



What you Need to Know about Providing Traditional Foods in Early Childhood Development Settings

Why Serve Traditional Foods?

First Nations and other Aboriginal children benefit from learning how traditional foods are harvested, prepared, and served. The primary reason to serve traditional foods is to teach children the spiritual connections with these foods. When we engage children in gathering, preparing, and eating traditional foods, we are introducing them to their cultures and the spiritual values associated with food.

Eating traditional foods builds children's sense of community and strengthens their identities. Helping children see the earth as the source of nourishment teaches them to respect the land and the sea and their gifts.

Countless generations of our families enjoyed nutrient-rich natural foods.

The introduction of processed foods has resulted in health challenges for many children and adults. When children are exposed at an early age to a variety of traditional foods, they are more likely to accept them as preferable alternatives to the commercial foods that have put our health at risk. By serving traditional foods, early childhood programs can help promote community health.



This resource sheet was developed by the British Columbia Aboriginal Child Care Society (BCACCS) in response to findings of the 2013 research project ***Licensing First Nations' Early Childhood Programs***. Early childhood programs reported difficulties serving traditional foods. The information that follows summarizes the ***Food Premises Regulation*** that early childhood programs must follow in order to prepare and serve traditional foods in their facilities. ©2014



What do early childhood programs need to know about the *Food Premises Regulation*?

Early childhood programs licensed for more than 8 children must have food service permits and comply with the *Food Premises Regulation* if they are cooking or baking or in other ways preparing food. Permits are required whether or not the food is traditional. For example, if stews and soups made using locally harvested ingredients, permits are required. Similarly, if stews and soups are made using store-bought ingredients, permits are required.

Environmental Health Officers issue the permits and enforce the *Food Premises Regulation*. The Environmental Health Officers who issue permits on-reserve are employees of the First Nations Health Authority. The Environmental Health Officers who issue permits off-reserve are employees of the local health authorities. Both groups of Environmental Health Officers enforce the provincial *Food Premises Regulation*.

Does the Child Care Licensing Regulation allow early childhood programs to prepare and serve traditional food?

Yes. The provincial *Child Care Licensing Regulation (CCLR)* allows licensees to serve traditional foods in their programs. In fact, licensees must consider children's food preferences and cultural backgrounds. *Canada's Food Guide* is the standard for ensuring healthy nutrition.

What does *Canada's Food Guide* say about nutrition?

Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide – First Nation, Inuit and Métis includes traditional foods as well as store-bought foods. Traditional foods can be part of a healthy, balanced diet that includes the four food groups.

Why are food service permits required?

The ***Food Premises Regulation*** promotes public health and protects everyone from food-borne diseases. Many foods such as meat, seafood, poultry, and dairy products are potentially hazardous. Environmental Health Officers inspect kitchens to ensure all potentially hazardous foods are stored and prepared safely. They also ensure food is prepared by people who are trained to work in food premises.

Who can work in kitchens with food service permits?

The operators of kitchens must hold **FOODSAFE** or equivalent certificates. If the operator is absent, at least one employee with food preparation responsibilities must hold a certificate.

Early childhood educators and assistants are not required by the **CCLR** to have **FOODSAFE** certificates. However, early childhood program employees benefit from the training. All employees should be encouraged to access **FOODSAFE** training to expand or refresh their knowledge of safe food-handling practices.

Do all early childhood programs need food service permits?

Although there are advantages to having a food service permit, if a program is not supplying food and cooking or baking, a permit is not required. If the children bring their own food from home, a permit is not required. If a program uses only prepackaged foods that are not potentially hazardous, a permit is not required. When in doubt about the need for a permit, contact an Environmental Health Officer to have your questions answered.

Early childhood programs in some communities use the kitchens in nearby schools or community centres that already have food service permits. If your program is considering preparing food off-site, discuss the matter in advance with an Environmental Health Officer. The Environmental Health Officer can help you evaluate the practicalities of this option.



How do Environmental Health Officers assist early childhood programs?

Early childhood programs work with Environmental Health Officers to obtain food service permits. Environmental Health Officers explain the process and the standards that must be met. They can answer questions about food safety and explain the regulations that apply to different foods.

Environmental Health Officers can provide early childhood programs with advice on all aspects of obtaining and keeping food services permits, such as:

- Necessary changes to the kitchens
- How staff can access **FOODSAFE** training
- How to safely acquire and process foods from sources such as community gardens, local fruits and berries, privately caught fish, and hunted meats
- Where game meats can be safely butchered and wrapped in order for them to be served in early childhood programs
- How to safely acquire seafood and other potentially hazardous local foods



Environmental Health Officers have the authority to approve foods such as garden vegetables, local berries, and other non-regulated foods.

Early childhood programs should ask their licensing officers how to contact Environmental Health Officers.

What are the advantages of early childhood programs having food service permits?

Food service permits makes it easier for programs to prepare and serve traditional foods, with the following beneficial outcomes:

Cultural Connections: Children connect with their cultural heritage, build strong identities, and learn about the gifts that come from the land and the sea.	Intergenerational Knowledge Sharing: The communities' funds of knowledge related to preserving and cooking natural local foods are passed to the next generation.	Health Benefits: Traditional foods are more nutritious than processed, refined, prepackaged store-bought foods.
Compliance with CCLR: The CCLR requires licensees to consider children's cultural backgrounds when selecting foods.	Teaching and Learning Opportunities: Hands-on cooking experiences for children introduce them to a wide variety of healthy traditional foods.	Community Economic Development: Building and staffing kitchens to Food Premises Regulation standards create employment opportunities.
Professional Satisfaction: Early childhood educators derive satisfaction from knowing the children will have lasting health benefits from eating traditional foods.		

Resources

Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide - First Nation, Inuit and Métis:
<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/pubs/fnim-pnim/index-eng.php>

Healthy Food Guidelines for First Nations Communities: http://www.fnha.ca/Documents/Healthy_Food_Guidelines_for_First_Nations_Communities.pdf

Food Premises Regulation: http://www.bclaws.ca/Recon/document/ID/freeside/11_210_99

FOODSAFE:
<http://www.foodsafe.ca>

Traditional Food Facts Sheets:
http://www.fnhc.ca/pdf/Traditional_Food_Facts_Sheets.pdf

Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities Indigenous Foods Network:
www.indigenousfoodsvi.ca

Ensuring Food Safety:
<http://www.bccdc.ca/NR/rdonlyres/1A068D5D-3350-4D1C-A356-D8C6D62B7DB9/0/EnsuringFoodSafetyHACCPWay.pdf>
See Appendix 2: "Potentially Hazardous Foods" for lists of foods that are potentially hazardous and foods that are not potentially hazardous.

Where can I view/download the resource sheet?

Visit http://www.acc-society.bc.ca/files_2/accs-publications.php

Where can I learn more?

Visit <http://portal.acc-society.bc.ca/>



and check out the links in our resources section



BC Aboriginal Child Care Society



First Nations Health Authority

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