

**THE STOP GREEN BARN
AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM
2012-2013
PARENT MANUAL**



Welcome Page

This manual outlines the policies and procedures for The Stop Community Food Centre's After School Program (**ASP**) at the Green Barn. This guidebook attempts to address all possible issues and concerns that may arise, however situations not covered will need to be handled on a case-by-case basis with the After School Program Coordinator.

The **ASP** strives to create an environment in which participants engage in fun and hands-on food-related activities, particularly cooking and growing food. **ASP** participants will have a safe and welcoming place to come to, where they can meet and interact with their peers, complete their homework and participate in enriching activities related to food, art, drama, dance, sports and music.

The staff and volunteers of the **ASP** program hope to foster a warm and friendly environment where your child and family can feel connected and welcome. We hope the families will share in the experiences of the children attending the **ASP** and will partake in various activities we have planned for parents throughout the program. Please do not hesitate to contact us at any time. We encourage parent interaction and welcome any questions or comments you may have.

1. The After School Program

The After School Program (ASP) is a new program that began last winter at The Stop Community Food Centre's Green Barn.

2. The Mission of the ASP

The mission of the ASP is to provide a safe, welcoming and stimulating environment where children can come when the school day is over. The focus of the program is to support children in developing knowledge and skills related to food, while also supporting their academic advancement, artistic expression and good health.

3. Objectives of the ASP

The ASP is designed to meet the following objectives:

- To increase children and their families knowledge and skills to grow and cook healthy food through fun and engaging hands-on activities in our state-of-the-art kitchen, greenhouse and sheltered garden
- To increase children's positive attitudes toward healthy eating and their ability to make healthy foods choices
- To increase children's knowledge of how food-systems work and social justice issues, thereby increasing their capacity for action to create a healthy and sustainable food system
- To offer homework support after school by providing children with a conducive environment for them to focus, as well as individualized help from appropriately qualified adults, thus enhancing their academic performance

4. Program Philosophy

This program has been created to introduce children to the wonder, joy and satisfaction of growing and preparing healthy food. It will teach your children how to cook fun and healthy recipes using whole, fresh foods.

They will learn how food is grown, where the food they eat regularly comes from, and why fair and equal access to healthy food is important for us all.

The program will also help children to comprehend and complete their homework assignments; encourage peer interaction and the development of social skills; and broaden their horizons by exposing them to various types of artistic disciplines and forms of physical activity.

5. ASP Staff

Each staff members and volunteers of the ASP have extensive experience working with children and are dedicated to providing an environment that is safe and stimulating. All staff in the program are certified in First Aid and CPR.

Kanaka Kulendran, Coordinator

Kanaka is a qualified Primary/ teacher with a Bachelor of Education from York University and an undergraduate degree in Political Science from York University. She has worked in education for over ten years both locally and abroad. She has been working at The Stop as the ASP and Summer Program Coordinator since July 2012.

6. The Schedule

The After School Program runs every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and begins at 3:30 pm and ends at 6:00 pm.

Regular Monday Schedule	
3:30 – 4:35	Arrival, snack, outdoor games or arts & crafts activity, homeworkhelp

4:35 – 5:55	Cooking/ Gardening or Educational Activity
5:55 – 6:00	Clean-up and dismissal

* If children have homework that needs to be completed for the next day staff and/or volunteers will be available to work with them on homework during this time.

7. Activities

Outdoor activities

The daily 15-minute period of adult-led outdoor games will provide an opportunity for children to release energy after a long day at school and will help them to interact and become comfortable with the group. On days in which the weather is poor, children will be guided through fun hands-on art & craft activities in our classroom-space.

Homework help

Every Tuesday children will have a 45-minute block of time designated for the completion of homework or advancement of school assignments in a quiet atmosphere that promotes concentration. We will also try to provide tutoring for certain subjects when it is brought to our attention that children are having difficulty with these subjects.

It is important that parents keep an open and continual communication with the Coordinator. On the other days of the program (Mondays & Wednesdays), if children have a large homework load or are in need of extra help with school assignments, an adult volunteer or staff person will be available to work with them one-on-one during the cooking sessions.

If children complete homework quickly they will be welcome to join the cooking session afterwards. We encourage children who may need homework help on a regular basis to come early to the program so that they may finish their work early, so as not to miss out on the cooking sessions.

Kitchen activities

1-2 times a week children will have 75-minute cooking sessions led by the Coordinator, Kanaka. In these cooking sessions children will learn how to prepare nourishing meals with fresh and healthy ingredients.

The recipes children will be preparing will include traditional dishes from various cultures, including Native Canada, Latin America, Caribbean, Africa and Asia. We encourage parents to share traditional family recipes that represent their heritage.

Children will learn how commonly used foods and ingredients are made, demystifying processing and preservation methods. They will learn about the nutritional value of foods, how to prepare well-balanced meals and how to read food labels and understand the information presented.

Gardening activities

On every day of the ASP children will have a chance to interact with our Greenhouse and Sheltered Garden, either by tending to plants, watering or harvesting ripe foods to use in the kitchen session.

Children will also have the opportunity to participate in 45 to 60-minute long gardening sessions in which activities will cover topics such as soil science, what plants grow well together, earth-friendly gardening principles (i.e. chemical-free growing), composting, vermiculture, plant and insect identification, seed germination and sprouting, stages of growing and seed saving.

By engaging in these hands-on activities, children will understand what is needed to produce food and will develop a greater connection to the food on their plates.

