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A GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE FOR SCHOOL FOOD INITIATIVES 123

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VEGETABLES



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Healthy Food for All
access | availability | affordability

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Healthy Food for All (HFfA) is an all-island multi-agency initiative seeking to promote access, availability and affordability of healthy food for low-income groups.

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A GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE FOR SCHOOL FOOD INITIATIVES



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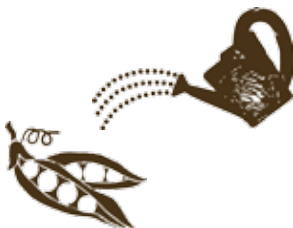
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THANK
YOU

Foreword

As National Nutrition Policy Advisor, Department of Health and Children, I am delighted to be involved with Healthy Food for All and the development of this new and important resource – A Good Practice Guide for School Food Initiatives – which will help improve the nutrition, education and development of children in Ireland.

Good eating habits are best established at an early age. Making healthy food choices enables children to attain their optimum growth and health potential. Healthy eating also allows children to take full advantage of the opportunity to learn and to play during the school day. All children should be able and encouraged to avail of healthy food choices.

Irish research has highlighted an increase in both childhood obesity and levels of physical inactivity. Therefore, the publication of this resource is both timely and critical.

This Guide will facilitate teachers, parents, health professionals and community workers in providing important information on healthy eating and physical activity.

Their role in the dissemination of the healthy eating message is vital in ensuring that positive messages are communicated and nurtured through all stages of childhood.

The Department of Social and Family Affairs offers a range of healthy food initiatives for schools and this Guide will help schools to access and avail of these initiatives and excellent opportunities.

I encourage all schools to use this Guide for the development of a healthy school food policy in conjunction with the Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Primary Schools issued by the Department of Health and Children (2003). These resources will be further supplemented by the forthcoming National Nutrition Policy.

Providing children with good food and nutrition early in life is a key determinant of health and will help enhance the nutritional health of the next adult generation in Ireland.

Ursula O'Dwyer

National Nutrition Policy Advisor,
Department of Health and Children.

Abbreviations

CE	Community Employment Scheme
CNDS	Community Nutrition and Dietetic Service
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Ireland
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
DENI	Department of Education Northern Ireland
DES	Department of Education and Science, Ireland
DOHC	Department of Health and Children, Ireland
DSFA	Department of Social and Family Affairs, Ireland
DYD	Drogheda Youth Development
EHSSB	Eastern Health and Social Services Board, Northern Ireland
ELB	Education and Library Board
EU	European Union
FÁS	Foras Áiseanna Saothair (National Training and Employment Authority)
FDP	Food Dudes Programme
FHI	Food and Health Instructor
FSAI	Food Safety Authority of Ireland
HBSC	Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children
HFfA	Healthy Food for All
HPS	Health Promoting School
HSE	Health Service Executive
JNS	Junior National School
NCFS	National Children's Food Survey
PE	Physical Education
RAPID	Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development
SFI	School Food Initiative
SMP	School Meals Programme
SNAG	School Nutrition Action Group
SNS	Senior National School
SPHE	Social, Personal and Health Education
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Introduction

Healthy Food for All (HFfA) is an all-island multi-agency initiative seeking to promote access, availability and affordability of healthy food for low-income groups. It was initiated by the Combat Poverty Agency, Crosscare and The Society of St. Vincent de Paul as a follow up to their joint publication *Food Poverty and Policy* (2004). The initiative sets out to demonstrate the relationship between food poverty and other policy concerns such as health inequalities, welfare adequacy, educational disadvantage, food production and distribution, retail planning and food safety. The aim of Healthy Food for All is to end food poverty on the island of Ireland.

One of the objectives of Healthy Food for All is to support local food initiatives which increase the availability of healthy food for low income groups. Schools are an important setting for the provision of healthy food for a number of reasons:

- food and nutrition are central to the physical and cognitive development of children and young people, which in turn contributes to educational success;
- schools provide a social environment where children can access, enjoy and experiment with food, without financial and other constraints;
- a positive experience of food in schools can filter through to children's homes and also shape their attitudes to food and consumption patterns in later life; and,
- schools are a cost-effective medium to deliver the expanding range of public policy objectives in relation to food consumption, from obesity to food poverty.

Government support for food consumption in schools in Ireland has increased in the last decade, with social welfare expenditure increasing tenfold to €32 million by 2008. Food in schools is also provided under other funding streams, such as the School Retention Programme and the European Union (EU) School Milk Scheme. A number of public bodies have issued nutritional guidelines and supported public awareness campaigns on the content of school lunches. There is a strong emphasis in the forthcoming National Nutrition Policy on tackling food poverty among school children. At local level, schools have themselves become pro-active in regulating the consumption and sale of food in school. Parents and children are also becoming more conscious about the food consumed in schools.

Despite this increased policy support for school food, there is little by way of practical guidance on the provision of food in schools. Schools are largely left to fend for themselves in terms of how best to provide food in schools. This is the gap that this Good Practice Guide for School Food Initiatives is intended to fill. This Guide has been developed for use within primary schools in Ireland, with the following audiences in mind:

- School boards of management
- School principals and staff
- Parents' associations
- Community and private providers of food to schools
- Community Dietitians
- Organisers of breakfast and after-school clubs.

Some aspects of this Guide could be adapted for use within secondary schools as well.

Our approach in developing this Guide was not to impose a single model of food provision for schools. Rather, this Guide was developed through extensive consultation with schools, community groups, health professionals and suppliers who are currently involved in providing food in school. Research was also conducted on approaches in Northern Ireland and in other countries. Finally, we consulted with Government and social partner stakeholders at national level to get their views as to the main issues to be addressed.

Section A of this Guide looks at school food provision, i.e. the means whereby food is provided to children at school. It examines available funding programmes for school food provision, describes how to access such programmes and explores the different types of direct school food provision such as school lunches, breakfast clubs and afterschool clubs. This section also offers guidance on how to set up a School Food Initiative (SFI), including advice on topics such as carrying out a needs assessment, writing aims and objectives and evaluating the success of the initiative.



WHAT
DO WE
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#####

Afterschool Club

Section B of this Guide covers school food policy. Such a policy addresses all aspects of food consumption in schools, whether the food is directly provided by the school/community or brought in by pupils from outside, and connects food consumption to other issues such as physical exercise, the school curriculum, environmental awareness and home–school–community links. This section provides practical information on the key steps involved in developing and implementing a school food policy. It aims to inspire schools to take a whole school approach to food over time which will ensure that the healthy eating messages taught in the classroom are mirrored by good practice in terms of all the food provided and consumed in the school setting. This section also presents practical information on healthy lunchboxes, healthy breaks, water provision in school and school growing projects.

In addition, we have online resource material on our website (www.healthyfoodforall.com) to support this Guide, including additional information such as links to reports, application forms, contact details and extra case studies.



Finally, we are keen to hear about other SFIs and approaches which have worked well.

We also want to hear of the obstacles experienced while setting up and running SFIs so that we can bring these to the attention of policy makers. To contact us, please email us at info@healthyfoodforall.com or telephone +353 (0)1 836 0011.

Healthy Food for All

Why School Food Initiatives?

There is a growing awareness of food and nutrition as determinants of public health. Current research demonstrates that food intake in early childhood is potentially linked to health-related problems in later life.

Food Poverty

Food poverty has a particularly detrimental impact on children. Lack of a nutritionally adequate diet can negatively affect a child's health, behaviour and cognitive functioning thus leading to poor school performance, non school attendance and leaving school early and without qualifications. Intervention at an early stage is, therefore, crucial in the interests both of children and society. Research has shown that the school is an important setting in obtaining a healthy diet. Early intervention is key to breaking the cycle of poverty and in the case of food poverty is critical in reducing dietary-related health inequalities. Food in school has great potential. It can provide a tangible benefit for children. Good nutrition allows children to take advantage of the learning provided to them and in this way school food initiatives (SFIs) can help children to escape the poverty trap.

Increasing Prevalence of Obesity

The prevalence of overweight and obesity has increased significantly since the 1980s. The fact that childhood obesity in Europe has reached epidemic proportions is particularly worrying. The National Children's Food Survey (NCFS) showed that 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 5 boys are either overweight or obese (Irish Universities Nutrition Alliance 2005). Obesity has many well-known health consequences.

Dietary Habits of School Children

Studies of children's eating habits show an increasing reliance on high fat and/or high sugar snacks and drinks, and fruit and vegetable intakes fall far short of the recommended intakes (Nolan et al. 2004; DOHC 2006; Irish Universities Nutrition Alliance 2005; SLÁN 2008.) On a positive note, the Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children (HBSC) study, launched in August 2007, reported some improvements in fruit and vegetable intake since the previous survey in 2002 (Nic Gabhainn et al. 2007). However, it also reported that 1 in 5 children are going to bed hungry because there is no food in the home and that 16% of children never eat a breakfast on weekdays.

The consumption of a varied diet should ensure the intake of adequate vitamins and minerals. In today's society, however, this is becoming increasingly difficult. Inadequate intake of folate, calcium, iron and vitamins A, C and B2 was observed in the NCFs (Irish Universities Nutrition Alliance 2005), with the prevalence of inadequate intake higher in girls than in boys. The rising consumption of sugar-sweetened drinks by children is another area of concern for health professionals (American Academy of Pediatrics 2004, DOHC 2006).

Promoting Good Nutrition in the School Setting

The school setting provides an excellent health promotion arena to reach children, teachers, families and the surrounding community in an effective and efficient way.

The National Taskforce on Obesity (DOHC 2005: 88) recommended that:

“All schools, as part of their school development planning, should be encouraged to develop consistent school policies to promote healthy eating and active living, with the necessary support from the Department of Education and Science. Such policies should address opportunities for physical activity, what is being provided in school meals, including breakfast clubs, school lunches and, in the case of primary schools in partnership with parents, children's lunch boxes.”

This view is echoed by the Commission of the European Communities' White Paper on nutrition, overweight and obesity (2007).

? Want More Information

- Department of Health and Children (Ireland) provides copies of all its publications, including Obesity - the Policy Challenges: the Report of the National Taskforce on Obesity (2005), on its website: www.dohc.ie
- Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children Survey (Ireland): www.nuigalway.ie/hbsc/
- Health Service Executive (Ireland): www.healthpromotion.ie
- Irish Universities Nutrition Alliance, NCFS: www.iuna.net/childrens_survey/
- SLÁN 2007: Survey of Lifestyle, Attitudes and Nutrition in Ireland: www.dohc.ie/publications/pdf/slan07-report.html
- World Health Organization: www.who.int/en



School Food Provision

This section looks at school food provision, i.e. the means whereby the school directly provides food to the children.

It examines available funding programmes for school food provision, describes how to access such programmes and explores the different types of direct school food provision such as school lunches, breakfast clubs and afterschool clubs. This section also provides guidance on how to set up a school food initiative, covering a range of topics such as carrying out a needs assessment, writing aims and objectives and evaluating the success of the initiative.



A.1. School Food Programmes

School food programmes are government-funded programmes which provide food for children at school. Depending on the scale of funding required, there is a range of approaches open to schools. If you are starting from scratch, funding will almost certainly be an issue. You may decide to charge for the school food initiative (SFI), but you need to keep the cost low to avoid excluding pupils from low-income families.

The School Meals Programme (SMP) is operated by the Department of Social and Family Affairs, Ireland (DSFA). It aims to supplement the nutritional intake of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds to allow them to fulfil their potential within the educational system and to reduce the risk of early school leaving. Funding for the SMP has risen significantly over recent years from €4.6m in 2004, €13.6m in 2006, €28m in 2007 to €32m for 2008. Two types of programmes are offered under the SMP – the Urban School Meals Scheme and the School Meals Local Projects Scheme. Both of these schemes, as well as the EU School Milk Scheme and other funding sources, are examined below.

A.1.1. Schools Meals Programme: Urban School Meals Scheme

The Urban School Meals Scheme is still often referred to as the ‘bun and milk scheme’, even though it has progressed from this to include a small sandwich and a drink and in some cases a piece of fruit.

This scheme is operated and administered by the local authorities and part-financed by the DSFA. At present, 32 local authorities participate in this scheme – Dublin City Council (with approximately 150 schools) is the largest provider.

Responsibility for the Scheme

The local authorities administer the scheme on a day-to-day basis and the decision in relation to whether or not to operate the scheme is entirely a matter for each eligible local authority.

The role of the DSFA is confined to reimbursing local authorities and approving participation in the scheme. This role involves liaison with the local authorities and the Department of Education and Science, Ireland (DES), as well as seeking Ireland's Department of Finance's approval for additional expenditure when necessary.

