



Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Ideas Getting Food Service On Board

1. Take Action: Invite the food service director or manager to be on the KidLink team and build a relationship

As the first step in building relationships, identify food service strengths, challenges, and win/wins for participation.

Recognize the strengths of food service

Check all that apply:

- Getting a large quantity of food out on time each day.
- Purchasing within a budget.
- Great tasting foods.
- Making the cafeteria appealing with limited resources.
- Caring staff.
- Other: (specify) _____

Recognize the challenges faced by food service

Check all that apply:

- A huge responsibility to serve healthy foods.
- Under a great deal of pressure to keep students' meal cost low, but generate enough income to cover their budget.
- Face conflicts with scheduling and facilities problems that make the cafeteria environment less than ideal.
- Equipment and/or staffing needs limit in menu offerings.
- Fundraisers, vending machines and/or an open lunchtime campus compete with the students' cafeteria purchases.
- Other: (specify) _____



Identify the win/wins for participation

- Develop/enhance a positive image of food service.
- Develop food service as a credible voice in healthy messaging.
- Increase participation in the meal program.
- Increase support for the meal program.
- Other: (specify) _____

2. Involve food service staff in personal and employee wellness programs

- Use the KidLink team activity, "Taking Action for Healthy Kids as I See It" (page 12 of Take Healthy Action), for all the food service staff.
- Once staff has ownership of personal wellness, use the Take the Challenge Wellness Menu (*Setting Up for Success* at the back of the book).
- Create fun "Challenges", such as a physical activity, fruit and veggie, or "water" challenge.
- Provide support and encouragement.
- Once a wellness program is identified, interview staff for a tip on how *they* made a healthy change. With their permission, post the tips on a bulletin board or in a newsletter. For more fun, take a picture of each staff member who shares a healthy tip, and post it along with the "tip".

3. Take Action: Take simple steps to begin working together

Generate fun and positive interest in food service:

- Arrange with teachers to display classroom artwork related to nutrition and physical activity in the cafeteria.
- Identify and present (on bulletin boards, in newsletters, or over an intercom) food service trivia questions, i.e., "How many ½ cup servings of green beans or gallons of milk are served in a day?"
- Use displays (*Setting Up for Success*) to make food service visible as a credible source at open house, parent nights, and/or health fairs.
- Increase understanding of food service. After meal service hours, arrange for KidLinks (i.e., staff or administrators) to a guided "tour" of food service. Share some of the "food service trivia" and "challenges" on the tour.
- Create awareness that meal participation sends a healthy message.
- Include the food service staff in communication, planning, and feedback.
- Survey teachers for perceptions of meals. Increase staff understanding of nutrition guidelines. Dispel misperceptions by providing nutrition information about foods perceived as being high in fat and/or calories.
- Other: (specify) _____

