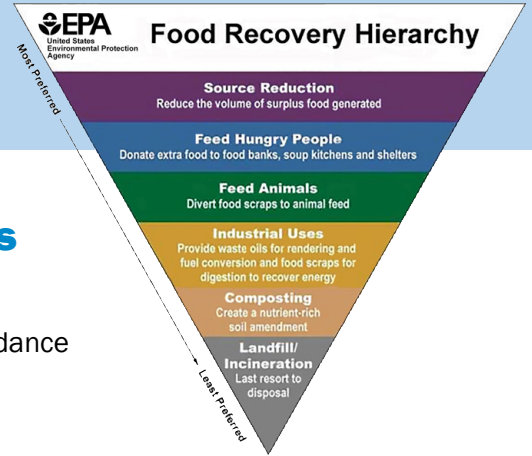


Food Tips for K-12 Schools: Get Kids To Eat More and Waste Less

Reduce waste from School Breakfast/Lunch Programs and retain reimbursement. Join the [EPA Food Recovery Challenge](#) and [USDA Food Waste Challenge](#) for resources and recognition opportunities.

EPA's Food Recovery Hierarchy (right) prioritizes food recovery strategies.

This factsheet helps schools identify proven best practices and the USDA guidance to support them.



Best Practices



Schedule [recess before lunch](#) to reduce plate waste by as much as 30%.

[Extend the lunch period](#) from 20 to 30 minutes to reduce waste by as much as 33%.

Add a [Share Table](#) where kids can drop off unwanted food and drink for others or for donation.

Opt in to "[Offer Versus Serve](#)" (OVS) to minimize food waste by allowing students to decline some of the food offered in a reimbursable lunch or breakfast while assuring the meal is still reimbursable.



[Market your meals](#) to make them more appealing so kids will [eat more](#) and waste less.

Join the [Smarter Lunchrooms Movement](#) – it provides assessments, strategies, easy to use resources.

Measure it! Use the [Guide to Conducting Student Food Waste Audits](#) to determine what is being wasted and why, so you can take action to reduce waste and improve nutrition.



More Great Ideas on How to Reduce Wasted Food

[Learn about](#) creative solutions to ending school food waste – see what other schools are doing.

Read this [booklet](#) to find ways to reduce, recover, and recycle food before it goes to waste.

Incorporate food waste and recovery into [lesson plans](#).

Check out these USDA Food Waste [Webinar Videos & Presentations](#).

Disclaimer: Many of the resources and websites listed in this document are not sponsored by EPA. EPA is listing them for your information only. EPA is not responsible for their content and does not endorse any commercial product, service, enterprise, or policy that may be included.

Donation:

Did you know USDA allows donation of excess wholesome food from school nutrition programs?

[Legal Guide to Food Recovery](#) has information on the Good Samaritan Act & liability.

[Food Bus Food Recovery Toolkit](#) is a program to help schools implement food recovery.

California Department of Education provides [Guidance on the Donation of Leftover Food](#).

[Food Rescue](#) has a free tracking tool, inspiring videos, and guides.

Learn more about Share Tables in [Enabling Share Tables in the National School Lunch Program: A Legal Review and Best Management Practices Guide](#).



USDA Guidance: Reducing Waste in School Breakfast and Lunch Programs While Retaining Reimbursement

[Offer Versus Serve \(OVS\) Guidance](#) for 2015/2016 has all you need to know about OVS and reimbursable meals.

[School Meals Guidance and Resources](#) includes websites, tools, Q&As, handbooks and guidance.

[The Use of Share Tables 2016 memo](#) details how to use share tables in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP).

[The Clarification of the Policy on Food Consumption Outside of Foodservice Area](#) memo clarifies student consumption of certain lunch or breakfast items outside of the foodservice area and meal period.

Review [Guidance on the Food Donation Program in Child Nutrition Programs](#) in this Feb 2012 memo.



For More Information:

EPA Sustainable Management of Food Website:
www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food

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