

## Meal Quality Improvement Strategies, Activities, and Corresponding Manager's Corner Lessons

### Strategy 1: Increase Menu Variety and Choices for Students

Activities	Manager's Corner Lessons	Additional Resources
<p>Activity 1: Provide at least <b>1 (2 or 3) cultural menu option(s)</b> a <b>week (month)</b>.</p>	<p><b>Cycle Menus</b>-Identify the benefits of a cycle menu.</p> <p><b>Food Bars</b>-Determine best practices when including food bars as a meal service option for reimbursable meals.</p> <p><b>Knowing Your Customer</b>-Identify who your customers are and how to determine their needs and expectations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICN's Basics at a Glance Poster</li> <li>• ICN's Child Nutrition Recipe Box (CNRB) <a href="https://theicn.org/cnrb/">https://theicn.org/cnrb/</a></li> <li>• ICN's MyPlate Poster/Cling</li> <li>• ICN's Spice Poster</li> <li>• USDA's Team Nutrition Healthy Food Heritages: Investigating Nutrition Across Cultures <a href="https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/TNevents_healthyheritages.pdf">https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/TNevents_healthyheritages.pdf</a></li> </ul>
<p>Activity 2: Use <b>food bars or salad bars</b> to provide students with menu variety and choices of at least <b>2 (3, 4, or 5) fruit and/or vegetable</b> offerings served each <b>day (week)</b>.</p>	<p><b>Dark Green Vegetables in Schools</b>- Identify food sources, nutrients, health benefits, and menu suggestions for dark green vegetables.</p> <p><b>Food Bars</b>- Determine best practices when including food bars as a meal service option for reimbursable meals.</p> <p><b>Other Vegetables Subgroup in School Meals</b>- Identify food sources, nutrient considerations, health benefits, and menu suggestions for vegetables in the other vegetables subgroup.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICN's Basics at a Glance Poster</li> <li>• ICN's Best Practices Handling Produce Handout</li> <li>• ICN's Food Safety Mini Poster</li> <li>• ICN's Glove Use Poster</li> <li>• ICN's Handwashing Poster</li> <li>• ICN's Produce Safety Booklet</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Red/Orange Vegetables Subgroup in School Meals</b>-Identify food sources, nutrient considerations, health benefits, and menu suggestions for red/orange vegetables.</p> <p><b>School Meals Fruit Component Requirement</b>- Identify the fruit component requirements for a reimbursable school lunch and breakfast.</p>	
<p>Activity 3: Make fruit available daily at all points of sale.</p>	<p><b>Quality Score Card</b>-Identify standards for a quality product using a quality score card.</p> <p><b>School Meals Fruit Component Requirement</b>- Identify the fruit component requirements for a reimbursable school lunch and breakfast.</p> <p><b>Storing Produce for Optimal Quality</b>-Identify best practices for storing produce to ensure optimal quality.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICN’s Best Practices for Handling Produce Handout</li> <li>• ICN’s Food Safety Mini Posters</li> <li>• ICN’s Glove Use Poster</li> <li>• ICN’s Handwashing Poster</li> <li>• ICN’s MyPlate Poster/Cling</li> <li>• ICN’s Produce Safety Booklet</li> <li>• ICN’s Quality Score Cards</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategy 2: Enhance Visual Appeal of Meals at Breakfast and Lunch</b></p>		
<p><b>Activities</b></p>	<p><b>Manager’s Corner Lessons</b></p>	<p><b>Additional Resources</b></p>
<p>Activity 1: The staff will <u>use garnishes</u> to add color and eye appeal to dishes served <b>daily (weekly)</b>.</p>	<p><b>Food Presentation</b>-Identify principles of good food presentation to increase students’ selection of a reimbursable meal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICN’s Quality Score Cards</li> <li>• ICN’s Spice Poster</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Meal Quality and Acceptability-</b> Identify the visual characteristics of quality foods and prepare foods that meet the program’s meal quality standards.</p> <p><b>Quality Score Card-</b>Identify standards for a quality product using a quality score card.</p>	
<p>Activity 2: The manager will <b><u>utilize quality scorecards</u></b> <b>daily (weekly)</b> to identify <b><u>acceptable quality products of each meal</u></b> prepared to ensure meals meet a set of quality standards.</p>	<p><b>Meal Quality and Acceptability-</b> Identify the visual characteristics of quality foods and prepare foods that meet the program’s meal quality standards.</p> <p><b>Quality Score Card-</b>Identify standards for a quality product using a quality score card.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICN’s Quality Score Cards</li> </ul>
<p>Activity 3: The manager will <b><u>ensure the staff does not serve brown, bruised, or otherwise damaged produce</u></b> on serving lines or salad bars daily.</p>	<p><b>Food Presentation-</b>Identify principles of good food presentation to increase students’ selection of a reimbursable meal.</p> <p><b>Meal Service Options-</b>Identify meal service options for a reimbursable lunch and breakfast.</p> <p><b>Quality Score Card-</b>Identify standards for a quality product using a quality score card.</p> <p><b>Storing Produce for Optimal Quality-</b>Identify best practices for</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICN’s Best Practices Handling Produce Handout</li> <li>• ICN’s Food Safety Mini Poster</li> <li>• ICN’s Glove Use Poster</li> <li>• ICN’s Handwashing Poster</li> <li>• ICN’s Produce Safety Booklet</li> <li>• ICN’s Quality Score Cards</li> </ul>

