



keep them healthy • keep them happy • keep them eating school meals!

Children who participate in school meal programs consume twice as many servings of vegetables as non-participants. It's not nutrition until it's eaten.



# HOW?

**The Smarter Lunchroom Movement steers students to better choices by making no-cost changes to the cafeteria environment**



## → 2 Quick & Effective Changes

**Change 1** *Move the Fruit*—Where is the fruit located on your serving line? Move it to a more visible spot like the bottleneck near the cashier, and you can increase the amount sold and consumed. Put it into an attractive serving container and sales will increase up to 105%.

**Change 2** *Name the Veggies*—"Power Ranger Peas" or Peas? "Krazy Kernel Korn" or Corn? Studies show that just by giving a vegetable a cool and fun name, kids are 29% more likely to take it as a meal choice. The possibilities are endless: Veggie Tales Veggie Cup, Spiderman Spinach, Pretty Princess Peas, Big Bird Broccoli, Rainbow Pepper Strips, Teeny Greeny Beanies, Cauliflower Snowballs, Zippy Zucchini, Thomas the Train Tomatoes...

### Increase Fruit & Vegetable Sales with Smarter Lunchroom Strategies

Verbal prompts can cue food choices. Train your servers and cashiers to engage students and ask, "Would you like apples or grapes with your lunch?" or "How about some steamed broccoli or raw baby carrots today?"

Place targeted entrees first and in front on the steam table. It grabs a high volume sales spot and is the first thing hungry kids will see when they arrive at the serving line.

Choice is important - offer several varieties of fruits and vegetables daily to maximize the number of students choosing them for meals.

## HOW TO DO MORE



### Concerned about flavored milk?

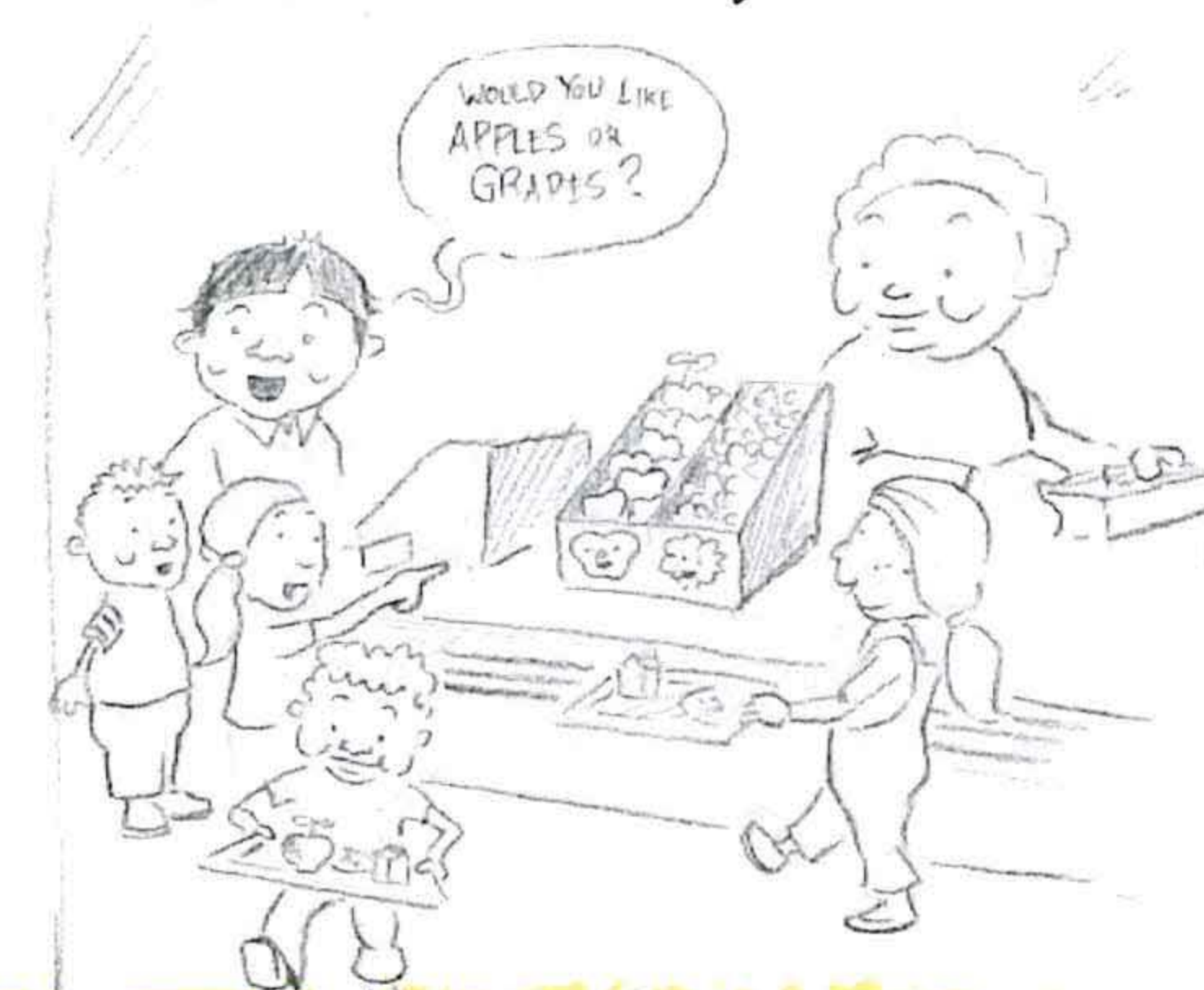
Move it to the back of the milk cooler or last in the milk display so students see the lower fat white milks first.

