

# Lesson 7: How Smart is Your Lunchroom?





# Lesson 7: How Smart is Your Lunchroom?

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## Background Information

In the 2013-2014 school year, California schools served nearly 560 million lunches to children, and 280 million breakfasts as part of the **National School Lunch** and **School Breakfast Programs**. The breakfasts, lunches, snacks, and suppers served as part of these programs must meet state and federal nutrition requirements and include whole grains, fruits, vegetables, protein, and low-fat dairy. However, it can sometimes be challenging to encourage students to choose and eat the healthier food choices from the lunch lines. Fortunately, there are many things school nutrition personnel can do to help encourage students to select and eat the healthier food options.



A variety of factors influence our food choices (refer to Lesson 6). Though some of the factors that contribute to our decision-making may be very subtle, they have a large impact over time. The **Smarter Lunchrooms Movement** is a method to positively affect children's food choice behaviors by making small changes within the school lunchroom environment. This movement, which began at Cornell University in 2009, uses sustainable, low-cost or no-cost solutions that help to guide student choices. Many of the tactics have been used in restaurants. For example, research has demonstrated that the order of items in a buffet can influence what an individual chooses, with the first item being at a distinct advantage. Restaurants use this information to lower costs, by placing less expensive items first. In school lunch, this placement may be used to encourage students to choose more fruits or vegetables, or to choose plain milk instead of flavored milk.



Research has also demonstrated that when students are able to make a choice, they are far more likely to consume the foods they've chosen. Using research results, the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement subtly guides student selections, which they are in turn more likely to consume because they freely made the choice.

Key components of the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement are designed to target specific areas, such as promoting vegetables and salads, increasing sales of reimbursable meals, and promoting an entrée of the day.

## Concepts and Vocabulary

**Creating School Synergies:** This Smarter Lunchrooms Movement component refers to creating an inviting lunchroom through signage, a pleasant atmosphere, and student involvement.

**Entrée of the Day:** This Smarter Lunchrooms Movement component refers to the promotion of a targeted entrée each day using creative, descriptive names, as well as placement on the line. The targeted entrée is a way to encourage the selection of new menu items, as well as selection of nutrient-dense menu items.

**Focusing on Fruit:** This Smarter Lunchrooms Movement component refers to methods in the placement and serving of fruit to increase exposure and visibility, in order to promote selection and consumption.

**Increasing Sales of Reimbursable Meals:** This Smarter Lunchrooms Movement component encourages students to choose reimbursable meals over competitive foods. Some of the techniques include moving competitive foods behind a counter so that students have to ask for them, and creating reimbursable grab-and-go meals.

**Moving More White Milk:** This Smarter Lunchrooms Movement component encourages students to consider plain milk as a beverage choice by using techniques such as including 1/3 or more plain milk on the serving line, or by placing plain milk in the front of the cooler.

**Promoting Vegetables and Salad:** This Smarter Lunchrooms Movement component refers to methods that are used to make vegetable offerings more appealing to students, through creative names and increased visibility.

**Smarter Lunchrooms Movement:** A method to change children's food choice behaviors through the application of evidence-based, lunchroom-focused principles that promote healthful eating.



## 7.1: Learning Activity

### Getting Ready

#### Time Required

40 minutes

#### Materials Needed

(\*Materials provided in the curriculum)

- ☐ Flip chart paper
- ☐ Markers, pens, or pencils
- ☐ \**Smarter Lunchrooms Movement* (Appendix 7A)
- ☐ \**Food of the Day Cards* (Appendix 7B)
- ☐ Craft supplies, such as construction paper, scissors, glue sticks, tape, glue, etc.

Optional:

- ☐ \**Focus on Food Lesson 7* (PowerPoint)
- ☐ Computer
- ☐ PowerPoint Projector

#### Preparation

1. Prepare copies of the *Smarter Lunchrooms Movement* Handout (Appendix 7A), one copy for each group.
2. Prepare copies of the *Food of the Day Cards* (Appendix 7B), so that each group has a different card.

**Facilitator Tip:** If there are more than six groups, it is acceptable for some groups to have the same *Food of the Day Card* (Appendix 7B).

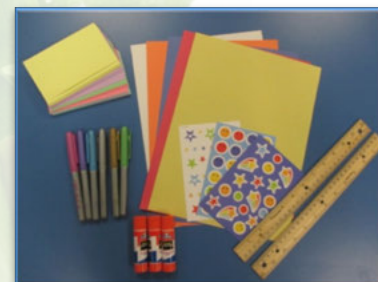
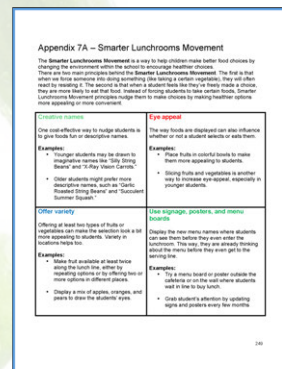
3. Prepare a table with craft supplies that participants may use to create their poster.
4. Organize the class into small groups of 2 to 4 participants.

**Facilitator Tip:** These groups can be the same groups formed in previous lessons.

5. Provide each group with a sheet of flip chart paper and markers, pens, or pencils to answer opening questions/prompts.

