



What Is “Mix It Up at Lunch”?

Mix It Up at Lunch is a simple call to action for all grade students: Sit next to someone new in the cafeteria. Whether they choose their own seats or sit where they’re assigned, most students eat lunch in a bubble, surrounded by the same people. Those habits lead to division. When school leaders encourage students to try something new, even if just for a day, they are helping them to bridge differences and build an important skill.

The world we live in is diverse, and we want young students to be able to know themselves and speak openly about their identities—and to learn about and respect identities that are different from their own. We want kids to appreciate the strengths of diversity and collaborate with others in service of a larger aim. These are global, 21st-century education goals, and Mix It Up can help your school community achieve them.

Students have told us that the cafeteria is one of the most segregated spaces in schools. Sometimes that’s because they like to eat with people they know; sometimes it’s because they’re afraid of crossing social boundaries – and sometimes it’s because they have no choice. But the cafeteria is a great place to start breaking barriers and show students how to meet new people, find common ground and learn new social skills. And what starts in the cafeteria can spread to other parts of the building to nurture an inclusive and welcoming school community.

Mix It Up at Lunch Day will take place on October 22, 2019. We designate a day so schools all over the country can participate in solidarity with each other; however, you can organize a Mix It Up at Lunch Day any time during the school year.

Teaching Tolerance, which launched Mix It Up in 2001, provides free poster sets, recommendations for how to organize the event, printable conversation starters, activities to prepare students for the event, and creative suggestions for mixing up social groupings in new ways. Brand-new posters come free with registration, and many more materials can be found online at [here](#).

Like adults, elementary school students find lots of ways to sort themselves: It might be by socioeconomic status, ability, race, religion or which part of town they’re from. And lately, even for young students, it might be politics. Whatever the divisions, we know that positive interactions can help reduce the prejudices that grow with separation.

We know mixing it up works – from our research and from the feedback we get from schools. So it’s worth the effort. Plus, Mix It Up is just FUN! We hope you’ll [register online](#) – and be sure to keep us posted on your planning via [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) so we can share your great ideas too. Good luck “mixing it up”!

get ready to build new
relationships at Mix It
up at Lunch Day!

