

Student Nutrition Programs:
a Guide to Getting Started

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with files from:

The Toronto District School Board
York Region Food for Learning
Toronto Public Health (Appendices D& E)
& the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (Appendix F)

Student Nutrition Program – Ontario Central East Region

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Student Nutrition Programs: a Guide to Getting Started

Introduction

You should be commended for your interest in starting a Student Nutrition Program (SNP) at your school. You are about to become involved in a very rewarding program that has such positive benefits for children and youth. This handbook is intended to support you every step of the way in the development of your SNP.

The purpose of a SNP is to provide nutritious food, including breakfast, lunch and/or snacks to children and youth. The central objectives of the program are to support the healthy development of children, and having children attending school ready to learn. The SNP must adopt a universal approach by providing all children and youth with the opportunity to participate regardless of socioeconomic status. Every participant of the program should be made to feel welcome.

There are many reasons why students participate in nutrition programs, including:

- long bus rides to school
- insufficient food in the home
- hurried morning routines are becoming more common
- lack of parental supervision at mealtime
- child is not hungry before leaving for school
- child likes the social aspects of eating with their friends

Offering children and youth nourishing food is a fundamental component to enhancing their healthy development and ability to learn. Research shows the many benefits attributed to participating in a SNP including improved academic performance, higher rates of school attendance, fewer classroom disruptions, improved student behavior and a more nutritious and healthy diet. Therefore, participation in a SNP can play a consequential role in improving student success and the healthy development of children and youth.

Some financial support for food and other program costs is available from the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, administered by the Peterborough Family Resource Centre – the lead agency in Ontario Central East. Your local Student Nutrition Program Coordinator can help you complete the necessary application. The funding available is calculated with consideration to a number of factors, including: rural areas and the higher cost of food in these regions; vulnerable children and youth; regions with widely distributed populations; varying income levels; and areas expected to experience high population growth. Other factors considered are the type of meal offered i.e.: breakfast, snack or lunch; the number of children participating; the number of serving days, in-kind contributions including the number of volunteers, the total number of volunteer hours as well as parental contributions, fundraising events, food, supplies, equipment, non-consumables and cash donations. Each school receives a percentage, which varies each year, of the total cost of running their program.

At this time, it would be a good idea for the school principal to read the letter in Appendix A which describes the background, purpose and accountability mechanisms for the Student Nutrition Program.

Step 1:**Contact your Local Student Nutrition Program Coordinator**

Your Local SNP Coordinator can assist with:

- Safe food handling practices to prevent food borne illnesses
- Menu planning to ensure adequate calories and nutrients in menus
- Application completion
- Visits to student nutrition programs in other schools

Local Student Nutrition Coordinators:

Durham's Child Nutrition Project

Ana Mazhar

Tel: 905 686-2661 ext:121

Fax: 905 686-4157

Email: amazhar@cdcd.org

Haliburton Food for Kids

Karen Phipps

Tel: 705 457-1311

Email: karhipps@yahoo.com

Food for Kids City of Kawartha Lakes

Andrea Brown

Tel: 705 292-0398

Email: foodforkidsckl@yahoo.ca

Northumberland Food for Thought

Susan Greenwood

Tel: 905 372-7863

Email: Susan_greenwood@eagle.ca

Food for Kids Peterborough

Kris Roberts

Tel: 705 743-1000 / 1-877-743-0101

Email: krisrob@pcchu.ca

Simcoe Eat Well to Excel**North Simcoe**

Nicole Bertucci

Tel: 705 327-9634

Email: bertucci_n@rogers.com

South Simcoe

Diane Parkinson

Tel: 705 735-6321

Email: parkinsond@rogers.com or

York Region Food for Learning

Lana Pearce-Searles

Tel: 905 895-4512 ext. 4397

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Student Nutrition Program – Ontario Central East Region

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Step 2:

Gain Support for a SNP & Determine the Right Program for Your School

Supporters, partners and allies are key to developing a successful Student Nutrition Program. The more parents, guardians, school staff and interested community members who are aware of and support the benefits of a SNP – including improved academic performance, higher rates of school attendance, fewer classroom disruptions, improved student behavior and a more nutritious and healthy diet – the more successful your program will be.