Optional:

6. Before participants arrive, connect laptop to projector. Load *Focus on Food Lesson 7* (PowerPoint).





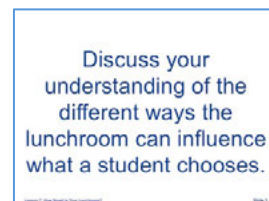
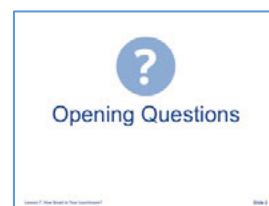
## Opening Questions/Prompts

1. **Say:** Let's get started with Lesson 7 – How Smart Is Your Lunchroom! To begin, I'd like everyone to discuss some opening questions within your group. Once you've discussed the prompts within your groups, we will come back together as a class and discuss your thoughts and responses as a whole. **(Slide 2)**  
  
The first prompt I'd like you to discuss within your groups is:
  - Discuss your understanding of the different ways the lunchroom can influence what a student chooses. **(Slide 3)**
2. **Do:** Allow 2 to 3 minutes for groups to discuss the prompts.
3. **Say:** Now I'd like you to discuss within your groups the next prompt:
  - Explain what you think about when you hear the term "Smarter Lunchrooms Movement". **(Slide 4)**
4. **Do:** Allow 2 to 3 minutes for groups to discuss the prompts.
5. **Say:** As a class, let's discuss what you talked about in your groups. What were some of your thoughts on the first prompt, "Discuss your understanding of the different ways the lunchroom can influence what a student chooses"?
6. **Do:** Allow about a minute for participants to share their thoughts on this topic with the class.

**Facilitator Tip:** This sharing phase is a great opportunity to begin to build rapport with participants. Some statements and questions to help engage participants at this phase are: "Tell me more about that"; "What do you mean by..."; "How is that motivating you?"; "Did anyone else write this?"; "That's a very popular opinion." At this stage, it is important that you do not correct misconceptions. Instead, make note of them, and if they are not corrected organically through the lesson, address them briefly at the end of the lesson.

7. **Say:** What were some of your thoughts on the second prompt, "Explain what you think about when you hear the term "Smarter Lunchrooms Movement"?"
8. **Do:** Allow about a minute for participants to share their thoughts on this topic with the class.

**Facilitator Tip:** Continue to make note of misconceptions as they arise. Assure participants that there will be more time to discuss these topics at the end of the lesson.



## Procedure (Experiencing)

1. **Say:** Now that we've completed our opening discussion, we'll start on the activity for this lesson. This activity involves the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement.
  - You will receive a handout that is about methods that are being used in schools to guide student choices in the lunchroom.



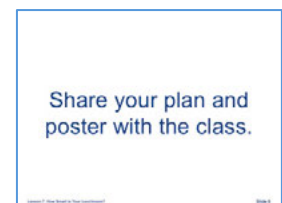


- Read through the handout within your groups. It might help to take turns reading aloud. **(Slide 6)**
2. **Do:** Hand out a copy of the *Smarter Lunchrooms Movement* Handout (Appendix 7A), one per group. Allow the groups a few minutes to read through the handout.
  3. **Say:** Now that you've read a little bit about the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement, you're going to put that into action. Your task is to make a plan that will increase sales of a menu item.  
**(Slide 7)**
    - Each group will receive a card with a type of school (Elementary, High School, or Middle School) and a food you will need to make a plan to promote.
    - This plan should use at least three different Smarter Lunchrooms techniques described in the handout you just read.
    - As part of that plan, you will need to make a poster, using the craft supplies provided, to promote your item.
    - At the end, all the groups will share their plan and poster, and how it incorporates different Smarter Lunchrooms Movement techniques.
  4. **Do:** Provide each group with a *Food of the Day Card* (Appendix 7B).
- Facilitator Tip:** Encourage participants to use inspiration from other sources than the handout, such as previous lessons, their own schools, restaurants, or advertisements. Some suggested prompts:
- Describe how you are going about making your plan to increase sales of this food.
  - Explain how you're using what you learned in the handout.
  - Explain how you're drawing inspiration from past experience.



## Activity Wrap-Up (Sharing, Processing, and Generalizing)

1. **Say:** Let's have each group share their plan and poster with the class, and we'll discuss how your plans use different elements of the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement. **(Slides 8 and 9)**
2. **Do:** Follow the group's line of thinking, and if necessary, ask more targeted questions.
  - Explain how you went about developing your plan and poster to reflect the information you learned about the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement.
  - Discuss the similarities and differences in the plans and posters that were presented.
  - Explain what was similar and different about the plans and posters that were for elementary schools compared to the ones for high schools.



- Explain how you already use some of the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement techniques, and how the students seem to respond.

**Facilitator Tip:** If there are any misconceptions remaining in this phase of the lesson, you should address these now.



## Concept and Term Discovery/Introduction

Over the course of the lesson, participants should be able to identify the following concepts:

- The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement suggests key principles for positively affecting student food choices. School nutrition staff can use Smarter Lunchrooms Movement tactics to encourage healthy behaviors.
- Their lunchrooms may already be using some of these tactics.





## 7.2: Expanding Knowledge

### Getting Ready



#### Time Required

10 minutes



#### Materials Needed

(\*Materials provided in the curriculum)

- ☐ \**Focus on Food Lesson 7* (PowerPoint)
- ☐ PowerPoint Projector
- ☐ Computer



#### Preparation

1. Connect laptop to projector. Load *Focus on Food Lesson 7* PowerPoint.
2. Queue the PowerPoint presentation to Slide 10.



### Procedure

1. Go through the Expanding Knowledge presentation slide by slide. The following script is available for use if you so choose.



