SMARTER LUNCHROOMS MOVEMENT
WHAT IT IS

The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement is a nationwide movement based on proven strategies for nudging students to select and eat the healthiest foods in the school lunchroom.

The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement provides schools with the knowledge, motivation, and resources needed to build a lunchroom environment that makes healthy food choices the easy choice.

The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement uses a scorecard to provide schools with a snapshot of how many strategies are currently in place in a lunchroom. The Smarter Lunchrooms Scorecard contains 60 simple, no-cost or low-cost strategies that lunchrooms can use to increase participation, improve consumption of healthy food, and reduce food waste. The scorecard is used to gather pre- and post-data about the cafeteria environment.
WHY IT WORKS

The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement applies research-based principles that lead children to make healthy choices when provided with the full spectrum of choice. The Movement brings evidence from the fields of economics, marketing, and psychology into the school cafeteria.

The strategies that the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement endorses have been studied and proven effective in a variety of schools across the nation. The strategies are based on research from the Cornell Center for Behavioral Economics in Child Nutrition Programs and partners and other behavioral science research. Examples of strategies include:

- Offering vegetables in **two locations** can result in students taking up to **40% more**
- Holding recess **before lunch** can increase vegetable and fruit consumption by **54%**
- Giving healthy food choices **fun, descriptive names** like “supercharged green beans” can increase consumption of that food by over **30%**
- Offering **sliced fruit** can increase student consumption by over **70%**
HOW IT WORKS

The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement is:

1. Easy and inexpensive to implement
2. Grows school meals participation
3. Increases student satisfaction
4. Uses simple evidence-based strategies to gently nudge students to make healthy choices
5. Empowers, energizes, and engages school nutrition staff
6. Increases the amount of healthy food students eat
7. Reduces waste

The 4 Step Path to Building a Smarter Lunchroom provides 4 simple steps to using more strategies that increase student consumption of healthy food: Spot, Plan, Do, and Prove. The 4 Step Path to Building a Smarter Lunchroom starts with the Smarter Lunchrooms Scorecard. Learn about the Scorecard on the next page!
The Smarter Lunchrooms Scorecard is the nation’s premier tool for assessing and improving the use of evidence-based strategies in the lunchroom. The Scorecard is a valuable tool for school nutrition professionals to use in their own lunchroom(s). However, all stakeholders, including students, teachers, administrators, PTO members, and outside professionals should be encouraged to complete a scorecard to give diverse perspectives. Always ask permission before completing a scorecard in a lunchroom that is not your own and always provide results and feedback to the lunchroom leaders afterwards.

The Smarter Lunchrooms Scorecard is a list of 60 strategies that can be easily incorporated into the lunchroom. Completing a Scorecard will help you uncover what your school is already doing to be a Smarter Lunchroom and will clearly identify the areas that can be focused on next.

The Smarter Lunchrooms National Office now offers an online Scorecard Tracker. With this new feature, you can enter Smarter Lunchrooms 60 Point Scorecards for your cafeteria(s) anytime on any device. It is designed to make entering, storing and tracking Smarter Lunchrooms Scorecards easy. Once registered, simply log in anytime to enter, view, and download or print your completed Scorecards. Register your lunchroom at www.smarterlunchrooms.org/members/register.
HOW TO GET STARTED

Are you ready to become a Smarter Lunchroom? It is easy and inexpensive to implement! Follow the 4 Step Path to Building a Smarter Lunchroom.

1. Spot: Before you make any changes, take a close look at your cafeteria to spot what changes you need to make. It is important to know where your lunchroom stands before any changes are made, in order to later determine how things have changed. The information you gather before you begin will vary by school. Pick and choose the methods that work for you. Ways to Spot changes you may want to make: Complete the Smarter Lunchroom Scorecard, Take Photographs.

2. Plan: Once you have completed the Scorecard and reviewed the photos, it’s time to move on the planning stage! To develop your action plan, review your Smarter Lunchroom Scorecard results and closely examine the photos of the lunchroom. Choose 3-5 Smarter Lunchroom Strategies to try. For example, you could select "Focus on Fruit," "Highlight the Salad," "Move More White Milk," and "Lunchroom Atmosphere." Create a plan for each strategy using a blank template available on the Smarter Lunchrooms website where you can also view examples and Frequently Asked Questions.
HOW TO GET STARTED

3. **Do:** You spotted what needs to be done and made a plan, now is the time to do it! Be sure everyone on the lunchroom staff is aware of the changes that are going to be made. Give everyone a chance to ask questions and offer suggestions to the plan, it helps create buy-in. If the change is big, such as only accepting cash for a la carte options, make sure communication and training is a part of your plan! Small changes can be made overnight or over the weekend. Larger changes are better made over the summer or after a vacation.

4. **Prove:** Now it’s time to evaluate the impact of the changes. You implemented the changes and now it’s time to show off the improvements!

   - Complete a new Scorecard. Get your new score by repeating the instructions in Step 1 on how to complete the Scorecard.
   - Take photos of the areas that change! A picture is worth a thousand words. Try to take them from the same location/angle as your pre-photos, to make comparisons easy. Date, label and save your photos.

After all the planning and doing, your score increased and your photos show your improvements. Give yourself and your staff a pat on the back! The lunchroom now uses evidence-based research to help ‘nudge’ kids to make healthy choices. Share your successes with school administration and parents.
Tips for Completing the Scorecard

Engage others! Are other people always asking about your cafeteria? Wanting to make changes or always offering suggestions? Pull them in the loop! Invite other key stakeholders to complete the Scorecard with you or for you. It’s a great discussion starter and relationship builder.

Examples of people to ask to complete a Scorecard include:

- School Nutrition Director
- School administrator
- Lunchroom staff member
- Teacher or other school staff member
- Parent (or PTA member)
- Student (such as a student council member)

Best Practices: Stay for at least two lunch periods when completing the scorecard. You should review each Scorecard item before beginning and plan to get started at least 20 minutes before students arrive for lunch.

Give each person the Scorecard ahead of time so they can read it and ask any questions before they begin. The observation period goes by quickly so, before they start, help them become familiar with the Scorecard so they can spend most of the observation period looking at the lunchroom, not searching for items on the Scorecard!
Tips for Completing the Scorecard

If more than one person completes the Scorecard, be sure to resolve any discrepancies. You may need another observation period or may need a conversation with an administrator or director to work out any differences in results. Ultimately, there should be only one baseline score that everyone agrees on.

Take photographs during the observation! If possible, have teams of two observers go through the lunchroom together: one will complete the Scorecard while the other takes photographs.

Make a folder for the photos. Label each with location, description (tray storage; salad bar), and date. Put the photos into a slide presentation for a group review.

Get a group together to review the photos. The group may include school meals staff, administration, parents, students, or other stakeholders. What looks great? Where is there room for improvement? Take notes.

Records: Some schools may want to use production records, sales records, or plate waste data to help identify changes to make.
WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

Smarter Lunchrooms Homepage:
https://www.smarterlunchrooms.org/

Frequently Asked Questions:

Smarter Lunchrooms Scorecard:
https://www.smarterlunchrooms.org/sites/default/files/documents/SLM-Scorecard2.0_5.pdf

Smarter Lunchrooms Strategies:
https://www.smarterlunchrooms.org/scorecard-tools/smarter-lunchrooms-strategies

Contact Us Page:
https://www.smarterlunchrooms.org/contact