

Establishing Healthy Food Environments

IN THE RECREATION SECTOR



THE PROJECT

- The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) is collaborating with Health Canada to help support the establishment of healthy food environments in the recreation sector.
- This resource provides some examples from initiatives from communities across Canada working towards healthier eating environments.
- By sharing these experiences, we can collectively learn, adapt, and advance our efforts towards creating healthier communities nationwide.



Workplace Monthly Healthy Snacks

Workshops, food, and special events in
Richmond County, Nova Scotia

The Initiative

The community development and recreation department in Richmond County, Nova Scotia, received a wellness grant that allowed them to carry out a variety of wellness activities throughout the year. One activity was to provide monthly healthy snacks to staff at all Municipal locations. This happens on the last Monday of each month, when a member of the Wellness Committee chooses the snack. Taking turns at picking the snacks means that each month there is something different.

Success and Learnings

This initiative has received positive feedback from all staff, especially those outside of the municipal administration building. It helped strengthen the feeling of belonging to the team as a whole.

The committee strives to maintain an inclusive and equitable environment for all members by continuing to deliver wellness type activities each month and will do so until funding is no longer available.

Partners

The municipal Administration Department, Council, Workplace Wellness Committee and the Association of Municipal Administrators Nova Scotia (AMANS).

Contact

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Live 5-2-1-0

Development of an overall healthy eating policy South Dundas, Ontario

The Initiative

This recreation department, in the small community of South Dundas, Ontario knew of the guidelines developed in British Columbia and promoted and followed them in their recreational programming for children.

LIVE 5-2-1-0 provides four simple guidelines for raising healthy children:

- 5 - Enjoy five or more vegetables and fruits every day.
- 2 - Limit screen time to no more than two hours a day.
- 1 - Play actively for at least one hour a day
- 0 - Drink zero sugary drinks

The recreation department said this great program was easy to follow and would like to see something similar throughout Eastern Ontario.

Contact

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Nutrition Guidelines

The development of a Cooking Program Manual, Cooking Program Curriculum, Purchasing Guidelines, Kitchen Expectations from Surrey, British Columbia

The Initiative

When recreation staff started reintroducing children’s cooking programs in their recreation centres, the municipal Health Promotion team partnered with Fraser Health around best practices. Fraser Health provided overwhelming data, received post pandemic, that highlighted how children and youth are suffering from poor body image, disordered eating, and in general a negative relationship with food. More importantly, the prevalence of eating disorder was double that of children with diabetes. Together, they (Fraser Health and the City of Surrey), developed a program manual for staff who cook with children or supply food/snacks to children that moves away from the typical restrictive and prescriptive nutrition education, and focuses more on food exploration, trauma and compassion informed approaches to nutrition, and includes an equity-centered and culturally inclusive lens. The team consulted with LIVE 5-2-1-0 to edit documents, advise on the purchasing guide for staff, and the curriculum.

A grant for funding was received from the UBC Community-University Engagement Support (CUES) fund in partnership with LIVE 5-2-1-0. The funding supported a roll out of these documents in the MYzone afterschool program for children aged eight to 12, alongside incorporating more cooking opportunities for those children registered at the seven sites across the City of Surrey. MYzone, winner of the Provincial Award for Program Excellence from the BC Recreation and Parks Association, is a fun and flexible after-school program that starts in October and runs most of the school year at select recreation facilities in Surrey.



Success and Learnings

The team created a set of nutrition guidelines that includes a cooking program curriculum, cooking program manual, purchasing guidelines for programs, and kitchen expectations to be posted in all recreation centre kitchens. Also included are the Fraser Health, Ministry of Health Purchasing Guide for schools, and Canada's Food Guide which is in the curriculum and each lesson is based off a tenant of the food guide. The guidelines are being branded and created by the city's marketing team and will be introduced to staff in May 2024 until June 2024 during a first phase roll-out. Afterwards, there will be an opportunity to edit the documents over the summer and re-introduce them in the new school year.

Partners

Fraser Health, [LIVE 5-2-1-0](https://www.fraserhealth.ca/live/5-2-1-0)

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Baker Lake Winter Camp/Summer Day Camp Healthy Snack Initiative

Addressing food provided at meetings, workshops and other events
Baker Lake, Nunavut

The Initiative

When Nathan Annanaut, became the Recreation Coordinator for the small, urban Hamlet of Baker Lake in Nunavut, he started looking for outside sources of funding that would feed the youth of Baker Lake something healthy after running around and playing in the indoor playground.

