

From Cafeteria to Conversation: Integrating Student Perspectives into School Meal Programs

**REIMAGINING
RURAL**
THE RURAL
CHILD HUNGER
SUMMIT 2023



Save the Children.



**NO KID
HUNGRY**

Housekeeping

- This session is being recorded.
- All recording will be available after the event.
- Closed captioning and language translation is available.
- Q&A will be at the end of this session.
Please enter all questions into the Q&A box.



2023 RURAL HUNGER SUMMIT

Sam King

Senior Manager, Program Innovation

Share Our Strength



Using the Principles of Human-Centered Design for Student Engagement



Agenda

Welcome

Identifying Your Questions for Youth

School Meals Design Guide Overview

Practice

Close



School Meals Design Guide

What is one issue or opportunity in your meal program that you want to understand better?



Common Challenges and Opportunities

1

Why is breakfast participation low?

2

What is preventing families from accepting food benefits?

3

Why are so few free and reduced priced meal forms being completed?

4

How do we adapt the meal program to reflect diversity in the district?

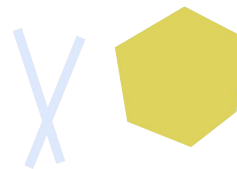
Do any of these issues resonate? How have you tried to address these?

What are your assumptions?

- Share your assumptions - what do you know or think you know about the topic? What don't you know?
- For example, "I think that students aren't making it to school in time for breakfast"
- Next we will explore how to learn more, test assumptions, and uncover new ideas

