

Getting Started

1. Determine Your Students' Need

Discuss with parents/ guardians the type of program that best serves your students. Often teachers, other administrators and parents/guardians will informally identify interest in development of a breakfast/ snack/lunch program at school. Present the opportunity at the next school council meeting.

Send home information describing what is feasible within the school, and survey parents/guardians to foster program support and to solicit volunteers and community contributions. *A sample cover letter and survey to parents/ guardians is provided in this Information Kit at the end of this section.*

A Planning Committee of 4-5 people should be formed to ensure the effective organization and operation of the program.

2. Determine How Your Nutrition Program Will Operate

Once interest in a snack or breakfast program(s) is indicated, the Planning Committee should determine how the program would run. See the end of this section for a list of “things to do” before a nutrition program can be initiated.

3. Gain Support

Once you have determined what your nutrition program will look like and how it will operate, you will need to update your school community with another letter or notice.

This letter/notice should:

- ✓ **describe the program(s)** and its benefits
- ✓ **indicate the optional cost** per student, per day, week, or month
- ✓ **state the time** of day the program will occur
- ✓ **include** an information form.

Solicit program volunteers at regular parent/school meetings and keep parents/guardians informed.

Plan Every Step:

1. Determine your students' need
2. Determine how your nutrition program will operate
3. Gain support
4. Communicate

On an ongoing basis, members of the planning committee should tap into student enthusiasm and ideas. For example:

- ✓ having a contest to uniquely name the program in your school
- ✓ planning menus
- ✓ having poster and display contests for students
- ✓ inviting students to experience foods from other cultures by planning international food or cultural theme days
- ✓ having senior students help the junior students get their breakfast or snack

4. Communicate

Keep parents/guardians involved. Let them know about your school nutrition program through school newsletters, school council meetings, and parent teacher night displays. 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 seeking community contributions and recruiting volunteers.

For menu ideas or suggestions,
please call the Nutrition Educator via
York Region Food for Learning at
1-800-735-6625 ext. 4397.

Things to Do Before a Breakfast, Snack or Lunch Program can be Started

1. **Space** You will need a space for the program. Some programs are conducted in a classroom, in the cafeteria, or gymnasium, and some in staff rooms. Snack programs will need a distribution system in place. They can be very labor intensive as they generally serve a larger number of students. As well there may be minimal preparation involved in a snack program. The custodian will need to be on board, as a program will impact on his or her work.
2. **Program Leader and Planning Committee** A program leader should be identified and a planning committee should be formed. This committee will be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the program.
3. **Volunteers** Volunteers will be needed to assist the program leader on a scheduled basis. You will need to discuss your school's volunteer policies with your school administration.
4. **Sponsors** Sponsors need to be found to help defray the cost of the program supplies and food. Sponsors may be a local church, business, service club, school fund raising activities, and School Council. It costs approximately \$1.00 a day per child for a breakfast program and \$0.65 a day per child for a snack program.
5. **Parental financial contributions** Support from parents is an important part of a successful nutrition program. You will need to determine how you are going to collect financial support from parents. See Money Management Section.
6. **Universal** You will need to ensure that your program is available to all students. It is important to present the program in a non-stigmatizing way. Focusing on the benefits of good nutrition and the social aspect of food can go a long way to making your program about healthy food choices and preparing students for learning – rather than feeding poor children.
7. **Menu** A basic breakfast/snack/lunch menu will need to be developed. The menu should be well balanced, nutritious and varied. Start simple and then begin to add “special days”. A York Region Health Services Nutrition Educator works with **York Region Food for Learning** and is available to assist schools with menu planning and food costing.
8. **Routine** Routines, expectations, and time frames will need to be developed for your nutrition program.
9. **Research** **Food for Learning** can make arrangements for you to visit other breakfast/snack/lunch programs.
10. **Record Keeping** Budget expenditures and deposits will need to be recorded. All receipts should be kept. It is also required that you prepare an annual year-end report.

Food for Learning Funding Guidelines

Every effort will be made by York Region Food for Learning (YRFFL) to support all student nutrition programs and their individual situations.

Common questions.

1. Who does YRFFL get its money from?

York Region Food for Learning receives provincial funding for the salary of the coordinator and any YRFFL community partnership expenses, i.e., workshops, volunteer appreciation gifts, marketing expenses.

Since 2002, YRFFL has applied for funding from the Regional Municipality of York Community Development Investment Fund. This money is strictly used to support student nutrition programs in York Region.

YRFFL also receives in-kind contributions by way of printing, marketing etc.

2. Who is eligible to apply for YRFFL funding?

Any student breakfast or snack program running in a school. These programs may include before and after-school programs and homework clubs. (not for profit)

3. How does YRFFL determine if a student nutrition program is eligible to receive funding?

The following is a list of requirements that YRFFL would like a program to work toward if they are going to be applying for funding. YRFFL will make every effort to help all programs incorporate these requirements into a breakfast or snack program so they will be eligible for YRFFL funding:

- Local program Planning Committee should be formed
- Parental contributions should be sought
- Universality (program open to all students)
- Nutritious and safe food should be offered
- Nutrition education should be a component of the student nutrition program
- Program should be operating at least 2 times per week
- Diversified funding should be sought at the community level by schools.

