

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FOOD AND NUTRITION DIVISION

# HEALTHY SUMMER MEALS FOR KIDS

# TOP 10 EASY WINS FOR SUMMER MEAL PROGRAMS



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
**COMMISSIONER SID MILLER**

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# TOP 10 EASY WINS

to improve your service and boost meal appeal for the Summer Meal Programs

## SUMMER MEAL PROGRAMS

### MULTIPLE ENTREES

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Plan multiple week cycle menus for summer meals to discourage repeating entrees. A one- or two-week cycle menu can be unappealing to kids who want to eat a summer meal every day. A 4-week cycle menu will keep your kids engaged while also maintaining or even increasing participation.



### FRESH LOCAL PRODUCE

In addition to offering cooked vegetables, serving fresh raw produce can help beat the summer heat. Incorporate fresh produce into entrees such as salads and slaws. Invite farmers to teach your students about how their food is grown and arrives on their plate.



### VEGETABLE SUBGROUPS

Exceed the minimum nutrition standards by incorporating vegetables from each of the subgroups including red/orange, dark green, starchy, beans and peas, and others on your weekly menu.



### SEASONAL FRUITS

Don't offer the same three fruits all summer. Add a variety of canned, fresh, sliced, and baked fruits to the menu. Blueberries, watermelon and peaches are a few Texas grown fruits in season during June and July.



### WHOLE GRAINS

Increase the amounts of whole grains offered daily through bread, rice, tortillas, and cereal.



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## VARIETY OF COLORS, TEXTURES, TEMPERATURES

Try different colorful fruits and vegetables both raw and cooked to keep your menus interesting for your students. Some children may not prefer one type of prepared vegetable to another.

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## APPEALING TO EVERYONE

Ensure your sites are accessible to anyone who might want to attend. Make sure to have easy to understand signage of where the meals will be served. Also, modify some food items for younger participants at your summer meal sites. Cut larger items into smaller bite size pieces.

## MARKETING

Promote your program around your community through social media, websites, and printed paper. Take pictures of your meals to encourage families to participate. Order TDA summer marketing products to use.

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**SUMMER MEALS  
ARE AVAILABLE  
AT NO-COST**



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## TASTE TESTS

Test out the food items to receive feedback from the participants. If you serve meals throughout the year, ask the participants what should be served in the summer.

## PRESENTATION MATTERS

Ensure the best food presentation even if the food is served outside. Food in coolers can still be packed neatly with any labels remaining visible so participants know what they are selecting.

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For more ideas, visit [SquareMeals.org/Summer](https://SquareMeals.org/Summer) and click on “Summer Resources.”