	storing produce to ensure optimal quality.	
<b>Strategy 3: Enhance Culinary Preparation Techniques</b>		
<b>Activities</b>	<b>Manager's Corner Lessons</b>	<b>Additional Resources</b>
Activity 1: The manager will <b><u>incorporate batch cooking</u></b> within the operation based on the menu offerings to ensure the best appearance, temperature, and texture of food are provided to maintain meal quality.	<p><b>Batch Cooking</b>-Identify the benefits of batch cooking.</p> <p><b>Meal Quality and Acceptability</b>-Identify the visual characteristics of quality foods and prepare foods that meet the program's meal quality standards.</p> <p><b>Quality Score Card</b>-Identify standards for a quality product using a quality score card.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICN's Basics at a Glance Poster</li> <li>• ICN's Best Practices Handling Produce Handout</li> <li>• ICN's Produce Safety Booklet</li> <li>• ICN's Quality Score Cards</li> </ul>
Activity 2: The staff will prepare menu items using <b><u>a different culinary technique</u></b> (i.e., roasting, steaming, sautéing, etc.) <b>each month (semester, etc.)</b> .	<p><b>Batch Cooking</b>-Identify the benefits of batch cooking.</p> <p><b>Common Large Cooking Equipment</b>-Identify common large cooking equipment and the uses for each piece of equipment.</p> <p><b>Knife Skills: Types of Knives</b>-Discuss the types of knives most commonly used in school kitchens.</p> <p><b>Knife Skills: Safety</b>-Describe good knife safety practices and demonstrate how to carry a knife properly.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICN's Basics at a Glance Poster</li> <li>• ICN's Managing Food Allergies in Schools Booklet</li> <li>• ICN's Produce Safety Booklet</li> <li>• ICN's Quality Score Cards</li> <li>• ICN's Spice Poster</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Mise en Place</b>-Identify the importance of mise en place to the success of a school nutrition operation.</p> <p><b>Quality Score Card</b>-Identify standards for a quality product using a quality score card.</p> <p><b>Roasting Vegetables</b>-Apply the basic principles of roasting to recipes for roasted vegetables.</p>	
<p>Activity 3: The staff will incorporate the <b>use of at least 1 (2 or 3) herb(s) and spice(s) to enhance flavor each week</b> to a menu item.</p>	<p><b>Batch Cooking</b>- Identify the benefits of batch cooking.</p> <p><b>Meal Quality and Acceptability</b>-Identify the visual characteristics of quality foods and prepare foods that meet the program’s meal quality standards.</p> <p><b>Roasting Vegetables</b>-Apply the basic principles of roasting to recipes for roasted vegetables.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICN’s Basics at a Glance Poster</li> <li>• ICN’s Spice Poster</li> </ul>
<b>Student Perception of Meal Quality Strategies, Activities, and Corresponding Manager’s Corner Lessons</b>		
<b>Strategy 1: School Environment</b>		
<b>Activities</b>	<b>Manager’s Corner Lessons</b>	<b>Additional Resources</b>
<p>Activity 1: The staff will maintain a <b>pleasant, safe, and clean physical environment daily</b> in the school cafeteria to encourage student participation.</p>	<p><b>Create a Positive Customer Experience</b>- Describe ways that the school nutrition staff can create a positive customer experience in the cafeteria.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICN’s Food Safety Mini Posters</li> <li>• ICN’s Gloves Poster</li> <li>• ICN’s Handwashing Poster</li> <li>• ICN’s Managing Food Allergies in Schools Booklet</li> <li>• USDA’s Team Nutrition Handwashing and Cleaning Resources</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Customer Service and Communication-</b> Discuss customer service and communication and explain how they work together in the school nutrition program.</p> <p><b>Food Presentation-</b>Identify principles of good food presentation to increase students' selection of a reimbursable meal.</p> <p><b>Knowing Your Customer-</b>Identify who your customers are and how to determine their needs and expectations.</p> <p><b>Serving Line Presentation-</b>Identify methods for displaying and presenting foods in an attractive manner.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/handwashing-and-cleaning-resources">https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/handwashing-and-cleaning-resources</a></p>
<p>Activity 2: The staff will <b><u>display posters and signs in the cafeteria each year</u></b> to promote healthy eating among students.</p>	<p><b>Create a Positive Customer Experience-</b> Describe ways that the school nutrition staff can create a positive customer experience in the cafeteria.</p> <p><b>Nutrition Education-</b>Identify ways to incorporate nutrition education messages into the school curriculum.</p> <p><b>Serving Line Presentation-</b>Identify methods for displaying and presenting foods in an attractive manner.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICN's MyPlate Poster/Cling</li> <li>• USDA's Team Nutrition Elementary School Posters <a href="https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/team-nutrition-elementary-school-posters">https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/team-nutrition-elementary-school-posters</a></li> <li>• USDA's Team Nutrition Posters <a href="https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/posters">https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/posters</a></li> <li>• USDA's Team Nutrition Graphic Library <a href="https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/graphics-library">https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/graphics-library</a></li> </ul>

