



Making Nutritious Foods Fun

Marketing healthy food choices to students.

Knowledge is power — and *Fuel Up to Play 60* gives you the power to influence students' choices based on their increasing knowledge about healthy eating. By creating opportunities for your classmates to learn more about the food choices they have, you'll build awareness about the major benefits that making better choices can bring.

These Action Strategies include fun activities like a milk mustache photo booth, contests to see which class or grade level can strive to get the right number of servings from important foods like low-fat or fat-free dairy, fruits, vegetables and whole grains, and direct marketing techniques like signs or people that highlight healthy choices at the exact moment kids make those choices.

MILK MUSTACHE BOOTH

Host your own "milk mustache photo booth," then post pictures of students with milk mustaches on your school's Web site. Hand out materials highlighting the benefits of low-fat and fat-free dairy foods in students' diets and let students sample dairy foods!

- **Work with your principal** to arrange a location for your photo booth. Think about convenient and high-traffic locations, such as outside the cafeteria. Arrange for the photography equipment you'll need, such as a digital camera and lighting, as well as one or more volunteer photographers. If your school has a photography class, try enlisting the help of photography students and teachers.
- **Check out [Nutrition Explorations](#)** for step-by-step instructions for setting up this activity, including advice on taking pictures, posting them on your school's Web site and more. Be sure to get permission to do this, or work with your school's webmaster to have your pictures posted.

- **Contact local businesses or organizations** that could let you borrow a camera and other supplies, if your school does not have the equipment you need. See [Tips and Tools for Engaging Businesses](#) and this [donor request letter template](#) for getting donations and assistance from the community. You can also check out [Tools to Help You Engage Others](#). Don't forget to let everyone know about the photo booth by making morning announcements, putting up posters and passing out flyers. Let them know that dairy foods will be available for them to sample, and that in exchange they can have their milk mustache photographed and posted on the school's Web site.
- **Choose a variety of healthy dairy foods** (with the help of your school nutrition professionals), to have available at the photo booth for students to taste. Use the same resources you used for equipment donations to ask local grocery stores for donations of sample dairy foods. At the booth, pass out handouts with information about the benefits of dairy in your diet. Check out the [Dairy Food Fact Sheets](#) resource, by the National Dairy Council®. Offer different foods on a rotating basis and let students sample new foods in exchange for having their milk mustache posted on the Web!

Everyone Can:

- Arrange for a photo booth location, equipment and supplies.
- Solicit donations and/or loaner equipment from the community.
- Prepare handouts with dairy nutrition information.
- Advertise the program.
- Arrange for milk-mustache photos to be posted on the school's Web site.

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HOW MANY CAN YOU ...?

Hold contests to see which classroom or grade level can eat the recommended number of servings of low-fat or fat-free dairy foods, fruits, vegetables and whole grains every day for a month. Highlight the food of the month and give classroom rewards for those who “win” or reach their goal. Remind your classmates to also track their healthy eating in the Fuel Up to Play 60 Competition!

- **Work with a team** of students and teachers (who can help track students’ eating behaviors), the school nutrition manager, health teachers and school nurse (who can provide nutritional information).
- **Distribute informational handouts** to students about healthy eating guidelines, including My Pyramid resources from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Post nutritional guidelines in the school newsletter and on posters throughout the school and in classrooms. Use Your Fuel Trivia Game and What Foods Can Do for You as handouts.

- **Obtain prizes and rewards** from the community. Check out Tips and Tools for Engaging Businesses and this donor request letter template to request donations.
- **Advertise the contests** to everyone by putting up posters in high-traffic areas, making PA announcements and distributing flyers. During the contest, be sure to post updates on students’ progress and which classrooms or grade levels are ahead. Emphasize that everyone can track their healthy eating behaviors for the Fuel Up to Play 60 Competition as well as this contest!

Everyone Can:

- Work with a team to plan the contest.
- Prepare and distribute handouts.
- Obtain contest prizes and rewards.
- Advertise the contest to students.



POINT-OF-PURCHASE PROMO

Make and place signs to highlight the healthy options in your cafeteria serving line. Working with the school nutrition manager, “rename” healthy foods on the menu so they are more appealing to everyone at your school. A simple renaming of foods can make nutritious options more appealing and can make more of your classmates want to eat them!

- **With your school nutrition manager**, identify the healthy eating choices in the cafeteria serving line, such as the salad bar or milk cooler. What Foods Can Do for You has information that can help you plan.
- **Think about how some foods** might be “renamed” on the menu to make them seem more appealing. For instance, carrots can be renamed “x-ray vision carrots”. The goal of renaming foods is to highlight the health benefits of the food while getting more of your classmates to eat it. This Newsweek article, that describes renaming foods in ways that are clever and also communicates why they’re great to eat, can be helpful.
- **With a team of students** (and with guidance from the school nutrition manager), make signs to post in the cafeteria line. You might want to enlist the help of art students in your school to design and create signs and posters. Place posters near the healthy food options in the serving lines.

- **Track how your promotional efforts** impact students’ food selections (with the help of the school nutrition manager). Based on your program’s successes, try “renaming” and highlighting other healthy food choices. Make an impact on your entire schools’ healthy eating behaviors and your school’s success in the Fuel Up to Play 60 Competition!