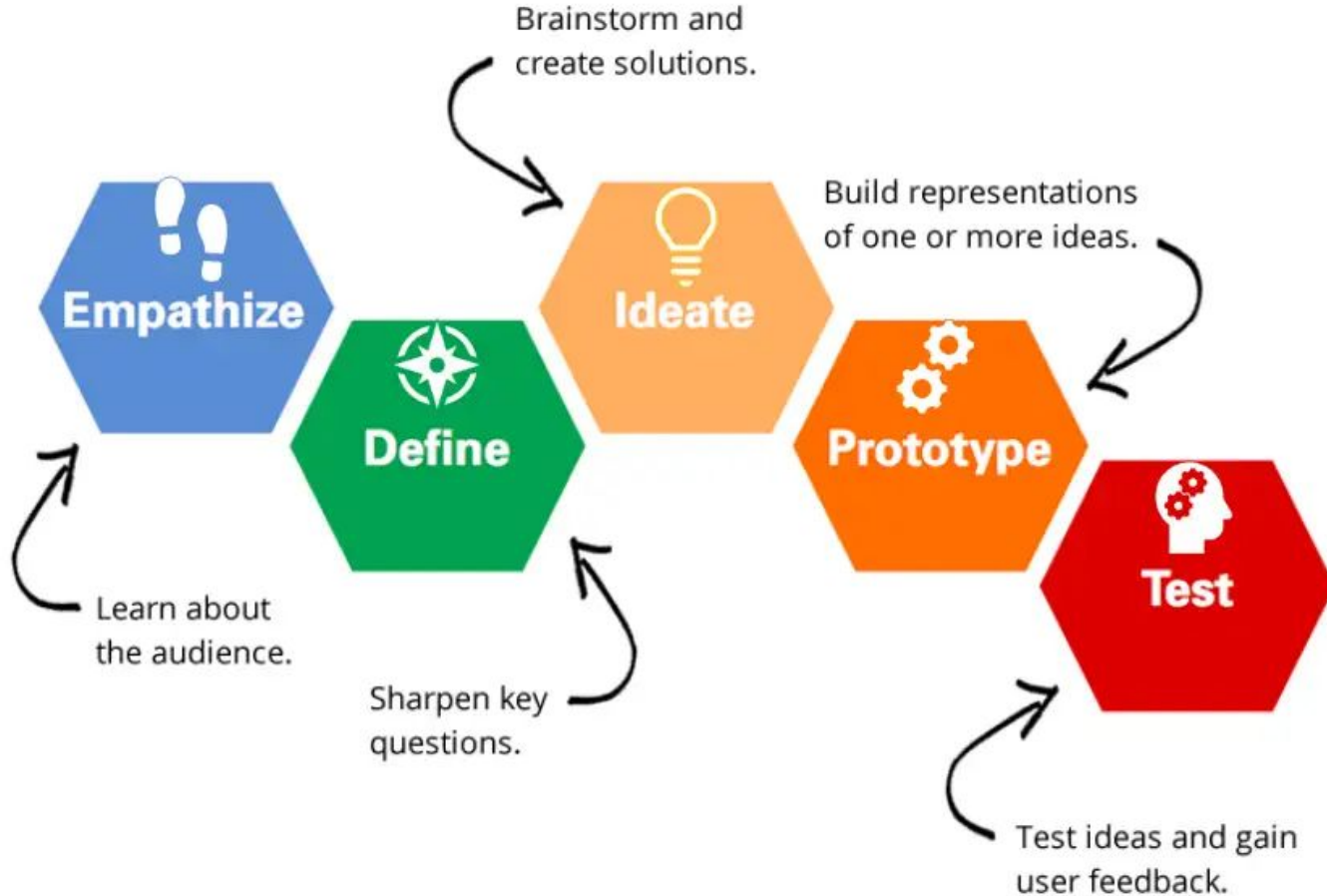


What is the School Meals Design Guide?



- An online hub for practical, easy-to-use tools to better understand your communities' needs and wishes
- Guidance on how to design for and with your community, from start to finish
- Resources to make tangible, user experience (UX) adjustments to the meal program

Design Process



Categories of Tools in the Guide

Activating Students



Welcoming students into the school meal program design

Engaging Caregivers



Make space for caregivers to share perspectives and passions

Connecting with Community



Expand the story of what school meals look like today to build a network of allies

Human-Centered Design 101



Explore basic tools used in the design process, from start to finish

**There are many
ways to understand
people's
preferences better**

Poll

Survey

Observation

Focus group

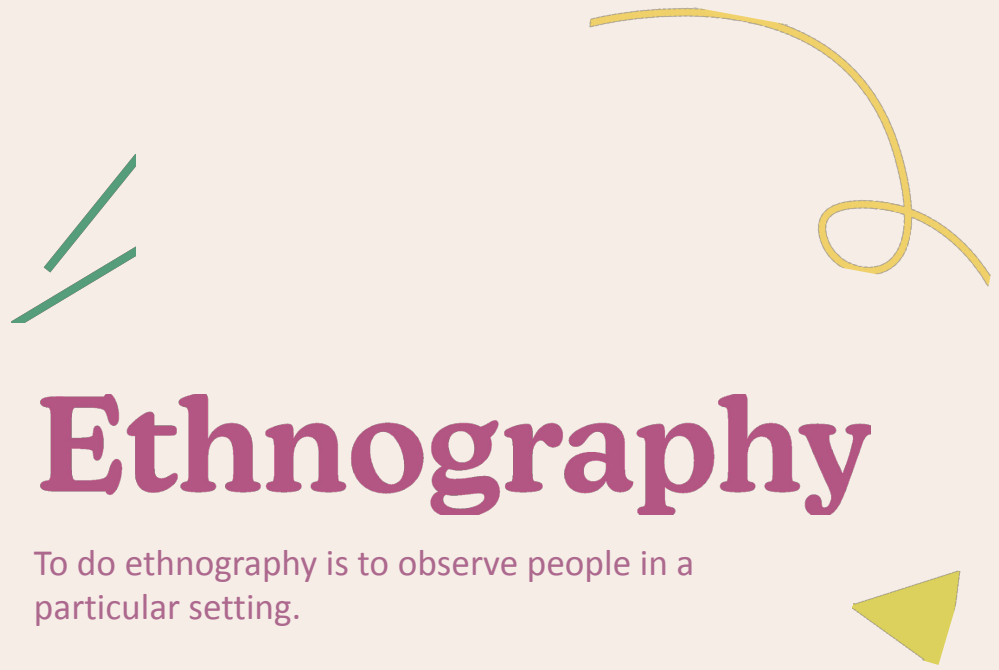
Interview





- Which group (s) do you want to engage?
- How - will you get the survey to them?
- What questions do you want to ask them?

1	Question Bank <i>Select the questions you'd like to put into a print or digital survey</i>			
2	Priority Student Feedback Questions			
3	What is your favorite food served at school? What do you like about it?	Open-ended		
4	What is your favorite thing about lunchtime? Why?	Follow-up		
5	What do you like about the cafeteria?	Open-ended		
6	(When previewing new menu items) Which food did you like more -- e.g., burrito or tamale?	Choose from among new meal items		
7	Which of the following foods would you like to see added (or removed if considering that)? E.g. macaron	Choose from among new meal ideas		
8	What food do you usually eat at school (circle all that apply)	breakfast	lunch	afterschool
9	Why do you eat lunch at school? Why do you not eat lunch at school?	Open-ended		
10	What is one thing you'd want to change about lunch?	Open-ended		
11	Additional Questions for In-Depth Conversations	Gauge current satisfaction and establish a baseline for reflection and impro		
12	What grade are you in?	Open ended		
13	How often do you participate in the meals program?	Never	Sometimes/Occasio	Often/Frequently
14	How often do you eat breakfast at school?	Never	Sometimes/Occasio	Often/Frequently
15	Where do you typically eat school breakfast?	Outside/Quad	In the classroom	In the cafeteria
16	How often do you eat lunch at school?	Never	Sometimes/Occasio	Often/Frequently
17	Where do you typically eat lunch?	Outside/Quad	In the classroom	In the cafeteria



Ethnography

To do ethnography is to observe people in a particular setting.

