

Cooking with Children

Cooking
with
Children

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Audience: Adults with Children

Preparation Time

Activity 1: 5 min
Activity 2: 10 min
Activity 3: 5 min

Duration of Lesson

Introduction: 15 min
Activity 1: 20 min
Activity 2: 25 min
Activity 3: 15 min
Closing: 5 min

Take Home Handouts

Parent Pages
Cinnamon French Toast
recipe
Mini Pizza recipe



Goal

To increase knowledge and understanding of food safety and sanitation and a child's role in cooking.

Participant Objectives

Participants will:

1. Identify at least one food safety and sanitation practice.
2. Identify at least one reason why involving children in cooking is beneficial.
3. Identify at least one skill 3- and 4-year-old children can perform in the kitchen.

Points to Cover

1. Explain why food safety and sanitation is important for the health of your family.
2. Describe the four ways to practice good food safety and sanitation:
 - Wash hands thoroughly.
 - Don't cross-contaminate.
 - Keep hot foods hot.
 - Keep cold foods cold.
3. Explain that children are natural kitchen helpers and that including children in planning and preparing meals is important for the following reasons:
 - Cooking builds self-esteem and helping in the kitchen builds confidence and early skills of independence.
 - Kitchen tasks give your child a chance to measure, count and see food change, and that's early math and science learning.
 - Cooking together creates closer bonds and lifelong memories.
4. Discuss the cooking tasks that young children can perform.

Activities

Activity 1: Cinnamon French Toast
Activity 2: Mini Pizza
Activity 3: Cooking with Children

Closing

1. Review participant objectives.
2. Discuss the date, location and subject of the next class.
3. Provide take home handouts

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References

[More than Mud Pies](#)

[Nibbles for Health](#)

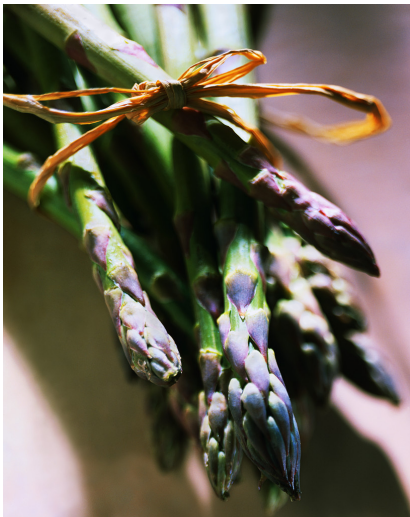
[Physical Activities and Healthy Snacks for Young Children](#)

[Teaching Children About Food](#)

[Tickle Your Appetite](#)

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Cooking with Children

Audience: Adults with Children

Activity 1: Cinnamon French Toast

Preparation Time: 5 min

Activity Time: 20 min

Ingredients

seasonal fresh fruit
eggs
low-fat (1% or less) milk
cinnamon
vanilla extract
whole-grain bread slices
vegetable cooking spray.

Supplies

recipes
cutting sheets
paring knives
electric griddle
mixing bowls
whisks
measuring cups and spoons
pancake turners
small plates
forks
napkins.

Preparation Prior to Class

1. Wash fruit if teams won't have access to a kitchen sink.
2. Place ingredients needed by each team in one container and supplies need by each team in a second container.
3. Place the ingredient container in the refrigerator to chill until class time.

Implementation

1. Warmly welcome participants, creating a comfortable environment where they feel valued and safe being open and honest.
2. Ask participants to wash their hands.
3. Divide the participants into parent-child teams and give each team their two containers.
4. Pass out the recipes and review the steps with the participants. Encourage the participants to allow children to help with the bold steps.
5. Circulate among participants to assist or answer questions as needed.
6. Discuss additional information as participants are cooking.
7. Encourage parents and children to top finished French toast with cut-up fruit.
8. Discuss the importance of fruit in the diet.
9. Encourage participants to sample their French toast.
10. Help them feel good about themselves, and remind them that they are powerful as each small action they take can make a positive difference in the lives of their children.

