



# **Nutrition & Healthy Snacks Guideline**

## **Peel Infant-Parent Program (EarlyON Child and Family Centres)**

**January 2024**

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## Purpose

This guideline provides key information about providing healthy snacks for the Peel Infant-Parent Programs (“PIPP”) delivered at select EarlyON Child and Family Centres (“EarlyON Centres”). This guideline is only for the PIPP program and should not be used in other programs or services offered at EarlyON Centres.

## Background

PIPP is an intensive therapeutic program for parents that wish to enhance their relationship with their infant or young toddler. PIPP is a customized program at select EarlyON centres. PIPP is co-delivered in partnership with EveryMind Mental Health Services and two EarlyON providers - Family Day Care Services (Family Day) and Child Development Resource Connection Peel (CDRCP). The goal of the program is to strengthen the social and emotional well-being of families with identified relationship concerns.

PIPP provides a supportive space for families to access nutritional foods, while also increasing the opportunities for PIPP staff to observe parent/caregiver and child interactions and provide real-time modeling/coaching. This is an important component of the PIPP model. Evidence supports that early childhood eating behaviours are heavily influenced by parents and caregivers. They are learned through early experiences with food and eating. Food and nutrition support and resources provided in early learning environments strengthen parent and caregiver knowledge and affect their choices for themselves and their families. The evidence around nutrition and healthy eating environments tells us that good nutrition is vital to our health, especially for active, growing children. Good role modelling supports healthy eating habits.

Parents and caregivers who have questions about nutrition should be redirected to reliable sources. This includes sources in Appendix A: Credible Sources for Food and Nutrition Resources.

## Nutrition Guidelines

All EarlyON Centres providing a healthy snack component for PIPP should meet the guidance that aligns with the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services’ [Student Nutrition Program, Nutrition Guidelines 2020](#). This includes food and beverage choice tables, food and nutrition information, and food safety. Note: Section 8: Guideline for accepting food donations does not apply to EarlyON and PIPP as the programs do not accept donated foods.

## Healthy Snack Considerations

- EarlyON providers should use the trusted resources below to guide the provision of healthy snacks.
  - Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services' [Student Nutrition Program, Nutrition Guidelines 2020](#)
  - Canada's Food Guide can be accessed at [food-guide.canada.ca/en/](http://food-guide.canada.ca/en/)
  - You can find more information on food premises at [peelregion.ca/health/protecting/food/](http://peelregion.ca/health/protecting/food/)
- Healthy snacks should be nut free - and sensitive to known allergies in the environment. Note: Allergies are explored as part of the PIPP assessment.
- Healthy snacks should be culturally appropriate: An individual's ethnic, cultural and/or religious background has an impact on their food choices and eating practices. Effort should be made to reflect the diversity of the Peel community and PIPP clients, while also meeting guidelines.
- Include food items with little to no added salt, sugars or saturated fat should be given preference.
- Serve water and/or milk instead of juices with high sugar.
- Refer to Appendix B for a sample list of food and drink items that you can offer as healthy snacks. This is not a complete; it includes a sample of items.

## Food Service

EarlyON Centre facilities that offer healthy snacks as part of PIPP, will only serve pre-packaged non-hazardous foods and low risk food service.

- **Low risk food** means food that is not potentially hazardous and does not require time and temperature controls. Examples include:
  - Non-hazardous baked products purchased from an approved source and handled or distributed on site, such as bagels or English muffins.
  - Whole fruits and vegetables that could be cut up on site, following food safety practices to clean and sanitize utensils after use.
- **Pre-packaged food** is food that is packaged at a location other than the location where it is sold.
- **Ready-to-eat food** is food with no additional processing before it is eaten. Examples include:
  - All foods individually portioned pre-packaged such as granola bars, yogurt, fruit cup, pre-packaged cereal
  - Frozen heat and serve products (non-hazardous foods)
  - Drinks served in original single-portioned containers such as milk cartons

## Food Safety

The following food safety guidance aligns with the Ministry of Health regulations for food premises serving low risk and pre-packaged ready to eat food.

### General Practices

- All food locations and equipment must be kept in a sanitary condition and in good repair at all times.
- All food products prepared and served must be from an approved, inspected premise.
- All food products must be stored and transported, to protect the food from contamination and adulteration.

### Dishwashing

- Clean and sanitize utensils after use. This may be conducted using a domestic dishwasher or by using a two-sink or three-sink method. If an adequate number of sinks are not available, it is recommended to wash and rinse utensils in a separate sink from handwashing or ensure the sink is thoroughly cleaned and sanitized before washing dishes. Use a second or third sink to carry out the sanitizing step. However, if not readily available, substituting the second or third sink with a dishwashing container or bin may be used to complete the sanitizing step.

### Refrigeration

- Refrigeration facilities must be adequate in size and maintained at the appropriate temperature (fridge at 4°C or lower and freezer at -18°C or lower).
- Each refrigerated compartment must be equipped with an accurate indicating thermometer.

