



There's More Than One Way to Serve Breakfast

TRADITIONAL BREAKFAST SERVICE

How does Traditional Breakfast Service Work?

Traditional breakfast service is the original service delivery method used in the School Breakfast Program. Reimbursable meals are provided exclusively within the school cafeteria to students before to the start of the instructional period. As such, this approach to school breakfast also employs a full serving line with a point of service payment system. In these respects, traditional breakfast service is highly similar to that of lunch service. One of the primary benefits of using traditional breakfast service is the flexibility that it provides to menu planners. Breakfasts may be served either hot or cold, and there are no special packaging considerations for any of the food items because students consume their meals on site. Furthermore, traditional breakfast service more readily allows for the use of the Offer Versus Serve option, which may help with cutting down on food waste. Lastly, trash disposal is both immediately present and convenient within the typical school cafeteria.

However, in many school settings, traditional breakfast service may be inconvenient for many students who would otherwise benefit from participating in the School Breakfast Program. As such, schools seeking to provide breakfast in this fashion are advised to carefully consider the accessibility of their breakfast program if they are providing breakfast exclusively in the cafeteria prior to the start of the instructional day.

Why Serve Traditional Breakfast?

When breakfast is served in the cafeteria, menu planners enjoy significantly more flexibility in terms of the serving methods and varieties of foods that are available to them. Hot menu items can easily be served alongside simpler items like cereals and fruits, and the use of a serving line allows students to choose from a variety of menu items rather than simply taking a prepackaged meal. Traditional breakfast service also requires the direct approval of fewer stakeholders, because meals are only being served and eaten in the school cafeteria.

When does Traditional Breakfast Service Work Best?

Depending on your school environment, serving a traditional breakfast may be the most viable service option. However, in many cases, employing at least one of the alternative service models might serve to expand access and increase the program's convenience to students.

Traditional breakfast service may be viable when:

- School buses arrive in a timely fashion, and early enough so that participating students may be served their breakfasts and eat them without feeling rushed
- The cafeteria is available and conveniently located
- There is high demand for hot foods at breakfast
- The school's counting and claiming apparatus does not support alternative service methods
- The school would consider offering traditional breakfast service in conjunction with one of the alternative service models, in an effort to further boost participation

BREAKFAST IN THE CLASSROOM

How does Breakfast in the Classroom Work?

Just as the name implies, students eat breakfast in the classroom at the beginning of the day or during morning break time. Breakfasts can be either hot or cold, depending on a school's facilities. Breakfast in the classroom can be offered in several ways:

- Students can stop by the cafeteria and pick up their breakfast in grab 'n' go bags, along with milk and then go to class.
- Breakfast can be delivered to the classroom on carts.
- A student representative can go to the cafeteria, pick up the breakfasts for those students eating breakfast, and take it back to the class in a cart or wagon.

Little instructional time is lost, as breakfast only takes 10 to 15 minutes for the student to eat. Many teachers use this time to take attendance, collect homework, deliver announcements or read to the class. Many teachers feel this is a valuable use of time and that their classes are more productive when students enjoy a healthy breakfast.

Students are responsible for clearing away their trash into trash bags provided by the cafeteria. Classroom representatives return the trash bags to the cafeteria or leave it in the hallway for the janitorial staff to collect.

Why Serve Breakfast in the Classroom?

When breakfast is served in the classroom, more students eat breakfast. Breakfast in the classroom is a great way to reach students who do not have time to eat before school, or who are not able to get to school in time for breakfast. In some cases, schools do not have space that is available or large enough to serve breakfast. Classrooms are familiar to students and offer a comfortable environment for eating. Breakfast in the classroom is convenient and can be prepared quickly with few staff.

When Does Breakfast in the Classroom Work Best?

Breakfast in the classroom works well in many different schools. Here are some qualities that make breakfast in the classroom successful:

- Students are in the same room at the start of each school day
- Buses arrive just before classes begin
- Teachers are supportive of breakfast and realize its importance to learning
- There is no space to serve breakfast
- The cafeteria is not centrally located

GRAB 'N' GO BREAKFAST

How Does a Grab 'N' Go Breakfast Work?

