



September 7, 2010

Title: Development of Menu Planning Tools for NS Child Care Centres

Funded by MSVU Internal Research Grant and CIHR Health Professional Student Award

This project started on May 3, 2010 and it has a very busy four months!

Menu planners from the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services Directory of Licensed Child Care Facilities were invited to participate in a collaboration group and/or on-line questionnaire. We are pleased that we had 28 volunteers sign ethics informed consent forms for the collaboration group and more than 80 completed the on-line questionnaire. [Click here](#) to see a summary of results from the questionnaire.

The collaboration group met on June 7, 2010 and had 16 participants. A World Cafe format was used to gather information about menu planning needs and considerations. The participants also provided us with great ideas and suggestions for menu planning tools and resources.

We used information from this meeting as well as from a variety of other sources to create a draft menu planning model, menu template, sample menu, evaluation form as well as a number of other relevant resources. The plan for a cohesive child care centre menu website was formulated.

These draft tools and resources were presented to the collaboration group (about 25 participants) on July 12, 2010. Using a World Cafe format again, we asked the collaboration group participants to comment on and apply the tools and resources to create menus.

Based on the feedback we received, we made a number of revisions to the draft tools and resources and used the menus that the groups created to develop additional sample menus. We also costed and determined food group servings for selected recipes. If you have recipe ideas, please use our [template](#) and send to us; we hope to add to the list of costed recipes over time.

On the [Child Care Center Menu Project](#) website you will find the Menu Plan Model (with video and written explanation), Child Food Group Servings & Best Practices, Menu Template, Sample Menus, Costed Recipes, Menu Plan Evaluation Form, and Resource List.

We see this as an ongoing project and to that end we are soliciting your feedback. You may send us your comments and suggestions to our [email](#) or you may join the Menu Project Blog. We hope the Blog will become a forum for the child care centre menu planners to share ideas among themselves as well as with us. Later this Fall, we will be distributing an on-line questionnaire to our participants to collect their opinions about the tools/resources.

We will also be conducting a workshop at MSVU on November 20, 2010 as part of the series coordinated by MSVU Department of Child and Youth Study. More details to follow.

This project is led by [Linda Mann](#), RD, MBA with Dana Power, RD, MEd candidate. Vanessa MacLellan, BScAHN candidate, completed her dietetic internship administrative competencies through her work on this project in summer 2010.

We would like to express our gratitude to all the child care center menu planners who took the time to complete the on-line questionnaire and to the collaboration group participants who made this such a meaningful project.

For more information about this project contact us at menu.project@msvu.ca