



EVALUATION TOOLS FROM Growing Chefs! Ontario

FARM TO CAFETERIA CANADA (F2CC), with the input of over 140 individuals from diverse sectors across the country, developed the Farm to School Evaluation Framework for Canada. This framework articulates priority outcomes and indicators that people want to see measured relating to 4 impact areas: Public Health, Education, Community Economic Development and the Environment.

To complement the Evaluation Framework, F2CC has asked community organizations to share tools that they use to evaluate their school-based food programs. This document shares some of the tools used by Growing Chefs! Ontario. It accompanies Growing Chefs! Ontario's Sharing Evaluation Tools to Support Farm to School Programs webinar, which was recorded in March 2022 and is publicly available [[see slides](#)].

Growing Chefs! Ontario unites chefs, growers, educators and community members in children's food education projects. Its mission is to change the way children, youth, families and the greater community learn about and develop healthy relationships with food.





Evaluation Tools from Growing Chefs! Ontario

The organization's projects have been offered in partnership with over 100 schools and dozens of community organizations across London, Ontario, and area over the past decade. All Growing Chefs! Ontario programs provide hands-on experiential learning opportunities designed to improve food literacy and an understanding of food systems.

Growing Chefs! programming is evidence-based and consistently shows significant increases in food literacy levels amongst participants. More important than that, its programs are fun. The reason the Growing Chefs! concept works is because it helps children, youth and families get excited about learning to enjoy food that's good for you.

Approach to Evaluation

To ensure that Growing Chefs! programming helps children increase their food literacy levels:

- The organization aligned its project Curriculum with the Ontario School Curriculum as well as the Public Health Ontario's definition of Food Literacy and the new Canada's Food Guide.
- The Thames Valley District School Board curriculum development team helped define the project's learning outcomes, ensure that the project curriculum is grade appropriate, and approved the learning outcomes so that they can be easily measured by participating teachers.
- Growing Chefs! worked with its School Board partners to better understand how teachers measure what children are learning in different subject areas and then dove into how food literacy activities can overlap with these subject areas.
- For example: In order for children to develop and build food skills they need a solid foundation in math (measuring ingredients and multiplying/dividing), literacy (understanding directions, following a recipe), science (cooking with heat, combining liquids, baking) and geography/history (understanding what climates different ingredients grow or where cooking techniques and terminology originated from, cultural food traditions).
- By ensuring that teachers can effectively measure what (and if) children are learning in areas of math, literacy, science etc., Growing Chefs! is able to gain a window into understanding whether or not its programming is effective. By letting children use cooking as a vehicle to apply knowledge and learning from other subject areas, the organization can ensure it is increasing their food literacy effectively.



Specific Evaluation Process


- Growing Chefs!'s first step was to focus its curriculum on the one or two key learning outcomes (taken from the elementary curriculum) that they were hoping the students would achieve through each lesson/activity.

Right: Example Lesson Plan Overviews with Learning Outcomes. [Click here for the full set of lesson plan overviews](#)

Keep it simple!


It's tempting to try to jam too many ideas and concepts into a lesson plan. Early in this process Growing Chefs! found that they added too much content and so needed to remove whole sections of lesson plans, or portions of activities, to ensure that the students (and teachers) were clearly able to understand (and evaluate) the lesson's Big Ideas and demonstrate that they could achieve the intended learning outcomes. When trying to connect the activities to larger concepts Growing Chefs! found they needed to slow down and simplify their messaging (while still keeping the activity fun and engaging!).

- The organization's second step was to make sure that participating teachers had the opportunity to review lesson plans and gain an understanding of what it is their students would be learning about/doing well in advance.
- The day before the event Growing Chefs! staff connect in person with teachers to confirm any special dietary or behavioural needs in their class, the physical setup of the room (do desks need to be moved around?, etc.), and that the teacher has read the lesson plan and is prepared to assist in the evaluation.
- Within one week following the event, Growing Chefs! sends a follow-up email with links to its evaluation surveys. Here are examples of a [Teacher Survey - In-School](#) | [Teacher Survey - Field Trip](#).
- Once the surveys are filled out, Growing Chefs! partners with a third party evaluator to collect, review, analyse and report on the results. They use the Human Environments Analysis Laboratory (HEAL Lab) at Western University or the Brescia University College Nutrition Program as its Evaluation Partners. Download the HEAL Lab's [2018 Project Evaluation Report](#).




School Project

Growing Chefs! Ontario




Junior & Senior Kindergarten - Lesson 1
Lesson Length: 1 hour




The Big Idea

- Eating and cooking are multi-sensory experiences. Chefs use all five senses when working with food, so we should too.
- Students then get creative - discovering how making art with your food can help make it more exciting to try new things



Activities

- **Introduction: Meet the Chefs** (5 minutes)
- **Tasting Adventure** (35 minutes)
- **Edible Art & Story Time** (20 minutes)



Outcomes

- Refer to Thames Valley District School Board approved Learning Outcomes on page 2.

