

Menu Planning for Early Learning and Child Care Programs

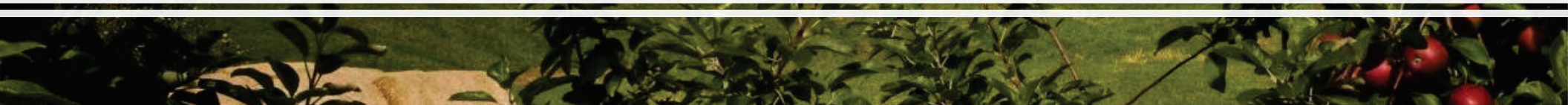

NOVA SCOTIA

Food and Nutrition in Early Learning and Child Care Programs





We will begin by acknowledging that the land upon which we work, live, and gather is the traditional territory and ancestral homeland of the Mi'kmaq Nation.



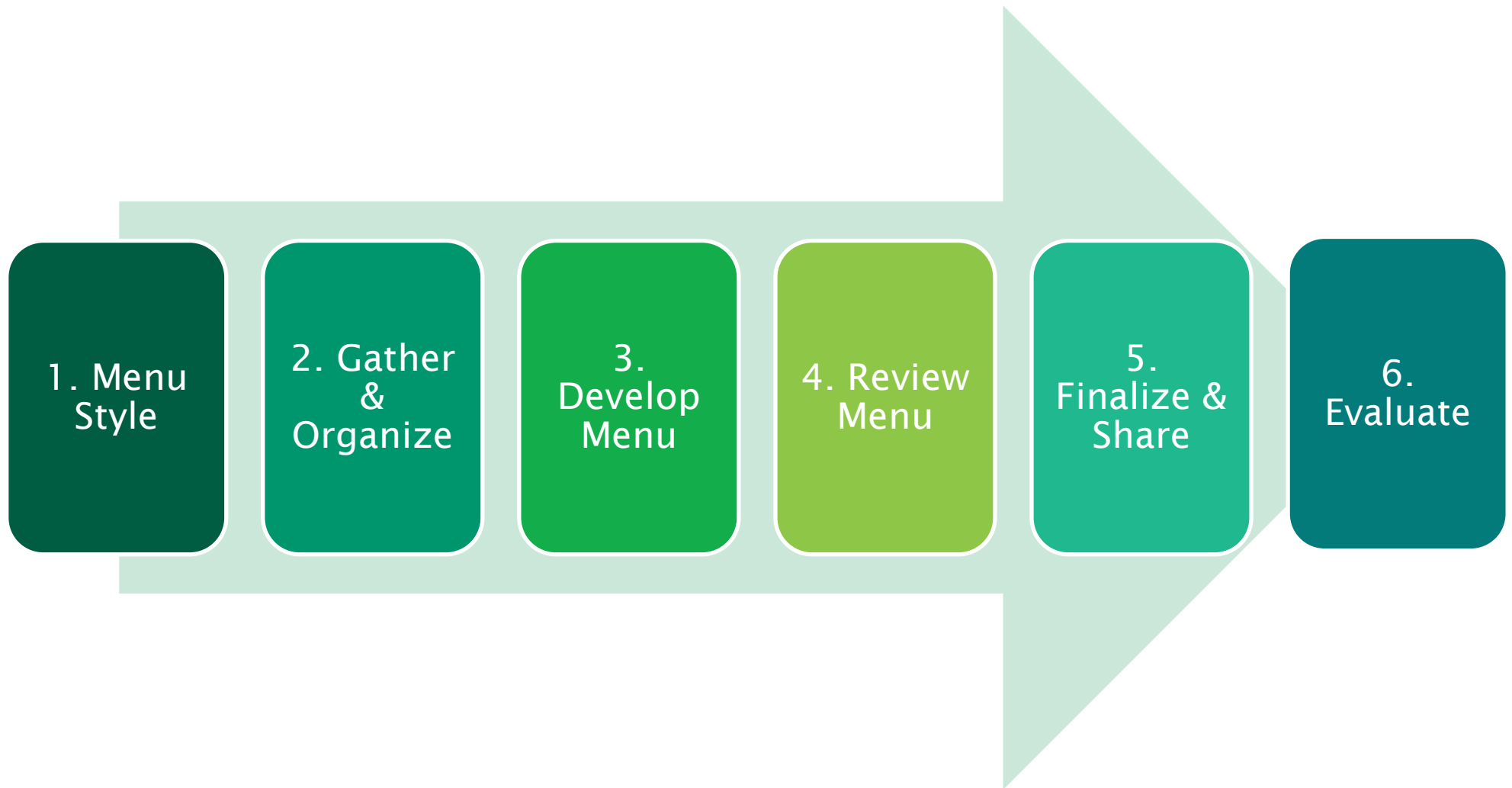
Professional Learning Objectives

1. Understand key components of menu planning process and available supportive tools and resources
2. Understand and apply the 2025 Food and Beverage Criteria to menu planning and recipe selection