4. Can a school apply for more than one student nutrition program?

Yes, providing that resources (e.g., human resources, space etc.), for an additional program are available. An application for each program (up to 2 programs) will need to be completed.

5. How does YRFFL determine how much money a Student Nutrition Program (SNP) receives?

Applying for the first time

Any program that is interested in receiving funding from YRFFL must complete a FOOD FOR LEARNING application form. Upon completion, the YRFFL coordinator or Public Health Nutrition Educator will visit the potential applicants and discuss their application. The following *formula is used to determine how much money a program will receive:

of students x # of days program runs x \$ of snack/breakfast x 25%* = grant amount.

YRFFL recommends that new programs apply to pilot test their program for a minimum of three days a week for 2-3 months, before applying for funding for the entire year. Testing the program will allow problems to be identified and solutions developed before undertaking a program for an entire year.

* up to 25% - actual % varies from year to year

6. Can a Student Nutrition Program apply for funding every year?

If a program is applying on a yearly basis, a *site visit will be conducted by the Public Health Nutrition Educator and a Progress Report and Expenditure Sheet will need to be completed by the student nutrition program coordinator. There are 7 Best Practice Standards which the student nutrition program needs to be working at achieving. If the program is making some progress in meeting these 7 best practices and the Progress Report has been completed appropriately then repeat funding will be given based on the above formula.

*A site visit is when the Health Services Nutrition Educator will visit a student nutrition program to observe and record information about the program operations, program environment and the menu. It is not a health inspection, but rather an opportunity to see the program in action and answer any questions the student nutrition program coordinator may have.

7. Can a Student Nutrition Program apply for funding anytime of the year?

YRFFL will accept applications any time of the year. However, YRFFL encourages student nutrition programs to apply in May for a program that will begin in September.

8. What happens if a SNP runs out of money in the middle of the year?

If a program needs additional money during the school year, e.g., there has been an increase in participating students, a second application will need to be completed and a Progress Report and Expenditure Sheet with financial records should be submitted for review. If the student nutrition program is working at achieving the seven Best Practices and participants have increased, YRFFL will work with programs to fundraise, or find alternative funding.

9. What happens if there is leftover money at the end of the year?

All money provided by YRFFL must be accounted for by receipts and bank statements and documented in the Progress Report and Expenditure Sheet. If there is money left at the end of the school year, this money should be banked and used for the SNP in the following year. If the program will not be operating in the following year, this money must be returned to York Region Food for Learning at the end of the school year.

10. What can a SNP use the money they receive from YRFFL for?

The money that YRFFL provides to student nutrition programs can be used to:

- buy food/supplies
- 10% may be used to provide an honorarium to coordinator/volunteers.

11. What can the money NOT be used for?

The money **can not** be used solely to pay a SNP coordinator/volunteer. Up to 10% of YRFFL funds can be used to pay a program coordinator or provide volunteers with honorariums.

12. When will a student nutrition program not be funded by YRFFL?

Every effort will be made by YRFFL to help all SNP to overcome barriers to functioning efficiently. The following are reasons that a SNP may not be funded by YRFFL:

- Limited support from the school administration
- The program is not promoted as universal
- The program is not offering nutritious food choices or meeting *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide* recommendations, after having help from the Nutrition Educator.
- No one to coordinate the program

13. What happens if a SNP is having trouble serving a nutritious menu to students?

YRFFL Public Health Nutrition Educator will go to the program to offer menu suggestions and menu planning advice.

**Sample • Covering Letter to Parents/Guardians
(attached to survey)**

Dear Parent/Guardian:

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

For students, a nutrition program is fun and inviting. Provided in a caring, clean and safe environment, such programs provide nourishment and help to promote a healthy lifestyle.

For parents, it's an easy and low cost way to encourage and support the development of lifelong, healthy eating practices.

The relationship between nutrition and learning is well known. The evidence is clear: children in nutrition programs perform better in class and are more successful at school. The research has proven that:

- Healthy food is essential for physical development, learning and good health.
- Nutrition programs increase opportunities for co-operation among peers and have a positive social impact on students.
- Nutrition programs can reflect the uniqueness of each school community.

To teach good, lifelong eating habits and valuable social skills, _____ School is considering starting a nutrition program for all students who are interested.

We would like your help in determining the best type of program for our students.

Please complete the attached survey and return the form to your child's teacher by _____.

Thank you.

Yours truly,

Nutrition Program Co-ordinator/
Chair, Planning Committee

School Principal

Sample • Parent/Guardian Survey

Survey

_____ School is considering starting a nutrition program for all students. We would like 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 for all students? Yes No
2. Which is the best program for our students?
 - Breakfast (typically run from 7:30 – 8:30 a.m.)
 - 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 their family's ability to contribute.

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 and the Nutrition Program Co-ordinator will call you.

Your Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number(s): _____

Child's Name: _____ Child's Grade at School: ____

Thank you.