



Take Action: PARENTS

Parents have a big influence on what their kids think and do—and eat! Overall diet quality, specifically fruit and vegetable consumption and lower fat intake, are important to academic performance.¹ Your efforts can ensure your children eat well, feel great and achieve their potential at school.

Did you know?

- Eating breakfast improves academic performance^{2,3} yet 50 percent of BC adolescents skip breakfast.⁴
- The more a family eats meals together, the more likely the children are to eat fruit, vegetables, grains and calcium-rich foods and beverages. They are also more likely to feel connected to their family.^{5,6}
- Daughters of parents who eat fruit and vegetables are more likely to do so themselves.⁷
- Mothers who drink more milk and less pop influence their daughters to do the same.⁸
- Having a school committee in place to promote healthy eating has a positive impact on food and beverage choices.⁹
- Parent Advisory Committees organize about half of food and beverage based fundraisers in schools.⁹

What can YOU do to help your children eat well, feel great and achieve their potential at school?

Value mealtimes.

- Effective classroom learning starts with a good breakfast, so help your child find ways to make time for a healthy start to their day.
- Try to eat at least one meal with your child each day—it can be breakfast, lunch and/or supper. Turn off the TV during mealtimes.

Show an interest in healthy eating and physical activity.

- Share nutrition information with your child. Talk about food and nutrition activities that occur at school and explain what you're eating at home and why.
- Be a positive role model for your child; go grocery shopping, cook and eat well together.



- Engage in family physical activities and limit screen time—TV, computer and video games.

Make the healthy choice the easy choice for your child.

- Work with your school nutrition committee to help promote healthier choices at fundraisers.
- Provide water and milk for your child to drink.
- Stock your kitchen with affordable, healthy choices (such as small muffins, milk, cheese, fresh fruit, raw veggies, sandwiches and yogurt) for your child to choose for breakfast, lunch or snacks.

Be your child's advocate.

- Organize or participate in the school health or nutrition committee.
- Offer fundraising ideas that rely on healthy foods or non-food items.
- Reinforce home efforts at school. Encourage school staff to serve as healthy role models by eating healthy foods and staying active.

For more specific healthy snack and meal ideas, creative fundraising activities, and more resources on school nutrition, visit <http://www.healthyeatingatschool.ca>

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4 "Healthy Youth Development—Highlights from the 2003 Adolescent Health Survey". The McCreary Centre Society, 2004.

5 "Family dinner and diet quality among older children and adolescents". *Archives of Family Medicine*, Gillman MW, Rifas-Shiman SI, Frazier AL, Rockett HR, Carmango CA Jr, Field AE, Berkley CD, Colditz GA, 9(3):235-40, 2000.

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7 "Parental influences on young girls' fruit and vegetable, micronutrient and fat intakes". *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, Fisher JO, Mitchell DC, Smiciklas-Wright H, Birch LL, 102(1):58-64, Jan 2002.

8 "Maternal milk consumption predicts the tradeoff between milk and soft drinks in young girls' diets". *Journal of Nutrition*, Fisher JO, Mitchell DC, Smiciklas-Wright H, Mannino ML, Birch LL, 131:246-250, 2001.

9 "School Food Sales and Policies Provincial Report II". BC Ministry of Education and BC Ministry of Health, 2007.