Discuss with parents, guardians, school staff and interested community members the type and delivery model of Student Nutrition Program that will best serves your students:

A. Type of Program

There are *three* types of programs.

- Breakfast - should contain at least one serving from a minimum of 3 food groups of *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating* with at least one serving from the Vegetables and Fruit food group
- Snack - should contain at least one serving two food groups of *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating* with at least one serving from the Vegetables and Fruit food group
- Lunch - same as breakfast

B. Delivery Model

There are *three* delivery models which can be used for either a breakfast, snack or lunch program.

- Bin Model - This popular model consists of providing a bin (usually a plastic bin about 8" high by 12" wide and 24" long) to each classroom which contains either their snack, breakfast or lunch servings. The bin can be picked up from the kitchen and returned by a student monitor. The servings may be distributed according to the teacher's discretion. The bin could be passed around by either the teacher or a student while students are working quietly, or it could be left on a table for students to help themselves. This model can serve a large number of students.
- Grab n' Go - This model is becoming popular in the high schools. Usually, a table of servings is provided on a table at the entrance to the school, supervised and replenished by volunteer(s). When students enter, they may help themselves to the servings. Individual servings can be served in "baggies". This model can serve a large number of students.
- Sit Down - This model varies according to the school facilities. An example would be a breakfast program served by volunteers in an empty classroom or gym. This program usually requires more teacher supervision.

Nutrition programs vary from one school to the next. For example, one school may serve a breakfast program using the bin model. Yet, another school may serve a sit-down breakfast or a grab n' go snack.

Initial feedback can come from staff, parents/guardians and School Councils through discussion of SNPs and the types of program that will best serve your students. A **sample cover letter and survey** to parents/guardians to gain support for the program, financial contributions and to recruit volunteers are provided in Appendix B.

Step 3: Set up Student Nutrition Advisory Committee

The purpose of this committee is to review the results of the survey and establish and monitor the effectiveness of the nutrition program. Include interested teaching staff, support staff, parents/guardians, Public Health nurses or nutritionists, students where appropriate and perhaps community persons who are interested in child nutrition i.e. local businesses, service clubs, interfaith group.

It is helpful for the Student Nutrition Advisory Committee to develop an action plan to implement the SNP that addresses the issues of:

- Location - A safe, clean comfortable space for the SNP within the school or other suitable venue that meets fire regulations and room capacity restrictions. Programs are conducted in classrooms, cafeterias, gymnasiums and some in staff rooms. The custodian will need to be on board due to the impact of the program on their work.
- Site Coordinator – A School Coordinator or Site Coordinator should be identified to supervise the day-to-day program operation and coordinate volunteers.
- Research – Your Local SNP Coordinator can make arrangements for you to visit other breakfast/snack/lunch programs.
- Type of meal(s) to be served i.e. breakfast, snack or lunch.
- Delivery model – Which of the 3 delivery models will you adopt - ‘sit down’, ‘bin’ or ‘grab n’go’? You need to ensure that your program is universal. All children should have the opportunity to participate in the program without being stigmatized or singled out. Every participant of the program should be made to feel welcome.
- Menu – Refer to the *Nutrition Guidelines – June 2005* at www.studentnutritionprogram.ca. A basic two week menu (see sample menus in Appendix C & D) should be nutritious, well-balanced and varied. Start simple. Your Local SNP Coordinator will be able to assist schools with menu planning and food costing. See Appendix E for a quick reference guide to nutrition.
- Food Safety Guidelines – Check with your Local SNP Coordinator to ensure food safety guidelines are followed.
- Budget – Expenditures and deposits will need to be recorded. All receipts must be kept. An accounting report of expenditures of food or paper products up the amount of the grant needs to be provided semi-annually to the Local Student Nutrition Program Coordinator (end of January and June). (Appendix F)
- Receipt of contributions and fundraising opportunities – Sponsors need to be found to help defray the program costs. Sponsors may include a local church, business, service club, school fund raising activities and School Council. Parental support is an important part of a successful nutrition program. You will need to determine how you are going to collect financial support from parents.
- Community support will need to be established including the availability of staff and volunteers. Volunteers will be needed to assist the Site Coordinator on a scheduled basis. You will need to discuss your school’s volunteer policies with your school principal.
- Quarterly Service Target Report – Participating schools are required to provide 4 quarterly service target reports which can be found in Appendix G.

