



New School Meal Requirements

You may have heard that there will be new requirements for school meals. Most of the new rules will begin for school year 2012-2013. Knowing what changes were likely to take place, we have gradually been making changes so it wouldn't be such a shock to the students when the new requirements went into effect.

Biggest Changes:

- Students will now be **required** to have $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit or vegetables on their tray for it to count as a full meal. Anything less than a full meal is charged at a la carte prices. We plan to offer a variety of fruits and vegetables daily to give the students more to select from.
- The amount of food and calories offered at each meal will be based on three different age groups; grades K-5, 6-8 and 9-12. Before, we only had two age groups which left some of the younger students with way too much food. You'll see that on the menus, many of our items are the same, but portion sizes and recipes will be designed to meet the specific age groups.
- We need to offer $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit to grades K-8 and 1 cup of fruit to grades 9-12.
- We need to offer $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of vegetables to grades K-8 and 1 cup of vegetables to grades 9-12.
- We are now limited as to how much meat/meat alternate (cheese, yogurt, peanut butter) and grains we can offer. Previously, we only had a minimum to meet, but could offer more. Now we have to stay within the specified ranges for each age group. This means main entrees may not be as large as they have been. Remember, though, that there are more fruits and vegetables available than before. We'll have to be a little creative to make this work, but have no doubt we can make each meal something our students will enjoy.

Changes We Have Already Made:

- Half of all grains offered must be whole grain rich. Almost all of our grains offered already meet this requirement. Our pizza crust and corndogs are whole grain rich.
- We must offer vegetables from the following groups each week: dark green, orange/red, beans, starchy, and other vegetables. We've been working towards this goal by serving fresh veggies with low-fat ranch, switching all lettuce to romaine, and offering beans/legumes.
- Schools have until 2014-2015 to meet the first level of sodium limits. While this might be quite a challenge for some districts, we come very close right now. Food manufacturers have gradually been lowering the sodium in foods, we expect it will not be a problem to meet this requirement.

How You Can Help

- Encourage your children to try new things at home and school.
- Join your child for lunch and/or breakfast.
- If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us. We're here to help!

