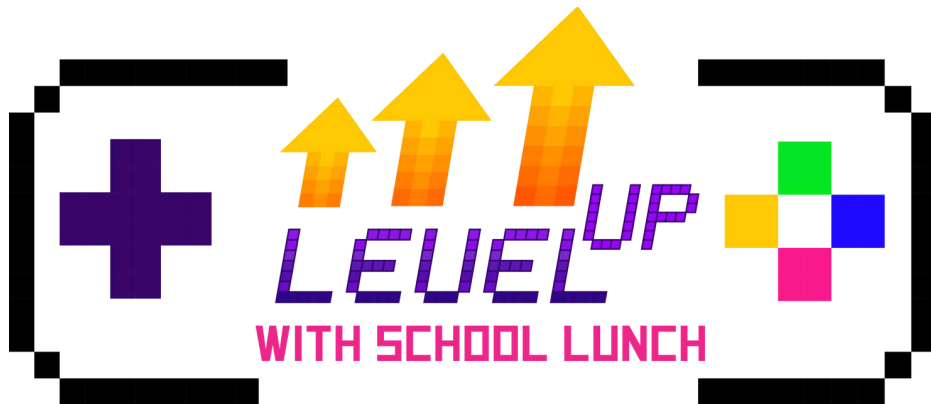
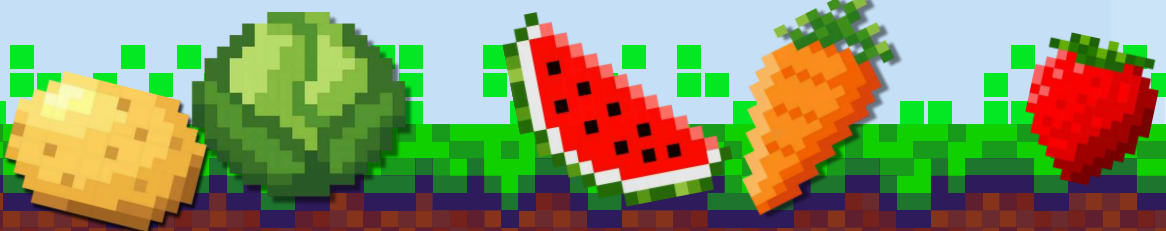
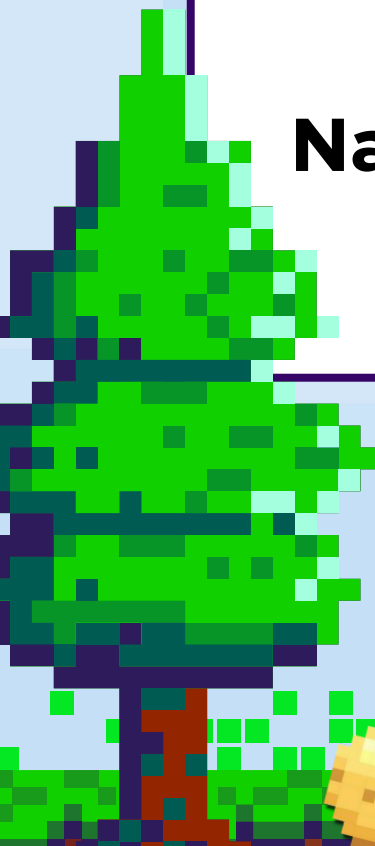


FROM PIXELS TO PLATES
**Get Ready to Level Up
with School Lunch!**



National School Lunch Week
OCTOBER 9-13, 2023

National School Lunch Week
resources are supported by:



MENU

- 1 — Introduction
- 2 — About National School Lunch Week
- 3 — Level 1: Planning and Brainstorming
- 4 — Level 2: Check List
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START

Students of all ages are undeniably drawn to the world of video games, which is why the **2023 National School Lunch (NSLW) Week** theme, "Level Up with School Lunch," will resonate with students from elementary to high school.

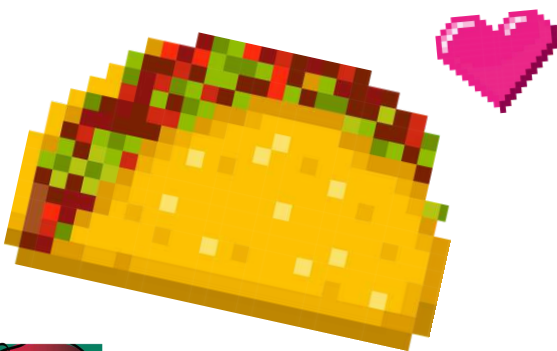
This theme celebrates the joy of gaming but also delivers a positive message about the value of school meals:

When students enjoy a balanced and delicious lunch at school, they gain the energy they need to elevate their achievements to new heights.

