



B.C. First Nations Head Start Healthy Snack Basket

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THIS PAST YEAR AT THE OSOYOOS INDIAN BAND HEAD START, we decided to start a Healthy Snack Basket in the classroom to help save costs on our snack program. In the morning, the children sort their backpacks before coming in to the classroom—homework bags in the homework bin, healthy snacks for sharing in the snack basket.

This has been a great way of teaching the children to identify healthy foods in their lunches, and it also helps to cut down on the amount of wasted food in the classroom. One of the reasons we wanted to have some sort of change in our snack program was because we were noticing a huge amount of waste of expensive fruits and vegetables at lunch time—children often don't eat a full piece of fruit after a meal.

Usually, families will send in a piece of fruit that we cut up for sharing at morning snack time. However, some families do choose to send in bulk for the week, like a bag of carrots or a whole watermelon or a container of yogurt. Not only has this program really helped with teaching social skills like sharing to the children, but there is an abundance of food for sharing throughout the entire day. Children who do not have enough to eat know they can access the basket any time they want! Plus, if a family does not have healthy food in the home for the day, there is always a lot to share so parents know that when they send their child to school, their child will have healthy snacks throughout the day to enjoy.

Besides budgetary reasons, the concept behind the snack basket has increased parent involvement and responsibility to provide healthy snack choices for their children, without it being an onerous task.

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