Agenda

- Overview of key menu planning components
 - Menu planning process
 - Menu checklist and selecting recipes
- Group Exercise #1 – Menu review
- Group Exercise #2 – Recipe review and modifications
- Reflection and Closing

Menu Planning Process



Menu Style

- Cycle menus are suggested
 - Offers different menu items daily and repeats after a specific time period (e.g., 3-4 weeks) and may change based on the season
- Benefits of cycle menu include:
 - Provides variety and accommodates seasonal options
 - Limits the # of menu items served
 - Saves time on food prep, costs, and inventory
- Consider “theme days” for additional structure and predictability (i.e., sandwich day, soup day)

Gather and Organize

Collect the following resources/ideas:

- Menu Planning Template
- Menu Checklist
- Previous menus, sample menus, and potential recipes
- Collect cultural recipes from parents/guardians

Develop Menu

- Consider the required components of each meal and snack (**see chart below**)

SNACKS	NOON MEAL
<p>At each snack time, offer one of the following food combinations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• vegetable(s) and/or fruit(s) and grain• vegetable(s) and/or fruit(s) and protein <p>Offer the following beverages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• water (required)• milk and/or fortified milk alternative (such as soy beverage) (optional)	<p>At lunch offer one of the following food combinations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• vegetable + fruit + grain + protein, or• 2 vegetables + grain + protein <p>Offer both of the following beverages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• water• milk and/or fortified milk alternative (such as soy beverage)

Develop Menu (continued)

- Consider variety of foods offered
- Variety is important because it:
 - Provides exposure to different foods, textures and flavours
 - Helps to ensure young children are meeting their nutritional needs
- Consider
 - colour (e.g., neutrals, oranges, greens, reds)
 - flavour (e.g., strong or mild; sweet or sour)
 - texture (e.g., crisp or soft)
 - shape (e.g., natural, round, cubes, sticks)
 - temperature (e.g., cold or hot)

Review the Menu and Make Modifications

- Use the **Menu Planning Checklist** to confirm the menu meets all requirements.
- Most menu items and recipes on menus aligning with the 2011 standards will continue to fit
 - Some may need small modifications and additions to meet all criteria

Appendix C: Menu Checklist

The menu checklist can be used for the following purposes:

- to assist with menu planning
- to review menus to ensure all the criteria have been met

At Mealtime Offer the Following:

- ☐ at least half of what you serve is vegetables and fruit OR a selection of vegetables (see Section C: Vegetables and Fruit)
- ☐ one quarter of what you serve is whole grains (see Section C: Whole Grain Foods)
- ☐ one quarter of what you serve is a protein food option (see Section C: Protein Foods; does not include milk)
- ☐ water
- ☐ milk or fortified soy beverage (see Section C: Beverages)

Note: Section C: Mixed Dishes provides guidance on how to apply these proportions.

At Snack Time offer the Following:

- ☐ at least one kind of vegetable or fruit (see Section C: Vegetables and Fruits)
- ☐ at least one grain option (see Section C: Whole Grain Foods) AND/OR one protein food option (see Section C: Protein Foods; does not include milk)
- ☐ water
- ☐ optional: Milk or fortified soy beverage (see Section C: Beverages)

Vegetables and Fruit

- ☐ A variety of vegetables and fruit are offered each day.
- ☐ Offer a dark green vegetable daily.
- ☐ Offer an orange vegetable at least two times per week.
- ☐ Dried fruit are only offered in combination with other foods or in

Finalize, Share and Evaluate

- Double check all components of the menu checklist are met
- Share the menu with parents/guardians
- Consider ways to ask parents/guardians for input and feedback prior to next menu revision



MENU CHECKLIST AND SELECTING RECIPES – WHAT IS DIFFERENT?

