

# Best Practices

## What are Best Practices?

In 2000, BREAKFAST FOR LEARNING, invited people from all over Canada to participate in a discussion that would outline the best practices in community food and student nutrition programs. The result was a BEST PRACTICES document that outlines the ingredients of a successful student nutrition program.

The ultimate goal of BEST PRACTICES is to ensure nutritional health for all children by establishing guidelines for improving the quality of student nutrition programs and enhancing their operational strength within the community.

**York Region Food for Learning** looks at how closely a student nutrition program is meeting the BEST PRACTICES objectives before they fund the program.

## Achieving Best Practices

The following seven areas have been identified as BEST PRACTICES for all student nutrition programs. Although your program may not meet all of these during your first year of operation, the idea is to work on improving your program to meet these BEST PRACTICES.

## Best Practice Standards

### 1. EFFECTIVE PROGRAM MANAGEMENT - Parental Involvement, Consent, Partnerships & Collaboration

- Parental involvement every step of the way - from planning to the day-to-day functions.
- A coordinating program committee reflecting community collaboration and diverse partnerships made up of parents, community members, students and volunteers. In addition the committee must also include the participation of the principal, vice-principal or a teacher.

### 2. MEASURING SUCCESS - Evaluation

- Ongoing and yearly evaluation of the program.

### 3. WHO IS SERVED - Access/Participation

- Universally accessible program allowing any child in the community to participate.
- Program operates at least 2 – 5 days per week during the school year.

**York Region Food for Learning** is available to work with schools to help them achieve BEST PRACTICES.

Call 905-868-9691 for more details.

#### **4. STAFF & VOLUNTEERS - Inclusive and Efficient**

- A qualified coordinator is - to play the central role of organizing volunteers, managing budgets and acting as a consistent community liaison.
- Resources in place to attract, train and support staff and volunteers.
- A system in place to recognize volunteers and other supporters in the community.

#### **5. MENU FOR LEARNING - Food Quality**

- Nutritious food, in sufficient quantities, available to meet the needs of the children. A breakfast must provide foods from at least three different food groups of Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide.
- Quality assurance regarding nutrition and food safety, provided by Nutrition Educator and public health inspectors along with training provided for the following:
  - ✓ Safe food handling practices - to prevent food borne illnesses
  - ✓ Menu planning - to ensure adequate calories and nutrients in menus
- Nutrition education support within program sites that promotes life-long healthy eating habits for children.
- Multicultural content - to reflect the cultural diversity of the community.

#### **6. MONEY MATTERS - Financial Accountability**

- Parental financial support, including contributing toward the cost of the program.
- Effective accounting system in place and training provided for the following:
  - ✓ Budgeting - to efficiently utilize funds
  - ✓ Bookkeeping & financial - to ensure fiscal accountability
  - ✓ management
- Effective purchasing - to ensure dollars are spent most effectively.

#### **7. CREATING A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN - Safety**

- A safe, hygienic, welcoming, and well-supervised environment - there should be a minimum of one adult for every 15 children.
- First aid training, provided to the coordinator, to assist in handling injuries.
- Appropriate facilities provided at no cost to the program by a school or community centre.