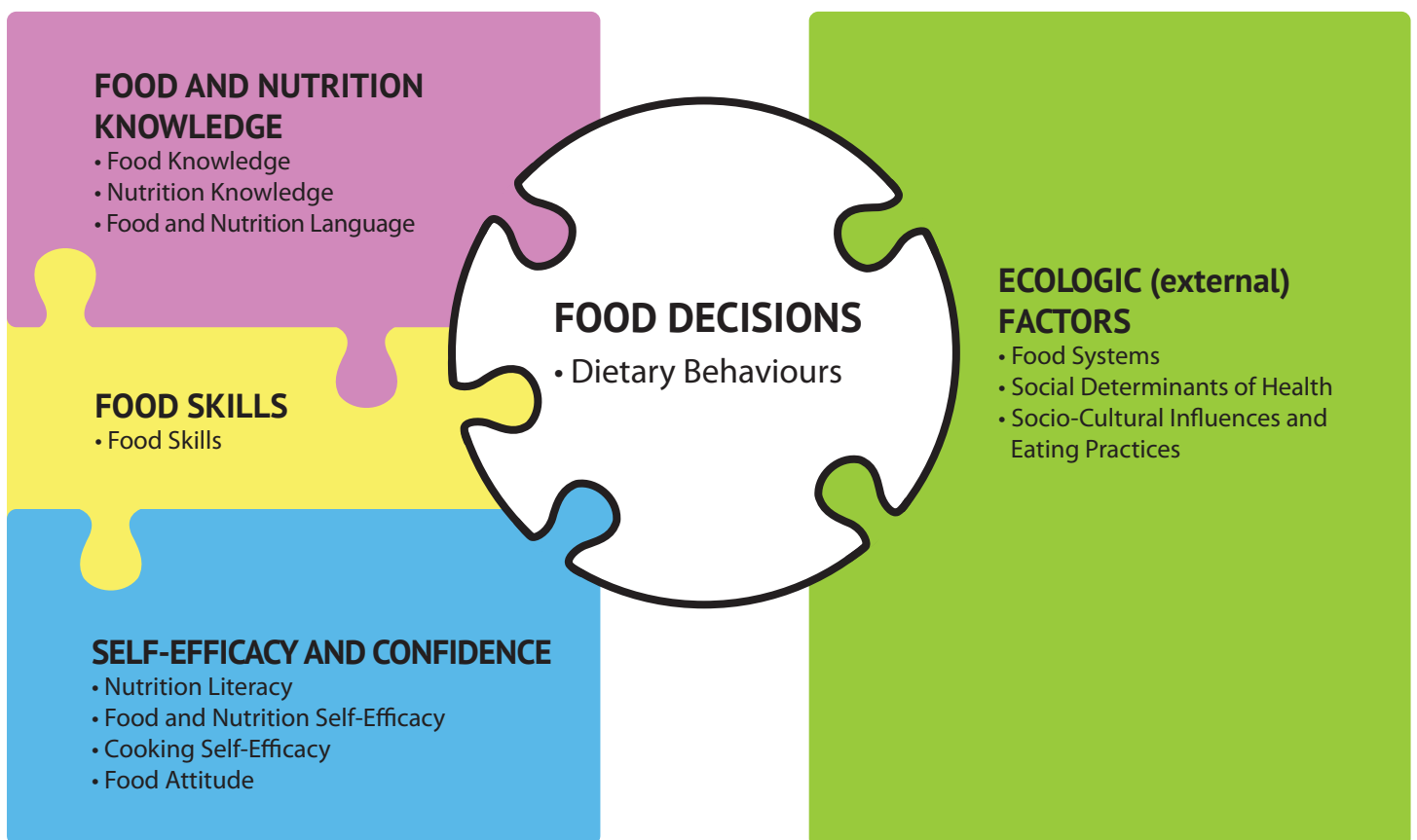


Food Literacy: A Framework for Healthy Eating

Food literacy includes interconnected attributes organized into the categories of food and nutrition knowledge; food skills; self-efficacy and confidence; food decisions; and ecologic (external) factors.

INDIVIDUAL

SOCIETAL



The Locally Driven Collaborative Project (LDCP) Healthy Eating Team would like to thank Public Health Ontario (PHO) for its support of this project. The Team gratefully acknowledges funding received from PHO through the LDCP program. The views expressed in this project update are those of the LDCP Healthy Eating Team and do not necessarily reflect those of PHO.

Key Attributes of Food Literacy

Food literacy includes interconnected attributes organized into the categories of food and nutrition knowledge; food skills; self-efficacy and confidence; food decisions; and ecologic (external) factors. These attributes have been identified as important and relevant in the public health context. The descriptions are based on how food literacy attributes were discussed in the literature and feedback collected as part of the food literacy research of the Locally Driven Collaborative Project.

The interdependent nature of the food literacy attributes has important implications for public health strategies and interventions addressing healthy eating and policy. For example, it may be difficult for some individuals to achieve food literacy without having appropriate knowledge and skills, as well as the ability to apply them. However, without self-efficacy and confidence and without access to income for purchasing food, equipment, and supplies for food preparation, or access to learning opportunities, neither knowledge nor ability may be relevant. A comprehensive approach considering the social determinants of health may be required to impact food literacy and ultimately dietary behaviour.

CATEGORIES



ATTRIBUTES

FOOD KNOWLEDGE

To understand the variety of foods within all food groups. To know where food comes from and what is in it.

NUTRITION KNOWLEDGE

To understand the nutrients in food and how these can affect health and wellbeing.

FOOD AND NUTRITION LANGUAGE

To understand commonly used words to describe characteristics of nutrition in food (e.g., high fibre, low sodium) and preparation of food (e.g., sauté, fold).

FOOD SKILLS

To be able to prepare meals throughout the life span using basic skills like chopping, measuring, cooking, reading recipes, and food safety.

NUTRITION LITERACY

To be able to distinguish between credible and false nutrition information. Knowing how to find reliable nutrition information and how to make sense of it (e.g., reading a food label).

FOOD AND NUTRITION SELF-EFFICACY

To believe in one's ability to apply food and nutrition-related knowledge to select, buy, and prepare food to make healthy choices in a complex food environment.

COOKING SELF-EFFICACY

To have confidence in one's ability to use cooking techniques and to prepare tasty meals with available food.

FOOD ATTITUDE

The desire to learn how to: prepare food; develop a healthy relationship toward food; have respect for food traditions and culture; and prepare and enjoy food to eat together with others.

FOOD SYSTEMS

The impact of the food system (e.g., growing, manufacturing, transportation, preparation, consumption and disposal of food products) on individual health, broader societal and economic wellbeing, and the environment.

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

Access to living wages, affordable housing, learning environments, healthy and adequate food, and cooking equipment.

SOCIO-CULTURAL INFLUENCES AND EATING PRACTICES

The influence of socio-cultural values, norms, and beliefs on food choices and eating practices; the social support to learn and share food skills; and the cultural and family food practices (e.g., eating together).

DIETARY BEHAVIOUR

To make healthy food choices.

For More Information

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