



Durable utensils in school cafeterias

Strategies for success

1. Planning and education

- Plan enough time to order and receive supplies, notify parents, and educate students, monitors, and kitchen staff.
- Inform students why the school is switching to durable utensils and how to place durable utensils in the correct bins (*see below*).

2. Bins for used utensils

- Place the soapy bins for utensils **first** in the cafeteria waste/recycling station assembly line, before students begin to sort the rest of their lunch waste.
- Have a **separate soapy utensil bin for each type of utensil**. This will save kitchen staff time so they do not need to sort the different types of utensils after they have been washed.
- Place a **sign on each utensil bin**, with an image of the type of utensil.



3. Two main causes of utensil loss

- Students who bring lunches from home and forget to bring their own utensils.
 - Send a **notice to families** that the switch from disposable and durable utensils is coming. Remind families that lunches from home should include whatever utensil(s) the student needs so that they do not need to use school utensils.
- Breakfast spoons. Breakfast tends to be less monitored and often includes yogurt or cereal that requires a spoon.
 - **Remind students** to place the spoon in the spoon bin after breakfast.

4. Cost of replacing lost durable utensils versus cost of buying single-use disposable utensils over the course of a school year

- Schools WILL lose some utensils, but even with what seems like a high loss rate, it can be cheaper to replace lost durable utensils than to buy single-use disposable plastic utensils for an entire school year. One school district concluded that replacing 10% of durable utensils each year costs less than buying disposable utensils.
 - **Share with school kitchen staff** that some loss is to be expected and it can be less expensive to replace lost utensils than to buy single-use plastic utensils.