



THE FOOD TRUST'S

ONE HEALTHY BREAKFAST TOOLKIT





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Students who
eat breakfast are
more likely to **pay**
attention in
class and are less
frequently sent to
the nurse's office.

We've all heard the phrase: *Breakfast is the most important meal of the day*. Unfortunately, many children are not starting their day with a healthy breakfast. While the national School Breakfast Program has made gains in recent years, too few students are reaping the benefits of good health. We need to help children get a healthy start to their day.



The *One Healthy Breakfast* program was developed through The Food Trust's School Breakfast Policy Initiative in collaboration with Temple University's Center for Obesity Research and Education. *One Healthy Breakfast* uses a comprehensive approach to ensure that every student starts their day with a healthy breakfast, which can have a positive impact on their school day and their health. This program builds on the commitment of school districts across the country to increase breakfast participation rates by offering breakfast at no cost to all students and providing breakfast "after the bell," as part of the school day. These efforts are paying off: Breakfast participation rates increased across the School District of Philadelphia by as much as 66% in some schools participating in the new breakfast program. And as a result, attendance rates are up, as well, with 17% more students districtwide meeting attendance goals for arriving on time for school.

The purpose of this toolkit is to help school administrators, teachers, food service workers, school staff, nutrition educators, health workers and others—to implement a comprehensive program, specifically designed for elementary and middle school students, about the importance of eating *One Healthy Breakfast* every day. We encourage you to use the resources and information in this toolkit to help children in your schools get a healthy start to their day.

With warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Duane".

Duane Perry
Founder, The Food Trust

GETTING A HEALTHY START: The Importance of School Breakfast

The School Breakfast Program helps children get a healthy start to their day. A significant body of research demonstrates that hungry children are at a significant disadvantage in the classroom. Furthermore, students who receive school breakfast tend to eat healthier and have improved health outcomes.¹ This is particularly important given that, as of 2015, more than 1 in 6 U.S. children (18%) live in food-insecure households, and 1 in 5 (20%) children and adolescents have obesity.² The immediate and long-term consequences of these twin epidemics are severe, including increased risk of heart disease, diabetes, bone and joint problems, and poor self-esteem.

Youth spend much of their day in school, so schools can play a critical role in alleviating childhood obesity and helping children maintain a healthy weight. Unfortunately, despite the numerous benefits of consuming a healthy breakfast, many students are not taking advantage of the School Breakfast Program at their school. For every 100 children receiving free and reduced-price lunch, only 57 received breakfast in the 2017–2018 school year.³

Traditionally, schools have served students breakfast before school starts in the cafeteria. To encourage students' participation, school boards in major cities and rural communities have adopted programs to provide breakfast after the bell, offering breakfast in the classroom at the beginning of the school day or using a "grab-and-go" or "second chance" breakfast model.

This simple change has been shown to significantly increase breakfast participation rates by combatting the stigma associated with school breakfast participation and increasing convenience for students.

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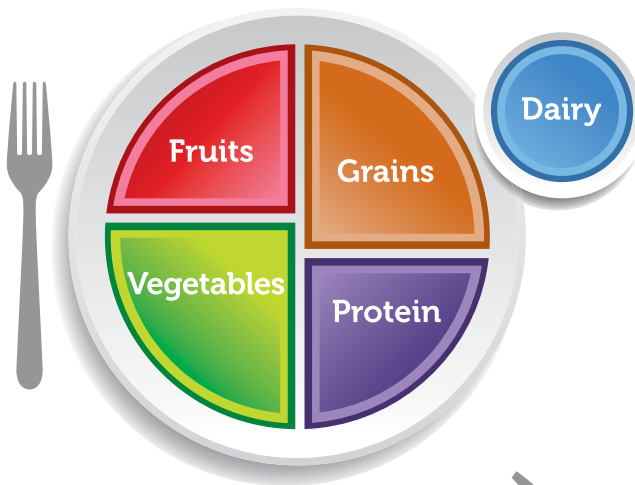
Despite these improvements, considerable work remains to be done to promote healthy breakfast consumption among all students—particularly those in high-need communities—whether at school or at home, and to help students get a healthy start to their day. Too many students are either skipping breakfast altogether or consuming foods high in calories with little nutritional value. In urban settings, for example, many students are stopping at the corner store in the morning to purchase chips, sugar-sweetened beverages or candy. A survey of school children in Philadelphia found that nearly 15% had nothing to eat in the morning, while almost 40% of students consumed multiple breakfasts.⁴ Those who ate breakfast at school tended to eat more fruits and vegetables and were more likely to meet dietary requirements, whereas students who purchased food from a corner store tended to choose foods high in sugar and fat with the least nutritional value.⁵

What is One Healthy Breakfast?

ONE = eat foods in their recommended amounts

HEALTHY = healthy choices from three MyPlate groups

BREAKFAST = morning food and drink, providing energy for the day



THE ONE HEALTHY BREAKFAST APPROACH

In response, The Food Trust, in partnership with Temple University's Center for Obesity Research (CORE), developed the *One Healthy Breakfast* program. This initiative was designed to increase the consumption of a healthy breakfast through a comprehensive approach that includes:

