

Supporting Healthy Lunch Eating In Schools



Studies show that most students need at least 20 minutes to eat their lunch. With less time, they might not eat enough or get the nutrients they need.

Benefits



Improve diet quality, such as increased fruits and vegetables



Improve overall happiness and well-being



Improve behaviour and focus



Reduce food waste

Recommendations for Healthy Lunch Practices

Scheduling



- Provide at least **20 minutes for seated lunch** (excluding transitions)
- Use **bells or announcements** to signal transitions
- Have **consistent lunch duration and structure** across grades
- **Coordinate food programs** with lunch schedules to maximize seated eating time

Mealtime Experience



- Adopt a “**Play First**” model to support appetite and calmness
- **Minimize screen** use during eating to support social connection and mindful eating
- Provide **eating areas** for students (e.g. multipurpose rooms, outdoor spaces, classroom setups)
- Provide **supervision** that maintains a calm, quiet eating experience that increases safety.

Engagement and Evaluation



- **Engage the school community** in planning and evaluating lunch practices
- **Track lunch time practices** as part of school improvement plans or wellness goals

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Factors Impacting School Lunch Time

