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Breakfast Program Quick Start

A checklist to ensure you have thought of what your program needs for the year!

Has your program thought about...

- If district or provincial food service guidelines have changed?
- A suitable location?
- How food will be delivered?
- What to serve on the menu?
- Accommodating different nutrition & dietary needs?
- Where and how food will be purchased or ordered?
- How food will be prepared?
- What equipment & supplies are in place or needed?
- A program budget?
- Advertising the breakfast program?
- How to minimize waste?
- Making the program accessible for all students?
- When will the program begin?
- Who will do what? Does the program need volunteers?
Program Delivery Models

Consult your provincial health and school authority’s guidelines when selecting where and how to deliver your program. Each delivery model offers advantages and challenges, and program models can be adapted to any level of social distancing or other precautions with a few adjustments.

The **Grab & Go Model**
- Allows for flexibility in the program location and time of service
- Can include a simple menu with minimal preparation or hot cooked meal items
- Can easily be adapted to a single serve or individually wrapped menu

The **Classroom Model**
- Students will be eating all meals in classrooms
- Can be suitable for schools requiring student cohorts
- Convenience of in-class model reaches more students
- Food can be set out at desks or at a central table or other station in each classroom

The **Cafeteria or Sit-Down Model**
- Breakfast is served in cafeteria or other central area (gym, resource room, etc.)
- Helps create a unique breakfast atmosphere
- Promotes socialization and community building where students enjoy the meal together as a group

**Toolkit Tip:**
Reusable dishes can help your program reduce waste and save costs, but may not be an option for all schools. Review your program to see if any precautions have eased to facilitate reusables.
Grab & Go Program
Food is distributed from a central location or contact point and eaten elsewhere.

Use central stations where students grab their own breakfast.
Have multiple food stations or deliver to each classroom.
Breakfast supervisor monitors stations.
Use pre-packed breakfast bags.

Less Precautions
Mix warm, prepared foods into regular grab and go programs.
Use a different station or cart for every cohort.
Use tongs and gloves to serve food items.

More Precautions
Limit foods to those that can be easily packed in a lunch bag.

A Grab & Go program is easily adaptable and can be used with the classroom and sit-down models. Almost any menu can be applied within a grab & go program: see sample menus here.
Classroom (Station or Bin) Program

Food may be transported to the classroom after preparation or provided at an in-classroom station.

Toolkit tip: Using labels can help you track bins and amounts of food going to and coming back from each classroom.

Create a self-service station in class, where students can collect food when hungry.

Reduce touch points by having one person deliver to classes using carts.

Assign one classroom supervisor or teacher to hand out food as students enter the room.

Less Precautions

- If permitted, classes may have a microwave, crockpot, kettle, toaster or fridge.

More Precautions

- Prepare bins at a central site and have a student volunteer or teacher pick up the bins each morning.

- Place food items on each student’s desk before they arrive in class.
**Cafeteria or Sit-Down Program**

Students eat together in a central location (cafeteria, gymnasium, resource room, etc.) before class.

- Have students line up for a buffet-style breakfast bar.
- Incorporate volunteers to assist in breakfast service.
- Seat students by cohorts or stagger times to separate students.
- Place dividers between students to maintain distance.

**Less Precautions**

- If permitted, prepare and serve more hot items in your regular menu.
- Reduce touch points by having one or two supervisors serve food.

**More Precautions**

- Limit the number of seats or use place settings to mark where students should sit.

**Toolkit tip:** Leftovers from your sit-down breakfast can be packaged and offered to reach late students.
Staff & Volunteer Roles

Staff and volunteer involvement in your program depends on many factors, including who is available, who your volunteers are, your program model, and local health and safety regulations. Learn more about welcoming volunteers on the next page, and see these ideas for engaging staff & volunteers in each model:

**GRAB AND GO**

**Less Precautions**
Involve community volunteers in preparing food items, setting up and monitoring stations, and greeting students as they select items.

**More Precautions**
Assign 1-2 staff or volunteers to pre-portion and hand out foods from a central location.

**CLASSROOM**

**Less Precautions**
Have a team of volunteers prepare food and stock bins or have student volunteers deliver bins to classrooms and help hand out food items.

