

Support a healthy food environment in all aspects of the school day.

School Meals

Providing nutritious and appealing meals to all children is a privilege and responsibility that can be challenging for financially self-supported food service departments.

Schools that participate in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs must provide 1/3 of the Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) for key nutrients at lunch and 1/4 of the RDA at breakfast. In addition, all meals must meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

School food service departments throughout the state are working to further improve the nutritional content of school meals by offering fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products.

Massachusetts Action for Healthy Kids encourages food service directors to share their success stories with their peers.



Competitive Foods

In addition to the nutrition guidelines for school meals set by the federal government, **Massachusetts Action for Healthy Kids (Mass AFHK)** has developed standards to address “competitive foods,” those foods and beverages sold outside the reimbursable school meals programs. These may include a la carte snacks and beverages available in the cafeteria, vending machines, school stores, fundraising activities, and classroom parties.

The standards are used in compiling the A-List, a comprehensive list of “A-acceptable” products.

The John C. Stalker Institute of Food and Nutrition (JSI) manages the A-List by evaluating new products against the Mass AFHK *Standards* to assure their “A-acceptability.”

The A-List and the Standards are available on the JSI website:

A-List:

[www.johnstalkerinstitute.org/
vending project/healthysnacks.htm](http://www.johnstalkerinstitute.org/vending-project/healthysnacks.htm)

Standards:

[www.johnstalkerinstitute.org/
MA_Food_Standards.pdf](http://www.johnstalkerinstitute.org/MA_Food_Standards.pdf)



Action for Healthy Kids (AFHK) is a nationwide initiative dedicated to creating healthy school environments by advancing sound nutrition and physical activity practices in schools across the country. AFHK is composed of 51 state teams including Massachusetts AFHK. www.actionforhealthykids.org

Taking Action for Healthy Kids School Wellness Policy Guide

for Food Service Directors



www.actionforhealthykids.org

Why focus on wellness?

- Well-nourished children are more likely to attend school regularly and achieve academic success.
- Overweight children and teens are more likely to develop chronic diseases and become overweight adults.
- Wellness policies are intended to raise nutritional awareness, promote healthy eating habits, and encourage physical activity among members of the school community.

The School Wellness Policy

All school districts are required to have a wellness policy in place according to the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-265).

As part of the wellness policy, school districts must set goals for nutrition education, physical activity, campus food provision, and other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness.

Participation in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the policy should include food service directors, school nurses, physical educators, teachers, school administrators, local school committee members, parents, students, and members of the community.

Food Service Directors Take Action for Healthy Kids

As a food service director, you can:

- Actively participate in the ongoing development, implementation, and evaluation of your school district's wellness policy.
- Work with school administrators, nurses, teachers, and parents whenever possible to promote the district wellness policy.
- Provide nutritious options for reimbursable and a la carte food and beverage items. Present healthy items in an attractive manner so that they are appealing to student and adult customers.
- Ensure that all vending machines within your control meet the district's wellness policy guidelines.
- Inform your school district and local community about the steps you have taken to improve the nutritional quality of your food and beverage offerings.
- Be a positive role model for students, cafeteria staff, faculty, and administrators by demonstrating healthy eating habits and being physically active.



Additional Resources:

The *John C. Stalker Institute of Food and Nutrition* offers educational and training opportunities for teachers, nurses, food service personnel, and others working to improve the quality of the school nutrition environment. Their free lending library includes materials about nutrition education, food service management, and food safety.
www.johnstalkerinstitute.org/

New England Dairy & Food Council is a non-profit organization committed to providing scientifically sound nutrition information to physicians, registered dietitians, nurses, educators, consumers, and the media concerned about fostering a healthier society.
www.newenglanddairyandfoodcouncil.org/

The School Nutrition Association of Massachusetts is one of the leading organizations committed to educating, supporting, and inspiring school nutrition and food service professionals.
www.maschoolfood.org/

Wellness Solutions for Massachusetts is an online resource for school community members to establish, implement, and share effective wellness policies for their schools.
www.johnstalkerinstitute.org/wellness/index.html

The Child Nutrition Outreach Program (CNOP) is a service provided by the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE) and administered by Project Bread to increase participation in both the School Breakfast and the Summer Food Service Programs. The website provides useful information and free promotional materials specific to these programs.
www.meals4kids.org

Cooks for Kids is a series of free training programs that can be viewed online. Each episode focuses on healthy food and cooking techniques that can be used at school, in restaurants, and at home.
www.olemiss.edu/depts/nfsmi/Education/Satellite/CFK/satinfo.html