	<p><b>School Breakfast Program Promotion</b>-Identify ways to promote the benefits of the school breakfast program.</p>	
<p>Activity 3: The staff will <b>upgrade one aspect within the cafeteria environment</b> (i.e., painting walls, seating arrangements, serving dishes, baskets for displays, updated signs, etc.) <b>each year</b>.</p>	<p><b>Create a Positive Customer Experience</b>- Describe ways that the school nutrition staff can create a positive customer experience in the cafeteria.</p> <p><b>Serving Line Presentation</b>-Identify methods for displaying and presenting foods in an attractive manner.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICN's MyPlate Poster/Cling</li> </ul>
<b>Strategy 2: Nutrition Education</b>		
<b>Activities</b>	<b>Manager's Corner Lessons</b>	<b>Additional Resources</b>
<p>Activity 1: The staff will <b>provide students with nutrition education each month (semester)</b>.</p>	<p><b>Nutrition Education</b>-Identify ways to incorporate nutrition education messages into the school curriculum.</p> <p><b>Promoting Milk Intake in School Meals</b>-Identify ways to promote nutrition education by encouraging students to drink more milk at school meals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• USDA's Team Nutrition Serving Up My Plate <a href="https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/serving-myplate-yummy-curriculum">https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/serving-myplate-yummy-curriculum</a></li> <li>• USDA's Team Nutrition Discover MyPlate <a href="https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/discover-myplate-nutrition-education-kindergarten">https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/discover-myplate-nutrition-education-kindergarten</a></li> <li>• USDA's Team Nutrition Fueling My Healthy Life <a href="https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/fueling-my-healthy-life">https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/fueling-my-healthy-life</a></li> </ul>
<p>Activity 2: The staff will work with the school/classes to <b>incorporate food from classroom</b></p>	<p><b>Getting Buy-In from School Administration and Staff</b>-Identify tips</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Whole World of Whole Grains: Celebrating Cultures and Food</li> </ul>

