

Food Families

PRICE MATCHING/MEAL PLANNING

MODULE 4

This module was developed in collaboration with

COUPONS  for  HUNGER



PRICE MATCHING/MEAL PLANNING

Module Component	Details
Topic:	Price Matching/Meal Planning
Time Required:	125 minutes
Objective:	The objective of this module is to introduce participants to the benefits of meal planning and price matching.
Learning Outcomes:	<p>By the end of this session, participants will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the value of meal planning • Develop a personalized meal plan specific to their situation and family needs • Make an organized and planned grocery list • Re-invent food into other recipes • Articulate the value of price matching • Implement price matching at the main grocery stores in London • Use the price matching policies for the local major grocery chains • Access a variety of price matching apps • Save money while grocery shopping by implementing price matching techniques
Materials Required:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A variety of grocery store flyers for price matching activity • Internet access • Computer and projector • Healthy snack and beverages
Preparation Required:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare snack and beverages • Print handouts • Prepare "Price is Right" activity • Collect current grocery store flyers for price matching activity (enough for 4 groups) • Install and gain experience using price matching apps on your phone
Budget Considerations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harvest Bucks – 12 x \$30/person = \$360.00
Handouts:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meal Planning Tips • Weekly Meal Planner Templates • Weekly Meal Planner Examples • Price Matching Basics



Module Component	Details
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grocery Shopping List Template • Price Matching Activity • Daily Tracking Sheet (for Money Sense Module)
Sources:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Save.ca • MyFitnessPal Blog • Eating Well • Cooking Light • Food Bloggers of Canada • The Better Mom
<p>Summary Instructions:</p> <p>A = Activity</p> <p>P = Presentation</p> <p>Q = Question(s)</p>	<p>A Welcome And Icebreaker (15 minutes)</p> <p>P Why Make A Meal Plan/Grocery List (10 minutes)</p> <p>P 10 Additional Meal Planning Tips (10 minutes)</p> <p>P Meal Planning Templates (5 minutes)</p> <p>A Build Your Own Meal Plan (20 minutes)</p> <p>P Grocery Shopping Tips (5 minutes)</p> <p>P Grocery List Templates (5 minutes)</p> <p>P How To Be A Price Matching Expert (10 minutes)</p> <p>P Price Matching Store Policies (5 minutes)</p> <p>A Price Matching Activity (20 minutes)</p> <p>P Price Matching Apps (5 minutes)</p> <p>P Prepare For Money Sense Module – Week 7 (5 minutes)</p> <p>P Give Harvest Bucks To Each Participant (5 minutes)</p> <p>A Wrap-Up & Evaluation (5 minutes)</p>



MODULE CONTENT

Part 1 – Activity: Welcome And Ice Breaker (15 minutes)

Script: Welcome everyone to the Food Families program.

PP Slide 3 – ASK:

- Who was able to use coupons during a recent grocery-shopping trip?
- How much were you able to save?
- Did you spend more time organizing your coupons?
- Did anyone collect new coupons? From where?
- Did you experience any frustrations related to the couponing process?
- Does anyone have coupons to share with the rest of the group?

PP Slide 4 – Agenda

- Icebreaker
- Meal Planning – Lots of ideas and tips
- Build Your Own Meal Plan
- Grocery Lists
- Becoming A Price Matching Expert
- Harvest Bucks

Instruction: PP Slide 5 – Ice Breaker – “Price is Right”

This icebreaker is meant to get the group thinking about the cost of various items at the grocery store and to have some fun doing it. It should also help the group understand that pricing can vary from store to store and some stores are just generally more expensive. It’s not about getting the answer right, because there may not be one right answer (each grocery store may have a different price), but it will lead well into the price matching conversation later in the session.

In preparation for the activity, look up the current prices of a number of items one would find at the grocery store and write them down. Make some of them easy, but some of them more difficult.

