

BREAKFAST IN THE CLASSROOM: PARENT COMMUNITY – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q1. Why did NYC decide to expand the Breakfast in the Classroom (BIC) program?

- A.** BIC was introduced to DOE elementary schools in an effort to alleviate hunger and ensure that all students are ready to learn each day following the success of the Breakfast in the Classroom (BIC) program in over 300 NYC public schools and in major cities around the country.

Q2. Why was my child’s school selected to participate in BIC?

- A.** The citywide BIC rollout began its implementation in Kindergarten through 5th grade because of the essential role nutrition plays in the healthy cognitive, social and emotional development of elementary school children. Participating BIC schools typically have a small number of students eating breakfast and have a high number of students who qualify for free or reduced lunch. By moving breakfast into the classroom, breakfast participation among children in need systematically increases from an average of 30% to 80% or more at BIC schools.

How does BIC work?

- B.** Principals at participating BIC schools select from several available BIC delivery methods. For example, packaged breakfasts may be brought directly to classrooms by SchoolFood staff or students may pick up bagged breakfasts on the way up to their classroom in the “grab and go” model. Once in the classroom, students eat at their desk while the teacher conducts morning activities (e.g.: takes morning attendance, reviews the day’s lesson plan, and reads announcements). Trash is placed into a lined, insulated trash bag that is collected at the agreed upon time and it is returned to the kitchen for disposal. No food is left inside the classroom.

Q3. What are the advantages of BIC?

- A.** Increasing the number of children who eat and are therefore ready to learn supports the quality of instructional time for all students. The quality of instruction time gained in class is optimized when teachers spend less time redirecting children who may misbehave or feel sick because they are hungry. BIC schools report that children make fewer visits to the nurse. They also experience increases in children’s class participation, self-control, concentration, and student attendance.

Q4. Is my child required to participate in BIC?

- A.** No. Children are not required to participate in BIC. Parents whose children eat before arriving to school, have other dietary requirements, or food preferences are encouraged to inform their child’s teacher about whether they want their child to participate in the program.

Q5. May my child bring breakfast from home to eat in the classroom?

- A.** The principal of your child’s school will determine whether your child may bring food from home to eat in the classroom.

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- Q6. Why does my child need to have a second breakfast when they already eat breakfast at home?**
- A. Eating two breakfasts is discouraged. Parents are asked to inform their child’s teacher about whether he or she typically eats breakfast in the mornings before coming to school so that the child will not receive a second breakfast. BIC meals are intended to feed hungry children who have not had breakfast before coming to school. Participating families typically, either: (1) want their children to eat school breakfasts; (2) cannot afford to provide breakfast; or (3) do not have time to prepare breakfast before dropping their child off at school.
- Q7. I am concerned with the amount of waste that is being produced at the school because of BIC?**
- A. BIC program is aligned with the DOE and NYC Department of Sanitation (DSNY) commitment to increase recycling and decrease contamination of recyclables and compostables, resulting in less waste generated in our schools overall. At BIC schools that are part of the Organics Collection program, sorting of the waste is performed by SchoolFood staff to ensure the dual recycling streams and organics are properly disposed.
- Q8. Is the BIC food being served healthy?**
- A. Yes. SchoolFood is providing delicious, high quality breakfasts that exceed the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Nutrition Standards for School Meals. Each breakfast includes two servings of grain and fruit every day and students may also request cereal and milk. SchoolFood staff at your school can provide you with the comprehensive list of prohibited ingredients such as food coloring, which studies show contributes to reduced cognitive development. Visit <http://schoolfoodnyc.org> to see the daily menu options.
- Q9. My child has food allergies and I am concerned about my child’s exposure to food in the classroom?**
- A. The school nurse and other appropriate school personnel work closely with SchoolFood staff and parents to determine if any classroom modifications are needed to make sure that students with food allergies can participate fully in the BIC program, such as allergy friendly seating arrangements. The DOE [food allergy policy](#) can be found on the SchoolFood website along with the [daily menu](#) options. To minimize allergic reactions, students are encouraged not to trade food with others and to wash their hands before touching or eating food.
- Q10. Will my child receive hot food as part of the BIC program?**
- A. SchoolFood now offers hot food items to eligible schools as part of the BIC program. Please note that hot food will not be available for all BIC delivery options but is available where feasible. Delivery options are chosen by each school’s principal based on what he or she decides best serves the needs of the school community. Delivery option decision by the principal is made during the logistics meeting SchoolFood has with the principal prior to BIC.