



Tips for Educators on Supporting Healthy School Meals

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently finalized updated nutrition standards for the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs. The new nutrition standards are intended to make school meals even healthier, and changes will begin this school year. Healthier kids are less likely to get diabetes or heart disease, and are more likely to live longer, healthier, and happier lives. Healthy school meals also help students stay focused and be ready to learn in the classroom.

Teachers and other school staff can play an important role in helping to ensure the standards are implemented successfully, and that children are willing to try new options. Here are some ways you can help support healthy school meals:

- ✓ Always speak **positively** about the school meal program, and encourage your students to try the new meals even if they're unfamiliar.
- ✓ Talk to your students about the new school lunches. Find out what they like/dislike, and report back to the cafeteria staff.
- ✓ Serve as a role model by occasionally eating school lunch with your students.
- ✓ Incorporate [nutrition education](#) into your curriculum, and help students understand the importance of healthy eating.
- ✓ Support the overall message of healthy eating by:
 - [Serving healthier items during class parties](#)
 - [Not using food as a reward](#)
- ✓ Implement a snack policy in your classroom:
 - [Provide healthy snacks for students](#)
 - [Send tips home for parents with healthy snack ideas](#)
- ✓ Help keep parents informed by including information about improvements to school meals in class newsletters, letters, back-to-school nights, school websites, etc.
- ✓ [Use healthier fundraising options](#) if you advise a school club or hold class fundraisers.
- ✓ Get involved by joining your school or district wellness committee.

