PREVIEW
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SCHOOL LUNCHROOM REDESIGN TOOLKIT
making the healthy choice the easy choice
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What is the School Lunchroom Redesign?

The school lunchroom redesign is an advocacy project created by the Real Food, Active Living team of Youth Empowered Solutions (YES!). Our project is based on the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement.¹ We are trying to implement easy, low cost methods of making the healthier options sold in school cafeterias more appealing. The goal of our project is to make the healthy option in a school cafeteria the easy option. We were inspired to work on this after learning that healthy school lunches are linked to better performance on standardized tests, higher grades, and better behavior.² Helping students choose the healthier options provides the opportunity to keep their bodies nourished throughout the day. The school lunchroom redesign project will not change the food that schools serve, but make the healthy options more appealing to students.

Step-by-Step Checklist

- Read through the material provided about the redesign and get online and research it!

- Plan what specific changes you want to implement at your school.

- Send an email to the key players: Child Nutrition Services manager, principal and cafeteria manager asking to meet with them to discuss the redesign (see sample emails). Communicate with Child Nutrition Services to figure out what you can and can’t do within their health restrictions.
• Print out Redesign Facts and How to Redesign Your Cafeteria. Educate yourself with facts on the benefits of the redesign, so you can thoroughly explain the project and the effect you expect to see. Bring these printed materials to your meeting with the key player.

• Meet with the key players to explain the purpose and go into further detail explaining the cafeteria redesign (see explanation of redesign).

• Request cafeteria sales records before implementing the project, so you will have tangible data of the sales before implementing the redesign.

• Work with Child Nutrition Services to help them market their food with more appealing names, ask them to change the name of the produce on the menus that go out to students.

• Spend an afternoon redesigning your school’s cafeteria.³
  o Create a Healthy Express Line.
  o Print off, laminate and post the labels for the foods.
  o Get baskets to put fruit in.
  o Install a water cup dispenser.
  o Move the ice cream and sweets so they are not at the end of the line and easy to grab.
  o Put healthy options near the cash register.
  o You have more options in the redesign - make sure you have figured out which options work best for you and your cafeteria.

• Help the school market their changes by: making signs, helping them develop Facebook/Twitter posts or getting the menu read on the announcements.

• Educate the cafeteria manager on the changes you made and provide him/her with this toolkit so that the redesign can continue being implemented after you graduate or move on.

• Ask the cafeteria manager for the sales record after implementing the School Lunchroom Redesign to see if sales of fruits and veggies have gone up.

• Conduct verification to see if the redesign has been successful.

• Celebrate your success, inform the media (letter to the editor) and promote the redesign to other schools!