

March 3, 2026

Dear President's Choice Children's Charity Team,

Re: Marketing Strategies within the Power Full Kids School Nutrition Funding Program

Ontario Dietitians in Public Health (ODPH), representing public health dietitians across Ontario, appreciates the financial contribution that President's Choice Children's Charity (PCCC) makes to school nutrition. Through the Power Full Kids™ program—which aims to empower children with good food and food skills and remove hunger as a barrier to education—many Ontario schools and students have benefited from food access and food literacy supports (1).

Recently, ODPH members working directly with school coordinators and regional Ontario Student Nutrition Program (OSNP) leads have raised a concern, that some schools report receiving promotional food items as part of the Power Full Kids™ grant. Specific foods provided to students include PC Rich and Chewy Chocolate Chip Granola Bars and Fruitsations Fruit Flavoured Snacks. Both granola bars with chocolate chips and fruit flavoured candies are on the Do Not Serve list per the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) Student Nutrition Program Nutrition Guidelines (3). After reviewing PCCC's publicly available program pages and FAQs, we find no indication that promotional or branded items are part of the program's design.

This is a concern for our members because ODPH supports the comprehensive restriction of all food and beverage marketing to children. Our position is further detailed in [Ontario Dietitians in Public Health's response to Health Canada's Proposal to Limit Food Advertising to Children \(June, 2023\)](#).

Introducing promotional or branded materials into school food programs risks creating commercial influence in environments where children are particularly susceptible to marketing. Marketing directed at children has been demonstrated to adversely affect their health and well-being and raises significant ethical concerns (2). This concern is particularly relevant given that Power Full Kids™ is positioned around universal, school-based meal and snack provision and food skills learning – not brand promotion or the use of charitable programming as a platform to highlight or normalize specific food products. The program's public materials describe a

commitment to providing “good food” and empowering students with skills to discover food, not exposing them to branded content or commercial messaging within the school food environment.

To ensure alignment between program implementation and the child-centred goals set out in Power Full Kids™, we respectfully request that PCCC consider:

1. Prohibiting the use or distribution of promotional or branded items within school meal and snack programs; and
2. Updating program agreements and guidance to explicitly state that food and materials used within Power Full Kids™ supported programs be free from commercial branding.
3. Food and beverage items provided to schools in Ontario by Power Full Kids™ supported programs follow the [MCCSS Student Nutrition Program Nutrition Guidelines](#) (3).

ODPH would welcome the opportunity to discuss these recommendations and to support your organization to develop clear, public facing guidance that ensures schools that receive funding from PCCC remain non-commercial.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Luisa Magalhaes, RD, MHSc
Chair, ODPH



Kimberly Leadbeater, RD
Co-Chair, ODPH School Nutrition Workgroup

cc.

Hon. Michael Parsa, Minister of Children, Community Social Services

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Hon. Paul Calandra, Minister of Education paul.calandra@pc.ola.org

References:

- 1) President's Choice Children's Charity. Power Full Kids™ program overview [Internet]. Available from: <https://www.pcchildrenscharity.ca/program-overview/> [cited 2026 Feb 12].
- 2) Ontario Dietitians in Public Health. (2019). *ODPH backgrounder: Marketing of food and beverages to children and youth*. Ontario Dietitians in Public Health.
- 3) Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. (2021). *Student Nutrition Program – Nutrition Guidelines 2020*. Government of Ontario. <https://files.ontario.ca/mccss-2020-student-nutrition-program-guidelines-en-2021-11-29.pdf>.