

Fresh Fridays at Hemmingford Elementary

Fresh Fridays are a parent-developed initiative, in partnership with school staff, that has been part of the students' experience at Hemmingford Elementary since the 2021-2022 school year. Essentially, one Friday afternoon each month, all students take part in sharing a platter of fresh fruits and vegetables in their classrooms.

Combining volunteered time and funds from PPO fundraising efforts, ready-to-serve fruit and vegetable platters are delivered to the school and brought to each classroom by teachers. Fridays were selected as delivery day as the end of the week can be a time when there are fewer fruits and veggies in families' fridges and students may enjoy the social connection of sharing foods heading into the weekend.

Each month, the platters contain three fruit options and three vegetables options. There are staple choices to allow students who value consistency to always have something that they enjoy. There is also a seasonal or new choice from month to month, allowing students to discover new produce in a food environment that is conducive to success. Ultimately, students pick and sample from any and all of the fruits and veggies available.

On behalf of the PPO, we would like to welcome our new families and we look forward to continuing our mission of enriching students experience at Hemmingford Elementary!



Fresh Fridays

‘Fresh Fridays’ est une initiative créée par des parents, en partenariat avec le personnel de l’école, qui fait partie de l’expérience des élèves de l’école primaire Hemmingford depuis l’année scolaire 2021-2022. Concrètement, un vendredi après-midi par mois, tous les élèves participent au partage d’un plateau de fruits et de légumes frais dans leur classe.

Grâce au temps consacré par les bénévoles et aux fonds recueillis dans le cadre des activités de financement de l’Organisation de participation des parents (PPO), des plateaux de fruits et de légumes prêts à servir sont livrés à l’école et distribués dans chaque classe par les enseignants. Le vendredi a été choisi comme jour de livraison puisque la fin de la semaine peut être un moment où il y a moins de fruits et de légumes dans les réfrigérateurs des familles, et les élèves peuvent apprécier l’aspect social du partage de nourriture à l’approche de la fin de semaine.

Chaque mois, les plateaux comprennent trois choix de fruits et trois choix de légumes. Certaines options reviennent régulièrement afin que les élèves qui apprécient la constance puissent toujours retrouver des aliments qu’ils aiment. Un fruit ou un légume de saison, ou encore une nouvelle variété, est également proposé chaque mois, permettant ainsi aux élèves de découvrir de nouveaux produits dans un environnement alimentaire propice à la réussite. Au final, les élèves sont libres de choisir et de goûter à tous les fruits et légumes offerts.

Au nom du PPO, nous souhaitons la bienvenue à toutes les nouvelles familles et nous sommes heureux de poursuivre notre mission visant à enrichir l’expérience des élèves de l’école primaire Hemmingford!



Fresh Fridays Backgrounder

There is unequivocal agreement that fruits and veggies are nutritious foods that offer many health benefits. Indeed, the 2019 Canada's Food Guide suggests that half your plate be filled with fruits and veggies, including for children. Fruits and vegetables are important sources of vitamins, minerals and fiber and are essential to a nutritious diet. In addition to the direct health benefits to children, a growing body of literature suggests an association between fruit and vegetable consumption in childhood and the prevention of chronic diseases later in adulthood. Unfortunately, many children do not consume the recommended amounts of fruits and veggies, and this proportion is increasing.

It is important to consider that eating goes beyond nutrients. Creating a positive environment where food is enjoyed and shared with others and associated with identity, culture and traditions, are also very important to healthy eating. Given that children spend a considerable amount of time in school, schools become an important player, alongside parents and the students themselves, in developing healthy habits. School-based initiatives are an opportunity to become leaders in fostering healthy lifestyle habits with a lasting impact.

Repeated exposure to foods that are less readily accepted is an important tool in increasing their acceptability. Therefore, even if a child does not eat the food, simply observing it and indirectly learning that it is a valued food, goes a long way in becoming familiar with, and ultimately accepting, that food. This intervention has been successfully demonstrated with vegetable consumption among children.

Food policies in schools are complex and can disadvantage children in certain socioeconomic situations. Furthermore, fresh produce can be expensive and difficult to access for some households. A small school-based initiative, such as Fresh Fridays, provides equal access to fruits and veggies, without implementing strict food policies based primarily on the nutrient content of foods. The current food environment is complex and omnipresent. By placing value on nutritious foods in a simple, straight-forward manner, clear evidence-based messages emerge and foster a positive relationship with nutritious foods.