

Program Toolkit

Tools To Help Set Your Breakfast Program Table



Table of Contents



- 03. Program Quick Start Checklist
- 04. Restarting your Breakfast Program
- 05. Program Delivery Models
- 06. Staff & Volunteer Roles
- 07. Welcoming Volunteers
- 08. Involving Student Volunteers
- 09. Celebrate Breakfast Champions
- 10. What's on the Menu?
- 11. Sample Menu & Hot Meal Tips
- 12. Health and Hygiene
- 13. Maximize Your Purchasing Power
- 14. Cost Saving Tips for Programs
- 15. Sample Purchasing Guide
- 16. Reminders for Successful Programming
- 17. Printable Program Resources
- 18. Stay in Touch with The Club

Program Quick Start Checklist

Review this checklist to help set up your program this year!

Has your program considered...

- ☐ *If your school authority or provincial food service guidelines have changed this year?*
- ☐ *A suitable location to run the program and how food will be prepared?*
- ☐ *The program service model/how food will be served?*
- ☐ *What will be served on the menu and how you will accommodate different cultural, nutrition & dietary needs?*
- ☐ *Where and how foods will be purchased or ordered?*
- ☐ *What equipment & supplies are needed to run the program efficiently?*
- ☐ *A program budget?*
- ☐ *Advertising the breakfast program in the school and the wider school community?*
- ☐ *How to minimize waste?*
- ☐ *Making the program accessible for all students?*
- ☐ *Who fill each role? Is student and/or community volunteer recruitment required?*

Restarting Your Breakfast Program

As you restart your program each year, 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 an 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 where to put used tableware.

Changes to Food Options

- Make food choices that align with local health, safety, and nutrition guidelines.
- Notice your student population and ensure cultural foods are represented in your menu to encourage comfort in participation.
- 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 19!

Program Delivery Models

Program delivery models can be assessed and adapted each year. Schools may implement one model, or a combination of service models depending on the capacity and needs of the school. Three commonly used program delivery models are:

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.
- A great option for recruiting student volunteers!

Classroom Model



- Students eat meals in the classroom
- Convenient way to reach more students and increase attendance.
- 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.

Central or Sit-Down Model



- Breakfast is served in the 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.
- Community volunteers can be involved in preparation and service.

Toolkit Tip: 💡

Adopting multiple models in your breakfast program can help 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.



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

Tip!

Assign 1-2 designated staff or volunteers to pack up 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 1 staff or volunteer sort items into bins, and let teachers 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!

1-2 staff or volunteers can prepare the space, portion & lay out food or serve 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

If you are 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

- Host a “welcome back” session for volunteers. Thank them for their commitment and review program details and changes for the year. Review new health/safety guidelines that might affect roles.
- Determine the best way to contact your volunteers – a newsletter? WhatsApp? Email? School announcement?
- Review what volunteer roles will look like and who can do what. Share clear expectations.
- 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

- How can you recruit volunteers? Community organizations? Parents? Staff? Students?
- Focus your recruitment strategy to the intended audience.
- What will volunteers do? Be able to share the various roles and duties a volunteer can be involved in.
- Hold a volunteer orientation to share 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 shift and have fun!

Visit the [Volunteers and School Community](#) section of the School’s Corner where you can find tips for recruiting volunteers, useful posters, role outlines and more!

Involving Student Volunteers

Students love to get involved! Student volunteer opportunities allow your school to engage and empower students, promote life skill development, increase nutrition education, and encourage leadership growth while strengthening self-esteem.

Engaging Student Interests

- Discuss your school's breakfast program during morning announcements and at school assemblies to promote your school's breakfast program. It's a great opportunity to share food facts about the day's breakfast!
- 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](#) found on the [Educational Activities](#) section of the School's Corner.
- 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.

Useful Tools from The Club

There are a variety of resources to help schools recruit and manage student volunteers. Check out the [Volunteers and School Community](#) section of the School's Corner to find our Student Volunteer Resource Kit that has everything you need!



Celebrating Breakfast Champions

Breakfast champions are people who contribute to making the breakfast program possible in your school. They might be student or community volunteers or be staff that dedicate time every day to ensuring your program is a success.

Ways to celebrate Breakfast Champions throughout the school year.

- Host an appreciation-themed breakfast any time during the school year
- 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 in the [Breakfast in Unison Webpage](#) and in the [Volunteers and School Community](#) section of the School's Corner.



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, visit the [Nutrition section](#) on the Club's website.