<p><b>themes/lessons</b> on the menus <b>each month (semester)</b>.</p>	<p>and techniques for getting buy-in from school administration and staff.</p> <p><b>Nutrition Education</b>-Identify ways to incorporate nutrition education messages into the school curriculum.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/popular-events-idea-booklet">https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/popular-events-idea-booklet</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• USDA's Team Nutrition Food Crusade: A Food Video Challenge <a href="https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/TNevents_foodcrusade.pdf">https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/TNevents_foodcrusade.pdf</a></li> </ul>
<p>Activity 3: The staff will <b>provide nutrition education messages on the website or on menus each week</b>.</p>	<p><b>Nutrition Education</b>-Identify ways to incorporate nutrition education messages into the school curriculum.</p> <p><b>School Breakfast Program Promotion</b>-Identify ways to promote the benefits of the school breakfast program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• USDA's Team Nutrition: Nutrition Education Materials at <a href="https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/nutrition-education-materials">https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/nutrition-education-materials</a></li> <li>• USDA's Team Nutrition Launch Your Day With Breakfast: Fuel Up To Help Your Day Take Off at <a href="https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/TNevents_launch.pdf">https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/TNevents_launch.pdf</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>Marketing Efforts</b></p>		
<p><b>Activities</b></p>	<p><b>Manager's Corner Lessons</b></p>	<p><b>Additional Resources</b></p>
<p>Activity 1: The staff will <b>provide teachers with promotional materials each month (semester)</b>.</p>	<p><b>Getting Buy-In from School Administration and Staff</b>-Identify tips and techniques for getting buy-in from school administration and staff.</p> <p><b>Nutrition Education</b>-Identify ways to incorporate nutrition education messages into the school curriculum.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• USDA's Team Nutrition Unravel Clues in the Cafeteria <a href="https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/gd_lesson6.pdf">https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/gd_lesson6.pdf</a></li> <li>• USDA's Team Nutrition School Wellness Policy Outreach Kit <a href="https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/local-school-wellness-policy-outreach-toolkit">https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/local-school-wellness-policy-outreach-toolkit</a></li> <li>• USDA's Team Nutrition Events Through the Year <a href="https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/TNevents_through.pdf">https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/TNevents_through.pdf</a></li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• USDA's Team Nutrition What You Can Do To Help Prevent Wasted Food <a href="https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/what-you-can-do-help-prevent-wasted-food">https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/what-you-can-do-help-prevent-wasted-food</a></li> <li>• USDA's Team Nutrition Schools Network <a href="https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/schools">https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/schools</a></li> <li>• USDA's Team Nutrition MyPlate Guide to School Breakfast <a href="https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/myplate-guide-school-breakfast">https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/myplate-guide-school-breakfast</a></li> <li>• USDA's Team Nutrition MyPlate Guide to School Lunch <a href="https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/myplate-guide-school-lunch">https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/myplate-guide-school-lunch</a></li> </ul>
<p>Activity 2: The manager will develop a <b><u>student advisory committee</u></b> each year.</p>	<p><b>Create a Positive Customer Experience-</b> Describe ways that the school nutrition staff can create a positive customer experience in the cafeteria.</p> <p><b>Customer Service and Communication-</b>Discuss customer service and communication and explain how they work together in the school nutrition program.</p> <p><b>Identify Customers and Their Needs-</b>Identify customers and their needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• USDA's Team Nutrition You Control the School Menu: Vote for Your Favorite <a href="https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/TNevents_control.pdf">https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/TNevents_control.pdf</a></li> <li>• USDA's Team Nutrition Be A Food Champion: Stand Up For Your Favorites <a href="https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/TNevents_foodchampion.pdf">https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/TNevents_foodchampion.pdf</a></li> </ul>