This official **#NSLW23 Toolkit** acts as your ultimate game guide, providing all the tools needed to plan an extraordinary celebration.

From crafting exciting decorations to coordinating a captivating gaming atmosphere, use this toolkit to ensure an unforgettable experience. Adding to the excitement, exclusive merchandise sets the stage for an epic gaming-themed event, transforming the school cafeteria into a vibrant gaming realm.

By uniting the thrill of video games with the significance of nutritious school meals, #NSLW23 extends an invitation to students and school communities to "Level Up with School Lunch" and unlock the true potential of their well-being and academic success.



THE LORE OF NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH WEEK

For more than a century, schools have been providing nutritious and substantial meals to students. However, it wasn't until 1946, with the signing of the [National School Lunch Act by President Harry S. Truman](#), that these meals were recognized as essential for supporting children's health and American agriculture.



This act established the [National School Lunch Program](#) (NSLP) and paved the way for other vital federal child nutrition initiatives, including school breakfast, afterschool snacks, summer feeding, farm-to-school and more.

After 77 years, the [School Nutrition Association](#) (SNA) remains a strong advocate for thousands of school nutrition professionals who now serve breakfast, lunch, snack, supper and weekend meals throughout the school year and summer.

[National School Lunch Week](#) (NSLW) was introduced by Congress and President John F. Kennedy in 1962. It is an annual celebration that emphasizes the importance of healthy school lunches for K-12 students.

DID YOU KNOW?

**30 MILLION
children receive
healthy lunches at
school every day!**



LEVEL I:

Plan Your Strategies

To kickstart an extraordinary #NSLW23, begin by looking back at previous celebrations and dedicating time to craft a comprehensive outline for your festivities this year. [Dive into the journaling prompts below](#), ensuring every aspect of the celebration is well-planned.



Brainstorming

Ponder some ideas for this year's "Level Up with School Lunch" theme. What aspects of nutritious school meals and video can you weave together to make it engaging and exciting?



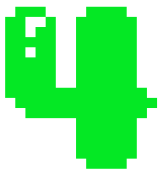
Goal-Setting

Define specific benchmarks for your #NSLW23 celebration. What do you want to accomplish by celebrating #NSLW23? Is it increased student participation in school lunch programs, promoting healthier meal choices or raising awareness about the importance of school meals (or all three?)



Budget Planning

Determine your funds available for the celebration. How can you allocate funds to different aspects of the event, such as decorations, activities and promotional materials? Don't forget to factor in the free resources that SNA offers!



Event Timeline

Create a loose schedule for the #NSLW23 celebration. When will you start preparations, and what tasks need to be completed each week leading up to the event?

SIDE QUEST #1: ASK THE KIDS!

In developing your celebration plans, focus on a generic video game aesthetic (taking cues from the retro style of the official #NSLW23 logo), but consider doing some research into games and characters that are popular with your students. Conduct a poll, asking students as they come through the serving line or while they're dining in the cafeteria to share their favorites. With this insight in hand, you can lean into those games with your decoration and celebration ideas. It can help the students feel involved in the event and make it more relatable to your school site. One word of caution about artwork: Remember that most games and characters are protected by copyrights and trademarks. Be sure you use officially licensed merchandise to stay in the clear!

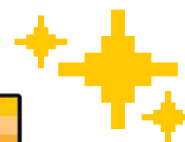
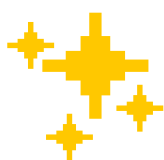
LEVEL 2:

Your Mission Log: Make Sure You Check Everything Off!

Prepare for an epic [#NSLW23](#) adventure with this handy mission log checklist that will guide you through every step of the planning process. Check off each task to ensure a successful and unforgettable "Level Up with School Lunch" celebration!

- Alert the school principal(s) and other leaders about your plans and secure any required permissions.
- Gather your team for a meeting to discuss responsibilities and finalize the timeline.
- Download and share the sample [proclamation](#) with your city council or mayor's office.
- Issue [custom press releases](#) to special guests, media representatives or legislators visiting your cafeteria.
- Kickstart promotion by using [SNA's Social Media Kit](#) to spread the excitement of [#NSLW23](#) to students and the community.
- Encourage team members to dress up on designated days and provide guidelines on appropriate attire during food preparation and service.
- Plan to deck out the serving lines and dining area with a captivating gaming theme. Compile a list of ideas, props and supplies, and assign someone responsible for acquiring or creating these items.
- Download [Activity and Coloring Sheets](#) from the [SNA website](#) to engage students in fun and educational activities.
- Level up your celebrations with official "Level Up with School Lunch" merchandise from the [SNA Shop](#).
- Prepare other themed activities with all necessary materials, instructions and prizes, ensuring every team member understands their roles and responsibilities.

