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Nourishing School Communities

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What is Nourishing School Communities?

Nourishing School Communities is a collaborative, evidence-based initiative that aims to get healthy and local foods into the minds and onto the plates of school children across Canada. We are engaging many partners in this process - from school children, parents, teachers, principals, school meal providers, farmers, after-school providers, First Nations communities, researchers and policy makers. Together we are supporting important changes to school food environments, changes that aim to shift policies and practices in a way that makes healthy local foods easier to access and fun to eat.

What do we do?

What makes this initiative unique is how research, practice and policy organizations are working together to transform school, after-school and community food systems to include healthy, regionally sourced and sustainably-produced food. The key elements behind this initiative are partnerships, great ideas, and action.

We are nourishing school children across Canada through meeting the following goals:

- Increase capacity to provide healthy, regionally sourced and sustainably-produced foods by engaging First Nations schools, public schools, after-school partners
- Enhance skills and improve knowledge about healthy eating, local and sustainably produced foods
- Create an evidence base for continuous learning by exchanging ideas, disseminating wisdom and transferring knowledge in order to scale up school food programs, policies and research in other communities
- Leverage public and private partnerships, build collaboration and sustainability

Creating Change Together

While we work hand in hand with multiple partners at provincial and more local levels, there are seven principal partners at our national table, partners who bring a depth of expertise and experience to the initiative. These partners include: the Heart and Stroke Foundation, Farm to Cafeteria Canada, YMCA Canada, Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, Lunch Lady, University of New Brunswick and Propel Centre for Population Health Impact.



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How do we do it?

ACT: Scale up and evaluate promising practices in school and after-school settings. Key actions include:

- Establishing Farm to School programs in elementary and secondary schools in urban, rural, remote and First Nations communities
- Implementing Learning Labs by engaging the food supply chain sector and school communities in processes to increase school procurement of healthy local and traditional foods
- Establishing provincial and regional Farm to School networks to support these programs and processes
- Strengthening private and public partnerships in school food services
- Establishing community and school gardens in First Nations, urban, rural, and remote communities as part of community/school partnerships
- Develop and pilot a healthy eating after-school framework for broader national adoption

FACILITATE: Develop tools and resources to support First Nations schools, public schools, after-school partners in their implementation of effective programs.

LEARN: Share project results, lessons learned and best practice tools with our partners and their networks from various sectors, including health, education, food service, recreation, agriculture, policy and research. This open collaboration will assist with further scaling up of healthy eating and locally accessible food interventions as well as showcase our endeavors.

GROW: Monitor uptake of project results; program, policy, and best practice tools; and facilitate ongoing sharing of experiences, resources, and results.

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