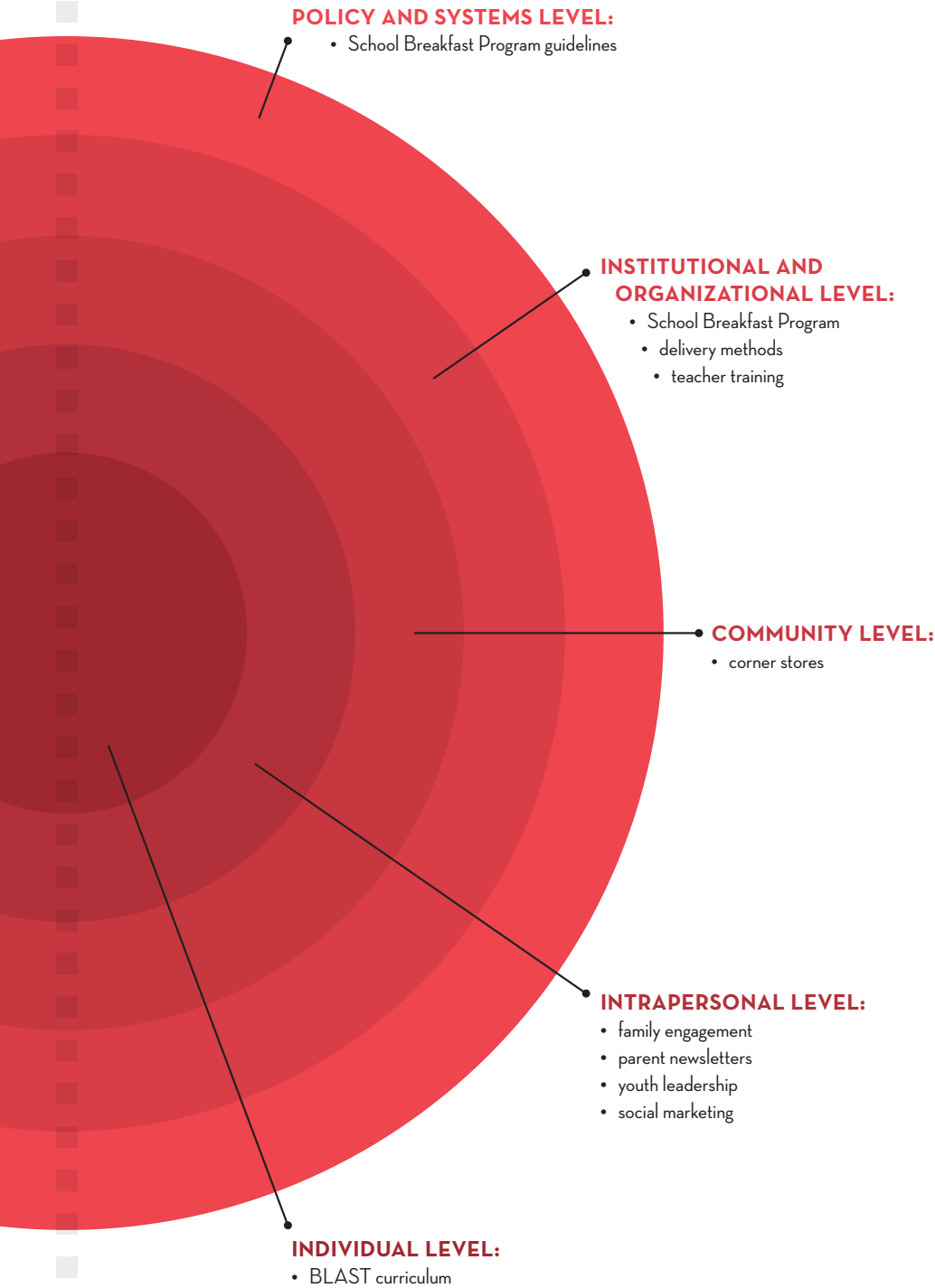
1. **Providing breakfast after the bell**
2. **Integrating breakfast-related nutrition education**
3. **Marketing strategies**
4. **Engaging families and communities**
5. **Evaluating outcomes**

This approach engages all members of the school community—teachers, parents, staff, students and administrators—to come together with the shared goal of encouraging every student to eat *One Healthy Breakfast* every day, thereby improving their long-term health and academic outcomes.

The *One Healthy Breakfast* program follows the Socio-Ecological Model. Various influences, including the home and school food environments, family and social networks all have a role in children's breakfast consumption, thus requiring a multi-tiered approach. This approach works: A five-year controlled study in Philadelphia found that **students who participated in the *One Healthy Breakfast* program were significantly more likely to eat breakfast at school.**

This toolkit shares information on how to start a *One Healthy Breakfast* program in your school as well as best practices and lessons learned from the intervention.

One Healthy Breakfast Socio-Ecological Model



GETTING STARTED:

Starting a One Healthy Breakfast Program in Your School

This toolkit offers information and best practices for starting a *One Healthy Breakfast* program in your school to improve students' health and academic success. Every school is unique, with varying levels of staff interest, ability and resources available. As such, a good first step is to take stock of your school's landscape and engage a diverse group of stakeholders to guide the planning process. Anyone working in a school that is enthusiastic about getting students to eat a healthy breakfast every morning and increasing school breakfast participation can lead the charge to implement the initiative.



Tips for Success

Engage all members of the school community. Ensure that all parties, including principals, teachers, students, parents, food service workers and other school staff, are aware of and involved in the initiative from the outset. Creating an inclusive, diverse leadership team to guide the planning process and providing opportunities for teachers, staff, parents and students to have a voice and offer input along the way can help build a strong and sustainable program. Troubleshoot challenges as a team to come up with solutions that work for everyone involved.

Educate staff on the importance of breakfast for student success as well as the success of breakfast after the bell and nutrition education programs in districts across the country to build buy-in and support.

Work together to select program components based on the needs and resources of your school. While a comprehensive strategy that includes providing breakfast after the bell along with nutrition education, social marketing and family engagement can have the greatest impact on breakfast participation rates and student health, individual components can be selected based on local needs. Understanding the options for delivering the School Breakfast Program; integrating nutrition education into the school day; and engaging students, family and community, as discussed in the subsequent sections of this toolkit, can help your group make the best choices for your students.

Leverage existing resources and partnerships. If your school already participates in the SNAP-Ed program or a different nutrition education program, perhaps The Food Trust's "Breakfast Learning Activities for Students and Teachers" (BLAST) curriculum (described in section 4) can be integrated to promote healthy breakfast consumption; existing youth leadership or wellness councils can be harnessed as breakfast champions to promote peer-to-peer engagement; local corner store initiatives can help to promote healthier breakfast choices at corner stores; and parent associations can provide useful feedback to maximize buy-in and support, as just a few examples. Schools may also wish to apply for a small grant to support their breakfast program. Grant funds can be used for many things, including purchasing supplies needed for classroom or grab-and-go breakfast, printing promotional materials or supporting staff training.

Plan a kickoff or launch event. This can include trainings for teachers and school staff on what to expect throughout the year as well as promotional events for students to build awareness and excitement about getting a healthy start to the day with school breakfast. All schools participating in the *One Healthy Breakfast* pilot hosted kickoff assemblies for students on the importance of eating breakfast along with a series of professional development workshops for teachers.







BREAKFAST AFTER THE BELL:

Models and Best Practices

While students may have better access to free meals at school, many are still not taking advantage of the School Breakfast Program, even in districts with high rates of poverty and food insecurity. One key factor driving low participation rates is that breakfast is often offered before the start of the school day, requiring students to arrive early in order to eat breakfast and creating a stigma around those who do. Shifting breakfast service from before to after the bell, combined with providing universal free meals to all students regardless of income, eliminates stigma and increases convenience for students. This simple change has been shown to be the most successful strategy for increasing school breakfast participation rates in districts across the country.⁸

There are several different methods for providing breakfast after the bell, all of which have the potential to increase breakfast participation when compared with providing breakfast before the school day. All schools participating in the *One Healthy Breakfast* pilot provided **classroom breakfast**, delivering breakfasts directly to the classroom for students to eat in the first few minutes of the school day. With this model, meals can either be delivered to the classroom pre-bagged or as individual components for students to select. Teachers are then responsible for distributing meals and tracking student participation in the program.

