

NUTRITION IN SCHOOLS  
PASSPORT TO HEALTH  
TEACHER DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP SERIES  
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Presented by: Comprehensive School Health Cohort  
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# DR. JEAN CLINTON

Canada's authority on  
children's well-being



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# THE WORKSHOP'S GOALS

- → Offer resources to future teachers (like yourselves!)
- → Make you *aware* of existing nutrition programs in North America
- → Share research with you that address the impact of proper nutrition in students, and how that affects their learning



# AGENDA

- **Part One:** Nutrition and the Child
- **Part Two:** Connecting with Parents
- **Part Three:** School Nutrition Programs



# INSPIRATION

- "To keep the body in good health is a duty... otherwise we shall not be able to keep our mind strong and clear" – Buddha



# WHAT IS COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL HEALTH?

- Interconnectedness of health and education
- Adhering to the three pillars of health: social/emotional, mental, and physical
- Aims to address the entire well being of the child



# WHAT DOES JAIME OLIVER HAVE TO SAY

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OiShJt2XVdw>



# DISCUSSION

What do you think?



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# HOW DOES NUTRITION AFFECT STUDENTS

- Their mood and their relationships (with other students, teachers, family)
- Withdrawn in school
- Their ability to concentrate, remain focused, and learn



# BREAKFAST

- When students eat breakfast, their energy levels increase
- Their ability to process information increases
- A balanced breakfast should be consist of whole grains, fruits and vegetables, protein, and fiber
- Why breakfast clubs are important
- Eating nutrient rich foods at the start of the day keeps them physically and cognitively developing





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# THE STIGMA OF OBESITY

- The benefits of positive reinforcement → Promote healthy rather than avoid obesity
- Encouraging healthy can lead to body respect and self regulation in students
- Reinforce positive components of a healthy life, opposed to avoiding the negative



# CONNECTING WITH PARENTS

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JvgdYn0ls8A>

1. Why is it important to communicate with parents about school nutrition?
2. Tips for Approaching and Engaging Parents
3. What Parents Need to Know About the **Ontario School Food and Beverage Policy**
4. Packing Healthy School Lunches
5. Healthy Shopping Tips
6. A Balanced Day
7. Resources



# WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO COMMUNICATE WITH PARENTS ABOUT SCHOOL NUTRITION

Effective, responsive, well-planned home/school communication has been linked to:

- Improved grades
- More positive student attitudes
- Fewer special education referrals
- Lower dropout rates
- Less high risk behaviour
- Higher staff morale
- Enhanced relationships between school and community
- Increased parental support for school's initiatives and programs
- Improved parental opinion of the school

Lavoie (2008)



# TIPS FOR APPROACHING AND ENGAGING PARENTS

- Hold a parent-teacher nutrition workshop or information session
- Look at the situation from the parent's perspective
- Identify and acknowledge any personal biases you have and adopt a neutral perspective
- When talking with parents, defer judgment, and avoid blaming
- Avoid being patronizing or acting superior to the parent; take the position of a partner and supporter rather than an authority over the parent
- Don't be discouraged if your voiced concerns or suggestions are not well-received.
- Persevere in trying to support your students however you can while maintaining respect for the parent's perspective and for their choices



# WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE ONTARIO SCHOOL FOOD AND BEVERAGE POLICY

- Developed to meet Canada's Food Guide recommendations, to make sure food and beverages sold in school support your child's healthy growth and development.
- Policy applies only to foods and beverages SOLD in school: cafeteria, vending machines, catered lunch programs, fundraising, any school events at school after hours
- DOES NOT apply to what children bring from home or buy off property to eat at school



# PACKING HEALTHY SCHOOL LUNCHES

## Why are healthy lunches and snacks important in school?

They give students energy and nutrients to learn and play at school. Without enough energy kids may feel tired and find it difficult to concentrate. If appealing healthy foods are not made available, your child is more likely to reach for unhealthy junk food.

## What's a good approach to building a healthy lunch?

Think food groups; aim for 3-4 food groups. Mix it up, think beyond the sandwich, try wraps or pitas or on-dish meals, leftovers. Think of snacks as mini-meals with at least 2 food groups.

## My child wants to eat the same thing every day. How can I introduce new healthy foods?

Try new foods regularly and don't be afraid to try them more than once you may have to offer foods many times before the child learns to like them. Include a variety of shapes, colours, textures in the lunch box.



## How do I involve my child in deciding what to have for lunch and snacks?

Get everyone involved in planning and packing of lunches!

- Provide lots of healthy options for children to choose from
- Older children can make their own lunches
- Younger children can place foods in containers and lunch bags
- Take your child grocery shopping if and when possible

## How do I know how much food to send my child for lunch?

- Encourage parents to use Canada's Food Guide to determine number of servings your child needs from each group per day, divide by the number of nutrition breaks per day
- Send home uneaten food so parents can get a sense of what and how much their child eats at school



# HEALTHY SHOPPING TIPS

1. Work with your child to design his or her own Food Guide using the Canada's Food Guide website:  
[www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/eating-nutrition/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php](http://www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/eating-nutrition/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php)
2. Have a plan: Make a weekly meal plan based on Canada's Food guide and sales in your weekly grocery flyer
3. Make a list: Use your meal plan to make a list
4. Stick to it! Stick to your list to avoid impulse buying of unhealthy or non-sale items
5. Use grocery shopping as an opportunity to talk with your child about making healthy and cost-effective food choices



# A BALANCED DAY

2 nutrition breaks, 40-45 minutes each: (20-25 minutes to eat, 20-25 for physical activity)

## Benefits of Balanced School Day

- Improved concentration
- More time to eat
- Supervised eating time
- More time for activity
- More time for learning

## Making the Balanced Day Work for Your Family

- Pack the food for each nutrition break in separate containers and label them, “break one” and “break two”.
- Use dividers in their lunch box. Use a piece of cardboard to divide up the food. Everything above the cardboard gets eaten at the first break. The rest of the food gets eaten at the second break.



# SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

Exploring the policy, the effectiveness of the policy, and the social outcomes.



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# ONTARIO

- The Ministry of Education recently instituted a new School Food and Beverage Policy (2011)
- Significant changes to the established norms



# A NEW APPROACH

All food and beverages fit into one of three categories: *Sell Most*, *Sell Less* or *Not Permitted for Sale*.

## Sell Most ( $\geq 80\%$ )

Products in this category are the healthiest options and generally have higher levels of essential nutrients and lower amounts of fat, sugar, and/or sodium.

Products in this category must make up *at least 80 per cent* of all food choices and all beverage choices that are

## Sell Less ( $\leq 20\%$ )

Products in this category may have slightly higher amounts of fat, sugar, and/or sodium than food and beverages in the “*Sell Most*” category.

Products in this category must make up *no more than 20 per cent* of all food choices and all beverage

## Not Permitted for Sale

Products in this category generally contain few or no essential nutrients and/or contain high amounts of fat, sugar, and/or sodium (e.g., deep-fried and other fried foods, confectionery).

Products in this category must not be sold in schools



## Trans Fat Standards

The Trans Fat Standards (O.Reg.200/08) requires that any food, beverage, or ingredient offered for sale in a school, or used as an ingredient in the preparation, in a school, of a food or beverage offered for sale in a school, must meet the following prescribed amounts of trans fat:

- The trans fat content does not exceed 2% of the total fat content for vegetable oil or soft, spreadable margarine.
- The trans fat content does not exceed 5% of the total fat content for any food, beverage or ingredient, other than vegetable oil or soft, spreadable margarine.

### Calculating Trans Fat

- Identify the amount, in grams (g), of Fat and Trans Fat on your product's Nutrition Facts table.
- Enter these two numbers into the following formula:

$$\text{Formula: } \frac{\text{Trans (g)}}{\text{Fat (g)}} \times 100 = \% \text{ of total fat from trans fat}$$



# EXEMPTIONS

- A principal can designate up to 10 days of the school year which can be exempt from the nutritional standards
- Sold in staff rooms?



# SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS (SNP)

- “The purpose of School Meal and School Nutrition Programs is to support the health and academic and social functioning of socioeconomically vulnerable students” (ActNow BC)
- In Ontario, SNP creation was directly linked to the Poverty Reduction Strategy (2008).



# SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

No child / youth is turned away.

- Breakfast Programs
- Milk / Snack Programs
- Lunch Programs
- Fruit Baskets



# WHERE TO BEGIN?

- Ministry of Education – Student Nutrition Program: Nutritional Guidelines (July 2008)
- Government funding may contribute up to 15% of the total costs incurred by the local program.
- Additional funding may come in the form of donations from the local community and parents.



# ON THE RISE!

- Within seven years, programs have grown to 690 marking a 34% increase in the Central East Region of Ontario (2011-2012).
- 1,902,388 meals and snacks for +40,000 students in South East Ontario (2012-2013).
- 11,300 Ottawa children in 148 schools begin each school day with a nutritious meal provided by the Ottawa School Breakfast Program.



# TRY SOMETHING DIFFERENT!

## Orillia's Orchard Park Public School

-Fresh fruit basket placed just outside the office with free fruits (apples, oranges, bananas).

-70 pieces of fruit a day or 15% of the school population.

## Cameron Street Public School

-The Big Crunch. Students, Teachers, and Faculty eat an apple at the same time to create a big crunch sound throughout the school.



# CHALLENGES

- As a result of the direct link to the Poverty Reduction Strategy, students are connecting attending SNP's with being poor.



# RESEARCH QUOTES

- “This stigma is associated with the perception that school breakfast is intended for low-income students”.
- "Well, [students] don't necessarily know who's 'free and reduced.' They know who's poor and who isn't poor”.



# STRATEGIES TO COMBAT STIGMAS

Can you think of any ways that we may attempt to break down those stigmas?

“Examples of such activities include principals and teachers eating with students, music in the cafeteria, and the establishment of an atmosphere conducive to socializing.”



# GET EVERYONE INVOLVED!

Orillia's Orchard Park Public School

-70 pieces of fruit a day or 15% of the school population.

Cameron Street Public School

-The Big Crunch. Students, Teachers, and Faculty eat an apple at the same time to create a big crunch sound throughout the school.

Maxwell Heights School

-Had students create international menus to sell in the cafeteria that met the standards of the Food and Beverage Policy.

Queen of Heaven Elementary School & St. Francis Xavier Secondary School

- High school culinary students visited elementary students and held a wellness fair.

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# RESOURCES

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Ministry of Education. (2009, October). Healthy Schools. Retrieved January 12, 2014, from <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/healthyschools.html>



THANK YOU FOR COMING! :)

NEXT THURSDAY DON'T MISS  
LEARNING THROUGH MOVEMENT!



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