

Millions of Kids Are Missing Out on Free School Breakfast

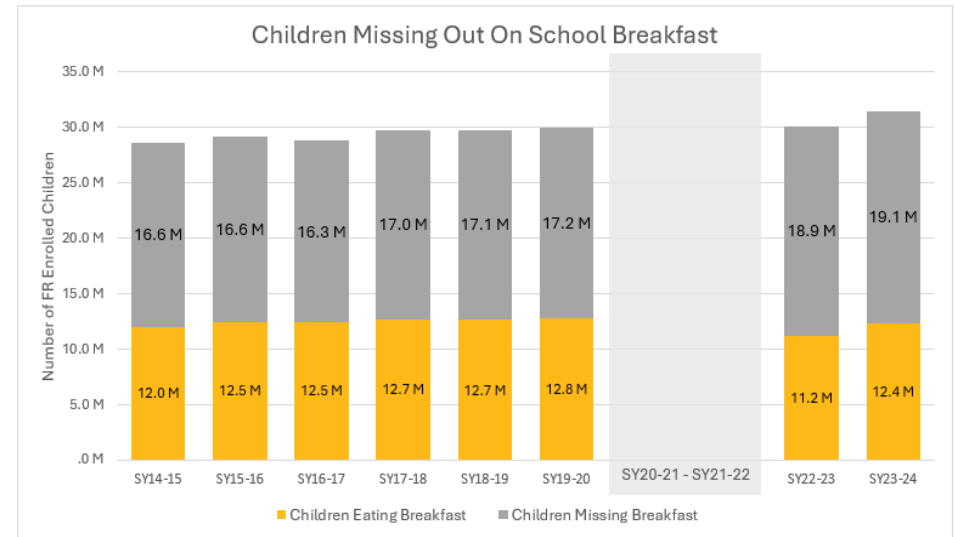
Over 19 million kids are not starting their day with breakfast at school.

Food is the most important school supply – but many kids are missing out.

There is a big gap between the [kids who qualify for free school meals](#) and the kids who actually get them. U.S. public schools reported 31.4 million children were enrolled for free or reduced-price meals during the 2023-24 school year but only 12 million kids started their day with breakfast at school. This means that on an average school day, **over 19 million students missed out** on school breakfast – **that adds up to more than 3 billion missed meals** over the course of the school year.

The solution is breakfast served during the school day, preferably in the classroom before instruction begins.

Many kids miss out on school breakfast because it is served early, before the school day begins and often before the busses arrive. Other kids intentionally skip free school breakfast, even if they're hungry, because of the stigma – they don't want their classmates to think of them as one of “the poor kids”. But making school breakfast a seamless part of the morning by serving it after the official start of the school can remove those barriers and give more kids the chance to eat.



School Meals Participation Data Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture National Data Bank v8.2. SY20-21 and 21-22 excluded from the chart due to national school meal waivers that allowed multiple program flexibilities, artificially inflating what we would consider “normal” meal service.

Learn more about our School Breakfast work at NoKidHungry.org



Kids Missing Out on Free and Reduced-Price (F/R) School Breakfast by State

| State | 2023-24 Number of Students Enrolled in F/R Meals <i>(thousands)</i> | 2023-24 Number of F/R Students Eating Breakfast <i>(thousands)</i> | 2023-24 Number of F/R Students Missing Breakfast <i>(thousands)</i> | 2023-24 Estimated Number of Missed Meals <i>(thousands)</i> |
|----------------------|--|---|--|---|
| Alabama | 585 | 264 | 321 | 53,605 |
| Alaska | 53 | 17 | 36 | 5,946 |
| Arizona | 604 | 216 | 388 | 64,863 |
| Arkansas | 278 | 262 | 17 | 2,779 |
| California | 3,835 | 1,299 | 2,535 | 423,400 |
| Colorado | 365 | 109 | 256 | 42,728 |
| Connecticut | 281 | 111 | 171 | 28,493 |
| Delaware | 81 | 35 | 46 | 7,704 |
| District of Columbia | 96 | 33 | 63 | 10,558 |
| Florida | 2,245 | 737 | 1,507 | 251,735 |
| Georgia | 1,191 | 537 | 653 | 109,075 |
| Hawaii | 89 | 24 | 66 | 10,940 |
| Idaho | 112 | 34 | 78 | 13,026 |
| Illinois | 1,195 | 397 | 798 | 133,326 |
| Indiana | 646 | 267 | 380 | 63,378 |
| Iowa | 261 | 93 | 168 | 28,122 |
| Kansas | 262 | 100 | 162 | 27,094 |
| Kentucky | 582 | 291 | 291 | 48,662 |
| Louisiana | 611 | 265 | 346 | 57,809 |
| Maine | 62 | 30 | 32 | 5,378 |
| Maryland | 543 | 191 | 352 | 58,852 |
| Massachusetts | 522 | 210 | 312 | 52,127 |
| Michigan | 887 | 388 | 499 | 83,284 |
| Minnesota | 433 | 165 | 268 | 44,824 |
| Mississippi | 347 | 167 | 181 | 30,204 |
| Missouri | 425 | 200 | 225 | 37,531 |

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|----------------|--|---|--|---|
| Montana | 75 | 28 | 47 | 7,826 |
| Nebraska | 178 | 65 | 113 | 18,853 |
| Nevada | 243 | 97 | 146 | 24,411 |
| New Hampshire | 39 | 12 | 28 | 4,626 |
| New Jersey | 597 | 278 | 319 | 53,214 |
| New Mexico | 202 | 111 | 91 | 15,255 |
| New York | 2,096 | 754 | 1,342 | 224,090 |
| North Carolina | 1,083 | 416 | 667 | 111,388 |
| North Dakota | 33 | 18 | 15 | 2,505 |
| Ohio | 890 | 360 | 530 | 88,453 |
| Oklahoma | 427 | 167 | 260 | 43,386 |
| Oregon | 297 | 89 | 208 | 34,703 |
| Pennsylvania | 1,047 | 422 | 625 | 104,421 |
| Rhode Island | 62 | 24 | 38 | 6,388 |
| South Carolina | 633 | 255 | 377 | 63,028 |
| South Dakota | 55 | 21 | 34 | 5,700 |
| Tennessee | 605 | 286 | 319 | 53,283 |
| Texas | 3,763 | 1,666 | 2,097 | 350,143 |
| Utah | 214 | 50 | 164 | 27,449 |
| Vermont | 39 | 18 | 21 | 3,477 |
| Virginia | 733 | 335 | 398 | 66,530 |
| Washington | 562 | 160 | 403 | 67,241 |
| West Virginia | 204 | 118 | 85 | 14,210 |
| Wisconsin | 428 | 155 | 273 | 45,608 |
| Wyoming | 36 | 10 | 26 | 4,410 |

School Meals Participation Data Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture National Data Bank v8.2

Estimated Missed Meals is calculated by multiplying Number of F/R Students Missing Breakfast by 167 (an assumed number of annual school days).