As an example, ask the group how much each product would cost:

- 1L jar of Kraft peanut butter – it could range from \$2.97 to \$6.99
- 1 box of chicken strips (800 grams) – it could range from \$4.99 (on sale) to \$11.99
- 1 bottle of body wash (650 to 900 ml) – it could range from \$3.73 to \$6.97
- 550 g box – it could range from \$3 to \$5.99
- 650 ml jar of pasta sauce – it could range from \$2.97 to \$4.97



1. Give each participant a blank piece of paper and a pen.
2. Go through the list, one product at a time, and ask them to write down their best guess for the cost of each item.
3. Once you have gone through 6 to 8 products, go back and ask them to share their guesses.
4. Share the price of the product based on a few neighbourhood stores and let them know that, through Price Matching, they can have the lowest price every time.

As you move through the answers, ask them:

- Where do you usually grocery shop?
- What grocery stores typically have the best prices?
- Do you usually just shop at one store?
- Do you look at the flyers each week and take advantage of the sales?
- Would anyone like to save money every time you shop for groceries?

Part 2 – Presentation – Why Make A Meal Plan/Grocery List? (10 minutes)

Script: When it comes to eating in a healthy way and not breaking the budget every month, meal planning is one of the easiest and best things you can do to find success.

PP Slide 6 – Ask the group:

- Is there anyone here that already puts a weekly meal plan together?
- Has anyone tried it in the past?
 - Did it work? What made it successful? Why didn't it work?
- **PP Slide 7** – What are some of the benefits to putting a meal plan together?
 - Makes the planning and preparation for nutritious meals much easier. It's sometimes the worst part of the day trying to figure out what to make for dinner.
 - Your family will be more intentional about the food you eat. You can make healthier choices.
 - You might be able to shop once in the week, which will simplify your life and likely save you from buying additional items you don't need or weren't budgeting for.
 - It will help you be more disciplined, stick to a plan, and reduce your grocery bill.
 - It will stretch your weekly/monthly budget.
 - It will encourage nutrition.
 - It helps avoid unnecessary waste.
 - You avoid stress on busy days.
 - It may encourage eating a wider variety of foods.

PP Slide 8 – Every meal plan may look a little different in the end, but there are some core ideas you will need to consider in order to get started.



Provide the group with the handout.

1. Plan for one week at a time.
 - a. Too much can change from week to week to worry about putting a meal plan together for more than a week at a time.
2. How many meals do you need to plan for?
 - a. Take some time to map out what your family's schedule looks like for the next seven days. Understanding everyone's schedule before you plan your meals will provide you with a good idea of how many meals you will need and who may or may not be around for each meal.
3. What time commitments do you need to consider?
 - a. Do you have a busy week coming up? Are you out on Wednesday night at a school meeting or kid's practice?
 - b. You might want to consider a slow cooker meal for those busy nights or plan to make the meal in advance.
4. What kind of food do you want to eat?
 - a. Things like the weather, changes in seasons, cravings (be careful), or what you had last week might impact what the meal plan for this week might look like.
 - b. Thinking about these things in advance will make recipe selection and the eventual meal plan move ahead much faster and smoother.
5. What is your budget for this week?
 - a. This might be the most important part of the plan. Know how much you can spend and build your meal plan around that budget. Using coupons and price matching will help you get more food for less money.

Part 3 – Presentation – 10 Additional Meal Planning Tips (10 minutes)

Instruction: PP Slide 9-10 – Go through the handout with the group.

Script: Here are some additional ideas you will want to be thinking about as you consider how to best develop a meal plan.

1. Breakfasts are the perfect meals to repeat.

- You will often hear people say that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, and yet, it is the one most of us skip.
- Have two or three breakfast selections you use all the time and rotate through them to get your day started in the right way (e.g. yogurt, fruit, and granola; toast with jam; cereal).



2. *Turn your dinner into leftovers for lunch.*

- Add a little bit more to your dinner planning and you will be making lunch at the same time.
- Make sure to take out a portion and package up your lunch before it gets eaten at dinner.

3. *Cook more vegetarian meals.*

- Animal proteins are typically more expensive, so finding a way to get your protein through other foods is a helpful way to go.
- Beans, lentils, tofu, and whole grains help you get the protein your body needs.

4. *Let each recipe inform the next.*

- Don't just select random recipes as you put your meal plan together. Select recipes that use some of the same ingredients. You might find a recipe with rice and another where you can use the leftover rice.

