TIPS FOR CONVERTING UNHAPPY PARENTS TO CHAMPIONS

Your next school meal champion may be your current unhappy parent. Convert unhappy parents into school meal champions by following these eight easy steps:

1. Thank the parent for bringing their concern to you (regardless of how big or small).
2. Listen carefully to his or her concern and avoid becoming defensive.
3. Repeat what you have heard back to them to make sure you understood them completely.
4. Assure them you will look into the matter.
5. Follow-up promptly and indicate how their concern was addressed.
6. Share your participation in the LiveWell@School Food Initiative and your vision for the school meal program.
7. Ask for their help to serve as a member of your Parent Advisory Team.
8. Ask them if they know other parents who might be interested in having their concerns heard.

TALKING POINTS FOR FOOD SERVICE

- While Colorado is often touted as America’s “leanest” state, nearly 58 percent and a quarter of our children are overweight or obese. And it’s getting worse. If trends continue, 45 percent of Colorado adults could be obese by 2030.
- Research has shown that overweight children are more likely to become overweight or obese as adults.
- Individuals who are obese have an increased risk of heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, certain cancers, and other chronic conditions.
- When kids eat a balanced diet, they are better able to focus on both academics and extracurricular activities. In fact, countless studies have demonstrated a strong link between health and learning. The bottom line is that when kids eat better, they feel better. And when they feel better, they perform better. Students that perform better in school are more likely to realize their full potential in life.
- When kids learn to make healthy food choices early on, they develop positive lifestyle habits that affect all aspects of their lives.
- Over the past few decades, many schools replaced conventional cooking appliances with equipment designed to heat and serve prepared foods in response to a demand for convenience. The heat-and-serve model has saturated generations of students with processed foods, full of added fats, refined grains and sodium – all linked to thickening waistlines and proven to be harmful to healthy appetites and good health.
- LiveWell Colorado’s LiveWell@School Food Initiative seeks to reverse these trends by retraining school food service staff on the fundamentals of scratch cooking and making it easy for kids to make healthy meal choices.
- With students consuming up to half of their daily calories at school, a school meal makeover offers an exciting opportunity to improve students’ health while getting back to the basics: fresh, nutritious and delicious meals.
- The LiveWell@School Food Initiative process involves four phases: a school meal assessment, strategic action planning, a culinary workshop for food service staff and on-site chef consultation.
- It can take two to four years to transition from a heat-and-serve model to a kitchen operation built on providing freshly prepared student meals.
- Sustained support from parents, students, staff and administrators is critical to the success of the LiveWell@School Initiative process.
- LiveWell Colorado is a nonprofit organization committed to reducing obesity in Colorado by promoting healthy eating and active living. In addition to educating and inspiring people to make healthy choices, LiveWell Colorado focuses on policy, environmental and lifestyle changes that remove barriers and foster healthy behaviors.
- For more information about LiveWell Colorado, visit: www.LiveWellColorado.org