

Ready, Set, LEARN!

ATTENTION: Parents and Children Do Not Skip Breakfast – or your grades may suffer.

Dating as far back as the 1950s several studies have shown that children who eat breakfast perform better academically compared to those that don't. In one study, researchers gave a series of attention tests to elementary school students. Children were asked to recall and repeat numbers read out loud by the researchers. The children were also asked to name as many animals as they could in 60 seconds. Overall, the results revealed that the breakfast eaters performed better than those children who had skipped breakfast.

These insights are not only applicable for children, but also adults. A developing body and brain, as well as an established one, needs a consistent supply of fuel (food) to function at peak performance. Digested food offers a fresh supply of glucose, or sugar. This sugar is the brain's basic fuel and without it children and adults struggle to understand and remember new information. Without consistent fuel you or your child may also feel drowsy, weak, unable to focus, or simply unmotivated.

What kind of breakfast you eat is just as important as whether or not you eat breakfast. Although the brain requires glucose, or sugar, for fuel, you don't want to eat a breakfast that is high in sugar. When the body digests food it makes sure that the brain gets the fuel it needs from the wholesome foods we eat. Eating foods high in sugar tends to cause quick highs and lows in our blood sugar or energy levels. So a child who eats sugary breakfast foods may feel charged as they head out the door for school, but by time the first class starts they may already feel tired.

Breakfast needs to include foods that keep the belly full and the brain fueled for several hours. This means a combination of protein and healthy carbohydrates. Carbohydrates are whole grain starches (cereals, breads, pasta, and rice) and fruits. Protein-rich foods include lean meats, low-fat cheese, eggs, yogurt, and other low-fat dairy products. The following are some examples of easy breakfast ideas:

- Peanut butter and Jelly on multigrain bread and a glass of 1% milk
- Oatmeal made with 1% milk and your favorite chopped-up fruit
- Whole grain cereal mixed into a cup of low-fat yogurt
- A pita pocket stuffed with scrambled eggs and topped with salsa

The best way to ensure your child eats breakfast everyday is by putting a plan in place. Come up with about 5 different breakfast favorites and rotate them each morning. Chances are your school offers a variety of options every day for breakfast. If you struggle with time in the morning, encourage your child to take advantage of your school breakfast program.



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*Keep your
brain fueled!*

Roxanne Moore is a Registered Dietitian and past spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association (ADA). She completed her undergraduate work in Dietetics at Hood College in Frederick, Maryland, and her Masters in Health Science and Business at Towson University in Towson, Maryland. Roxanne has over 15 years experience developing nutrition education programs and providing nutrition education for individuals, groups and the community-at-large. She is certified as a Child and Adolescent Obesity Counselor and a member of ADA Sports, Cardiovascular and Wellness Nutritionists dietetic practice group.

Sodexo is proud to partner with your school district to provide nutritious school meals for your children. Our unique approach provides students with a variety of healthy menu choices designed specifically to satisfy their taste preferences. To learn more, visit www.sodexousa.com or call 800-354-7000.

