

CAPABLE. CONFIDENT. CURIOUS.

From Principles to Practice: Real Ideas. Real Stories. Real Learning.

From the Framework

Capable, Confident and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework emphasizes the importance of responsive relationships, environments that reflect children's identities, and practices that honour children's agency. When educators tune into children's cues, offer choices, and create calm, respectful routines—including during mealtimes—they support children's learning.

Responsive feeding is one way educators can bring these principles to life. Educators decide *what, when, and where* food is offered — children decide *how much, what, and whether* to eat. This approach supports autonomy, exploration, and a positive relationship with food, while also creating space for meaningful conversations and connection.

Language and Responsive Feeding

Mealtimes are more than moments to eat, they're opportunities to build language, relationships, and autonomy. In a responsive feeding environment, educators support children's ability to self-regulate by creating calm, respectful routines and engaging in positive, social conversations that aren't focused on food.

Talking about food with neutral language, encouraging children to share stories, and modeling rich vocabulary all support early literacy. These moments help children build oral language, comprehension, and confidence — key foundations of communication and learning.

To learn more, see Section A, 7.0 Responsive Feeding in the **Food and Nutrition Standards**.

About this Issue

This issue explores how mealtimes can support connection, culture, and communication. With the release of Nova Scotia's new Food and Nutrition Standards, we highlight responsive feeding practices that honour children's autonomy and spark joyful conversations.



Growing Our Own Food

Submitted by: Charlene Caines, Tompkins Memorial Pre-primary Program

We set up a simple pumpkin patch provocation that sparked a big idea. When a child exclaimed, “Did you know you can eat pumpkins?” laughter filled the room—most children thought pumpkins were only for Halloween! This led to a conversation about where food comes from and the children explored the idea of growing their own food.

Together, we planted pumpkin seeds and recorded our observations every week. Children learned that fruits and vegetables need sunlight, water, and care to grow. As the plants began to sprout, the children made connections between the foods they eat and where they come from. This hands-on experience helped them understand the importance of caring for living things.



Taste of Togetherness

Submitted by: Nida Mariam at Maritime Muslim Academy

Some of our new friends had just joined the class, and their parents were unsure about not bringing lunch boxes from home. So, we invited them to see what snack time at our centre is really like.

On a sunny morning, one parent led a “Show and Tell,” serving yogurt, granola, blueberries, and strawberries. The children made their own granola cups. Their eyes sparkled with excitement! They took turns scooping, sprinkling, and adding fruit — sticky fingers and proud smiles all around. Even children who are cautious eaters were happily trying something new.

When everyone sat together, something magical happened — they waited patiently, helped their friends, and shared stories as they ate. The room was full of joy and togetherness.

What's Next?

Being responsive is more than reacting in the moment — it also means taking time to reflect. As you think about mealtimes in your space, consider how they support not just nutrition, but relationships, identity, and communication.

- How do your mealtime routines reflect children’s identities, choices, and voices?
- What stories or conversations emerge around food in your space?
- How might responsive feeding support early literacy and numeracy in your daily practice?

**DO YOU
HAVE A
STORY TO
SHARE?**

We’d love to feature your story from an early learning and child care program in the next issue of Capable. Confident. Curious.

If you'd like to include photos, please email us to request an Image Consent Form.

Story topic: **Supporting Early Numeracy Through Play**

Submit by: **December 22, 2025** to be considered for the January issue.

Submit your story to: ELCCprofessional.learning@novascotia.ca