



# The Importance of Grains in School Nutrition

Whole grain-rich foods like waffles, toaster pastries, cereal bars, and crackers are a big hit with kids – they're quick, convenient, and delicious. But did you know that whole and enriched grains also support healthier lifestyles in children and adolescents?<sup>1,2</sup> Learn more about the benefits of whole and enriched grains below to help your students reach their greatest potential.

## WHOLE & ENRICHED GRAINS PROVIDE A TOP-NOTCH TEAM OF NUTRIENTS KIDS NEED TO THRIVE.

Both whole and enriched grains contain carbohydrates, which our bodies use for energy. Grain-based foods are important sources of key nutrients like iron, zinc, and B vitamins,<sup>3</sup> and higher whole grain intake has been associated with improved cognitive function in kids and teens!<sup>4</sup>

## SEARCHING FOR BALANCED STUDENT NUTRITION? EXPERTS AGREE – WHOLE & ENRICHED GRAINS ARE KEY!

Grains have an important place on a balanced tray. MyPlate, a tool developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), allots about one-quarter of a standard plate for grains – approximately the same amount as proteins, fruits, and vegetables.<sup>6</sup>

## WHOLE GRAINS CAN ALSO HELP REDUCE THE ODDS OF OBESITY, A COMMON ISSUE FOR KIDS & TEENS.

Looking for ways to promote healthy weight in your students? Here's a tip: more whole grains! Higher whole grain consumption is associated with decreased risk of being overweight or obese in children and adolescents ages 5–18.<sup>1</sup>

### DID YOU KNOW?

Grain-based foods contribute nearly 55% of all fiber consumed in the United States!<sup>5</sup>

### DID YOU KNOW?

Grains are a great starting point for meals and can serve as a vehicle for other food groups and nutrients.<sup>7</sup>

### DID YOU KNOW?

Whole grains may also play a role in helping manage fasting blood glucose in adolescents.<sup>2</sup>

## MAKE GRAINS A STANDARD IN SCHOOL MEALS

When involved parents, dedicated cafeteria managers, and innovative foodservice suppliers work together, greatness is always on the menu! Let's help put our students on the path to a brighter future with nourishing, nutrient-rich grains in every meal.