Funding of the Scheme

Local authorities may only recoup 50% of their expenditure on food costs for eligible children from the DSFA. Administration costs are covered in full by the local authorities, which means that the bulk of the total cost of operating the scheme rests with the local authorities.

Administration within Local Authorities

The local authorities are responsible for deciding on the eligibility of individuals and schools in the first place. Other tasks undertaken include meeting the DSFA requirements with regard to submission of application forms and making requests for reimbursement. They are also responsible for tendering for the supply of meals.

Administration within Schools

The school usually initiates participation in the scheme. In general, the school is also involved in deciding on the eligibility of individual pupils. Participating schools are required to provide details of average attendance etc. to the local authority.

A.1.2. School Meals Programme: School Meals Local Projects Scheme

The School Meals Local Projects Scheme has grown steadily and significantly since its introduction in 2000, and the greatest proportion of the available SMP funding is spent on this scheme. It provides funding directly to primary schools, secondary schools, local groups and voluntary organisations (including community-based, not-for-profit pre-schools), which operate their own school meals projects.

Aims of the Scheme

Projects must be targeted at areas of disadvantage or at children with special needs. Priority is currently given to schools which are part of the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) initiative. The main objective of the scheme is to assist children who are unable by reason of lack of food to take full advantage of the education provided for them (DES 2005). The scheme aims to assist school meals projects operating outside the Urban Schools Meals Scheme. However, in some cases schools may operate both schemes.

Funding is provided only to existing projects that have shown ongoing viability. The viability of a project may be demonstrated by projects that are firmly established or recently established projects that have suitable voluntary or statutory backing.

Responsibility for the Scheme

The DSFA administers this scheme. The school, local group or voluntary organisation is responsible for making the funding application to the DSFA and for food provision and the day-to-day operation of the project. They have essentially two options in terms of food provision: provide the food themselves or contract out to an external provider. More detail on this is provided in Section A.2.

Funding under the Scheme


The DSFA only funds food costs under this scheme. See Section A.2.2 (p.27) for an outline of some of the potential non-food costs that may arise.

The amount of funding allocated to a local project depends on the type and number of meals provided. Decisions on the type and quantity of meals, as well as the method and logistics of supplying the meals, are made by the individual local group or school that operates the project. Funding is paid in two instalments.

Funding for meals per head (as per July 2008):

Breakfast/snack	€0.60
Lunch	€1.40
Dinner	€1.90



The School Meals Local Projects Scheme application form can be downloaded at www.welfare.ie/foi/swa_schoolmapp.pdf. 

Who Can Access this Funding?

Priority for new applications for funding is currently given to schools which are part of the DEIS initiative. However, there is no automatic entitlement to funding for any school and all applications are assessed in the context of the budget available for the scheme.

The DEIS initiative is an action plan for educational inclusion that focuses on addressing the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities, from pre-school through to second-level education. The action plan represents a shift in emphasis away from individual initiatives, each addressing a particular aspect of the problem, towards a multi-faceted and integrated approach. This is the first time that an integrated educational inclusion strategy has been developed for 3 to 18 year olds in Ireland.

DES publishes the DEIS list on its website at:

www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/deis_school_list.htm.

**want More ?
Information**

Department of Social and Family Affairs, School Meals Programme, Social Welfare Services Office, College Road, Sligo.

Tel: +353 (0)71 913 8612 or

LoCall 1890 50 00 00. Website: www.welfare.ie

A.1.3. EU School Milk Scheme

The EU School Milk Scheme is operated in Ireland by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (DAFF). The uptake of the scheme is mainly among primary school children. All pupils in regular attendance at primary schools can avail of the scheme during school days but not during holiday camps. When the scheme was re-launched in 2006, it offered a broader range of products including flavoured milk, low-fat milk and yoghurt.

Cost

The maximum price for milk payable by school children has been set at 20c per 250ml. DAFF review and fix the price at the beginning of each school year, or by 1 October at the latest.

Application Process

The school principal contacts his/her local dairy/creamery to express interest in the scheme. He/she will be asked to complete an application form and provide details of how many children want to avail of the scheme. Some schools carry out a survey among the parents to establish how many children will participate in the scheme.

The school principal returns the completed application form to the dairy/creamery, which in turn makes an application to the Milk Subsidies Section of DAFF. The maximum number of pupils in the school and the number of pupils participating in the scheme must be stated on each school list attached to a claim.

Collecting Children's Contribution

The day-to-day operation of the scheme varies between schools. Some schools will appoint monitors (sixth-class students) and give them the responsibility of going to each classroom to collect the money weekly. Other schools will ask the children to pay on a quarterly basis and the school secretary will be given the responsibility for coordinating this. Even if a school is availing of the EU School Milk Scheme, individual children have the choice to opt in or out of the scheme at anytime during the school year.

Quantity of Milk per Child

Currently, 250ml of milk is given per pupil per day through the scheme. However, a 2007 report from the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) suggested that the portion size of milk supplied should depend on the child's age, recommending that a carton not exceeding 189ml is most appropriate for children up to third class, while 250ml should be provided for older primary school children.



Product Type

Products eligible under the scheme include whole milk, semi-skimmed milk and flavoured milks. In practice, however, schools tend to avail of whole milk primarily.

To prevent the development of dental caries arising from the consumption of flavoured milks through the EU School Milk Scheme, the FSAI (2007) recommends that flavoured milks should contain at least 90% milk and no more than 5% added sugars and should always be supplied with a straw. The report also recommends that milk supplied through the EU School Milk Scheme should be refrigerated to ensure that it is safe for consumption and it maintains palatability to encourage consumption.

90% milk =
healthy teeth





Checklist **Get the EU School Milk Scheme in Your School**

- Contact your local dairy/creamery for advice on the necessary steps, as outlined above, and for the relevant forms that the school needs to complete.
- If your local dairy/creamery cannot help you, the Milk Subsidies Section of DAFF can provide details of a dairy close to you that operates the scheme. Contact: Milk Subsidies Section, On-Farm Investments, Subsidies and Storage Division, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Johnstown Castle Estate, Wexford. Tel: +353 (0)53 916 5502. Fax: +353 (0)53 914 3852
- You can also check out the following websites for more information:
 - www.agriculture.gov.ie/index.jsp?file=areasofi/eumilkscheme/
 - eumilkscheme.xml and www.drinkitup.europa.eu

A.1.4. Funding Options to Supplement Government Programmes

There is a range of possible sources of funding and support, including:

- Using the core school budget
- Approaching your school's parent teacher association
- Charging pupils, e.g. healthier tuck shop
- Fundraising at school
- Accepting donated resources
- Applying for corporate sponsorship
- Talking to local businesses through local business networks such as Business in the Community or Women in Business
- Requesting funding, sponsorship or other in-kind support from local businesses
- Contacting local representatives of national bodies, e.g. Rotarians, Round Tables, Lions, Townswomen's and Countrywomen's Guilds.

A.2. Providing School Lunches

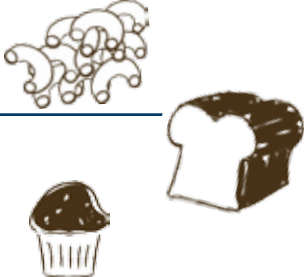
A.2.1. Nutritional Guidelines for School Lunches, Ireland



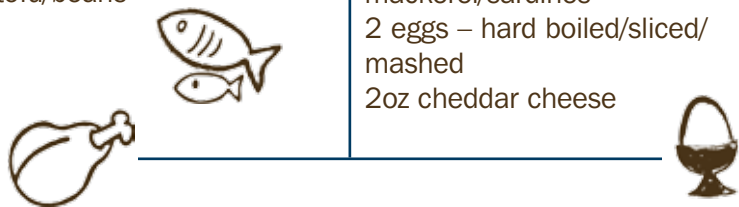
The community nutrition and dietetic teams within the Health Service Executive (HSE) are a good contact point if you are exploring the option of providing school lunches in your school.



The Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Primary Schools (DOHC 2003) recommend using the food pyramid as a guide to what constitutes a healthy lunch. The guidelines state that each of the four main shelves should be represented in a child's lunch and offer lots of suggestions and practical ideas for a healthy lunchbox.

Choosing Lunch the Food Pyramid Way

Bread, cereals and potatoes	2 servings for lunch
<p>Bread (all types, plain or toasted), rolls, scones, pitta breads, crackers (preferably wholegrain/wholewheat), pasta, spaghetti, rice</p> 	<p>1 serving is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">1 slice of bread1 medium roll2 crackers1 small scone2 tablespoons of cooked pasta/ riceSmall serving of popcorn

<p>Fruit and vegetables</p> <p>Vegetables – cooked or raw, salad vegetables, vegetable sticks, all fresh fruit, dried fruit, unsweetened pure fruit juice</p> 	<p>1 or more servings for lunch</p> <p>1 serving is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 large piece of fruit e.g. 1 apple/1 orange/1 banana 2 small pieces of fruit e.g. 2 satsumas/2 kiwis 100ml unsweetened pure fruit juice ½ tin of fruit, in own juice 2 tablespoons of vegetables 1 small salad
<p>Milk, cheese and yoghurt</p> <p>Milk, yoghurt, cheese</p> 	<p>1 serving for lunch</p> <p>1 serving is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 glass of milk 1 yoghurt 1oz cheddar cheese 2 slices processed cheese
<p>Meat, fish and alternatives</p> <p>Meat (lean beef/lamb/pork/ham), chicken/turkey, eggs, fish, nuts (whole nuts are not suitable for children under 5 years), peanut butter, cheese, textured vegetable protein/tofu/beans</p> 	<p>1 serving for lunch</p> <p>1 serving is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 slices of cooked meat (2oz) 2 slices chicken/turkey breast (2oz) 3oz fish e.g. tuna/salmon/mackerel/sardines 2 eggs – hard boiled/sliced/mashed 2oz cheddar cheese

Drinks

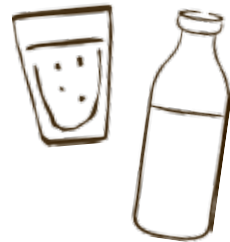
It is important that children take in enough fluids during the day. Almost two-thirds of the body is made of water. If children do not drink enough water, they may become dehydrated, thirsty, tired and weak.

Drinks should always be included in lunch and break times. Water and milk are the best choices and milk is also a valuable source of calcium, which is important for healthy bones and teeth. Unsweetened fruit juice or diluted sugar-free squashes are also suitable drinks if taken with meals. Children should be encouraged to drink fluids with meals rather than filling up on drinks beforehand.

Drink	'Tooth Friendliness'
Water	Good choice
Milk	Good choice
Diluted sugar-free squash	Only at meal times
Unsweetened fruit juice	Only at meal times
Fruit drinks	Only at meal times

Consider the Lunch Environment

- Is there enough time for children to enjoy lunch and have some physical activity at lunch time?
- Is lunch time supervised?
- Is there a designated area for eating?
- Do/could older children help younger children with lunch?
- Are there hand-washing facilities?



A.2.2. School Lunch Provision

In Ireland, there is no standard system whereby all schools provide school meals for the children attending them. There are a number of reasons why a school might choose not to provide meals. For example, the school may lack kitchen/catering facilities to provide school meals. Also, in situations where children bring a lunchbox to school, there is an opportunity for them to be involved in the lunch preparation. If the responsibility for providing lunches is transferred from the parents to the school, this opportunity may be lost.

Initiatives such as the Limerick School Meals Project (see case study pp. 30-31) have been able to identify some of the non-food costs that go hand-in-hand with running an effective school food programme. The DSFA funds food costs only under the School Meals Local Projects Scheme. Therefore, in many cases, a degree of creativity is required to find funds to pay for the non-food requirements. The following list itemises some of the considerations and requirements when planning to provide school lunches.

Issues for the School to consider

- (Lack of) kitchen facilities
- Administration (ordering/forms/menu changes/dealing with suppliers/storage)
- Community Employment/Job Initiative schemes (not) permissible on school properties
- Funding employment of staff/organising volunteering
- Purchasing equipment
- Meeting/maintaining standards for kitchen/storage/delivery
- Training/upskilling regarding developing menus/systems
- Minimising waste
- Searching for value for money
- Collection/delivery of supplies
- Quality control
- Finding a suitable space to eat in
- Being able to give the children sufficient time to eat their lunch and ensure some playtime as well
- Supervision
- Hand-washing facilities
- Gathering waste and litter
- Linking with/supporting curriculum/policy/ethos.

