



Family Meal Toolkit

A roadmap for planning
and executing successful
Family Meal Events

ACTION FOR
HEALTHY
KIDS 

Kellanova

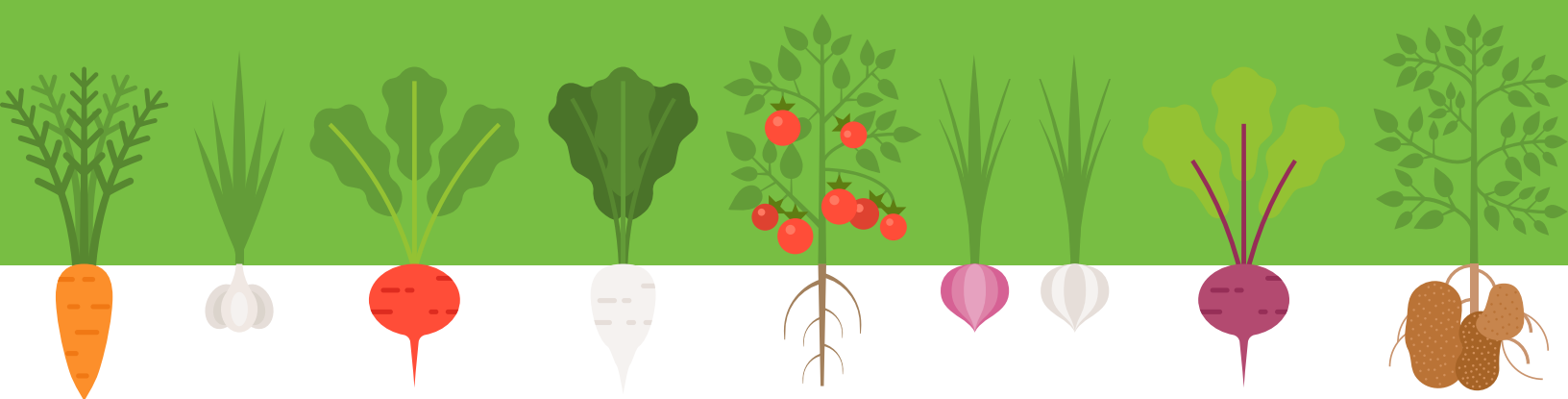
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About This Toolkit

Action for Healthy Kids and Kellanova have partnered to create a toolkit designed to increase school meal participation while ensuring students receive the healthy and nutritious meals they need to thrive. Family Meal Events offer a unique opportunity to engage both students and families, showcasing the high quality and taste of school meals, and providing an interactive experience that highlights the importance of nutrition. These events serve as a platform to integrate hands-on nutrition education, offering families and students the chance to actively participate in activities that promote healthy eating habits and provide a deeper understanding of school meal programs.

This toolkit is crafted to be straightforward, practical, and easy to navigate, providing schools with a clear roadmap to successfully plan, execute, and follow up on their Family Meal Event. With resources such as **detailed checklists, activity ideas, taste test suggestions, and templates for event promotion**, this toolkit ensures that schools are equipped with everything needed for a smooth and impactful event. This toolkit offers the support and guidance needed to create a multi-faceted event that accomplishes a variety of goals, including increasing meal participation, fostering nutrition education, engaging families in hands-on experiences, celebrating school meals, and recognizing the efforts of local school nutrition teams, all while strengthening community connections and promoting healthier eating habits.



CHECKLIST

Family Meal Event

1. Define Event Goals

Set clear objectives for the event and align them with your school nutrition program's mission.

- Increase student meal program participation
- Increase student and family engagement with the meal program
- Share nutrition program goals, philosophy, and daily impact and highlight school meals
- Engage families and students in nutrition education and local food systems

2. Select Event Date, Time, Theme, and Location

Choose the logistics and theme of the event.

- Choose an event date and time that maximizes family participation
- Decide on the location
- Brainstorm and vote on a theme involving students
- Align event theme with your school's nutritional focus

3. Set a Budget and Identify Funding Sources

Create a budget that includes all event expenses.