Grab 'N' Go breakfasts are packaged in paper bags, boxes or trays. Students pick up their breakfast and eat it when and where they want, within school guidelines. Food service staff pack reimbursable breakfasts into individual paper bags, usually the day before, or purchase prepackaged reimbursable breakfasts in boxes. These are served with milk the next morning. Breakfasts are usually cold, but can include hot items as well.

Grab 'N' Go breakfasts can be served first thing in the morning, between classes, or at a mid-morning break. Bags can be served from mobile service carts located in high traffic areas such as the school entrance, cafeteria, hallways, or near the gym. Students can take the breakfast and eat it outside, in the hall, in class, or in the cafeteria, depending on what the school decides is appropriate. The serving carts usually have a computer or point of service machine. A school

food service staff member operates the cart before school, during morning break, or between classes. There is a lot of flexibility with this method of serving breakfast, depending on the school's needs. Students are responsible for following the school's guidelines as to where and when they can eat and for throwing out their trash.

Why Serve a Grab 'N' Go Breakfast?

Grab 'N' Go breakfasts bring breakfast to the student, making it easier for them to choose to eat breakfast. Many middle and high school students are not hungry first thing in the morning or they want to hang out with friends. Grab 'N' Go breakfasts allow students the flexibility and choice to eat breakfast where and when they want. Grab 'N' Go breakfasts are convenient for food service staff and prepackaged breakfasts can take less time to prepare than traditional breakfasts. Because it is so easy and efficient for students to simply grab a bag, this method also allows schools to serve a breakfast more quickly to students.

When Does a Grab 'N' Go Breakfast Work Best?

Grab 'N' Go breakfasts work particularly well in middle and high schools because older students enjoy the flexibility and choice that Grab 'N' Go provides. Here are some other qualities where Grab 'N' Go breakfasts are likely to be successfully:

- The cafeteria or gym is crowded or not available for breakfast
- A large number of students have to eat in a short amount of time
- Buses arrive just before the start of classes
- Teachers and custodial staff are supportive of breakfast and realize its importance to learning
- Students rely on a la carte and convenience foods from outside the school for breakfast
- The cafeteria isn't located where students enter the building or hang out
- The breakfast menu can easily offer Grab 'N' Go options

USING MOBILE CARTS FOR GRAB 'N' GO BREAKFAST

How Do Breakfast Carts Work?

Breakfast carts act as mobile serving areas for breakfast. Instead of having the students come to the cafeteria for breakfast, breakfast is brought to students. Grab 'N' Go breakfast work best with a breakfast cart. Breakfast can be prepackaged; however, some schools offer choices from their breakfast cart. The general rule is the food has to be portable and easy to grab.

Schools typically put their breakfast carts in high traffic areas such as the main entrance, hallway, outside the front door, or near the gymnasium. Wherever the students hang out is where the cart is located. Carts usually have a computer or point of service machine. A school food service staff member operates the cart before school, during morning break, or between classes, depending on the school.

Carts can be purchased for a reasonable cost, but remember, you will have to also fund the portable milk coolers. Students are responsible for their trash and following school rules as to where they can eat their breakfast.

Why Use Breakfast Carts?

Schools find that by bringing breakfast to the students more students eat breakfast because they do not need to leave their friends to get breakfast. Breakfast carts mean that students do not need to choose between socializing and eating breakfast. Breakfasts served from a cart are convenient for food service staff and take less time to prepare than traditional breakfasts. Because breakfasts are Grab 'N' Go, breakfast carts allow schools to serve breakfast quickly to more students.

When Does Using a Breakfast Cart Work Best?

Using a breakfast cart works particularly well in middle and high schools, but it has also been successful in elementary schools. Here are some other qualities where using a breakfast cart is likely to be particularly successful:

- The cafeteria is located apart from where students hang out
- Environment service staff are supportive of serving breakfast at school
- The breakfast menu can easily be made into Grab 'N' Go breakfasts
- There is one main area of the school where students tend to gather
- The cafeteria tends to be congested or is too small to serve breakfast

BREAKFAST AFTER FIRST PERIOD

How Does Breakfast after First Period Work?