Best Practice Elsewhere: School Meals in Northern Ireland

Nutritional Standards for School Meals

The Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI) has developed compulsory, updated nutritional standards for school lunches and other food outlets (vending machines, tuck shops etc.) in schools. These standards, which came into effect in September 2007, and subsequently updated in April 2008, mean that children and their parents know what standards of provision to expect. The new standards can be downloaded as follows: http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/85-schools/5-school_meals/5-nutritional_standards_background.htm



The Education and Training Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) has appointed two nutritional associates to join a series of inspection teams to monitor the implementation of the new standards and general approaches within schools to promote healthy eating amongst children. Since January 2007, the nutritional associates have obtained evidence relating to the nature, range and quality of healthy eating policies and practices in schools. An important aspect of the gathering of this evidence base included the discussions held with the school principal, health education coordinator, catering supervisor and groups of children/pupils respectively.

Meal Tickets and Smart Cards

It is a statutory requirement in Northern Ireland to provide a free meal during term time to school children of families in receipt of income support. Free meal tickets can be used to purchase food to the equivalent of a conventional meal. Other pupils must purchase their tickets and all tickets are collected at the same pay-point to avoid the potential for discrimination or stigmatisation of children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Smart Card Initiative

In 1996, a 'smart card' system for school meal payment was introduced in some secondary schools in England and Northern Ireland. A card is issued to each school child and personalised with a photograph. The card can be used in the school canteen, in the library (photocopying and lending), in vending machines on the school premises and for automated roll call (swipe the card on the way into school). While there may be fewer uses for the card in the primary school setting, its benefits in reducing the school meal queue (where there is a school canteen) and in avoiding stigmatisation of children receiving free meals are apparent.

The pupils can add money to their card (re-charge) through authorised operators in the school and then the money is deducted automatically as services/meals are purchased. The perceived benefits of the scheme are:

- The stigma associated with free school meals is eliminated, as every pupil has the same card. This is an important step forward as the issue of stigmatisation is cited as a reason for the poor uptake of free school meals
- Reduced bullying as students are not carrying money with them to school and cannot be pressurised into handing the card over
- Students will not have 'lunch money' with them each day, which they may be tempted to spend on sweets or cigarettes.

There are no plans at present for a DENI-led funding initiative to provide smart cards in all Northern Ireland schools. However, a pilot scheme is in progress in Lisburn, Co. Antrim to look at the feasibility of providing multi-function cards to students and DENI will be reviewing the results of this pilot in due course.

Want More ?
Information

Department of Education
Northern Ireland:
www.deni.gov.uk

Case Study

A.2.3 School Meals Project

Seventeen schools in Limerick city and its environs are involved in the Limerick School Meals Project. All schools are part of the DEIS initiative. The total student population served by this initiative is 3,000. Funding is made available to the schools from the DSFA.

This programme, which has been successfully running for more than three years, evolved out of a much smaller pilot which was run under the direction of the PAUL Partnership, Limerick. The 17 primary schools within the initiative receive free school lunches. Seven community-based schemes supply nine schools, while a commercial supplier provides lunch to the other eight schools.

Structure of the Limerick School Meals Project

In 2005, the Limerick Food Partnership was set up and the school meals project came in under its umbrella. The Limerick Food Partnership has city-wide stakeholders: DSFA, HSE, Limerick City Council, Limerick Institute of Technology, PAUL Partnership and local community groups.

A food project coordinator was appointed to take responsibility for food related activities, e.g. the food bank and school meals. The coordinator hosts biannual meetings with the school meals suppliers and the schools that receive the meals and can be contacted at other times if the schools or suppliers have any problems. The school meals project is now even better than before due to the sharing of experiences and ideas.

How the Limerick School Meals Project Works

Each school uses a community project to supply meals to the school. The school claims the funding from the DSFA at a rate of €1.40 per child per day for lunch and 60c per child per day for a snack. The community project invoices the school for the total amount of lunches delivered at the end of the school year. The school then pays the community supplier.

The community projects are run as small businesses. In this way, all the non-food costs fall to the supplier. Therefore, the supplier is constantly trying to find more reasonably priced products, as well as different products, to keep the children's boredom at bay.

The food project coordinator has also set up a small business producing a fruit cup for sale to the community suppliers. This consists of a reusable sealed plastic bowl that is filled with fruit pieces. It is used by the community suppliers as a snack item in the school meals system and was produced in response to the difficulty of sourcing a reasonably priced fresh fruit snack pack.

Want More Information ?

Contact: Liz Slattery, Food Project Coordinator, Limerick Food Partnership. Tel: +353 (0)61 329594 or +353 (0)61 419388

The community suppliers involved in the Limerick School Meals Project are:

- Brenda Gardiner, St Munchin's Community Centre.
Tel: +353 (0)61 458651
- Beatrice Cronin, Southhill House. Tel: +353 (0)61 415340
- Teresa Sheehy, Our Lady of Lourdes Community Centre.
Tel: +353 (0)61 228596
- Ann Rainbow, St Mary's Parish. Tel: +353 (0)61 411656
- Trish Foley or Francis O'Brien, Limerick Youth Services.
Tel: +353 (0)61 412444

Two schools make their own school lunches:
Southhill Junior School. Contact Marion Tobin.
Tel: +353 (0)61 419879
St Michael's School. Contact Susan Frawley.
Tel: +353 (0)61 317672



A.3. Breakfast Clubs and Afterschool Clubs

Additional services that extend the traditional school day are now being offered by many schools. These services include initiatives such as breakfast clubs and afterschool clubs. This section focuses on how to set up a breakfast club but can be easily adapted if you are setting up an afterschool club.

A.3.1. The Importance of Breakfast

Research has shown that children benefit both nutritionally and behaviourally by eating breakfast. Many children come to school without having had breakfast. These children will invariably be hungry in class and therefore unable to concentrate or participate in school activities. Many other children arrive having eaten food that has been purchased on the way to school and which may not be healthy. All children need a healthy breakfast to grow, learn and play. A nourishing breakfast is a good start to the child's day and gives children the energy they need to concentrate and learn. (DOHC 2003)

A.3.2. Role of Breakfast Clubs

While a key function of a breakfast club is to provide children with food at the start of the day, a good breakfast club can be about much more than that. Breakfast clubs are becoming effective environments for promoting healthy eating, for enriching the curriculum through informal learning and for tackling issues of social exclusion and academic underachievement by encouraging children to come to school who might be reluctant to attend otherwise. (Scottish Community Diet Project 2004)

A breakfast club should involve school staff, children, parents, carers and the wider community. It aims to improve the health and health behaviours of children, staff and volunteers who become involved.



Useful tip

Check if your proposed breakfast club is eligible for funding under the School Meals Programme (see Sections A.1.1 and A.1.2).

Why Set Up a Breakfast Club?

The following is a list of potential outcomes:

- Helps meet nutritional needs
- Improves school attendance and punctuality
- Improves concentration in class
- Creates positive links between families and the school
- Creates a sense of security in the school environment
- Provides a mechanism to assist young people who may not present as in need
- Allows for a more positive outlook towards the school, resulting in improved participation
- Improves interaction with adults
- Develops social skills
- Allows participants to have fun
- Improves peer relationships
- Fulfils childcare needs, allowing parents to attend work or further training and thus tackling social disadvantage.



A.3.3. Setting Up and Running a Breakfast Club

There is no single or ideal way to set up a breakfast club. What works in one situation may not work in another, but the following toolkit aims to provide an insight into the key aspects that need to be considered. This can be adapted further to suit different circumstances. Refer also to Section A.4, where you will find guidance on carrying out a needs assessment, setting aims and objectives, identifying key stakeholders and partners, examining budgetary requirements and planning evaluation. These are all important elements in setting up a SFI.

Child Safety

Getting to the Breakfast Club

It is important to consider how the child will get to the breakfast club. Will school crossing supervisors be in place earlier than usual? Will pupils reliant on school transport be able to get to the breakfast club on time or independently? Is the school near busy roads? Prior to the launch of the breakfast club, parents should be notified about key safety measures via a meeting or a leaflet.

Child Supervision Measures

The numbers of children attending your breakfast club will impact on the adult to child supervision ratio levels. Always check what this ratio should be with the school, health service or organisation with which your club is linked. See 'Staffing' below for further information.

Types of Breakfast Club

There are a number of different models of breakfast club.

Model One 'Tea and Toast': this is generally a stand-alone breakfast club held in the school premises and run by volunteers, community members and teaching staff. This type of breakfast club may be targeted at particular children rather than being available to all.

Model Two 'Canteen': food is served in the school canteen, which offers multiple food options including hot food. This type of breakfast club is more common in Northern Ireland and would be available to all. An example of this model in Ireland is the breakfast club at St John's Junior National School (JNS) and St Paul's Senior National School (SNS), Rathmullen, see case study pp. 41-42.

Model Three 'Community focused': this is generally an off-site breakfast club that takes place in the community as part of a social programme, has a single menu and is run by community staff such as family support workers. An example of this type of model is run by The Get Ahead Club, Clondalkin, see case study pp. 44-47.

When deciding what type of breakfast club you are going to set up, choose a model or a combination of models to meet the needs of your own group. A good breakfast club should be child centred, inclusive and fun. It will enable its members to make confident choices about a balanced diet and will offer them opportunities to learn new things and try out different activities.

Running Costs

The cost of running your breakfast club will ultimately depend on the resources and facilities available, attendance rates, charging policy, staffing levels, menu etc.

Some Regular Expenses

- Food costs and wastage
- Cleaning costs
- Transport costs
- Staff wages
- Volunteer expenses
- Administration and banking of any money collected
- Road crossing supervisors if they do extra hours.



One-off Expenses

- Set-up costs such as purchasing books, stereo, games
- Cutlery, crockery and glassware
- Electrical equipment – fridge freezer, kettle, microwave, toaster
- Bins, table covers, jugs, chopping boards
- Training costs
- Promotional material and stationery
- Theme days, Halloween, Christmas, Easter and other cultural events.

Choosing a Location

School breakfast clubs can take place in a variety of settings such as school dining facilities, classrooms or gym halls. They can also take place in community venues such as a local community centre. Where you hold your club can make a difference to the number of pupils who attend.

Before deciding on the location, consider the following:

- Number and age of children most likely to attend. How do you know this? Have you checked?
- Size of venue. Can it accommodate the expected numbers of children, plus staff and volunteers?
- Facilities within the venue. Is there running/drinking water, access to kitchen facilities, sinks, toilets, storage facilities?
- How will children get to the venue and then to the school if it is not in the school itself?
- Availability of the venue for use at the specified time on an ongoing basis. Try to allocate a specific room so that the students always have a familiar environment
- Does the venue meet health and safety requirements for your breakfast club?
- Is the venue near a busy road? Are there road safety considerations?

Additional Equipment

The type of breakfast club you decide to establish will dictate your equipment needs but there are a few basics that will be needed whatever type of club you set up. These include:

- Kettle
- Fridge
- Cutlery and crockery
- Tables and chairs
- Cleaning products
- Waste disposal facilities.

BREAKFAST
CLUB ★
#####

Other useful resources:

- Freezer
- Radio/stereo
- Play materials
- Books
- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Computers
- Games.



Getting the Room Right

If you are running a small club in a big hall, mark out the 'club space' with posters or markers. If possible offer an area where club members can go to relax etc.

Try to set aside an area for members to display some of their work or photos of club activities – this gives a sense of pride and ownership and is also an excellent way to attract other pupils.

Getting the Menu Right

Healthy eating guidelines are based around the food pyramid model. For more information on this, refer to the Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Primary Schools (DOHC 2003).



Breakfast the Food Pyramid Way

Bread and cereals	Breakfast cereals including porridge, bread, toast, rolls, crackers, crisp breads, bagels and scones
Fruit and vegetables	Unsweetened fruit juice, banana, apple, orange, peach, satsuma, plum, grapes, kiwi, pear, melon, pineapple
Milk, cheese and yoghurt	Glass of milk, milk on cereal, unsweetened milk shake, yoghurt on its own or mixed with fruit or cereal, cheese sauce
Meat, fish and alternatives	Grilled lean rasher, grilled sausage, slice of cooked meat, baked beans, poached or scrambled eggs

Choose one portion from each of the main four food groups listed in the table above for a healthy balanced breakfast. Try different combinations to add interest and variety, for example:

- Bowl of cereal with sliced banana, toast with jam, a glass of milk
- Baked beans on toast, an apple cut into quarters, a glass of water
- An orange, scrambled egg on toast, a glass of milk
- Glass of pure fruit juice, grilled lean rasher sandwich, a pear
- Satsuma, bowl of cereal, bread roll, a yoghurt, a glass of water.

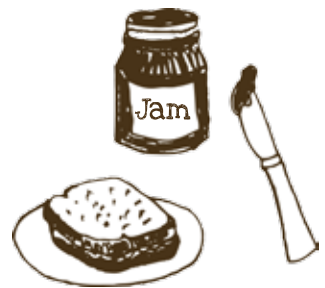
Other Points to Consider

Marketing

- Put healthier choices first on the menu and make sure they can be seen
- Make food look attractive.