YOU WIN!



LEVEL 3:

Game Over, Hunger! Here's Some NSLW Menu Ideas

Step into a world of culinary adventure during National School Lunch Week (NSLW) with these fun and imaginative menu ideas inspired by beloved video game characters and themes! From iconic characters like Yoshi and Sonic to classic symbols like the Triforce from "The Legend of Zelda," each dish is carefully crafted to bring a touch of gaming magic to the cafeteria table!

1. Yoshi's Egg Salad Sandwiches

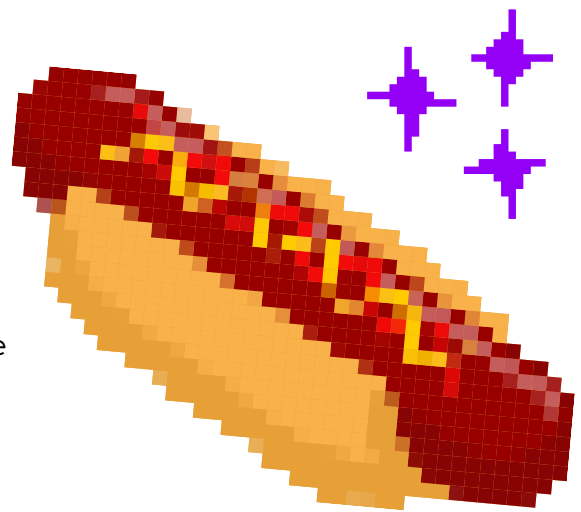
Prepare egg salad sandwiches and cut them into oval shapes to resemble Yoshi's eggs from the Super Mario series.

2. Sonic Chili Dogs

Serve hot dogs with chili and cheese, just like Sonic the Hedgehog's favorite meal.

3. Link's Master Sword Skewers

Create kabobs or skewers with chunks of grilled chicken or veggies, symbolizing Link's Master Sword from "The Legend of Zelda."

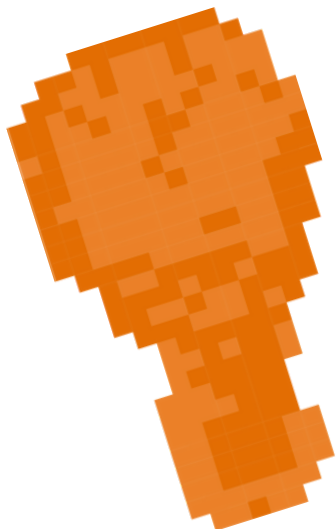


4. "Minecraft" Creeper Quesadillas

Make quesadillas with green spinach tortillas and cheese, resembling the face of a Creeper from "Minecraft."

5. Fire Flower Chicken Wings

Prepare spicy chicken wings and call them "Fire Flower Wings" after the power-up in "Super Mario."



6. Animal Crossing Fruit Salad

Create a fruit salad using a variety of colorful fruits featured in Animal Crossing, such as peaches, pears, apples, coconuts, oranges, cherries and more.

7. "Minecraft" Dirt Pudding Cups

Layer chocolate pudding with crushed cookies to resemble the look of dirt in "Minecraft."

8. Triforce Sandwiches

Make different kinds of sandwiches and cut them into triangles and serve as the shape of the Triforce symbol (three triangles) from "The Legend of Zelda."