This model is also called a nutrition break or second chance breakfast. As the name implies, students eat breakfast during a break in the morning, usually between 9:00 am and 10:00 am. Reimbursable breakfasts are individually packaged in grab 'n' go bags. These are usually offered

from mobile carts or tables located in high traffic areas where there are many students. Breakfasts can be hot or cold, depending on school facilities. Foods that are easy to eat or hand held are popular and more convenient.

Many schools already offer a break from classes in the morning. By serving a reimbursable meal at this time, students who were not hungry first thing in the morning and skipped breakfast, or those who ate breakfast very early now have a chance to enjoy a healthy meal. Serving a reimbursable meal is a healthy choice compared to a la carte options.

Students are responsible for discarding their own trash. Extra trash cans in the area where students are between classes helps to ensure that trash is discarded properly.

Why Serve Breakfast after First Period?

When you offer a mid-morning nutrition break, more students eat breakfast. Many middle and high school students are not interested in eating breakfast first thing in the morning. A mid-morning nutrition break is a great way to reach these students as well as those who do not have time to eat before school, or who ate very early in the morning. In some cases, schools do not have available space to serve breakfast. Serving breakfast from carts outside of the cafeteria eliminates this problem. A mid-morning nutrition break can be prepared quickly with few staff.

When Does Breakfast after First Period Work Best?

Breakfast after first period works well in many different schools, the following qualities help make a breakfast after first period successful in schools:

- A milk break or other break in the morning already exists
- Buses arrive just before classes begin
- There is no time to serve breakfast before classes
- Students rely on vending machines for snacks in the morning
- Teachers are supportive of breakfast and realize its importance to learning
- There is no space to serve breakfast
- The cafeteria is not centrally located

BREAKFAST ON THE BUS

How does Breakfast on the Bus work?

Packaged or bagged breakfasts are served to students as they board their school bus every morning. Students then eat their breakfast while riding on the way to school. Breakfast service of this type should almost always feature cold meals, with particular attention given to how easily students will be able to eat a particular food item while on the go. Messy or easily spilled items are not advised, though fortunately, there are a number of menu choices and pre-packaged options available to school food service directors that are well suited to this method of providing breakfast service.

Allowing students to eat on the ride to school provides ample time for students to consume their meal at a leisurely pace in a social environment. Furthermore, this serving method “reclaims” time that would otherwise need to be spent in a school setting; either before the start of the day, or once the instructional day has commenced.

As with other non-traditional serving methods, students enjoying Breakfast on the Bus are responsible for disposing of their own waste. Trash disposal may be made available to students:

- while they are still on the bus
- as they exit the bus
- once they are inside the school

Why serve Breakfast on the Bus?

Sometimes, it is a challenge for students to arrive at school prior to the start of the instructional day in order to eat breakfast, as would be the case when providing traditional breakfast service. Serving breakfast in the classroom or after first period may bump up against lunch service if some or all children in the school take lunch before noon. Breakfast on the Bus service can alleviate these potential issues by reaching a large number of students in a setting where they will have adequate time to consume a meal, prior to the start of the instructional day. Furthermore, the use of pre-assembled cold meals can reduce the preparation burden for food service staff, and reduce the operating costs of and the logistical demands on the school cafeteria.

When does Breakfast on the Bus work best?

- Students spend an adequate amount of time (15 minutes or more) on the school bus every morning
- The busing schedule leaves inadequate time for students to enjoy traditional breakfast service at school
- Agreements with instructional/food service/janitorial staff have not yet been established for supporting other alternative breakfast service methods, such as Breakfast in the Classroom
- The busing service is amenable to establishing a Breakfast on the Bus arrangement
- Breakfasts can be prepared by food service staff ahead of time and delivered to the bus
- Meal payment system does not require cash at point of service