

Meals in the Classroom

Meals consumed in the classroom reduce large group gatherings and can be a good way to promote physical distance. There are varied methods of service that may be used for meals in the classroom. Sponsors may use one method for all meals or a hybrid of different methods.



Classroom Service

Meals are served and consumed in the classroom.

Focus on the Details

Meal Quality and Student Experience Priorities

- Use foods that are in season and keep meal appeal and presentation in mind.
- Offer vegetarian and culturally appropriate menu items often.

Considerations When Serving Both Lunch and Breakfast in the Classroom

- Increased waste removal
- Menu variety
- Training staff to perform meal service tasks

Creative Staffing Solutions

- Consider enlisting help of adult volunteers and other staff, but keep in mind what training would be needed.

Timing Considerations

- Develop a written and routine process for sanitizing all equipment
- Create a plan which outlines the steps for the prep time of each meal option.

Delivery and Packaging Ideas

- Use a mobile kiosk near the classroom.
- Run mobile serving lines with trays down the hallway.
- Distribute prepackaged grab-and-go breakfasts at the school entrance for students to take to their classroom.
- Create multiple lunch pick-up points throughout the school or cafeteria to reduce bottlenecks in serving times.
- Package entire meals in one container instead of individually wrapped (IW) to cut down on waste and reduce standing in line for meals.
- Create a plan for how meals will be delivered including staff assigned to distribute meals, collect meals not distributed, service equipment, and trash.
- Identify strategies for protecting staff and students, such as sneeze guards and hand sanitizer stations.



Compliance Check - Before **performing** any child nutrition tasks, make sure all staff, including teachers, are trained on how to correctly count and document reimbursable meals served in the classroom. If teachers are performing any operational tasks related to meal service, they must also complete civil rights training. [Review the NSLP FAQ to learn more about operational tasks.](#)

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Classroom Service Cont.

Focus on the Details

Advanced Ordering Options

- Consider the use of a meal ordering system, paper or electronic
- Create a plan for how and when meals orders will be submitted, completed and served to students.
- Determine what equipment is needed for an ordering system
 - Cooling or heating equipment for transport
 - Label maker to mark orders
 - Tray sealer to safely transport meals

Develop a plan for ensuring the accuracy of counting and claiming

- What are the actions needed to ensure accurate counting and claiming?
- Who will be assigned to complete each task?
- What resources are needed to complete counting and claiming? For a manual counting system? For an electronic system? For a combined manual and electronic system?
- What strategies will be used to verify all counts?
- What strategies will be used to prevent overt identification?
- What charge policies need to be modified to meet the needs of modified meal service?

Tips to Provide to Teachers and Teacher Aides

- Consider utilizing students to assist with cleaning or order-taking.
- Alternate the order of meal delivery to avoid having the same student always receiving their food last or first.

Menu Ideas and Suggestions

- Collaborate with Partners
 - Cycle menus offer a great way to think seasonally, plan, and keep variety a priority.
 - Work with distributors to keep meal appeal a priority and express your needs and wants clearly.
 - Use USDA Foods to offset some of the sales lost.