

development of policies, programs and practices in the psycho-social and physical environments and support services to help develop positive, health-promoting behaviours and coping skills among youth.

Focus- and pilot-testing of Voices and Choices have confirmed its value and effectiveness as a tool in promoting student engagement and democracy. Through partnerships with national health and education organizations, this tool is being made available to schools and other organizations across Canada. Currently underway is the development of an on-line mechanism for accessing the School Health Model.

Health Canada has long played a leadership role in developing policies, guidelines, standards and awareness-raising programs on diet and nutrition. It has also played a role in fostering the development and adoption of those policies, guidelines and standards, including those implemented by provincial/territorial and municipal governments, non-governmental organizations, school boards, consumer groups and the private sector. Since 1995, Health Canada has developed a number of targeted resources based on *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating*. *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating: Focus on Preschoolers* and *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating: Focus on Children Six to Twelve Years*, for example, now provide information for educators, health practitioners and others working with children. In 1999, *Nutrition for a Healthy Pregnancy: National Guidelines for the Childbearing Years* was released for use by a range of health professionals who regularly offer nutrition-related advice and guidance to women. From a population health perspective, these guidelines address issues of concern to women in their childbearing years, in preparation for and during the course of pregnancy. In 1996, Health Canada partnered with the Canadian School Boards Association to produce *Anaphylaxis: A Handbook for School Boards*. This widely used tool provides useful background information for developing policies for life-threatening allergies in schools.

The Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program, created in 1995, is a comprehensive community-based program that supports pregnant women at risk of threatening their health and the development of their babies (i.e., women living in poverty, teens, women who use alcohol, tobacco or other harmful substances, women living in violent situations, Aboriginal women, recent immigrants, women living in social or geographic isolation or with limited access to services). The Program provides community-based groups with funds to support nutrition (e.g., food and/or vitamin/mineral supplements, counselling, food skills); knowledge and education (e.g., specialized counselling on prenatal health issues, breastfeeding and infant development); social support; and assistance with access to services (e.g., shelter, health care, specialized counselling). The Program is delivered through Health Canada regional offices, and managed jointly by the federal government and provincial/territorial governments.

The Community Action Program for Children, created in 1992, provides long-term funding to community coalitions for services that address the developmental needs of young children at risk (from birth to age six). In 1999, there were 490 projects across Canada — jointly managed by the federal government and provincial/territorial governments and delivered through Health Canada regional offices — delivering more than 1900 programs in cities, towns and remote areas in every province and territory across Canada. The program focusses on prevention and early intervention so that children get a better start in life. This in turn enhances their chances of participating fully in society as responsible adults.