munch on raw vegetables.

2 go food shopping together



Grocery shopping can teach your child about food and nutrition. Discuss where vegetables, fruits, grains, dairy, and protein foods come from. Let your children make healthy choices.

3 get creative in the kitchen

Cut food into fun and easy shapes with cookie cutters. Name a food your child helps make. Serve "Janie's Salad" or "Jackie's Sweet Potatoes" for dinner. Encourage your child to invent new snacks. Make your own trail mixes from dry whole-grain, low-sugar cereal and dried fruit.

4 offer the same foods for everyone

Stop being a "short-order cook" by making different dishes to please children. It's easier to plan family meals when everyone eats the same foods.



5 reward with attention, not food

Show your love with hugs and kisses. Comfort with hugs and talks. Choose not to offer sweets as rewards. It lets your child think sweets or dessert foods are better than other foods. When meals are not eaten, kids do not need "extras"—such as candy or cookies—as replacement foods.

6 focus on each other at the table

Talk about fun and happy things at mealtime. Turn off the television. Take phone calls later. Try to make eating meals a stress-free time.



7 listen to your child

If your child says he or she is hungry, offer a small, healthy snack—even if it is not a scheduled time to eat. Offer choices. Ask "Which would you like for dinner: broccoli or cauliflower?" instead of "Do you want broccoli for dinner?"

8 limit screen time

Allow no more than 2 hours a day of screen time like TV and computer games. Get up and move during commercials to get some physical activity.

9 encourage physical activity

Make physical activity fun for the whole family. Involve your children in the planning. Walk, run, and play with your child—instead of sitting on the sidelines. Set an example by being physically active and using safety gear, like bike helmets.



10 be a good food role model

Try new foods yourself. Describe its taste, texture, and smell. Offer one new food at a time. Serve something your child likes along with the new food. Offer new foods at the beginning of a meal, when your child is very hungry. Avoid lecturing or forcing your child to eat.