



Lesson 8 – How Smart is Your Lunchroom?

Background Information

In the 2013-2014 school year, California schools served nearly 560 million lunches and 280 million breakfasts to children 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 by including whole grains, fruits, vegetables, protein, and low-fat dairy. However, many still find it 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.

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 strategies 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, which include: **promoting vegetables and salads**, **increasing sales of reimbursable meals**, **creating school synergies**, 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.

8.1: Learning Activity

Overview

This lesson explores changes that can be made to the lunchroom to influence students to choose and consume healthy options by using Smarter Lunchrooms Movement techniques. In this activity, participants read a handout summarizing some of the key areas of the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement. They are then assigned a menu item and a type of school and are asked to make a plan to promote that menu item using at least three Smarter Lunchroom Techniques. As part of this plan, they are asked to make a poster to promote the item. The posters are then shared with the class during a class discussion.

Getting Ready

Time Required

45 minutes

Materials Needed

(Materials provided in the curriculum)

For Each Group of 2-4 Participants <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Flip chart paper<input type="checkbox"/> Markers, pens, or pencils<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Smarter Lunchrooms Movement (Handout 8-A)</i><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Food of the Day Cards (Lesson Material 8-B)</i>	For the Facilitator <p>Optional:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Lesson 8 (PowerPoint)</i><input type="checkbox"/> Computer<input type="checkbox"/> PowerPoint Projector
For the Class <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Craft supplies, such as construction paper, scissors, glue sticks, tape, glue, etc.	For Each Participant <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> None

Preparation

Handouts

1. Make copies of the following handout:
 - ***Smarter Lunchrooms Movement (Handout 8-A)***, one copy per group.

Other Materials

2. Print and cut out copies of the ***Food of the Day Cards (Lesson Material 8-B)***, one card for each group.

Facilitator Tip: To tailor this activity to your program, create your own food of the day cards for menu items served in your lunchroom, rather than using the ones provided.

Activity Set-up

3. Prepare a table with assorted craft supplies that participants may use to create their poster.

Classroom Set-up

4. Organize the class into small groups of 2 to 4 participants.
5. Provide each group with a sheet of flip chart paper and markers, pens, or pencils to answer opening questions/prompts.

Optional

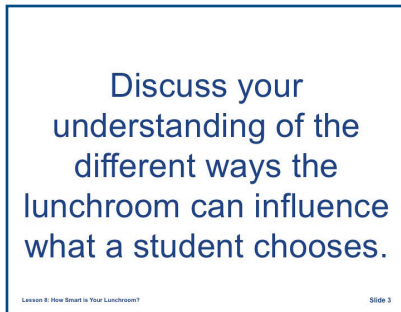
6. Before participants arrive, connect laptop to projector. Load ***Focus on Food Lesson 8*** (PowerPoint).



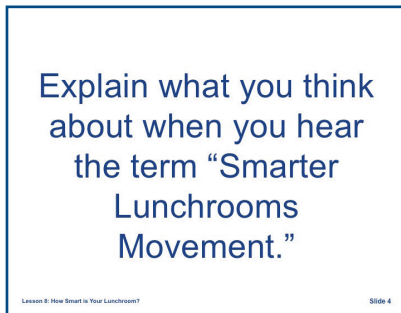
Slide 1



Slide 2



Slide 3



Slide 4

Opening Questions/Prompts

Small Group Discussion

1. **Say:** Let's get started with Lesson 8 – How Smart Is Your Lunchroom! **(Slide 1)** To begin, I'd like everyone to discuss some opening questions within your group. **(Slide 2)** 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.

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)**

Facilitator Tip: Explain to participants that they may write their answers independently or assign one person in their group to write down everyone's thoughts. It may be helpful to explain to the class that they will learn more about these topics throughout the lesson.

2. **Do:** Allow 2 to 3 minutes for groups to discuss the prompt. Repeat with the remaining prompt:
 - Explain what you think about when you hear the term "Smarter Lunchrooms Movement." **(Slide 4)**

Class Discussion

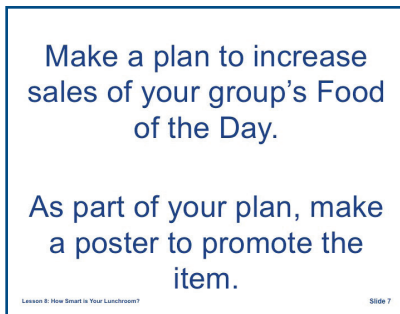
3. **Say:** As a class, let's discuss what you talked about in your groups. What were some of your thoughts on the first prompt, "Discuss your understanding of the different ways the lunchroom can influence what a student chooses?"
4. **Do:** Allow about a minute for participants to share their thoughts on this topic with the class. Repeat with the remaining prompt:
 - Explain what you think about when you hear the term "Smarter Lunchrooms Movement." **(Slide 4)**



Slide 5



Slide 6



Slide 7

Procedure (Experiencing)

