

## School Breakfast Program

The School Breakfast Program (SBP) is a federal program available to public schools. School districts that choose to take part in the School Breakfast Program receive cash subsidies from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) for each meal they serve. In return, they must serve breakfasts that meet federal meal pattern and dietary specifications, and they must offer free or reduced price breakfast to eligible children.

Current breakfast meals offer a minimum of 3 components (fruits, grains and milk) and must also meet dietary specifications for calories, sodium, saturated fat and trans fat.

The SBP provides a good start to the school day. Eating a balanced meal in the morning can make a major difference in the overall health and well-being of children. Evidence shows that children who participate in school breakfast eat more fruits, drink more milk, and consume a wider variety of foods than those who don't eat breakfast or have breakfast at home – they are also less likely to be overweight.

Meals not only contribute to children's nutritional health, but also to school performance. Specifically, studies indicate that students who routinely eat a well-balanced breakfast perform better on standardized tests, have higher math scores and have lower rates of tardiness and absenteeism.

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