



The Official Publication of the
School Nutrition Association

8 Steps to a Publishable Photo

Readers are encouraged to submit short stories and photos for *School Nutrition's* annual recaps of National School Lunch and National School Breakfast Weeks, as well as School Lunch Hero Day. Opportunities also are available in the magazine's "Things We Love" column. Plus we maintain an image library for social media and other uses. Photos are selected based on quality; these eight steps will improve your chances for publication.

1. Get up close and personal. Look through your camera's viewfinder. When you are taking pictures of people, can you see the floor *and* the ceiling? If so, you probably are standing too far away from your subjects. Generally, you can get as close as four feet to your subject and still take a sharp, clear photo. Don't try to fit *everything* in; instead, zero in on the most important details. After your photo is developed, the casual observer should see those details easily--whether they're the smiles on your subjects' faces, icing on cookies or words on a banner.

2. Use the right lighting. For indoor photos, use your flash and/or take photos near a window. For outdoor photos, the best light is on a cloudy day. If the sun is shining brightly, it will cast a harsh, unnatural shadow on your subject's face. It also might force subjects to squint, appearing to be grumpy in spite of their celebration! If possible, move individuals under an awning, where they can receive a flattering glow from light reflected off a sidewalk or grass.

3. Remove distractions. Is there a pole behind your subject? Are people walking by in the background? If so, you may end up with a photo of a pole growing out of a boy's head, or the hand of a passerby stuck in your subject's ear. Move your subject to a better place or wait for background activity to die down.

4. Get a little artsy. Don't be afraid to use the top and bottom thirds of your viewfinder. For example, if you're taking a photo of a girl with her lunch tray, spice it up by framing her just to the right of center, with her face in the top third of your viewfinder. Though this may seem like a small change, it can have a big impact!

5. Take multiple pictures, review and edit. When you want to capture photos in the moment, it may be difficult to keep Steps 1-4 in mind. That's okay. Snap

away! Most professional photographers take several pictures of a single subject, then they review each carefully for the best expressions, composition backgrounds, etc. Most smartphones or computers have simple editing tools to help you crop, improve lighting, fix red-eye and correct other mistakes. Make time to use these and send your *best* photos to *SN*.

6. Make sure you have media releases for students. Know your school/district's policy for taking and sharing photos of students. You do not need to send media release information to *SN*, but the responsibility is on you to ensure that photos can be used on social media or in print. *SN* and SNA assume no liability for photos submitted by representatives of schools/districts.

7. Record details on a separate document. Make time to prepare a document of caption details. Write the name of the photo, then describe it briefly. If it's important that *SN* publish the names of the individuals, be certain to record these and use directionals, such as "from left to right" or "back row." The caption may not be literally transcribed in our uses, but we'd like to have all the information that is appropriate—and it's good to get while it's still fresh in your mind!

8. Save and Send. Most photos today are shared electronically. If you do opt to print photos, be sure you use photo-specific paper and ink. If you are sticking with digital media, be sure it is saved at a high resolution and size. Keep your original photo; *SN* staff may contact you if we need you to reformat and resend. Instead of sending a photo file with gobbledygook letters and numbers, rename it using words that connect back to you and the event, such as: "WilsonElementary-NSLW18-decorations." You can email your images to snmagazine@schoolnutrition.org.