Working with the Recreation Parks Association of Nunavut (RPAN) the Hamlet runs Summer Day Camp for over 150 youth aged five to 12 years, and winter camp for 50 - 75 youth (the other half play hockey)! Both are available from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday to Friday. In addition, the recreation centre is open from 4:00 pm after school until 10:00 p.m. Nathan found funding from local businesses and transient/seasonal businesses in the Baker Lake area, such as exploration mining camps. With the funding, he purchased healthy snacks such as cereals, granola, and fruit. Now in its second year, the healthy snack initiative receives funding from Forum Energy Metals and discounts and fruit donations from the local Northern store. On the physical activity side, the Hamlet of Baker Lake organizes recreation opportunities, while RPAN finds funding from their partners to train youth leaders in first aid, how to work with youth, and icebreaker games.



Success and Learnings

Nathan says “a lot of children get to have something healthy they normally would not have at home. The diet of most people in the north has become unhealthy, leading sedentary lives. We are trying to teach a healthy start at life to continue a healthy lifestyle of eating healthy and being active.”

The price of food is very expensive in Nunavut since everything is airlifted up north. Finding storage also proved difficult to store healthy food and juice.

“Great to see the happy smiles and faces of children as they eat and get something in their stomach for a lot of the kids.”

Partners

RPAN, Forum Energy Metals,
Northern Store

Contact

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Politique sur les saines habitudes de vie – Ma Ville ma Santé

Reviewing a policy about healthy lifestyle habits and employing innovative practices in Québec

The Initiative

In 2010, a group focused on healthy eating was created in Québec, funded by Québec en forme and the Chagnon Foundation. This led to a local consultation to implement initiatives on healthy eating and physical activity. As a result, the Healthy Lifestyle Habit (HLH) policy was established in 2014. Ten years later, this policy needs to be revised and re-innovated!

Success and Learnings

As a result of the policy, a resolution was established to prohibit the solicitation of energy drink companies in city parks and to ban sales in municipal buildings. Little gardens have been created in different parks in the city that provide fresh vegetables to citizens in the summer in accessible and free places. In addition, healthy food was offered at city events and vending machines were removed from municipal buildings. These are just some examples of what the policy covered.

It remains a challenge to get support for urban agriculture because some citizens are afraid of what it entails; some members of the community feel that access to healthy food is an individual choice and do not fully understand how the community can be part of the change and the difference that their involvement can make. The consultations, and the ensuing project, were very successful and the upcoming revision will be equally interesting!

Partners

Integrated health and social services centre of Montérégie-Ouest (CISSS-MO), local schools, food safety organizations, sport organizations, Sportium (local iceskating center), Complexe sportif Delson-Sainte-Catherine, early childhood centres

Contact

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Healthy Eating Resources and Initiatives

CPRA has compiled a collection of valuable resources curated to support your efforts in promoting healthy eating within the recreation sector. From evidence-based guidelines to practical toolkits, this compilation serves as a reference guide for engaging food environments and fostering healthy habits in recreation settings.



Healthy Eating in Recreation Settings (HERS) Report Recreation NB

The Healthy Eating in Recreation Settings (HERS) Working Group was formed in 2016. The working group aims to support the movement towards healthy eating in recreation settings through communication, research and resource development. This main objective of the provincial scan of food environments in recreation settings was to collect baseline information about the food and beverage options available in recreation facilities across New Brunswick. This resource provides a good template for others who want to do a scan of recreation food environments.

Stay Active Eat Healthy

The Stay Active, Eat Healthy program is an evidence-based program, developed in British Columbia, that aims to increase the provision of healthy food and beverages while restricting unhealthy options in municipal and community recreation facilities. The objectives are to:

- support recreational facilities and to take a leadership role within the community to promote a healthy, active lifestyle by providing healthy choices in vending machines, snack bars, food concessions, programs and events to benefit both workers and the public;
- facilitate collaborative approaches between industry and recreation facility staff to provide and promote a wider range of healthy choices.



Healthy Eating in Recreation Settings

In 2019, the City of Temiskaming Shores in Ontario, developed a By-law titled “Healthy Eating in Recreation Settings” with its local Public Health Unit. The by-law applies to all food vendors in its recreation settings (arenas ,and mini-putt during the summer months).

