



Saskatchewan  
**Health Authority**

# The Cost of Nutritious Meals and Snacks for Children in Saskatchewan 2025

A tool for childcare, schools and community organizations to help with planning for the cost of nutritious food.



Developed by SHA Public Health Nutritionists

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# The Cost of Nutritious Meals and Snacks for Children in Saskatchewan 2025

The food and drinks offered in childcare settings, schools and community programs play an important role in children's learning, health and well-being. Program budgets, funding, and the cost of food all influence what is offered. Factoring in the cost of nutritious foods and drinks into program planning helps make them available and sustainable.

## How to use this resource

This resource shows the average cost of basic nutritious meals and snacks for children across Saskatchewan, based on food prices collected in June of 2025. Childcare facilities, schools and community organizations can use this to:

- Estimate the cost of food used in programming
- Help identify budget needs
- Support grant applications



## Why it is important to offer nutritious and culturally appropriate foods for children

- Providing a variety of nutritious foods can help children feel good about eating while supporting growth, development and their ability to learn (1,2).
- Including cultural foods in programs can promote cultural awareness and learning, increase familiarity with and consumption of a variety of foods (6-9).
- When programs offer nutritious foods, it helps reinforce the message that eating well is important (3) and can help children learn to enjoy nutritious foods (4).
- Healthy eating patterns can protect against developing chronic diseases such as Type 2 diabetes and heart disease (5).

## Other food program cost considerations

- There are other factors to consider when planning a budget beyond the cost of food and drinks such as staff wages and training, storage equipment, and serving supplies.
- Food costs can vary based on children's ages. Younger children have small stomachs and tend to eat smaller amounts of food, while older children need to eat more for their growth and development needs, so food costs will be higher.
- Pre-packaged and convenience foods were not included in the estimated costs in this tool. If these items are included, the costs could be higher.
- Meal and snack costs in this tool are based on average package sizes found in most grocery stores. There may be some savings by purchasing in bulk through a food service distributor or grocery wholesale company.

**Table 1. The average cost of breakfast, lunch, and a snack for one child per day in Saskatchewan**

*Geographical Area	Sample Breakfast Cost/Child/Day	Sample Lunch Cost/Child/Day	Sample Snack Cost/Child/Day
<b>Northern Saskatchewan</b>			
<b>Far North</b>	\$3.74	\$ 3.32	\$2.72
<b>North West</b>	\$2.31	\$2.21	\$1.70
<b>North East</b>	\$2.18	\$2.04	\$1.37
<b>Northern Town</b>	\$2.02	\$1.85	\$1.22
<b>North Average</b>	<b>\$2.43</b>	<b>\$2.35</b>	<b>\$1.72</b>
<b>Southern Saskatchewan</b>			
<b>Rural</b>	\$2.09	\$2.03	\$1.50
<b>Town</b>	\$2.07	\$1.90	\$1.35
<b>Small City</b>	\$1.81	\$1.71	\$1.18
<b>Large City</b>	\$1.71	\$1.72	\$1.18
<b>South Average</b>	<b>\$1.91</b>	<b>\$1.81</b>	<b>\$1.27</b>
<b>Total Saskatchewan Average</b>	<b>\$2.01</b>	<b>\$1.89</b>	<b>\$1.34</b>
<b>*Northern communities are classified by geographic location and ease of access</b>		<b>* Southern communities are classified by population size</b>	
<p><b>Far North:</b> Low access with air travel as the main form of transportation. Some communities have limited seasonal roads.</p> <p><b>North West:</b> Moderately accessible; majority gravel roads and air access.</p> <p><b>North East:</b> Moderate and low access; gravel or seasonal roads or air travel as the main forms of transportation.</p> <p><b>Northern Town:</b> Highly accessible; paved roads, access to nearby towns and cities and air access.</p>		<p><b>Rural:</b> less than 500 people</p> <p><b>Town:</b> between 500 and 4,999 people</p> <p><b>Small City:</b> between 5,000 and 99,999 people</p> <p><b>Large City:</b> more than 100,000 people</p>	

The costs shown above were calculated using a sample one-week menu based on Canada's Food Guide recommendations. Food costs were collected in June 2025. For more information about the data collection see *The Cost of Food in Saskatchewan 2025 (10)*.

## Example calculation for a food program

A school in rural Southern Saskatchewan offers a breakfast program for 90 children for 180 days a year. Table 1 shows that the average cost of breakfast for the Southern Saskatchewan is \$2.09 for each student. The following steps show how to calculate the food costs for the program.

### **Step 1. Calculate the cost of food for one day:**

(Rural Southern Saskatchewan average cost of breakfast for a child per day) X (number of children)

$$\text{\$ } 2.09 \times 90 = \text{\$ } 188.10 \text{ per day}$$

### **Step 2: Calculate the cost of the breakfast program for the year:**

(the cost of food for one day as calculated in step 1) X (number of days)

$$\text{\$ } 188.10 \times 180 = \text{\$ } 33,858$$

In this example, the cost of food for a nutritious breakfast program for one year = **\\$ 33,858**

### **Step 3: Calculate the cost of food for additional meals and snacks**

If your program offers multiple meals and snacks, simply complete the steps above for each and then add them together.

## Recommended Resources

- **Nutrition guidelines in Saskatchewan childcare settings** can be found in the 'Saskatchewan Child Care Licensee Manual' at [www.saskatchewan.ca](http://www.saskatchewan.ca).
- **Saskatchewan School Food & Nutrition Guidelines** and **Nourishing Minds: Eat Well – Learn Well – Live Well** can be found at [www.saskatchewan.ca](http://www.saskatchewan.ca)

## References

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