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# NutriSTEP™ - Nutrition Screening Tool for Every Preschooler

## Description:

NutriSTEP™ is a fast and simple way to assess eating habits and identify nutrition problems early, including growth and overweight issues. It is a parent-administered 17-item questionnaire that covers the nutritional risk constructs for the preschool population: food and nutrient intake, physical growth, developmental and physical capabilities, physical activity, food security and the feeding environment.

Unlike many surveillance and screening tools, NutriSTEP™ has been scientifically validated with more than 1500 multi-ethnic preschoolers and their parents from across Canada over the past 10 years using a defined methodological template<sup>1</sup>. It takes a parent only five minutes to complete and will generate a low, moderate or high risk score with parent guidelines to the most appropriate programs and services.

Based on validation results, approximately 10% of the preschool population will be identified as needing some form of primary prevention. NutriSTEP™ has been designed for administration by parents, caregivers or community professionals in a variety of settings and can easily dovetail onto existing child care and child health programs and services, physicians' offices, etc.

NutriSTEP™ can also be incorporated into existing population level surveys for surveillance purposes without using the individual nutrition risk score data. This information can be used for local and provincial surveillance efforts, to plan programs and identify implications for further research and practice.

To implement a preschool nutrition screening program at the individual, agency or community level, a supportive toolkit is required. The NutriSTEP™ Implementation Toolkit includes background information; training and support materials; suggested models for implementation, as well as guidelines to assist administrators on scoring and interpreting NutriSTEP™ and on making referrals. There are links to the online versions of the NutriSTEP™ screening questionnaire in English and French and to supportive nutrition education resources. There is also promotional information to build a supportive framework for screening. These toolkit components will help develop a feasible and sustainable preschool nutrition screening program in your community. Future versions of this toolkit will include success stories and a program evaluation.

**Reference:** Randall Simpson JA et al (2008); "Nutrition Screening Tool for Every Preschooler (NutriSTEP™): validation and test-retest reliability of a parent-administered questionnaire assessing nutrition risk of preschoolers". *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 62:770-780.