Tremplin Santé

The Tremplin Santé Foundation, in Quebec, helps summer camps promote healthy lifestyle habits among young people from socially and financially disadvantaged backgrounds. They produce a number of tools related to healthy eating.

Healthy Eating in Recreation and Sport Settings Guidelines (2015)

The purpose of Healthy Eating in Recreation and Sport Settings Guidelines (2015) in Nova Scotia, is to enable those who work, participate, and support activities in recreation and sport settings to change the food environment to support eating well.



Healthy Eating in Recreation Settings Toolkit

Through Communities ChooseWell, a provincial program that inspires and supports local healthy living champions, organizations and municipal governments across Alberta to transform their communities into places where eating well and being active are easy choices for everyone, a number of resources have been produced aimed at the recreation setting:

- o [Healthy Eating in Recreation Settings Toolkit](#)
 - o [A Fresh Start: A Guide to Offering Healthy Food and Drink Options in Recreation Food Services](#)
 - o [Using Traffic Light Labels to Promote Healthier Food Purchases Among Patrons in Recreational Facilities](#)
 - o [Sharing a Meal: Connection and Community in Northeast Calgary](#)
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Healthy Food in Recreational Facilities

Produced by the Alberta Policy Coalition for Chronic Disease (APCCP), an organization that represents a broad range of practitioners, policy-makers, researchers, and community organizations who come together to coordinate efforts, generate evidence, and advocate for policy change to reduce chronic disease. Visit: [Healthy Food in Recreational Facilities](#)

Healthier Food and Beverage Guidelines for Public Events

[The Healthier Food and Beverage Guidelines for Public Events](#) is a collaborative document created by the Housing for Health team at the University of Alberta, working with Alberta Health Services Nutrition Services and being distributed also in partnership with the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association's Communities ChooseWell.

Healthier Vending Toolkit. Healthy Eating in the Community

The Healthier Vending Toolkit provides resources to help recreation centres, middle and high schools, post-secondary institutions, workplaces, vendors, and community groups offer healthier foods and drinks in their vending machines. It was developed by Alberta Health Services.

Healthy Eating in the Recreation Setting

Healthy Eating in the Recreation Setting, from the Ontario Dietitians in Public Health, provides an opportunity for consistency and improved efficacy in creating a supportive environment and policy development in the recreation setting in public health regions across Ontario.

Healthy Foods in Recreation Facilities

From the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Government of New Brunswick, the goal of the Healthy Foods in Recreation Facilities toolkit is to provide awareness, education and resources to encourage a greater availability of healthy food choices in New Brunswick's recreational facilities.



Eat Great and Participate

Making the Move to Healthy Choices: A Healthy Eating Toolkit for Recreation, Sport and community Food Service Providers is a resource from Recreation Newfoundland and Labrador. The goal of the Toolkit is to make it easier for recreation, sport and community food service providers to provide more healthy food and beverage choices in facilities and at tournaments and events. It includes healthy meal and snack ideas, strategies for marketing healthy choices, food safety considerations and recipes.

Healthy Eating in PEI Recreation Settings: Action Starter Kit

The Heart & Stroke Foundation in PEI's Children's Nutrition Committee (CNC) aims to collaborate with municipalities and facility managers/operators to provide support and share best practices to foster healthier food environments in recreation settings. They produced the Healthy Eating in PEI Recreation Settings: Action Starter Kit. They also produced the Handbook for healthy eating in recreation facilities.



Explore Our Online Learning Sessions

Join us in celebrating the success of our three engaging online learning sessions, focused on establishing healthy food environments within the recreation sector. Our sessions featured insightful speakers who shared valuable knowledge, alongside an interactive platform where attendees exchanged personal experiences and posed questions. These sessions not only offered educational opportunities but also fostered a collaborative environment for advancing healthy eating initiatives.

Establishing Healthy Food Environments

Find out more about what it means to provide a healthy eating environment, the role of the recreation sector and the resources available to support your work.

Case Studies and Ask the Experts – Part I

Learn about how three communities are building healthy eating environments in the recreation sector, hear others' stories, and listen to advice that could help you on your own journey.

Case Studies and Ask the Experts – Part II

We want to continue the discussion and provide more opportunities to profile healthy eating initiatives underway in Canada's recreation sector. Barriers and facilitators to implementing healthy eating initiatives are discussed.