- Determine a realistic budget based on expected attendees, supplies, and activities
- Request funding or fundraising opportunities from the school board, PTA, or community partners
- Suggest applying for local grants or ask for donations
- Consider joining an existing event for shared costs and resources

4. Develop the Menu

Create a menu that reflects the event's theme and goals.

- Decide the format of the meal (e.g., family-style, taste test, lunch line)
- Feature seasonal produce or culturally relevant dishes
- Include scratch-cooked recipes or local ingredients
- Select a menu that supports nutrition education

5. Order Supplies and Decorations

Ensure all items needed for the event are planned and ordered in advance.

- Order food supplies based on the menu and number of attendees
- Arrange for serving and cleanup supplies
- Collaborate with student clubs or teachers to create event decorations
- Use toolkit templates, order, or create event-related signage and promotional materials

6. Plan Event Activities

Incorporate activities that engage families and meet your event goals.

- Organize interactive nutrition education activities
- Set up a community resource table
- Plan a taste test of new menu items or seasonal foods with educational components
- Coordinate with local partners for interactive activities
- Schedule time for a school nutrition program overview, success stories, or student testimonials

CHECKLIST Family Meal Event cont.

7. Market the Event

Ensure families and the community are informed and excited about the event.

- Post event details on school and district websites, newsletters, and social media using templates
- Create an RSVP link for online registration or use physical RSVP options, use template
- Promote the event through local media (newspapers, radio, TV) and student clubs (e.g., yearbook, media)
- Use posters, digital signage, and student-created artwork to advertise the event
- Send invitations and updates through email, school announcements, and social media accounts, use template

8. Recruit Volunteers

Engage the community to help with event preparation and execution.

- Recruit volunteers from the school community
- Coordinate with the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) or local groups for volunteer support
- Arrange for student volunteers to assist with serving, cleanup, and activities
- Assign specific roles

9. Set Up Event Logistics

Prepare for smooth event operation on the day.

- Work with facilities staff to ensure the space is set up
- Have a plan for food safety and sanitation
- Ensure you have adequate staff and volunteers to manage the event and respond to any issues
- Create a timeline for event activities and meal service

10. Host the Event

Ensure everything runs smoothly on the day of the event.

- Set up decorations, signage, and activity stations
- Serve food and manage meal service
- Engage attendees with nutrition education, taste tests, and interactive activities
- Capture photos and videos for social media and event recaps

11. Clean Up and Manage Leftovers

Plan for the aftermath of the event.

- Recruit volunteers for cleanup tasks
- Have a plan for storing or donating any leftover food
- Return event space to its original condition
- Dispose of waste according to school policies

12. Post-Event Follow-Up

Engage the community and assess the event's impact.

- Post thank-you messages and event highlights on social media and the school website
- Share event photos and updates with local media, PTA, and community partners
- Send follow-up emails to participants, including event photos and upcoming events
- Conduct a survey or gather feedback on the event
- Reflect on event successes and areas for improvement for future events

13. Evaluate and Plan for Future Events

Make improvements for your next family meal event.

- Analyze feedback from attendees and volunteers
- Discuss what worked well and what could be improved
- Use the insights to plan your next family meal event or other community engagement activities
- Consider ongoing strategies for engaging families and increasing meal program participation year-round

Pre-Event Planning

Planning a successful Family Meal Event starts with clear goal setting and thoughtful preparation. This section will guide you through essential steps, from defining your event objectives to selecting a date, time, theme, and location. By setting specific goals aligned with your school's mission, you can create an engaging and impactful event that increases student participation and fosters strong family connections with the school meal program. The pre-event planning section offers a detailed checklist and helpful resources to ensure you're on the right track for a well-organized and memorable event.



HOW TO PLAN A FAMILY MEAL EVENT AT YOUR SCHOOL

Follow the steps below and utilize the linked resources to plan a successful event!

BRAINSTORM AND SET YOUR GOALS FOR THE EVENT

1 [Goal ideas](#)

- » Increase student school meal program participation.
- » Increase student and family engagement with your school meal program.
- » Share your school nutrition program goals, philosophy, and daily impact on students with the community.
- » Show off your best school meals to families and the community to demonstrate how school meals have changed since parents and guardians were in school.
- » Engage families and students in nutrition education and the community food system.

