

# Children's Health & Nutrition Initiative

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

*Feed the Kids, Change the World*

### A Proposal to Make Safe and Healthy Food Available to All of Canada's Children

Presented by Olivia Chow, MP

Q: What age of children would be covered by the Children's Health and Nutrition Initiative?

A: All children under the age of 18.

Q: How will my child benefit if the initiative is implemented?

A: A healthy and nutritious breakfast, snack and/or lunch will be available to your child(ren) in a place deemed most appropriate by local implementers, such as a childcare centre, school, community centre, or neighbourhood gathering place.

Q: Are there such food programs already in place for children?

A: Yes. Breakfast for Learning and other community based organizations have some food programs across Canada. But there is not enough funding or federal leadership in the form of financial assistance or national standards so most children don't have access to these services.

Q: Who will run these programs and how can I get it started?

A: If there is federal funding support, any non-profit organizations, parent councils, principals or local governments could start a program, but the food would have to be nutritious, with an emphasis on locally and sustainably sourced food.

Q: How much would the initiative cost?

A: A Federal Government contribution of \$250 million in the first year with incremental increases every year for five years. The funding will initially cover 30% of total meal costs which are estimated at \$1 to \$2 depending on regional food prices, volunteer time, parental contribution, local fundraising and charitable donations.

Q: Is the initiative good for the economy?

A: Having healthy children means better learning, better academic performance, reduced Medicare costs, and higher productivity for Canada. Also by emphasizing local and sustainable food sources, the initiative will support the production of quality foods, strengthen local farm communities and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

Q: Would parents be expected to contribute to the cost of the meals?

A: Yes, but no child should be denied healthy food if the parents have trouble paying.

Q: What about all the junk food advertising?

A: Drawing on the Supreme Court of Canada's judgement that "advertising directed at young children is per se manipulative", we will advance innovative ways to protect children from manipulative marketing messages, in particular those that encourage poor nutritional practises.

Q: Why is the proposal timely?

A: The Federal Standing Committee on Health is required to report to the House of Commons on childhood obesity very soon. Children's diets may be a primary focus of debate for Parliament this spring.