Special Promotions

- Theme day promotions, e.g. different national breakfasts
- Promotion of different fruit, e.g. exotic fruits, fruit salad
- 'Taster days' where small portions of unfamiliar foods can be tried.



Coordinating the Club

Once you have thought about what your goals are and how you want to set up the breakfast club, you need to think how best to run it. A designated breakfast club coordinator should be responsible for ensuring that the club is developed to meet its objectives.

A typical coordinator might be responsible for:

- Planning activities
- Identifying the target group of pupils
- Staffing
- Looking after premises
- Marketing and promotion
- Reporting to funders
- Liaising with the steering committee and senior management team
- Health and safety
- Child protection issues
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Making appropriate links with the local community.

Where breakfast clubs are overseen by a steering committee, the committee's remit may cover some of the areas set out for the coordinator above, thereby sharing the burden of responsibility. Having a range of members on your steering committee will give you access to a broader base of information and expertise. It also means that the key players are involved in decision making and that work can be shared between members.

Staffing

Depending on how you structure your club, you could think about involving parents, teachers, local school completion coordinators, local home–school–community liaison officers, youth workers and other members of the community. Parents and other family members may be able to help on a rota system if they cannot commit themselves to coming in every day. Contact local colleges to see if they have any students that would be willing to help with the club in order to gain experience. Check the school policy on who can work with children in the school; this may need to involve the Criminal Records Bureau or Garda Clearance.

Staff Training

It is important to consider whether training is needed to maximise the effectiveness of the breakfast club. What kind of training is essential and desirable for staff (e.g. food hygiene, health and safety)? What other training would be of value to staff and volunteers? Examples of training areas include first aid, childcare, play skills, computer skills and record keeping. Find out where the training gaps are and take action to improve the knowledge and skills of your staff.

Activities to Include

You can run a wide variety of activities at breakfast clubs. Some breakfast clubs run their activities before breakfast and others afterwards. You could set up your activities so that children can opt in or out of them. The activities you select must reflect the needs and wishes of the members. The emphasis should be on having fun. Remember to ask the children what they want and be prepared to change what you are doing every now and then to keep them interested.

- Reading Corners

Make sure there is always a wide range of reading material available to all club members. See whether a local newsagent would be willing to donate a couple of different magazines; borrow some books from the school library etc. You could also encourage pupils to write their own stories.



- Free and Structured Play

Play is an important part of every child's development. Consider whether you can create different play spaces within your breakfast club area.

- About us

This is a very valuable tool that helps everyone in the group get to know each other and that celebrates diversity. Decide on a range of topics such as 'My favourite food is . . .' and 'My favourite game is . ..'. The children can contribute their responses in whatever way they choose – they could write, draw or make a collage. Their responses could then be made into a member's book or picture.

- Physical Activities

Children could participate in activities such as skipping, walking, dancing and hopscotch.

- Homework Corners

Homework corners can offer a good opportunity for children to discuss their work and seek advice from one another, as well as giving them the chance to tell you about any problems, difficulties or successes they are having. Often children do not have a quiet area at home to work in, so the only place where they can do their homework is at school. Also, if members of their family do not see the importance of homework, children will not give it the emphasis it deserves.



- Board Games

Games can stimulate the mind and lead to great personal and interpersonal development.

The benefits of this should not be underestimated. Children can be nominated as 'games monitors' to ensure that all games are put away at the end of each session and that nothing is missing.

Checklist

See the general checklist that can be adapted and used when planning any school food initiative (p.55).

want More ?
Information



Case Study

A.3.4 Breakfast Clubs

The following case study describes the “Extension of a School Canteen” by St John’s Junior National School (JNS) and St Paul’s Senior National School (SNS) Breakfast Club in Drogheda.

Management Structure

The breakfast club in St John’s JNS and St Paul’s SNS is managed by an inter-agency committee:

- Breakfast club staff (project coordinator)
- Department of Education and Science (DES)
- Department of Social and Family Affairs (DSFA)
- Drogheda Borough Council
- Drogheda Partnership
- Drogheda Youth Development (DYD)
- Foras Áiseanna Saothair (FÁS)
- Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development (RAPID) Area Implementation Team
- St John’s and St Paul’s Parents’ Council
- St John’s JNS Board of Management
- St Paul’s SNS Board of Management

The committee meets approximately once every three months during school term time and is responsible for the overall strategic management of the breakfast club. One of the committee’s primary tasks is to ensure that sufficient funding is in place to maintain the day-to-day operation of the club.

Funding

The breakfast club is funded and supported by a variety of sources including DES, Drogheda Partnership, DYD, Drogheda Borough Council/RAPID, DSFA, Dormant Accounts Fund, FÁS and the schools’ boards of management and parents’ council. Funding is secured year on year.

DES provides three classrooms to be used exclusively by the breakfast club. DYD plays a key role in maintaining the club’s current funding structure through FÁS. The Parents’ Council plays a key role in maintaining the current structure of the club by providing the entry way for DYD (and hence FÁS) to be involved in the breakfast club.

Staffing Structure

The breakfast club is managed by a coordinator and a Community Employment (CE) scheme catering supervisor on a day-to-day basis. It is staffed by 20 catering assistants, employed on a CE scheme by DYD. The CE scheme is a training project to enable people who are long term unemployed or other disadvantaged people to get back to work. The coordinator is supported by an assistant coordinator. Four monitors are employed to supervise the children in the dining room as well as en route to and from their classrooms and the dining room.

Day-to-Day Operation

Staff start work in the breakfast club at 7.45am. The club is open from 8.15am to 9.00am, and again from 11.00am to 11.15am for 'little lunch' for the pupils of St Paul's SNS only. It re-opens from 12.40pm to 1.15pm for lunch. Lunch comprises a choice of two hot meals and a salad dish.

The choice of a hot breakfast and a hot lunch is available to the pupils. In terms of the nutritional quality of the food on offer, the school is liaising with the Community Nutrition and Dietetic Service with a view to improving the menu and to developing a healthy school food policy.

Charging for the Service

The food in the breakfast club is not free. Each item has a price, albeit a low price, which is the same for everyone. This lack of differentiation allows those most in need of the service to avail of it without fear of being stigmatised. The club does, however, make an effort to 'target' those children identified as being in need of food and whose families may not be able to afford the price of the food in the club. In such a case, the cost of the food is waived for the children, who are told that their parents have already paid for the food 'on the book'. This way, no child is made to feel any different from anyone else, while the target children receive the support and food that they need.

Want More Information





- Our website includes a full copy of the impact analysis of the St John's JNS and St Paul's SNS Breakfast Club (Fitzgerald 2006).

A.3.5. Afterschool Clubs

After the long school day, children doing their homework may find it hard to concentrate and learn. All children need a snack after school to keep them satisfied until their evening meal. Schools may be interested in organising afterschool clubs to ensure that children have healthy snacks and an opportunity to do their homework.

The following list gives snack ideas from each of the main four food groups in the food pyramid.

Snacking the Food Pyramid Way

Bread, cereals and potatoes	Breakfast cereal, bread, toast, rolls, crackers, crispbreads, bagels, scones, plain biscuits, plain popcorn	
Fruit and vegetables	Unsweetened fruit juice, banana, apple, pear, orange, plum, satsumas, grapes, kiwi, melon, pineapple, raw carrot sticks, raw pepper sticks	
Milk, cheese and yoghurt	Glass of milk, milk on cereal, unsweetened milk shake, yoghurt, cheese slices, cheese cubes	
Meat, fish and alternatives	Slices of cooked meat, small chicken sandwich, small egg sandwich, baked beans	

Case Study

A.3.6. Afterschool Clubs

The Get Ahead Club's Afterschool Support Groups, Clondalkin, Dublin 22

The Get Ahead Club is a community-based education project that aims to support the participation and progression in school of children at risk of marginalisation. It achieves its aims using a community development model that provides a range of services that target children and their families. These services include afterschool groups, breakfast clubs, summer programmes, developmental work with parents and participation in integrated responses to educational needs.

Background

The North Clondalkin Homework Project was established in 1994 by Dóchas, together with local schools and parents, due to concern about children not succeeding in the education system because of limited social and communication skills, poor self-esteem and difficulty completing homework.

Volunteers were recruited and trained to operate afterschool support groups on a pilot basis. After an evaluation of the project showed the pilot phase had been successful, the project was set up on a permanent basis. A management committee was formed and FÁS, through South Dublin County Council, came on board to sponsor a CE scheme. The workers on this scheme carry out the direct work with children on the project.

The project continues to develop as resources become available. It was renamed The Get Ahead Club in 1999.



Aims and Objectives of The Get Ahead Club

- To support the development among targeted children of:
 - good homework patterns
 - good school attendance
 - positive relationships with their peers and with adults
 - inter-personal qualities such as self-esteem, self-confidence and the ability to deal appropriately with conflict
- To enhance the capacity of parents to support their children's education
- To increase the capacity of the local community to be an active partner in the provision of educational services in the area.

Target Groups

The Get Ahead Club operates in north Clondalkin, an area which is classified as being severely disadvantaged. Within this area it caters for children who:

- Need extra individual attention, e.g. due to family circumstances
- Need to develop social skills, e.g. to make friends, to deal appropriately with conflict
- Have poor homework patterns
- Have poor school attendance patterns
- Have poor self-esteem or self-confidence and are withdrawn in class.

Services are provided to children from all seven primary schools in north Clondalkin.

Services Provided

Afterschool support groups are based in four local community centres. Eight groups operate, catering for 120 children in total from second and third class. Each child attends twice every week from 2.45pm to 4.30pm and individual attention is guaranteed with a staff to child ratio of 1:2.

Each session comprises:

- Healthy snack
- Homework support
- Developmental activities – self-esteem building, games, arts and crafts, sports etc.

HEALTHY

Work with Parents

The aim of the work with parents is to address the educational and developmental needs of parents of children on the project so that they, in turn, can support their children's education.

Work with Other Agencies

The project participates in a range of initiatives to work towards an integrated response to educational needs in Clondalkin.

Easter Programmes

In order to provide positive alternatives for children during school holidays, activities include trips to Funtasia, the cinema, the zoo, activity centres etc.

Management and Staffing

The Get Ahead Club is incorporated as a company limited by guarantee with charitable status. The project is managed by an independent committee representing a range of local interests. This includes representatives of parents, community groups, schools, South Dublin County Council, Ronanstown Youth Service (Catholic Youth Council), religious of the area and An Garda Síochána. 22 CE staff work on the project and there is one CE supervisor. There are also four part-time key workers, (one for each of the four centres where the project operates), whose role is to ensure the project operates effectively at a local level. The Get Ahead Club is also served by one full-time project coordinator.

Funding

Funding for the operation of The Get Ahead Club has been provided through a range of different agencies and bodies, including:

- FÁS
- South Dublin County Council
- Department of Education and Science
- Department of Social and Family Affairs
- Clondalkin Partnership
- Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme
- Once-off grants from a range of sources.



Outcomes

Independent external evaluations have noted that the project has major benefits for the children who are involved. Feedback from school staff and parents suggests that The Get Ahead Club provides a whole range of positive supports – social, nutritional and educational – to the participating children.

Some of the tangible outcomes for children attending the project are:

- Much improved homework patterns
- Improvement in self-esteem
- Improvement in social skills
- Progression of parents onto courses to meet their own needs.

Want More Information ?

Rita Sweeney, Project Coordinator, The

- Get Ahead Club.

Tel: +353 (0)1 6450281



A.4. Planning a School Food Initiative

This section provides guidance on project planning for any school food initiative (SFI). It has relevance whether you are setting up a ‘tea and toast’ style breakfast club, exploring the possibility of providing lunch in your school or trying to improve the snacks that children are consuming in school before moving on to more ambitious projects.

A.4.1. Demonstrating Need

Before commencing with any SFI, you should be clear on who your target audience is and whether there is a **need** for the project you have in mind.

Consulting

You could survey parents, teachers and students through a questionnaire or run focus groups to assess whether they feel there is a need for a particular SFI. Whatever way you decide to consult, try to make it easy for everyone to take part, especially ‘hard-to-reach’ pupils, who may be the group you most want to attract to your SFI. Try to make sure that the timing, format, length and language of the consultation do not deter anyone from contributing.



Useful tip

There are lots of ways that you can make it fun for young people and others to give their views about setting up an SFI. You could try:

- Graffiti walls
- Suggestion boxes
- Online surveys
- Face-to-face meetings
- Playground questionnaires
- School-gate questionnaires.

