



# Creating Healthy Schools

## Ensure Adequate Time to Eat

Our school district cares about the health and well-being of students. That's why we work with families to help write and implement School Wellness Policies. Working together, we can help make schools healthy places for children to learn and grow. An important policy is to make sure that children have enough time to eat meals without feeling rushed or distracted. This is an important policy. Your family can help support the health and wellness of your child and all the children attending your child's school by taking an active role in School Wellness Policies.

### Why is adequate time to eat important?

School lunch is a time for students to eat healthful foods, take a break from class, and prepare for the rest of the day. Children who have more time for lunch at school develop healthy eating habits, improve learning in the classroom, and build social skills. Over time, daily practices learned in school turn into habits. Making sure that there is enough time for eating meals teaches students that eating well is an important part of every day.



### How can I get more involved?

There are several ways you and your family can become active with school wellness and make sure your child has enough time to eat meals. Below are a few examples, including some tips that can be used at home:

#### School Policy

- Know the school policy on mealtimes.
- Speak with your child's teacher or principal about the school policy and mealtimes.
- Join and attend PTA/PTO (parent teacher association or organization) meetings and discuss your thoughts on school mealtime.

#### School/Classroom Food Environment

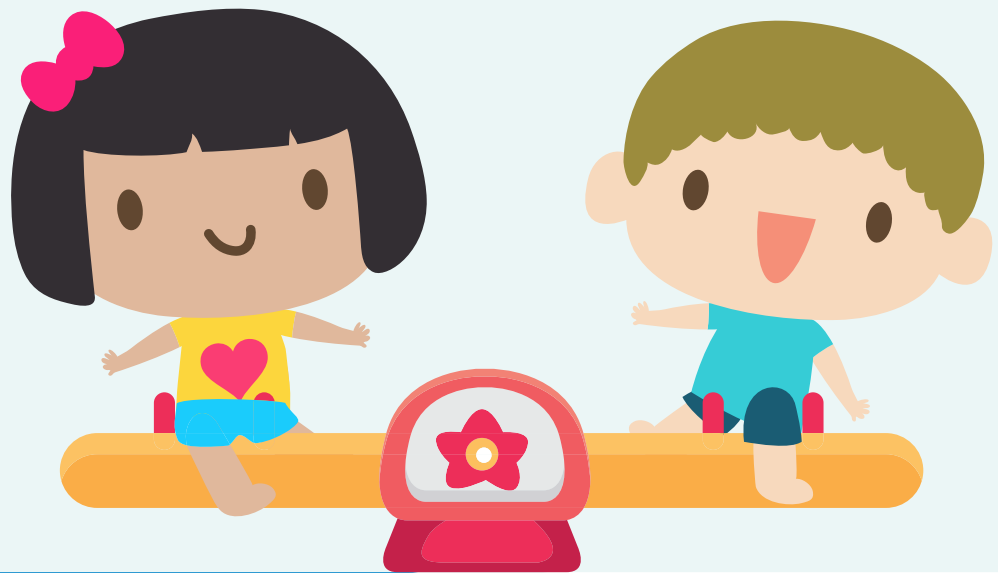
- Visit your child at school and eat lunch with them to find out how the lunch period works.

#### Home Mealtimes

- Try to eat as a family as often as you can.
- Turn off the television during mealtimes.
- Allow enough time for meals and snacks – don't feel rushed to finish.
  - Set a regular mealtime.
  - Have your child set the table: dishes, silverware, napkins, etc.
  - During the meal, talk to your child about the day, schoolwork and the food served at mealtimes.
  - Plan meals ahead of time to help reduce the stress in having dinner as a family.

## Other Resources:

- For more information on mealtimes at home, visit <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/families#mealtimes>
- Understand why family meals are so important! Iowa State University Research and Extension, handout on family meals is a great resource, click here: <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/publications/pm1842.pdf>
- California Project Lean, an organization committed to improving health behaviors of children, has created a handout on how school wellness policies can help create a healthier school environment. To read more visit: **read more visit:** <http://www.californiaprojectlean.org/docuserfiles//The%20School%20Environment.pdf>
- Washington State University developed a family meal toolkit called Eat Together, Eat Better: <https://nutrition.wsu.edu/eteb/>



## I'm interested in learning more!

Who do I contact?

Principal: \_\_\_\_\_

PTO President: \_\_\_\_\_

School Wellness Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

District Wellness Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