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Activity 1: Cinnamon French Toast

Preparation Time: 5 min

Activity Time: 20 min

Additional Discussion During this Activity

1. Discuss sanitation issues:
 - Wash hands thoroughly before cooking or eating and whenever they become contaminated.
 - Wash all fresh produce under cold, running water. Wash regardless of whether the produce will be served whole, peeled or cooked.
 - Refrigerate milk and eggs and leftover French toast.
 - Do not taste items made with raw eggs before cooking thoroughly.
2. Discuss wise buying suggestions:
 - Shop for seasonal and local produce for the best price and quality.
 - Choose canned or frozen fruit when fresh is expensive or unavailable.
 - Purchase store brand items (bread, milk, cinnamon, cooking spray and vanilla) rather than the more expensive brand name items.
 - Reconstitute non-fat dry milk for cooking.
 - Eggs are an economical source of protein. French toast topped with fruit and served with a glass of low-fat (1% or less) milk is a complete meal.
3. Discuss highlights from the lesson plan:
 - The importance of children helping to plan and prepare meals.
 - Kitchen tasks preschool children can do.
 - The four ways to practice good food safety and sanitation.
 - The importance of following good food safety and sanitation practices.
4. Discuss the Food Stamp Program:
 - Benefits of participation.
 - How to find out if they are eligible for this benefit and receive assistance completing the application.
 - Contact information for the local Nutrition Outreach and Education Program (NOEP) agency.

Cinnamon French Toast

Yield: 8 slices

Serves: 4 adults

Ingredients

seasonal fresh fruit

4 eggs

1/3 cup low-fat (1% or less) milk

1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

1 teaspoon vanilla extract (optional)

8 slices whole-grain bread

vegetable cooking spray.

Steps

1. **Wash fresh fruit** and slice as a topping for the French toast.
2. Preheat griddle on medium-low heat.
3. Break eggs into mixing bowl.
4. **Add milk, cinnamon (and vanilla, if desired) to mixing bowl with eggs; mix well with fork.**
5. **Dunk bread into egg/milk mixture;** make sure all of the bread is covered.
6. Spray the griddle with cooking spray.
7. Place bread on the griddle and cook for 3 to 4 minutes or until lightly browned. Then flip the French toast over and cook on the other side for 3 to 4 minutes or until lightly browned.
8. Place French toast on plate and **top with prepared fresh fruit if desired.**
9. **Enjoy!**

Have your child help you do the bold steps.

Adapted from [Tickle Your Appetite](#).

Cooking with Children

Audience: Adults with Children

Activity 2: Mini Pizza

Preparation Time: 10 min

Activity Time: 25 min

Ingredients

green peppers
onions
whole-wheat English muffins
tomato sauce
low-fat mozzarella cheese.

Supplies

recipes
oven
baking sheets
cutting sheets
knives
can opener
spoons
measuring spoons
grater
hot pads
wax paper.

Preparation Prior to Class

1. Wash fresh peppers if teams won't have access to a kitchen sink.
2. Place ingredients needed by each team in one container and supplies needed by each team in a second container.
3. Place the ingredient containers in the refrigerator until class time.

Implementation

1. Warmly welcome participants, creating a comfortable environment where they feel valued and safe being open and honest.
2. Ask the participants to wash their hands.
3. Divide the participants into parent-child teams. Give each team their two containers.
4. Pass out the recipes and review the steps with the participants. Encourage participants to allow children to help with the bold steps.
5. Circulate among the participants to assist or answer questions as needed.
6. Discuss additional information as participants are cooking.
7. Advise parents that these mini pizzas are an easy-to-make main course that their children will enjoy. Discuss other vegetable toppings that could be used. Review why this is such a nutritious choice – whole-grain muffin, tomato sauce/vegetables and low-fat cheese.
8. Help them feel good about themselves, and remind them that they are powerful as each small action they take can make a positive difference in the lives of their children.