**More Precautions**
Have 1 staff or volunteer sort items into bins, and let teachers pick up and distribute to classes in the morning.

**SIT-DOWN/CENTRAL**

**Less Precautions**
A team of volunteers can take an active role in preparing and serving food, and join students for the meal to socialize and build community.

**More Precautions**
1-2 staff/volunteers can prepare the space, pre-package & lay out food or serve the food with tongs & gloves.

There are many volunteer roles outside of preparing and serving food, including:

Outreach  Menu Planner  Shopper/Order Management  Treasurer  Fundraiser  Report Writer  Marketing & Communications
Welcoming Volunteers
This year your school may be welcoming back volunteers or recruiting them for the first time. Consider the following:

Make sure you are aware of any local restrictions or health policies that may influence volunteering. These might affect the number of volunteers you have, their responsibilities, and the need for health and safety equipment or training.

Welcoming Back Volunteers

- Determine the best way to contact your volunteers – a newsletter? Email? School announcement?
- Review what volunteer roles will look like and who can do what. Share clear expectations.
- Hold a volunteer return session and thank them for their commitment. Go over any changes on how your program will be running and review new health/safety guidelines that might affect roles.
- Ensure volunteers have the necessary equipment for safe food handling and distribution. This will depend on your delivery model.

Some breakfast programs have found success tying student volunteering to extra-curricular activities or other school programs. Read about Georges P. Vanier School for an example.

Recruiting New Volunteers

- What will volunteers do? A sample of volunteer roles can be found on Pg.33 of our Build them Up Guide.
- Where can you source volunteers: Community organizations? Parents? Staff? Students?
- Think of the best way to reach out for recruitment. Sample letters can be found in the "Additional Resources" section in the Build Them Up Guide.
- Recruit students by using school announcements, engaging student clubs, or using a registration sheet.
- Hold a volunteer orientation to go over how the program runs, safe food handling practices, safety guidelines, and volunteer responsibilities.
- Be present to help volunteers during their first shift and have fun!
Health and Hygiene
Tips for Success in Every Environment

Extra care and cleaning is recommended if your program is hosted in a central location.

Provincial Health & Safety Guidelines
Compliance with hygiene and safety measures and health guidelines issued by your provincial government is essential to the operation of a successful program. Your local school authority may also have additional guidelines to follow. Please refer to both when running your program.

Recommendations for All Programs

Handwashing for all is encouraged before and after students eat.

All tables and desks used for the program should be disinfected after breakfast using a proper sanitizing solution. Bins, dishes, and any reusable utensils should be cleaned daily.

Gloves and tongs can be used to help safely distribute food to students.

Assigning 1 or 2 staff members to oversee food distribution can assist in restricting exposure of food items.
What’s on the Menu?

Your breakfast program menu should align with Canada’s Food Guide and Breakfast Club of Canada’s Nutrition Guidelines. Your menu should include at least one item from the three main food categories:

- Vegetables & Fruits
- Proteins
- Whole Grains

Water is the Club’s drink of choice. If you want variety in taste, you can infuse water with different fruits and vegetables like citrus or cucumbers.

Your program is an excellent place to introduce students to new foods. If you’re highlighting interesting fruits and vegetables, adding more cultural foods to represent your student population, or trying any new recipes, consider these tips on introducing new foods to your program.
Menus for Every Comfort Level

No size fits all when planning and choosing foods for your menu, so here are some sample plans to accommodate different levels of preparation, cooking, and health restrictions. Menus can be adapted to suit many program delivery models, so you can mix and match items according to your school's needs.

Pre-portioned/Simple Cold Menu
This menu is best for accommodating rigid precautions by offering individual, pre-portioned items that require little preparation and are easy to restock. It can work very well for classroom bins and refill stations and can be made more cost-effective by portioning items onsite.

Prepared Cold Menu
This menu works well for programs that have some time and freedom around food preparation. It offers more variety than a pre-portioned menu by starting to combine multiple food groups into each item. This menu doesn’t require any cooking.

Make Ahead Menu with Minimal Cooking
This menu features some items that require a bit of cooking or preparation beforehand so that minimal preparation is needed during program delivery. The final foods are hot or cold and easily portioned, making this menu a good fit for any delivery model.

