

Running A Successful Share Table

Using “share tables” is an innovative strategy to encourage the consumption of nutritious foods and reduce food waste in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), and the At-Risk component of the Child Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). A share table is a place where program participants can place unwanted food or drink and allows hungry participants to take an additional helping of food or drink.

Requirements for Share Tables are outlined on the [Share Table Reference Sheet](#). When setting up a share table, be sure to ask yourself the following questions.

- **What type of items can be shared?**

Currently, only shelf stable, pre-packaged fruits and whole fruits with non-edible peels (i.e., banana) may be shared on a share table. Check with your local health department whether items with an edible peel and temperature-control cold items may be shared on a share table with an approved plan. *Please note that only items selected as part of a reimbursable meal may be put on the share table. Items brought from home may not be shared.*

- **When should I reach out to the health department?**

The health department should be contacted prior to utilizing a share table. Keep any verification by your local health department, including documentation that an approved plan is not required by your county, on file.

- **Who will monitor the share table?**

Food service staff or volunteers with knowledge of food safety should be assigned to make sure items are in the appropriate bins and packaging is intact for participants who choose an available item.

- **What type of storage bin/container to use?**

A dry bin for shelf stable items can be used. A temperature-controlled cold bin must be used for food that must remain below 40 degrees to ensure food safety. Local health departments may have specific recommendations for this.

- **Where to set up a share table?**

The share table should be clearly identified, somewhere visible, and close to the point of service so it can be easily monitored for food safety.

- **When should participants share items on share table?**

Items selected as part of a reimbursable meal that the student does not plan to consume can be placed on the share table during the designated meal service period.



- **If using time as temperature control, temperature-controlled items must be discarded. They cannot be recycled for future meal service or donated.**

Post a clear sign of share table rules that include:

- When to place unwanted food items.
- Who is allowed to take items from the share table.
- What can be shared, and items not allowed.
- Items must be unopened.

The poster on the following page is intended as a guideline. Be sure to work with your Local Health Department to ensure all local health codes are met. Share table rules may differ in your county.

Resources

- [Washington State Retail Food Code](#) Page 40
- SP 41-2016, CACFP 13-2016, SFSP 15-2016: [The Use of Share Tables in Child Nutrition Programs](#)
- [Share Tables Reference Sheet](#)



Items For Program Participants Only

SHARE TABLE RULES

A share table is a place where program participants can place unwanted food or drink. Any hungry participants can choose to take a helping of food or drink from the share table.

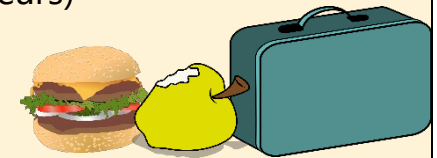
Share at ANYTIME

- **Shelf Stable Packed Food**
Cereal | Crackers | Juice box | **Bars | Applesauce cup
- **Whole Fruits with a non-edible peel**
Orange | Banana



NOT ALLOWED

- **Partially eaten or opened items**
- **Hot food**
- **Food brought from home**
- **Fruit cups that are not commercially packaged**
- ***Unpackaged fruits and vegetables with edible peels** (apples, pears)



Share table items **MUST** be unopened!

- **Commercially Packaged/ Individually Wrapped Cold food. ***

Milk | Yogurt | String Cheese | Bagged fruit and vegetables (sliced apples, baby carrots)

If approved by local health department, cold items must be placed on share table immediately following point of service in a cold bin and maintained at 41°F or below.

***Check with your Local Health Department whether items with an edible peel and temperature-control cold items may be shared on a share table.**

****Bars are not creditable in the CACFP and considered a Grain Based Dessert (GBD)**



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