## Expanding Knowledge

Lesson 7: How Smart is Your Lunchroom?

Slide 10

Slide 10

Let's review some of the concepts we learned during Lesson 7, How Smart is Your Lunchroom?

## Smarter Lunchrooms Movement

- Started at Cornell University in 2009.
- Uses sustainable, low-cost or no-cost solutions to help guide students.
- Focuses on encouraging healthy choices, increasing participation, and decreasing plate waste.

Lesson 7: How Smart is Your Lunchroom?

Slide 11

Let's start with some basic facts about the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement. Originating at Cornell University in 2009, the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement uses sustainable, low-cost or no-cost solutions to help guide students. It also focuses on encouraging healthy choices, increasing participation, and decreasing plate waste.

### Slide 11

## "Nudging" Food Choices

- The environment can subconsciously nudge our decision.
- Smarter Lunchrooms Movement uses the environment to encourage, or nudge, students into making healthier choices.

Lesson 7: How Smart is Your Lunchroom?

Slide 12

One tactic the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement is "nudging". This tactic is based on the fact that the environment can subconsciously nudge our decision. The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement uses the environment to encourage, or nudge students into making healthier choices.

### Slide 12

## Smarter Lunchrooms Movement Principles

- Increase convenience
- Improve visibility
- Enhance taste expectations
- Use suggestive selling
- Manage portion sizes
- Set smart pricing strategies

Lesson 7: How Smart is Your Lunchroom?

Slide 13

The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement Principles include: Increasing convenience; Improving visibility; Enhancing taste expectations; Using suggestive selling; Managing portion sizes; and Setting smart pricing strategies. Let's go over these in more detail.

### Slide 13

### Increase Convenience

- By making healthy options quicker and easier, students will be more likely to choose them.
- Put healthy choices in easy-to-reach spots.
- Create a healthy foods convenience or grab-and-go line.

Lesson 7: How Smart is Your Lunchroom?

Slide 14

Slide 14

You can increase convenience by making healthy options quicker and easier to access. This way, students will be more likely to choose them. You may also consider putting healthy choices in easy-to-reach spots. Creating a healthy foods convenience or grab-and-go line is another Smarter Lunchrooms Movement tip that can help increase convenience. Can anyone share how you're using this principle in your lunchroom, or how you could in the future?

[Pause to allow responses from the class.]

### Improve Visibility

- Place foods you want students to choose front and center.
- Use attractive bowls or baskets
- Place fruits and vegetables at eye level of students.
- Make fruits and vegetables available at more than one spot on the line.

Lesson 7: How Smart is Your Lunchroom?

Slide 15

Slide 15

Some Smarter Lunchrooms Movement Tips that help improve visibility include placing foods you want students to choose front and center; using attractive bowls or baskets; placing fruits and vegetables at eye level of students; and making fruits and vegetables available at more than one spot on the line. Can anyone share how you're using this principle in your lunchroom, or how you could in the future?

[Pause to allow responses from the class.]

### Enhance Taste Expectations

- If we expect food to taste good, it often will.
- One way to increase taste expectations is through appealing names.
- Which of these sounds tastier?
  - Salad
  - or
  - Zesty Southwest Salad

Lesson 7: How Smart is Your Lunchroom?

Slide 16

Slide 16

Enhancing taste expectations can also help nudge students into making healthier choices. It is well known that if we expect food to taste good, it often will. One way to increase taste expectations is through appealing names. Which of these sounds tastier? Salad or Zesty Southwest Salad?

[Pause to allow responses from the class.]

Can anyone share how you're using this principle in your lunchroom, or how you could in the future?

[Pause to allow responses from the class.]

### Use Suggestive Selling

- Use visual cues and verbal prompts to encourage students to make healthy selections.
- Try verbal prompts, such as “Did you know you get fruit free with your meal?”
- Use colorful, eye-catching signage, menu boards, and name cards.
- Promote the next day’s menu with signs.

Lesson 7: How Smart is Your Lunchroom?

Slide 17

Slide 17

The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement also advises that you use suggestive selling in the lunchroom. For example, you can use visual cues and verbal prompts to encourage students to make healthy selections. Try verbal prompts, such as “Did you know you get fruit free with your meal?” You can also use colorful, eye-catching signage, menu boards, and name cards. Another idea is to promote the next day’s menu with signs. Can anyone share how you’re using this principle in your lunchroom, or how you could in the future?

[Pause to allow responses from the class.]

### Manage Portion Sizes

- The larger the serving utensil, the larger the portion.
- Try using smaller scoops or spoons for foods you want children to select less of.
- For example, on the salad bar use a smaller scoop for croutons than for green peas.

Lesson 7: How Smart is Your Lunchroom?

Slide 18

Slide 18

Another Smarter Lunchrooms tip is to manage portion sizes. The larger the serving utensil, the larger the portion. Try using smaller scoops or spoons for foods you want children to select less of. For example, on the salad bar use a smaller scoop for croutons than for green peas. Can anyone share how you’re using this principle in your lunchroom, or how you could in the future?

[Pause to allow responses from the class.]

### Set Smart Pricing Strategies

- Pricing can be a large influence on choice.
- Make healthier choices cheaper, or offer combo deals.
- For example, offer a two-for-one fruit deal.

Lesson 7: How Smart is Your Lunchroom?

Slide 19

Slide 19

Another Smarter Lunchrooms tip is to set smart pricing strategies. Pricing can be a large influence on choice. Make healthier choices cheaper, or offer combo deals. For example, offer a two-for-one fruit deal. Can anyone share how you’re using this principle in your lunchroom, or how you could in the future?

