

Breakfast • Lunch • After School • Summer

Healthy Eating Helps You Make the Grade in Michigan!






SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMS



The Link

There is a critical link between nutrition and learning.

Good Nutrition
Feeds Successful
Learning

-  Teachers and principals have said it for years: hungry children can't learn. Children who aren't hungry feel better, learn better, and behave better.
-  Nutrition is essential for effective learning every day, all year long. USDA's Child Nutrition Programs—school lunch, school breakfast, after-school snacks, and the summer food program—help children get the nutrition they need to learn, play, grow, and develop.
-  All children need a nutritious breakfast. The School Breakfast Program offers all children—regardless of their economic status—a critical jump start at the beginning of each day.



After-school and summer programs feature healthy meals and snacks, and draw children into supervised activities that are safe, fun, and filled with learning opportunities.



Knowing what their bodies need for good nutrition and having access to nutritious school meals empower children to make healthy food choices now and for the rest of their lives. The dining room is a learning laboratory for practicing nutrition education learned in the classroom.



School nutrition services staff and teachers can use the mealtime as an opportunity to teach reading, history, geography, math and science—by teaming together to promote and sample foods including Michigan grown products. Students can enjoy foods from different cultures and study the history and science of food, agriculture in the classroom, nutrient calculations and more.



A child-friendly dining room, with adequate time for students to eat, relax, and socialize, enhances the school climate and progress toward educational goals.



The Research






Nutrition plays a key role in students' school performance.

- A+** Medical authorities and nutrition researchers have documented that meeting nutritional requirements throughout childhood is essential to full intellectual development.
- A+** Recent research provides compelling evidence that undernutrition impacts the behavior of children, their school performance, and their overall cognitive development (Tufts University Statement, 1998).
- A+** In the "School Breakfast Program and School Performance" study, program participation was associated with improved test performance and reduced tardiness and absence rates (Meyers et al., 1989).
- A+** Researchers at Harvard (1998) reported that when school breakfasts were made available to low-income students their attendance, grades, behavior, and emotional adjustment improved.
- A+** A State of Minnesota Breakfast Study (1997) found that students who ate breakfast had a general increase in math grades and reading scores, increased student attention, reduced nurse visits, and improved student behaviors.



The Programs

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Child Nutrition Programs provide nutrition that promotes learning.

-  The National School Lunch Program provides nutritious lunches and the opportunity to practice skills learned in classroom nutrition education.
-  Nutritious snacks are now available through the National School Lunch Program to students enrolled in after-school care programs.
-  The School Breakfast Program ensures that all children have access to a healthy breakfast at school to promote learning readiness and healthy eating behaviors.
-  The Summer Food Service Program provides nutritious meals to low-income children during school vacation.
-  In addition, Food and Nutrition Service's (FNS) Team Nutrition provides schools with nutrition education materials for children and families, and technical assistance materials for school nutrition service directors, managers and staff. State agency partners provide training and technical assistance to support these programs in local schools.



The Partners

For more information about the school meals program in your area, contact the Director of Food and Nutrition Services in your local school district. For information about the school meals program in Michigan, contact the Michigan Department of Education, Food and Nutrition Program at 517-373-3347 or visit the Web site for news and updates at:

www.state.mi.us/mde/off/oss/news/index.htm



For additional copies of this brochure or other Michigan Team Nutrition materials:

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Michigan Team Nutrition Web Site:
www.msue.msu.edu/fnh/tn

Your school can sign up to be a Team Nutrition school -- the application form is on the Web site!

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