2 **Choose the date, time, theme, and location within the school (cafeteria, gym) for the event.**

Ideas for selecting an event theme:

- » Ask students to submit and vote on theme ideas in the lunch line.

- » Highlight a local, seasonal produce item, such as apples in the fall at a [Crunchoff](#), with recipes, nutrition facts, activities, and a local farmer spotlight.
- » Ask students or a teacher what their [favorite lesson](#) is and create an event focused on that lesson's teachings. For example, share the Three Sisters' history and cultural significance while serving a [Three Sisters Stew](#) and hosting interactive activities, such as planting [Three Sisters Seeds in a container garden](#).
- » Work with a local community partner, such as a community garden, farmers market, local library, or Boys and Girls Club, to [host interactive activities](#) and teach attendees [quick culinary](#) or grocery shopping skills.
- » [Host a site visit of your Farm to School or school garden program](#) including a tour and taste test.

3 **Set an event budget.**

- » [Meet with your school board](#), administration, [Parent Teacher Alliance](#), or a community partner to request funding or fundraising opportunities for School Nutrition events.
- » Join another event already happening at the school, such as a health fair, open house, back to school night, student concert, or PTA event.
- » [Apply for local grants](#) or request donations from community stakeholders. School Nutrition events can be part of [farm to school](#) and nutrition education programs to connect with the school community.

4 Consider maximum participation based on supplies, location, and budget.

Set a realistic attendee goal for the event based on:

- » Capacity of the event space.
- » Number of staff and volunteers available to prepare for and run the event.
- » Amount of ingredients and supplies available order ahead of the event.
- » Budget for event and School Nutrition Team event staff hours.

5 Develop the menu based on your event goals!

Decide if your event will be a taste test, family style meal, lunch line style meal, or another format.

Ideas for selecting the menu item(s):

- » Seasonal menu item – Feature a seasonal produce item in 3 different ways, such as roasted butternut squash on its own, in a fall veggie or meat/meat alternate taco, and in a chili.
- » Culturally relevant menu item – Serve a culturally relevant item from your lunch or breakfast menu that students enjoy.
- » Scratch cooked recipe(s) – Spotlight a scratch-prepared menu item your students love! This could be a main dish, side, or a salad dressing.
- » Serve the salad bar or fresh veggie bar that is available to your students.
- » Ask families to submit a recipe they would like to see on the menu and prepare one recipe as a taste test at the event.
- » Try out a new recipe or two you're considering adding to the menu as taste tests.

6 Order food supplies and make decorations for the event theme.

- » Serve the meal, menu item, or taste tests on school lunch trays.
- » Partner up with student clubs, art class teachers, or elementary school teachers to have students create art, decorations, table toppers, and fun nutrition fact posters or flash cards to display at the event.
- » Order any recipe ingredients and additional serving or cleanup supplies ahead of time.

7 Plan event activities that support the event goals and will engage attendees.

Activity ideas:

- » Nutrition education
- » Host a taste test: Utilize the AFHK Taste Test Guide and Ingredients For a Successful Taste Test Event workshop!
- » Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSSC) model education
- » Community food system education
- » Culinary skills and tips for engaging students and families in home cooking
- » Community resource share table

You can create an engaging and impactful event that increases student participation and fosters strong family connections.

8 Utilize social media, your district website, invitations, RSVPs, and local media outlets to [market the event](#).

Use a variety of marketing methods to engage all students and families in your school community. Create a simple invite to send home on paper and post online with essential information that can be digested with a quick glance. Translate all marketing materials into your school community's spoken languages.