**Step 4:
Apply for Funding**

Complete and submit the SNP Funding Application form found in Appendix H in consultation with your Local Student Nutrition Program Coordinator. In addition to funding available through the MCYS Student Nutrition Program, schools are expected to fundraise and develop partnerships with potential sponsors in order to increase the funding base of their Student Nutrition Program.

**Step 5:
Keep the Communication Flowing**

You are well on your way to establishing your program. It is a good time to update your school community on the description of your new student nutrition program. A sample letter is included in Appendix I which describes the program, indicates the cost per child, the time of day the program will occur and an information form.

It is a good idea to keep parents and volunteers informed at School Council meetings, parent and teacher night displays and newsletters.

Students can be informed and included by:

- having senior students help the younger students with their breakfast, snack or lunch
- having poster and display contests for students
- planning menus
- having a contest to name the program in your school
- inviting students to experience foods from other cultures

Let parents/guardians, suppliers, local community groups, media and other advocacy organizations know how well your nutrition program is run and the benefits realized by the children. This will be very helpful when recruiting volunteers and seeking community contributions.

Appendix A Letter Outlining Key Requirements of School Participation in a Student Nutrition Program

Dear Principals & School Coordinators,

Please find included in this letter information on the goals and funding requirement of Student Nutrition Programs.

Should your school develop a Nutrition Program, and apply and be approved for funding, you will receive funding, with allocations distributed in September 2007 and January 2008. Your school's funding will come through the Central Eastern Ontario lead agency, the Peterborough Family Resource Centre (PFRC), from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

The **purpose** of the Student Nourishment Program (SNP) is to support communities that want to provide nutritious food, including breakfast, lunch and/or snacks, to children and youth across Ontario. The central objective of the programs operating throughout the province is to support the healthy development of children and youth arriving at school ready to learn. Government funding of SNPs operates within a larger group of contributors including parents, corporate sponsors, local charities and municipalities. This universal program supports initiatives to increase levels of school readiness among young people and provide a healthy nutrition environment in schools. The program also complements efforts to reduce rates of childhood obesity and the incidence of overweight children.

When a grant is provided to a school, the recipient agrees to the following:

**** forms** are available at: www.studentnutritionprogram.ca or through your local Nutrition Program Coordinator**

- The recipient will sign and submit an **authorization form**.
- The recipient will follow current **nutritional guidelines**.
- The recipient will provide an **accounting report of expenditures** for food or paper products up the amount of the grant and provide these semi-annually to the local breakfast coordinator (end of January and June). The receipts will be kept on file at the school.
- The recipient will provide four quarterly **service target reports**. The two service targets required are:

1. Number of Children Served -The number of children that received services, at a point in time, during the fiscal year. This is a cumulative number and a child is reported in the initial quarter in which he/she received services and counted once during the fiscal year. For example, in the first quarter if 15 children received service this would be reported at the end of November (end of first quarter). If 5 additional new children received service during the second quarter, a total of 20 children would be reported at the end of February (end of second quarter).

2. Number of Meals/Snacks Served - The total number of meals (ie. Breakfast or lunch) and snacks served as part of the student nourishment program. Meals and snacks are taken to include any occasion when food and/or drink is distributed to an individual child or young person as part of the student nourishment program. For example, if breakfast was served to 15 children on 10 occasions, then this would be counted as 150 meals/snacks served. This is a cumulative number.

This data is collected for the purposes of Ministry reporting, program development and adjustment of the School Nutrition Program. The service target tracking form will be forwarded to you by your Local Nutrition Coordinator.

