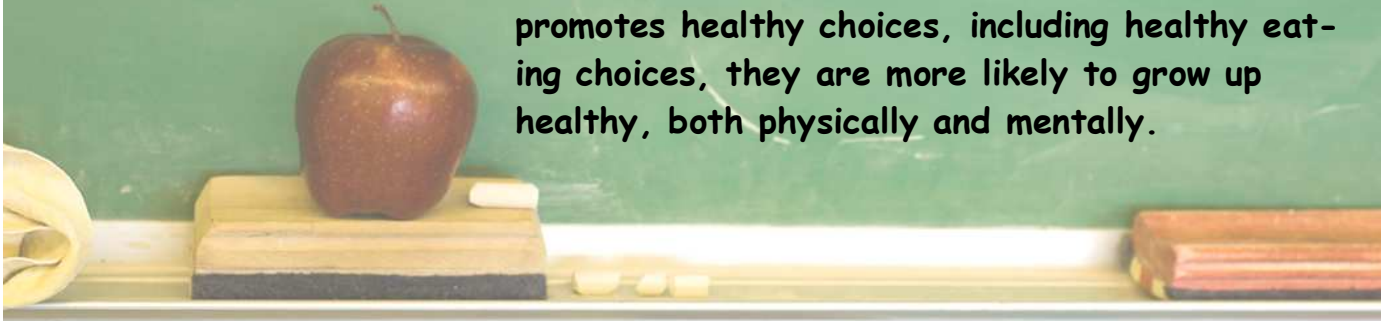


Creating a Healthy School Environment

When children develop in an environment that promotes healthy choices, including healthy eating choices, they are more likely to grow up healthy, both physically and mentally.



Why Use School Food Guidelines?

Introducing nutrition guidelines demonstrates a commitment to the health of your school community. Providing and promoting nutritious food choices delivers a message consistent with nutrition teaching in the classroom. Taking action to help students develop and maintain healthy eating will contribute to their well-being now and in the future.

Background

- ◆ Schools can have a positive impact on student's eating habits by making healthy food choices the easy choices.
- ◆ Research shows that schools provide the opportunity to reach children and adolescents with nutrition information and healthy eating.
- ◆ Studies on adolescents indicate:
 - ◇ 9 out of 10 consume too much fat
 - ◇ 40% have less than the recommended amount of vegetable and fruit per day
 - ◇ On average they consume less than they recommended amount of milk products

Facts

- ◆ Students who are well nourished learn better in school
- ◆ Nutritious foods are essential for growth and development
- ◆ Adolescence is an important time for establishing life-long eating habits
- ◆ Healthy eating patterned can help reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases like heart disease and cancer, as well as obesity

School Food Policy

A food guideline provides direction on the types of foods served and sold in the school setting, for example:

- ◆ We strive to include a menu that has food from all four food groups for “special food days”
- ◆ “Other Foods”, like pop and candy, will not be sold in the school canteen/tuck shop
- ◆ Only nutritious foods and beverages will be sold in vending machines
- ◆ Foods sold on the school premises should be consistent with classroom teachings to provide students with access to healthy food choices which help reinforce healthy eating messages.



Nutrition Services

Working with Schools to Promote Healthy Food Choices

The Public Health Dietitians/Nutritionist is available to consult with schools on developing and implementing school food policies/guidelines such as:

- ◆ Supporting and practicing on task force to work toward nutrition policies
- ◆ Providing information on healthy food choices for fundraisers, school food days, vending machines and cafeterias
- ◆ Providing nutrition resources for teaching purposes and displays
- ◆ Visiting your school community to discuss different healthy eating action plans
- ◆ Ideas for promoting healthy food choices—e.g.- using displays, point of purchase messages, contests

Benefits of a School Food Policy:

Students

- Develop skills to make healthy food choices
- Provides consistent messages about food choices and health
- Reinforces nutrition messages learned in the classroom
- Provides a supportive environment in which to modify eating habits and maintain healthy nutrition practices
- Demonstrates to students the concern that schools have for their health



Parents

- Reinforces the efforts of parents who promote healthy eating at home
- May have a positive impact on parents eating habits

Schools

- Demonstrates a commitment to the health and well-being of students
- Eliminates inconsistencies and confusing messages about food and health
- Supports teachers in promoting healthy eating practices