

Helping Kids Learn Better with Healthy School Meals

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Today's Presenters



Carol Muller
State Director, Colorado
Action for Healthy Kids



Theresa Peña
Regional Coordinator for
Outreach and Engagement
Denver Public Schools
Food and Nutrition Services




Alli Howe
Parent – Morgan County
School District
Colorado AFHK
Parent Advisory Board

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Who Are We?



AFHK's vision is a world in which every kid is healthy, active and ready to learn.

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Who Are We?



Action for Healthy Kids works to mobilize school professionals, families and communities to take actions that lead to healthy eating, physical activity and healthier schools where kids thrive.

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What We Do

- School Programs
- Breakfast Grants
- Game On Grants
- Trainings and Technical Assistance
- Parents for Healthy Kids

ActionforHealthyKids.org

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Get Your Game On



Game On supports America's schools, their staff, students, and families to incorporate healthy food choices and physical activity into their daily lives and school environment, with the ultimate goal of getting recognized as a health-promoting school.



ActionforHealthyKids.org/Game-On

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Game On

Step 4: Find Activities

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Action for Healthy Kids • National PTA
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ParentsforHealthyKids.org

hot topics ♦ success stories ♦ tools & tips ♦ parent forums ♦ school grants

What We'll Cover

- How national school meal programs work
- Challenges school meal programs face
- Strategies for collaborating with your school nutrition department
- How parents can support healthy school meals
- Resources to advocate for healthy school meals



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United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Services Child Nutrition Programs

- National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
- School Breakfast Program (SBP)
- Child and Adult Care Food Program
- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program
- Special Milk Program
- Summer Food Service Program



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National School Meal Programs

Participating public and non-profit private schools:

- Receive cash subsidies and USDA Commodity Foods for each meal served
- Must offer nutritionally balanced meals that meet federal nutrition requirements
- Must offer free or reduced-priced meals to eligible children



More than 13 million children in the United States live in "food insecure" homes, meaning they don't always have enough to eat.

Hunger Facts: <https://www.nokidhungry.org/who-we-are/hunger-facts>

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School Lunch Participation and Cost 2017

- 30 Million – Children ate school lunch each day
- 4.9 Billion – School lunches served in total
- 73.6% of lunches served were free or at reduced-price rates (\$0.40)
- \$13.6 Billion – Cost of the national school lunch program (federal reimbursements to districts + commodities)



Source: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/pd/annual.xls>

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School Breakfast Participation and Cost 2017

- 14.6 Million – Children ate school breakfast each day
- 2.4 Billion – School breakfasts served in total
- 85% of breakfasts served were free or at reduced-price rates (\$0.30)
- \$4.2 Billion – Cost of the national school breakfast program (federal reimbursements to districts)



Source: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/pd/annual.xls>

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The Learning Connection



Skipping breakfast affects student performance—demonstrated through levels of alertness, attendance, memory, problem solving and math skills.



Action for Healthy Kids, The Learning Connection
What You Need to Know to Ensure Your Kids are Healthy and Ready to Learn
<http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/thelearningconnection>

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The Learning Connection

Students with a higher quality diet are found to be on task more often and have higher test scores and attendance rates.



More information and citations can be found in: *Health is Vital for Student Success: A Summary of Relevant Research*, Colorado Education Initiative: <http://www.coloradoeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/MakingtheCaseFF.pdf>

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National School Meal Programs Who makes the decisions?

- Federal Government
- State Government
- School Board
- District Administration
- Food Service Director
- Principal
- Teachers and Staff
- Parents and Students

Schools must follow the federal requirements, but decisions about specific foods to serve and how to prepare them are left up to local school food authorities.

Learn more: Center for Ecoliteracy: Understanding the Levels of Authority for School Food Systems: <http://www.ecoliteracy.org/article/understanding-levels-authority-school-food-systems>

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A Balancing Act...

- Budget – the costs of running a food service operation – food, labor, equipment, supplies, maintenance, transportation, utilities and more
- Federal government's Food and Nutrition Standards
- High expectations of parents and the community
- Narrow food preferences of so many children

"Budgeting for thousands of wholesome, appetizing, kid-friendly meals on a daily basis is easily compared to a high-wire act. It requires a near-microscopic focus on where every cent goes, and relentless, expert balancing of the nutritional, esthetic, and financial value of every single choice."

"The Cost of School Lunch," School Food 101, School Food Focus
http://www.schoolfoodfocus.org/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2016/05/The-Cost-of-School-Lunch.pdf

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How School Meals Are Funded

- Paying students
- Federal reimbursement dollars for Free, Reduced and Paid student meals and after-school snacks
- A la carte sales, including snack carts and vending machines
- Catering services or contracts with community programs, child care and elder care centers



2017-2018 School Lunch Reimbursement Rates: \$3.29 Free, \$2.89 Reduced, \$0.37 Paid + 2¢ additional per meal in districts with 60% or more free/reduced. Alaska and Hawaii receive higher rates.