**Location, Location, Location!** It's easier for a student to choose between a red or yellow apple, than between an apple and a bag of chips. Keep less healthy foods separate from healthier foods to "nudge" students into a better choice.



### Lights and Action!

Use inexpensive lighting to focus attention on the healthiest items on your serving line and watch them go from the counter to the tray!



## Op-Chart

BRIAN WANSINK,  
DAVID R. JUST  
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# Lunch Line Redesign

School cafeterias are much criticized for offering the kind of snack foods and lesserts that contribute to childhood obesity. But banning junk food from cafeterias, as some schools have tried, or serving only escarole or tofu, can backfire. Students then skip lunch, bring in their own snacks or head out for fast food. We've even seen some pizzas delivered to a side door.

Children and teenagers resist heavy-handed nutritional policies — and the food that is associated with the heavy hand. No food is nutritious, after all, until it is actually eaten.

A smarter lunchroom wouldn't be draconian. Rather, it would nudge students toward making better choices on their own by changing the way their options are presented. One school we have observed in upstate New York, for instance, tripled the number of salads students bought simply by moving the salad bar away from the wall and placing it in front of the cash registers.

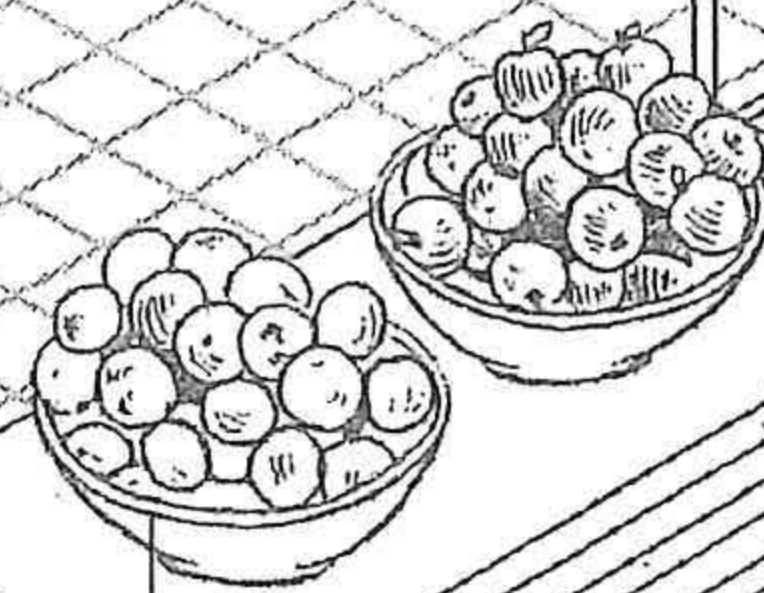
Experiments that we and other researchers have done in cafeterias at high schools, middle schools and summer camp programs, as well as in laboratories, have revealed many ways to use behavioral psychology to coax children to eat better. Here are a dozen such strategies that work without requiring drastic or expensive changes in school menus.



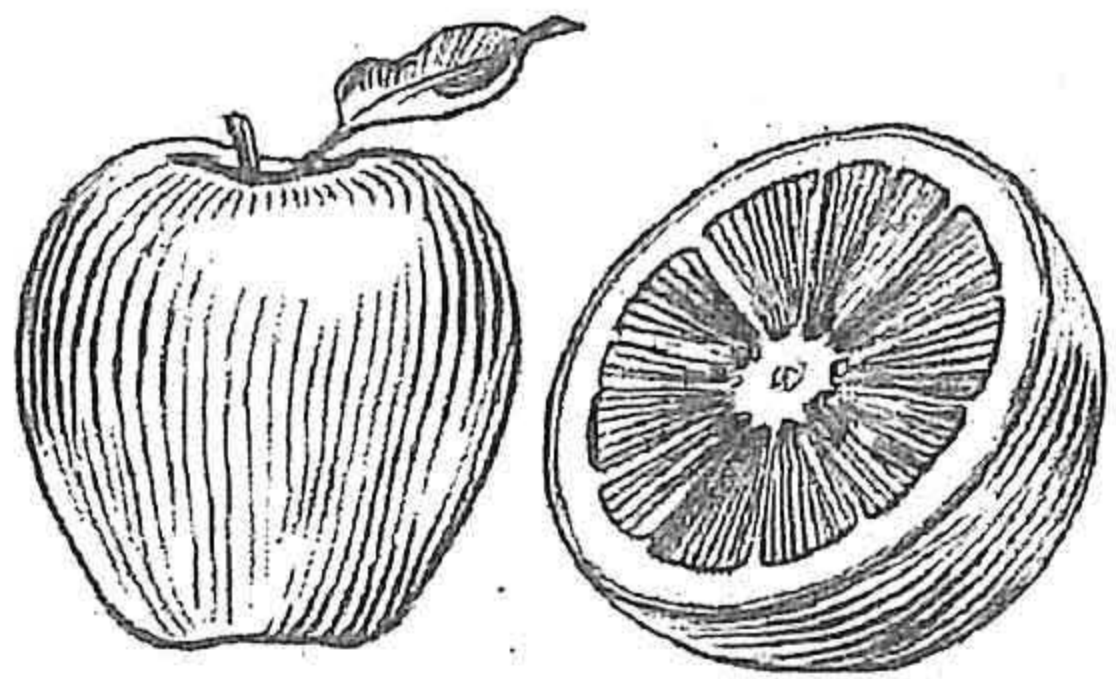
Placing nutritious foods like broccoli at the beginning of the lunch line, rather than in the middle, increased the amount students purchased by 10 percent to 15 percent.