Other models for providing breakfast after the bell include **grab-and-go breakfasts**, in which students pick up a pre-bagged breakfast from a kiosk in the hallway, cafeteria or another high-traffic area and bring it to the classroom to eat, and **second-chance breakfast**, in which students can get breakfast from a designated location during a break after first period, either to eat in the cafeteria, between classes or in the classroom during the subsequent period. While classroom breakfast has been shown to be one of the most effective strategies for boosting participation rates, these alternative models can work well for schools that may not have the capacity to deliver food to each classroom or that prefer to keep food service staff responsible for breakfast provision rather than classroom teachers.

Many districts utilize a combination of approaches, for example offering classroom breakfast for students in younger grades and grab-and-go or second chance breakfast for middle or high school students who may not always report to the same classroom every morning and sometimes prefer to eat a later breakfast.⁹

Whichever approach, or combination of approaches, your school or district decides to implement, launching a successful breakfast after the bell program requires careful planning and collaboration amongst diverse stakeholders. The following section highlights strategies and best practices, based on The Food Trust's experience in Philadelphia and informed by experts across the country, to increase rates of participation, promote student and staff satisfaction, and help every student get a healthy start to the day.

PROVIDING SCHOOL BREAKFAST: FEDERAL AND LOCAL

The U.S. School Breakfast Program is a federal food and nutrition assistance program that was permanently authorized in 1975 to provide nutritious breakfasts at school, targeting lower-income children. The program now serves approximately 12.2 million lower-income children per day.⁶ Today, as a result of The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, children have better access to nutritious school meals. This law created new requirements improving the nutritional quality of school meals and established a community eligibility provision that gives more students access to free breakfast and lunch by eliminating the need for qualifying paperwork showing family income. The School District of Philadelphia, where the *One Healthy Breakfast* program was first implemented, was one of the earliest districts to adopt this model, providing free universal meals to all students in qualifying schools. Now, more than half of all eligible districts across the country have adopted community eligibility, with participation growing every year.⁷

OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Oakland Unified School District serves 7,500 breakfasts per day and has made significant strides in developing innovative menu options that are both popular with students and good for their health. The District has adopted standards to reduce sugar, for example, using the new *Child and Adult Care Food Program* guidelines for foods like yogurt and cereals, and focuses on integrating protein foods as often as possible. Favorite *Breakfast in the Classroom* menu offerings include a reduced-sugar yogurt with graham crackers, hard-boiled eggs, and cereal bars that meet their enhanced nutritional guidelines. Secondary school students also enjoy biscuits and gravy and scrambled eggs on a bagel. The district is a leader in farm-to-school sourcing and partners with the *Center for Good Food Purchasing* to increase purchases of foods that are local, humane, sustainable, fair and nutritious.¹⁰

Tips for Success

Develop a menu that takes into account both student preferences and nutrition standards.

- **Seek student input** on menu offerings to boost student satisfaction and participation in the program. Engage student leaders, for example, to conduct surveys of student preferences or taste tests of new breakfast items. Plan menus that take into account cultural preferences and seasonality, incorporating scratch-cooked items whenever possible and ensuring that hot food items are heated adequately to improve the desirability of school breakfasts.
- At the same time, efforts should be made to **improve the nutritional quality** of the food that is served, such as offering items that are lower in sugar and higher in protein and limiting highly processed foods. Schools can set their own nutritional guidelines above and beyond minimum standards, for example following WIC or CACFP guidance on sugar content. Offering healthier breakfast choices is not only good for the health of students but can also improve the perception of your program among parents and teachers who can serve as key breakfast champions.



- **Leverage farm to school programs** to incorporate local produce, eggs or dairy products into breakfast menus to increase sustainability and support local food systems.
- **Publicize the menu** to students and their families so that students can plan whether to eat at home or at school. While this information is often available on school districts' websites, some schools and districts are using innovative models such as mobile apps to publicize school menus. Limit substitutions or alterations whenever possible once menus are set.



Conduct trainings for staff and teachers early on and provide opportunities to troubleshoot challenges as they come up.

- Teachers are key partners in implementing a successful breakfast after the bell program. **Classroom breakfast**, in particular, asks teachers to take on a new role in disseminating and tracking breakfast participation. Understanding the requirements of what constitutes a reimbursable meal, for example, and other nuances of program implementation requires adequate and ongoing training from food service staff to ensure the program is implemented successfully. Steps can also be taken to ease the burden on classroom teachers, such as pre-bagging individual breakfasts.
- In addition to the nuts and bolts of program implementation, trainings should take into account the **classroom management implications** of serving breakfast in the classroom. Teachers will need to establish new morning routines for their classrooms as well as a cleanup process once breakfast is complete. Teachers participating in the *One Healthy Breakfast* program received annual trainings from both The Food Trust and food service staff as well as dedicated bins and cleaning supplies. Feedback from the training sessions was extremely positive, with participants noting that they appreciated having the opportunity to share classroom management strategies and brainstorm solutions to their challenges.

SAN DIEGO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

San Diego Unified Food and Nutrition Services serves over 135,000 meals and snacks per day at nearly 200 schools. To further its mission to support student academic success by promoting healthful eating habits, the district provides a mobile application that provides students and families easily accessible menu information on their mobile devices, tablets, laptops and desktop computers.

The menu app is an interactive and innovative tool used to promote school meal participation, healthful eating habits and an understanding of San Diego Unified's mission to provide wholesome California food for California kids. The app provides easy-to-access menu information by school and by day, including photos of each menu item, nutritional and allergen information, and a complete ingredient list to help families make informed menu choices. The app also serves as a marketing tool, enabling the district to invite students to tastings, highlight local sourcing or other good food "stories," and encourage families to fill out free and reduced-price meal applications. Students are also invited to submit feedback through a survey module, providing valuable information to drive menu development.

JEFFERSON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS), in Louisville, KY, provides meals to more than 64,000 students, with more than 40,000 starting their morning with a healthy school breakfast. The district utilizes a variety of breakfast provision strategies including a grab-and-go model, in which carts are set up at school entrances, significantly increasing breakfast participation. They also offer bagged breakfasts in the cafeteria for students to bring to class, reducing the burden on classroom teachers, along with offering traditional line breakfasts and kiosks/carts.