[Pause to allow responses from the class.]

What are some other strategies we can use to encourage healthy choices and increase participation?

Lesson 7: How Smart is Your Lunchroom?

Slide 20

Slide 20

What are some other strategies we can use to encourage healthy choices and increase participation?

[Pause to allow responses from the class.]





## 7.3: Goal Setting Activity

### Getting Ready



#### Time Required

10 minutes



#### Materials Needed

(\*Materials provided in the curriculum)

- ☐ \**Goal Setting: How Smart is Your Lunchroom* (Appendix 7C)
- ☐ \**Smarter Lunchrooms Self-Assessment Scorecard* (Appendix 7D)

Optional:

- ☐ \**Focus on Food Lesson 7 Newsletter* (Appendix 7E)
- ☐ Computer
- ☐ PowerPoint Projector

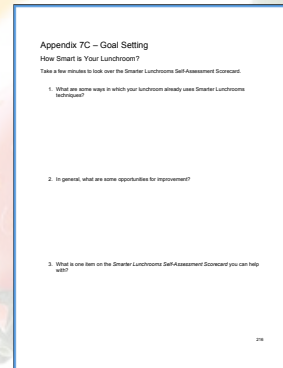


#### Preparation

1. Make copies of the *Goal Setting: How Smart is Your Lunchroom* Handout (Appendix 7C), one for each participant.
2. Make copies of the *Smarter Lunchrooms Self-Assessment Scorecard* (Appendix 7D), one for each participant.

Optional:

3. Make copies of the *Focus on Food Lesson 7 Newsletter* (Appendix 7E), one for each participant.
4. Connect laptop to projector. Load *Focus on Food Lesson 7* (PowerPoint).
5. Queue the PowerPoint Presentation to Slide 21.

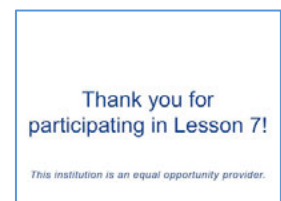
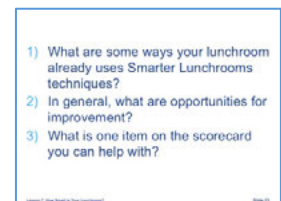
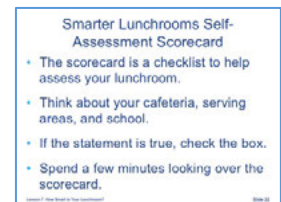






## Procedure (Experiencing)

- Say:** Now let's move on to Goal Setting! **(Slide 21)** We've talked about how important consuming a variety of foods is to our health. The next step is to set some goals and make a plan. I am going to distribute a *Smarter Lunchrooms Self-Assessment Scorecard*. **(Slide 22)**
    - This scorecard is a checklist to help assess your lunchroom.
    - Think about your cafeteria, serving areas, and school.
    - If the statement is true, check the box.
  - Briefly glance over the Scorecard, and then answer the following questions on your Goal Setting Handout: **(Slide 23)**
    - What are some ways your lunchroom already uses Smarter Lunchrooms techniques?
    - In general, what are some opportunities for improvement?
    - What is one item on the *Smarter Lunchrooms Self-Assessment Scorecard* you can help with?
  - Do:** Provide a copy of the *Smarter Lunchrooms Self-Assessment Scorecard* (Appendix 7D) and a copy of the *Goal Setting: How Smart is Your Lunchroom* Handout (Appendix 7C) to each participant. Allow participants a few minutes to complete the handout.
  - Say:** Would anyone like to share the goals they set for themselves?
- Optional:
- Say:** I'm going to distribute one last handout, which is a newsletter with some extra information you might be interested in. Thank you all for participating in Lesson 7! **(Slide 23)**
  - Do:** Provide a copy of the *Focus on Food Lesson 7 Newsletter* (Appendix 7E) to each participant.



## Appendix 7A – Smarter Lunchrooms Movement

The **Smarter Lunchrooms Movement** is a way to help children make better food choices by changing the environment within the school to encourage healthier choices.

There are two main principles behind the **Smarter Lunchrooms Movement**. The first is that when we force someone into doing something (like taking a certain vegetable), they will often react by resisting it. The second is that when a student feels like they've freely made a choice, they are more likely to eat that food. Instead of forcing students to take certain foods, Smarter Lunchrooms Movement principles nudge them to make choices by making healthier options more appealing or more convenient.

<p><b>Creative names</b></p> <p>One cost-effective way to nudge students is to give foods fun or descriptive names.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Younger students may be drawn to imaginative names like “Silly String Beans” and “X-Ray Vision Carrots.”</li><li>• Older students might prefer more descriptive names, such as “Garlic Roasted String Beans” and “Succulent Summer Squash.”</li></ul>	<p><b>Eye appeal</b></p> <p>The way foods are displayed can also influence whether or not a student selects or eats them.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Place fruits in colorful bowls to make them more appealing to students.</li><li>• Slicing fruits and vegetables is another way to increase eye-appeal, especially in younger students.</li></ul>
<p><b>Offer variety</b></p> <p>Offering at least two types of fruits or vegetables can make the selection look a bit more appealing to students. Variety in locations helps too.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make fruit available at least twice along the lunch line, either by repeating options or by offering two or more options in different places.</li><li>• Display a mix of apples, oranges, and pears to draw the students’ eyes.</li></ul>	<p><b>Use signage, posters, and menu boards</b></p> <p>Display the new menu names where students can see them before they even enter the lunchroom. This way, they are already thinking about the menu before they even get to the serving line.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Try a menu board or poster outside the cafeteria or on the wall where students wait in line to buy lunch.</li><li>• Grab student’s attention by updating signs and posters every few months</li></ul>

### Convenience counts!

Making foods easier to choose is a great way to encourage students to eat those foods.

