

## Regional Child Care Local Food Values Charter

Niagara Regional Child Care Centres recognize that our food purchasing decisions have significant economic, environmental and social impacts. Niagara Region and Counsel have documented their expectation that Regional programs will follow Niagara Sustainability and Counsel's Business Plan. It is our hope that Niagara residents will endorse this way of supporting the community and farmers by purchasing local food. We fully support Ontario farms and producers and our procurement practices reflect our decision to purchase local food wherever possible.

- Regional Child Care Centres are committed to dedicating a minimum of one day per week to serving local food on their menu (80% ingredients will be local, Ontario grown/produced).
- We will strive to increase our local food purchases to 10% of our total food budget, and will sustain this for a minimum of one year;
- We will support our key staff through training, encourage innovation, identify areas of improvement, and support the efforts of our Local Food Advisory organizations.
- Staff, including RECE's and dietary, will be educated on the importance of serving locally grown foods.
- We will provide our clients with information about local food on our menu boards, and posters, develop recipe books, host cooking nights, and provide resources on where to buy local food in Niagara Region.
- All five Regional Child Care Centres have implemented their own gardens where herbs, vegetables and some fruits is grown, supporting "the seed to the table" program. Children will visit a local farm.
- We will enhance awareness of the local food initiatives amongst all stakeholders including employees, clients and our food suppliers.
- We will source responsibly, ensuring suppliers are aware of our ongoing efforts to purchase locally, and foster supplier partnerships with those who have demonstrated a commitment to local food purchasing in their operations.
- We will continue to reach out and establish partnerships with the local food community in Niagara, and leverage our position to increase awareness of our program and it's far-reaching benefits;
- We will continue to improve, making better, and more educated food purchasing choices;
- We will continue to align our Local Food purchasing goals with Niagara's Children's Charter which states all children should have healthy food, safe water and clean air.