For more information about reimbursement rates and eligibility guidelines, visit:
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/child-nutrition-programs>

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Commodity Foods

- 15-20% of the food on school lunch trays usually comes from the USDA commodity food program (USDA Foods)
- Typical commodities available include meat, poultry, eggs, grain products, cheese, fruits and vegetables
- School districts place their orders as much as a year in advance



Source: White Paper: USDA Food in the National School Lunch Program
<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/fdd/NSLP-White-Paper.pdf>

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The Cost of School Lunch

- Food: \$0.85 – \$1.40
- Labor, equipment, supplies, maintenance, transportation, utilities, training and more: \$1.60 – \$2.15



Source: Chef Ann Foundation, Parent Advocacy Toolkit
http://www.chefannfoundation.org/assets/uploads/documents/CAF_School_Food_Infographic_Oct2016.pdf

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School Meal Nutrition Standards (2012)

- Ensure students are offered both fruits and vegetables every day
- Require grains to be whole-grain-rich
- Limit portion sizes based on students' ages
- Require fat-free or low-fat milk
- Limit fats and sodium



Update: In May 2017 the USDA rolled back some of these requirements related to whole grains, milk and sodium for the current school year. The USDA's new School Meal Flexibility Rule, announced in November, eases some of these requirements for 2018-2019. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/fr-113017>

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The Five Components of a Complete School Lunch

In order for a meal to be fully reimbursable, a student must take three of the five components:

- Milk
- Vegetable
- Whole Grains
- Fruit
- Meat or Meat Alternate



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The Lunch Box

Supports school districts and food service teams who are transitioning their food programs from processed foods to scratch cooking and fresh ingredients. Find best practices, tools, grants, online trainings, menus and recipes and more!



www.thelunchbox.org



Healthy School Meals: Participation Challenges

- Kids don't have enough time to eat
- Popularity and availability of convenience foods
- Competition from outside restaurants
- Stigma associated with eating school lunch



Increasing participation needs to be a community effort!

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Parents as Partners: Lunch Period Timing



Experts recommend that students be allowed 20 minutes to eat after they arrive at the table with their food.

"It takes more time to chew a whole apple than applesauce. Eating an entrée salad takes longer than eating a cheeseburger or chicken nuggets...Sometimes kids eat their favorite foods first, and if they run out of time, those vegetables may land in the trash." Helen Phillips, President of the School Nutrition Association, 2011-2012

"Cutting short lunch time in school may lead to obesity" Nanci Hellmich, USATODAY.COM 8/17/2011

Game On Activity

<http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/game-on/find-challenges/cafeteria-challenges/1435-time-to-eat>



Parents as Partners: Recess Before Lunch



Kids tend to eat a better lunch if they've already had their time on the playground, leading to less waste, better behavior and performance.

Game On Activity

<http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/game-on/find-challenges/cafeteria-challenges/1232-recess-before-lunch>



Parents as Partners: Competitive Foods

"Competitive foods" compete with nutritionally balanced school meals for student dollars. They include a la carte lines in the cafeteria, vending machines, snack carts, school stores and fundraisers.

- Work with nutrition services to offer healthier snack items
- Restrict purchases before kids have finished their meals
- Ask nutrition services to allow families to opt out
- Restrict access to competitive foods from other school groups during mealtimes



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Parents as Partners: Smarter Lunchrooms



- Make healthy foods more visible and convenient
- Present foods in an appealing way
- Use cool labels that appeal to kids
- Use signs and verbal prompts
- Utilize suggestive selling

Game On Activity

<http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/game-on/find-challenges/cafeteria-challenges/1430-smarter-lunchrooms>



Parents as Partners: Marketing Your Program

- Host taste tests of healthy menu items
- Organize a smoothie contest
- Hold Farm Fresh Fridays to showcase locally grown foods
- Educate families about good nutrition and its connection to learning
- Conduct a student focus group to gather student input
- Spruce up your cafeteria with new paint, murals and music



Game On Activities

Taste Tests: <http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/game-on/find-challenges/cafeteria-challenges/1210-host-a-taste-test>
 Cafeteria Spruce Up: <http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/game-on/find-challenges/cafeteria-challenges/1267-cafeteria-spruce-up>
 Nutrition Promotion: <http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/game-on/find-challenges/cafeteria-challenges/1485-nutrition-promotion>

Parent Advocacy Toolkit



School Food 101, understanding the political landscape, case studies, conducting an investigation, reviewing your priorities, understanding your district wellness policy and priorities, identifying collaborators, holding a kick-off meeting, exploring programming possibilities, connecting with decision-makers and key influencers, requesting a district meeting

www.chefannfoundation.org/for-parents/parent-advocacy-toolkit/

Parent Advocacy Toolkit



Get to Know Your School:
 Visit your cafeteria and eat lunch with your child.