JCPS integrates several best practices into their school breakfast program to promote sustainability. They are a leader in farm to school, with items such as Harvest Muffins with butternut squash puree and Blue Ribbon Muffins with zucchini as regular features on their breakfast menu. Additionally, rather than share tables, JCPS utilizes hot and cold bags for their classroom breakfasts so that any excess food not distributed can be sent back to the cafeteria and returned to inventory. To further combat food waste, the district partners with Kentucky Harvest, a local food bank, donate items that students may have taken out of the bags but not consumed. Teachers receive training both at the beginning of the school year as well through follow-up videos and in-person visits from food service staff to support these best practices.

Take steps to reduce food waste and mitigate unwanted consequences of classroom breakfast.

- Food waste is a concern with any school feeding program. Schools transitioning to a classroom-based feeding model should **develop a plan to reduce waste**. Whenever possible, in accordance with local food safety guidelines, unwanted food or beverage items that are brought to the classroom should be sent back to the cafeteria to be reused in other meals. Alternatively, arrangements can be made to donate excess food to a local nonprofit organization, such as a community food bank, homeless shelter or food pantry. Some districts prefer grab-and-go breakfast for minimizing waste as well as easing the burden on classroom teachers.
- While “share tables” can be used to reduce waste by redistributing items students choose not to eat, teachers should be mindful not to encourage children to consume multiple servings of food and/or beverage items. Some districts chose not to use share tables because of concerns around overeating and sustainability or prefer to have items sent back to the cafeteria so food service managers know what students are eating and which items may not be so popular.





NUTRITION EDUCATION: Teaching Students with BLAST

Integrating nutrition education in the classroom is a key strategy to promoting healthy breakfast consumption. The *One Healthy Breakfast* initiative's comprehensive approach includes a dedicated curriculum to build students' understanding of basic nutrition concepts, encourage them to think deeply about their challenges with eating healthy in the morning, and provide them the tools needed to make healthier food choices.

The Food Trust developed "Breakfast Learning Activities for Students and Teachers" (BLAST), an interactive, engaging series of lessons specifically designed to encourage students to get a healthy start to their day with breakfast.¹¹ This curriculum was first implemented in Philadelphia and is now being used in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Education Program (SNAP-Ed).

BLAST lessons include direct instruction, independent work and group activities. Lessons begin with building basic understanding of nutrition concepts focused on breakfast and energy balance. As they progress through the program, students learn behavior-changing skills through analyzing and evaluating foods and their own choices. The lessons conclude with students writing a personal letter committing to eating *One Healthy Breakfast* after the series is complete. The BLAST curriculum is designed for fourth- to eighth-grade students, an age at which students are beginning to make independent food choices.

BLAST lessons are highly adaptable and can be implemented by any educator in the school environment who has an interest in helping students improve their health. This could include a homeroom, physical education, health or science teacher, or a visiting educator, such as through the SNAP-Ed program. Lessons are designed to be approximately 45 minutes in length and are accompanied by a "breakfast challenge" to reinforce key concepts and objectives. Challenges can be given to students to complete as a homework assignment or as a reinforcement activity at the end of the lesson. Some challenges are designed to be done throughout the week and can be assigned as appropriate.

BLAST lessons increase in difficulty as the series progress, beginning with lessons that are designed for fourth- to sixth-grade students and ending with lessons for sixth- to eighth-grade students. The curriculum is very flexible, however, and lessons can be adapted for older or younger students. While there are a total of 18 lessons, educators are encouraged to select a four- to six-lesson series based on their needs and available resources. Additional lesson plans, including detailed, step-by-step educator notes with suggested timing, language and materials needed, are available separately from The Food Trust.

"The One Healthy Breakfast lessons were fun and engaging for my students. I loved learning with them about making healthier choices in the morning. The lessons cover important material that helped them to learn more about the food they put in their bodies."

—SHARON T., SEVENTH-GRADE TEACHER
IN PHILADELPHIA

Sample BLAST Lesson Series

Introductory Series (fourth to sixth grade):

- The Importance of *One Healthy Breakfast*
- What is a HEALTHY Breakfast?
- Eating *ONE Healthy Breakfast*
- Being Healthy is Being in Balance

Comprehensive Series I (fourth to fifth grade):

- The Importance of *One Healthy Breakfast*
- What is a Healthy Breakfast?
- Eating *One Healthy Breakfast*
- Breakfast Food Makeover
- Letter to Yourself

Comprehensive Series II (sixth to eighth grade):

- Jasmine and Jose Eat *One Healthy Breakfast*
- Factors Influencing Our Food Choices
- SMART Breakfast Goals
- Designing a Breakfast Promotion Part One
- Designing a Breakfast Promotion Part Two

LESSON #11 Challenge

Name _____

Action Plan for SMART Goal

As part of your lesson, you came up with an action plan for achieving your One Healthy Breakfast SMART goal. Try reaching your goal and don't forget to use your action plan to help you achieve your goal. Write down your SMART goal and solution from your action plan and then, in the chart, track your progress towards your goal every day this week.

What is your SMART breakfast goal for the week? _____

In your action plan, what solution to an obstacle did you pick to help you reach your goal? _____

Day	How did you do?	Successes & Challenges
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		

Did you reach your SMART breakfast goal this week? _____

Did having an action plan help? _____

Lesson 3:

eating one Healthy breakfast

Answer the questions based on the example your group was given.

For questions 1-3, the chart below asks your group to fill in three pieces of information. First, list all the foods that Cameron ate in the morning. Second, for each food listed write down which food group it belongs to (you can refer to the MyPlate Graphic above for help). Third, for each food listed write down the amount he ate (you can refer to the pictures on page 16 and 17 for help).

1. Foods Cameron Ate	2. Food Group	3. Amount Eaten
EXAMPLE: 2 pieces of Toast	Grains	2 ounces
EXAMPLE: 1 cup of Yogurt	Dairy	1 cup

4. Based on what Cameron ate, how many food groups he included, and how much he ate from each food group, would you say Cameron ate One Healthy Breakfast? Why or why not? How could you make Cameron's breakfast healthier?