- » [Post an invitation](#) to your event on your school district website homepage or events calendar, school nutrition webpage, and social media accounts.
- » Print the invitation to send home with students in school backpacks or take-home folders. Leave a stack of invites in the school front office, nurses' office, district office, and in other places families commonly pass through or gather.
- » Create a specific [School Nutrition Team social media account](#) to share regular updates on the event and your school nutrition program.
- » Include a [virtual RSVP link](#) in your district, school, and/or school nutrition program newsletters.
- » Invite a local newspaper, news station, and any student writing, media, or yearbook clubs to take photos and [write a story about the event](#).
- » Include the event information in district or school email updates and morning announcements.
- » Partner up with student clubs, art classes, home economics or culinary classes, and the student council to make signs, posters, and virtual invitations for the event.
- » Post student-made signs and posters in common areas where students and families congregate, such as school or district offices, cafeterias, and in hallways during sporting or after school activities. Include a QR code to your school nutrition program website!
- » [School Nutrition Program Marketing Guide](#)

9 [Engage your stakeholders!](#) Gather volunteers, school administrators, facilities staff, teachers, local partners, school clubs or sport teams, and students to assist with the event.

- » Partner with a student club, class, or grade level to host the event together! Involve students in hosting interactive activities, serving taste tests, and gathering feedback or ideas for the school nutrition programs at the event.
- » Contact the Parent Teacher Association and school board for volunteer support during the event and for clean-up.
- » Offer volunteer hours to high school students for assisting with event set up, running activities, and clean up.
- » Partner with a student sports team, drama club, or music class to incorporate a student performance into the event.
- » Invite the Superintendent, school principals, school board and office staff, school counselors, and teachers to attend the event and connect with families.
- » Ask a school or district celebrity or student group to MC the event, host an interactive activity, or serve the meal to attendees.
- » Work with your school and district facilities staff to ensure your event space has tables, chairs, trash cans, and proper food safety guidelines are followed.

10 Make a plan for cleaning up the event space.

- » Recruit volunteers to clean up after the event!
- » Plan for how to avoid food waste, such as sending home any leftovers with attendees, properly storing leftovers for serving the next day, or donating leftovers to a local food pantry.
- » Ask the school facilities team how to dispose of trash and recycling and where to store tables and chairs.

11 Make a plan to follow up with a thank you on social media including pictures and highlights of the event and the winner(s) of any contests.

- » [Post photos of the event](#) on the school, district, and School Nutrition Team social media pages and thank the attendees, volunteers, students, and partners who supported the event.
- » Share photos and highlights of the event in a school meals or district newsletter, on the school nutrition program webpage and district website, and as a poster in the cafeteria.
- » Make a specific [social media congratulations post](#) with photos for any event contest winners.
- » Share highlights of the event in the morning announcements and school or district informational emails the day after the event.
- » Send a specific highlight email to school administrators, the school board, and the Parent Teacher Association to let them know how the school community benefited from the event.

12 Make a plan to evaluate the lessons learned and collect feedback from students and families on ideas for the next event.

Have a suggestion or feedback box available at the event with a specific ask.

- » Example feedback box questions:
 - “What did you enjoy about our event?”
 - “What events would you suggest for the School Nutrition Team to hold in the future?”
 - “How do you prefer to stay updated on school meal program updates?”
 - “What did you learn about our school nutrition program at this event?”
- » Create virtual and/or paper surveys for attendees to complete at the event with 1–3 brief questions on what attendees enjoyed about the event and what they would suggest for future events. Raffle off a prize for completing the survey!
- » Get to know your school community by talking to students and families at the event about your school nutrition program! Ask what attendees like about the program, what they would change, and what questions they have about the program.



During the Event

During the Family Meal event, the goal is to increase meal participation by engaging kids and families in the meals themselves, showing the high quality and taste of foods served, providing an opportunity for nutrition education, and directly engaging parents and caregivers, who are both part of the decision-making process for when to purchase school meals and the primary buyers of the similar products at the grocery store.

Once your event is underway, the focus shifts to creating an engaging and educational experience for families and students. This section provides suggestions for interactive activities, nutrition education, and taste tests to highlight the quality of school meals and increase awareness about the benefits of healthy eating. By integrating fun and informative activities, you'll not only showcase school meals but also foster meaningful conversations around nutrition, healthy food choices, and family engagement. The goal is to provide an opportunity for participants to enjoy, learn, and interact, leaving them excited about school meal programs and their benefits.

