

Food Sense

Parent Guide

Dear Family,

Your child is exploring healthy eating choices and physical activity this school year using a program called **Food Sense**. This program was developed by Registered Dietitians, and is based on national healthy eating guidelines. This letter describes how **Food Sense** aligns with the most recent version of *Canada's food guide*, and complements the **Food Sense** Parent Guide pamphlet your child brought home from school.

Canada's food guide (2019) is a web-based resource that includes tips and recipes as well as a two-sided summary "Snapshot".

The new guide merges two of the previous food groups (Milk & Alternatives and Meat & Alternatives) into the *Protein Foods* category.

Additionally, the new food guide does not outline the number of servings needed from each category, but tries to illustrate this concept by showing how different food categories fill the plate.



Important note: Among *Protein Foods*, not all foods are interchangeable. Milk and other dairy products, as well as some fortified soy products, provide a unique set of nutrients, including calcium and vitamin D, that are essential for growing children and adolescents. In fact, these foods provide **6 of the 8 key nutrients** that most Canadians do not consume enough of.



both emphasize the need to eat:

- a variety of healthy foods each day
- vegetables and fruit
- whole grains
- protein foods such as beans, fish, milk, chicken and eggs

...and to limit foods that are high in fat, sugar and salt.

With **Food Sense**, students use the previous food guide to discover how their eating habits align with recommendations and to make plans for improved nutrition. We know this program works! Program evaluations showed that nearly 75% of students completing **Food Sense** were able to follow their nutrition plans on 2 out of 3 days recorded!

Dietary needs have not changed much at all since the 2007 food guide*. Provincial health authorities have stated that the portion numbers and serving sizes from the 2007 food guide can continue to be used until we have more information.

In summary, **Food Sense** remains a fun, accurate and positive approach to teaching nutrition in your child's classroom.

If you have further questions, please contact your child's teacher.

To learn more about BC Dairy Association's Nutrition Education programs, find us online at nutritioneducationbc.ca

*Dietary recommendations for vitamin D and calcium were updated in 2011. For children 9-13, there was an increase in vitamin D recommendations, and no changes made to calcium recommendations.