Everyone Can:

- Help identify healthy foods in the cafeteria.
- Help “rename” healthy food choices in the cafeteria.
- Create and post signs that highlight healthy food choices.
- Help track which foods more students are choosing after renaming.
- Identify additional foods to highlight in the cafeteria.



IF YOU ASK THEM, THEY WILL EAT

Work with the school nutrition staff to start a campaign of simply asking your classmates if they want specific healthy foods. Research shows that by simply asking students the question at the time they're coming through the line, their consumption of healthy foods goes up!

- **Meet with the school nutrition manager and principal** to discuss the campaign and identify low-fat and fat-free dairy foods, fruits, vegetables and whole grain choices to target in the cafeteria. Share the Newsweek article "[Stealth Health for Kids](#)", which describes a [Yale University study](#) that showed an increase in fruit consumption from 40 percent to 70 percent when kids were asked if they wanted fruit with their meal. Also share the [Active & Healthy Schools](#) resource, which cites studies that show how signs can influence behavior.
- **Brainstorm ideas** about how to best implement this approach. For example, cafeteria line staff can directly ask students questions such as "Would you like an apple with that?" or "Would you like to refuel with chocolate milk?" Signs with the same questions can also be posted in the food serving lines.
- **Ask student volunteers** or art students to create posters to place near healthy foods in the serving line. For instance, near the fruit, a sign could read "Wouldn't you like a banana with your lunch today?"

- **Work with the school nutrition professionals** to track whether the program has increased the consumption of the healthy foods you've targeted. Based on the program's successes, introduce this campaign with other healthy foods in the cafeteria. You might want to highlight a different healthy food each day, or each week, for example.
- **Ask a simple question** and increase your schools' healthy eating opportunities. Remind your classmates to track their healthy eating behaviors to earn rewards for your school in the [Fuel Up to Play 60 Competition!](#)

Everyone Can:

- Share research supporting this idea with the principal and school nutrition professionals.
- Create signs and questions that prompt students to make healthy food choices.
- Track the program's successes; remind students to track their healthy eating behaviors.



VENDING REVAMP

Work with your school leaders to reorganize vending machines in your school. Move the machines with healthy options to high-traffic areas. Then move the healthier choices to eye level in the machines — or better yet, get the less healthy choices replaced with healthier options!

- **Form a team**, including classmates, teachers, school leaders, parents, the principal and school nutrition professionals. Discuss a plan for moving vending machines in the school so that healthy food choices are offered in areas with more traffic. Also discuss how healthy food choices should be more visible (at eye level) in the vending machines, making them more likely to be noticed and selected. Share the [Nutrition: Making it Happen Marketing Approaches](#), which has information about placement of vending machines.
- **With your team**, identify which machines should be moved, and to which location. Then identify which foods and beverages should be rearranged in the vending machines, and which foods you might replace with healthier options. Consider surveying your classmates, teachers and staff to ask them which healthy food options they'd like to see available in vending machines. Try to include as many of these choices as possible. The National Dairy Council provides resources with more information on [milk vending](#).

- **After you've made changes** to vending machine locations and contents, let the school know! Distribute flyers and put up posters that explain the changes and promote the healthier food choices. Remind your classmates to track their healthy eating behaviors to help the school earn rewards in the [Fuel Up to Play 60 Competition!](#)

Everyone Can:

- Form a team to plan vending machine reorganization.
- Provide the team with related information.
- Identify which machines should be moved.
- Identify healthy food choices to move to eye level.
- Identify less healthy choices to be replaced.
- Inform the school of changes made to vending machines.



TASTE A RAINBOW

Hold taste test activities that highlight all the colors of foods, such as fruit or vegetable rainbow days. Have students sample foods and vote on their favorites. Use the results to create a rainbow poster highlighting the foods and their benefits.

- **Plan several taste tests** during the year with help from your principal and school nutrition professionals. For example, you might choose fruits for one event, vegetables for another and dairy foods for the next. Share information with your team, including this article, [Marketing Nutrition in the Middle Grades](#), which explains that the marketing of healthy foods can have a positive influence on students' eating habits. Explain that having students vote on their favorite foods can influence others' choices.
- **The [Taste Test Tip Sheet resource](#)** can also help your team plan this event.
- **Obtain food samples** from local stores by checking out [Tools for Engaging Businesses](#) and this [donor request letter](#) template to request donations.
- **Advertise the taste tests** to students by putting up posters in high-traffic areas, making PA announcements, distributing flyers and using your school Web site.

- **During taste testing events**, emphasize the importance of eating foods of all different colors as part of an overall healthy eating lifestyle. Provide your classmates with nutrition information and trivia handouts, such as [What Foods Can Do for You](#) and [Know Your Fuel Trivia Game](#). Remind students that they can track their healthy eating behaviors for the [Fuel Up to Play 60 Competition](#) while voting on their favorite foods! After the events, be sure to share the taste test results with everyone at your school via announcements or posters in the cafeteria.

Everyone Can:

- Help plan taste tests.
- Share resources with the planning team.
- Obtain food donations from local stores.
- Advertise the taste test events.
- Share nutrition information with students.
- Share taste test results with the school.
- Remind students to participate in the [Fuel Up to Play 60 Competition](#).