NUTRITION EDUCATION

- » [Share recipes to make at home](#) based on scratch school meals.
- » [MyPlate](#) education, activities, and recipe cards.
- » [Tips](#) on how to encourage families to [engage in healthy meal planning and prep](#)
- » Share data on the importance of eating a healthy meal in fun and interactive ways that start conversations!
 - [School Lunches](#)
 - [Success Stories](#)
- » [How to increase fruit and veggie intake](#) at home for families and students.
- » [School Meal Trays](#)
- » Fun Facts about...
 - [National School Lunch Program](#)
 - [How school meals are essential to student learning and health](#)
 - [School Breakfast Program](#)
 - [Local Food in Schools](#) – Share facts about local foods in your school!
 - Local farmers, food hubs, co-ops, or food distributors your program works with.
- » [How to read a nutrition label](#) and why monitoring sodium, added sugars, trans fats intake is important for health.
- » [Nutrition based physical activity games](#)



INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES



- » Family style meal
- » Fill in a [MyPlate activity sheet](#) for K-6; activity page with nutrients.
- » Play a “[Did you know?](#)” matching facts with nutrients game—for 7–12th graders with their family.
- » Family recipe swap! Ask each student to bring a recipe they enjoy at home or would like to try. Students can exchange recipes and prepare them at home individually or together, follow up with photos to the School Nutrition Team. A favorite could be created into a school meal!
- » Ask families and students to submit recipes to be created and served as a school meal.
- » [Local foods trivia!](#) Include questions on what fruits, vegetables, and herbs are grown in your local food system, how these foods are grown, and where to purchase locally grown produce in the community.
- » Reflection question stations: Ask attendees to reflect on one food-related question and to write their answer on a communal space other attendees can see.
 - For example, ask attendees to “Share a favorite food and how it makes you feel.” Ask attendees to write their answer on an apple-shaped piece of paper and pin the apple on a large paper tree or local food system poster for all other attendees to read. Share some answers in your event follow-up messages!
- » Host a guided cooking lesson of a simple recipe or snack for local, in season fruits or veggies.
- » Free or farmers market style produce (partner with a local community garden, food bank, farmer) table with recipes and [info cards on how to prepare a few of the produce items](#).
- » Host an optional [vegetable chopping skills](#) quick 10 min lesson.

HIGHLIGHT YOUR PROGRAM AND SCHOOL NUTRITION PROFESSIONALS

Give your school community more visibility into the daily workings of your school meal program and celebrate your hard-working school nutrition team at your event.

- » Print and hand out popular school meal recipes for families to make at home. Include these recipes in newsletters and social media posts too!
- » Create a “Lifecycle of A Recipe” poster to demonstrate how a new recipe was created, tested, and prepared for serving. Include images of each step in the process and student feedback.
- » Share your [Healthy Meals Incentives Recognition Award Journey!](#) Include statistics on how your team has lowered sodium and added sugars in school meals, increased scratch & speed scratch recipes, collected and utilized student feedback, started a salad bar, or incorporated nutrition education.
- » If your event is inside, run a slideshow of photos from the cafeteria, of your team preparing and serving meals, and students enjoying school meals!



Taste Test Ideas

BREAKFAST

[Baked oatmeal bars](#)

[Apple cinnamon sheet pan pancakes](#)

[Overnight Oats](#)

[Smoothies](#)

[Baked energy bites](#)

[Hashbrown egg bake](#)

[Berry cornmeal muffins](#)

[K12 Eggo® Froot Loops® Waffles Recipe Concepts](#)

LUNCH

[Herbs and spices \(low sodium\) on cooked veggies](#)

[Wraps](#)

[Scratch prepared dressings and/or hummus with fresh veggies](#)

[Bean and cheese Pupusas](#)

[Black bean patties with crema](#)

[Chana Masala](#)

[Roasted carrot parmesan fries](#)

[Broccoli cranberry salad](#)

[Chicken Kung Pao bowl](#)

[K12 Eggo® Eggoji Recipe Sheet](#)

[K12 Whole Grain Cheez-It® Cruncheezy Wrap Recipe Sheet](#)

[K12 MorningStar Farms® Whole Grain Chik'n Nuggets Recipe Concepts](#)

- » Create a “Meet Your School Lunch Heroes” poster for each of your School Nutrition Professionals! Include their photo, favorite school meal recipe, a culinary skill they’re an expert at, and facts about their daily workday, such as the number of pounds of apples sliced this week.
- » Invite one of your local procurement partners to host an interactive table and answer questions on local procurement with your school meal program, such as a produce farmer. Display photos of the produce you purchase from this partner, how the produce is grown, and meals prepared with the produce along with student feedback on these meals.
- » Host a Day in the Life of a School Nutrition Professional Q&A session with event attendees!
- » Have one School Nutrition Professional sit at each table to connect with families by sharing their passion for child health, their daily work, and how school meals impact students.