9. "Fortnite" Shield Potion Smoothies

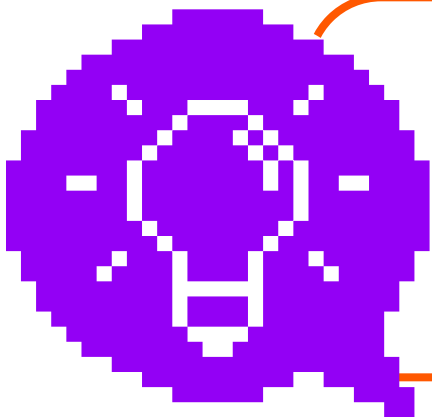
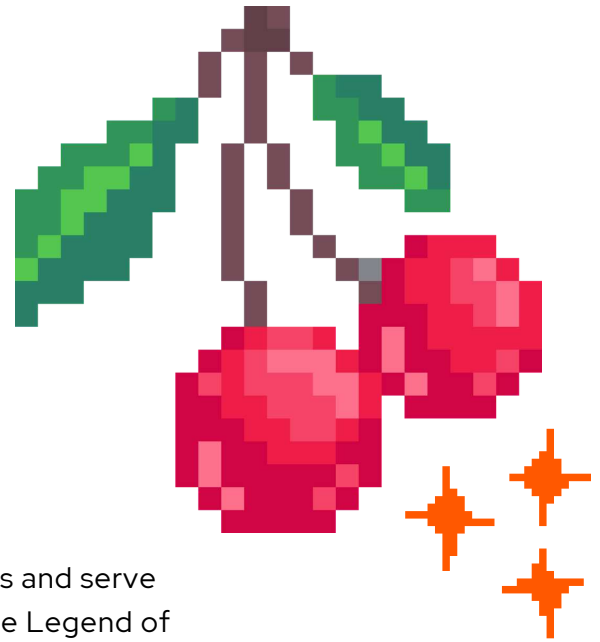
Blend blueberries, bananas, and yogurt to create refreshing smoothies inspired by the shield potions in "Fortnite."

10. "Pokémon" Pokéball Pizza Bagels

Top mini bagels with pizza sauce, cheese and pepperoni to resemble Poké Balls.

11. "Super Mario" Mushrooms

Cook your favorite recipe that features mushrooms, such as adding them to pasta sauce, topping on a pizza or creative stuffed mushrooms to get a power-up like in "Super Mario."



Get creative with your menu!

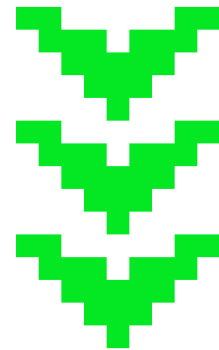
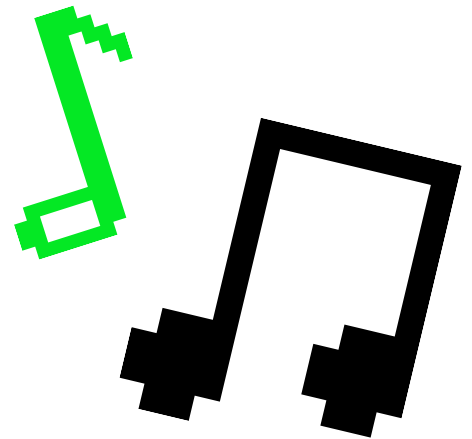
A simple name change creates a playful atmosphere for this gaming theme. Milk and fruit and vegetable juices can become "health mana potions." Grab 'n' Go items can become "XP boosters" (XP=experience points) and entrées and sides can be "main quests" and "side quests."

PRESS PLAY:

Unleash Gaming Vibes with the NSLW23 Playlist

Creating the right atmosphere for a video game party is crucial, and music plays a significant role in setting the mood. Here's a diverse playlist of video game-themed music that should enhance the gaming experience and keep the energy high:

- "Super Mario Bros. Theme" - Koji Kondo
- "The Legend of Zelda Main Theme" - Koji Kondo
- "Sonic the Hedgehog Green Hill Zone" - Masato Nakamura
- "Tetris Theme" - Hirokazu Tanaka
- "Pokémon Theme Song" - Jason Paige
- "Halo Theme" - Martin O'Donnell and Michael Salvatori
- "Minecraft Theme" - C418
- "Street Fighter II Theme" - Yoko Shimomura
- "Donkey Kong Country Theme" - David Wise
- "Mega Man 2 Dr. Wily's Castle" - Takashi Tateishi
- "Final Fantasy VII Battle Theme" - Nobuo Uematsu
- "Overwatch Main Theme" - Neal Acree
- "Rocket League Theme" - Mike Ault
- "Fortnite Default Dance" - Various Artists
- "Pac-Man Theme" - Toshio Kai
- "Stardew Valley Overture" - ConcernedApe
- "Skyrim Main Theme" - Jeremy Soule
- "Super Smash Bros. Ultimate Theme" - Hideki Sakamoto
- "Animal Crossing: New Horizons Main Theme" - Yasuaki Iwata, Yumi Takahashi, Shinobu Nagata, Sayako Doi



Play on Spotify!



SUIT UP FOR ADVENTURE:

Add excitement to the Cafeteria with Costumes!

Get ready to **level up your cafeteria** celebrations with these fantastic video game character costume ideas. We know how much you **love to dress up**, and that's why we've curated this collection of iconic video game characters that will bring an **extra dose of fun and excitement**. From **classic heroes** like Mario and Link to beloved characters like Pikachu and Sonic the Hedgehog, these costumes are sure to make your **school lunch experience truly epic**.

