

BREAKFAST FOR LEARNING: 5 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

1. What is Breakfast for Learning (BFL)?

Breakfast for Learning is committed to helping children across Canada realize their full potential in life by ensuring that all children attend school well nourished and ready to learn. As Canada's first and largest charity focusing on child nutrition, Breakfast for Learning has been helping support and sustain school based breakfast, lunch and snack programs for 20 years. Operating nationally, BFL funds programs in all 10 provinces and all 3 territories. In the 2011-2012 school year, Breakfast for Learning funded 4,431 breakfast, lunch and snack programs operating within over 2,400 school/community sites, supporting more than 440,000 children and youth with the provision of over 67 million nourishing meals and snacks. To learn more or donate online, visit www.breakfastforlearning.ca.

BFL supports school affiliated community-based breakfast, lunch and snack programs through funding, program and nutrition support. The community based model encourages the engagement of local expertise and resources, and relies on a dedicated team of volunteers. All children are able to participate regardless of their ability to contribute, ensuring all children feel welcome, safe and comfortable.

BFL provides:

- Child Nutrition Program Grants - breakfast, lunch and snack funding for school-based nutrition programs
- Equipment - appliances (large and small) to meet the demands of feeding large groups of children
- Volunteer and Program Development - support to ensure programs have the tools and resources needed to run quality, sustainable programs
- Award winning best practices tools - Keys to Success, winner of the Conference Board of Canada's "Share the Flame" award, a "how to" best practices tool that helps programs operate quality nutrition programs
- Access to Registered Dietitians and Nutritionists - providing credible expertise to programs
- Nutrition Education & Awareness - resources for children, youth, families, school staff and volunteers
- Research - BFL helps to facilitate, support, and disseminate research that underscores the impact of child nutrition programs
- Advocacy for a National Child Nutrition Strategy - Canada is the only G8 country without a national meal program for children

Since its inception in 1992, Breakfast for Learning has nourished over 2.9 million children with the provision of over 367 million meals and snacks.

2. Why are BFL services needed?

When a child is hungry it's hard to learn. Research supports a strong link between good nutrition and academic success. Students who are well-nourished perform better in school - as their ability to concentrate improves, as well as their overall ability to learn. Children who eat a nutritious breakfast also have improved memory, problem-solving skills, class participation and better attention to task. Child nutrition programs are also credited with being one of the primary reasons for lower absenteeism rates, and reduced behavioural issues, in schools where programs exist. In addition, good nutrition is linked to improved health and a reduced burden of chronic disease throughout life.

Research indicates that 31% of elementary and 62% of secondary school students attend school without a healthy breakfast. There are many reasons that a child goes to school hungry including poverty (food insecurity- and access to nutritious food). Children not living in poverty may also come to school hungry, as a result of busy morning routines, children needing to look after themselves as their parents work longer hours, long bus rides to school, or a general lack of understanding about the importance of eating nutritious food. BFL works on all fronts to address barriers to proper nutrition which ultimately can affect a child's ability to thrive and grow up and become a healthy adult.

What is food insecurity?

Health Canada has been monitoring key food and nutrition indicators since 2004, and defines food insecurity as "the inability to acquire or consume an adequate diet quality or sufficient quantity of food in socially acceptable ways, or the uncertainty that one will be able to do so". It is often associated with the household's financial ability to access adequate food.

Households that experience food insecurity have reduced quality or variety of meals and may have irregular food intake. In Canada the national food insecurity rate is approximately 8%; in some areas it is as high as 29%. In households led by single parents, the food insecurity rate is double the national average (16%) and even higher in single parent households led by women (22%). (*Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), 2009-2010 & 2007 - 2008*)

3. How much does it cost to feed a child?

The cost to feed a child varies across the country depending on: location, access to nutritious food, food price indexing, and type of meal provided, but on average a \$10 donation will feed a child a healthy breakfast and snack for one week.

4. How does BFL decide which programs to fund?

The school nutrition programs that Breakfast for Learning (BFL) funds are all required to fill out an application and meet pre-set selection criteria. Once funded, they are also expected to maintain set quality standards.

Applications for BFL funding are reviewed by BFL and prioritized according to eligibility and need. BFL ensures donor accountability by assuring that the school nutrition programs that receive donor funds meet quality standards and are sustainable. Therefore, when someone donates money to BFL they are not only donating funds to school nutrition programs they are also investing in the future health of children and helping to create a network of quality, sustainable nutrition programs across Canada.

BFL eligibility criteria and performance measures include but are not limited to the following:

- established level of need;
- availability of nutritious food (requirements to meet Canada's Food Guide);
- budget requirements and sources of funding (there is a preference for multiple sources so programs are not dependant on one funder alone and are likely more sustainable);
- compliance with local regulations regarding food safety and preparation;
- inclusion of nutrition education;
- programs must operate a minimum of 3x/week -our optimal goal is to get them to 5x/wk;
- universality (program access for all students to ensure non-stigmatization).

BFL measures the success of our programs over time. Success factors include: an increase in the percentage of the student population served and number of meals served; quality of food; an improvement in the programs financial sustainability; increased level of community involvement for sustainability purposes; and data on student success including attendance at school and academic performance.

5. How much of BFL funding goes towards the organization mission?

Breakfast for Learning has an excellent track record of devoting the majority of its funds to support its charitable endeavours. As an example, for the 2011 Fiscal Year, Breakfast for Learning had a Good Works Index of:

<i>Charitable Good Works</i>	<i>85%</i>
<i>Fundraising, Program Delivery, Financial Management</i>	<i>15%</i>

(The "Good Works Index" is the percentage of dollars a charity spends on its programs in relation to the total dollars the charity spends in a year. Charity watchdogs say a Good Works Index of at least 60% is the minimal acceptable amount for an organization. BFL has consistently exceeded industry standard.)

To learn more or donate online, visit www.breakfastforlearning.ca