Tips for Success

- **Choose your series.** BLAST is designed for students ranging from fourth to eighth grade. Lessons cover a variety of topics including basic nutrition concepts, setting and achieving healthy eating goals, and examining the impact of advertising on students' food choices. Review the 18 available lessons to determine which would work best for you and your students. There are a variety of series options—choose what's right for your classroom.
- **Do what works.** BLAST lessons can be integrated into the school day in a variety of ways. Try doing a series of four to six lessons once a week during a health or science class or a monthly lesson with your homeroom class. Another scenario could involve doing one lesson every morning during National School Breakfast Week. Consider hanging a schedule in the classroom so students understand the series is part of their routine.
- **Print the lessons.** If possible, printing lessons for each student allows students to complete their activities individually. Many of the activities require writing answers directly onto the workbook pages.
- **Encourage the challenges.** Encourage students to complete their *One Healthy Breakfast* challenge at a time that works in their schedules. Challenges could be assigned as a graded homework assignment or could be done as a class during as a "Do Now" activity to begin the day. Small prizes can be used to reward students who complete *One Healthy Breakfast* challenges.
- **Celebrate.** Provide a certificate for students at the end of the lesson series as a reward for completion of the series. This can also serve as a reminder of the *One Healthy Breakfast* practices that the students learned through the series.
- **Collaborate with teachers schoolwide.** Work with other teachers to integrate *One Healthy Breakfast* concepts throughout the school. Suggestions include: writing prompts during English class, breakfast or energy balance related activities in the gym, a school poster campaign, or designing a breakfast promotion in art class. The BLAST curriculum can also be taught across multiple grade levels, with students receiving different series of lessons as they progress through the program.



MARKETING STRATEGIES: Promoting One Healthy Breakfast

While multiple factors influence students' dietary choices, there is no doubt that food marketing can have a significant impact on food preferences and behaviors—a fact made clear by the estimated \$1.8 billion per year spent by the food industry on marketing aimed at young people. Unfortunately, the overwhelming majority of these resources are devoted to promoting foods high in sugar, fat, calories and/or sodium.¹² Launching a social marketing campaign promoting healthy breakfast consumption can be a great way to engage students, parents and school staff and can help create a buzz around the importance of eating breakfast.

A variety of promotional strategies can be utilized depending on resources available. The Food Trust developed a suite of promotional materials featuring the *One Healthy Breakfast* logo and tagline to build awareness and visibility of the campaign both in school and in the community. These materials were designed with significant student input and are now available for use by schools across the country. Additional breakfast promotion resources are also available from the USDA¹³, School Nutrition Association¹⁴ and other groups. Marketing materials could include: posters or bulletin boards promoting the breakfast campaign; branded classroom materials such as folders or pens; or reinforcements such as wristbands, temporary tattoos, T-shirts or lanyards.



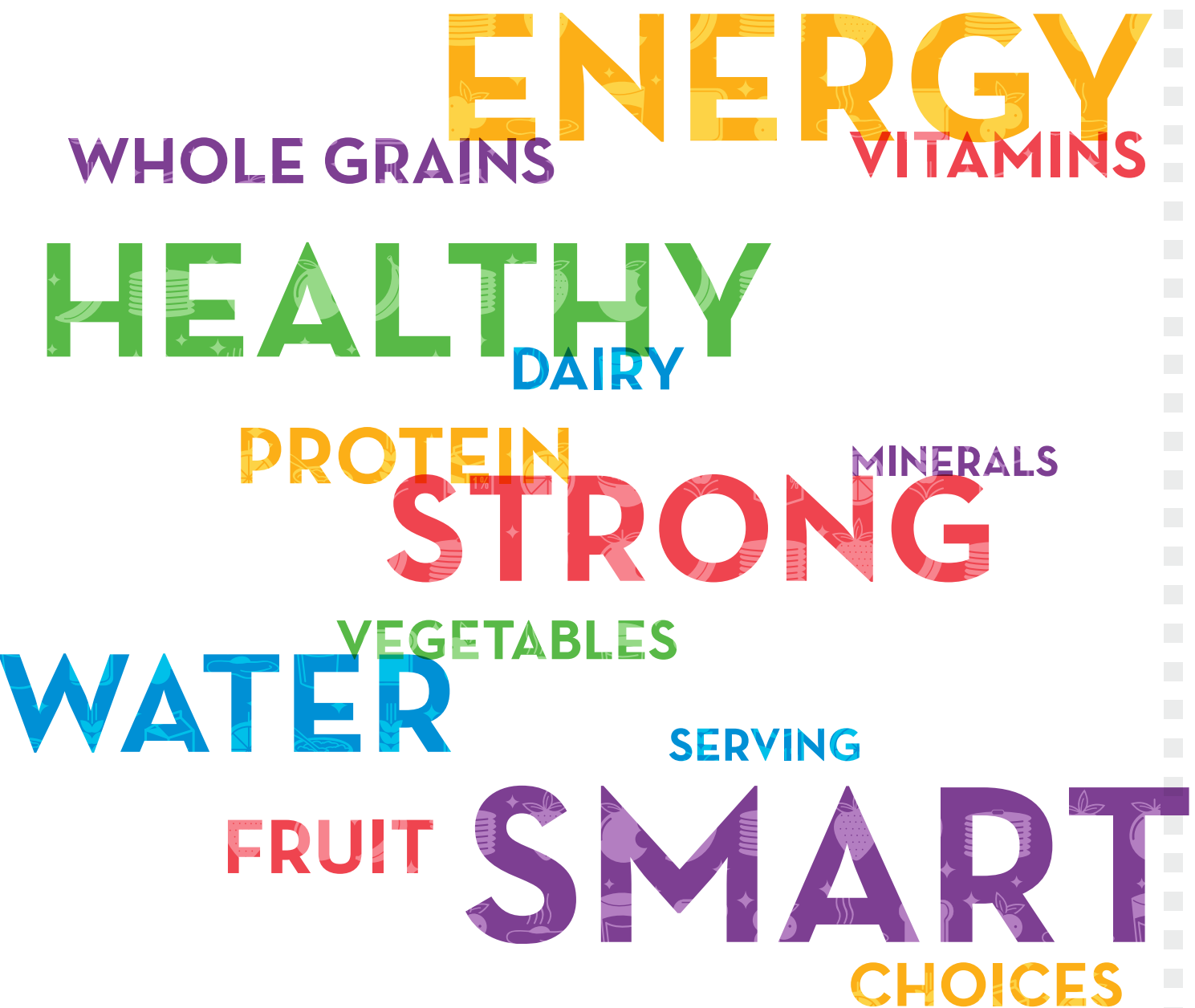
HYPE: ENGAGING YOUTH AS LEADERS

The Food Trust engages youth across Philadelphia in becoming leaders for healthy change in their schools and communities. The HYPE (Healthy You. Positive Energy.) campaign supports youth councils in approximately 70 middle and high schools, all working to get their schools "HYPE" by improving access to healthy foods, decreasing the availability of unhealthy foods and increasing opportunities for physical activity. Youth councils plan and implement a range of healthy activities including fitness clubs, movement breaks, healthy fundraisers, school gardens and healthy pledge events, encouraging their peers to be more active and make healthier food choices.