#### Examples:

- Put quick, healthy items in a “grab and go” meal
- Increase eye-appeal by slicing fruits and vegetables. This especially appeals to younger students.

### Be a healthy eating hero!

One of the most important ways to nudge a student to make healthier choices is by modeling healthy behaviors! They look up to you!

#### Examples:

- Do what you do best! Continue to be friendly with your students and point out healthy lunch selections with a smile on your face.
- Label a lunch item as “chef’s choice” and encourage students to give your favorite meal a try!

### Get the whole school involved!

Students spend the majority of their time at school outside of the lunchroom. You can take advantage of this by marketing outside the lunchroom.

#### Examples:

- Keep a daily menu board posted around campus.
- Have student groups organize taste tests or name school foods.

### Make the lunchroom an inviting place to eat!

There are a lot of little things that contribute to a pleasant environment that we may not even realize. Chances are the more inviting the lunchroom is, the more likely a student is to purchase school meals.

#### Examples:

- Keep the lunchroom and serving area free of clutter and clearing supplies.
- Tidy up between lunch periods to keep mess to a minimum.

## Appendix 7B – Food of the Day Cards

### **High School Food of the Day**

#### **Turkey chili**

Make a plan to promote this item, using at least 3 different Smarter Lunchrooms Movement Techniques.

### **Elementary School Food of the Day**

#### **Sweet potato fries**

Make a plan to promote this item, using at least 3 different Smarter Lunchrooms Movement Techniques.

### **Middle School Food of the Day**

#### **Carrot sticks**

Make a plan to promote this item, using at least 3 different Smarter Lunchrooms Movement Techniques.

### **High School Food of the Day**

#### **Three bean salad**

Make a plan to promote this item, using at least 3 different Smarter Lunchrooms Movement Techniques.

### **Elementary School Food of the Day**

#### **Romaine lettuce salad**

Make a plan to promote this item, using at least 3 different Smarter Lunchrooms Movement Techniques.

### **Middle School Food of the Day**

#### **Bean burrito**

Make a plan to promote this item, using at least 3 different Smarter Lunchrooms Movement Techniques.

## Appendix 7C – Goal Setting

### How Smart is Your Lunchroom?

Take a few minutes to look over the Smarter Lunchrooms Self-Assessment Scorecard.

1. What are some ways in which your lunchroom already uses Smarter Lunchrooms techniques?
2. In general, what are some opportunities for improvement?
3. What is one item on the *Smarter Lunchrooms Self-Assessment Scorecard* you can help with?

# Appendix 7D – Smarter Lunchrooms Self-Assessment Scorecard



## Smarter Lunchrooms Self-Assessment

2014  
Scorecard

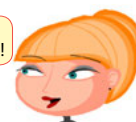
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Since its founding in 2009 the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement has championed the use of evidence-based, simple low and no-cost changes to lunchrooms which can simultaneously improve participation and profits while decreasing waste. This tool can help you to evaluate your lunchroom, congratulate yourself for things you are doing well and and identify areas of opportunity for improvement

### Instructions

Read each of the statements below. Visualize your cafeteria, your service areas and your school building. Indicate whether the statement is true for your school by checking the box to the left. If you believe that your school does not reflect the statement 100% do not check the box on the left. After you have completed the checklist, tally all boxes with check marks and write this number in the designated area on the back of the form. This number represents your school's baseline score. The boxes which are not checked are areas of opportunity for you to consider implementing in the future. We recommend completing this checklist annually to measure your improvements!

It's not nutrition  
...until it's eaten!



### Important Words

**Service areas:** Any location where students can purchase or are provided with food

**Dining areas:** Any location where students can consume the food purchased or provided

**Grab and Go Meals:** Any meal with components pre-packaged together for ease and convenience – such as a brown bag lunch or “Fun Lunch” etc.

**Designated Line:** Any foodservice line which has been specified for particular food items or concepts – such as a pizza line, deli line, salad line etc.

**Alternative entrée options:** Any meal component which could also be considered an entrée for students – such as the salad bar, yogurt parfait, vegetarian/vegan or meatless options etc.

**Reimbursable “Combo Meal” pairings:** Any reimbursable components available independently on your foodservice lines which you have identified as a part of a promotional complete meal – For example you decided your beef taco, seasoned beans, frozen strawberries and 1% milk are part of a promotional meal called the, “Mi Amigo Meal!” etc.

**Non-functional lunchroom equipment:** Any items which are either broken, awaiting repair or are simply not used during meal service – such as empty or broken steam tables, coolers, registers etc.

**Good Rapport:** Communication is completed in a friendly and polite manner

**All Points of Sale:** Any location where a register/pin-pad is located for example: deli-line, snack window, a la carte line, hot line, kiosks/carts etc.

