



New School Meal Requirements

There is always a feeling of excitement and anticipation with the beginning of a new school year...new teachers, new classes, new experiences. Kansas students can look forward to “new” in the school meal programs as well! Updated meal patterns will provide healthy foods to help fuel your child for learning!

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.. A variety of fruits and vegetables will be offered daily to give students more choices 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 too much food. This year, many menu items are the same but portion sizes and recipes will be designed to meet the specific age groups.
- At least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit to grades K-8 and 1 cup of fruit to grades 9-12 will be offered at lunch.
- At least $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of vegetables to grades K-8 and 1 cup of vegetables to grades 9-12 will be offered at lunch.
- Meat/meat alternate and grains amounts are now specified. Previously, there was only a minimum to meet, but could offer more. Now there are specified ranges for each age group. This means main entrees may not be as large as they have been. Remember, though, that there will be more fruits and vegetables available than before!

Kansas Schools Have Been Gradually Implementing Healthy Changes

- This school year, half of all grains offered must be whole grain rich. Most grains offered in school meals already meet this requirement such as whole grain pizza crust, rolls and pasta.
- Vegetables from the following groups will be served each week: dark green, orange/red, beans, starchy, and other vegetables. Kansas schools have been working toward this goal by serving fresh veggies with low-fat ranch, switching lettuce to romaine, providing fruit & veggie bars and offering beans/legumes.
- Schools have until 2014-2015 to meet the first level of sodium limits. Food manufacturers have gradually been lowering the sodium in foods and schools are using less salt in recipes.
- School Food Service Professionals have attended training to learn culinary techniques and new meal requirements!

How You Can Help

- Encourage your children to try new things at home and school.
- Join your child for lunch and/or breakfast.
- Volunteer for the School Wellness Council!
- View your schools Wellness Policy Data on-line at www.kn-eat.org, Wellness Policies.
- Check out the Eat Smart Play Hard Video News at www.eatsmartplayhard.org for information about healthy eating and physical activity!
- If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us. We're here to help!