

Raising Healthy Eaters in the Classroom

SECONDARY SCHOOLS



Caregiver's Role

Have available a variety of food to pack

School's Role

When & where students eat. Schools may also have food available

Student's Role

Pack a variety of food & decide how much to eat

Provide A Positive Eating Environment

- Provide eating environments around the school that encourage students to eat together and use mealtimes as a time to connect.
- Have casual conversation with students. Save nutrition education for the classroom instead of at meal times.
- Encourage students to limit screen time to be mindful of their eating habits.

Encourage Natural Hunger & Fullness Cues

- Allow students to control their own intake.
- Allow students to eat food in any order they choose - no need to finish one food before another.
- Trust and respect students when they say or signal they are full or still hungry.

Build Trust With Students & Families

- Respect that students and families may define "healthy food" differently, and have different health needs.



Eating Should Be Enjoyable

- Allow student to eat food brought from home unless the food is restricted due to an allergy.
- Support all students and families by encouraging access to reliable nutrition information such as Telehealth Ontario (1-866-797-0000) or from www.unlockfood.ca.
- Refer students to community food resources when needed. Visit the Food Inventory at www.foodcoreLGL.ca for a list of available resources.

Teach Nutrition In A Positive Way

- Teach about a variety of foods, focusing on the benefits of fueling the mind and body.
- Keep all messages positive for example, "eating a variety of foods gives you energy to think critically and be active." Avoid negative/fear-based statements like "x food is not healthy."
- Focus on behaviors, such as regular meals and snacks, sleep, and physical activity to feel good, and not for weight control. Weighing, using weight tables or charts, or calorie counting apps can hinder health behaviours and create preoccupation with weight.
- Role model positive body image by encouraging body positivity and diversity. Each person's body is different, and we should respect, accept, and celebrate these differences!
- Teach students how to look at media messages critically. Unrealistic images of beauty are often mistaken for happiness and popularity.

The information in this article is based on Ellyn Satter's principles and guidelines. For more about Satter's work, see: ellynsatterinstitute.org

For more information, call 1-800-660-5853 or visit www.healthunit.org

Adapted with permission from the Manitoba School Nutrition Action Group



www.healthunit.org

3612b July 2019