Share Our Strength
Afterschool Planning Resources

This document contains information about the tactics and activities Share Our Strength recommends for afterschool programming. It also includes guiding questions and links to online resources to help support planning for all types of afterschool offerings.

Key Acronyms
- CACFP – Child and Adult Care Food Program
- NSLP – National School Lunch Program
- SFSP – Summer Food Service Program

When to Serve Supper versus Snack versus Both

Consider the following when determining the best afterschool meal offering to offer in a particular site/school or geographical area.

1. *Location – Is it a high-need site/school or geographic area?*
   - Consider both supper and snack if time and capacity allow.
   - Consider supper if there is only time for one.
2. *Age of Participants – What is the average age or age range of the participants served?*
   - Elementary school students often respond well to a meal, though with age-appropriate portions.
   - Middle and high school students may prefer an easy-to-grab snack or "super snack" meal.
   - Middle and high schools with large athletic programs may support a meal.
3. *Operating Time – When does the program operate relative to when the participants eat lunch? How long does the program operate?*
   - Consider both supper and snack for longer programs.
   - Consider supper if participants arrive hungry.
4. *Program Capacity – Does the sponsor or site have the capacity to prepare, deliver, hold, and/or distribute meals that meet participants' expectations for quality and variety?*
   - If not, consider cold "super snack" meals or snacks.
5. *Labor Cost Considerations*
   - Snacks, especially with ready-to-eat and individually wrapped items, require little/no labor to prepare and distribute. In areas with high labor costs, it can outweigh the extra cost for ready-to-serve items.
   - Cold suppers often require less labor but higher food costs than hot supper.
   - Hot suppers usually require the highest labor cost but lowest food cost. Hot suppers also allow for more variety.
6. *Other Financial Considerations*
   - The reimbursement per component required is:
     - $0.43 at snack ($0.86 for two components)
     - $0.68 at supper ($3.39 for five components, including USDA foods or cash-in-lieu)
   - The reimbursement for 1 supper with all five components = the same as the reimbursement for 4 snacks, each with two components.
   - Using offer versus serve (OVS) can further reduce food costs for supper.

Increase Supper and/or Snack Participation at Existing School Sites

Questions to Guide Planning

- Where is participation in snacks and/or meals low (i.e. in what geographies or at what schools)?
- How can we encourage schools to reach all children, not just those participating in specific afterschool activities?
- If needed, how can we get additional volunteers, staff, or programming to support a broader afterschool supper/snack program?
- How can we improve the logistics, meal quality, and overall experience to maximize participation?
- How can we effectively promote the availability of suppers/snacks?

Tactics and Activities	Resources

For schools currently serving snacks only, determine if switching to a supper is feasible and if that would increase overall participation.
 	
  o Make a financial case to the school nutrition director that reimbursements for suppers, especially with effective service models that maximize participation, can outweigh costs.
  o Raise awareness of the option for suppers among athletic directors, coaches, afterschool activity coordinators, principals, the superintendent, and school board members.
	o *Understanding Afterschool Snacks and Meals*
	o *Schools as Nutrition Hubs Report*
	o *Make Your School a Nutrition Hub (video)*
	o *Supper Makes Cents for Schools–The Finances of Afterschool Meals*
	o *Three Meals a Day: A Win-Win-Win for Schools*
	    ▪ *Printable Executive Summary*
	    ▪ *Full Resource Guide*

Ensure key stakeholders (e.g. afterschool program coordinators, coaches, administrators, and teachers) are aware of the meal/snack, promote it to students, and build it into afterschool programming. • Ensure stakeholders work with the school nutrition staff to change the logistics (packaging, location(s), time, etc.) as needed to promote participation.	

