

# What Do You Get When Children Play Before They Eat Lunch?



# Children Who Are Ready to Eat and Then Ready to Learn!



## Consider the benefits:

- Children eat more. They are hungry and ready to eat more of their lunch. They are not rushing out to play.
- It's cost effective. Children throw away less food. Which means more value for the food service dollar.
- Cafeteria behavior is better. Children are focused on their lunch, not recess and socializing.
- Classroom behavior is better. Children are quieter and more settled when they return to class.
- Children are ready to learn. They have eaten well and can pay better attention in their afternoon classes.



## Nebraska schools report:

*"We thought it wouldn't work. But we were wrong! It is wonderful. The children eat more and throw away less because they don't have the pressure to finish for recess. They look forward to every lunch, no matter what is served. At first it was very hard to get over the hungry tummies because of the late lunch, but soon more and more began to eat breakfast. That has really helped the morning study time, too!"*

Teachers at Litchfield Public School

*"Recess first is a beneficial change, the children eat more and are more settled when they go to class."*

Teachers at Orchard Public School

## Schools across the nation have made the change:

*"We feel children eat better and are more ready to learn when they return to the classroom after eating. There is also more participation in hot meals."*

Elementary School, Valparaiso, IN

*"Kids eat their food and drink their milk. . . food waste is way down. They are no longer in a hurry to throw their food away to get to recess."*

Elementary School, Northglenn, CO



## Tips for Success

- Work out details in advance with the school food service manager, teachers and other staff.
- Set up a routine that promotes handwashing before eating.
- Decide where children should place coats after recess.
- Take care of lunch money in the morning before recess.
- Have a convenient place to store cold lunches.
- Be sure children are allowed enough time to eat.
- Plan for supervision during recess, lunch and the transition times.

## Initiate a Change That Benefits Children!

### SCHEDULE RECESS FIRST

Help them eat better and learn more!

The American School Food Service Association recommends that schools allow students to play first and return to the classroom after eating. It is also recommended that schools provide meal periods that allow children to have 10 minutes to eat breakfast and 20 minutes to each lunch AFTER they have selected their meal.

Nebraska Department of Education  
Nutrition Services

301 Centennial Mall South  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-4987  
(800) 731-2233 or (402) 471-2488

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D. C. 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity agency and employer.

## Play First



## Then Eat!