POST-EVENT

Continuing Family Engagement

After the event, it's important to keep the momentum going by engaging families, evaluating the event's success, and building on the connections made during the meal. In this section, you'll find strategies to follow up with attendees, gather feedback, and share highlights of the event with the broader community. Additionally, we provide tips on how to leverage the event to increase ongoing participation in school meal programs and deepen family engagement. Post-event efforts are crucial for sustaining interest and support for future events and ensuring that the impact of your Family Meal Event continues long after the event concludes.

EVALUATION

- » Follow up with a thank you for attending and include information on the next event, social media accounts to follow, new menu highlights, and photos of the event.
- » Send out a brief evaluation survey for parents/guardians and students. Keep the questions simple family friendly!
- » Add meals served to school lunch menu
- » Family recipe contributions, sharing meal and pictures on school's social media

To effectively implement these strategies and ensure broad support for school meal programs, it is essential to gain buy-in from key stakeholders, including the school nutrition team, parents, teachers, and students. Building a strong sense of community around the meal program will not only increase participation but also create a lasting impact on students' health and well-being. The following strategies outline how to engage and involve these groups in meaningful ways, fostering a collaborative environment that supports the success of school nutrition initiatives.

INCREASE MEAL PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

- » Serve taste tests at student events, school board meetings, sporting events, back to school nights, open houses, school or event registration events.
- » Host tours of the school kitchen for students and families during regular school events.

- » Start an [after-school cooking club for students](#).
- » Host a weekly or monthly cooking, taste test, or nutrition education lesson at an afterschool program or club.
- » Work with high school foods or health classes: Ask students to design a meal for the lunch menu this year. Have the students prepare and serve taste tests for the student body to vote on.
- » Update your school nutrition and district webpages and social media accounts with nutrition program statistics.

Example stats to share:

- Pounds of fresh local carrots (or another fresh vegetable) served
- Number quarts of fresh Pico de Gallo (or another scratch prepared sauce, dressing, or condiment) prepared and served
- Percentage of students who tried and loved a new menu item
- Weekly veggie features on the salad bars
- » Invite school administration, teachers, staff, and coaches to serve meals and to eat with students in the cafeteria on a regular basis.
- » Form a student advisory group to share meal ideas and collect feedback from peers on the school nutrition programs.
- » [Start a school garden](#), either in containers, grow towers, or a hoop house. Work with teachers to incorporate the garden into the curriculum, recruit student clubs to harvest the produce, and serve student-grown produce in meals.

GAIN SUPPORT AND BUY-IN

- » [Market your School Nutrition Programs!](#) Brag about how fantastic your meals and School Nutrition Professionals are and demonstrate how the [School Nutrition Programs support student health and wellbeing](#).
- » [Celebrate your School Nutrition Professionals!](#) A confident, [motivated](#), and [proud School Nutrition Team](#) makes all the difference in engaging your school community.
- » Work with teachers to [incorporate nutrition education into regular activities and curriculum](#).
- » Include nutrition education and school meal program community events in your [school and district wellness policies](#).
- » [Teach](#) families how important their support and involvement in the school community is for their students.

DEVELOP LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

- » Form a [Health and Wellness Advisory Committee](#) with parents and families to build trust and create space for feedback and learning. Invite local non-profit organizations and public health organizations as guest speakers.

