



2023-2024 Toolkit

Tools To Kickstart Your Breakfast Program



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Program Quick Start Checklist

Review this checklist to help prepare for setting up your program this year!

Has your program considered...

- ☐ *If authority or local food service guidelines have changed this year?*
- ☐ *A suitable location to run the program?*
- ☐ *How food will be delivered to students?*
- ☐ *What will be served 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 needed and in place?*
- ☐ *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?*
- ☐ *Any local support in the school community?*

Preparing for 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 health guidelines.
- Consider labels and signs outlining breakfast procedures for students such as what time breakfast is served, where and how to get food, and where to sit.

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 servings 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 to help save time.

Check out our poster resources on page 17!

Program Delivery Models

If you are considering changing your program delivery model, remember to consult your local health and school authority's guidelines. Three commonly used program delivery models are:

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 eat meals within classrooms
- Convenient way to reach more students in-class
- Food can be set out at desks or at a central table or other station in each classroom
- Food and nutrition education can be incorporated into the program to increase teaching and learning

The **Central 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:

Adopting multiple models in your breakfast program can help you reduce barriers that might keep students from accessing it. For example, pack leftover food from your sit-down breakfast model into grab-n-go bags for students arriving late by bus.



Staff & Volunteer Roles

Staff and volunteer involvement in your program depend on many factors, including who is available, who your volunteers are, your program model, and local health and safety regulations. **Learn more about welcoming and engaging volunteers on the next few pages**, and consider these suggestions for involving staff & volunteers in each model:



GRAB AND GO

Involve community or student volunteers in preparing food, setting up and monitoring stations, and greeting students as they select items.

Tip!

Have designated staff or volunteers prepare and hand out foods from a central location.



CLASSROOM

Have a team of volunteers prepare food and stock bins or have student volunteers deliver bins to classes and help hand out food.

Tip!

Have staff or volunteers sort items into bins and let teachers or student volunteers pick up and distribute to classes in the morning.



CENTRAL/ SIT-DOWN

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.

Tip!

Have staff or volunteers prepare the breakfast tables, and either set up food stations or serve the meal to students.

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. 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.
- Create a breakfast club binder to store all the important information about your program. The binder will ensure continuity in program operation, should the program coordinator or another key person be absent unexpectedly.

Recruiting New Volunteers

- Where can you source volunteers: Community organizations? Parents? Staff? Students? Visit [Involve Volunteers and the School Community](#) section on our School's Corner.
- Gear your recruitment strategy to the intended audience. Here are some ideas to support you in [recruiting volunteers](#).
- What will volunteers do? Here are some ideas on [volunteer roles](#) that might work for your program.
- Hold a volunteer orientation to go over how the program runs, safe food handling practices, safety guidelines, and volunteer responsibilities.
- Pay personal attention to your volunteers and establish relationships that lead to long-term commitment.
- Be present to help volunteers during their first few shifts and have fun!

Involving Student Volunteers

Students love to be an active part of their breakfast program! Consider the following:

Your program presents unique opportunities to engage and empower students by providing volunteer opportunities that promote life skill development, food and nutrition education, and leadership growth. They also provide opportunities for students to build positive relationships and self-esteem.



Engaging Student Interests

- Discuss your school's breakfast program during morning announcements and at school assemblies to promote your school's breakfast community.
- Invite students to share why they love their school's breakfast program or what they would like to see in the program using the Club's visual storytelling activity [Story Bites](#).
- Communicate the benefits and importance of school breakfast through the school newsletter and bulletin boards, highlighting the many reasons why students may want to volunteer for their breakfast club.

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.

Useful Tools from The Club

- How can you recruit student volunteers? Here are some suggestions from our [student volunteers](#) resource package.
- What can student volunteers help with? Check out these innovative [ideas](#) for incorporating student support into your program.
- Assign kitchen tasks according to students' abilities; see our example on tasks based on [food skill levels](#).
- Recruitment poster, commitment form, training guide and schedule calendar can be found on [Pg. 5-10](#) of the Student Volunteers resource package.
- Celebrate your student volunteers. Ideas of showing recognition and a sample recognition letter/certificate can be found on [Pg. 12-15](#) of the Student Volunteers resource package.

Celebrating Breakfast Champions

Breakfast champions are people who contribute to making the breakfast program possible in your school.

Ways to Celebrate Breakfast Champions

- Host an appreciation-themed breakfast
- Involve the whole school community by providing recognition to breakfast champions in your school newsletter and assemblies
- Have students make special thank you cards for breakfast champions
- Listen to your champions and actively seek their feedback
- Write a reference letter for your student volunteers
- [More recognition ideas can be found here](#)



Breakfast champions are everywhere; They might be a paid staff who oversees or coordinates the program, a teacher who volunteers their time, a student who helps before or after classes, a community volunteer who bigheartedly contributes their free time to the program, or a donor who kindly provides additional support. We want to celebrate you and help you to celebrate all the other breakfast champions in your school community!

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 vegetables and fruits like citrus or cucumbers.

Your program is an excellent place to introduce students to new foods. If you're highlighting interesting vegetables and fruits, adding more cultural foods to represent your student population, or trying any new recipes, consider these [tips on introducing new foods to your program](#).



Sample Menus & Hot Meal Tips

If you are planning to include more hot menu items in your program, here are a few general food safety tips to help you with the transition:

- Ensure that hot holding equipment is available to keep foods out of the temperature danger zone.
- Keep hot foods hot at or above 60 °C (140 °F).
- Begin with simple hot menu options and build up to more advanced recipes as the school year progresses.
- Freeze or consume leftovers within four days of cooking. Always reheat leftovers until steaming hot before eating.
- Start off small to avoid waste. Once your hot options are established you can prepare larger quantities ahead of time.