Promote and assist middle and high schools implementing the Umbrella Model to expand meal access to all students.
  • Enlist coaches and athletic directors to support a broader program that would allow athletes to eat.
  • Work with school and district administrators, afterschool program coordinators, and the state agency to ensure that everyone is comfortable with the plans for supervision, programming, logistics, and record keeping.
  • Engage volunteers, AmeriCorps or VISTA members, or outside organizations as needed to provide additional support. Consider if higher participation would provide enough reimbursement funding to compensate food service or afterschool program staff needed to distribute meals and maintain records.
  • If necessary, consider permission slips/waivers or other tools to help administrators feel comfortable with students staying after school without being enrolled in an activity.
	o *The Umbrella Model Report*
	o *The Umbrella Model Handout*

Promote the supper/snack regularly through periodic in-school announcements, posters/menus/flyers, website, social media, and communications or events with parents.	o *Sample Promotional Text for the Umbrella Model* o *Customizable Afterschool Outreach Postcard* o *Example Afterschool Outreach Postcard* o *Template Afterschool Meals Facebook and Twitter Posts*

Promote and assist elementary schools implementing Supper in the Classroom (SIC).
  • Ensure stakeholder engagement, including teachers, administrators, food service workers, custodians, and administration; use stories and data to illustrate the need; develop strategies to minimize waste and mess as needed.
 	
★*Special Notes* ★ *Consider SIC for schools that:*
  • *Are extended-day or expanded-learning-time (≥1 hour longer than required or standard for that grade level).*
    o *These schools can serve supper before the bell.*
    o *Schools with shortened school weeks (e.g. Monday-Thursday) likely qualify.*
  • *Are located in rural areas with few transportation options.*
  • *Have limited afterschool activities.*
  • *Can adjust the final bell time (because it's over the minimum required instructional time but by <1 hour).*
  • *Can adjust bus schedules (although teacher contracts may still present a problem in this case).*
	o *Supper in the Classroom Report*
	o *Supper in the Classroom Handout*

Tactics and Activities	Resources
Improve meal quality, packaging, and branding. • Survey students to get their input. • Consider "super snacks" branding to manage expectations for cold meals. • Consider transportable boxes or bags if the school and state agency are comfortable with students taking meals to their activities or eating them in a preferred location on campus. • Consider clear packaging or lids as a way to showcase the day's meal.	o *Optimizing Summer and Afterschool Meal Service* o *Strategies to Reduce Food Waste in Schools & Child Nutrition Programs* o *Alliance for a Healthier Generation Smart Food Planner*
Work with district administrators (superintendent, school board, transportation officials, etc.) to change bus schedules in order to better accommodate students staying for the supper/snack.	
Support opportunities for peer learning, such as regional meetings for school nutrition directors or site visits, where directors can share best practices and new ideas.	
Provide grants to support promotion and infrastructure needed to increase participation.	

Increase the Number of School Sites Serving Suppers and/or Snacks

Questions to Guide Planning
• Where are there gaps in schools participating, especially where there are also gaps in community-based sponsors and sites? How can we coordinate efforts if there are existing sponsors and sites in the area? • How can we make the right case to the right stakeholders that suppers and snacks are a valuable service to offer? • How can we use partnerships to overcome barriers in schools/districts that are unwilling or unable to manage all aspects of the program?

Tactics and Activities	Resources
Support opportunities for peer learning, such as regional meetings for school nutrition directors or site visits, where directors new to the program learn from those already serving suppers or see the program in action.	
Identify and support NSLP snack implementation at schools that are not area-eligible.	o *Understanding Afterschool Snacks and Meals*
Identify and support effective implementation in districts not currently sponsoring afterschool suppers/snacks, especially if there are enrichment activities or after care programs occurring at eligible schools within the district. • Focus on districts with greater numbers of area-eligible schools, schools with very high free/reduced-price eligibility percentages, and/or large area-eligible schools. • If the district is unwilling to sponsor, consider connecting the district or schools to existing sponsors or organizations willing to sponsor the schools as meal sites.	

