



NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION

to get **REAL FOOD** in schools · Labor Day, Sept. 7, 2009

A SLOW FOOD USA CAMPAIGN

GUIDE TO REACHING PARENTS AND TEACHERS

It's summer. Schools have already let students out. To get parents and teachers involved in our campaign this summer, we need to work hard to reach them.

This guide will help you introduce the Time for Lunch campaign to parents and teachers and invite them to get involved over the summer. Some parents and teachers will not be able to help out until students go back to school in August, but they should still be aware of the campaign now so they can plan to get involved later.

Suggestions for reaching parents and teachers:

- **Talk** to a parent or teacher that you know personally. Ask if there are websites, listservs, bulletin boards or community meetings that parents and teachers go to for information. Some schools send information home with students; ask if there's a way to include a message about the campaign.
- **Check** your local school district's website. There will be helpful info, and there may be a place to post information about the campaign.
- **Contact** your local PTAs and PTOs and your district's Wellness Council. Check out the "Resources" section below for help.
- **Reach out** to parents with kids in preschool or childcare. Many preschools operate year-round. You might also reach out to summer camps and to churches that run summer childcare programs.

You should also consider:

- Reaching out to your personal and professional networks. If you lead a Slow Food chapter, reach out to the parents and teachers on your mailing list.
- Contacting school administrators, school nurses and school board members.
- Finding parents who are very involved in their child's school and who always attend meetings and events. They can quickly connect you to other parents.



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- Assigning the role of “Parent and Teacher Organizer” to one person on your team.
- Whenever you talk to someone, ask for a list of other people to contact.

Core messages for speaking to parents and teachers:

- School gardens and farm-to-school programs can **teach children healthy habits that will last through life**. Kids who are involved in growing and cooking fruits and vegetables are much more curious to give them a try.
- We can **protect children against food that puts them at risk** by setting standards for *all* food sold at school, including food from vending machines and the “a la carte” items sold in cafeterias.
- This summer, we’re focusing on change at the national level. Passing a better Child Nutrition Act can dramatically improve every school’s ability to source, prepare and serve real food. **This campaign can be an opening** to begin talking about longer-term goals to improve school food at the local level.

Other tips for talking to parents and teachers:

- Parents can contribute whatever time or resources they have to offer. Slow Food USA is providing support through its website and toolkits; this campaign doesn’t have to be time-consuming. An Eat-In is a fun and easy way to build community.
- Parents tend to be unsatisfied with making small improvements to the school food system; they want their children to be eating real food, plain and simple.
- Our campaign is about telling Congress to give schools the resources to serve real food. It’s not about blaming school administrators or cafeteria workers.
- An idea from [Susan Rubin](#): start a conversation with a teacher by giving him/her a book. We suggest: Michael Pollan’s *In Defense of Food*; Barbara Kingsolver’s *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*; or Sherri Brooks Vinton’s *The Real Food Revival*.



- An idea from [Sustainable Table](#): at meetings and events, leave educational fliers about food safety, factory farming, rBGH and more. Download them at <http://www.sustainabletable.org/spread/handouts>.
- In addition to parents and teachers, consider reaching out to high school students, who are often members of school environmental/green clubs. Help them connect the dots between food and climate change.

Resources:

The **Parent Teacher Association** (PTA) is the largest child advocacy organization in the U.S. Find chapters near you at http://pta.org/jp_find_your_pta.html.

By federal mandate, every school district has a **Wellness Policy** to oversee the quality of food served at schools. (In 2004, Slow Food USA helped write model Wellness Policies that were distributed to school districts.) Check out [Better School Food](#) and the [USDA website](#) to learn more, and then contact the Wellness Committee in your area.

Try reaching out to **teachers' unions**. The [American Federation of Teachers](#) and the [National Education Association](#) are the two largest in the country, but ask local teachers for which unions are prominent in your area's schools.

Other websites that could be of use in reaching parents and teachers:

- Moms Rising, <http://momsrising.org>
- National Association for the Education of Young Children, <http://naeyc.org>
- The Holistic Moms Network, <http://holisticmoms.org>
- American Camp Association, <http://acacamps.org>
- The Children's Defense Fund, <http://childrensdefense.org>