- ☐ Fruit is available at all points of sale (deli-line, snack windows, a la carte lines etc.)
- ☐ Daily fruit options are available in at least two different locations on each service line
- ☐ At least one daily fruit option is available near all registers (If there are concerns regarding edible peel, fruit can be bagged or wrapped)
- ☐ Whole fruit options are displayed in attractive bowls or baskets (instead of chaffing/hotel pans)
- ☐ A mixed variety of whole fruits are displayed together
- ☐ Daily fruit options are easily seen by students of average height for your school
- ☐ Daily fruit options are bundled into all grab and go meals available to students
- ☐ Daily fruit options are written legibly on menu boards in all service and dining areas

### Promoting Vegetables & Salad

- ☐ At least two types of vegetable are available daily
- ☐ Vegetables are not wilted, browning, or otherwise damaged
- ☐ At least one vegetable option is available in all foodservice areas
- ☐ Individual salads or a salad bar is available to all students
- ☐ The salad bar is highly visible and located in a high traffic area
- ☐ Self-serve salad bar utensils are at the appropriate portion size or larger for all fruits and vegetable offered
- ☐ Self-serve salad bar utensils are smaller for croutons, dressing and other non-produce items
- ☐ Daily vegetable options are available in at least two different locations on each service line
- ☐ Daily vegetable options are easily seen by students of average height for your school
- ☐ A daily vegetable option is bundled into grab and go meals available to students
- ☐ A default vegetable choice is established by pre-plating a vegetable on some of the trays



- ☐ Available vegetable options have been given creative or descriptive names
- ☐ All vegetable names are printed/written on name-cards or product IDs and displayed next to each vegetable option daily
- ☐ All vegetable names are written and legible on menu boards
- ☐ All vegetable names are included on the published monthly school lunch menu

### Moving More White Milk

- ☐ All beverage coolers have white milk available
- ☐ White milk is placed in front of other beverages in all coolers
- ☐ White milk crates are placed so that they are the first beverage option seen in all designated milk coolers
- ☐ White milk is available at all points of sale (deli-line, snack windows, a la carte lines etc.)
- ☐ White milk represents at least 1/3 of all visible milk in the lunchroom
- ☐ White milk is easily seen by students of average height for your school
- ☐ White milk is bundled into all grab and go meals available to students as the default beverage
- ☐ White milk is promoted on menu boards legibly
- ☐ White milk is replenished so all displays appear “full” continually throughout meal service and after each lunch period



### Entrée of the Day

- ☐ A daily entrée option has been identified to promote as a “targeted entrée” in each service area and for each designated line (deli-line, snack windows, a la carte lines etc.)
- ☐ Daily targeted entrée options are highlighted on posters or signs
- ☐ Daily targeted entrée is easily seen by students of average height for your school
- ☐ Daily targeted entrées have been provided creative or descriptive names
- ☐ All targeted entrée names are printed/written on name-cards or product IDs and displayed next to each respective entrée daily



### Focusing on Fruit

- ☐ At least two types of fruit are available daily
- ☐ Sliced or cut fruit is available daily
- ☐ Fruit options are not browning, bruised or otherwise damaged
- ☐ Daily fruit options are given creative, age-appropriate names





- ☐ All targeted entrée names are written and legible on menu boards
- ☐ All targeted entrée names are included on the published monthly school lunch menu
- ☐ All targeted entrees are replenished so as to appear “full” throughout meal service

### Increasing Sales Reimbursable Meals



- ☐ A reimbursable meal can be created in any service area available to students (salad bars, snack windows, speed lines, speed windows, dedicated service lines etc.)
- ☐ Reimbursable “Combo Meal” pairings are available and promoted daily
- ☐ A reimbursable meal has been bundled into a grab and go meal available to students
- ☐ Grab and go reimbursable meals are available at a convenience line/speed window
- ☐ The convenience line offers only reimbursable grab and go meals with low-fat non-flavored milk fruit and/or vegetable.
- ☐ Grab and go reimbursable meals are easily seen by students of average height for your school
- ☐ The School offers universal free lunch
- ☐ A reimbursable combo meal pairing is available daily using alternative entrees (salad bar, fruit & yogurt parfait etc.)
- ☐ Reimbursable “Combo Meal” pairings have been provided creative or descriptive age-appropriate names (i.e. – The Hungry Kid Meal, The Athlete’s Meal, Bobcat Meal etc.)
- ☐ Reimbursable “Combo Meal” pairing names are written/printed on name-cards, labels, or product IDs and displayed next to each respective meal daily
- ☐ All reimbursable “Combo Meal” names are written and legible on menu boards
- ☐ All reimbursable “Combo Meal” names are included on the published monthly school lunch menu
- ☐ Reimbursable “Combo Meal” pairings are promoted on signs or posters
- ☐ The named reimbursable “Combo Meal” is promoted during the school’s morning announcements
- ☐ Students have the option to pre-order their lunch in the morning or earlier
- ☐ The cafeteria accepts cash as a form of payment

### Creating School Synergies

#### Signage, Priming & Communication



- ☐ Posters displaying healthful foods are visible and readable within all service and dining areas
- ☐ Signage/posters/floor decals are available to direct students toward all service areas

- ☐ Signs promoting the lunchroom and featured menu items are placed in other areas of the school such as the main office, library or gymnasium.
- ☐ Menu boards featuring today’s meal components are visible and readable within all service and dining areas
- ☐ A dedicated space/menu board is visible and readable from 5ft away within the service or dining area where students can see tomorrow’s menu items
- ☐ Dining space is branded to reflect student body or school (i.e. – school lunchroom is named for school mascot or local hero/celebrity)
- ☐ All promotional signs and posters are rotated, updated or changed at least quarterly
- ☐ All creative and descriptive names are rotated, updated or changed at least quarterly
- ☐ A monthly menu is available and provided to all student families, teachers and administrators
- ☐ A monthly menu is visible and readable within the school building
- ☐ A weekly “Nutritional Report Card” is provided to parents detailing what their student has purchased during the previous week.

