

KidFit

What is the KidFit™ Project?

The Timiskaming KidFit™ Community Advocacy Project is working to **increase school community awareness and knowledge** about a *healthy school nutrition environment*. An advocacy campaign will be developed - with valuable input from school community members – that will promote and define a healthy school nutrition environment, explain why it's important and how it can be achieved.

This project will engage the entire school community (boards, councils, staff, students, parents, and community partners).

What is a healthy school nutrition environment?

A *healthy school nutrition environment* exist when administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community partners work together to promote healthy eating through quality instruction/programs, supportive environments and community partnerships. The school promotes healthy eating through words *and* actions and students get the same message about food, nutrition and healthy eating wherever food is served – in the classroom, in the school and in the home. This is called the 'whole school' approach.

Why focus on kids? Parents, teachers, educators, public health and the community at large have a vested interest in the promotion and protection of the health of our children and youth. Behaviors and attitudes developed in childhood last the rest of our lives. Healthy, active children become healthy, active adults. Together, we can build healthier generation in Timiskaming.

Why focus on Schools? Because children and youth spend a significant amount of time at school. Not only do children learn about nutrition through the curriculum, but the school offers many chances as well to practice and reinforce health eating behaviors.

Why health eating?" The connection between healthy eating and learning is well-established among scientists. It is clear that inadequate food intake limits children's ability to learn. Healthier children have decreased lateness and absenteeism, improved behavior, less anxiety, more effective coping skills and increased alertness.

How can a school achieve a healthy school nutrition environment? *Nutrition Tools for Schools*© is a resource that assists schools as they work towards creating healthy school nutrition environments in a comprehensive way. This evidence informed toolkit, involves working through a step-by-step process that addresses nine essential elements for creating a healthy school nutrition environment. Public health staff and schools work together for a 'whole school' approach to promoting healthy eating. .

How is this project funded? This project is jointly funded by the Timiskaming Health Unit, the Timiskaming Heart Health Program and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario's KidFit™ Community Action Grant program. (embed link to [hsfo: http://www.heartandstroke.on.ca/site/c.pvI3IeNWJwE/b.5109503/k.2AB8/Spark_Home.htm](http://www.heartandstroke.on.ca/site/c.pvI3IeNWJwE/b.5109503/k.2AB8/Spark_Home.htm))

The Timiskaming Health Unit looks forward to working with the school community on this innovative and exciting project.

For more information contact the Chronic Disease Prevention & Health Promotion Team.