1. Mario or Luigi ("Super Mario")

Wear blue overalls, with a red long-sleeved shirt and a red cap with an "M" on it for Mario or a green long-sleeved shirt and a green cap with an "L" on it for Luigi. Create a fake mustache using black construction paper or felt and attach it to your upper lip.

3. Pikachu ("Pokémon")

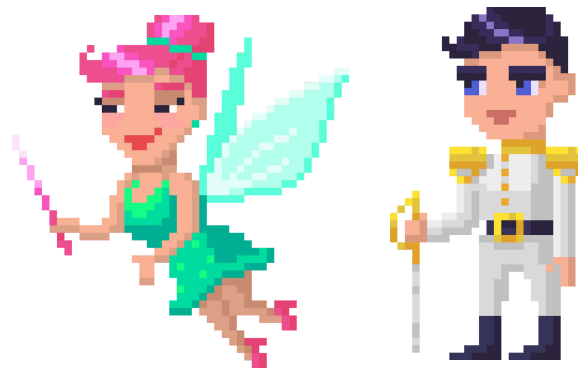
Dress in a yellow onesie or all-yellow clothing. Add Pikachu's iconic red cheeks using red face paint or cut out red circles from felt and stick them on your cheeks. Wear Pikachu ears or make them using cardboard and headbands.

5. Sonic the Hedgehog

Wear a blue jumpsuit or hoodie with spikes made from blue felt or foam attached to the back. Add red or white gloves and Sonic's red shoes.

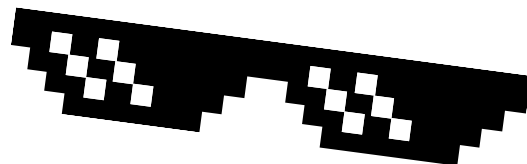
2. Lara Croft ("Tomb Raider")

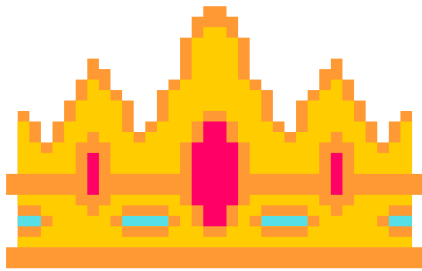
Wear a tank top, cargo pants and a utility belt. Complete the look with a long brown ponytail and fingerless gloves.



4. Link ("The Legend of Zelda")

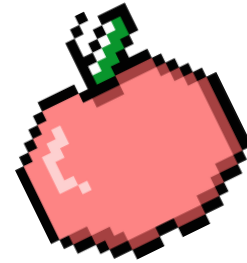
Wear a green tunic or hoodie, green pants, and a brown belt. Create a sword and shield using cardboard, foam and paint.





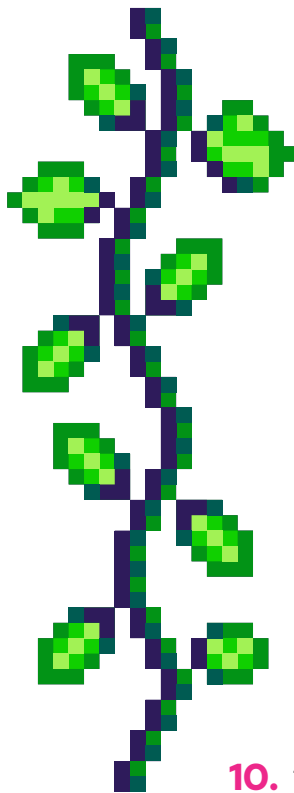
6. Princess Peach (“Super Mario”)

Wear a pink dress or pink blouse and skirt. Add a crown or tiara to your hair and carry a plush Toad or Mario plushie as a prop.



7. “Fortnite” Default Skin

Dress in a basic outfit with brightly colored clothing. Create a cardboard or foam pickaxe with a blue headband to complete the default skin look.



8. “Minecraft” Steve

Make different kinds of sandwiches and cut them into triangles and serve as the shape of the Triforce symbol (three triangles) from The Legend of Zelda.



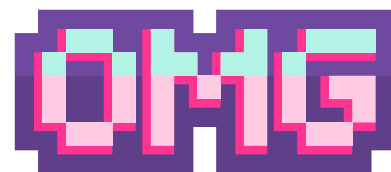
9. Princess Zelda (“The Legend of Zelda”)

Wear a medieval-style dress in shades of pink or purple. Accessorize with a tiara or crown and carry a toy Triforce emblem as a prop.