As part of the *One Healthy Breakfast* program, HYPE youth councils led promotional events and served as key ambassadors of healthy breakfast messaging in their schools. For example, HYPE youth leaders at one Philadelphia school saw that their peers were drinking a lot of sugar-sweetened beverages, especially in the morning. The students made a poster campaign to promote drinking water as part of *One Healthy Breakfast*, hanging posters around the water fountains and in the cafeteria. At another school, youth leaders held a *One Healthy Breakfast* quizzo contest with winners receiving prizes like homework passes, stickers and other small goodies.

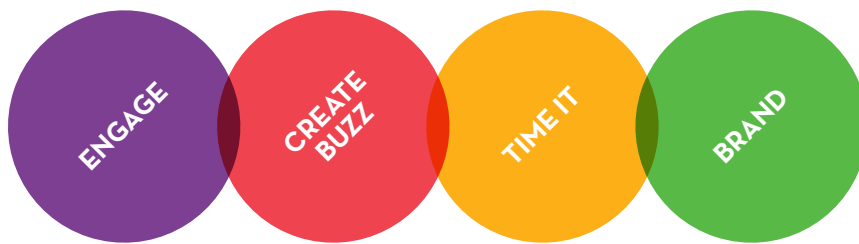
Events and Youth Leadership

In addition to visual materials and giveaways, student-led events or activities promoting *One Healthy Breakfast* can be an effective way to engage students and shift attitudes and perceptions of school breakfast. If an established youth leadership or student council exists, these students could be good ambassadors for peer-to-peer messaging. For example, students can create a promotional board with pictures of youth and school staff eating a healthy breakfast or share facts and simple tips about the importance of breakfast during morning announcements. Youth leaders organized a multi-day “Breakfast Wall of Fame” event, taking pictures of students eating healthy breakfasts to display on a large board in the main hallway. Student leaders can also help inform menu development, surveying their peers on breakfast preferences or leading taste-tests of new breakfast menu items. Kickoff events, such as assemblies at the beginning of the school year, can also help build excitement around a *One Healthy Breakfast* campaign.



Tips for Success

- **Engage students early on.** A successful marketing campaign starts with listening to the needs of your target audience. Student taste tests, for example, can also be a good way to learn about student preferences and build excitement around new menu options. When possible, it's also a good idea to involve students in developing and/or implementing the marketing strategy to build buy-in and ensure that messaging resonates with local youth.
- **Create a buzz.** Holding contests or games to motivate students or inviting local "celebrities" to participate in school breakfast can generate enthusiasm around school breakfast.
- **Consider your timing.** While promotional strategies can be successful at any point in the year, and are best integrated throughout the school year, National School Breakfast Week¹⁵ in March is a good opportunity to maximize the visibility and impact of your breakfast promotion efforts. Standardized testing weeks can also be a good time to promote the benefits of eating breakfast for academic achievement.
- **Mimic the strategies of the food industry.** Branding your breakfast initiative using consistent colors, design and messaging, can increase awareness and memorability of your efforts.



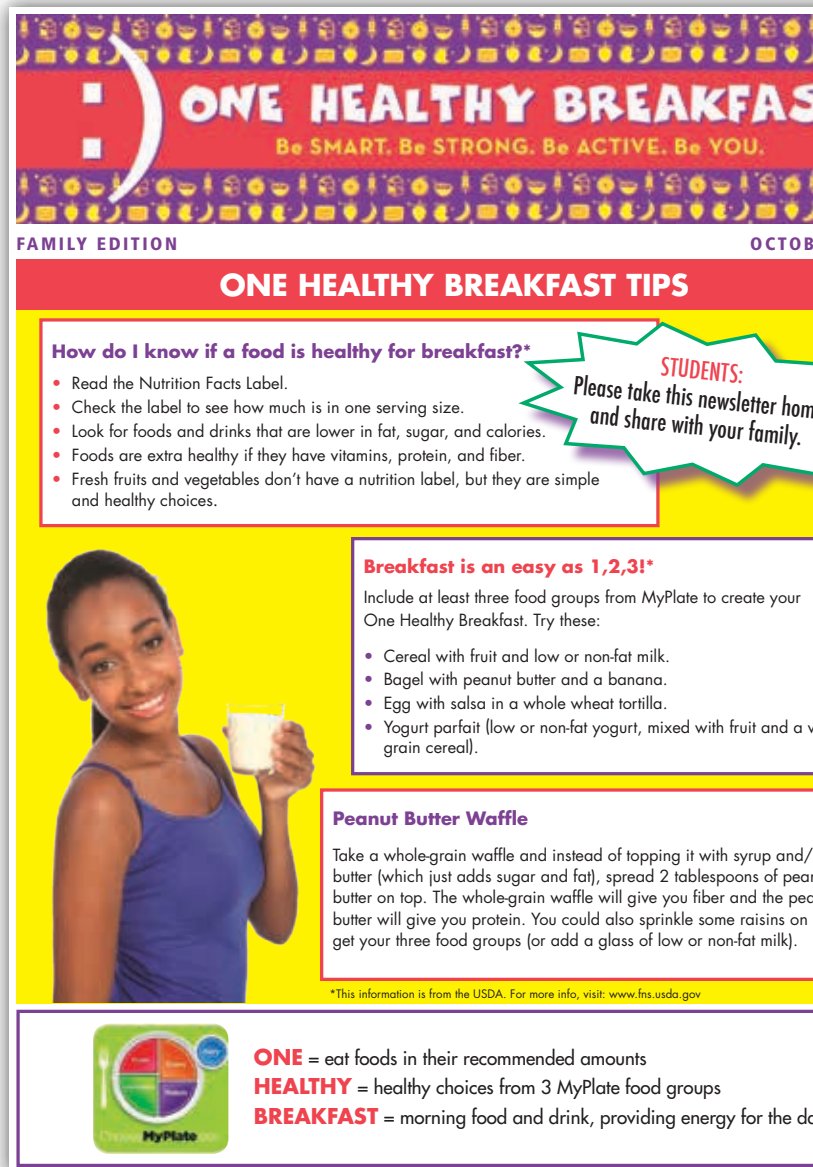


FAMILY & COMMUNITY: Engaging Parents and Caregivers

While schools can play an important role in encouraging more students to eat *One Healthy Breakfast* each day, these efforts can be even more impactful with support from family and caregivers at home. Caregivers can help reinforce the healthy behaviors that students are learning about in school and model healthy breakfast patterns themselves. Providing caregivers with information and resources, such as tips on eating a healthy breakfast and the school breakfast menu, can empower families to become key partners in helping students get a healthy start to their days.