### Lunchroom Atmosphere

- ☐ Trash on floors, in, or near garbage cans is removed between each lunch period
- ☐ Cleaning supplies and utensils are returned to a cleaning closet or are not visible during service and dining
- ☐ Compost/recycling/tray return and garbage cans are tidied between lunch periods
- ☐ Compost/recycling/tray return and garbage cans are at least 5ft away from dining students
- ☐ Dining and service areas are clear of any non-functional equipment or tables during service
- ☐ Sneeze guards in all service areas are clean
- ☐ Obstacles and barriers to enter service and dining areas have been removed (i.e. – garbage cans, mop buckets, cones, lost & found etc.)
- ☐ Clutter is removed from service and dining areas promptly (i.e. – empty boxes, supply shipments, empty crates, pans, lost & found etc.)
- ☐ Students artwork is displayed in the service and/or dining areas
- ☐ All lights in the dining and service areas are currently functional and on
- ☐ Trays and cutlery are within arm’s reach to the students of average height for your school
- ☐ Lunchroom equipment is decorated with decals/magnets/signage etc. wherever possible

- ☐ Teachers and administrators dine in the lunchroom with students
- ☐ Cafeteria monitors have good rapport with students and lunchroom staff
- ☐ The dining space is used for other learning activities beyond meal service (i.e. – home economics, culinary nutrition education activities, school activities etc.)
- ☐ Staff is encouraged to model healthful eating behaviors to students (i.e. – dining in the lunchroom with students, encouraging students to try new foods etc.)
- ☐ Staff smiles and greets students upon entering the service line continually throughout meal service
- ☐ Students who do not have a full reimbursable meal are politely prompted to select and consume a fruit or vegetable option by staff

### Student Involvement

- ☐ Student groups are involved in the development of creative and descriptive names for menu items
- ☐ Student groups are involved in creation of artwork promoting menu items
- ☐ Student groups are involved in modeling healthful eating behaviors to others (i.e. – mentors, high school students eating in the middle school lunchroom occasionally etc.)
- ☐ Student surveys are used to inform menu development, dining space décor and promotional ideas
- ☐ Students, teachers and/or administrators announce daily meal deals or targeted items in daily announcements

### Recognition & Support of School Food

- ☐ The school participates in other food program promotions such as: Farm to School, Chefs Move to Schools, Fuel Up to Play 60, Share our Strength etc.)
- ☐ The school has applied or been selected for the Healthier US School Challenge
- ☐ A local celebrity (Mayor, sports hero, media personality) is invited to share lunch with student 3 to 4 time a year

### A la Carte

- ☐ Students must ask to purchase a la carte items from staff members
- ☐ Students must use cash to purchase a la carte items which are not reimbursable
- ☐ Half portions are available for at least two dessert options

### Total Checked

#### Scoring Brackets

- 70-100 – Smarter Lunchrooms Gold
- 50-70 – Smarter Lunchrooms Silver
- 30-50 – Smarter Lunchrooms Bronze



It's not nutrition  
...until it's eaten!



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## Appendix 7E – Focus on Food Lesson 7 Newsletter

The optional newsletter on the following pages is designed to help reinforce the concepts learned. If offering this course in a single workshop, you may wish to distribute the lesson newsletters weekly in order to help refresh participants' memory and solidify the concepts.

# How Smart is Your Lunchroom?

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## What is a Smarter Lunchroom?

The **Smarter Lunchrooms Movement** is a way to help children make better food choices by changing the environment within the school to encourage healthier choices.

There are two main principles behind the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement. The first is that when we force someone into doing something (like taking a certain vegetable), they will often react by resisting it. The second is that when a student feels like they've freely made a choice, they are more likely to eat that food. Instead of forcing students to take certain foods, Smarter Lunchrooms techniques nudge them to make choices by making healthier options more appealing or more convenient.

Key components of the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement are designed to target specific areas, such as promoting an entrée of the day, promoting vegetables and salads, increasing sales of reimbursable meals, and encouraging student to choose white milk over flavored milk.

*Turn the page to find out what Smarter Lunchrooms is all about!*



Visit the **Smarter Lunchrooms Movement** website for methods to change children's food choice behaviors through the application of lunchroom-focused principles that promote healthful eating.

<http://smarterlunchrooms.org>





## Moving More White Milk

*Encourage students to consider plain milk as a beverage*

Growing kids need plenty of calcium and vitamin D to support growing bones. Milk is a great way for students to get these nutrients, along with protein and potassium.

Like with fruits and vegetables, offering students a choice of milk is a great way to encourage students to select and drink it. Help students get in the habit of thinking of white milk as a great choice. There are some easy ways to increase the chance that students will choose white milk over flavored.

Rearrange coolers so that white milk is at least 1/3 of all drinks displayed.

Place white milk in front of other drinks so that students must reach around the white milk to get to other drinks.

Place milk first in line, before other drinks so that students must walk past the white milk to get to other drinks.

If your students still prefer flavored milk to white milk, don't fret. It still has all the calcium, vitamin D, and protein as white milk.

## Focusing on Fruit Colorful, Tasty, and Nutrient-Rich

Fruit, one of the five components of a reimbursable meal, is a great source of a variety of nutrients children need, including vitamin C and potassium. What are some ways we can encourage students to select fruit and eat it?

