



How to Make a Healthy School and Community!

A recent study conducted in the Greater Toronto area found as many as 15% of students were attending school without eating breakfast.

Student nutrition programs are a way of ensuring that all students can obtain a nutritious breakfast, snack, or lunch during school hours. There are over 300 student nutrition programs across the City of Toronto serving about 60,000 students.

Pop machines can be a good, if not essential, fundraising strategy (especially in today's climate of cutbacks and budget constraints). One way to help children meet their healthy eating goals is to include a variety of food in the vending machines (e.g. pop, juice, chocolate, fruit, and milk).

Schools do not always have the most inviting environments for eating, particularly in schools where there are no cafeterias and students must eat in their classrooms or while sitting on gym or hallway floors. Did you know that a school in a culturally diverse, low-income neighbourhood of Ontario formed a healthy school committee to find ways to upgrade their cafeteria? "Healthy teen cuisine" sessions were hosted by the students and posters reminding students about healthy food choices were designed for the cafeteria walls. Simple ideas can contribute to a positive school climate.

Busy schedules may require the use of more creative ways of encouraging students to be active throughout the day. Why not incorporate a body break at the beginning of each class (to eat a snack or to perform a brief stand-up activity)?

Some children feel uncomfortable participating in physical activities. Developing an environment that emphasizes inclusive physical education activities for all children regardless of size or skill-level can be a way to promote active living. Equally important are policies that address weight and size discrimination.

Children are influenced by adults around them. Providing adult role models with the opportunity to examine their own attitudes to ensure that body image discrimination does not occur is an important step in creating a healthy school environment.

Parents: For more School Climate information on-line visit - <http://www.aboutkidshealth.ca/thestudentbody>