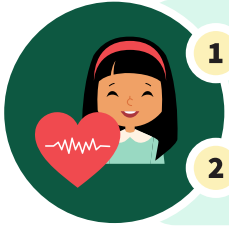




# TEN REASONS TO BUILD BACK EVEN BETTER WITH SCHOOL MEALS!

School meals are one of the most important tools for ensuring children have access to healthy and nutritious food. USDA strengthened school meal standards in 2012. Research on the impact of these changes emphasizes why we must build back *even better* for the healthiest school meals.

## SCHOOL MEALS ARE CRITICAL TO IMPROVING CHILD HEALTH



1

For many children, the food they receive from school breakfast and lunch makes up about half their dietary intake each school day.<sup>[1]</sup>

2

Children without consistent access to the nutrition they need are at a higher risk for diet-related chronic diseases including obesity. Meanwhile, healthy eating can reduce the risk of developing high blood pressure, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, cancer, and more.<sup>[2]</sup>

## SCHOOLS HAVE SHOWN THAT NUTRITIOUS MEALS ARE ACHIEVABLE



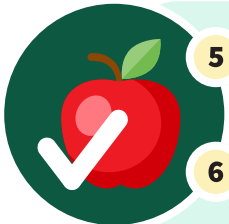
3

American children get their healthiest meals of the day at school.<sup>[3]</sup>

4

Just two years after the 2012 nutrition standards were put in place, more than 90% of school lunches included the required amounts of fruit, protein foods, and milk, and about 80% included the required amounts of vegetables and grains.<sup>[4]</sup>

## SCHOOLS, PARENTS, AND KIDS ALL LIKE HEALTHIER SCHOOL MEALS



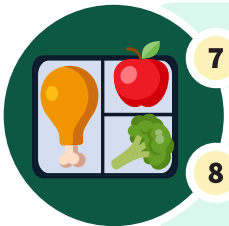
5

Schools that served healthier meals had school meal participation rates 10 percentage points higher than schools that served less healthy meals.<sup>[4]</sup>

6

Over 80% of parents of students who had ever eaten a school meal were satisfied with the school meals.<sup>[4]</sup>

## STRONG SCHOOL MEAL STANDARDS IMPROVE NUTRITION



7

The average Healthy Eating Index (HEI) score – a measure of diet quality – for school lunch went up by 24 points out of 100 after the 2012 meal standards; school breakfast went up by 21 points.<sup>[4]</sup>

8

Kids who ate lunches from school were more likely to consume milk, fruits, and vegetables and less likely to consume desserts, snack items, and non-milk beverages.<sup>[4]</sup>

## NUTRITION STANDARDS HELP SCHOOLS SERVE HEALTHIER MEALS



9

78% of school food service directors found USDA's school meal standards helpful in decreasing sodium intake.<sup>[4]</sup>

10

70% of school food service directors reported the standards were helpful in serving kids the right amount of calories and getting kids to eat more dark green and red/orange vegetables.<sup>[4]</sup>