

SHARE TABLES

DEFINITION: “Share tables” are tables or stations where children may place whole food or beverage items they choose not to eat. These food and beverage items are then available to other children who may want additional servings.

Before deciding whether a Share Table is right for any of your schools, please consider the following information:

Food waste management is good.

Food waste prevention is better.

- Promote and educate students/administrators about the benefits of the “Offer versus Serve” option which allows students to decline foods they do not intend to eat.
- Remind students/staff that students do not need to pick up a milk if they do not intend to drink it when “Offer vs Serve” is implemented.
- Cutting whole fruit into slices so it is more easily eaten, utilizing creative menu names, and offering different seasonings at the end of the line are some strategies to help prevent food waste.
- Shelf stable items may be saved by the student, who selected the item as part of their meal, for consumption later in the school day or after school. (i.e. whole fruit and packaged items that do not require temperature control for food safety.)

Unintended consequence

Sometimes utilization of Share Tables can increase program food costs. Students may take food they do not intend to eat so they can donate it to the Share Table.

Food Safety

Share Tables can introduce opportunities for food tampering and may compromise food safety.

REGULATIONS

Regulations are dependent upon who manages the Share Table.

IF School Nutrition Professionals Manage the Share Table, Georgia Food Code Regulations apply.

Foods and Beverages Allowed for Redistribution:

- Non-temperature controlled pre-packaged products can be redistributed if the packaging is intact and completely sealed. Examples include crackers, cereal bowl packs, breakfast bars.
- Washed and wrapped whole fresh fruit with edible peels (such as apples, pears, and plums) if the wrapping is intact and completely sealed. Whole fresh fruit with inedible peels (such as oranges and bananas) if peels are completely intact and in sound condition.
- Individual cartons of commercially processed fruit juice that does not require temperature control for safety if the cartons are unopened and intact.

Foods and Beverages NOT Allowed for Redistribution:

- Any unpackaged foods, open items, or items in packages that are not intact and completely sealed.
- Any food or beverage that requires time/temperature control for safety (TCS). Examples include milk, cut fresh fruit, yogurt, string cheese.
- Items brought from home.

IF Student Volunteers/Teachers/Administrators manage the Share Table, Georgia Food Code Regulations do NOT apply.

There should be an explicit understanding and written agreement between the School Nutrition Program and the person(s) monitoring the Share Table clearly stating that School Nutrition Professionals are not responsible for the donated food.

Foods and Beverages Not Allowed for Redistribution:

- Any unpackaged foods, open items, or items in packages that are not intact and completely sealed.
- Items brought from home.

NOTE: *Equipment that is owned/operated by the School Nutrition Program (such as coolers, refrigerators, bins, etc.) may NOT be utilized. No items may be stored in school kitchen.*

Foods and Beverages Allowed for Redistribution:

- Pre-packaged products can be redistributed if the packaging is intact and completely sealed. Examples include crackers, cereal bowl packs, breakfast bars.
- Washed and wrapped whole fresh fruit with edible peels (such as apples, pears, and plums) if the wrapping is intact and completely sealed. Whole fresh fruit with inedible peels (such as oranges and bananas) if peels are completely intact and in sound condition.
- Pre-packaged time/temperature control for safety (TCS) foods and beverages if cartons/packages are unopened, intact, and held/stored at or below 41°F. Examples include cartons of milk or juice, yogurt, string cheese.

