

Eating Breakfast

Overview

An alarming number of school age children do not eat breakfast each morning. In fact, according to the American Dietetic Association, more than 40% of girls and 32% of boys skip breakfast on a regular basis. Children who do not eat breakfast do not consume the necessary nutrients for their bodies to produce the energy needed to concentrate in school and to adequately complete learning responsibilities. A study conducted by the State of Minnesota on the correlation between breakfast and performance in school shows that “children who eat breakfast before going to school perform better in math and reading, increase their attention span and improve their overall behavior.”

Breakfast affects a child’s overall performance during school by:

- Providing energy needed to start the day
- Eliminating hunger symptoms such as headache, fatigue, sleepiness and restlessness
- Helping them to think faster when doing school work and respond more clearly to teacher questions
- Increasing mental performance
- Making them less likely to be irritable
- Helping to keep them from “drifting” during class
- Causing them to be calmer and less anxious

In addition to improving a child’s performance during school, studies show that breakfast is important to a child’s general health as well. Children who eat breakfast are more likely to consume nutrients important to healthy growth, are better able to keep their weight under control, have lower cholesterol levels, visit the school nurse less often because of stomach aches, and are less likely to catch colds and flu.

What Is a Good Breakfast?

What constitutes a good breakfast? Minimal nutritional standards set by the USDA’s food and nutrition service includes one serving of milk; one serving of juice (fruit or vegetable); and two servings from the bread and/or meat groups.

Belle Plaine School has a breakfast program available to all students.