Decreasing the size of bowls from 18 ounces to 14 ounces reduced the size of the average cereal serving at breakfast by 24 percent.



Putting apples and oranges in a fruit bowl, rather than a stainless steel pan, more than doubled fruit sales.



Pulling the salad bar away from the wall and putting it in front of the checkout register nearly tripled sales of salads.

## The **BEN** Center is...

### RESEARCH

We offer small grants to teams applying Behavioral Economics theory to school meal programs. Annual workshops assist new researchers and provide mentoring and practical experience.

### OUTREACH/EDUCATION

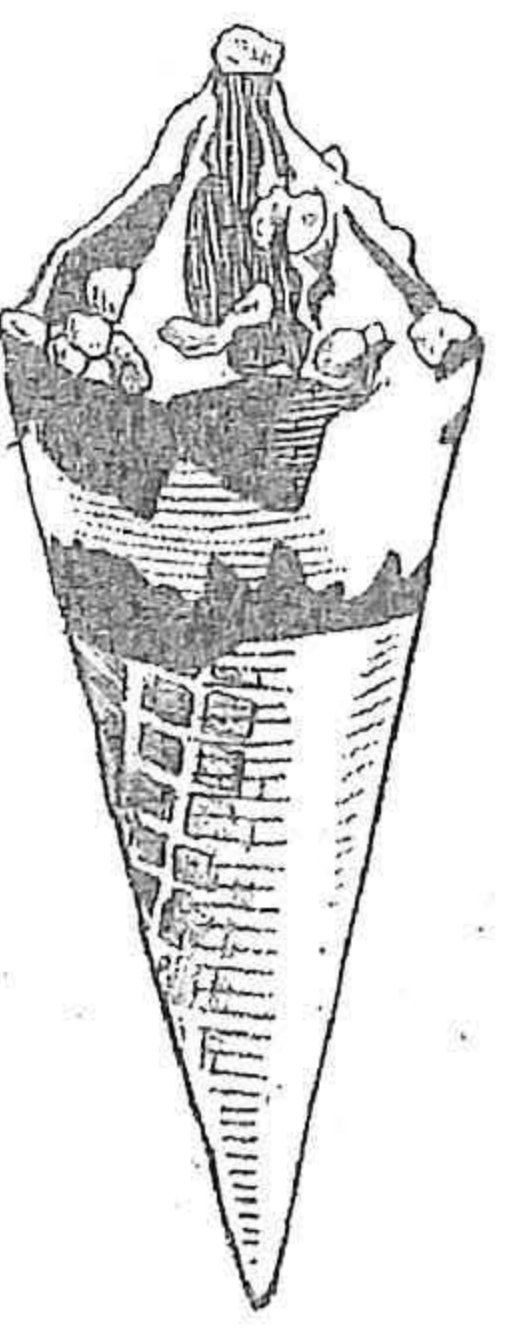
We offer the latest information on easy and inexpensive changes that food service professionals can use in their programs. These environmental changes will help students make more healthful choices while maintaining meal participation and revenue. We plan to reach 50,000 schools by 2015.

### POLICY

We offer Health and Wellness group options for food policy other than choice restriction and ineffective pricing mechanisms. We provide fact-based research results to policy makers to insure sound and objective policy development.

Giving healthy food choices more descriptive names — for example, "creamy corn" rather than "corn" — increased their sales by 27 percent.

Students given a choice between carrots and celery were much more likely to eat their vegetables than students forced to take only carrots.



Keeping ice cream in a freezer with a closed opaque top significantly reduced ice cream sales.

Requiring or encouraging the use of cafeteria trays increased vegetable consumption: students without trays eat 21 percent less salad but no less ice cream.

When cafeteria workers asked each child, "Do you want a salad?" salad sales increased by a third.

Creating a speedy "healthy express" checkout line for students who were not buying desserts and chips doubled the sales of healthy sandwiches.

Moving the chocolate milk behind the plain milk led students to buy more plain milk.

A "cash for cookies" policy — that is, forbidding the use of lunch tickets for desserts — led students to buy 71 percent more fruit and 55 percent fewer desserts.

