

Creating a Healthy School that supports: Healthy Eating

Healthy eating is having healthy food to eat at school, the knowledge to make healthy food choices and learning the skills to prepare and eat healthy foods.

A school environment supportive of healthy eating can contribute to the overall health of students by helping them to develop lifelong healthy eating attitudes and skills. This supportive environment reinforces learning and offers students the opportunity to practice new skills. Small changes by teachers, parents, students and administrators over time can have a positive impact on children's health. Research shows that adults can be powerful role models.

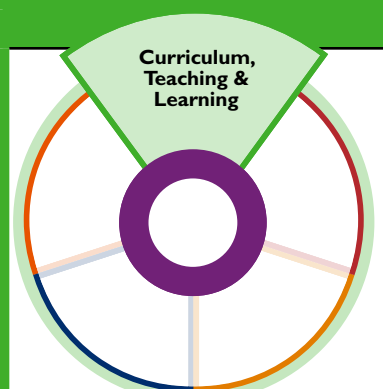
Only 45% of elementary students and 34% of secondary students eat vegetables and fruit at least 5 times a day.


38% of elementary and secondary school students consume soda pop/sports drinks two to four times a week.

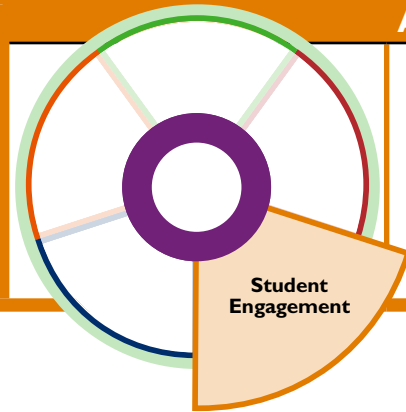
Only 48% of secondary students ate breakfast every day in the last 5 school days.

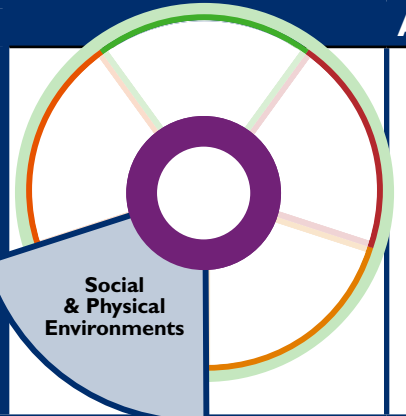
Healthy eating can help students to be more settled, attentive and ready to learn. When students are healthy and succeed in school, they are more likely to have increased job and economic opportunities, improved mental health and increased community involvement. Healthy eating can also decrease a student's risk for developing chronic diseases (heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, some cancers) and obesity.

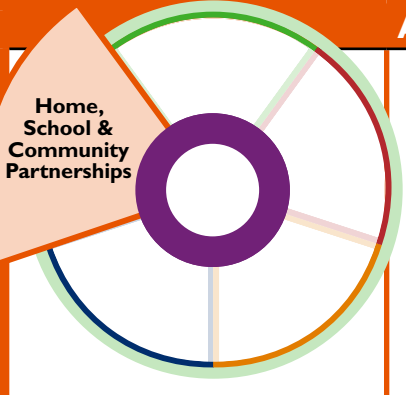
Take small steps towards a school environment supportive of healthy eating. Here are some ideas to get you started!

	At the School	In the Classroom	Student
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote healthy eating messages through different channels (e.g. school assemblies and ready-to-go newsletter inserts available at durham.ca/schools). Provide opportunities for educators to learn about healthy eating (e.g. workshops, training, in-services). Invite your school's public health nurse to attend a staff meeting or lunch-and-learn session for teachers and/or parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities across subject areas where students can apply knowledge and food skills. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use label reading to calculate percentages in math class or create a healthy food budget in business class. Involve students in planning a healthy menu to practice food selection, safe food handling, food preparation, storage and serving. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze food and beverage advertising (e.g. have students look at T.V. and magazine advertisements and reflect on how these ads affect their food choices). Plan and implement a school wide campaign to promote healthy eating (e.g. plan events during Nutrition Month, participate in Durham Region's vegetable and fruit campaign). <p>Supporting curriculum and campaign resources are available at durham.ca/healthyeating.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement/support healthy school policies and guidelines related to healthy eating (e.g. food and beverages sold in school meet or exceed School Food and Beverage Policies). Collaborate with staff, students and parents to encourage healthy fundraising opportunities (e.g. Walk-a-thon, vegetable or fruit sales). Create a plan for students who do not have a breakfast or lunch. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role model healthy eating behaviours in front of students (e.g. use a reusable water bottle). Have students create artwork, sculptures, videos or murals that promote the benefits of healthy eating. Encourage students to share projects with the entire school to raise awareness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with school council to change the traditional 'Hot Dog Lunch' or 'Pizza Day' to healthier, student approved options that incorporate whole grains, vegetables and fruit (e.g. Pita Day or Wrap Day). Get involved with organizing snack/breakfast programs (e.g. have older students deliver apples to classrooms).

At the School	In the Classroom	Student
 <p>Student Engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use extracurricular activities to promote healthy eating (e.g. cooking club). • Create a school garden! Collaborate with community partners, students and parent volunteers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrate diversity in the classroom by having a discussion with students about healthy foods from their cultural background(s). • Have students cut out food items from flyers and have students sort items into food groups. • Host a healthy eating door decorating challenge!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share healthy eating messages with peers through morning announcements, games, stories or recess activities. • Celebrate Nutrition Month by encouraging peers to dress up in the colour of their favourite vegetable or fruit. Work together to create a song or play about healthy eating. 		

At the School	In the Classroom	Student
 <p>Social & Physical Environments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase a refrigerator for storing healthy food during the school day. • Have veggies/fruit or other healthy food options available for students arriving without breakfast/lunch. • Offer a clean, safe, calm and enjoyable eating space. • Ensure there is an adequate amount of time (minimum 20 minutes) for students to eat and socialize during meal times. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use non-food rewards in the classroom (e.g. replace classroom celebration treats with stickers or pencils). • Allow students access to drinking water throughout the school day (e.g. water only policy). <p>For more ideas visit durham.ca/healthyeating to access our resource “Bringing Healthy Eating to the Classroom”.</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in the development and/or maintenance of a school garden. • Provide input for school menus to ensure foods offered are healthy, affordable and culturally diverse. <p>For more information on starting a school garden visit durham.ca/healthyeating to access our online resource “A Guide to School Gardens”.</p>

At the School	In the Classroom	Student
 <p>Home, School & Community Partnerships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite community volunteers and/or partner with local organizations to help implement healthy eating programs (e.g. snack/breakfast programs). • Host an event for students and families to raise awareness about the importance of eating breakfast. • Collaborate with a local restaurant to provide healthy lunch options for fundraising or special events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish a healthy eating cookbook with recipes from students, staff and parents. • Partner with or visit a local nursery or farm to learn about growing fresh vegetables and fruit.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work together with your school’s public health nurse to plan healthy eating initiatives or start a Health Action Team that involves staff, students and parents. • Coordinate a Farmer’s Market in your school parking lot or gym. • Connect with community agencies that support healthy eating.



Durham Health Connection Line
905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729

durham.ca/healthyeating



If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729