

Is there a lunch box shame in Norway?



Arnt Steffensen

President of the Norwegian Diet and Nutrition Association



Kost- og ernæringsforbundet i Delta

Healthy & Climate Friendly School food



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The Norwegian lunch box («matpakke»)



Glamorous version
How a lunch box is presented in
colorful brochures, nutrition
recommendations etc

The Norwegian lunch box («matpakke»)



Real life version

- This is what a typical Norwegian lunch looks like in real life
- Sandwiches wrapped in paper, with a glass of milk
- Most Norwegians have had this for lunch during their whole childhood
- Why?

100 years discussing school food



1920s Bad nutrition among poor children in Oslo

1930s Schools in Oslo serve a simple, nutritious meal for all children. It's called the *Oslo breakfast*

40/50s After the war, the Norwegian economy is bad (this was before we found oil), so there were no money for free school food

Parents are told to make the children's lunch boxes based on the Oslo breakfast-model. This is the birth of the Norwegian lunch tradition.

The evolution of the Norwegian school lunch



- 1960–1980s The *matpakke* is the traditional lunch in Norway. Everybody eat this, not only in schools, but at all levels of the society
- 1990s Introduction of school fruit
- 2003 & 2013 The Health Directorate makes guidelines for food served in schools
- 2000 – 2019 Parents and political pressure groups ask why Norway can't have school meals, like in Sweden

2000 – 2019: Political discussions



2019: The gamechanger



The Socialist Party (Arbeiderpartiet) makes free school meals one of their political priorities.



2021: New government with an ambition



- Elections in Norway. The Socialist Party and The Centre Party forms a new government.
- Ambition: All children shall receive a free school meal

2022: A different school meal discussion



Moving from discussing **why** we should have school meals, to discuss **how** we are actually going to make it.

Hip, hip, hurra!! 😊 However...



- Most Norwegians want a hot school meal, the Swedish model
- They won't get it, because:
 - No kitchens
 - No infrastructure
 - Not enough cooks
 - No political enthusiasm of spending *that* much money

What is the situation today?



- Many counties/kommuner have already started pilot projects
- Simple solutions, like bread buffet, porridge and some fruit in the morning. Not for all the children, but for those who show up early
- Different solutions, depending on local infrastructure

So, who shall make this nutritious food?



- Cooks?
- Teachers?
- Voluntary organizations?
- The children themselves (part of an education programme)?
- The food industry?
- Commercial canteen companies?
- Elderly care kitchens?
- Pensioners?
- Parents?

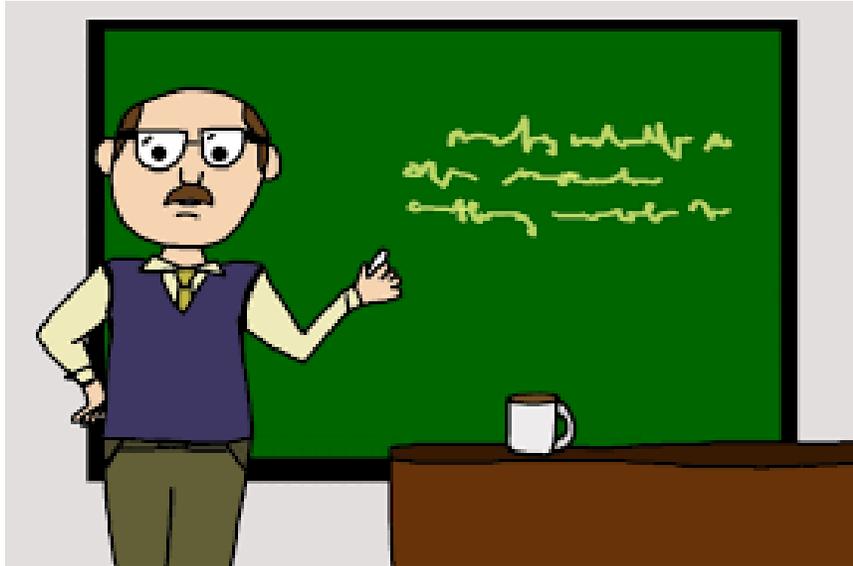
Food in kindergarden is a disaster. So why should school meals be any better?



The Health Directorate's recommendations for food in kindergarden are excellent. But the reality in kindergardens:

- Badly organized
- Poorly equipped kitchens
- Very little dietetic competence
- Very little culinary competence
- Very little money for buying food
- Very little commitment from the county

The teachers' view



- Teachers see the positive effects of the school food
- Better concentration in class, reducing social differences
- But: They don't want to prepare the food, serve it or clean the kitchen afterwards
- Our organization agree. Making food for large groups is more complex than people think.

Feb 2022: Dietitian – teacher alliance

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Hold lærerne unna kjøkkenet!

Debatt: Med Hurdalsplattformen har man kommet noen viktige skritt nærmere et offentlig skolemåltid, og det finnes flere veier til målet. Men én ting må være klart: Lærerne skal ikke stå på kjøkkenet!

 **Arnt Steffensen**
LEDER AV KOST- OG ERNÆRINGSFORBUNDET I DELTA

 **Janne Maria Øksnes**
FORBUNDSLEDER, LÆRERNES YRKESFORBUND I DELTA

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- Shortage of teachers, so their organizations think they should spend their time on teaching, not making food
- We think the same. Let teachers teach, and cooks cook
- The teacher – dietitian alliance resulted in a chronicle in the largest magazine for teachers:
«Keep the teachers out of the kitchen!»

April 2022: Meeting the government



- The chronicle found it's way into the government offices
- Meeting with the Education departement and the Health departement in April
- They have just started the work, to find out how a school meal shall be organized
- As often in these cases: No promises, no clear answers, but they see our points

Summary



- There will be a school meal in the future, but not the way people dream of. Most places, it will be simple
- There is no political will to build kitchen on all the schools
- There are not enough cooks
- But: A simple, nutritious meal is better than no meal at all 😊



arnt@matomsorg.no



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forbundet i Delta