Materials

Growing Chefs:

- Food-themed book (i.e. Dragons Love Tacos)
- Plastic plates for food art/per child
- Cutting boards/per child
- Cutting board mats/per child
- Trays for cut vegetables x 5
- Knife x 1
- Peeler x 1
- Safe choppers/per child
- Cookie cutters
- Sanitizer
- Dish cloths
- Bus bins x 2
- Lesson ingredients

Teachers:

- Chart paper
- Markers

Preparation

Growing Chefs:

- Prepare fruits and vegetables for sensory activity and food art
- Sanitize all work surfaces
- Set out equipment and ingredients on tables
- Review lesson plan

Teachers:

- Arrange 1 preparation table (should be approximately 3 desks in size)
- Have 4 table groups of students
- Have students wash hands with soap and water; clear off desks and sit in circle on floor

This step gives the teachers the opportunity to know what they are supposed to be evaluating as they observe their students participate in Growing Chefs!'s lessons/ activities. Growing Chefs! sends all lesson plans via email roughly a month ahead of time and sends reminders to review the information in the weeks leading up to the activity. Teachers are required to provide any special dietary and behaviour needs ahead of time, so information about the lesson plans is covered in the same communication.

This check-in is essential as many teachers do not read all of the information ahead of time.

By reaching out you might be able to find an academic partner who can help you with your evaluation process.



Growing Chefs! Ontario

Program Evaluation Summary 2018-19

17
Teachers Surveyed

HQ FIELD TRIP

AVERAGE PROGRAM SATISFACTION SCORE **9.9/10**



TOP 3 FAVOURITE ACTIVITIES



Cooking



Meal



Gardening

Bringing the lesson back to the classroom after the HQ experience

76%

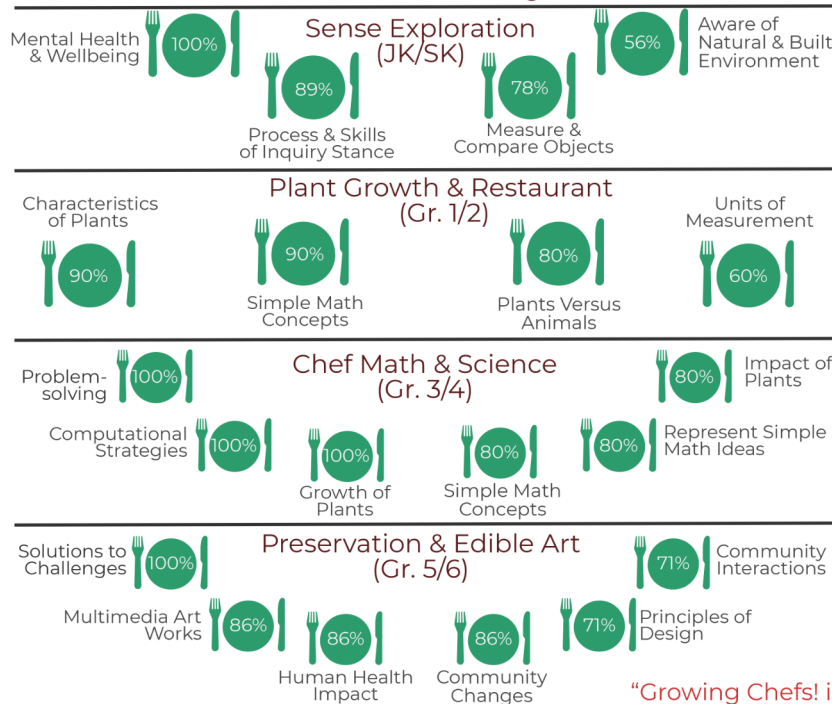
of teachers incorporated field trip activities or themes into their teaching after the experience

"This activity was engaging, authentic, educational, practical, hands-on, and accessible to all students. The organization of the day was extremely well done."

SCHOOL FOOD EDUCATION PROJECT

Meeting Learning Outcomes

Teachers were asked which Ontario Curriculum learning outcomes students were able to meet through the lesson:



32
Teachers Surveyed

Opportunities to Improve Food Literacy

Teachers were asked which food literacy elements students could improve through the lesson:



"Growing Chefs! is a great way for students to become aware of the joy and health of a "live food" experience."



Evaluation Tools from Growing Chefs! Ontario

Additional Links from Growing Chefs! Ontario

[Growing Chefs! Ontario Lesson Plans](#)

[Ontario Dietitians in Public Health - Food Literacy Framework](#)

[Growing Chefs! Ontario Video Resources](#)

Information/Studies on Cross-curricular learning:

- **Source 1** - Ontario Curriculum Resources: Cross-curricular and integrated learning
- **Source 2** - Teachers' cross-curricular instructional practices of environmental education in Ontario's primary elementary classrooms
- **Source 3** - Integrated Curriculum as an Effective Way to Teach 21st Century Capabilities

[New Ontario Elementary Science & Tech Curriculum - Food Literacy Related Learning Outcomes](#)

[Children's Books about food that Growing Chefs! likes](#) (please feel free to add yours!)