The Food Trust utilized a variety of communication methods to reach out to families about *One Healthy Breakfast*, including:

- **Monthly Newsletters:** Newsletters were sent home with students each month with information on eating a healthy breakfast, the school breakfast menu and a fun activity for families to do together.
- **Back-to-School Nights and Report Card Conferences:** Staff were present at these events to provide information to families on the *One Healthy Breakfast* program.
- **Promotional Materials:** Magnets with key tips for eating *One Healthy Breakfast* were sent home with students, and it was recommended that they be placed on refrigerators.
- **Parent-Teacher Group Meetings:** An active parent-teacher group can be a strong advocate for a healthy breakfast initiative as well as a great way to get information out about the program to caregivers.



ONE HEALTHY BREAKFAST
Be SMART. Be STRONG. Be ACTIVE. Be YOU.

FAMILY EDITION OCTOBER

ONE HEALTHY BREAKFAST TIPS

How do I know if a food is healthy for breakfast?*

- Read the Nutrition Facts Label.
- Check the label to see how much is in one serving size.
- Look for foods and drinks that are lower in fat, sugar, and calories.
- Foods are extra healthy if they have vitamins, protein, and fiber.
- Fresh fruits and vegetables don't have a nutrition label, but they are simple and healthy choices.

STUDENTS:
Please take this newsletter home and share with your family.

Breakfast is an easy as 1,2,3!*

Include at least three food groups from MyPlate to create your One Healthy Breakfast. Try these:

- Cereal with fruit and low or non-fat milk.
- Bagel with peanut butter and a banana.
- Egg with salsa in a whole wheat tortilla.
- Yogurt parfait (low or non-fat yogurt, mixed with fruit and a grain cereal).

Peanut Butter Waffle

Take a whole-grain waffle and instead of topping it with syrup and butter (which just adds sugar and fat), spread 2 tablespoons of peanut butter on top. The whole-grain waffle will give you fiber and the peanut butter will give you protein. You could also sprinkle some raisins on top to get your three food groups (or add a glass of low or non-fat milk).

*This information is from the USDA. For more info, visit: www.fns.usda.gov

ONE = eat foods in their recommended amounts
HEALTHY = healthy choices from 3 MyPlate food groups
BREAKFAST = morning food and drink, providing energy for the day

Promoting One Healthy Breakfast at Corner Stores

In addition to the impact of the home environment on students' breakfast patterns, many students in urban areas stop at corner stores in the morning often buying foods and drinks high in calories, fats and added sugars. A study published in *Pediatrics* found that the average Philadelphia student purchases more than 350 calories on each visit to the corner store, consuming almost a pound worth of additional calories each week.¹⁶ Building connections with local corner store owners, or community partners already working with corner stores, can strengthen school-based efforts to promote good nutrition. Marketing materials promoting healthy breakfast consumption, similar to those used in schools, for example, can also be used at local corner stores or bodegas.

As part of its *One Healthy Breakfast* initiative, The Food Trust developed a series of simple signage options for use in corner stores in Philadelphia to encourage students to pick healthy breakfast options, including water, fruit, low-fat dairy and whole grains. These materials included the *One Healthy Breakfast* logo and branding and were placed in stores frequented by local youth in order to build linkages to the messaging used at school and reinforce concepts from the BLAST lessons and broader social marketing campaign. Stores were selected to receive the marketing materials if they were located near target schools and offered healthy breakfast items such as fresh fruit or low-fat yogurts. This strategy can be particularly successful in communities with an existing Healthy Corner Store Initiative or a partner with the capacity to support store owners in making healthy changes in their stores.

By integrating community engagement, along with social marketing and classroom-based nutrition education, the *One Healthy Breakfast* approach provides students with the tools needed to choose healthier options in the morning regardless of whether they choose to eat breakfast at home, at school or from the corner store.







EVALUATION:

Looking Back, Moving Ahead

Evaluating your breakfast initiative can yield valuable insight on the extent to which you are reaching your goals and shed light on what is working well and where improvements may be needed. Evaluation data can also be a useful tool for communicating with key stakeholders such as school administrators, parents and potential funders and sharing your successes.

The first step is to determine what measures are important to assess and develop a plan to collect and analyze data. Both qualitative and quantitative data can be valuable in planning improvements and evaluating outcomes. While specific metrics can vary based on your school's goals, programming components and resources, examples of the types of measures and data sources you may wish to consider include:

- **Knowledge outcomes**, such as students' understanding of basic nutrition concepts related to healthy breakfast consumption.
- **Behavior outcomes**, such as school breakfast participation data, surveys on students' breakfast patterns, or data on absenteeism and tardiness.
- **Health and academic outcomes**, such as students' weight or BMI or standardized testing proficiency rates.
- **Quality improvement outcomes**, such as staff or student satisfaction with breakfast program changes.
- **Process outcomes**, such as whether menus are regularly updated and readily available and marketing materials are distributed as planned.

In addition to drawing upon data already collected by your school or district, incorporating student or staff surveys, focus groups or questionnaires can be a good way to involve key stakeholders in your evaluation. This can also be a good opportunity to engage external partners such as university-based researchers who may be interested in supporting your evaluation efforts.