Have you ever heard the phrase "We eat with our eyes first?" It means the way food looks or is presented makes a huge difference in whether we want to eat it. This is true for children, as well as adults. Changing the way fruit is displayed can make a big difference in student choices.

Here are some ideas that you can try in your lunchroom!

Always offer a choice of fruit! Just giving students a chance to choose means they'll be more likely to eat what they select.

Display fruit in attractive bowls or baskets!

Make fruit available at least twice along the lunch line, either by repeating options or by offering two or more options in different places.

Make sure students can see all the great fruit you offer by displaying it at their eye level.

Offer a sliced fruit daily. Not only does it increase eye-appeal, it's easier for younger students to eat.





# What's in a Name?

*Turns out, quite a lot!*

The way a food is described can make a big difference in how we expect it to taste, even when it's the exact same food. In fact, research suggests that people rate the very same dish as tasting *better* just with a change in name. Which would you rather eat—Grilled Chicken, or Fiesta Lime Grilled Chicken?

It doesn't just work on adults. One cost-effective way to nudge students to select certain foods, or try new menu items is to give foods fun or

Studies have shown that labeling a food as "healthy" actually decreases sales. Try using "fresh" to convey a similar idea.

descriptive names. When thinking of new names, take the age of students into account.

Younger students may be drawn to imaginative names like "Silly String Beans," and "X-Ray Vision Carrots" but older students might prefer more descriptive names, such as

"Garlic Roasted String Beans," and "Succulent Summer Squash."

One study found that when carrots were called "X-Ray Vision Carrots," elementary

Younger students like imaginative names while older students prefer more descriptive names.

students ate twice as many compared to when they were called "Food of the Day." Keep in mind that using the word "healthy" in your description might not be a good idea. Studies have shown that labeling a food as "healthy" actually decreases sales. Try using "fresh" to convey a similar idea.



## Increasing Sales of Reimbursable Meals



A reimbursable meal is a great way for students to eat a variety of nutrients that support their health and academic success. But how do we encourage students to choose reimbursable meal over competitive foods? Here are some ideas!

### **Provide Grab-and-Go Meals**

Make it easy and convenient for students to grab a complete reimbursable meal quickly.

### **Move Competitive Foods Behind a Counter**

This way, students will be less likely to choose competitive foods over a reimbursable meal. Out of sight, out of mind.

### **Create a Healthy-Items-Only Convenience Line**

Hungry students will jump at the chance to get in a fast-moving line so they can quickly get back to their friends!



# Promoting Vegetables and Salad

*How can we encourage students to not just select vegetables, but to also eat and enjoy them?*

Get students involved! Create a committee of students responsible for the naming of and creating signage for veggies. Chances are, they're more savvy about what appeals to their peers.

Use fun, brightly colored name cards for the vegetables to help draw attention to them.

Advertise your newly renamed veggies before students even enter the cafeteria. A great option is a poster or menu board outside the cafeteria that students will see on their way in.

There are a lot of different ways you can display your fun name cards. You can fold and place them on the counter, or use tape, magnets, or magnetic clips. The important thing is that they're at student eye level.



## Smarter Lunchrooms Success in Tustin, California!

In Tustin, CA, C.E. Utt Middle School set out to transform the lunchroom and enhance healthy eating habits among students.

The team incorporated changes that included increasing the abundance and variety of fresh fruits and vegetables displayed in a pleasant manner multiple times along the lunch line, and making milk cartons more visible while increasing the white- to flavored- milk ratio. This change doubled the sale of white milk!

Other changes included adding colorful tablecloths to create a welcoming environment for students and moving trash cans away from exits to help decrease food waste.

Learn more at:

<http://thrivingschools.kaiserpermanente.org/feeding-the-falcons-how-one-school-is-increasing-healthy-eating-behavior/>

## Entrée of the Day



Why have an entrée of the day? It's a great way to promote new menu items, or nutrient-dense foods you'd like students to select.

Give the entrée of the day a fun, creative, or descriptive name!

Display the new names where students will see them before they even get to the cafeteria. That way, they'll think about the entrée of the day while they're hungry and deciding what they want to eat.

Promote your daily entrée in all service lines.

Highlight it on signs and menus. Attractiveness counts! Write neatly and use bright, easy to see colors.

Don't limit advertising to just the lunchroom. Also consider promoting the entrée of the day in school announcements, or in the front office.





## Test your knowledge with the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement quiz!

True or False: The following are Smarter Lunchrooms Principles.

1. Ask students math problems in the lunch line.  
☐ True  
☐ False
2. Use fun, creative, or descriptive names for menu items.  
☐ True  
☐ False
3. Give all foods in the lunch line a grade.  
☐ True  
☐ False
4. Increase sales of white milk by no longer serving flavored milk.  
☐ True  
☐ False
5. Increase convenience of healthy items.  
☐ True  
☐ False
6. Use grab-and-go meals as a way to increase reimbursable meal sales.  
☐ True  
☐ False

## The Results are In!

*If you got all six right:*

You are a Smarter Lunchrooms Smarty! Keep getting out there and learning more!

*If you got three to five right:*

You're on the right track! Try finding the information you missed in other pages of this newsletter to become a Smarter Lunchrooms Movement master!

*If you got two or less right:*

It just means you have more opportunities to learn. Read through the newsletter again, or take a look at the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement website at

<http://www.smarterlunchrooms.org>

1. False; 2. True; 3. False; 4. False; 5. True; 6. True

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