

SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS IN **LET'S GO!**

Let's Go! views School Nutrition Programs as essential partners in our goal to promote healthy eating and active living. School Nutrition Programs (also known as school food service programs) often operate independently from the rest of the school environment. However, schools implementing 5-2-1-0 Goes to School can greatly benefit from a positive relationship with the School Nutrition Program and vice versa.

What 5-2-1-0 teams can do:

- **Invite the district School Nutrition Director to join your team.**
Let them know what 5-2-1-0 Goes to School is and that you are looking at the entire school food environment (i.e. not just lunch but also celebrations, snack time, fundraisers, etc.). Invite them to participate because of their expertise in feeding kids and your desire to develop a productive relationship. A good way to start off on the right foot is to ask what you can do to help the nutrition program. Be positive and don't immediately request changes.
- **If you are working on a healthy snack program, involve your school nutrition director.** Each school also has a kitchen manager. You may get more headway with the director, but having the manager on board is helpful too. Check out the Cafeteria Sponsored Snack Program handout in the toolkit!
- **Embrace school lunch staff as valuable members of the school community.** Give them a chance to show off their stuff! Offer them the opportunity to come into the classroom to offer nutrition education. See the Cafeteria to Classroom Connection handout in the toolkit.
- Spend time in the cafeteria. Walk through the hot lunch line. Help kids identify how their lunch choices can contribute to their 5-a-day. Go to the salad bar. **Sit with the kids. Be a healthy eating role model!**
- **If you want to work on the school menu, developing a positive working relationship with the director is the first step. Be curious.** Ask about what nutrition standards they follow and how much money they are allowed to spend per meal. It's a real eye-opener. Contact *Let's Go!* for further assistance.

What School Nutrition Directors can do:

- Adding a healthy new menu item? Rely on your 5-2-1-0 team members to help promote the new item. Ask the principal, school nurse, or school secretary to help serve the new item.
- Write a descriptive menu. For example, write "Grandma's Garden Vegetable Stew" instead of "Vegetable Soup."
- Increase the nutritional quality of school meals by achieving the HealthierUS School Challenge.
- Include classroom teachers in nutrition activities, such as "March through the Alphabet" or "Eat your way through the Rainbow." These efforts can be complemented in the classroom.
- Market, market, market! Let people know why your program is great!

Let's Go! runs regional School Nutrition Workgroups. Visit our website to see if there is one in your area! With a little extra effort, everyone who has a role in healthy eating and active living at school can come together and have double the impact!

