

Cooking with Your Kids

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Lesson Goals:

Help families achieve a healthier lifestyle through improving food preparation skills.

Objectives:

1. Help parents tap into their child's naturally curious personality through cooking.
2. Increase children's confidence in food preparation.
3. Help families understand the value of family meals.

Introduction:

For a lot of people, the kitchen is the center of family life. Most of us have wonderful childhood memories of food. Some of us believe that we do not have the time to cook or that cooking a meal is not important. However, more studies are now showing positive benefits of eating meals together. Family mealtime is an opportunity to reconnect with each other, model good nutrition habits and make wonderful memories for your children.

Teaching your children to cook is one of the best gifts you can give them. Most children actually enjoy cooking. For them cooking is fun and a new adventure. You may think kids cannot do anything in the kitchen; however, most children can make a positive contribution in the kitchen. When given a butter knife, children can cut bananas, boiled eggs or spread jam on bread. You can also purchase a serrated plastic bread/lettuce knife.

Cooking opens up a whole new world for your children. Cooking teaches children creativity, math, science, reading, writing, organization and time management. Getting children involved in meal preparation is a great chance for you to instill the importance of good nutrition.

Family meals offer an opportunity to improve the nutritional well-being of family members, particularly children. Studies show that families that eat together every day consume more fruits and vegetables, less fried foods both away from home and at home and fewer

sodas. They also have a slightly higher intake of iron and calcium. Even though families are consuming fewer meals together, research shows that families still want to eat together. Here are a few suggestions to help you start planning your own family mealtimes.

Suggestions:

Before you get started, here are a few suggestions to make it an easier and fun experience for both of you.

1. Develop a menu with your child. A sample menu is provided at the end of this lesson. Don't forget to round out the meal with 8 ounces of skim milk.
2. Use age-appropriate recipes. For very small children, try some no-cook recipes. As they get older you may allow them to use the microwave.
3. Take your kids shopping. Shopping for food introduces kids to budgets and new foods. As you make food selections, talk to your child about food labeling. Show them what foods you may want to purchase more often and those you only want to purchase occasionally.
4. Have kids help put groceries away. This is a chance to teach food safety. Teach children which foods go in the cupboard, the freezer and the refrigerator.
5. Have patience with your child. Cooking is a new experience for children. Allow them to make mistakes. Making mistakes is a part of the learning process. Things that seem simple to you may be complicated for your kids. As they get more experience in the kitchen, their skills will improve.
6. Praise your child. Giving your child praise for a job well done helps to build their confidence.
7. Use your time in the kitchen to teach family heritage. Talk with your child about the foods you cooked when you were growing up.



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- Use cooking to talk about other cultures. Search for recipes for cultural foods and prepare them with your child.
- You are about to explore a whole new world. Have fun!

Resources:

- Healthy Meals for Healthy Kids
- Fast Foods — 4-H Foods curriculum
- Cook It Quick — www.lancaster.unl.edu/food/ciq.htm
- Produce Marketing Association — www.aboutproduce.com
- National Dairy Council's — www.3aday.org
- Produce for Better Health — www.5aday.com/
- Dole — www.dole5aday.com/
- Kansas State University — www.kidsacookin.ksu.edu
- Kraft, Inc. — www.kraftfoods.com/kf/
- All Recipes — www.allrecipes.com/
- Better Homes and Gardens — www.bhg.com

Menu Suggestion

When developing a menu, consider nutrition and appearance. Food should nourish the body and please the eye. Luckily, research shows that more colorful diets are healthier. For more detailed suggestions on developing menus, check Fast Foods, the new 4-H foods curriculum. Below is a suggested menu. Recipes also can be found in Fast Foods.

Main Dish

Cinnamon Apple Pork Chops

Ingredients:

- 4 (three-quarter inch) boneless pork chops
- Vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- ½ cup chicken broth
- Chunky Applesauce with Cinnamon (recipe below)

Directions:

- Heat a nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Brush chops lightly with oil. Sprinkle with salt and pepper.
- Brown chops on both sides, turning once, about 3-4 minutes on each side. Add broth and lemon juice. Reduce heat to low, cover and simmer gently for 5 minutes.
- To serve, top with cinnamon applesauce.

Chunky Applesauce with Cinnamon

In a small saucepan, stir together 1 ½ cups chunky applesauce, ½ teaspoon cinnamon and 1 tablespoon brown sugar. (Adjust to suit your taste.) Cook mixture until warm.

OR

Cinnamon applesauce also can be made with cinnamon red hot candy. In a small saucepan, stir together 1 ½ cups applesauce and 2 tablespoons candies. Cook over medium heat, stirring often, until candies are melted; stir well to thoroughly combine.

Serves 4.

Vegetable / Side Dish

Carrot Coins

Ingredients:

- 1 package (1 pound) presliced carrots
- ¼ cup water
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon butter or margarine
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

- Wash carrots and pat dry.
- Place carrots in a medium size frying pan with water. Cook over medium-high heat for 6 to 7 minutes, or until the water has nearly evaporated and the carrots are soft.
- Uncover. Add the sugar, butter and vinegar.
- Season with salt and pepper and serve.

Serves 4.

Dessert

Crystal's Fruit Salad

Ingredients:

- 2 oranges
- 2 red grapefruits
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- ½ cup poppy seed dressing

Directions:

- Peel and section fruit. Remove the white part covering the sections
- Mix fruit together. Add sugar and poppy seed dressing.

NOTE: For a change of pace, use tangerines. This recipe also can be made with strawberries, cantaloupe or honeydew (omit the sugar).

Serves 4 to 6.

