Our menu has changed quite a bit because of this program.

Organizationally the rewards are huge for us. To celebrate around healthy food creates a positive energy for the kids.

Because of this program we have developed an agency wide nutrition policy. We needed to be more purposeful about the meals and snacks we were offering.

Now we are asking, what can we do better?

Menu planning and food accessibility. What produce is in season (generally cheaper) and what items are available locally.

Frequency of offering a vegetable and fruit choice.

The cost of foods in your area and your budget. What are the options for getting the most for your dollar.

Menu planning and food accessibility. What produce is in season (generally cheaper) and what items are available locally.

The amount of time and help you will have for shopping, food preparation, delivery and clean up.

Kitchen facilities, space, storage and equipment.

The appropriate serving sizes for various age groups.

The variety of ways that produce can be served.

The child Nutrition Council has had the opportunity to work with schools, community places and licensed child care facilities in Manitoba to increase vegetable and fruit intake for children and youth through snack programs. This pilot project was made possible through funding from the Province of Manitoba and the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Community responses to the vegetable and fruit project have been overwhelmingly positive. This leaflet is a collection of special highlights, and a precursor to the more detailed Vegetable and Fruit program resource kit, created to help you initiate a program in your own community.

Participating sites in the original vegetable and fruit pilot were fully engaged in designing and delivering a program to suit their particular situation. This non-standardized approach provided a unique opportunity to learn about the successes and challenges of different program approaches. Sites discovered ways to offer a good variety of vegetables and fruits, often introducing produce that children had never tasted before. The experience of these first programs has helped us understand how and what food can be offered in these settings.

Students received a message, emphasized through curriculum, activities and practice, about the importance of healthy eating, in particular the significance of increased vegetable and fruit consumption.

Each site discovered a way to deliver the program in their own way, creating different involvement opportunities for teachers, educational assistants, students, parents and community volunteers.

In addition to increased vegetable and fruit intake, the vegetable and fruit snack programs had positive impacts on student behaviour and other indicators, such as attendance and social interaction.
Program guidelines gave the opportunity to expose kids to many choices of vegetables and fruits, to discover the origins of the produce and to explore different ways of obtaining and serving foods the foods. This experience led to increased skills and knowledge for both staff and students.

Variety can mean colours, textures, taste, sizes and shapes. Each color of vegetables and fruits contains a unique combination of nutrients.

Vegetable and Fruit Program Guidelines

Students will eat all kinds of vegetables and fruits—it’s often the adults who make assumptions about students being unwilling to eat particular foods.

1 Offer serving sizes consistent with Canada’s Food Guide.
2 Serve vegetables as often as fruits.
3 Offer a variety of vegetables and fruits.
4 Choose vegetables and fruits prepared with little or no added fat, sugar or salt.
5 Choose locally grown foods when they are available and affordable.

Age Appropriate Kitchen Tasks that Build with Age

Ages 4-5
- Measuring dry and liquid ingredients
- Peeling fruit
- Beating with a whisk
- Cutting parsley, green onions or dried fruit with blunt scissors
- Cutting soft fruit with a blunt knife on cutting board
- Placing muffin liners in baking pans
- Cleaning surfaces before and after use
- Gathering utensils and ingredients
- Opening cans
- Washing fruits and vegetables

Ages 9-12
- Assist in planning and preparing simple meals and snacks
- Follow a recipe, measure accurately and prepare a product
- Read and interpret food label ingredients list and nutrition facts
- Operate small appliances such as a blender or microwave oven
- Moderate chopping, dicing and cutting
- Handling and storing ingredients and finished products safely
- Cleaning up
- Knowing how and what to hand wash or wash in dishwasher

Teens
- Plan and prepare menus for special occasions
- Create garnishes for meals
- Make shopping lists/shopping for ingredients
- Assist younger children with food preparation

Where in the World

An educational activity in which students take a close look at produce stickers and world maps to learn the location of the countries, provinces, states, and “where in the world” their favourite vegetables and fruits are grown.

“We are now doing things like adding banana and blueberry to muffins. Cauliflower in spaghetti sauce, sweet potato in macaroni and cheese, grated beets in muffins and loaves. Grated zucchini and oatmeal pancakes, peppers, tomatoes and onions in scrambled eggs—the kids love it.”

“The kids seem to eat anything if I put it on a skewer.”

“I love just putting a big bowl of fruit out for children to help themselves and also to choose what they want.”

“Kids liked the asparagus—some asked if we could have it again.”

“Many students did not enjoy the grapefruit but could have it again.”

“Kids loved making the salsa themselves. Whatever THEY make tastes better to them.”

“When students are excited about tasting and learning about new foods they bring that excitement home to their families.”

“We are playing a role in introducing new, healthy foods.”

“Kids are definitely eating and accepting the vegetables and fruits. We are seeing more fruit in lunches now that we ever used to.”

Age 4-5
- Washing fruits and vegetables
- Gathering utensils and ingredients
- Cleaning surfaces before and after use
- Cutting parsley, green onions or dried fruit with blunt scissors
- Cutting soft fruit with a blunt knife on cutting board
- Placing muffin liners in baking pans
- Gathering utensils and ingredients
- Opening cans
- Washing fruits and vegetables

Age 9-12
- Assist in planning and preparing simple meals and snacks
- Follow a recipe, measure accurately and prepare a product
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Eggplant
Purple Cabbage
Garlic
Green Onions
Beets
Nectarines
Strawberries
Raspberries
Cranberries
Cherries
Blood Oranges
Tangerines
Grapefruit
Cantaloupe
Apricots
Yellow Tomatoes
Yellow Squash
Yellow Potatoes
Yellow Peppers
Yellow Beans
Yellow Peppers
Yellow Tomatoes
Yellow Squash
Yellow Tomatoes
Cantaloupe
Grapefruit
Golden Kiwifruit
Mangoes
Nectarines
Oranges
Papayas
Peaches
Persimmons
Pineapples
Tangelines
Yellow Apples
Yellow Pears

Involving students in a comprehensive approach through menu planning, shopping, food growing and preparation as well as tying in educational activities is an ideal way to encourage them to try new foods.