Food Literacy and Healthy Eating:
OMAFRA-University of Guelph
Food for Health Research Forum April 9, 2015
Debbie Field, Executive Director FoodShare Toronto
How can we build food literacy capacity?

1. Access - Children cannot learn or be healthy if they do not have adequate access to healthy food while at school.
2. Through hands on food education, learning how to cook and grow food and be food self-sufficient and literate:
   • Choice
   • Taste Testing
   • Student Engagement
   • Skill building
   • Leadership
   • Mentorship
   • Fun
3. Investment and integrated school strategy student nutrition and food literacy strategy.
Food Access through student nutrition programs
Good Food Café now in all 4 school boards
Bring home economics back for boys and girls, change the grade 12 diploma so no one can graduate high school without food literacy, knowing how to cook, grow food, recognize local food…
School Grown rooftop at Eastdale Collegiate
Miss C’s Green Smoothie

1 very ripe banana
1 handful of frozen berries
1 handful of spinach or other green, leafy vegetable
1 date
Water to cover

Directions:
Blend all ingredients together in a blender, on high.

Enjoy!
Research helps build the case for food literacy:
• 86% of respondents supported a provincial plan to “support farmers who grow food to be delivered to school cafeterias and student nutrition programs.”
• 85% supported the statement: “The federal government should work with the provinces to provide universal access to healthy snacks and lunches for all school aged children across Canada”.
• 82% endorsed food literacy programming in schools.
• 71% endorsed the idea of local food purchasing policies for public institutions.
• 70% supported mandatory cafeterias and kitchens in new schools.
Do you agree or disagree that children should be learning about food and healthy eating in school as a way to combat obesity and diabetes?

- Strongly Agree: 73%
- Somewhat Agree: 22%
- Somewhat Disagree: 2%
- Strongly Disagree: 2%
- Don't Know: 1%
Local Food Act’s Food Literacy Goals:

1. Goal 1: Increase the number of Ontarians who know what local foods are available.
2. Goal 2: Increase the number of Ontarians who know how and where to obtain local foods.
3. Goal 3: Increase the number of Ontarians who prepare local food meals for family and friends, and make local food more available through food service providers.

TEACH FOOD COMPETENCIES FROM JK to GRADE 12 ACTIVE LEARNING
To cook local food one needs to know how to cook...beets, cabbage, lentils, chicken, eggs...
Universal Student Nutrition Programs and School Food Literacy: a strategy for healthy kids.

Make schools a hub of food activity where it is easy for all to participate in a new culture of Food Literacy.