5. *Store and cook ingredients based on when they expire.*

- When deciding what meals to have on which days, think about using the more perishable items earlier in the week so you don't end up wasting food (and money).
- Organize your fridge so the more perishable items are at the front and more visible.

6. *Concentrate on your family's core recipes – these are the meals you cook often and are family pleasers. The goal is:*

- Prepare 4-5 of these each week.
- Match up with seasonal produce and rotate as the seasons change (this saves you money).
- Create a family cookbook that everyone contributes to and encourage participation in the kitchen.

7. *What food is on sale?*

- Look through your coupon folder to find out what coupons you have that you may be able to use this week.
- Look through the flyers to see what product sales might be happening that you can include as part of your meal plan for the week.
- Be prepared to price match once you get to the grocery store.

8. *Spice it up!*

- Give basic recipes something new.
- Have theme recipes (e.g. Mexican, Italian, Asian, Indian).

9. *Be careful of the expense of meat.*

- Use less expensive cuts of meat.
- Stir-frys and casseroles with added vegetables will stretch your dollars.
- The slow cooker is your friend and is the best way to tenderize those tougher, less expensive cuts of meat.
- Plan for at least one meatless meal. Use beans, lentils, eggs, tofu, and canned fish.



10. *Canada's Food Guide/Foodland Ontario.*

- Include all the food groups in as many meals as possible.
- Pick up FREE recipe booklets at the grocery store for ideas.
- Get to know our seasonal fruits and vegetables.

11. *Prepare and cook food in bulk.*

- Prepare perishable foods and package them in smaller portions to be eaten by family members for snacks or for additional meals. Your family is more likely to eat food that is prepared (e.g. chop all celery, carrots, peppers, and mushrooms).
- Put prepared vegetables, nuts, etc. into smaller "grab and go" bags or containers.
- Cooking large batches of food helps to stretch your food, reduce food waste and cooking time during the week.

Part 4 – Presentation – Meal Planning Examples/Template (5 minutes)

Instruction: PP Slide 11 – See the handout with a sample meal plan and discuss it with the group. Don't plan to read through the entire week, word for word, but highlight some of the main components and demonstrate how the template has implemented many of the tips listed earlier.

Part 5 – Activity – Build Your Own Meal Plan (20 minutes)

Instruction: PP Slide 11 – Give each participant a copy of the meal-planning template and provide him or her with some time to work on completing a plan for the upcoming week. If participants find it easier to work with a partner to consider ideas and brainstorm, facilitate that process.

You might encourage the group to go to Pinterest if they would like some visual ideas related to how to organize their meal plan.

Part 6 – Presentation – Grocery Shopping Tips (5 minutes)

Script: PP Slide 12 – Putting a meal plan together is helpful and important, but if you don't have a plan for the grocery store, all the hard work can be for nothing. You need to purchase the right products to be able to follow through with your plan. Here are some tips and ideas to consider as you prepare for your trip to the grocery store and while you are there.



1. Make a grocery list.

- Use your meal plan to create an action plan.
- Save time and organize your list into food groups, as this is often how the store is laid out.
- Keep a running grocery list in your kitchen for all family members to add to.
- Add an app on your phone – when you are on the run, you can add to it quickly.

2. The Shopping trip:

- Don't shop when you (or anyone else) are hungry, as this results in purchasing food you do not need.
- Keep the list and stick to it.
- Shop the outside aisles most often.
- Purchase, when possible, based on sales, price matching opportunities, and coupons.
- If you bring children shopping with you, find some age appropriate tasks for them so they can participate in the process (e.g. reading the list to you, finding certain items, asking them about colours or flavours of various food). It will keep them more engaged in the process and help them use skills and learn new things.
- Have a plan for when the kids ask for things not on the list – **ANY ADVICE FROM OTHER PARENTS?**

Part 7 – Presentation – Grocery List Template (5 minutes)

Instruction: PP Slide 13 – Provide the group with the handout related to grocery list templates and go through the sample, answering any questions.

Part 8 – Presentation – How To Be A Price Matching Expert (10 minutes)

PP Slide 14 – ASK:

- What Is Price Matching?

