



Taking a Closer Look at the School Cafeteria

Easy Merchandising Ideas to Increase Sales of Healthful Foods

Researchers Dr. Brian Wansink and Dr. David Just, Cornell Food and Brand Lab, have been investigating how to use school cafeterias as vehicles for encouraging healthful eating among students.

Incorporating principles from psychology, behavioral economics, and business, Wansink and Just's research has uncovered creative, sustainable, low-or no-cost school cafeteria-based tactics for improving students' eating behaviors.

Major findings: Eating environment is critical...

- We eat *more* when we are *distracted* (e.g. when sitting in front of a computer or TV)
- We eat *more* when we use *larger dishware* (e.g. 12-inch plate instead 9-inch)
- *Food names and descriptions influence our eating behaviors* (e.g. "Berry Blast Yogurt Parfaits" are more appealing than "Fruit & Yogurt Parfaits")
- We eat *more* of a food if we *see it* (e.g. A bowl of fruit positioned right next to the cash register vs. behind the glass in the serving line)



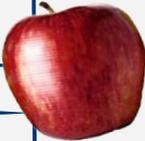
So, what does this mean for you?

These findings are relevant for children because they have not fully developed the ability to evaluate costs and benefits. Instead children act based on emotion and impulse.

Wansink and Just suggest using these findings to organize your school cafeteria in a way that leads students to make healthful food choices, without them even knowing it.

Tricks to Try:

*Studies have shown that...

Place fruit near the register where it is more visible		Moving or highlighting fruit can increase sales up to 102%
Display whole fruit in an attractive bowl		
Add signs that call attention to fruit		
Give vegetables and entrees creative and appealing names (e.g. "X-Ray Vision Carrots" or "Big Bad Bean Burritos")		Creatively naming vegetables - and displaying those names - can increase vegetable selection by 40% to 70%
Move your school cafeteria's salad bar so that students have to pass by it		One school experienced a 2 to 3 fold increase in salad bar sales by simply rotating the bar 90 degrees and moving it to the center of the cafeteria
Put the more healthful entrée options at the front of the service line or at top of the menu board		The first or highlighted options in line are chosen 11% more often than the second ones
Increase vegetable options		When given a choice of vegetables (rather than being told which one they had to take) students ate 22% more
Make sure milk is served cold, in attractive packaging, and in high visibility displays		Visibly and attractively displaying milk and serving it ice-cold increased sales by 18%**

Fuel Up to Play 60 Can Help!

FUTP 60 action strategies or “Plays” offer great opportunities for you to modify your school cafeteria environment and put some of this fascinating research into practice.

A sampling of related plays is included below. Check out the Interactive Playbook on FuelUpToPlay60.com for more ideas.



Cafeteria Restyle Plays

A Little Paint Can Go a Long Way

Give your cafeteria a facelift with a new paint job by forming a team to repaint the walls or holding a contest for students to create a healthy lifestyles mural.

Cafeteria Culture

Create monthly themed cafeteria decorations highlighting the nutritious food choices available. Incorporate cultural themes based on your school's population to get everyone involved.

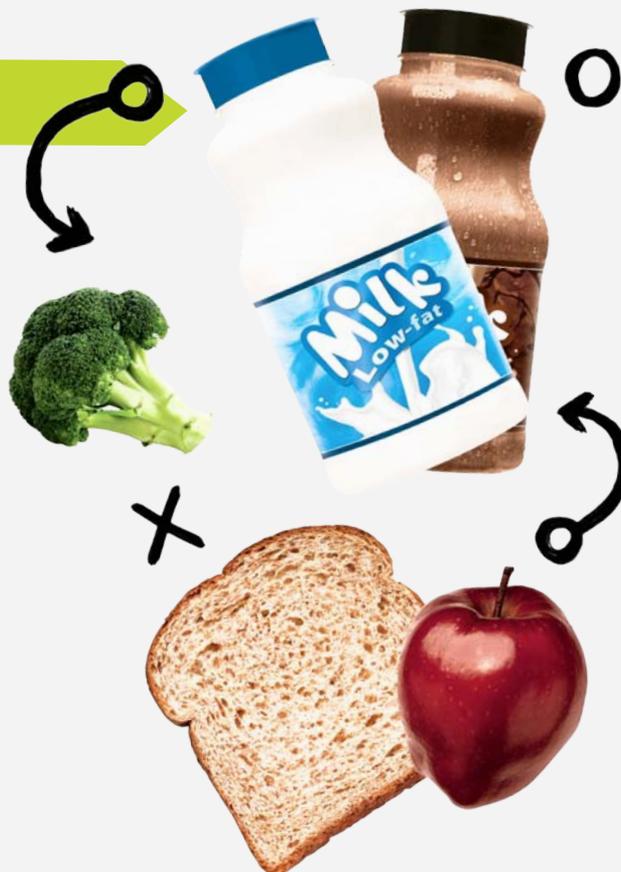
Menu Makeover

Redesign the menus and signs in the cafeteria to highlight the nutritious food options and promote making healthier eating choices during school.

Making Nutritious Foods Fun Plays

Vending Revamp: Work with your school leaders to reorganize vending machines in your school. Move the machines with nutrient-rich options to high-traffic areas. Then move the healthier choices to eye level in the machines – or better yet, get the less healthy choices replaced with healthier options.

Point-of-Purchase Promo: Make and place signs to highlight the nutrient-rich options in your cafeteria serving line. Working with the school nutrition manager, “rename” healthy foods on the menu so they are more appealing to everyone at your school. A simple renaming of foods can make these options more appealing and can make more students want to eat them.



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