Category	What is the same?	What is different?
Vegetables and Fruit	-Offer a variety	-Dark green vegetable is offered <u>DAILY</u> -Orange vegetable is served at least 2x/week
Protein Foods	-Offer a variety	-Offer a plant-based protein 2-3x per week -Fish is not required, but still encouraged -Specific guidelines on how often to offer cheese and yogurt
Whole Grain Foods	-Offer a variety	-All grain foods should be whole grain except for when a whole grain option is unavailable
Meals	- Offer foods from each food grouping	-Offer proportions in Canada's Food Guide Plate -Offer two vegetables or one vegetable and one fruit
Snacks	-All snacks include a vegetable or fruit -Offer foods from at least two food groupings	N/A
Beverages	-Water is offered at all meals and snacks, as well as throughout the day	-Milk is offered as a beverage at noon meal (no specific serving size) -Offer vegetables and fruits instead of 100% juice
Recipes	-Food items on the “cannot offer lists” are not included -Select recipes with lower amounts of sodium, sugar and saturated fat	- More emphasis on replacing saturated fats with unsaturated fats

Specific Requirements for Cheese and Yogurt

- Cheese and yogurt are offered as the **only** protein food at **noon meal** a maximum of once per week
 - Example: If macaroni and cheese is offered without another protein food at noon meal, grilled cheese cannot be offered without another protein food in the same week.
- Cheese and yogurt are **each** offered a maximum of 1x/day
 - Example: If a yogurt-based smoothie is offered for morning snack, a yogurt parfait cannot be offered for afternoon snack on the same day.

Selecting Recipes

- Most recipes included on menus following the previous standards will continue to fit with the new 2025 Food and Beverage Criteria.
- **Two main questions** to ask when reviewing and selecting recipes:
 1. Is the recipe made mostly from scratch with the main ingredients being vegetables and fruits, whole grains and protein foods (from the “to offer” lists)?
 2. Does the recipe have ingredients that are on the “CANNOT offer” lists?
- When it is not possible to prepare completely from scratch, some packaged ingredients **used in large quantities** may need to be assessed to ensure they align with the % DV criteria (e.g., tomato sauce used in pasta dish, whole grain cereal used in trail mix).

Selecting Recipes (continued)

	STEP 1: Is the recipe made mostly from scratch with the main ingredients being vegetables and fruits, whole grains and protein foods (from the “to offer” lists)?	STEP 2: Does the recipe have ingredients that are on the “CANNOT offer” lists?
YES	Check Step 2.	Can these ingredients be omitted or replaced?
NO	Can the recipe be modified to include more whole foods and replace highly processed ingredients?	The recipe can be offered without modifications.

Consider the proportions of ingredients used in recipes



- Vegetables and fruit = $\frac{1}{2}$ of plate/ingredients
- Protein foods = $\frac{1}{4}$ of plate/ingredients
- Whole grains = $\frac{1}{4}$ of plate/ingredients
- Add vegetables or fruit on the side when the recipe does not have enough to make up $\frac{1}{2}$ the plate
- This plate represents the amount that is offered not the amount that the child eats.

Example 1a: Adjusting proportions at noon meal



Example 1 b: Adjusting proportions at noon meal



Example 2: What is offered vs. what a child self-serves



Example: Selecting whole grain products

Tortilla A

Ingredients

Enriched Wheat Flour, Water, Vegetable Oil And/or Vegetable And Palm And Palm Kernel Oil Shortening, Sugar, Wheat Gluten, Salt, Baking Soda, Sodium Acid Pyrophosphate, Vegetable Mono- And Diglycerides, Calcium Propionate, Fumaric Acid, Potassium Sorbate, Guar Gum, Vegetable Monoglycerides, White Vinegar, Potassium Chloride, Cellulose Gum, L-cysteine Hydrochloride, Enzymes, Vegetable Oil. May Contain: Soy, Sesame.

The first ingredient is not whole grain so this tortilla cannot be offered.

Tortilla B

Ingredients

Whole Grain Whole Wheat Flour Including The Germ, Water*, Canola And Modified Palm And Palm Kernel Oil Shortening, Sugar, Wheat Gluten*, Baking Powder, Salt, Wheat Bran, Potassium Chloride, Calcium Propionate, Fumaric Acid, Guar Gum, Modified Cellulose, Potassium Sorbate, Vegetable Monoglycerides. *order May Vary. May Contain: Milk.

Whole grain whole wheat flour is the first ingredient, so this tortilla is whole grain and can be offered.