10. “Ms. Pac-Man (Classic Version)”

Put on a pink dress or pink clothing with a pink bow on your head. Create a round Pac-Man shape using cardboard or foam and attach it to your chest.



LEVEL 4:

Power up Your Communication with Legislator Visits and Media Coverage

Embark on an epic #NSLW23 quest, by inviting national legislators to witness the importance of a healthy school lunch. Check with your local school officials to help determine the feasibility and parameters of these special visits.

[Here's your strategy guide:](#)

1. Plan Ahead

Start organizing media events and legislator visits well in advance of National School Lunch Week (NSLW). Reach out to local media outlets and legislators early to secure their availability and commitment to attend.

3. Develop an Agenda

If the event is approved, be well-prepared, as guests may have tight schedules. Create a detailed agenda for each media event and legislator visit. Outline the activities, key talking points and photo opportunities to make the most of their time at your school.

2. Coordinate with District Communication Team

Work closely with your school district's communication team to ensure that all media events and legislator visits comply with district policies and guidelines on filming children. They can help to reach out to bloggers, news producers and reporters from local papers and news stations to promote #NSLW23.

4. Showcase School Lunch Success Stories

Prepare success stories, testimonials and key data about your school lunch program to share with the media and legislators. Illustrate how nutritious meals positively impact students and the community.

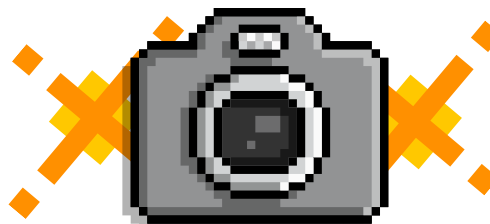
NEXT

5. Prepare Media Kits

Assemble all the important documents you'll need such as the SNA customizable press release, fact sheets (such as the financial impact on your program and staff), high-quality images and other relevant information about NSLW and your school lunch program. Provide these kits to media representatives during their visit.

6. Capture Moments

Assign a team member to capture photos and videos of the events. Documenting the visits and media coverage will be valuable for future promotions and reports.



7. Follow Up

Show gratitude by sending thank you notes to all involved, including media representatives and legislators who attended. Provide them with any additional information they may need and express gratitude for their support.

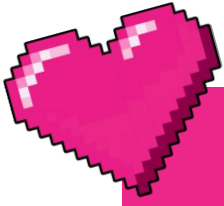
Even if you cannot arrange a visit by state or national legislators, you can still download the #NSLW23 Official Proclamation, customize it with your details and request local authorities like mayors, city council chairs, county executives or district superintendents to recognize October 9-13, 2023, as National School Lunch Week!

SIDE QUEST #2:

VIRTUAL WORLDS, REAL OPPORTUNITIES

Your celebration can also draw a link to video games as a door into a career in computer science or video game development. Partner with the school librarian or with IT instructors to highlight video game-themed books, lesson plans on coding, video game production, design and testing, etc. to create a more holistic and engaging approach to maximizing the #NSLW23 theme with students and the school community.

LEVEL 5:



Connect, Engage, Conquer #NSLW23 on Social Media!



As you embark on your journey to celebrate National School Lunch Week, creating a vibrant and engaging online presence is crucial. With diverse platforms at your disposal, you have the opportunity to connect with various audiences and share the importance of nutritious school meals in a fun and creative way. To ensure your success, we've compiled essential tips and strategies to make the most of your social media efforts.

Utilize Hashtags and Tags



Use the hashtags #NSLW23, #LevelUpWithSchoolLunch and #SchoolLunch on all your Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and X (formerly known as Twitter) posts related to NSLW. Don't forget to tag SNA on Facebook ([@SchoolNutritionAssociation](#)), X ([@SchoolLunch](#)), and Instagram ([@schoolnutritionassoc](#))—we might share your content!

Align Social Media Goals with Campaign Objectives

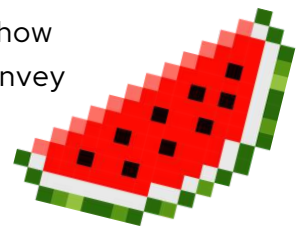
Consider your #NSLW23 campaign goals that you journaled about previously and how social media can help you achieve them. Identify the key messages you want to convey and the platforms that align best with your desired outcomes.

Visual Content Is Key

Utilize eye-catching visuals, including images and videos, to showcase the fun and excitement of your video game-themed celebration. Capture moments of students dressed in costumes, enjoying special meals and engaging in activities.