- » Work with the Parent Teacher Association to include school meal program goals and information in their meetings. Present to the Association how your school meal programs impact students, new program innovations, and student feedback.
- » [Form a Community of Practice group](#) with School Nutrition Professionals and/or with local food distributors and farmers in your city, region, or state. Meet virtually or in-person regularly to brainstorm ideas, work through challenges, and learn from each other.
- » [Contact](#) local food hubs, co-ops, and farmers about procurement of local produce, honey, meat, grains, eggs, or poultry. Work with local farmers to plant plots of vegetables specifically for your school district.
- » Contact local non-profit organizations, [university extension offices](#), and your [state agency](#) for resources on connecting with your school community.
- » Work with a local [Foodcorps](#) or [AmeriCorps](#) chapters for volunteers who are motivated and invested in supporting school communities through farm to school programming, nutrition education, and community connections.





SUCCESS STORY

Building Trust Starts with a Taste

When students don't participate in school lunch, it's often because they're concerned about the quality of the food being served.¹ But even if you're serving the highest quality food in town, your students and their families might not realize it. Giving students and their families a first-hand look at your school meal program can lessen any hesitations families may have about food quality and lead to trust.

This was the goal at **Carrollton Exempted Village School District** in Carrollton, OH, where they hosted a Family Meal night deemed "A Taste of Carrollton" to showcase the quality of their school meals. Planning their event was no small undertaking, so the team at Carrollton turned to the [Family Meal Toolkit](#), a helpful guide created in partnership by Kellanova and Action for Healthy Kids. This toolkit outlines steps for planning and hosting an event for your school community, with detailed checklists, activity ideas, taste test suggestions, and templates to promote the event. To evaluate the success of hosting an event like this, the toolkit also includes post event ideas, such as evaluation surveys and social media messaging for schools.

Check out Carrollton's Family Meal night

During the planning phase, the team at Carrollton involved student groups, to keep them engaged and invested in the success of their event. A month prior to the event date, the school hosted a cooking competition among student groups to develop a new recipe for the school lunch menu. The recipes had to meet school nutrition standards, contain a commodity food, a red/orange or dark green vegetable, or a vegetable grown in the school garden. The top 3 teams from the competition then offered samples of their recipes at the Family Meal event, for all attendees to try.

Along with the recipes from the student competition, Carrollton dished out samples of lunch menu favorites like Pulled Pork Mac and Cheese and two new entrees called Cowboy Salsa and Pork Teriyaki Woodle bowl. After trying samples of these recipes, attendees could visit stations created by student groups at Carrollton, such as nutrition bingo, veggie-themed coloring placemats, and a plant sale featuring plants from the school's greenhouse. Adding to the ambiance was music from Carrollton's student chamber chorus and jazz band.

Overall, "A Taste of Carrollton" was a huge success, with almost 400 people in attendance, including a guest from the Ohio Department of Education, the school mascot "Munch the Fox" and representatives from Kellanova and Action for Healthy Kids. Carrollton's School Food and Nutrition Director, Barbara Burns, knows other schools can benefit from hosting similar events too.

Events like the one
Carrollton hosted
are possible in
your district too!

Refer to the [Family Meal Toolkit](#) as a resource for planning your own event to promote healthy eating and build trust in your school meal program.

"I hope what you see here is actually a blueprint for what you can do at your school...You want to showcase the great food that you serve in your cafeteria, and you want to show your families what you do during the school day to keep their children healthy."

Barbara Burns, School Food and Nutrition Director at Carrollton

1.Asperin, A. et al. (2010) The Non-Participation Survey: Understanding Why High School Students Choose Not to Eat School Lunch. The Journal of Child Nutrition & Management . Volume 34. (Issue 1) <https://schoolnutrition.org/journal/spring-2010-the-non-participation-survey-understanding-why-high-school-students-choose-not-to-eat-school-lunch/#full-article>

This toolkit is designed to provide the inspiration, tools, and guidance needed to host a successful Family Meal Event at any school. By bringing together students, families, and the community, these events offer a unique opportunity to create lasting impressions that promote healthier eating habits and increase awareness of the vital role school meals play in supporting student success. Every step—whether in planning, engaging, or following up—helps to build stronger community connections and fosters a positive, sustainable impact on the school’s nutrition program. The goal is to create an event that celebrates nutritious food, strengthens community ties, and contributes to a healthier future for all students.



Healthy Kids. Better World.

ACTION FOR
HEALTHY
KIDS 