

## Functional Areas of School Nutrition

Being a successful school nutrition assistant requires various skills in several functional areas. Functional areas are categories of tasks that are done on a daily, weekly, or seasonal basis. Here are the six main functional areas of school nutrition and some of their related tasks and skills.

### 1. Food Production

- Basic food preparation techniques
- Portion control
- Production schedules and deadlines
- Accurate inventory system

### 2. Sanitation, Safety, and Security

- Good personal hygiene
- Time-temperature relationship
- Cross-contamination of foods
- Accident-prevention and first aid

### 3. Customer Service

- Appearance of serving line and dining room
- Taste, smell, texture, and appearance of food
- Student feedback
- Positive interactions with customers

### 4. Program Regulations and Accountability

- Reimbursable meal components
- Basic nutrition standards
- Different meal planning methods
- Customer confidentiality

### 5. Equipment Use and Care

- Equipment safety
- Methods for operating equipment
- Cleaning and maintaining equipment
- School district policies for repairs

### 6. Professional Excellence

- Effective communication
- On-going training to improve skills
- Professional appearance and positive attitude
- Organization and time management

**Quick Tip:** Think about your own knowledge and skills. Which of these functional areas do you already feel confident in? Which areas might need more work?

**Reference:**

National Food Service Management Institute. (2008).

*Growing your professional skills: Competencies, knowledge, and skills for successful school nutrition assistants.*

University, MS: Author.

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