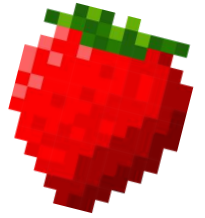
Behind-the-Scenes Sneak Peeks

Share behind-the-scenes glimpses of the planning process, decorating or menu preparation to build excitement and demonstrate the effort that goes into the celebration.



Enlist Community Partners

Engage community partners, including vendors, child health organizations and school groups to spread the word during #NSLW23 about the delicious and nutritious school meals available to all children.

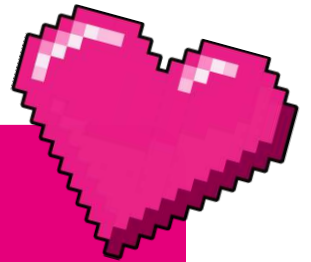


Customize Your Profiles

Before #NSLW23, update your profiles and cover photos to feature the official #NSLW23 artwork from SNA's Social Media Toolkit. Keep these visuals until a week after the conclusion of your events and activities. Additionally, a few days before #NSLW23, you can publish any special menus you have planned. Take advantage of the website's #NSLW23 social media graphics and sample posts for inspiration.

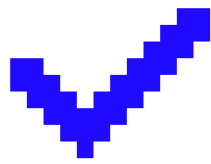
Foster Engagement

Include posts that promote user engagement in your plan. Consider running polls, sharing short videos or even live-streaming your preparations or #NSLW23 activities to captivate your audience and encourage interaction.

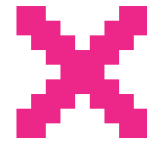


SIDE QUEST #3: LEVEL UP THE CAFETERIA WITH PIXEL ART DECORATION

Embrace the nostalgic and retro vibe of classic video games with this creative and budget-friendly craft to decorate your cafeteria. To create pixel art decorations, gather colorful construction paper squares or sticky notes in various shades. Choose iconic characters and symbols from beloved classic games such as "Super Mario," "Pac-Man," "Space Invaders" or "Tetris." You can find pixel art templates online or let students unleash their creativity by designing their pixel art characters. These can be displayed on the cafeteria walls, entrance or even on tabletops to create a vibrant and playful atmosphere.



LEVEL 6



Achieve Victory in Your Celebration!

Get ready to unlock the secrets to a successful "Level Up with School Lunch" celebration during NSLW! In this section, we present a collection of essential do's and don'ts to guide you on your quest to create an extraordinary event.

FORWARD

BACK

Do Embrace the Theme

Ready, player one! Level up your #NSLW23 celebration by immersing it in the exciting theme of "Level Up with School Lunch." Get your game face on and incorporate thrilling video game elements throughout the event!

Do Plan Ahead

Start your epic quest early to ensure a smooth and successful NSLW celebration. Create a detailed timeline and checklist of tasks to conquer!

Do Involve Students

Calling all heroes and heroines! Join forces with your fellow students to plan and execute this memorable event. Their ideas and preferences will be the secret to unlocking a truly legendary celebration!

Don't Overlook Safety

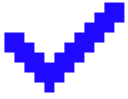
Safety first, heroes! Ensure all activities and decorations are safe for everyone, and stay within the bounds of school safety guidelines.

Don't Overspend

Guard your precious coins! Stick to the allocated budget and avoid overspending on unnecessary items.

Don't Neglect Communication

Keep all players informed! Make sure everyone knows about the epic celebration, including parents, staff and students.



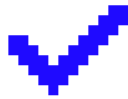
Do Promote Healthy Meals

Power-ups are essential for victory! Highlight the nutritional value of school lunches and encourage healthier meal choices during #NSLW23.



Do Collaborate with Staff

Teamwork makes the dream work! Collaborate with school staff, nutrition professionals and community partners to create a cohesive and engaging celebration that will leave everyone cheering.

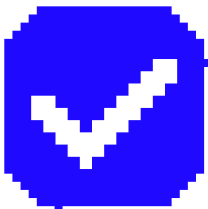


Do Use Social Media:

It's time to level up your communication game! Utilize social media platforms to spread the word about #NSLW23. Share thrilling updates, captivating photos and action-packed videos of the festivities!

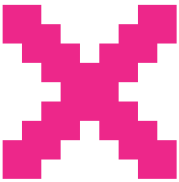
Do Recognize Nutrition Professionals:

Ready to salute the real-life heroes behind the scenes? Celebrate the hard work of nutrition professionals during #NSLW23. They are the true MVPs for providing healthy meals to all players!



Do Evaluate and Reflect

After the celebration, it's time for a post-game analysis! Evaluate your achievements and gather feedback from fellow gamers—students, staff and parents—to discover areas for improvement in future events.



