

Flavor Stations: Spicing Up School Meals for our Kids

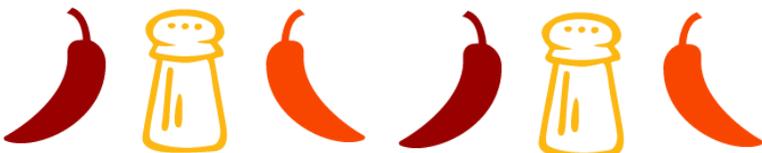
What's Happening in Rochester?

Parents have concerns about school lunch. In 2009 Healthi Kids', parents and kids advocated for changes to school lunch that would make the meals tastier and healthier.

Since then, Healthi Kids staff and parents have been doing lunch observations in Rochester City School District (RCSD) elementary schools to see how lunch has changed. We want to know if kids were happy with the food that they are served and what would make it better. Together we look at how much food is being wasted and thrown away and we talk to kids about what they like and don't like.



In 2013-2014 parents saw that students were throwing out **25 to 75 percent** of their school lunch and that their kids needed better tasting healthy food options. Kids told us they want more variety and choice in their meals, more fruits and vegetables and want the food to be cooked at school so that they would look more like "home-made" food. Many kids think the food is too plain and needs more flavor.



What is a Flavor Station?

One solution to adding flavor to school meals is a flavor station. Flavor stations are as simple as providing spices at the end of the cafeteria line, or can go as far as putting a permanent stand for the "flavor station" items. Flavor stations can include seasonings such as: lemon slices, pepper, cayenne seasoning, parsley flakes, garlic powder, hot sauce and red pepper flakes. The flavor station allows kids to season their vegetables and meals themselves. Healthi Kids recommends creating flavor stations in each RCSD school to encourage kids to eat more fruits and vegetables.



Example of a flavor station in an Iowa School District that offers lemon slices and spices to kids

What Can I Do?

- **Send a letter to Dave Brown, director of food services for RCSD. Tell him you want a flavor station in your child's school.**
- **Talk to your child's school principal. Share your concerns over the food waste and ask what they are doing to make it better.**
- **Want more information about how we can get flavor stations in your school? Call or e-mail Erick Stephens, Healthi Kids' parent engagement coordinator at 585.224.3112, erickstephens@flhsa.org.**