

Pointers For Parents

Parents, Are You Making The Grade?

(NAPSA)—When your child goes to school on an empty stomach, she's losing up to a quarter of the daily recommended intake of critical vitamins and minerals. This loss directly impacts energy levels, memory and focus. Studies show that children who start the day hungry score lower on achievement tests and have higher absenteeism rates than children who eat breakfast.

The second annual "Report Card on America's Breakfast Habits" conducted by national parent teacher organization PTO Today and The American Cereal Council, revealed that 30 percent of elementary school-age children are still going to school at least one day per week on an empty stomach—showing no improvement from last year's Report Card. In fact, 20 percent of elementary school-age children are now going to school without breakfast twice a week. This dangerous trend exists despite parents' acknowledgment that starting the morning with breakfast is an important way to prepare kids to learn.

The Report Card did offer hope and easy solutions. Moms noticed a positive impact on their children's performance at school when they took the time to sit down with their kids for breakfast. And the chance of kids skipping breakfast when mom partook was reduced by two-thirds. The conclu-



Did your child eat breakfast today? A new Report Card reveals surprising trends.

sion is that parents need to make the grade each morning as role models for their children.

"Parents are the most influential role models in their kids' lives," said Tim Sullivan, father of four and president of PTO Today. "That's why it's crucial for them to stress the importance of eating breakfast to help prepare their kids for school each day. And it doesn't have to be difficult—a simple way to get kids off on the right foot is by sitting down together for a bowl of cereal and milk."

To show the effect of this issue, PTO Today and The American Cereal Council conducted two-week in-home surveys with 1,000 families across the country to complement the Report Card. Participating parents shared a cereal-with-milk breakfast with their children every day and recorded changes in their children's attention spans and school work.

The testimonials confirmed that

when the families sat down for a cereal breakfast each day, the results were positive, in and out of the classroom. Furthermore, the kids' excitement to take part in the survey and eat breakfast as a family impressed parents.

One participating mom in Simi Valley, California commented, "Cereal was a quick, easy and nutritious breakfast I felt good about starting the day with. Not spending so much time cooking breakfast left more time to sit together at the table—we've definitely started a habit."

Moms and dads nationwide can take their own two-week cereal challenge through www.americancerealcouncil.org to see how starting the day together at the breakfast table can positively impact their families.

Starting your child's day off right is more than just making sure she has done her homework or has her lunch for the day. It starts in the morning around the breakfast table and is as easy as a bowl of cereal with milk. Not only will you feel good about sending your child off with the most important meal of the day, but you know she will be ready mentally and physically throughout the day.

Visit www.americancerealcouncil.org or www.ptotoday.com for more information on the Report Card, and to find more easy parent involvement tips.