Reading About Smarter Lunchrooms

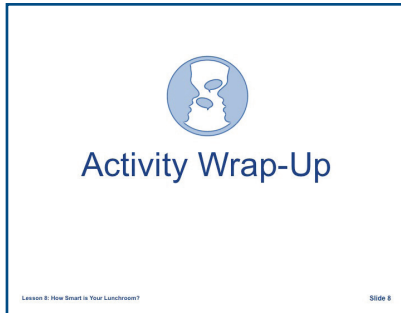
5. **Say:** Now that we've completed our opening discussion, we'll start on the activity for this lesson. **(Slide 5)** This activity involves the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement.
 - You will receive a handout that is about methods that are being used in schools to guide student choices in the lunchroom.
 - Read through the handout within your groups. It might help to take turns reading aloud. **(Slide 6)**
6. **Do:** Hand out a copy of the ***Smarter Lunchrooms Movement Handout (Handout 8-A)***, one per group. Allow the groups a few minutes to read through the handout.

Creating a Plan and Poster

7. **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.
8. **Do:** Provide each group with a ***Food of the Day Card (Lesson Material 8-B)***.

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.*

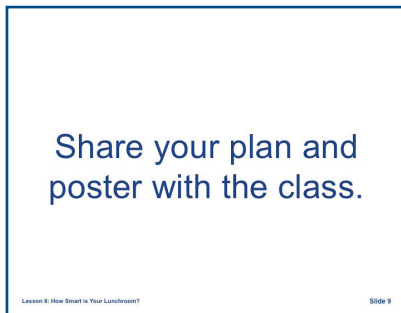


Slide 8

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

9. **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)**

10. **Do:** Follow the group's line of thinking, and if necessary, ask more targeted questions.



Slide 9

- 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.

8.2: Expanding Knowledge

Overview

In this mini-lecture, participants will learn more about the different tactics the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement uses to increase participation and selection and consumption of healthy items.

Getting Ready

Time Required

10 minutes

Materials Needed

(Materials provided in the curriculum)

For the Facilitator <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 8 (PowerPoint)<input type="checkbox"/> Computer<input type="checkbox"/> PowerPoint Projector	For Each Group of 2-4 Participants <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> None
For the Class <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> None	For Each Participant <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> None

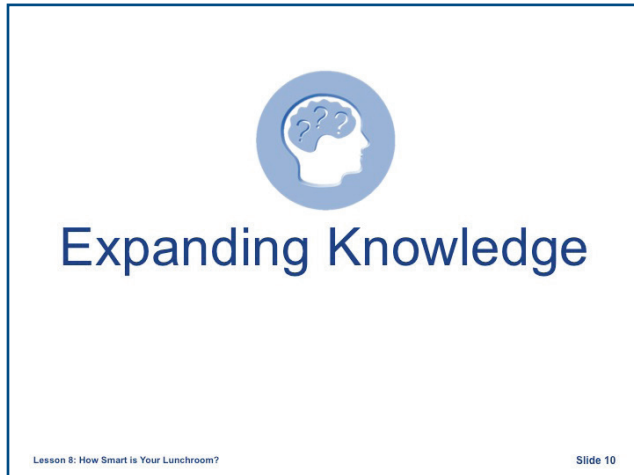
Preparation

Projector Set-up

1. Connect laptop to projector. Load **Focus on Food Lesson 8** (PowerPoint).
2. Queue the PowerPoint presentation to Slide 10.

Procedure

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



Slide 10

Slide 10

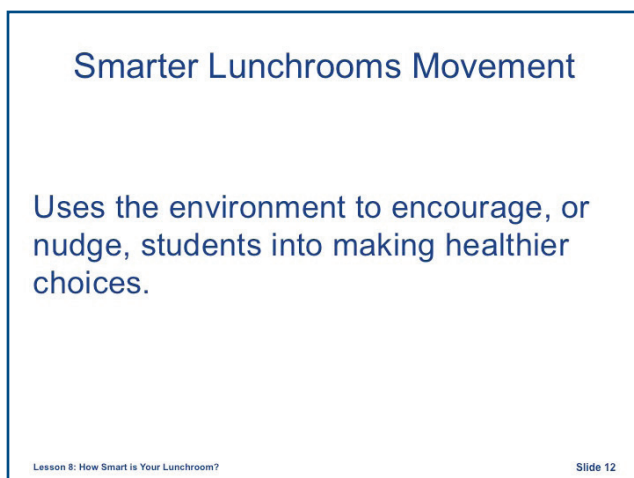
Let's review some of the concepts we learned during Lesson 8, How Smart is Your Lunchroom?



Slide 11

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 12

Slide 12

One tactic of 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.

Smarter Lunchrooms Movement Principles

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

Lesson 8: How Smart is Your Lunchroom?

