

# Share Tables Guidance for Missouri Schools



**SHARE TABLES** are an effort to reduce the amount of wasted food and encourage the consumption of food served at schools. Children can place unconsumed food and beverage items they choose not to eat or drink on the table. This provides other children the opportunity to take additional helpings of food or beverages at no extra cost. Use these guidelines to help your school start a share table program.

## ALLOWABLE PRODUCTS

- Non-temperature-controlled, pre-packaged products like crackers, drinks and cereal packs
- Washed and wrapped fruit and vegetables. Washed fruit with a nonedible peel such as bananas and oranges. Unwrapped edible peel fruits must be rewashed in order to be placed on the share table
- Temperature-controlled, pre-packaged products (e.g., string cheese and milk)

## SHARE TABLE CHECKLIST

- The table or cart should be clearly labeled and placed at the end of the serving line or as close as reasonably possible
- The share table is to be monitored by an employee who has demonstrated food safety knowledge
- Food or beverages that are held under temperature control (e.g., milk, string cheese) should be placed in a small refrigerator, cooler with ice or ice bath at the share table
- Recovered food and beverages should be labeled (e.g., marked with green sticker) and stored separately from unsold foods
- Plans for the share table or cart should be discussed and cleared with the local health inspector prior to implementation
- Standard Operating Procedures in the school's Food Safety HACCP Plan should be developed

## FOOD SAFETY CHECKLIST

- Students should place their unwanted food onto the share table before sitting down to eat. This will prevent any potential contamination
- The monitor should identify any food, beverage or condiment to make sure it has not been contaminated (e.g., opened, partially eaten, in contact with soiled hands, etc.) and the original packaging is in sound condition
- Students are not allowed to put items brought from home on the share table
- Students with allergies are cautioned not to take food from the share table due to unknown ingredients

## BEST PRACTICES

- Use Share Tables in combination with Offer Versus Serve
- For more information about Offer Versus Serve, an employee can view an e-module and earn .25 CEUs <https://dese.mo.gov/serving-success/nutritional-quality-and-meal-pattern/serving-success-offer-vs-serve>
- Support training of culinary skills for staff by visiting Team Nutrition's Culinary Skills Institute web updates for training opportunities: <http://health.mo.gov/living/wellness/nutrition/culinaryskills/>
- Other ways to minimize wasted food include:
  - Integrate self-serve food bars
  - Serve bite size fruits and vegetables
  - Incorporate local produce in recipes
  - Offer periodic student surveys