A.4.2. Aims and Objectives

Once you have demonstrated a need for the SFI, you can move on to consider its aims and objectives. Aims represent broad goals that you intend to achieve, objectives are more specific goals and evaluation is the measurement of the extent to which they are achieved. Objectives should be SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound. There is a balance to be struck in setting objectives that are realistic but also challenging. See Section A.4.5 for sample aims and objectives.

A.4.3. Identifying Key Players and Partners

It might become apparent that you will need the help of other individuals or organisations in order to achieve your aims. Often more can be achieved when working in partnerships than when working in isolation. When trying to impact on the diets of school children, this is most definitely the case.

Potential SFI stakeholders

- Parents, carers, families
- School principal, teaching staff, classroom assistants
- School parent teacher association and board of management
- Pupils
- Dietitians
- School janitors/cleaners
- Catering staff and assistants (if applicable)
- School crossing patrol staff
- Community health projects, healthy living centres or community centres
- Family support workers
- Community development projects
- Local school completion coordinators
- Local home–school–community liaison officers
- Local development partnerships
- RAPID projects
- Health promotion and community nutrition and dietetic teams in your local HSE area
- St Vincent de Paul/Barnardos
- Local voluntary groups (e.g. Rotary Club/Lions Club)
- Local shops and private businesses.

There are many potential stakeholders. However, it depends on the nature of your initiative as to how wide you need to go in terms of consultation. If you are setting up a ‘tea and toast’ style breakfast club as described in Section A.3.3, the list of potential stakeholders will be shorter. If you are looking at developing a healthy school food policy (see Section B1), a longer list, such as that outlined above, is more relevant.

Community dietitians work closely with schools’ health promotion teams. They are generally based within Health Promotion Departments in the HSE. Both are excellent points of contact if you are developing a school food project. The number of personnel and the approach used may vary from region to region.

Getting the Key Stakeholders around the Table

Setting up a steering committee that is representative of the key players can be a very useful approach in developing any SFI. Such a committee helps to establish a shared understanding of what the initiative hopes to achieve. It is vital that the people who may be affected by the SFI get an opportunity to have a say in the development and running of the initiative. If the key stakeholders are given an opportunity to contribute to the process, they are more likely to be supportive and will gain a sense of ownership of the initiative.



A.4.4. Budget and Resources

Before planning your SFI in detail, you need to ensure that your budget and resources match what you hope to deliver. You need to consider the following questions:

- What is your budget (if any)?
- Are SFI partners contributing any financial support? If so, how much is it and what activities can it be used for? Is the funding time specific and is continued funding dependent upon success?
- Are there any grant or sponsorship opportunities?
- Should you charge for the service provided? Some SFIs charge a small fee to all students using the service, which prevents those most in need avoiding the service for fear of being stigmatised. Others opt not to charge and target the initiative at particular children as opposed to all students. This is an important issue to tease out in relation to how best to ensure that the children most in need benefit from the initiative
- Will the initiative generate revenue? If so, what is the forecasted revenue?
- What resources will be needed to deliver the initiative and do they have any costs (e.g. sampling costs, venue hire, equipment purchases)?
- How much time will be required to set up, deliver and evaluate the initiative? If the initiative is being delivered as part of the routine work of the school staff, it is important to give proper consideration to time allocations as this requirement is frequently underestimated. How much time will any partners contribute?
- Do you have a contingency plan for exceeding your budget or timescale for delivery?

A.4.5. Planning the Project Delivery

Drawing up an **action plan** helps to ensure that the key aspects of the initiative are carried out **in the right order, at the right time**. The objectives of the initiative can form the basis of an action plan; you may want to add more information to them or split them into smaller steps. Assign people to specific actions, and allocate time, resources and a budget to each step.

Remember to include how you are going to **evaluate** your initiative in the planning phase as well, as this will determine what information you need to collect.

Evaluation

Proper, thorough evaluation of a SFI is very important because it determines which aspects are successful and why and which aspects are not as successful and why. Evaluation needs to be built into project plans from the beginning. If you do not define your starting point, it will be difficult to demonstrate the effects of all your hard work. You need to consider what information you want to collect and how. If you have set out realistic and measurable aims and objectives, you are well on the way there.

Be Realistic

The long-term aims should always be considered (i.e. halting obesity levels by improving the quality of food that school children are eating). However, you cannot measure long-term health changes as a result of a one-year SFI. Instead, you can measure short-term indicators such as consumption patterns of fruit and vegetables versus high fat snacks, and knowledge of healthy eating.

Sample Evaluation Plan for a Breakfast Club Initiative

The table on page 54 outlines how you might evaluate a breakfast club initiative. Remember you can start small and you do not need to use all of the examples outlined. This approach can be adapted for any SFI.

To increase the response rate of your evaluation mechanism:

- Keep surveys and questionnaires short and simple to complete
- Questionnaires should be confidential/anonymous
- Collect the evaluation information at the time that your initiative is delivered (make time available to do this)
- If your initiative involves giving participants certificates of attendance or an award, you could make it a condition that the evaluation has to be completed before they receive the certificate/award.

Once the evaluation information has been collected, it can be analysed and you can compare your results to your aim(s).

Report and Publicise

Reporting on evaluation findings helps to strengthen your position in securing continued funding. Consider who you need to report to at the end of the initiative; this might include partner agencies that have provided funding, the school principal and parents. You may have publicised your initiative as it was in progress; but now think about also publicising it after you have collected the evaluation information as well. Why not write an article for your local newspaper or do an interview with your local radio station celebrating your success? Why not submit a case study to the our website? Contact us by email at info@healthyfoodforall.com or call on +353 0(1) 836 0011



Objectives of the Breakfast Club	What to Measure	How to Measure
To improve school attendance	Does the breakfast club improve the numbers of children attending school?	Monitor attendance patterns in school
To increase the number of children eating a healthy breakfast before school begins	Does the breakfast club bring about a change in eating patterns?	Ask the children to complete a food diary before they join the initiative and after Measure stock to determine what foods are being eaten and what foods are left
To improve the children's concentration levels and behaviour in class	Is there a link between eating a healthy breakfast and improved concentration and behaviour in class?	Carry out a focus group with teachers before and after the initiative starts
To increase the children's knowledge about healthy eating	How much knowledge do the children have about healthy eating?	Use questionnaires to assess knowledge levels before and after the initiative starts
To increase the number of children brushing their teeth before school	How many of the children brush their teeth every day?	Get the children to put a tick beside their name on a sheet at the sink when they have brushed their teeth



Checklist

Setting Up a School Food Initiative

Have you.....

- Carried out a needs assessment to determine needs and interest levels?
- Considered the limitations of the facilities in your school and how you might work around any such limitations?
- Established clear aims and objectives?
- Consulted the key players?
- Considered setting up a steering committee?
- Considered other organisations and people you might like to involve?
- Contacted other similar initiatives to learn from their experiences?
- Considered how you will evaluate the initiative?
- Thought about or looked into how the initiative will be funded? Do you have a definite budget to work with?
- Considered whether your service will be free to all/some children, or will there be a nominal fee for all/some children?
- Given thought to the menu options?
- Factored in the time required for preparation and cleaning?
- Thought about staffing requirements? Will staff be paid or voluntary?
- A contingency plan if commitment levels of staff fall off?
- Checked legislation and insurance requirements?
- Considered child safety and child protection issues?
- Confirmed procedures for children registering on arrival, and for accidents?
- Gained parental consent for each child's inclusion in your initiative?
- Checked the need for school crossing supervision?
- Ensured consistency between what is taught in the classroom and food provision through your initiative?
- A fair and transparent code of conduct?
- Thought about how you might provide leadership roles to the children who attend?
- Considered how you might improve the children's participation in activities such as signing and drafting a contract, voting activities and serving themselves?

Healthy School Food Policy



This section of the Guide addresses the topic of a healthy school food policy, which encourages the bringing together of all aspects of food and drink consistently and clearly throughout the school.

It is hoped that this section will be of interest to all schools. It presents very practical information on the key steps involved in developing and implementing a healthy school food policy and aims to inspire schools to take a ‘whole school approach’ to food and drink, over time. This will ensure that the healthy eating messages taught in the classroom are mirrored by good practice in terms of all the food and drink provided and consumed in the school setting.

B.1. Whole School Approach to Food and Drink

Good health and effective learning go hand-in-hand and schools have the potential to play an active part in shaping attitudes to health. The World Health Organization's Health Promoting Schools Programme looks at the whole school, including the physical, social and learning environment, the involvement of parents, the well-being of all the children and adults in the school and all the ways that health can be promoted in the school setting (see www.who.int/school_youth_health/gshi/hps/en/index.html).

Within a Health Promoting School (HPS) consistent messages about healthy eating are communicated through all aspects of school life – the classroom, the curriculum, school breaks, school lunches and physical activities. Developing a healthy school food policy is a good starting point for ensuring that a whole school approach to food and drink is taken (see Section B.1.1). From here, all types of school food initiatives (SFIs) can follow.

However, if this approach is not possible in your school, you might start by improving one aspect of food and/or drink in school and take it from there. This Guide contains chapters on different SFIs such as healthy snacks, healthy lunches and water provision to help you get started. Over time, you can look to address other aspects of eating and drinking throughout the school day. For example:

- Are children eating a healthy breakfast?
- Are children drinking enough in school?
- Are the snacks provided during extended school services healthy?
- If school meals are provided, are they healthy and is the environment in which children eat conducive to a good dining experience?
- Is there consistency between what is taught in the classroom and food and drink provision in the school?
- Are basic nutritional concepts and healthy eating messages communicated across a wide range of subjects?
- Is school sponsorship in line with a healthy school food approach?
- Has the school considered healthy vending provision where vending machines are available in the school?

B.1.1. School Food Initiatives and Healthy School Food Policy

There are many different types of SFIs, including breakfast clubs, healthier breaks, the Food Dudes Programme (FDP), water provision, school lunch provision, the EU School Milk Scheme, healthier lunchboxes and school growing projects.

The school meal and other food and drink-related activities that take place in schools are very important because they play a part in improving the health of children and in establishing longer-term eating and drinking habits and preferences, thereby setting a precedent for the future food and drink choices, health and nutritional well-being of the population. Because SFIs present excellent opportunities to influence what children are eating and drinking, they can also help to address the detrimental impact that food and drink can have on a student's learning capacity.

A school food policy encourages the bringing together of all aspects of food and drink consistently and ensures greater sustainability through planned action. When it comes to developing a school food policy, you might choose to start by developing a policy in relation to school lunches and then expand the policy to incorporate other aspects of food and drink in school over time.

B.1.2. How to Develop a Healthy School Food Policy

A school's food policy should reflect the needs of the whole school community – staff, parents and children. The reason for developing the policy will vary from one school to another. For example it may be due to concerns about the extent or effects of food marketing in the school environment, a litter problem or teachers' concerns regarding the nutritional content of the children's diet. However, the key element to success is that the guidelines are developed in a consultative manner.

Step 1: Getting Started

A school food policy working group/committee should be established. This group must be representative of the key stakeholders (see Section A.4.3). The size of the group may vary depending on numbers in the school. While it is vital that children are involved in the process from the outset, one needs to consider whether it is appropriate for them to be members of the working group, where they may be exposed to sensitive information

about individual families and children. Children can still be involved in the planning, consultation and design of a school food policy without actually sitting on the working group. If a school decides to invite children to sit at working group level, it is important that a coding system is used when referring to individual children or families within the school to ensure anonymity is maintained at all times.

Best Practice Elsewhere: School Nutrition Action Groups (Northern Ireland)

School Nutrition Action Groups (SNAGs) are school-based alliances involving staff, pupils and caterers, supported by health and education professionals. The composition of a SNAG will depend on the needs of the school and its current structures. If a school already has a school council or a health forum, the SNAG might be a sub-group of an existing structure.

Typical membership of a SNAG includes pupils, senior management, teachers, healthy schools coordinator, catering supervisor and parents. Other members could be included such as governors, community dietitian, catering area manager, school advisor/health education advisor, dental education representative, school nurse, and school premises manager.

All group members should work together to review and expand the range of food and drink available in the school in order to increase the uptake of a healthier diet and ensure consistent messages from the curriculum and food service.



Checklist

- Set up a working group meeting to outline the initiative and develop a plan of action
- Discuss and agree why you want a school food policy. What are the potential benefits? What do you hope to achieve through your policy?

Step 2: Conducting a Survey of Food and Drink in School

The purpose of this survey is to look at food and drink provision and consumption in the school, nutrition within the curriculum and extra-curricular activities. Senior cycle students could be involved in surveying and reporting on the eating habits of the other children. This survey will highlight areas that need improvement, as well as things that are working well. It will also act as a baseline against which future progress can be measured.



Checklist

- Conduct the survey and write up the results
- Decide on key areas of focus for your school
- Write aims and objectives for your policy.



