

Why is Breakfast Important?

Research confirms that breakfast is the most important meal of the day for children's health, academic achievement, cognitive development and mental health. Unfortunately, many children regularly skip breakfast each morning, depriving them of the important benefits associated with the morning meal. Though most schools in the United States offer the School Breakfast Program, less than a quarter of all students and less than half of the students who are eligible for a free and reduced price breakfast are eating it. Reasons for low participation may include:

- *Busy morning schedules
- *Inability to get to school early due to bus and carpool schedules
- *Not being hungry first thing in the morning
- *Peer pressure to socialize or play instead of eating breakfast
- *Social stigma that "only low-income students" eat breakfast in the cafeteria.

The Florence County School District Two Breakfast Program makes it possible for all students to receive a nutritious breakfast every school day. Participating in the Breakfast Program decreases discipline, visits to school nurses and tardiness and increases attentiveness, attendance and improved learning. Students who participate in the Breakfast Program eat more fruits, drink more milk, have improved nutrition, consume a wider variety of foods and perform better on standardized tests.

Children who struggle with hunger also have to cope with its effect on their success at school. It is our goal in Florence County School District Two to provide our students with a meal that provides them the opportunity to concentrate better, be more alert, retain more of what they learn, participate in class and reach higher levels of achievement. Parents, teachers, administrators and staff can help us reach this goal by encouraging students to participate in breakfast at school.