Prepared Cold Menu

Make Ahead Menu

Full Hot Service

Hot Service Menu
This menu is excellent for programs that can cook or offer hot foods often. It features main dishes that include all food categories and suggestions for sides that add additional nourishment to the heartier menu items. It is easiest to use with a sit-down model but can be adapted for other delivery models.
Maximize Your Purchasing Power

Building a relationship with your local store can support your breakfast program’s sustainability and may help you save on costs and time. Local store relationships are very useful especially if you receive funding in gift cards or use our egg coupons.

1. **Set Up an Account**
   Try to set up an account for your school with gift cards or funding at local stores so that your shopping team can pick up grocery orders and pay for them automatically. You should also check for a rewards program to collect points and save more.

2. **Try Special Orders**
   Many grocery stores allow special orders, where the store will prepare and pack your order for pick up. This can save you on shopping time and ensure the store has the items you need. Call or visit your local store to ask about special orders.

3. **Seek Additional Supports**
   Keeping a good relationship with local stores and store managers can help you identify any other school meal program supports, community discounts or food donations available. Local organizations might also donate or assist in preparing breakfast for your program.

4. **Consider Group Buying**
   If you know other schools in your area that use the same grocer, it may be helpful to shop together. Purchasing as a group can build more community relationships by expanding your network. Working together can save shopping time and might provide additional bulk purchasing discounts.

**Toolkit Tip:** Setting up an account or asking about special orders would be a great time to ask about any discounts for school programs!
Reminders for Successful Programming

Choose the Right Time

Whether it’s as soon as students arrive to school or just before recess, you know what the best time is for your program. Sooner is better than later to make sure students start the day with the energy to learn.

If program space is limited, you may want to consider staggering your program time or adapting to a classroom program model.

Make the Experience Special

The breakfast experience should continue to be engaging and positive for students. The program can be a consistent support for students even when the school environment changes.

Consider using breakfast time to create rituals; encourage discussion, group reading and other nourishing activities that promote a welcoming, safe and inclusive environment.

Avoid Waste!

Start by serving only the food that is required and restock/refill your serving area as needed. This will ensure that items are not exposed and left out for waste.

Encourage students to bring reusable cutlery from home and ask them to save unopened or uneaten breakfast items in their lunchbox to enjoy later.

Remember, there are bound to be some hiccups when you reset your program. Figuring out what works best for your school under changing guidelines might take some time - be patient and know we’re here to support you along the way!
Resetting Your Breakfast Program

Be prepared for...

Changes in Program Attendance
- Adjust to a program model that allows your school to serve the most students and prepare food in the most efficient way.
- You might consider a combination of models to reach the most students, such as in-class delivery with a grab & go station at the office for late students.

Changes to Program Environment
- Be aware of and align your program with any local restrictions and provincial health guidelines.
- Consider labels and signs outlining breakfast procedures for students such as where and how to get food, where to sit, and how to social distance (if applicable).

Changes to Food Options
- Make food choices that are in line with local health, safety, and nutrition guidelines.
- Increased attendance may mean an increase in serving sizes or food amounts.
- Choose food items that work with your program model – will you pre-package food? Will you serve fresh foods?
- Certain foods can be prepared ahead of time to help your program.

Check out our poster resources on the next page!
Printable Program Resources

This selection of posters and templates is available to support and reinforce hygiene and food safety practices throughout the year. Click on each description or poster below to access printable versions. For more resources, visit our School Corner.
The BCC newsletter brings you bright ideas that combine inspiration and nutrition. You’ll also find tips and success stories from other breakfast programs across the country, along with news from our staff.

Click here to subscribe now. Past issues are available here.
The Club’s Team is Here for You!

Figuring out what works best for your school might take some time. We hope this information will help you to deliver a high-quality breakfast program that reaches students who rely on your program. We are here to support you along the way.

We encourage you to share the successes and challenges you encounter as part of our continuous improvement efforts. If you have stories or pictures you’d like to share, please email us at testimonials@breakfastclubcanada.org.

You are playing a vital role in making sure thousands of students across the country start their day with a nutritious meal. Thank you for doing your part for kids!