Slide 13

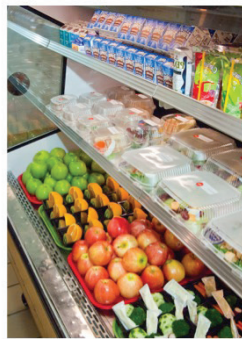
Slide 13

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.

Increase Convenience

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



Lesson 8: How Smart is Your Lunchroom?

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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 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 8: How Smart is Your Lunchroom?

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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.

Lesson 8: How Smart is Your Lunchroom?

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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

Promote the next day's menu with signs.



Use colorful, eye-catching signage, menu boards, and name cards.



Lesson 8: How Smart is Your Lunchroom?

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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

Try using smaller scoops or spoons for foods you want children to select less of.



Lesson 8: How Smart is Your Lunchroom?

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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.

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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 8: How Smart is Your Lunchroom? Slide 20

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.]

8.3: Goal Setting Activity

Overview

In this activity, participants review the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement Scorecard and use what they've learned to set goals for getting involved in Smarter Lunchrooms in their school.

Getting Ready

Time Required

5 minutes

Materials Needed

(Materials provided in the curriculum)

For the Facilitator Optional: <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 8 (PowerPoint) <input type="checkbox"/> Computer <input type="checkbox"/> PowerPoint Projector	For Each Group of 2-4 Participants <input type="checkbox"/> None
For the Class <input type="checkbox"/> None	For Each Participant <input type="checkbox"/> Goal Setting – How Smart is Your Lunchroom? (Activity Sheet 8-C) <input type="checkbox"/> Smarter Lunchrooms Self-Assessment Scorecard (Handout 8-D) Optional: <input type="checkbox"/> Focus on Food Lesson 8 Newsletter (Handout 8-E)

Preparation

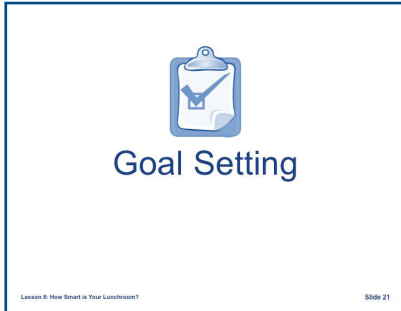
Handouts

1. Make copies of the following handouts:
 - **Goal Setting – How Smart is Your Lunchroom? (Activity Sheet 8-C)**, one for each participant.
 - **Smarter Lunchrooms Self-Assessment Scorecard (Handout 8-D)**, one for each participant.
 - Optional: **Focus on Food Lesson 8 Newsletter (Handout 8-E)**, one for each participant.

Optional

2. Connect laptop to projector. Load **Focus on Food Lesson 8** (PowerPoint).
3. Queue the PowerPoint presentation to Slide 21.

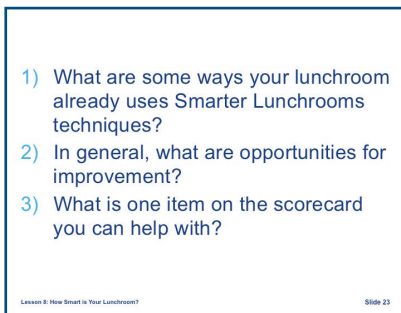
Procedure



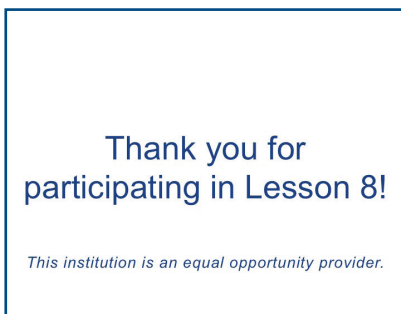
Slide 21



Slide 22



Slide 23



Slide 24

1. **Say:** Now let's move on to Goal Setting! **(Slide 21)** We've talked about the importance of encouraging students to select and consume healthy foods. 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?
2. **Do:** Provide a copy of **Goal Setting – How Smart is Your Lunchroom? (Activity Sheet 8-C)** and **Smarter Lunchrooms Self-Assessment Scorecard (Handout 8-D)** to each participant. Allow participants a few minutes to complete the handout.

3. **Say:** Would anyone like to share the goals they set for themselves?

Optional:

4. **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 8! **(Slide 24)**
5. **Do:** Provide a copy of the **Focus on Food Lesson 8 Newsletter (Handout 8-E)** to each participant.

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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?

Smarter Lunchrooms Self-Assessment Scorecard

The Smarter Lunchrooms Self-Assessment Scorecard is a resource developed by the Cornell Center for Behavioral Economics in Child Nutrition Program (also called the BEN Center). To download the scorecard, visit the following link.

<https://www.smarterlunchrooms.org/scorecard-tools/smarter-lunchrooms-scorecard>

Focus on Food Lesson 8 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 students to choose white milk over flavored milk.

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



Smarter Lunchrooms Movement

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 choice.

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 descriptive names.

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

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>

Check your answers at the bottom of the page!

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

