

## Background Information for Teachers

- There is a great deal of research about students eating breakfast and school success. Students who eat breakfast:
  - have better test scores
  - make fewer mistakes
  - are more creative
  - are better able to concentrate
  - are less likely to miss class
  - get in trouble less often
- A great breakfast includes foods from at least 3 food groups. Children do not always have a choice. If they do have a choice, encourage students to choose whole grains, fruit and low-fat milk.
- Protein foods are also a good choice for breakfast.
- Low-fat milk is a healthy option for breakfast. Sugary drinks (pop, juice, sports drinks) add extra calories and can harm teeth.
- Healthy breakfast choices will vary from family to family. Being aware of children’s ethnic and cultural background can help you know how to best teach them about healthy breakfast choices.
- Lead by example—children make more healthy choices when they see adults including healthy habits in their lives. Students may not be eating breakfast with you but you can let them know you enjoy healthy foods in the morning to help you start your day and give you the energy you need.

## GOALS

Children will know it is important to eat breakfast.

## Healthy Habits Breakfast throughout the day

### At Meals and Snacks

Help create conversations at meals and snacks that reinforce healthy food choices. During the meal, talk with children about the kinds of food they are eating and what foods they like to eat. Be nonjudgmental in your responses, adding your own comments to extend children’s thinking. “Some people do like candy. I also love apples—they are very crunchy.” Conversation can include what foods families eat for breakfast at home.

Model healthy habits: If breakfast is served in your classroom model eating healthy foods with your students.

### Centers

If you use model foods in **dramatic play**, be sure to have many examples of healthy breakfast choices. Have separate baskets for fruits, vegetables, protein, grains and dairy. Collect empty containers from your families to include culturally-relevant healthy breakfast foods and add these to your shelves. Find

well-illustrated cookbooks in languages that represent the children in your classroom and add these to your home center. Have children help you develop a **Breakfast Restaurant** in Dramatic Play.

## Transitions

Sing one of your songs/chants about breakfast.

As you dismiss students from circle time ask them to identify a healthy breakfast food.

## Home-School Connection

**Information to families:** Send home a newsletter or class letter that gives parents the information that you are teaching children about breakfast and tells them about what you will be studying. Also, keep families informed of your daily activities with daily take-home cards.

**Families contributing to the classroom:** Let families know ways they can help such as 1) writing on a 3X5 card that you have sent home about their favorite family breakfast, 2) sending in any empty boxes or other containers of healthy breakfast foods they eat at home 3) volunteering to lead a breakfast cooking project in the classroom (your classroom provides the ingredients and the parent provides any special tools and the cooking knowledge.)

**Homework:** 1) Use the Big Book “Did You Know...about Breakfast?” as a template for each family to create their own book page about what they eat for breakfast. Ask them to draw or write in the page provided. Consider sending home crayons or colored pencils. 2) Use the book Bread, Bread, Bread as a template for creating book pages. 3) Prepare an “interview sheet” and give children practice at asking their parents “what did you eat for breakfast when you were little?” Have the children draw a picture of what the parents answered and bring it back to school.

**Families at School:** Create a consensus board around breakfast. We know children are influenced daily by messages about what to eat. Often these messages come from the media and are not always around healthy choices. Creating a consensus board telling children and families that you make healthy choices can have a strong influence on their decisions. This is an area in your classroom or hallway that provides a message to children and families about healthy habits. You can change the theme as the school year progresses. Healthy breakfast choices, favorite fruit, vegetable and exercise are all suggestions.