Step 3: Draft Policy

In consultation with the working group, draft a policy that draws on the information gathered in the survey and that reflects the needs of the school. Consider whether there is consistency between what is taught in the classroom and what happens in practice in relation to food and drink in school. Would setting up additional services such as water provision throughout the school, a school growing project or a healthy breakfast club facilitate the success of a school food policy?

The policy should be structured as follows:

- Aim e.g. 'To ensure that all aspects of food and drink in school promote the health and well-being of pupils, staff and visitors to our school'
- Rationale i.e. state why you are writing the policy
- Objectives i.e. state what you want to achieve
- Guidelines i.e. state how the objectives will be met
- Monitoring and evaluation i.e. state how you will assess whether your objectives are being met.



Checklist

- Put the policy down on paper and review it at a working group meeting
- Allow working group members to provide constructive feedback on this draft
- Make any necessary changes so that the policy is ready for wider consultation
- Draft a questionnaire for stakeholders to provide structured feedback.

Step 4: Consultation on the Draft Policy



Checklist



- Make a list of who needs to be consulted
- Set a deadline for the consultation process
- Decide who the responses will be returned to
- Post information about the process on school notice-boards, include it in the school newsletter and/or website
- Send the policy to all stakeholders, with a feedback questionnaire
- At the end of the consultation period, collate feedback on the draft policy.

Useful tip

Children can be engaged in this process by asking a number of them to visit each class and read through the draft policy with other children. They may also set up a comments box which will give everyone an opportunity to respond to the draft policy.

Step 5: Amending the Draft Policy Following Consultation

- Review the feedback – give consideration to both positive and negative responses
- Amend the policy based on the feedback received
- Include a date on the policy so that it is clear when it was written. You can also include a date (in two years time) when the policy will be reviewed
- Acknowledge those who contributed to the policy
- Submit to the senior management team for approval
- Print the final policy when all feedback has been received.

Step 6: Disseminating and Implementing the Policy

Make sure the whole school is aware of the school food policy.

- Provide copies of the policy to all school staff
- Provide a copy to each family in the school
- Display the policy prominently in the school
- Set up a healthy eating display in the school foyer or another prominent place
- Put information about the policy in the school newsletter, and/or website and announce its introduction at year meetings, parent teacher meetings etc.
- Ask each working group member to take responsibility for a particular aspect of the school policy.

Step 7: Reviewing and Evaluating the Policy

Review the policy every two years in light of developments and changes within the school. New targets may need to be set or effort moved to new priorities and challenges. Are the objectives of the policy being met? How can you tell? How have you measured outcomes? Have there been difficulties? Why have these arisen? What have been the successes? What made these possible? What do the parents think of the policy? Is it having an effect on food and drink choice, educational attainment, attendance and behaviour?



Checklist

- Include the policy as an agenda item for staff meetings and the board of management
- Use a digital camera/camcorder to record what is being done
- Continue to give stakeholders an opportunity to feed into the policy, e.g. set up a comments box, send questionnaires out or arrange an open meeting where they can offer opinions
- Write an article for the local newspaper to document your success.



Water is the most tooth-friendly drink. Have you thought about how you can increase the number of children drinking water in your school?

To promote good oral health, aim to reduce how often children are eating and drinking sugary foods and drinks.

Remember, do not use food as a reward. Instead reward children with non-food items such as stickers, a story or art and crafts.

You could specify in the school food policy what your policy is regarding food on sports days, on tours, at celebrations etc.

Have a special focus on healthy eating on certain days during the school calendar, e.g. have a theme day such as a fresh fruit day.

Build a food pyramid with the class using food models and empty packages.

Consider bringing in examples of healthy foods to class for discussion to link in with social, personal and health education (SPHE) and other classroom activities.

Incorporate discussions about food into other subjects such as history, geography, English, Irish and Physical Education (PE).



? Want More Information

- 'Healthy Eating Guidelines – A Resource Pack for Primary Schools' Department of Health and Children, Ireland (2004) is available on our website (www.healthyfoodforall.com). This resource supports the 'food and nutrition' module of the SPHE curriculum and contains many classroom activities
- School Development Planning (Ireland) has suggested a standard template for completing a healthy eating policy: www.sdpi.ie

ReSourceS Available in Other Countries

- Food in Schools, a joint venture between the Department of Health and the Department for Education and Skills (UK), provides lots of guidance and practical resources: www.foodinschools.org
- The Health Promotion Agency (Northern Ireland) has developed a toolkit to assist school development planning for health: www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk/Work/hpschools/toolkit.htm
- Schools for Health (Europe): www.schoolsforhealth.eu/
- The Health Education Trust (UK) website contains information about Whole School Food Policies and SNAGs: www.healthedtrust.com/pages/snag.htm
- Wired for Health is a series of websites managed on behalf of the NHS and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (UK). Health information is provided that relates to the national curriculum and the Healthy Schools Programme: www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk

Case Study

B.1.3. Developing a Healthy School Food Policy

Here we feature a school in Cork which has successfully developed a whole school food policy. Refer to B.3.2 also, where we feature a project whose focus is on developing a school food policy in relation to lunchbox content.

Case Study: Scoil an Spioraid Naoimh, Bishopstown, Co. Cork

Scoil an Spioraid Naoimh National School, Bishopstown became a Health Promoting School (HPS) in 2002. As part of its development as a HPS, the whole school community (staff, parents and students) was consulted to identify the health-related issues of most concern. The results of this consultation were used to develop a written plan of action that took a whole school approach to all aspects of health. One of the main areas identified in the action plan was nutrition.

Development of a Whole School Nutrition Policy

A whole school nutrition policy was developed following consultation with all members of the school community. This nutrition policy looks at healthy eating within the school, giving recommendations to children and parents based on the food pyramid. It is reviewed every couple of years to ensure that it remains up to date. The nutrition policy has looked beyond encouraging healthy lunches, to incorporate the development of a school garden, food safety and hygiene, education on nutrition and waste disposal/composting.

In the classroom, through the SPHE curriculum, children are educated on nutrition and encouraged to eat healthy and nutritious foods. Linking in with the development of the nutrition policy, a school garden has been created. The garden is divided into lots with each class having responsibility for a specific lot. The children have planted spring bulbs and vegetables as well as an apple tree, a blueberry bush and strawberries in pots. Here, the children gain first-hand knowledge of growing and cultivating nutritious foods,

ensuring that what they learn in the classroom is further reinforced by what they can see growing in the garden.

Composting is also performed in the school. Pupils collect peelings and skins daily from all the classes in the school and use them to make compost for the garden and to allow new growth. The school grounds are inspected by pupils on a daily basis for litter and every pupil is encouraged to pick up their litter to maintain a clean and healthy school environment. Emphasis is placed in every class on good hygiene practices such as hand-washing after using the bathroom and before meals.

Scoil an Spioraid Naoimh also encourages and facilitates participation in regular physical activity, with sports such as swimming, GAA, tennis, athletics and cooperative games which are built into the school day. To reinforce the healthy messages, each year the school is involved in Happy Heart Week which promotes all aspects of physical and mental health within the school.

The school continues to strengthen its capacity as a HPS and its HPS Committee is constantly looking at new ways to develop as a healthy setting for living, learning and working.

Want More Information ?

Contact: Mary Tobin, HPS Coordinator, Scoil an Spioraid Naoimh, Curraheen Road, Bishopstown, Co. Cork.

Tel: +353 (0)21 454 3305. Email: spnaoimhc.ias@eircom.net

B.2. Healthier Snacks

Childhood is a time of rapid growth and development. Good nutrition during this time is important as it impacts on children's general and oral health now and in the future. Children need a balanced diet based on a variety of nutrient-rich foods and may need to eat more frequently than adults to meet their nutritional requirements. By encouraging healthier snacks and drinks between meals, we can promote better health for our children. Refer to Section A.3.5 for more information on healthy snacks.

B.2.1 Food Dudes Programme

The Food Dudes Programme (FDP) is funded in Ireland by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (DAFF) and managed by Bord Bia. The programme was originally designed by the Food & Activity Research Unit, Bangor University, Wales.

In Ireland, the FDP is being rolled out on a national basis to all primary schools. Schools are contacted in clusters of 12 to 15 schools, on a phased basis. Participation in the programme is voluntary.

Large-scale studies in schools in England and Wales and pilot studies in schools in Ireland have shown the FDP to be effective. The results have been long-lasting across the primary age range, regardless of gender, school size, location and socio-economic factors.

The Programme

The FDP aims to positively change children's behaviour with regard to consumption of fruit and vegetables, both in school and at home. Based on positive role models (the Food Dudes characters), repeated tasting and rewards, it is designed to increase children's consumption and enjoyment of a healthy diet, and to create a healthy eating culture within schools.

The Food Dudes are four young super-heroes: Charlie, Tom, Raz and Rocco. By eating fruit and vegetables, the Food Dudes gain special powers that enable them to save the world and the Life Force from a gang of baddies: the Junk Punks. General Junk and his sidekicks, Miss Demeanour and Master Disaster, are trying to drain the energy of the world by depriving it of nutritious fruit and veg. With the special powers

given to them by carrots, tomatoes, raspberries and broccoli, the Food Dudes feed the Life Force and foil the Junk Punks.

There are two main phases to the programme:

- **Phase 1** is an intensive intervention over 16 days. During this time, the children are given fruit and vegetables while they read a letter and/or watch a specially designed video of the Food Dudes. Each day the children are rewarded with small prizes for successfully eating the fruit and veg. This phase is primarily school based, although the children keep a diary of fruit and veg they have eaten at home.
- **Phase 2** extends the home element of the FDP by encouraging the children to bring their own fruit and veg to school everyday in special Food Dudes containers. Classroom wallcharts are used to record progress, and the children receive Food Dudes certificates and further rewards upon reaching their goals. This phase maintains fruit and veg consumption in the longer term.

Curriculum Links

The FDP can generate a huge amount of enthusiasm in schools, which can be harnessed to engage the children in work in many other curriculum areas. The Food Dudes characters are a useful stimulus to fire the children's interest and imagination in order to achieve other educational and curriculum aims.

How To Get Involved

The FDP contacts schools within a cluster on a phased basis. Once a school principal gives the go-ahead, the school nominates one or two teachers as Food Dudes school coordinators. These coordinators then attend in-service training delivered by regional project managers (employed by Real Event Solutions), who will also be available to support the school throughout the implementation of the programme.

Want More ? Information

Check out the website www.fooddudes.ie.
If you would like to be considered for the FDP, please email fooddudes@realevents.ie or call +353 (0)1 522 4800.

For Dental Health programmes in schools, check out the Dental Health Foundation website at www.dentalhealth.ie.

Case Study

B.2.2 Healthier Snacks

Case Study: The Fresh Fruit in Schools Project, HSE Dublin North-East Area

Schools offer a most important opportunity for educating children on nutritional issues and facilitating and encouraging healthy eating patterns alongside the development of academic and social skills. As a result, the Health Promotion Department, including the community dietitians, in the HSE Dublin North-East Area decided to run a pilot scheme in a number of designated disadvantaged primary schools in the region. It was to be similar to the Fresh Fruit in Schools Project which had been run in Northern Ireland.

Aims of the Scheme

- To provide access to fruit for all pupils within the selected schools
- To encourage children to develop the habit of eating fruit
- To encourage children to adopt and sustain healthy eating patterns in school, at home and in the community.

How the Scheme Operated

Fourteen designated disadvantaged primary schools were invited to participate in the project. Each school was sent the following:

- An explanatory letter regarding the project for the principal
- A parent information leaflet explaining the project
- A parent questionnaire looking at baseline fruit and vegetable consumption in the home. Attached to this questionnaire was a consent form which parents were requested to complete to allow their child to participate in the project.

All 14 schools agreed to participate in the project. It was arranged that the project would operate for four weeks prior and six weeks after the Christmas break 2006/7. A fruit and vegetable supplier was secured who was able to supply fruit to each of the 14 schools across the region and delivery dates and times were agreed locally.

Evaluation

At the end of the ten-week pilot period, an evaluation was carried out using questionnaires completed by the school principal, teachers, parents and pupils in each school.

Discussion

Based on the findings from the evaluation questionnaires, the pilot project was very well received. Although the scheme placed additional demands on staff time, these demands were deemed to be reasonable. Teachers reported better dietary intakes as a result of the fruit provided, and the effect of peer influences was positive with children trying fruit in the classroom who would not normally have taken fruit. The scheme also appeared to have helped to improve behaviour and concentration levels in the classroom. Some parents reported an improved intake of fruit, both at school and at home, amongst the whole family. Principals, teachers and parents all reported that they would like to see the scheme continue.