The recipient will ensure the funded program embraces the School Nutrition Program **principles** of:

1. Program must take a **universal** approach and serve all children and youth across the province regardless of socioeconomic status.
2. Offering children and youth nutritious food is a fundamental component to enhancing their healthy development and ability to learn.
3. Communities can work together and share their knowledge, experience and resources to effectively serve children and youth.
4. Every region and community across the province is unique and programs must be flexible to

- address their specific needs.
5. Parental involvement in and contributions to local programs are key elements of success.
 6. Community groups and local stakeholders must be engaged in the design and implementation of student nourishment programs at the local level.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your Local Student Nutrition Program Coordinator. Thank you for your cooperation and for all you are doing to support children and their learning!

Sincerely,

Mary Bark
Healthy Lifestyles Team Leader
Peterborough Family Resource Centre

Please complete the attached form and return by **Oct. 15** to your Local SNP Coordinator,
_____ Fax: () - at the _____

This application must be signed by two people. One signature must be that of the school principal.

School Board: _____

School: _____

Date: _____

Amount Received: _____

The undersigned, being authorized on behalf of the applicant, hereby acknowledge receipt of the School Nutrition Program cheque and certify that you agree to provide the services and data set out in the attached letter dated _____, 200__.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Title: _____

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Title: _____

Appendix B
Sample Covering Letter to Parents/Guardians (attach survey below)

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Our school is considering starting a student nutrition program. We are asking for your input on what kind of program to start; a breakfast, snack or lunch program.

Healthy food is essential for students' physical, emotional, social and intellectual development. Research has shown that well-nourished students are better able to concentrate; more effectively retain and apply the things they learn and are more likely to show positive social behaviors. Children use up energy quickly and require frequent nourishment.

Our nutrition program will be safe and welcoming, reflective of the values and tastes of our community and follow Canada's Food guide to Healthy Eating. More than 400 schools have student nutrition programs operating in Central Eastern Ontario.

There are many reasons why students participate in nutrition programs, including:

- Long bus rides to school
- Insufficient food in the home
- Hurried morning routines are becoming more common
- Lack of parental supervision at mealtime
- Child is not hungry before leaving for school
- Child likes the social aspects of eating with their friends

We are asking our parents/guardians for assistance in determining the best type of program for our students. Please take a few minutes to complete the attached survey and return it to your child's teacher by _____.

Thank you.

Yours truly,

School Principal

Sample School Nutrition Survey (attach to letter)

_____ School is considering starting a Student Nutrition Program available for all students. We would appreciate your help in determining the best type of program for our students. Please answer the following questions and return the form to your child's teacher by _____.

1. Do you like the idea of a daily nutrition program available to all students?

_____ Yes _____ No

2. Which is the best program for our students?

_____ Breakfast
_____ Snack
_____ Lunch

3. How much would you be willing or could you pay, for this program on a **monthly** basis?

_____ \$5.00 _____ \$8.00 _____ \$10.00 Other \$ _____

Note: The program will be open to all students regardless of the family's contribution.

4. Would you be willing to assist the program by volunteering 1-2 hours per week?

_____ Yes _____ No

If you are able to volunteer, please print your name, address and telephone number below.

Your name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number(s): _____

Child's Name: _____ Child's Grade: _____

Thank you.

Appendix G

School Nutrition Program Quarterly Service Targets Report

Date: _____
School: _____
County: _____

This report is due by the end of the first week following the end of each quarter.
E.g.: Quarter 1– due Oct. 6 Quarter 2- due Jan.5, Quarter 3- due April 6, Quarter 4- due July 5

	<u>Quarter 1</u> (July 1-Sept. 30)	<u>Quarter 2</u> (Oct. 1- Dec. 31)	<u>Quarter 3</u> (Jan. 1 – Mar. 31)	<u>Quarter 4</u> (April 1 – June 30)
*Number of Students Served	Breakfast _____ Snack _____ Lunch _____	Breakfast _____ Snack _____ Lunch _____	Breakfast _____ Snack _____ Lunch _____	Breakfast _____ Snack _____ Lunch _____
**Number of Meals/Snacks Served	Breakfast _____ Snack _____ Lunch _____	Breakfast _____ Snack _____ Lunch _____	Breakfast _____ Snack _____ Lunch _____	Breakfast _____ Snack _____ Lunch _____

* The number of children who received services, at a point in time, during the fiscal year. This is a cumulative number and a child is reported in the initial quarter in which he/she received services and counted once during the fiscal year. For example, in the first quarter if 15 children received service this would be reported at the end of November (end of first quarter). If 5 additional new children received service during the second quarter, a total of 20 children would be reported at the end of February (end of second quarter).

