

## Food Loss Prevention Options for Grade Schools - Draft Under Review

Below is a list of food loss prevention ideas for grade schools. Please use this document as a guide for potential activities that you can implement or feel free to add your own activities to the list.

**[Join the US EPA's Food Recovery Challenge! :](http://www.epa.gov/smm)** <http://www.epa.gov/smm>

- Perform a waste audit.** This is your essential starting point for all other activities. A waste audit will tell you what is being thrown out and why. With this data, one can target those activities in reducing food waste. For example, pick a sample number of days and be there at the dish return line with a few volunteers, a few buckets and a weight scale and record what is being thrown out, how much, and ask the students why they threw out that food. In the kitchen, have only one food waste bin and give each staff a small container to have with them to fill with waste. Have a log sheet and a scale at the main bin for staff to record what is being thrown out and how much. You can then adjust the menu, purchasing, or portion sizes accordingly. Tip: volunteering can part of the core curriculum or count toward community service hours for many student organizations. Contact your EPA representative for log sheets, signs, and other tools. Example of a landfill waste audit showing a large portion of school waste is milk and tator tots: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LMO-01IZbm8> Some example resources: [http://www2.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-08/foodwaste\\_audit\\_tool.xlsm](http://www2.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-08/foodwaste_audit_tool.xlsm) [http://www2.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-08/documents/r5\\_fd\\_wste\\_guidebk\\_020615.pdf](http://www2.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-08/documents/r5_fd_wste_guidebk_020615.pdf)
  
- Share tables:** A share table is simply a place where children may return whole items that they choose not to eat. Check with your local health department and school boards about donation and sharing - if allowed, then these items are then available to other children who may want additional helpings. This practice may be facilitated by serving meal components that can be easily "recycled." For example, if milk is served in individual cartons, a child can return an unopened milk carton to the share table. Complete meals and nonperishable components that remain on a share table may be appropriately stored for subsequent service. [http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SP%2008\\_SFSP%2008-2014os.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SP%2008_SFSP%2008-2014os.pdf)
  
- Offer Vs Serve:** USDA - Offer versus Serve (OVS) is a provision in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) that allows students to decline some of the food offered. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SP45-2013os.pdf>
  
- Smaller dishes:** When available, purchase smaller serving dishes and give children the opportunity to choose portion size. <http://foodpsychology.cornell.edu/op/servingkids>
  
- Recess before lunch** reduced plate waste from 40.7% to 27.2%. - <http://docs.schoolnutrition.org/newsroom/jcnm/04fall/bergman/bergman1.asp> <http://www.ers.usda.gov/media/887982/efan02009.pdf>

- Offer a gardening and culinary class:** Having onsite gardens might reduce purchasing of food that may also require additional freight and storage to get to the school. Also, when students get to participate in the growing of food themselves, they might be less likely to waste it at lunch. - <http://www.endfoodwastenow.org/index.php/issues/issues-schools>
- Buy local foods** to reduce impacts of additional travel distance and storage time associated with non-local foods. [http://www.nrdc.org/globalWarming/files/eatgreenfs\\_feb2010.pdf](http://www.nrdc.org/globalWarming/files/eatgreenfs_feb2010.pdf)
- Create a student advisory group** that encourages student input in creating more satisfying menus thus leading to reduction in wasted food by stocking the cafeteria with food that will be eaten. Bottom of Pg 4 <http://www.ers.usda.gov/media/887982/efan02009.pdf>
- Purchase foods that uses less water to produce.** An example resource that shows how much water each food takes to produce can be found here: <http://waterfootprint.org/en/resources/interactive-tools/product-gallery/>
- Introduce water cups as a low cost way to reduce milk waste.** Some students will take a milk but will not drink it and end up throwing most or all of it away. Have water cups next to the milk in the lunch line to give the children another choice of beverage without costing the school anything. Also, help the kids understand they do not have to take a milk if they don't want to.
- Change lunch periods from 20 minutes to 30 minutes.** Overall food waste decreased from 43.5% to 27.2% when the length of the lunch period was 30 minutes versus 20 minutes - <http://docs.schoolnutrition.org/newsroom/jcnm/04fall/bergman/bergman2.asp>
- Offer more foods associated with less deforestation and less greenhouse gas pollution.** Encourage these options through signage and other means. <http://mitigation2014.org/>
- Tips on minimizing mandatory fruit/vegetable serving waste.** Many schools may be mandated to offer or serve a fruit/vegetable serving to the children. If children don't eat their fruit/vegetables, there may be waste. Below are tips to minimize waste from that mandatory serving:
  1. **Pre-ordering** increases healthy eating: <http://foodpsychology.cornell.edu/outreach/preordering.html>
  2. **Slice that fruit:** the percentage of students who ate more than half of their apple increased by 73% when the apple was sliced. - <http://foodpsychology.cornell.edu/outreach/slice.html>
  3. **Do you want fruit with that?:** sales of a suggested item can increase by as much as 50%. [http://foodpsychology.cornell.edu/outreach/nudge\\_lunch.html](http://foodpsychology.cornell.edu/outreach/nudge_lunch.html)
  4. **Apples in baskets:** Moving healthy foods to more convenient and attractive places such as moving apples from behind the sneeze shield to baskets in a well lit area showed actual consumption increased by 18% for fruits and 25% for vegetables. Less than \$50 to implement. - [http://foodpsychology.cornell.edu/outreach/nudge\\_lunch.html](http://foodpsychology.cornell.edu/outreach/nudge_lunch.html)
  5. **X-Ray Vision Carrots:** By changing the carrots to "X-ray vision carrots", a whopping 66% were eaten, far greater than the 32% eaten when labeled "Food of the Day" and 35% eaten when unnamed. - <http://foodpsychology.cornell.edu/outreach/whatname.html>

6. **What would Batman eat?:** by showing children photos of role models and asking children: “Would this person order apple fries or French fries?” , 36.4% more children made the healthy choice for lunch. - <http://foodpsychology.cornell.edu/outreach/batman.html>
7. **Put healthy foods closer in reach:** closing the lid on a freezer that contains ice cream reduces the number of people choosing ice cream from 30% to 14%. Moving salad bars and fruit closer to students' reach increased both sales and consumption.
8. **Chef made meals** can increase overall selection of and consumption of vegetables by 16% - [http://foodpsychology.cornell.edu/OP/chefs\\_move\\_to\\_schools](http://foodpsychology.cornell.edu/OP/chefs_move_to_schools)

**Other idea:** Have an idea not on this list? Tell us about it!

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**This draft is under review.**

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