PP Slide 15 – Price Matching is asking the store to sell an item for the same price as another store. Price Matching is so popular and an awesome way to save money, shop at only one store, plus use coupons for added value.

ASK:

- Has anyone tried to price match? How did it go? Did you have any difficulty?



Here are some ideas you need to understand about price matching in order to save as much money as possible (**provide handout**):

1. Make your grocery list with the flyers or phone apps close by.
2. Go through the flyers found in London Community News and Our London Weekly.
3. Circle the items and write down the store name next to the item on your list.
4. Know the store policies and bring them with you.
5. Bring your flyers or save items on your phone/tablet app.
6. Inform the cashier that you will be Price Matching and using coupons and ask how they would like you to organize/sort the items for easier checkout.
7. Not all stores price match and you cannot price match non-local stores.
8. Purchase the correct item ensuring you read the fine print, match the exact same item, model number, right size, and flavour.
9. Finding coupons for fresh items can be challenging, but you can price match fruits and vegetables.
10. If you do the prep work ahead of time, your shopping trip becomes easy and quick, making for a successful checkout.
11. Download the Flipp and Reebee apps for the latest flyers on your phone or tablet.
12. Ask for a rain check on sold out Price Match items.

Part 9 – Presentation – Price Matching Store Policies (5 minutes)

Instruction: PP Slide 16 – Provide each participant with updated price matching store policies handout. Go through some of the main components they will need to know and answer any questions the group might have.

Part 10 – Activity – How Much Money Can You Save Through Price Matching? (20 minutes)

Instruction: PP Slide 17 – Using the Price Matching Activity handout, have groups of three move through the activity to see how much money could be saved by price matching a number of basic items.

NOTE: The handout has included a number of basic and mostly generic items that are on sale most weeks. Participants will want to begin to see how much can be saved by purchasing similar products for a lower price (example: Activia yogurt may be less expensive than Liberte).

In preparation for the activity, you will want to gather a number of the most current grocery store flyers available. Participants can use the phone apps if they have them available.

Although not part of this activity specifically, participants will want to be reminded that they can also combine coupons with their price matching to save even more money!



Part 11 – Activity – Show Participants Some Of The Best Price Matching Apps (5 minutes)

Instruction: PP Slide 18 – Introduce the group to some of the most helpful, easy to use, and free price matching apps and how to use them. Current apps include:

- Flipp
- Reebee

Provide the handout with instructions.

Part 12 – Presentation – Preparation For The Money Sense Module In Week 7 (5 minutes)

Script: PP Slide 19 – In a couple of weeks, we will have the opportunity to have a guest speaker come into the group to talk about our money. We are going to get some very practical advice for managing our finances and creating a spending plan that can work, even on a limited budget.

To prepare, it will be helpful for you to think a little bit about your money and how you spend it. This is not meant to make you feel guilty about your money, but to bring awareness so the things we talk about are even more valuable.

We have a **Daily Tracking Sheet (give them the handout)** you can use to track where you spend your money over the course of the next few weeks. It's an individual and private exercise that will ultimately help inform your budgeting process in a few weeks and will be the foundation for some of our conversations. No one else will see your financial information unless you choose to let others see it.

Part 13 – Presentation – Harvest Bucks (5 minutes)

Instruction: PP Slide 20 – You will hand each participant \$30 Harvest Bucks. Make sure to personally hand the money to each person. For any participants who may miss this module, wait until the next time you see them to give them their Harvest Bucks. Don't send the money with another participant.



What are Harvest Bucks?

- Vouchers used to buy fresh vegetables and fruit at participating farmer's markets in London and Strathroy.
- Harvest Bucks is a partnership of London's Child and Youth Network, Middlesex-London Health Unit, local farmers' markets, and other community organizations.

Part 14 – Activity – Wrap Up And Evaluation (5 minutes)

Instruction: PP Slide 21 – ASK:

- What was the most helpful part of the session today?
- Are you ready to start price matching?

PP Slide 22 – Encourage each participant to:

- Complete their meal plan.
- Put together a grocery list, using the template, for their next trip to the grocery store.
- Try price matching the next time they are at the grocery store.
- Continue collecting coupons and use them.
- Track their spending for the week.

Hand out the evaluation and encourage each participant to complete it.