The fact that all children in the selected schools received fruit would have enhanced the success of the scheme as research indicates that peers now have a stronger influence on children's eating habits than family, so children may be particularly motivated to eat fruit at school when it is a group activity.

Conclusions

Given the positive response obtained in the evaluation, it is recommended that a more proactive and sustained commitment encompassing all schools be established and implemented in the area. In the meantime, the experience gained in this pilot scheme can be harnessed and replicated. Its learning outcomes include encouraging teachers to take a lead role, using classroom activities to emphasise the benefits of fruit, involving peers and older children, engaging parents and aligning the programme to national campaigns and programmes.

Want More Information ?

Contact: Dr Nazih Eldin, Head of Health Promotion, HSE Dublin
North-East, Railway Street, Navan, Co. Meath.
Tel: +353 (0)46 907 6400

B.3. Healthier Lunchboxes

Information on what constitutes a healthy lunch can be found in the Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Primary Schools (DOHC 2003) and the food pyramid model. See Section A.2.1 of this Guide.

B.3.1. How to Improve Lunchbox Content in Your School

Section B.1.2 discusses how to develop a healthy school food policy. You could use this approach to develop a school policy in relation to school lunches. A positive attitude to food should be encouraged. Children should enjoy their food. It is important to communicate the message that all foods have a place in a balanced diet. When developing a school food policy in relation to school lunches, it is important to focus on the positive as much as possible as opposed to having a policy which has a more negative focus and becomes a list of things the children cannot have.

Some schools have ‘treat’ days as part of their school policies. However, using the word ‘treat’ in relation to foods such as biscuits, cakes, chocolate and crisps reinforces the idea that foods are either good or bad, i.e. eat the ‘good’ foods on Monday through to Thursday and on Friday you get to have a ‘treat’ day. This approach could give children the message that lunch time on Monday to Thursday is a chore that has to be suffered through to get their ‘treat’ day on Friday. It is preferable to promote the idea that fruit, vegetables, breads and yoghurts are foods to be enjoyed, full stop.

What Should a Healthy Lunchbox Include?

The following checklist summarises the recommendations from the Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Primary Schools (DOHC 2003). It is advised that children have something from each of the main food groups in their lunchbox and a drink, ensuring a balance of nutrients. Bright and colourful foods with different tastes and textures should be included.



Checklist

A healthy lunchbox should contain the following items:

- A portion of starchy food, e.g. wholegrain bap, thick-sliced wholemeal bread, bagels, rolls, pitta pocket, pasta or rice
- Fruit and vegetables, e.g. an apple, grapes, a mandarin orange, a banana, a pear, carrot sticks, pepper sticks, a small box of raisins or a fruit salad
- A portion of low-fat milk or dairy food, e.g. individual cheese portion, a yoghurt or a drinking yoghurt
- A portion of lean meat, fish or alternative, e.g. ham, chicken, tuna, egg or hummus
- A drink, e.g. unsweetened fruit juice, low-fat milk or water.

Storing Healthier Lunchboxes at School

How lunchboxes are stored, and specifically whether they can be kept cool, can influence the type of foods included. Sandwich fillings such as egg, cheese and tomatoes are sometimes not included as there is concern amongst parents that the ingredients will become 'smelly', soggy and off-putting to their child at lunch time.

safe food advises that ideally, lunches containing perishable food should be stored in a fridge when children get to school. Perishable foods include sandwiches containing meat or cheese or other foods that require refrigeration and these foods should be kept as cold as possible until lunch. Help keep lunches cool by encouraging parents to follow this advice:

- If there is a fridge at school, an insulated box or bag can be used to help keep lunches cool until lunchtime
- A small ice pack can also be used to keep food cold until lunch. Include a frozen juice box as a refreshing alternative to an ice pack
- Discard any perishable food that hasn't been eaten at the end of the day - an ice pack cannot maintain cool enough temperatures in the lunch box for an entire school day
- It is important that lunches are not kept in a warm place such as near radiators or in direct sunlight.

Think about:
Promoting lunchbox safety tips

Useful tips

Schools can pass on tips to parents as part of their school food policy. For example:

- Make and refrigerate the lunch the night before as this helps to reduce the stress and rush in the morning
- Avoid packing warm food in a lunchbox
- Use a Thermos to keep cold food cold and hot food hot (rinse the flask in boiling water before placing the hot food inside)
- Keep different types of foods separate by using cling film or clean disposable bags or boxes. Make sure you only use the cling film once.
- If using leftovers, make sure the foods were fully cooked the first time and that leftovers were cooled as quickly as possible. Portion food into smaller containers to help foods cool quickly and place them in the fridge within two hours of cooking. When handling or storing leftovers, make sure to use clean utensils and containers. Leftovers should be used within 3 days and only reheated once.
- Remember to wash fruit and vegetables under running water before packing them into lunches
- Wash reusable water bottles and lids every day in warm soapy water, as well as encourage children to wash their hands before touching the bottles
- Wash the lunchbox in warm soapy water and allow to air dry after use



See www.safefood.eu for more information

Case Study

B.3.2 Healthy School Lunch Policy

Case Study: ‘Pack a Punch – Eat a Healthy School Lunch’, HSE Dublin Mid-Leinster Area

This initiative was set up by the Midlands Schools Health Project. It commenced in 2001 and facilitates primary schools to set up their own healthy lunch policies. It was evaluated after the first year to measure the impact of the initiative. Since then, the initiative has evolved and in 2005 it was evaluated again to measure its longer-term impact.

Getting Started

An initial meeting was set up with each school’s principal and staff. This was followed by a parents’ evening to discuss nutrition and the specifics of the initiative. This approach was a good way of identifying interest levels in the initiative and also of recruiting parent representatives to the working group. Other members of the working group included the principal, at least two sixth-class students, a member of the board of management and HSE representatives.

Working Group

The role of the working group was to guide the creation of a school lunch policy, looking at the current situation in the school and the needs of pupils, parents and teachers. The group also guided the implementation of the policy, through consultation with teachers, parents and pupils. HSE staff acted as a resource for schools when the need was expressed. Sixth-class pupils acted as health promoters in the school. See Section B.1.2 for more information on developing a school food policy.

Lunch Audit

A lunch audit was carried out on a sample of lunches in each school before the initiative commenced, after year one and again in year four of the initiative. This audit/re-audit approach allowed comparison before and after the school lunch policy was in place. The initiative resulted in a measurable improvement in lunch box content both after year one of the initiative and again in year four.

Positive Outcomes

- Creating greater awareness of healthy eating
- Reduction in litter and waste
- Building good eating habits for a lifetime
- Children are less hyperactive
- Children were not comparing school lunches
- Children have fewer fights with parents regarding snacks.

Recommendations for Future Development

All of the participants recommended more professional involvement in the initiative. Many stated that more help from the dietitian was needed to educate parents, especially with regard to new products on the market.

Future Plans

The Community Nutrition and Dietetic Service (CNDS) in the HSE Dublin Mid-Leinster Area, through community partnerships, has developed a peer-led initiative – the Food and Health Project. Members of the community are trained to become ‘Food and Health’ instructors (FHIs), who in turn facilitate food and nutrition courses in the community. The CNDS is exploring the possibility of training FHIs further to provide the external support requested by schools in the phase two evaluation. It has carried out a viability study to examine this and is currently training two FHIs in the Westmeath area who will work with six schools in that area as a pilot project.

Want More Information ?

- The 'Pack a Punch – Eat a Healthy Lunch' evaluation reports provide detail regarding the factors that supported and impeded the process as well as the experiences of those involved. For more information, contact the Community Nutrition and Dietetic Service, HSE Dublin Mid-Leinster, Marlinstown Office Park, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath. Tel: +353 (0)44 935 3220. Email: community.dietitians@hse.ie
- The 'Munch and Crunch' is a similar programme in the HSE South Region and has also been formally evaluated. For more information, contact the Community Nutrition and Dietetic Service, HSE South, Health Promotion Department, Dean Street, Kilkenny. Tel: +353 (0)56 776 1400
- Slowfood Ireland and Eurotoques have joined together to develop a project aimed at improving children's awareness of food and taste. The programme is called C.H.E.W. (Children's Healthy Eating Workshops). The project includes aspects of planting, tasting, smoothy making and healthy lunchbox preparation. For more information on this project contact Michelle Darmody. Tel: +353 (0) 1 4789394. Email: michelledarmody@gmail.com. Further information on both organisations can be found on www.eurotoquesirl.org and www.slowfood.com
- Check out the **safefood** website – www.safefood.eu – for lots of ideas on healthier lunchboxes
- Check out the Dental Health Foundation website www.dentalhealth.ie

B.4. Water in School

It is recommended that everyone should drink about 1.5 to 2 litres (6 to 8 cups) of fluid per day. The recommended intake rises with increasing body size and levels of physical activity and if the weather is warm. The sensation of thirst is not triggered until we are already dehydrated, so it is important to drink before you feel thirsty.

From an oral health point of view, fluoridated (tap) water is best for teeth as fluoride has been shown to be associated with less dental decay than bottled water. However, this depends on whether tap water is available in the school. It is more advisable to drink water, bottled or tap, than fizzy drinks.

Providing water and promoting water consumption can:

- Offer a plentiful source of low-cost refreshment throughout the day
- Encourage good oral health as well as general health benefits and well-being amongst pupils and staff
- Reduce tiredness, irritability and distraction from thirst
- Increase pupils' concentration during the day.

For information on other suitable drinks that could be consumed during the school day refer to Section A.2.1.

B.4.1. Step-by-Step Plan for Providing Water at School

How much water pupils drink at school depends on the type, location, number, attractiveness, palatability and accessibility of drinking facilities. There is no one approach that suits all schools. More than one type of facility may work best in your school.

Checklists for Schools Regarding Water Provision

The following series of checklists will assist you in improving water provision for the children in your school. This information has been adapted from the 'Water is Cool in School' campaign in the UK (www.wateriscoolinschool.org.uk).



✓ Checklist

School Culture

- Are pupils, parents, staff and Board of Management aware of the importance of drinking water regularly throughout the day?
- Are staff who teach PE made aware of the importance of hydration before, during and after exercise?
- Is drinking tap water consumption actively encouraged at all times?
- Is drinking water consumed regularly?
- Where is the policy of encouraging water consumption promoted? (For example school prospectus, website, notice-board, posters, guidance for new/supply staff, newsletters to parents)
- Are pupils aware of the oral benefits of drinking tap water regularly?
- Have you linked drinking water to the curriculum?
- Do you have a written water policy?
- Does practice mirror written/unwritten policy? (Check with pupils)
- Do all teachers support the policy?
- Are staff encouraged to lead by example and drink water in front of pupils?
- Have you consulted and involved pupils from the outset? (For example about where and how water will be provided.)
- Have pupils been made aware of the economic and public health benefits of providing mains supplied water?

✓ Checklist

During Lessons

- Are pupils actively encouraged to drink water during class?
- Are bottles of water allowed on desks?
- What happens if a pupil forgets or loses his/her water bottle?
- If the school does not allow water bottles in class, are all the children encouraged to go and get a drink, more than once if necessary, over the course of a lesson/afternoon?

✓ Checklist

Water Bottles

- Are bottles washed and refilled daily?
- If bottles are not washed at school, are parents regularly advised as to the correct washing and filling procedures?
- Are safety procedures in place to keep bottles away from electrical equipment and science laboratories?
- Are bottles named?





Checklist



Water Provision (If available)

- Is drinking water free of charge at all times?
- Are there adequate numbers of water outlets for the number of pupils?
- Is drinking water available from a number of outlets around the school?
- Do pupils have access to water at all times?
- Is water also freely available outside of the standard school day? (For example during breakfast clubs, extra-curricular activities and school trips)
- Are water outlets (including taps and fountains) appropriately sited?
- Is drinking water accessible to all users, including pupils with special needs or disabilities?
- Are water dispensers (e.g. water coolers) modern and attractive?
- Are water supplies fed from the mains and not storage tanks? Have you checked this with a qualified body (e.g. regional water supplier)?
- Are all water outlets included in monitoring, maintenance and cleaning regimes?
- Has using water from a mains supply been considered based on the benefits from an oral point of view?



Checklist

Modern Water Facilities (e.g. mains-supplied water coolers, modern chilled fountains with a swan neck)

- Are these water facilities accessible to all pupils at all times?
- Are drinking vessels provided for all pupils?
- If using bottled water coolers, are bottles changed promptly?
- If using filters, are these changed regularly?
- Could bottled coolers be changed to mains-supplied water?
- Could coolers be connected to mains drains?
- Are dispensers serviced and sanitised before the beginning of each term?



Checklist

Tap Water (If available)

- Are the taps used for drinking water only?
- Are the taps clearly and correctly labelled as drinking water?
- Are drinking vessels provided for all pupils? If non-disposable, are they washed after each use in hot, soapy water and rinsed?
- Are sinks kept clean and empty?



