

## SafeFood in our Schools

Why are school foods so safe? One reason is the dedicated staff &ndash; I have yet to meet a person working in child nutrition programs who does not have the kids&rsquo; welfare front and center (and I have inter-acted with a lot of these folks across the nation). Another reason is that, three years ago, school districts were charged to develop and implement a food safety plan based on HACCP principles. HACCP is an internally driven approach to food safety &ndash; the food service setting identifies possible risks or hazards that might exist, and then puts into place procedures to mitigate these risks. HACCP is about documentation and ownership by all employees. So, if all employees are knowledgeable about the safe way to handle foods and have to document that these practices are followed &ndash; then knowledge can translate into practice. Believe me, I am usually not a fan of increased government regulations. While we still can&rsquo;t regulate morality or outlaw people acting stupidly, having someone &ldquo;have to&rdquo; do something can only increase odds it will get done &ndash; so safe food handling is practiced more frequently.

In the spirit of back to school welcome &ndash; let those working in your district&rsquo;s child nutrition programs know you appreciate their efforts to keep your child healthy and well-fed.