



HEALTHY EATING TO SUPPORT LEARNING

SUPPORT LEARNING OUTCOMES WITH NUTRITION

Adequate dietary intake of key nutrients supports the mental wellbeing of students, as well as their cognitive and academic performance.

NUTRITION TO SUPPORT A HEALTHY BRAIN AND MENTAL HEALTH



Data shows that 24.1% of students (grades 6 to 12) have a low level of mental fitness.

Key Nutrients

- B-vitamins
- Vitamin D
- Omega 3
- Vitamin C & Vitamin E
- Minerals



Examples of Whole Foods

Meat, Nuts and Seeds



Meats



Nuts and Nut Butters



Beans and Lentils



Wild Rice



Whole grain bread



Fortified cereals

Fatty Fish & Plant Sources of Omega 3



Salmon



Sardines



Chia seeds



Flaxseeds

Milk & Fortified Milk Products



Milk and milk products



Fortified Milk Alternatives



Fruits and Vegetables

Vitamin C



Citrus



Strawberries



Sweet Potatoes



Mango



Spinach



Tomatoes

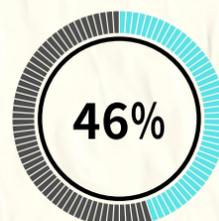


Sweet Peppers



Broccoli

In 2021-2022, data shows that 45.6% of kids grades 6-12 consumed 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day





HEALTHY EATING TO SUPPORT LEARNING

LEARNING CAPACITY

ENERGY INTAKE

- Energy intake impacts alertness and concentration in the classroom
- Have balanced meals and snacks on a schedule
- Carbohydrates such as whole grains, fruits and vegetables provide great energy sources to the brain

ADDED SUGARS AND FIBRE

- The high amounts of sugar and low amounts of fibre consumed in the diets of many Canadians are related to poor concentration, alertness and mental health status
- Added sugars are listed next to the word sugar in the ingredients list
 - Fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables do not contain added sugars

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Variety in dietary intake has been related to decreased feelings of worry or sadness. Fruits and vegetables are significant contributors to intake quality, which is associated with better mental health outcomes, higher IQ and better academic performance.

MICRONUTRIENTS

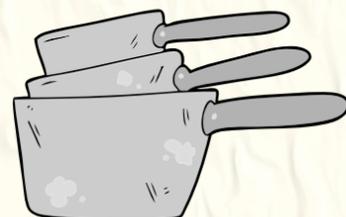
Low intake of the minerals listed above can impact sleep, digestion, immunity and increase risk of many mental health conditions including depressive disorders, which impact the attendance and concentration in class.



SUPPORTING HEALTHY INTAKES



- Offer education on the benefits of the various nutrients that promote students' wellbeing. 
- Give students the opportunity to build the skills to prepare a variety of foods (age appropriate tasks). 
- Help reduce health inequities such as food insecurity of students to assist with access to nutrient dense foods in the school environment 
- Follow the Food Guide recommendations and policy 711 suggestions for foods in the classroom. 
- Support students with learning activities that are designed with positive food messaging. 



RESOURCES

[Nurturing Healthy Eaters in Elementary Schools](#)

[Nurturing Healthy Eaters in Secondary Schools](#)

[Tips for Teachers](#)