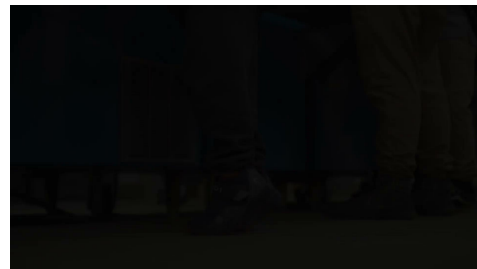


Another tool in this guide, interviewing, encourages you to ask people about what they do and why. But ethnography encourages you to actually observe people engaging and interacting in a specific place.

Even though you've spent countless hours in school cafeterias, intentionally observing and taking notes can allow you see the same people, space, and interactions in a new light.

Instructions:

- Grab a pen/pencil and get ready to take notes
- Instead of observing this clip as a member of the food and nutrition team, imagine yourself as a small child seeing this event for the first time
- Write down everything you see and hear. When someone says something worth noting, write it down as accurately as possible
- After the video, reflect on what you saw and what changes to your meal program you might explore based on this observation



Let's give it a try

Field Notes - Observation

Where:

Date and time:



In chronological order, write down everything you see, hear, taste, and smell as if observing this place and these interactions for the first time. Record now without interpretation. Write down things people say as accurately as possible.

Reflection

What is your interpretation or analysis of what you just observed? Did the kids seem to like the food? Did they enjoy the environment? Was service efficient? Did anything surprise you? Was anything particularly difficult or pleasant to see? What went well? What do you wish were different?



Future Actions

Did your observation inspire you to want to make any changes to your meal program (e.g., more efficient meal service, menu changes, staff trainings, cafeteria environment, etc.)?



A Few Best Practices

1

Give a brief overview of **how school food works**, concentrating on specific areas where you can realistically make changes

2

Create a **safe space** for students to share feedback

3

Be **transparent** about how their feedback will be used

4

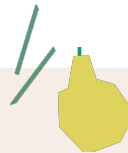
Consider a simple **grounding exercise** to help them collect their thoughts