**The total of number of meals (ie. Breakfast or lunch) and snacks served as part of the student nutrition program. "Meals and snacks" are taken to include any occasion when food and/or drink is distributed to an individual child or young person as part of the student nutrition program. For example, if breakfast was served to 15 children on 10 occasions, then this would be counted as 150 meals/snacks served. This is a cumulative number.

Thank you for your cooperation and for all you are doing to support children and their learning.

Principal's Signature _____

Reports can be faxed to your Local Breakfast Coordinator – _____ - at
_____ Fax: _____

**Appendix H
Student Nutrition Program Funding Application 2006-2007**

Full Name of School: _____
 Date of Application: _____
 School address: _____
 Region: _____ No. of Students in School: _____
 Grades in School: _____
 Principal's Name: _____
 Contact Name: _____

Please include all information for existing, new and revised programs which require funding.

		Type of program(s) offered by your school (√)	Is/are the program(s) universal?*(Yes/No)	Average no. of children served per day	No. of serving days per year	Average no. of volunteers/day (not including site coordinator)	Average no. of volunteer hours/day (not including site coordinator)
Breakfast	Existing						
	New						
	Revised						
Snack	Existing						
	New						
	Revised						
Lunch	Existing						
	New						
	Revised						

***Universal** - All children are encouraged to participate to ensure that the program is non-stigmatizing and that children can feel welcome, safe and comfortable.

	Do you have a site coordinator? (Yes/No)	Estimate of no. of hour/month for the site coordinator	Estimate of no. of hours/week that food is prepared off-site by volunteers	Does your program use disposable dishes & utensils? (Yes/No)	Estimate of \$ value of in-kind* donations for the academic year
Breakfast					
Snack					
Lunch					

***In-Kind Contributions** – Include food, supplies, equipment, non-consumables from other agencies, businesses, individuals or social clubs, as well as cash donations.

Additional Information ie. Special Circumstances which may warrant additional funding.

Local Student Nutrition Program Coordinator's Signature: _____

For office use:

Application approved: _____

Date cheque sent: _____

| **Appendix I**

Sample Program Announcement and Registration Form

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

Recently, _____ School asked our school community if they thought our students would benefit from a Nutrition Program. As a result of discussion with **list the parents, teachers, school council etc.** as well as the survey sent to parent(s)/guardian(s), our schools is going to start a **type of program** program.

The **name of program** will start at **time of day** and run **number of days of the week.** The program is open to all children.

There are many benefits to having a student nutrition program available to our students. Research has shown that student nutrition programs improve learning and classroom behavior. They allow children to eat with their friends and give tghem the opportunity to try a variety of new food, which are appealing, culturally diverse, tasty and nutritious. Lastly, the programs' focus on nutrition supports the Ontario curriculum.

If you are interested in having your child/ren participate in the **Name of program**, please complete the information on the back of this letter and return it to your child's teacher by

_____.

Thank you,

Yours truly,

School Principal

Sample School Nutrition Program Registration Information Form

Please Print:

_____ agree to let _____ in
(Parent/Guardian's Name) (Student's Name)

grade: _____ take part in the School Nutrition Program. His/her teacher is
_____ in room: _____.
(Teacher's Name)

Please list any special health or dietary concerns for your child by answering the following questions.

1. Does your child have any **dietary restrictions**? Please be specific.

2. Does your child have any **allergies**? E.g. is your child allergic to milk/dairy products? Please list any food allergies, inhaled allergies or skin contact allergies.

All **donations** are gratefully accepted. Please find enclosed in the unmarked envelope, my contribution to our school nutrition program.

Enclosed is \$ _____ for the month of _____, or for the 3-month period of _____. (All children are welcome to participate regardless of their family's contribution to the program.)

I would be willing to assist the program by **volunteering** 1-2 hours/week:

Yes _____ No _____

If you are able to volunteer, please print your name, address and telephone number.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number(s): _____

Thank you for completing this form and returning it to your child's teacher by _____.