

Parents tasting sessions support implementation of free school meals

In order to inform parents about the free school meals programme and to encourage healthy eating in school and at home, Newham Council supports schools to run taster sessions.

"Our biggest success was the tasting sessions we did with parents. Although we did this before, we really scaled it up when we started the pilot. Parents came in at 3pm for a 'school lunch' with the exact same menu showing the range of choices, with the dining room set-up also mirroring the lunchtime arrangements. This helped turn around perceptions of the meals and helped drive up take up. We continue doing this to this day often offering taster sessions as part of parents evening"

Sally Shadrack, Catering Development Manager, Newham Council

Lorna Jackson, Head teacher at Maryland primary school

'We had about 300 parents, including lots of dads, trying the food and all commented on how tasty the food was. Even families whose children do not stay for dinners commented that they may now try it, which is great for our Free School Meal take-up.'