## Appendix A: Credible Sources for Food and Nutrition Resources

### Peel Public Health Resources:

- **Peel Public Health Unit:** (905) 799-7700 | Caledon 905-584-2216
- Children and parenting: Services and resources for families with children [peelregion.ca/children-parenting](https://peelregion.ca/children-parenting)
- Food safety information: [peelregion.ca/health/protecting/food/](https://peelregion.ca/health/protecting/food/)
- For safe food handling tips visit: [canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/food-nutrition/food-safety/safe-food-handling-tips.html](https://canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/food-nutrition/food-safety/safe-food-handling-tips.html)

### Other Credible Sources:

- **Canada's Food Guide:** [food-guide.canada.ca/en/](https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/). Provides resources, including snapshots in 26 languages.
- **Student Nutrition Program Guidelines** (2020, Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services): [files.ontario.ca/mccss-2020-student-nutrition-program-guidelines-en-2021-11-29.pdf](https://files.ontario.ca/mccss-2020-student-nutrition-program-guidelines-en-2021-11-29.pdf)
- **Ontario Dietitians in Public Health (ODPH)** provides leadership in public health nutrition by promoting and supporting member collaboration to improve the health of Ontario residents through the implementation of the Ontario Public Health Standards: [odph.ca/about-us](https://odph.ca/about-us)
  - **Menu Planning and Supportive Nutrition Environments in Child Care Settings - Practical Guide** provides information on serve most often, serve sometimes, and do not serve foods: [odph.ca/upload/editor/cuser/PG-Final-EN-AODA-Jan-19-2018.pdf](https://odph.ca/upload/editor/cuser/PG-Final-EN-AODA-Jan-19-2018.pdf)
  - **Paint Your Plate with Vegetables and Fruit: A Toolkit for Child Care providers:** provides guidance on menu planning, snack patterns, nutrition policy development, and healthy eating environment: [odph.ca/paint-your-plate-english](https://odph.ca/paint-your-plate-english) [English] [odph.ca/d-corez-votre-assiette](https://odph.ca/d-corez-votre-assiette) [French]
- **Unlockfood.ca** provides information on nutrition, food and healthy eating as well as recipes, videos and interactive healthy eating tools: [unlockfood.ca/en/AboutUnlockFood.aspx](https://unlockfood.ca/en/AboutUnlockFood.aspx)
- **HealthLinks BC** provides resources on healthy eating and nutrition, including age-specific guides [healthlinkbc.ca/healthy-eating-physical-activity/food-and-nutrition](https://healthlinkbc.ca/healthy-eating-physical-activity/food-and-nutrition)
- **Telehealth Ontario** to speak with a RD for free (various nutrition related topics): Health811: Call 811 (TTY 1-866-797-0007), visit [health811.ontario.ca/static/guest/home](https://health811.ontario.ca/static/guest/home)
- **College of Dietitians of Ontario** lists all RDs who practice in Ontario: [portal.collegeofdietitians.org/public\\_directory/publicregistermember.aspx](https://portal.collegeofdietitians.org/public_directory/publicregistermember.aspx)
- **Dietitians of Canada** lists private practice RDs who are available for a fee to do presentations and workshops [members.dietitians.ca/DCMember/s/find-dietitian](https://members.dietitians.ca/DCMember/s/find-dietitian)
- **Foodland Ontario** Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs partnered with producers to champion, promote and support eating fresh Ontario produce and processed agricultural foods: [ontario.ca/foodland/page/about-us](https://ontario.ca/foodland/page/about-us)

- **Ecosource** is an innovative environmental organization specializing in fun, hands-on programs that focus on how each of us can change our daily habits to become better environmental citizens: [ecosource.ca/](http://ecosource.ca/)

## Appendix B: Sample of Snack Items

Sample of Snack Items		
<b>Whole or pre-cut fruits:</b> Nectarines, peaches, apples, bananas, oranges, plums, strawberries, clementines, tangerines	<b>Grain products</b> (whole grain cereals, whole grain crackers) <sup>1</sup>	<b>Milk</b> (plain skim, 1%, 2% M.F. for children over 2 years; 3.25% M.F. for children 9 months to 2 years) <sup>2</sup>
<b>Hummus (individual packages)</b>	<b>Whole or pre-cut vegetables:</b> Carrots, cucumbers, peppers, cherry tomatoes, broccoli, snow peas	<b>Canned beans, rinsed and drained</b>
<b>Yogurt:</b> plain and flavoured that is greater than 4% M.F. or higher for children 1-3 years and doesn't contain artificial sweeteners <sup>3</sup>	<b>Edamame from frozen</b>	<b>Unsweetened fruit sauces or fruit blends (individual packages)</b>
<b>Hard and soft non-processed, pasteurized cheese:</b> cheddar, mozzarella, brick, Monterey Jack, Havarti, Gouda, Swiss, feta, ricotta, cottage cheese, string cheese, cheese curds (individually packaged)	<b>Water</b>	<b>Packaged fruit and vegetables - packed in water (if in juice it must be rinsed)</b>

<sup>1</sup> Government of Canada, Eat Whole Grain Foods. [food-guide.canada.ca/en/healthy-eating-recommendations/make-it-a-habit-to-eat-vegetables-fruit-whole-grains-and-protein-foods/eat-whole-grain-foods/](http://food-guide.canada.ca/en/healthy-eating-recommendations/make-it-a-habit-to-eat-vegetables-fruit-whole-grains-and-protein-foods/eat-whole-grain-foods/)

<sup>2</sup> Government of Canada, Infant Nutrition [canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/infant-care/infant-nutrition.html](http://canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/infant-care/infant-nutrition.html) and HealthLink BC, [healthlinkbc.ca/pregnancy-parenting/parenting-babies-0-12-months/feeding-your-baby/weaning](http://healthlinkbc.ca/pregnancy-parenting/parenting-babies-0-12-months/feeding-your-baby/weaning)

<sup>3</sup> HealthLink BC, [Healthy Eating Guidelines for Your Vegetarian Toddler: 1-3 years | HealthLink BC](#)

It is best to consult with Peel Public Health for the specific health and safety needs of each centre to ensure these suggestions will fit with specific settings.

For more detailed information on providing nutrition refer to *Canada's Food Guide* [food-guide.canada.ca/en](https://food-guide.canada.ca/en)