

Introduction and Purpose

What is York Region Food for Learning?

York Region Food for Learning (**YRFFL**) is a community partnership of parents, educators, health professionals, community members and business members. This group is dedicated to enhancing classroom learning by initiating and supporting student nutrition programs such as breakfast, lunch and snack programs.

YRFFL has a coordinator, a fundraiser and an active and highly skilled steering committee. In the spring of 2002, York Region Community and Health Services dedicated a Nutrition Educator to work with **YRFFL** to assist coordinators of student nutrition programs with menu planning, budgeting and nutrition education.

York Region Food for Learning offers a broad range of resources and support to community-based student nutrition programs.

Support and Resources include:

- presentations about the benefits of student nutrition programs
- assistance with starting and maintaining programs
- nutrition education, assistance with budgeting and menu planning
- food safety resources and training
- assistance with volunteer recruitment and training
- funding assistance.

Purpose of the Information Kit

This information kit is designed to help school administrators and local parent communities start and maintain a nutrition program in their school. The **York Region Food for Learning** Information Kit includes information on how to:

- ✓ **set-up** an effective nutrition program in your school
- ✓ **ensure** effective program management and measurements of success
- ✓ **focus** on student success and encourage the participation of parents and students to achieve this goal
- ✓ **develop** partnerships and collaboration among parents/guardians, community, businesses and other nutrition programs
- ✓ **make** the best use of staff and volunteers
- ✓ **develop** funding and diverse fundraising initiatives for all aspects of program operations
- ✓ **create** a positive environment for helping children develop lifelong, healthy eating habits.

There are many ways to run a program; you will need to adapt your program to meet the specific needs of your own community. Involving parents/guardians is key to your program's success, especially to ensure that cultural and faith concerns are incorporated into menu planning.

York Region Food for Learning
programs are open to all students
regardless of their ability to contribute
financially to the program.

Imagine if someone else would prepare breakfast, a snack or lunch for you and you got to enjoy it with friends everyday. You would probably eat regularly and better because meals would be convenient, fun and probably more nutritious. It's a situation we would all benefit from, especially our children.

Benefits of Student Nutrition Programs

- For students, nutrition programs provide a caring, clean and safe environment. Such programs help to promote healthy eating.
- For parents, it's a convenient, economical way to encourage and support the development of lifelong, healthy eating practices. As well, programs enable children to practice their socialization skills.
- For school, student nourishment programs improve cognitive function and classroom behavior.
- For teachers, nutrition programs provide opportunities to incorporate healthy living knowledge and skills in the daily school curriculum.

Why is a Student Nutrition Program Important in Your Community?

There are many reasons why students end up in class hungry. For example, early bus schedules, parents who commute long distances to work, poor eating habits and dieting are some of the reasons why students are missing the most important meal of the day. For whatever reason, children who skip breakfast arrive in class under-nourished and unable to learn at their true potential.

The evidence is clear: students that participate in nutrition programs perform better in class and are more successful in achieving their educational goals.