Checklist

Traditional Drinking Fountains (If available)

- Are the fountains easy for a child to operate and drink from?
- Is the water jet high enough?
- Can children drink without having to suck on or touch the metal spout with their lips?
- Are there sufficient fountains (minimum one per 30 pupils)?
- Are there additional drinking sources throughout the school day? Even at a 1:30 ratio, these fountains do not provide an adequate daily intake of water if drunk from directly
- What arrangements are made after exercise and during hot weather to provide additional drinks? If drunk from directly, these fountains do not suffice.



Checklist

The toilets

- Can pupils go to the toilet whenever they need to?
- Are the toilets user friendly, i.e. clean, welcoming, well maintained and stocked, private and safe?

Case Study

B.4.2 Water Provision in School

Case Study: Stay Cool in School (Northern Ireland)

In September 2003, the Dental Directorate of the Eastern Health and Social Services Board (EHSSB), in partnership with the Health Promoting Schools Programme, Belfast Education and Library Board and South Eastern Education and Library Board initiated a multi-disciplinary pilot project entitled Stay Cool in School. The project is designed to promote improved access to fresh drinking water within the school setting and to improve the oral and general health of children and adults. A total of 22 schools, including nursery, primary, special and post-primary schools, were involved in the pilot project.

The Pilot Project

The pilot project encouraged pupils and staff to bring a bottle of fresh water to school each day and permitted them to keep bottles on their desks to allow easy access to a regular intake of water. Schools were supplied with a point-of-use water cooler (installed and serviced for one year) and durable, clear plastic, sports cap bottles for pupils and staff. Other resources included a poster, parental information leaflet, health and safety guidelines and a fridge magnet. Funding for the pilot was provided by the EHSSB.

Criteria for Inclusion

The pilot project was open to schools participating in the Health Promoting Schools Programme (now Extended Schools Programme), which were linked to areas of social deprivation.

Update

Following evaluation of the pilot, Stay Cool in School has continued to grow. A total of 69 schools are involved, with funding for point-of-use water coolers and bottles being provided at various stages by a range of partners. Supporting resources (poster, parental information leaflet, health and safety guidelines) continue to be provided and funded by the EHSSB on a yearly basis or upon request.

Points to Consider

The amount of preparatory work required prior to the installation of water coolers, and the resulting costs, will vary from school to school. It is therefore vital that the relevant department (e.g. extended school coordinator, finance, purchasing, maintenance) of the education and library board (ELB) is represented and involved from the outset. If these extra costs are not considered and included in any bid for funding then there will most likely be a financial shortfall.

Suggested ELB Process

- Identify a batch of schools that are to have the cooler installed
- Issue a tender through the ELB purchasing department (check if one already exists) and identify successful contractor
- The successful contractor visits individual schools and assesses installation requirements such as additional plumbing, electrical and health and safety work
- ELB maintenance department works with the contractor to ensure all proposed additional work complies with health and safety and building regulations
- Notify each school of the final cost
- Install water coolers
- Ensure external funding received is allocated to the relevant budget (this may not apply if extended school funding is to be used) and used to pay the contractor
- Notify schools of maintenance charges beyond year one.

Sustainability

It is essential to note that, beyond the initial investment, individual schools will be responsible for the future maintenance costs of the water cooler and any purchase of water bottles.

Want More Information ?

- For more information on the Stay Cool in School scheme, contact: Gail Kerr or Kathy Salmon, Oral Health Promotion Facilitators. Tel: +44 (0) 28 9055 3778/9.
- Irene Thompson, Community Dietitian, was involved in running a Water is Cool in School project in her area.
Tel: +44 (0) 28 3752 2381.
Email: schools.dietetics@southerntrust.hscni.net
- Charlotte Johnston, Senior Community Dietitian was also involved in a Water in School project. Contact: Community Nutrition and Dietetic Service, Marlinstown Office Park, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath. Tel: +353 (0)44 935 3220.
Email: charlotte.johnston@mailq.hse.ie
- The Food in Schools website includes a detailed toolkit on water provision in schools: www.foodinschools.org.uk
- Check out www.wateriscoolinschool.org.uk.
- Check out the Dental Health Foundation website www.dentalhealth.ie

B.5. School Growing Projects

B.5.1. School Food Gardens

Food growing projects create educational, recreational and therapeutic opportunities for school children. A school growing club:

- Contributes to children's knowledge of healthier eating
- Offers children the chance to experience growing food and to understand where food comes from
- Provides an opportunity to involve parents and strengthen home-school links
- Boosts the confidence of the children who take part.

(Food in Schools Toolkit, 2007)

The health benefits of school gardens include promoting physical activity through regular exercise and promoting mental health through creative achievement.

B.5.2. Setting Up a School Food Garden

This particular toolkit outlines a more ambitious SFI.

However, as with all the SFIs discussed in this Guide, you can start small.

In relation to

school growing projects, you could begin by growing herbs in pots or having a few flowerbeds or indeed use the potato seeds to try your hand at potato growing.

You could combine this with regular 'clean up the environment' days or have an annual bulb planting day. From there, you can progress to the next phase.





Checklist

- Clarify expectations right from the start – groups and schools involved need to be aware of the time and effort required to establish a food garden. Some expectations might be unrealistic, e.g. the amount of help offered from the organisers, or a very expensive garden design
- Get full commitment from a key person within the group you work with, e.g. the school principal, teacher in charge or playgroup leader, to ensure that the garden development remains a priority throughout the year
- Start small – a few raised beds are all that you need – you want to create success and enthusiasm, not a massive garden that soon becomes too much for the group to maintain
- Make sure your garden plans are based on a specific site. You will be able to work with most sites, but make sure you consider restrictive factors such as soil quality, sun and shade, water logging, wind corridors or steep banks
- Keep the school or group involved right from the planning stage through to the purchasing of tools and materials, selection of plants and seeds and assessment of training needs. This will ensure the group's ownership of the garden – and ultimately decide the initiative's success
- Provide plenty of hands-on training – do not assume that children or adults involved already know how to sow, seed, transplant or weed. Training should be on site, be tailored to the needs of participants and cover all aspects of garden development
- Get expertise from other organisations such as the the Organic Centre in Co. Leitrim: www.organiccentre.ie. or Agri Aware www.agriaware.ie



Setting a Timetable

School growing initiatives often have a strong environmental education component. South Tyrone's Community and Schools Food Gardens Project (see case study pp.88-90) offered an intensive support programme to participants that included practical workshops, training sessions and visits to other gardens. While year one focused on the set-up of gardens and skills development of participants, year two aimed to establish a growing routine, ultimately leading to project sustainability.

When setting up a similar initiative you may want to devise a timetable. For example:



Stage 1: Planning (Early Autumn)

- Expectations' meeting with teachers/group leaders
- Introductory sessions (purpose of initiative, environmental gardening)
- Planning sessions (What do we want to grow?)
- General site preparations and mapping
- Purchasing of materials, tools etc.

AUTUMN

Stage 2: Establishing Gardens (Autumn/Winter)

- Putting structures in place (e.g. raised beds, compost, cold frames, paths)
- Environmental elements (e.g. willow sculptures, hedge planting)
- Seed ordering.

Stage 3: Main Growing Season (Spring–Autumn)

- Ground preparation
- Practical training (e.g. seed sowing, transplanting, crop rotation)
- Weed control
- Specialist training sessions (e.g. composting, organic pest control)
- Harvest/cooking sessions.

Stage 4: Evaluation and Plans for Year Two (Late Autumn/Winter)

- Evaluation
- Project planning for year two
- Planting of fruit trees and bushes
- Future crop planting and seed ordering.

winter





Crop Rotation

To minimise the problem of soil-borne pests and diseases, organic growers use a system of crop rotation. Vegetables are grouped according to their families and rotated around the plot, which means the same kind of plants only return to the same place after several years.

Know the Vegetable Families

Family	Members
Cabbage family (Brassicaceae)	Broccoli, brussels sprout, cabbage, cauliflower, kale, kohlrabi, radish, swede, turnip
Carrot (root) family (Umbelliferae)	Carrot, celeriac, celery, fennel, parsnip
Onion family (Alliaceae)	Garlic, leek, onion, shallot
Pea and bean family (Leguminosae)	Broad bean, french bean, pea, runner bean
Potato family (Solanaceae)	Aubergine, pepper, potato, tomato
Other	Corn, courgette, cucumber, lettuce (daisy family), melon, pumpkin (marrow family), spinach, swiss chard



Checklist

When working in the garden, make sure everyone is aware of the risks involved:

- Use tools with care – demonstrate proper handling of tools before every gardening session
- Children and others need to be made aware that some plants are poisonous and must not be eaten. It might be wise to avoid planting certain poisonous plants especially when working with pre-school children. Poisonous flowers include autumn crocus, lupins, lily of the valley, lobelia, foxglove, jasmine, and many spring bulbs such as daffodils. Some parts of vegetable plants may also be toxic such as uncooked potato tubers and their foliage or rhubarb leaves and their uncooked stems
- Avoid use of treated wood for raised beds as the toxins will leach into the soil where you want to grow your vegetables – frames made from recycled plastic may be an alternative.

Case Study

B.5.3 School Growing Projects

Case Study: The Community and Schools Food Gardens Project, South Tyrone (Northern Ireland)

The Community and Schools Food Gardens Project was led by Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council in partnership with the Armagh and Dungannon Health Action Zone and the South Tyrone Area Partnership (STAP) Local Strategy Partnership. It was an innovative partnership project funded under the European PEACE II Programme to provide a practical solution to the problem of food poverty in the area and to increase local production, consumption and knowledge of healthy, sustainable food.

The participating schools and groups included Howard Primary School, Moygashel; Aughnacloy Primary School; St Joseph's College, Coalisland; An Tearmann Early Years Project; Breakthru Dungannon/Laghey Primary School, Killyman; Parkanaur College, Dungannon. High quality 'in-kind' support was provided by Greenmount Campus, College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (Northern Ireland) in the form of educational inputs and an organic advisory service for the groups involved.

Phase 1

The first phase of the pilot project provided the necessary tools, materials, seeds and plants as well as training and guidance to a number of local schools and groups to support the development of six community/school-led, organic vegetable and fruit gardens in south Tyrone. Through the garden development, children and adults addressed a range of issues such as

sustainable consumption, environmentally friendly food production, self-reliance, food poverty, local regeneration, social interaction and skills development.



HOW DOES
YOUR GARDEN
GROW

Phase 2

A second phase supported by additional PEACE II funding granted through South Tyrone Area Partnership allowed the project to enhance a number of elements, namely orchard development, greenhouse growing and the planting and use of willow.

The Gardens

The six gardens are all based on environmentally friendly production methods, community ownership and partnership working. All the gardens comprise a vegetable area, in most cases based on several raised beds, and a fruit area as well as wildlife elements such as native hedgerows, willow domes, planting of native trees, setting up of bird nesting boxes or sowing of native wildflowers to attract beneficial insects.

What Did They Grow?

Over both growing seasons all of the six groups managed to produce, harvest and eat a variety of different vegetables and fruit that in many cases were new to the children involved. The impressive harvest ranged from potatoes, carrots, parsnips, beans, peas, courgettes, tomatoes, peppers, lettuce, radish, cabbages, beetroot, onions, garlic, turnips, spinach and cucumbers, over various herbs, to strawberries, raspberries, red and black currants and even some melons! Some groups also grew edible flowers such as sunflowers, pot marigolds or nasturtiums, which can be added to salads.

Achievements

- Establishment of six community/school-led, organic, fruit and vegetable gardens in south Tyrone
- Active participation of more than 200 children and over 20 adults
- High participation rate in individually tailored support programmes
- Successful production of a variety of locally grown, healthy fruits and vegetables
- Increased levels of practical horticultural skills, environmental awareness and learning in the areas of science, health, organic growing and social skills
- High degree of enthusiasm among participants.



Want More Information ?

- The Schools Food Gardens Project ceased in September 2006 when its funding came to an end. For further information contact: Armagh and Dungannon Health Action Zone, 26 Dungannon Street, Moy, Co. Tyrone BT71 7SH.
Tel: +44 (0) 28 8778 9531
- The Organic Centre in Rossinver, Co. Leitrim details some of the work it has initiated with schools in the local area on its website: www.theorganiccentre.ie
- www.foodinschools.org has a toolkit on school growing projects
- Other useful websites to check out for ideas on setting up a garden see:
www.antisce.org
www.bbc.co.uk/gardening
www.cultivate.ie
www.gardeningabout.com
www.garden.org
www.gardenorganic.org.uk
www.gardenweb.com
www.ipcc.ie
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GROW



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