Don't Forget Inclusivity

Every player matters! Make sure the celebration caters to the diverse interests and preferences of all students.

Don't Overcomplicate

Keep it simple, heroes! Stay focused on the core message of promoting nutritious school meals and let the excitement of the theme shine through.

Don't Disregard Sustainability

Save the environment, heroes! Be mindful of the environmental impact of decorations and materials used during #NSLW23.



Don't Underestimate the Impact

#NSLW23 is a game-changer! Remember that it has the potential to create a positive and lasting impact on students' attitudes toward school lunches and nutrition—o, gear up and let the adventure begin!





GAME OVER



Unleash the SNA Resources for #NSLW23

Get ready to level up your [National School Lunch Week](#) celebration with the power-packed resources from SNA! Embrace the pixelated world of gaming and embark on an epic adventure as you explore SNA's treasure trove of video game-themed resources. The quest awaits at www.schoolnutrition.org/nslw—prepare to conquer [#NSLW23](#) with style!

Activity & Coloring Sheets

The official #NSLW23 campaign logos (available in English and Spanish), artwork and elements are available for select uses.

Artwork & Logos

Popular coloring pages and puzzles you can [download, print and distribute](#) to engage students.



Digital Meeting Backgrounds

Schools can download and use digital meeting backgrounds related to the NSLW theme for virtual events and online engagements. These fun and engaging backgrounds add a festive touch to virtual meetings with students, parents and community partners.

Infographic

SNA provides an infographic that visually presents key information and statistics about National School Lunch Week, making it easy for schools to [share important facts and figures with their students, staff and parents.](#)

Merchandise

Find #NSLW23-branded gear online in the [SNA Shop](#).

Press Release

Customize our template with details about your #NSLW23 celebration.



Proclamation

[Download the sample](#) proclamation and add your school or district's information. Request that the [mayor or city council proclaim](#) October 9-13, 2023, as National School Lunch Week.

Social Media Toolkit

SNA offers a social media kit with graphics and sample posts to help schools effectively engage with students, parents and the community on various social media platforms.



BONUS CONTENT:

Get Crafty with Fuse Bead Creations!

This step-by-step guide will show you how to create adorable pixel art using fuse beads to decorate your cafeteria, use it as prizes or involve students in the craft! Fuse bead crafts are a fantastic way to immerse yourself in the pixelated charm of classic and modern games while unleashing your artistic prowess. So, grab your pegboards, gather your beads and let's embark together on this simple craft. Looking for design inspiration? Check out our NSLW24 Pinterest boards for patterns and ideas!

Materials Needed:

- A pack of fuse (or Perler) beads in various colors (these can be found at craft stores like Michaels or online stores like Amazon)
- Pegboards (typically included in the fuse bead kits)
- Ironing paper
- Iron



Step 1: Choose Your Design

Select a video game character, symbol or item that you want to recreate with fuse beads. You can find pixel art patterns online or create your own design!



Step 2: Place Fuse Beads on Pegboard

Lay out the pegboard and place the fuse beads on it, following the design you've chosen. Be careful to arrange the beads precisely to create a pixelated look.



Step 3: Ironing Preparation

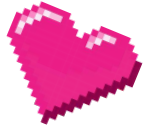
Once your design is complete on the pegboard, place a sheet of ironing paper or parchment paper over the beads to protect them during the ironing process.





Step 4: Iron the Beads

Preheat the iron to a medium setting (check the beads package for specific instructions). Carefully iron the beads with a gentle circular motion, making sure each bead fuses and sticks together. Avoid pressing too hard, as it may cause the beads to deform.



Step 5: Cooling and Removal

Preheat the iron to a medium setting (check the beads package for specific instructions). Carefully iron the beads with a gentle circular motion, making sure each bead fuses and sticks together. Avoid pressing too hard, as it may cause the beads to deform.

Step 6: Display or Use

Preheat the iron to a medium setting (check the beads package for specific instructions). Carefully iron the beads with a gentle circular motion, making sure each bead fuses and sticks together. Avoid pressing too hard, as it may cause the beads to deform.



Here are some tips on making pixel-perfect creations:

- Use tweezers or a bead tray to help with precise bead placement.
- Be mindful of the iron's heat, and don't leave it unattended while working on your craft.
- Experiment with different colors and bead arrangements to add your unique touch to the design.
- Get inspiration from various video games such as "Zelda," "Minecraft," "PacMan" and "Mario"!
- Looking for design inspiration? Check out our NSLW24 Pinterest boards for patterns and ideas!