Identify districts with food service management companies or vendors to make the financial case for suppers and enlist their support in implementing afterschool meals.	o *Schools as Nutrition Hubs Report*
	o *Make Your School a Nutrition Hub (video)*
	o *Supper Makes Cents for Schools–The Finances of Afterschool Meals*
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Identify opportunities to connect with athletic directors, coaches, afterschool activity coordinators, principals, the superintendent, and school board members to raise awareness, make the case for snacks/suppers, and find champions.	
Provide grants to support promotion and infrastructure needed to start afterschool snacks/suppers.	

Leverage Partners and Networks to Build support, Facilitate Partnerships, and Expand Access

Questions to Guide Planning
• Are there places in the community where kids are spending time after school, especially places that offer some kind of enrichment activity?
• How can we expand participation to those kids outside of school? Do schools have the capacity to sponsor community locations for snacks/suppers? If not, who else has capacity?
• How can we retain sponsors, especially those that operate year-round?
• Who can provide additional assets (programming, volunteers/staff, locations, food service, transportation, promotion) to support expansion?

Tactics and Activities	Resources
Take advantage of Summer Meals sponsor councils, collaborative planning groups, and/or debrief or planning meetings as well as broader community coalitions or workgroups to promote afterschool meals and snacks as well as year-round program sponsorship. o Consider making afterschool meals a regular part of these groups or meetings.	o *Center for Best Practices Collaborative Planning Toolkit*
Provide and/or support opportunities for sponsor networking and peer mentoring, such as Afterschool summits, sponsor councils, or site visits with successful sponsors.	
Identify existing school or community-based non-profit CACFP afterschool sponsors with the capacity to sponsor afterschool programs that do not want to apply and participate independently.	
If existing sponsors do not have enough capacity, identify potential new sponsors, such as CACFP child care center or family child care sponsors, SFSP sponsors, government entities (like a parks and recreation department), or other trusted, high-capacity community services agencies.	o *Afterschool Meals and Summer Meals Comparison Chart*
Engage afterschool programming networks and participate in meetings (ex. Afterschool Alliance, 21st Century Community Learning Centers) to promote suppers/snacks and connect potential sites with willing sponsors.	
Connect with the YMCA, especially branches participating in the peer mentor network or year-round meal program grants, to support year-round meal program efforts. If branches are not currently participating, encourage them to get connected to YMCA resources.	o *www.TheYFeedsKids.org*
Engage library networks and associations to encourage libraries to serve as afterschool sites, and connect libraries with willing sponsors.	
Provide grants to support promotion and infrastructure needed to start afterschool snacks/suppers. o Focus on established, high-capacity sponsors rather than individual programs.	

Collaborate with the State Agency and Other Officials to Reduce Barriers and Set the Stage for Expansion

Questions to Guide Planning
• How can we build a positive, mutually beneficial relationship with the state agency to lend credibility to our work and increase our impact with outreach and disseminating effective strategies?   • What are administrative or state policy and regulatory barriers to the program, and how can we work to overcome them?

Tactics and Activities	Resources
If meeting health and safety standards is a barrier, assess the current standards, if any, and determine needs, such as: • Legislative action to develop standards for community-based afterschool programs; • Policies or procedures for approving programs; • Education of state or local health, sanitation, or fire officials; • Agreements among agencies to conduct health inspections; or • Education or resources for programs trying to comply.	
Partner with the state agency to assist where needed: • Conduct outreach, • Develop outreach materials, • Present at trainings, or • Convene stakeholders for collaborative planning.	
Encourage or support the state agency in implementing available streamlining options for sponsors operating NSLP, SFSP, and/or CACFP Afterschool, and support the child nutrition program staff in optimizing its staff and place within its host agency.	○ *Streamlining and Cross-Promoting CACFP and SFSP* ○ *State Agency Administration of Afterschool Snack and Meal Program Report* ○ *Moving and Consolidating Child Nutrition Program State Agencies*
Encourage and support the state agency in upgrading computer systems to simplify the application and claiming processes as well as facilitate reporting and data analysis.	