Educational food-related activities

In addition children will participate in sessions with a focus on educational activities related to food. These educational games and activities will help kids to think about the bigger picture in terms of how our food system works and what its impacts are on society and the environment.

This educational component will include fun and practical activities that help kids to understand the different steps of the food system, including growing food, transportation, factory processing and refining, and commercial marketing and distribution.

Children will also learn through the education program how much it costs to eat healthy and to feed an average size family. They will begin to understand the importance of having affordable healthy food available to everyone and what they can do to make this happen.

Arts activities

Other artistic activities that will be provided to children in the ASP may include yoga sessions for kids, Afro-Brazilian dance, Capoeira, Hip-Hop, Brazilian percussion, Story-telling by expert story-tellers, jewelry-making and other arts & crafts. All of these activities will be led by trained instructors who have extensive experience working with primary school-aged children.

8. Registration and Payment

The child must be registered prior to attending. There is no fee for families facing financial barriers. For other families there is a subsidized rate, of which further information can be provided by the Coordinator.

9. Attendance

The success of the ASP depends on committed attendance by children participants and their families. We therefore ask that children who participate commit to all three days of the weekly program. Some exceptions can be made in certain cases as long as the attendance does not drop below two days per week. Should there be any changes in your child's weekly or daily attendance, it is very important that you contact the ASP Coordinator at the earliest possible time. Such changes include appointments, illness, family obligations or other special circumstances requiring absence.

Parents may use any of the following methods to inform staff of changes to your child's attendance:

- Supply a written note to the ASP Coordinator
- Telephone the ASP Coordinator at (416) 651-7867 extension 22
- Email the ASP Coordinator at kanaka@thestop.org

10. Arrivals and dismissals

It is important for staff to know whether your child is able to come to and leave the program on their own. For children who need to be accompanied by an adult, the only people authorized to pick up a child will be those listed on the registration form. If another individual is to pick up a child, or it is planned that the child leaves with another parent from the program, please inform the Coordinator in writing, by phone or via email. If the individual is not a parent in the program they must present photo ID. This is a precaution to ensure the safety and protection of your child.

11. Custody and Access

The ASP staff cannot become involved in the marital or custody issues of families. If a parent is divorced, separated or going through custody negotiations, the ASP staff must be informed of the relevant custody and parental access details. If there are any restrictions on parental access, such as no visits or no pick-ups, we will require official documentation to that effect, such as a court order or a restraining order. Without proper documentation, ASP staff cannot deny a parent access to their child. If an unauthorized parent comes to visit or pick-up a child, ASP staff will request that he/she leave. In

case of difficulty, ASP staff will call the police and have the parent accompanied away from the premises.

12. Discipline Policy

The objective of the discipline policy is to instill the children with self-discipline, a clear understanding of right and wrong, and the knowledge that there are consequences to their actions. The ASP does not support any use of inappropriate language, violence, bullying, disruptive behaviour toward staff or other children, or any behaviour inappropriate for cooperative group settings.

Children will first receive two warnings for misconduct, then a time-out. If incidents continue to occur parents will be contacted in order to discuss the disruptive behaviour and find an appropriate solution. If the child still continues to act inappropriately, he/she may be excluded from the program.

It is hoped that through open communication between staff and parents that such a situation not need arise.

13. Pedagogical Days

Where numbers warrant, sessions may be planned on PD days. These special sessions would include special activities and possibly field trips that would offer children the opportunity to experience leisure outside the ASP site (permission slips will be provided to parents on these occasions). It is possible that a field-trip may require a fee to be paid by parents; this will be communicated in advance of the proposed activity.

14. Allergies

Please ensure that any allergies or intolerances to foods are communicated clearly to staff and clearly indicated on the registration form.

15. Medication

If your child develops a fever, exhibits signs of illness, or is injured requiring further medical attention, you will be contacted immediately.

16. Communication

The ASP values and encourages transparent communication amongst all parties, including staff, parents and children. The Coordinator is accessible at all times to discuss parents' concerns or address any questions. If an issue requires more significant attention, an appointment can be organized with the Coordinator a time that is mutually-convenient.

In an effort to continuously improve upon the program, parents are asked to give feedback by speaking directly with the Coordinator, either in person or by telephone, or by sending an email to the Coordinator's attention with any suggestions or program ideas.

You can also contact The Green Barn's Manager, Rhonda-Teitel Payne or The Stop's Program Director, Rachel Gray to address any questions or concerns (see Important Contact Information for their phone numbers and email addresses).

17. Parent involvement and support

Children will be learning a variety of fun cooking and growing skills throughout the duration of the program. It is important that parents support the development of these skills by supporting and encouraging their children to apply them in their home setting.

By helping your child to prepare one of their favourite ASP recipes at home, or allowing them a certain task in preparing the family meal, children can gain confidence and master these important skills.

Children will not only be learning how to cook and grow, they will also be learning how to make healthy food choices and how to shop on budget. We ask that parents be open and supportive of this learning. You could ask your child on a regular basis what they are learning in the program. As a result you may find that you are able to learn new things as well. Involving children in the family grocery shopping or in planning family meals can also your child apply what they are learning and instill important values surrounding food as well as confidence.

18. Important Contact Information

ASP Coordinator: Kanaka Kulendran
Phone number: (416) 651-7867 extension 22
Email: kanaka@thestop.org

Green Barn Manager: Rhonda Teitel-Payne
Phone number: (416) 651-7867 extension 28
Email: rhonda@thestop.org

The Stop's Program Director: Rachel Gray
Phone number: (416) 652-7867 extension 223
Email: rachel@thestop.org