More food safety tips can be found on the [Public Health Agency of Canada's website](#)



Cold Menu Suggestions

- Overnight oats, with milk & topped with berries
- Whole wheat bagel with cream cheese, cucumber & carrot sticks
- Whole wheat wrap filled with homemade hummus & shredded carrot
- Whole wheat English muffin, boiled egg & orange slices

Hot Menu Suggestions

- Scrambled eggs, whole wheat toast & fresh fruit
- Breakfast burrito filled with rice, egg and beans
- Whole wheat pancakes, yogurt & fresh fruit
- Breakfast sandwiches, baked or fresh vegetables



Toolkit Tip: Mix up cold and hot serving items to create a menu that works for your school's breakfast club and reduce prep time. Visit our School Corner for 1-week [sample menus](#) and check our updated [Recipe Book](#) for easy hot and cold meal ideas to choose from!



Health and Hygiene

Tips for Success in Every Environment



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



Health & Safety Guidelines

Compliance with hygiene and safety measures and health guidelines issued by your **local government** is essential to the operation of a successful program. Your school authority may also have additional guidelines to follow. 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 designated staff members to oversee food distribution can assist in restricting exposure of food items.

Maximize Your Purchasing Power

Building a relationship with local business 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 store discounts for school programs!

Cost Saving Tips for Programs

With the rising cost of living impacting food costs across our breakfast programs, here are some helpful budgeting and food prep tips to minimize food waste and maximize your budget.

- Shop local flyers for deals and offers on items for your breakfast program.
 - Search for local gleaning organisations or speak to your local farmers. Gleaning is the act of collecting leftover crops from farmers' fields after they have been commercially harvested or on fields where it is not economically profitable to harvest.
 - Adapt existing recipes and switch out expensive items called for with what you have available, or a cheaper alternative.
 - Make smoothies, sauces, stews and compotes – an effective way to use leftover vegetables and fruits.
 - Freeze leftover vegetables and fruits, include them in a smoothie, sauce, stew, or compote.
 - Hold a theme day or celebration breakfast to use up random, donated, or fresh ingredients.
 - Find recipes that use up the ingredients you have leftover.
- Beans are a terrific way to add protein to your breakfast program and are cost-effective too when bought in bulk!
 - Buy reduced products in the supermarket and freeze them for later use.
 - Cook in batches and freeze ahead of time.
 - Plan your meals/breakfast ahead of time, make a list and stick to it!
 - Think about buying fresh vegetables and fruits that are in season as they are usually tastier and cheaper.
 - Consider budget-friendly options, like purchasing generic store brands over brand names.
 - Buy frozen: fruit is great for smoothies and breakfast with porridge, cereals, and plain yogurt.
 - Freeze bread and use what you need when you need it to avoid waste.
 - If you can, buy in bulk (especially shelf-stable goods like oats, cereals, and beans)!

Sample Purchasing Guide

ITEM	QUANTITIES	SERVING SIZE	50 CHILDREN	200 CHILDREN
GRAINS				
Whole Wheat Bread	15 slices per bag	1 slice	4 bags	14 bags
Whole Wheat Bagel	6 bagels per bag	1/2 bagel	5 bags	17 bags
Whole Wheat Crackers	30 per sleeve	5 crackers	9 sleeves	34 sleeves
PROTEIN				
Milk	4L jugs or bags	250 ml	4 jugs or bags	13 jugs or bags
Yogurt (100g/cup)	16 per package	100g	4 packages	13 packages
Babybel Cheese (20g)	32 per pack	20g	2 packs	7 packs
Block Cheese	525g	25g	3 blocks	10 blocks
Eggs	12 per dozen	1 egg	5 dozens	17 dozens
VEGETABLES & FRUITS				
Cucumbers	12 wedges per cucumber	3 wedges	13 cucumbers	50 cucumbers
Baby carrots	82 pieces per 2lb bag	5 pieces	3 bags	13 bags
Apples	50 per bag	1 whole	1 bag	4 bags
Bananas	100 per case	1 whole	½ case	2 cases
Grapes	10 servings per bag	10 grapes	5 bags	20 bags

The serving size in this guide is simply a recommendation. The actual serving size for your program can vary depending on students' ages (i.e. high school vs. elementary school) and hunger levels. We want to remind you that students are in the best position to determine how much food they need to satisfy their appetites.

When determining purchasing quantities for your breakfast program, the first step is to determine the approximate **number of students** you anticipate serving every day. This Purchasing Guide is a sample of how you might plan for a program serving 50 or 200 students. If you are planning to serve an item more than once a week, remember to multiply the purchasing quantities by the number of times you are planning to serve it.

You may also want to create a buffer for potential increases to attendance - items with longer shelf-life like non-perishables, yogurts, cheeses, and eggs, could be purchased in a slightly larger quantity to help prevent shortages.

💡 Toolkit Tip:

Look for the unit price when shopping. The unit price breaks the ticket price down to the cost per litre, kilogram, etc. and is usually found on the product price tag attached to the shelf. This information makes it easy to quickly compare different items to find which one has the best value.



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 or students regularly arrive late, 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 in your program. Figuring out what works best over the school year might take some time - be patient and know we're here to support you along the way!

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](#).



[Poster- How to Grab my Breakfast](#)



[Poster- My Breakfast Routine](#)



[Poster- High School- My Breakfast Routine](#)



[Printable Bin Label Templates](#)



Stay in Touch with The Club

Program Newsletter

The Club's 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.

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The Club's Team is Here for You!

Figuring out what works best for your school takes some time and effort. We hope this information will help you in your efforts to deliver a high-quality breakfast program that meets the needs of the students who count on you. 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 students!