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: Choose both cold and hot foods to create a menu that works for your school's breakfast club and reduces prep time. Visit the [Nutrition section](#) of the School's Corner section for sample menus and our updated [Recipe Book](#) that includes many 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



Provincial Health & Safety Guidelines

Compliance with hygiene and safety measures and health guidelines issued by your **provincial or territorial 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.

You can find documents and information about Health and Hygiene in the [Safe Food Handling](#) section of the School's Corner.

Maximize Your Purchasing Power

Building relationships with your local grocers can support program sustainability and may help you save on costs and time.

1

Set Up an Account

If you receive support from the Club via gift cards or egg coupons, talk to your local grocer about setting up an account for your school. This would support your shopping team to be able to pick up grocery orders and pay for them automatically.

2

Try Special Orders

Many grocery stores allow special orders, where the store will prepare and pack your order for pick up. This can reduce shopping time and ensure the foods you need are available. Call or visit your local store to ask about special orders.

3

Seek Additional Supports

Establishing relationships with local store managers and community members can help you identify additional community support, discounts or food donations. 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. Group purchasing can help build community relationships, expand your network, save on shopping time and reduce food costs.



Toolkit Tip: Setting up an account at a grocer or asking about special orders would be a great time to ask about store discounts for school programs! Check for available rewards programs at your local stores to collect points and save more.

Cost Saving Tips for Programs

Here are some helpful budgeting and food prep tips to minimize food waste and maximize your budget.

- Scan local flyers for deals and offers on items for your breakfast program.
- Search for local gleaning organizations or speak to your local farmers. Gleaning involves collecting leftover crops from farmers' fields after they have been commercially harvested or on fields where it is not economically profitable to harvest. It's a great class activity!
- Adapt existing recipes that have costly food items. Switch them out for a less expensive alternative. This can be done once or twice a week and can be a great way to introduce new foods.
- Make smoothies, sauces, stews and compotes – an effective way to use leftover vegetables and fruits.
- Freeze, freeze, freeze! Breads, leftover vegetables and fruits are great to store and put in the freezer. Plan to fresh fruits and vegetables in smoothies, sauces, stews, or compotes.
- Hold a theme day or celebration breakfast to use donated and fresh ingredients.
- Beans are a terrific way to add protein to your breakfast program and are cost-effective especially when purchased in bulk!
- Buy recently reduced foods in the supermarket and freeze them for later use. Perfectly imperfect fruits are often discounted and are great for smoothies and freezing.
- Cook in batches and freeze ahead of time. This is a great way to seek community support for batch cooking parties!
- Plan your meals/breakfast ahead of time. Make a grocery 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 name items.
- Buy frozen: fruit is great for smoothies and breakfast with porridge, cereals, and plain yogurt.
- 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 how much food you need for your program, the first step is to estimate the **number of students** you anticipate serving each day.

This Sample Purchasing Guide shows how you might plan for a program serving 50 or 200 students. If you plan to serve an item more than once a week, remember to multiply the purchasing quantities by the number of times you plan to serve it.

You may also want to create a buffer for potential attendance increases - 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 when you restart your program in the Fall. 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!



Stay in Touch with The Club

Programs Newsletter

Vitamin C, the Programs 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. To access the latest issues, visit the **Newsletters** section of our website.

School's Corner

The **School's Corner** is a great place for volunteers and school administrations to look for extra information they may need. It contains a wide range of resources that will help you operate your breakfast program.

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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 kids!



Printable Program Resources

This selection of posters and templates is available to support and reinforce hygiene and food safety practices throughout the year. To find printable versions of each, visit our [School Corner](#).



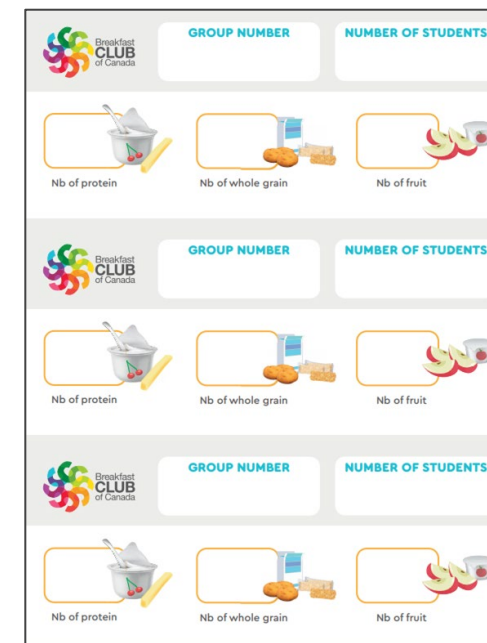
[Poster- How to Grab my Breakfast](#)



[Poster- My Breakfast Routine](#)



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



[Printable Bin Label Templates](#)