	<p><b>Knowing Your Customer</b>-Identify who your customers are and how to determine their needs and expectations.</p> <p><b>School Breakfast Program Promotion</b>-Identify ways to promote the benefits of the school breakfast program.</p> <p><b>Student Taste Testing-Breakfast</b>-Promote the School Breakfast Program by hosting a taste test of breakfast foods.</p> <p><b>Student Taste Testing-Lunch</b>-Promote the National School Lunch Program by hosting a taste testing of lunch foods.</p>	
<p>Activity 3: The staff will host a <b><u>student recipe competition</u></b> each year.</p>	<p><b>Create a Positive Customer Experience</b>- Describe ways that the school nutrition staff can create a positive customer experience in the cafeteria.</p> <p><b>Identify Customers and Their Needs</b>-Identify customers and their needs.</p> <p><b>Knowing Your Customer</b>-Identify who your customers are and how to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• USDA's Team Nutrition Team Nutrition Cooks  <a href="https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/cooks">https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/cooks</a>            USDA's Team Nutrition The Chef in You: A Cooking Competition  <a href="https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/tn/TNevents_chefinyou.pdf">https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/tn/TNevents_chefinyou.pdf</a></li> </ul>

	determine their needs and expectations.	
<b>Additional Manager's Corner Lessons</b>		
<b>Buy American</b>	<b>Objective:</b> Identify the importance of the Buy American provision and ensuring the domestic products ordered are the same ones received.	
<b>Communication on the Serving Line: Substitutions</b>	<b>Objective:</b> Identify effective communication methods regarding menu substitutions on the serving line.	
<b>Dietary Fiber</b>	<b>Objective:</b> Define dietary fiber and identify food sources and nutrition benefits of dietary fiber.	
<b>Eight Major Allergens</b>	<b>Objective:</b> Recognize the eight major allergens – eggs, fish, milk, peanuts, shellfish, soy, tree nuts, and wheat – and possible food sources.	
<b>Forecasting: The Role of School Nutrition Staff</b>	<b>Objective:</b> Identify the role of school nutrition staff in the accurate forecasting of foods, goods, works, and services.	
<b>Ingredient Calculations</b>	<b>Objective:</b> Identify how to adjust ingredient quantities for production needs.	
<b>Legumes in School Meals</b>	<b>Objective:</b> Identify food sources, nutrient considerations, health benefits, and menu suggestions for legumes.	
<b>Menu Substitutions for Vegetables</b>	<b>Objective:</b> Identify menu substitutions for the vegetable component that meet meal pattern requirements.	
<b>Preventing Excess Waste in Storage Areas</b>	<b>Objective:</b> Identify inventory management techniques to help prevent having too much product on hand.	
<b>Production Records</b>	<b>Objective:</b> Identify the required information and the benefits of production records.	
<b>School Meals Grain Component Requirements</b>	<b>Objective:</b> Identify daily and weekly grain requirements in school meals.	
<b>School Meals Meat/Meat Alternates Component Requirements</b>	<b>Objective:</b> Identify meats/meat alternates (M/MA) component requirements for a reimbursable school lunch.	

<b>Standardized Recipes</b>	<b>Objective:</b> Identify the parts of a standardized recipe.
<b>Vegetable Subgroups in School Meals</b>	<b>Objective:</b> Identify vegetable subgroups and weekly requirements for a reimbursable school meal.
<b>Weight and Volume</b>	<b>Objective:</b> Distinguish between measuring weight and volume.