

ABOUT THE NO KID HUNGRY FOR BEST PRACTICES

Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry® campaign is ending childhood hunger by connecting kids to the healthy food they need, every day; teaches families how to cook healthy, affordable meals through Cooking Matters®; and invests in community organizations that fight hunger.

The No Kid Hungry Center for Best Practices provides the tools and resources needed to help elected officials and their staff, educators and community leaders achieve success in fighting childhood hunger. Learn what works in the fight against childhood hunger and discover toolkits, case studies, hunger stats, issue briefs, reports and more at BestPractices.NoKidHungry.org.



LESSONS LEARNED:

NYC SCHOOL BREAKFAST FOCUS GROUPS

In January 2013, the New York City No Kid Hungry campaign hired Global Strategy Group to conduct focus groups with parents from the Washington Heights area of the city to determine their awareness about the School Breakfast Program and learn more about their interest in the program overall, some potential barriers to participation and marketing best practices.

Parents who participated in the focus groups, most of whom already participate in other federal assistance programs, openly discussed factors that might make this program appealing. This included:

- key benefits of the free school breakfast program;
- how participation can help relieve strained food budgets;
- the lack of perceived program stigma in this community; and
- the overall importance that every child is able to start their day with a healthy breakfast.

The following is an overview of the lessons learned from this research project.

COMMUNICATE CLEARLY

Parents prefer simple language that gets straight to the point. For example “Breakfast is free for everyone” rather than “Have your first meal on us.” Emphasize that school breakfast is free and focus on the positive benefits of breakfast—healthy, helps kids focus, etc.—rather than the negative consequences of skipping breakfast.

INFORMATION IS KEY

Underscore that no forms are needed for students to receive a free school breakfast. Parents said providing a menu could help them plan whether or not their child will eat school breakfast that day. Parents also expressed a desire for accountability, and had a positive reaction to the idea of serving breakfast in the classroom—this way, they said, their child’s teacher would know if they are eating breakfast as long as it is emphasized that this will not take away from instructional time.

WIDELY DISTRIBUTE INFORMATION

Many parents said they do not go inside the school on a regular basis, so distributing outreach materials about school breakfast in parks, on buses and the subway, and in local community centers is key. Traditional and online marketing mediums are well received by parents, along with direct mailing.

PICTURE SPEAKS A THOUSAND WORDS

School Breakfast materials should convey an open invitation to breakfast, but should be informative in tone. Images of kids eating a healthy school breakfast help communicate what the program is about and allow parents to connect to the program. Parents cite using logos helps give the materials credibility and school breakfast materials should be distinguished from materials about other food and nutrition programs by using different color schemes.

WORDS TO USE

- Free breakfast
- Breakfast is for everyone
- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- Nutritional breakfast
- Free and available to all
- Good for your children
- Healthy foods
- Including milk, juice, fresh fruits, eggs, and whole grains
- Enjoy a healthy breakfast

WORDS TO LOSE

- Show identification
- Have your first meal on us
- Federal nutritional guidelines

“Breakfast is very important for you. It helps (kids) improve their brains and concentrate throughout the day.”

- Spanish-dominant Parent

