Offering Smoothies to Boost School Breakfast Participation

Best practices used by Pennsylvania School Breakfast Expansion Grantees

Recipients of the Pennsylvania School Breakfast Expansion Grant have reported increased breakfast participation by offering smoothies. Smoothies can improve fruit and vegetable consumption, reduce waste, and entice students with this popular and versatile menu option.

Not enough time to make smoothies? Try these ideas:

- Pre-measure and prep ingredients a day ahead, then blend and portion in the morning.
- Remove frozen fruit from the freezer when staff first arrive, so it thaws a bit before blending for service.
- Adjust the work schedule for staff to start earlier on days when smoothies will be served.
- Offer smoothies for breakfast on days when the food offered at lunch takes less time to prepare.
- For bulk preparation (50-60 at once) use an immersion blender in food safe buckets then pour into pitchers for serving.
- Some schools report success making, portioning, and storing smoothies in the refrigerator or freezer the day prior, then removing them from cold storage when the first staff person arrives in the morning.
- Limit smoothies to one or two flavors per day to simplify preparation.

Smoothies are a great way to use fresh, frozen, and canned fruits & vegetables!

- Don't throw that away! Use older/overripe fresh produce in smoothies to reduce waste and save money.
- Frozen fruit from USDA Foods is great for smoothies. Partially thaw frozen fruit for easier blending.
- Need to use up some canned fruit? Freezing canned fruits like peaches works well. Drain, lay out on sheet pans, freeze, and bag for later use.
- Tons of applesauce? Consider blender-less smoothies!

How can I build excitement around my smoothie program?

- Younger students love brightly colored straws! Use secure lids to avoid spillage.
- Small touches, like a dab of whipped topping for a "milkshake look" can entice younger students. Older students may like trendy flavors and touches, like chai spices with a cinnamon stick.
- Conduct taste tests to identify favorite flavors. Word of mouth can really help!
- Offer seasonal smoothies for variety.
- Use creative names for the smoothies. Ask students to help with naming them.

Did you know?

- Smoothies are great for Grab 'n Go or Breakfast in the Classroom because they do not create crumbs for teachers and custodial staff!
- An ice bath can keep portioned smoothies cold for service.
- Smoothies may count as a full reimbursable breakfast with careful planning. USDA's *Offering Smoothies as Part of Reimbursable School Meals* is a must-read resource for menu planners.
- The American Dairy Association can be a resource for smoothie supplies and recipes.