USDA
Smarter Lunchrooms

Become a Smarter Lunchroom to decrease food waste

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What will I learn today?

• Smarter Lunchroom Movement (SLM) basics
• Examples of SLM decreasing food waste in schools
• Plate waste evaluation protocol
• Changes to help you start today
• Where to find more information to implement SLM in your school
School lunchrooms provide more than just a place to eat meals...

- Nutrition education
- Health promotion
- Daily practice for making healthy choices
- Social interaction with peers and adults

*The lunchroom is the heart of a healthy school environment*
Let’s get down to the basics

Origins

The Smarter Lunchroom Movement began in 2009 at the Cornell Center for Behavioral Economics in Child Nutrition Programs (the B.E.N. Center) by Dr. Brian Wansink & Dr. David Just

Mission

To equip school lunchrooms with evidence-based tools that improve child eating behaviors and thus improve the health of children

Core Values

• To use low cost, or no cost, solutions
• To focus on the lunchroom environment
• To promote healthful eating behaviors
• To create sustainable changes in the lunchroom that guide smarter choices

Source: http://smarterlunchrooms.org/about-us
What exactly is “behavioral economics”?

The study of how environmental cues affect how consumers choose and enjoy foods.

Packaging  Placement  Ambiance  Prompting
What exactly is a “Smarter Lunchroom”?

A Smarter Lunchroom applies research-based methods to get kids to eat better, improve the bottom line & decrease waste!

25-50% of Food Service Directors in Illinois are aware of the Smarter Lunchroom Movement

http://articles.extension.org/sites/default/files/ScorecardPPT-FINAL.pdf
SLM concepts

- Portion size
- Taste expectations
- Smart pricing
- Suggestive selling
- Visibility
- Convenience
HOW WILL THIS DECREASE WASTE IN MY LUNCHROOM...?
Show me the facts!

- **Naming**: “X-ray vision carrots” doubled consumption & “big bad burrito” increased consumption by 40%
- **Amount of students consuming “healthy items”** increased by 35% after the introduction of a “healthy choices only” convenience line
- **When given a choice** between carrots and celery, students **ate 91% of the vegetable chosen**, compared to 69% when only carrots were offered
- After implementing SLM interventions in schools served by **Chartwells school dining services**, fruit and vegetable consumption increased between **18-50%** along with **LESS food waste**
Show me the facts!

• **In Montana High Schools** they decreased salad bar waste by 15% and decreased total milk waste by 34% using SLM interventions

• **In Ohio schools**, renaming broccoli & beans decreased waste of those vegetables by 8.5% overall

• **Slicing apples** increased the number of students that ate more than ½ of their apple by 73%
Plate Waste Protocol

1. Organize your plate waste study team & practice the Quarter Waste Method
2. Plan for 3 collection days before & after intervention
3. Choose which days & menu items you will focus on
4. Prepare your data collection spreadsheet*
5. Plan where you will set up in the cafeteria
6. Weigh the standard/“average” initial serving size of food beforehand (i.e. how much is on the plate BEFORE it’s eaten)
7. Show up & COLLECT DATA!
8. (Clean up &) Evaluate & share your results!

Step-by-step guide to measuring food waste in your school

Video demonstration of Quarter Waste Method!
Quarter Observational Method

Coding System

0 for none wasted
1 for ¼ wasted
2 for ½ wasted
3 for ¾ wasted
4 for all wasted

Practice 1

Servings taken:
• Bowl of tomato soup
• Cheese sandwich
• Carton of juice
• Carton of milk

Servings wasted:
• ¼ serving of soup: 1
• ¼ serving of sandwich: 1
• No juice wasted: 0
• ¼ milk wasted: 1

Servings taken:
• Bowl of tomato soup
• Cheese sandwich
• Carton of juice
• Carton of flavored milk
• Pack of fun fruits

Servings wasted:
• Tomato soup: 0
• Cheese sandwich: 0
• Juice: 4
• Milk: 0
• Fun fruits: 1
Quick changes you can make today

• **Help students feel like they made the choice:**
  – Use colorful, attractive signage to draw attention to healthful items
  – Rename items on the menu with fun and engaging names (involve students!)
  – Create a student nutrition action committee (SNAC) committee to get student feedback about how to increase consumption & decrease food waste
  – Use verbal prompts to prompt the choice of selected food(s)
  – Award students who try/eat selected food(s) with stickers or other incentives
  – Organize taste tests of different menu items so students select future menu items
  – Add a sharing bowl to your lunchroom

• **Improve convenience:**
  – Put fruit or fruit/veggie snack packs in an attractive bowl near cashier for easy pick up
  – Create a healthy convenience line or healthy grab-n-go meals/snacks
Quick changes you can make today

• **Enhance taste expectations (appearance & reputation):**
  – Make sure fruits, veggies, entrees are drained of excess liquid & look fresh
  – Choose attractive packaging and labels to make foods look appealing
  – Organize taste tests of new foods to change students’ attitudes
  – Make sure trash is picked up from tables/floors & full trash cans emptied between services
  – Move trash cans away from where students enter the service line & away from where they eat
  – Take advantage of technology/social media to show off your school food, engage student body & community, and enhance your reputation
  – Encourage staff to eat school meals!

• **Recruit help:**
  – Inform teachers to teach about new foods, especially fruits and veggies
  – Inform parents to encourage their students to eat fruits & veggies
  – Inform school administrators to talk up school meals on announcements
  – Work as a team to change schedule to have recess before lunch and/or extend lunch periods
Additional Resources

• University of Illinois Extension
  – In-person SLM assessment, makeover & evaluation guidance
  – Additional in-person SLM training

• Smarterlunchrooms.org
  – Best practices for lunchrooms
  – Videos
  – Real school success stories

• Healthy Food Choices in Schools

• Handouts
  – 1, 2, 3, 4

• Webinars & video
  – 1, 2, 3

• Follow The BEN Center on Twitter/Facebook
  – @SmartLunchrooms
  – Smarter Lunchroom Movement

• Check out other states’ resources for Smarter Lunchrooms
  – Ohio Smarter Lunchrooms & their plate waste evaluation tools
  – Michigan Team Nutrition
Register for today for more school wellness webinars!

http://go.illinois.edu/inep_spr2016

I’m available for any questions you have!

Are you a school food service director, manager or staff member? Email ajie2@illinois.edu or jscrogum@illinois.edu to receive your Certificate