Building a Relationship with your Cafeteria Manager and Nutrition Services

- Collaboration vs. confrontation
- Take a positive and constructive approach
- Compromise does not mean defeat
- Respect their expertise
- Assume good intent
- Recognize their achievements
- Understand their challenges and priorities



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Parents as Partners – Supporting Healthy School Meals

- Understand and support the process
- Offer feedback along the way
- Enlist your kids to champion school meal improvements among their peers
- Encourage other parents to join the movement
- Support a healthy school food culture outside the cafeteria with healthy celebrations, fundraisers and rewards



Source: LiveWell@School Food Initiative
<https://livewellcolorado.org/healthy-schools/school-food-initiative/>

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Theresa Peña – Regional Coordinator for
Outreach and Engagement

Denver Public Schools

Food and Nutrition Services

Fun Facts....

- ▶ 207 schools
- ▶ 92,331 students
- ▶ 67% FRL
- ▶ Meals Served (2016-17)
 - Breakfast: 32,251 average daily participation
 - Lunch: 47,577 average daily participation
- ▶ \$41M annual budget
- ▶ Approximately (800+) food service workers



Key DPS initiatives...

- ▶ Scratch cooking
- ▶ Seasonal Menus:
 - New entrees
 - Hot vegetarian entrees
 - Fruit & vegetable bars
- ▶ Urban farms and school gardens
- ▶ Complimentary breakfast for ALL students
- ▶ Better nutrition AND tastier items



Areas of Focus...



- ▶ Improved quality of entrees and sides
- ▶ Modern Menus:
 - New entrees
 - Hot vegetarian entrees
 - Customization of entrees
 - More sauces, more flavor
 - More & different choices
- ▶ Fewer processed ingredients
- ▶ Education and feedback



Parent Engagement



- School Based
 - Menu changes
 - Access to Water
 - Policy
- District Level
 - School Wellness Policy
 - Menu Options
 - Policy



Parent Engagement



- Feedback
 - Lunchroom manager
 - Supervisor
 - Executive Director
- Opportunities
 - Recipes
 - Quality
 - Taste tests
 - Host educational opportunities with PTA, community groups, parents
 - Regularly eat in the lunchroom



Allison Howe, MPH

Parent and PTO Member
 Sherman Early Childhood Center, Pioneer Elementary
 Fort Morgan, Colorado
 Colorado AFHK Parent Advisory Board



Certified Health Education Specialist
 Consultant for the Lifelong Wellness Project
 Morgan County School District

School Food Initiative

Offers culinary, operations and marketing technical assistance to help food service directors and staff in Colorado provide wholesome, nutritious school meals.



- Applied for Salad Bars and related equipment
- Fully funded for all of our elementary schools
- Implemented first in Columbine Elementary School



Use your strengths to support Nutrition Services!

- Writing grants
- Writing letters of support
- Writing press releases
- Speaking at PTO/PTA Meetings
- Fundraising
- Create a logo
- Leading a parent group
- Taking pictures of events



Every Kid Healthy™ Week

- Annual celebration of schools' wellness achievements
- Recognized on the calendar of National Health Observances
- Takes place last week of April each year
- Schools have hosted more than 5,000 Every Kid Healthy Week events since 2013, engaging over 2 million students, parents, teachers and community members!



Register your event: EveryKidHealthyWeek.org

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ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS



Questions?

Carol Muller
cmuller@actionforhealthykids.org

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Follow Us for More Resources

Stay up to date on success stories, health tips, physical activity games, fun recipes, volunteer opportunities and ideas for action!





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Parents for Healthy Kids

What Topic

Whether you're looking for K-12 resources in the classroom or for ways to make healthier school lunches and homework loads for families, there are lots of topics to explore with our online resources.

Physical Activity & PE
School Lunch
Policy
Back to School
Healthy Snacks
Grade 5-6
Healthy Mindset



School Lunch

Pop Quiz for Parents! How Healthy is Your School?

Does your child get recess for 20 minutes every day?

Yes

No

I don't know

TAKE QUIZ

How does the National School Lunch Program work, anyway?

Parents for Healthy Kids

ParentsforHealthyKids.org



School Programs ♦ Tools and Resources ♦ Expert Partners
Volunteer Opportunities ♦ School Grants

ActionforHealthyKids.org

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