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## **Eating Between the Lines (EBTL) Led by Dr. Ray Doiron & Dr. Jennifer Taylor**

### **Linking Healthy Eating with Literacy**

Two years ago, researchers from The University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI) began taking steps to implement a healthier eating program for children 4--6 years old. What made this program unique was that it linked nutrition with literacy. After five weeks, 25 children were assessed on their vocabulary; reading, writing, and drawing skills; and basic nutrition knowledge.

Led by researchers Dr. Ray Doiron (Faculty of Education) and Dr. Jennifer Taylor (Family & Nutritional Sciences), the program included such units as *Eating the Rainbow*, *Breakfast Matters*, and *The Salad*, linking healthy eating with literacy.

### **Learning Healthy & Healthy Learning**

Results suggest that the program was highly successful in enabling students to make meaningful connections with each other and with new nutrition concepts. Educators, researchers, and parents identified a clear increase in children's oral language and vocabulary development over the course of the program. Children practices many early literacy skills and applied new nutrition knowledge, using technology as a literacy tool.

### **Learning Healthy Online**

Two years later, the research team continues to work with parents, early childhood educators, and young children to develop new tools that link healthy eating to literacy. A

website was developed that allows the research team to share their program with parents and early childhood educators. The website, designed to be user-friendly and fun for both children and parents, includes separate sections for parents, enabling them to link nutrition and literacy in the home, and for educators, allowing the information to be used in the classroom. Parents can find child-friendly and healthy recipes, games, and even songs about food by PEI's very own Music Man. Educators can help children learn about healthy eating with various learning activities.



**ebt1.org**

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