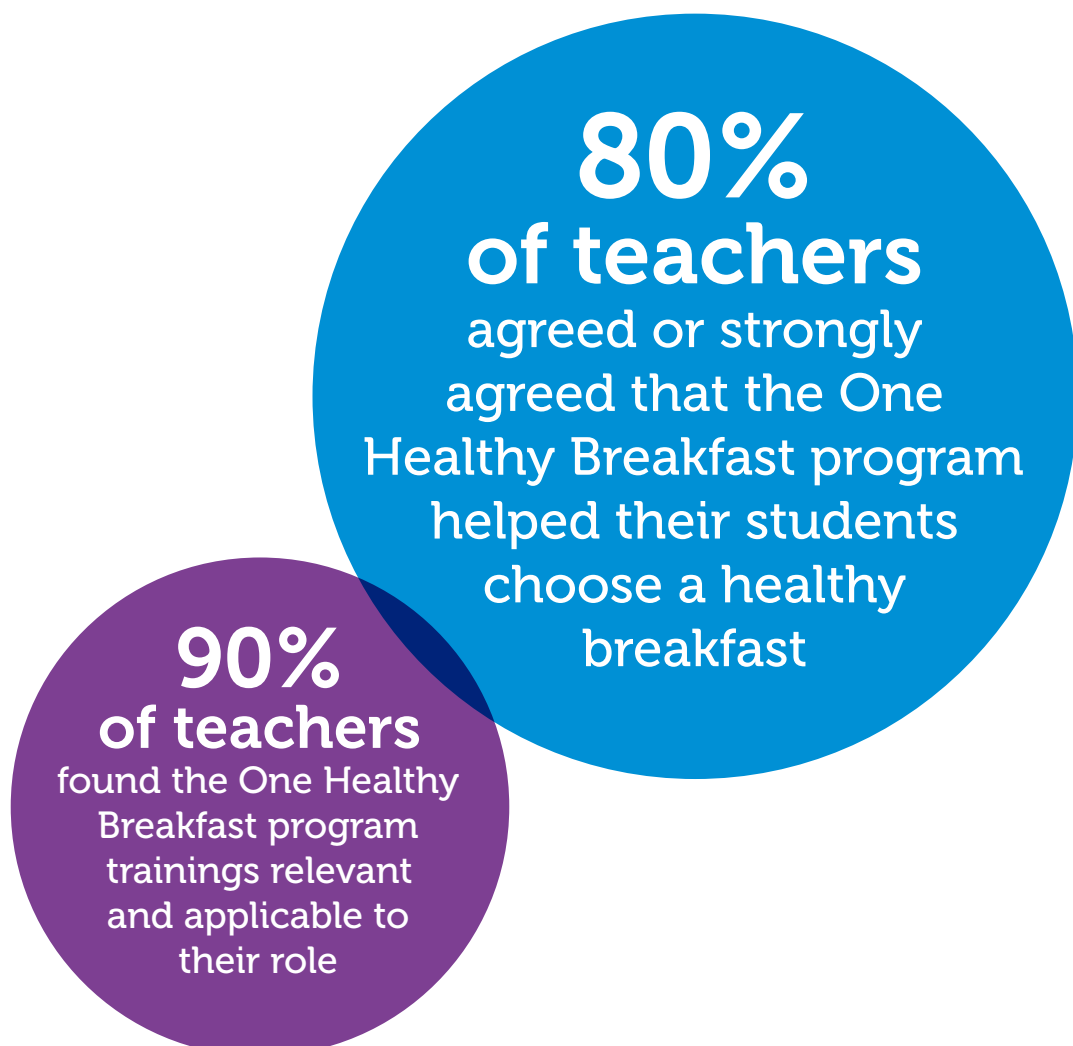


The School Breakfast Policy Initiative Study

One Healthy Breakfast was part of a five-year study funded by the USDA's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative launched in 2013 in partnership with Temple University's Center for Obesity Research and Education (CORE), known as the School Nutrition Policy Initiative. In order to test the effects of the intervention on its goal of encouraging every student to eat a healthy breakfast each day, a three-year randomized control trial was conducted, following fourth-, fifth- and sixth-graders until they were sixth-, seventh- and eighth-graders. Sixteen K-8 Philadelphia public schools were randomly assigned to either receive the program or to be a comparison school.

In all 16 schools, breakfast participation data was collected to help determine the effects of the initiative on school breakfast participation rates; a breakfast pattern questionnaire was distributed annually to assess what and where students were eating; and students' weight and heights were measured at baseline, mid-point and end-point. The Food Trust also conducted teacher surveys at intervention schools to measure the effectiveness of classroom breakfast trainings as well as of the overall program.

A Food Trust survey found that 80% of teachers either agreed or strongly agreed that the *One Healthy Breakfast* program helped their students choose a healthy breakfast, and more than 90% found the trainings relevant and applicable to their role.



CONCLUSION

A national movement is afoot to help more students get a healthy start to their day with school breakfast. The issue is pressing: Too many students are either skipping breakfast altogether or eating unhealthy foods high in fat and sugar in the morning; a survey of Philadelphia school-children found that nearly 15% had nothing to eat that morning and almost 40% had consumed multiple breakfasts.¹⁷ Schools across the country are working to increase breakfast participation by offering breakfast at no cost to all students and providing breakfast after the bell, making breakfast an integral part of the school day.

The Food Trust's *One Healthy Breakfast* program provides a comprehensive approach to tackling this issue, integrating these proven strategies along with a breakfast-focused nutrition education curriculum, youth-driven social marketing campaign, family and community engagement and evaluation, all aimed at helping students make healthy choices in the morning. This approach brings together all members of the school community—including teachers, food service staff, SNAP-Ed practitioners and other community partners. *One Healthy Breakfast* can complement schools' existing breakfast promotion, nutrition education or youth leadership initiatives, leveraging existing resources to support student's health and academic success.

The Food Trust is committed to working with partners across the country interested in bringing the *One Healthy Breakfast* program to their school. We hope that this toolkit, along with the corresponding BLAST curriculum and social marketing materials, provides practitioners with the resources they need to get started. Working together, we can ensure that all students have the opportunity, knowledge and support to get a healthy start to their day.

For copies of the BLAST curriculum and other materials, please email contact@thefoodtrust.org.

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Since 1992, The Food Trust has been working to ensure that everyone has access to affordable, nutritious food and information to make healthy decisions. The Food Trust's comprehensive approach includes improving food environments and teaching nutrition education in schools; working with corner store owners to increase healthy offerings and helping customers make healthier choices; managing farmers markets in communities that lack access to affordable produce; and encouraging grocery store development in underserved communities.

Founded March 1, 2006, CORE is a university-wide group of investigators dedicated to excellence in obesity research. Its mission is to facilitate interdisciplinary research on the etiology, consequences, treatment and prevention of obesity. A particular focus of the Center is a greater understanding of the causes, treatment and prevention of obesity among minorities of lower socioeconomic status, with whom obesity is more prevalent.

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ENDNOTES

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The Food Trust, founded in 1992, strives to make healthy food available to all. Working with neighborhoods, schools, grocers, farmers and policymakers, The Food Trust has developed a comprehensive approach that combines nutrition education and greater availability of affordable, healthy food. To learn more about The Food Trust, visit www.thefoodtrust.org.



 **ONE
HEALTHY
BREAKFAST**