

HOW TO MAKE CHANGE IN THE SCHOOL FOOD ENVIRONMENT

1. Understand how school food works.

The money for school lunches comes from USDA reimbursements. For the 2010-11 school year, reimbursements for free lunch is \$2.72, for a reduced fee lunch \$2.32 and a full paid lunch is reimbursed \$0.26. That all sounds well and good until you find out that from this pot of money comes the funding for cafeteria staff salaries, food, equipment and then to top it all off, they are also required to pay all indirect costs (electricity, custodial services, heating) and a percentage of their profits for the privilege of doing business on school property.

2. Show that you are on the Child Nutrition Director's side.

Don't go in with an Us vs. Them attitude. Get to know your Child Nutrition Director. See how tough her/his job is. Understand that they want the best for our children too.

3. Do something positive!

Fundraise for additional cooking tools and equipment for your school cafeteria. Buy a CSA share for the cafeteria staff. Host cooking demos in the cafeteria. Invite the cafeteria staff when you have a party. Ask if you can help decorate the cafeteria.

4. Get the kids excited and motivated.

Plant a school garden. Take kids on a farm field trip. Ask chefs and parents and farmers to come cook with a classroom.

5. Join the National Farm to School Network.

If you have a school garden, cook with kids using locally grown food, or take kids on a farm field trip, THAT's farm to school. Let everyone know. Register your school with the National Farm to School Network. Go to www.farmentoschool.org and join! You will also receive an e-newsletter with farm to school news from around the country. If you want to get information about what is happening in the southeast, contact Molly at ASAP to sign up for the SE farm to school e-newsletter.

6. Get the latest information on farm field trips.

Contact ASAP and get the new “Hayride – A Resource for Educational Farm Field Trips” publication that lists all the farm field trips in the region. It can also be downloaded at www.growing-minds.org

7. Get Cooking! Get Growing!

Michelle Obama has made chefs cooking with children in the classroom very popular. Call ASAP if you would like to connect a chef with a teacher/school. ASAP also has cooking kits and gift cards for food available too. Training is provided to chefs that are interested in learning how to cook with children and connect the experience with the curriculum.

Seeds are available in the spring and fall. This year *Sow True Seeds* is the official ASAP seed sponsor.

8. Check out a book – ASAP’s Lending library.

ASAP has an extensive library of children’s books and curriculums on subjects relating to gardens, farms, and food – come check a book out! ASAP offices are located at 306 West Haywood St. and the office number is 828-236-1282.

9. Donate money to your local organization that is working hard to change food in the cafeteria, reconnect children (and adults!) to local agriculture while helping farmers stay in business and protecting the rural landscape that we all enjoy. Donate to Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project! <http://www.asapconnections.org/donate.html>