

What we do



Food service professionals make sure that everything the students eat meets nutritional guidelines and is savory and presentable. They courteously serve the students hot meals and tasty, healthy snacks. Food service professionals are in charge of keeping the cafeteria, kitchen, cooking equipment and utensils clean, sanitary and in orderly condition. They also handle the payment for meals from the students.



"We put a lot of care and effort into preparing the students' meals, and we put a lot of thought into the nutritional value." — Penny Second, (far right) Stanislaus Chapter 520

Photo by Mary Black

INSIDER TIPS FROM THE FOOD SERVICE PROS

- Make eating nutritious meals fun for your kids through presentation.
- Avoid giving children fast food as much as possible.
- Start healthy eating habits when children are very young. Introduce them to fruits and vegetables when they're toddlers so they get used to eating food that is good for them.
- Have kids drink water more regularly. Give them water instead of sugary drinks such as soft drinks and fruit juice (yes, most fruit juices are loaded with sugar —often labeled as "fructose").

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Essential Web sites

- *USDA Healthy Meals Resource System:*
<http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov>
- *School Nutrition Association:*
www.schoolnutrition.org
- *CA Dept. of Ed School Nutrition Info:*
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/>
- *CSEA's food service professionals page:*
csea.com/foodservice

facts about food service pros

- Food Service professionals are very aware of the nutritional guidelines implemented to make sure that students have the best diet possible.
- Food service professionals are experts at maintaining the cafeteria and the kitchen in superb sanitary conditions. The Food and Drug Administration's "Report of the FDA Retail Food Program Database of Foodborne Illness Risk Factors" released in August 2000 found that elementary schools, along with hospitals and nursing homes, had the highest food code compliance rating among both commercial and institutional food service establishments studied.
- It is highly unlikely that students will get ill from eating something from the school cafeteria. A 2003 report from the General Accounting Office, the investigative arm of the U.S. Congress, found that there are relatively few instances of foodborne illness outbreaks in the nation's schools. The GAO report identified 195 foodborne illness outbreaks in schools nationwide between 1990 and 1999. This represents about 3 percent of all outbreaks reported during that period.
- Food service professionals serve approximately 487 million school lunches each year in California.
- Food service professionals regularly attend classes and training to keep them up to date on the latest nutritional standards.
- Food service workers begin their day as early as 4 a.m. to have breakfast ready by the time hundreds of students arrive at school. By the time students begin eating breakfast, the kitchen staff is already busy preparing the students' lunch.

essential
work



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