Grounding before Focus Group or Interview

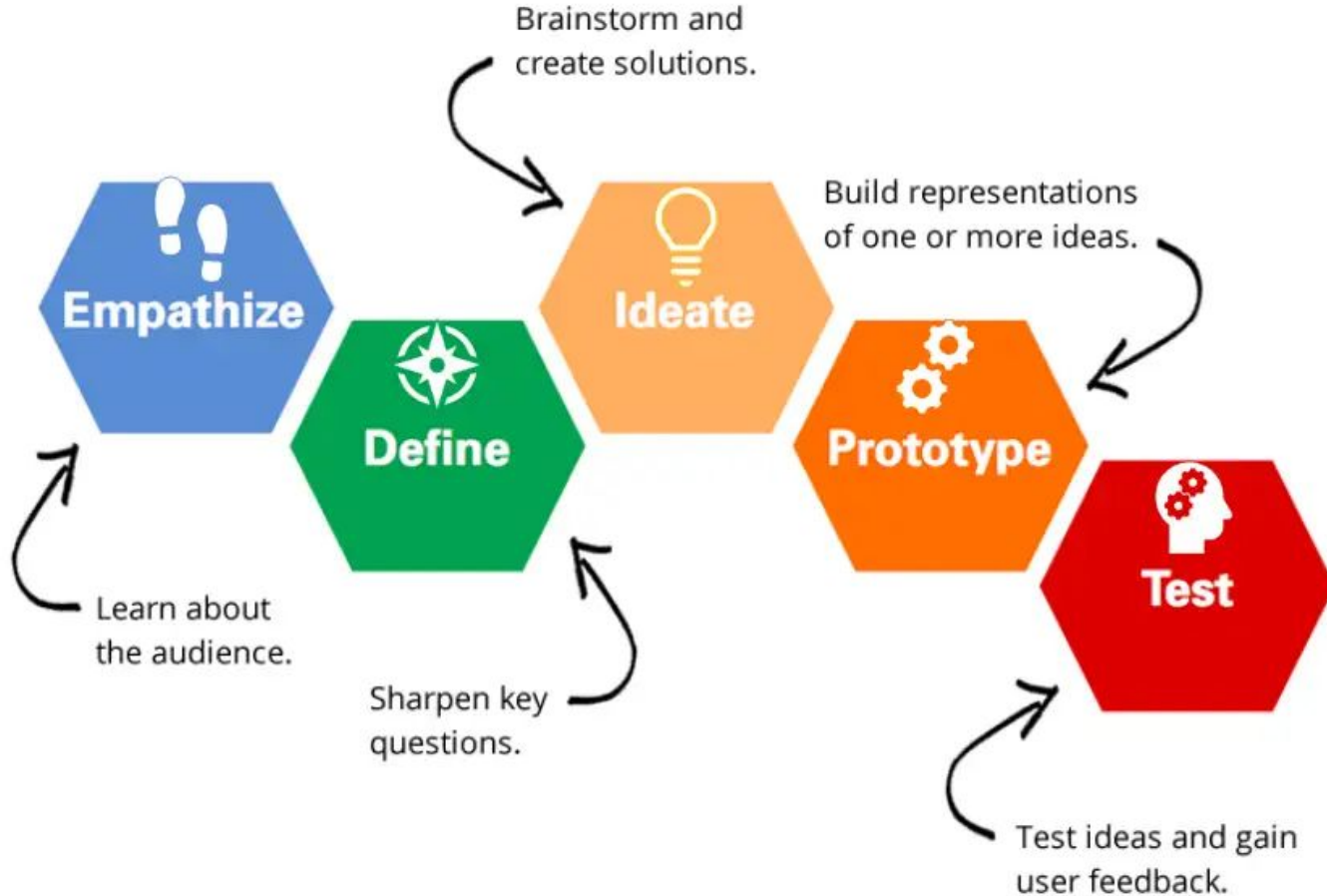
This works for me...

I am curious about...

Meh, this could be better...



Design Process





- **How are you going to get started?**
- **What questions do you have that we can help you think through?**
- **What seems easy? What seems too challenging?**

Thank you!

- Please use and share the guide at www.schoolmealsdesign.org or by visiting No Kid Hungry's website
- Get in touch! Let us know if you use it, if you need support, and how your experience is



2023 RURAL HUNGER SUMMIT

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Share Our Strength





Gathering Student Feedback: An Essential Toolkit

Rural Child Hunger Summit

October, 2023



Why gather student feedback?

A [recent study by No Kid Hungry and FM3](#) found that 87% of teenagers (ages 12-18) would be more likely to participate in school meals if they knew their school gathered feedback from students about how to improve them. This is a great opportunity to gather student input and recommendations to help increase student engagement in school meals and improve program participation.



Start with a Survey!

Surveys allow students to provide pointed feedback on specific menu items and cafeteria logistics in a format without any pressure or repercussions. Surveys are also helpful for identifying which students to engage in listening sessions down the road.

Why are these questions important?

Surveys reach a larger audience than listening sessions, making them the perfect place to seek mass feedback on menu offerings and service models.

Listening Sessions

This format allows students to discuss their thoughts and beliefs with a facilitator and their peers, helping students expand upon each others ideas and even voice differences in opinions.



Who should be involved?

- The Nutrition Team – who is responsible for the success of child nutrition programs?
- Program Administrators – who is responsible for the implementation of child nutrition programs?
- Facilitator – who will act as the facilitator for the discussion?
- Students – who are your program participants?



Organizing the Sessions

- An ideal session has 5-8 students that lasts 45 minutes
- Compensate your participants
- Create a brave space for discussion and address power dynamics that can occur in these settings
- Use a discussion framework to help move the conversation along



“Using No Kid Hungry
allowed us to get a true
student perspective without
students being reserved with
their opinions. Based on the
feedback, we reached out to
one of the trusted teachers at
GCHS and we increased
breakfast participation in one
day!

— MaRendia Garner, School
Nutrition Director at Greenville
County Public Schools





Student Feedback Toolkit

Tools for Conducting Surveys and Listening Sessions for School
Meals with High School-Aged Students

There are links to resources like English and Spanish surveys, sample flyers, listening session guidelines and frameworks, and more in our ONLINE TOOLKIT.

A group of young people, mostly of South Asian descent, are in a kitchen or cafeteria. They are smiling and holding blue trays with food. The background shows other people and kitchen equipment. The lighting is bright and warm.

THANK YOU

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Engagement and
Empowerment

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