Cooking with Children

Audience: Adults with Children

Activity 2: Mini Pizza

Preparation Time: 10 min

Activity Time: 25 min

Additional discussion during the activity

1. Discuss sanitation issues:
 - Wash hands thoroughly before cooking or eating and whenever they become contaminated.
 - Wash all fresh produce under cold, running water. Wash regardless of whether the produce will be served whole, peeled or cooked.
 - Refrigerate cheese and leftover pizzas.
 - Once the tomato sauce has been opened, pour unused portion out of the can into another container and refrigerate.
2. Discuss wise buying suggestions:
 - Plan your menu according to what is on sale. Make a shopping list based on what you already have on hand and stick with your list.
 - Purchase muffins at a bread store or when on sale.
 - Purchase store brand items (muffins, tomato sauce and cheese) rather than more expensive name brand items.
 - Purchase a brick of cheese (rather than shredded) and shred it yourself.
 - Check the unit price to determine what package size of cheese is the best buy (as long as it can be used while fresh).
 - Purchase raw vegetables that have been reduced in price because they need to be used immediately.
 - Review unit pricing.
 - Mini pizzas served with fruit and a glass of low-fat milk could be a complete lunch or dinner.
3. Discuss highlights from the lesson plan:
 - The importance of children helping to plan and prepare meals.
 - Kitchen tasks preschool children can do.
 - The four ways to practice good food safety and sanitation.
 - The importance of following good food safety and sanitation practices.
4. Discuss the Food Stamp Program:
 - Benefits of participation.
 - How to find out if they are eligible for this benefit and receive assistance completing the application.
 - Contact information for the local Nutrition Outreach and Education Program (NOEP) agency.

Mini Pizza

Yield: 6 mini pizzas

Serves: 3 adults

Ingredients

- 1/4 chopped green pepper (2 tablespoons)
- 1/8 chopped medium onion (2 tablespoons)
- 4 ounces low-fat mozzarella cheese
- 3 whole-wheat English muffins
- 3/4 cup tomato sauce.

Steps

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. **Wash the green pepper.** Remove stem and seeds, and chop into small pieces.
3. Place onion on the cutting board, and carefully cut off the ends. Cut the onion in half. **Remove the skin and discard with the ends.** Chop the onion into small pieces.
4. Shred cheese onto wax paper, and set aside.
5. **Place muffin halves on baking sheet.**
6. **Spoon 2 tablespoons tomato sauce on each muffin half.**
7. **Top with chopped peppers and onions as desired.**
8. **Sprinkle each pizza with approximately 3 tablespoons shredded cheese.**
9. Place baking sheet in the oven, and bake for 15 minutes.
10. Remove from the oven and **enjoy!**

Have your child help you do the bold steps.

Cooking with Children

Audience: Adults

Activity 3: Cooking with Children

Preparation Time: 5 min

Activity Time: 15 min

Supplies

easel
easel pad
markers.

Preparation Prior to Class

1. Assemble the easel and place a pad on the easel.
2. Determine whether a brainstorm or facilitated group discussion will be the most effective teaching strategy.

Implementation

1. Warmly welcome participants, creating a comfortable environment where they feel valued and safe being open and honest.
2. Begin by explaining how cooking experiences help children grow and develop.
3. Explain that cooking together creates close family bonds and lifelong memories.
4. Introduce the purpose of this activity, which is to get ideas that have helped other parents include their children in kitchen tasks.
5. Start with an icebreaker: How old were you when you helped cook, and what is one of your first family cooking memories?
6. Record participant responses to the icebreaker on the easel pad.
7. Discuss results:
 - What age were most participants when they started to cook?
 - Did most have a childhood cooking memory to share?
8. If you are leading a brainstorm, review brainstorming rules:
 - Any idea is fine – no comments on the ideas of others.
 - It is okay to build on someone else's idea.
 - Yell your ideas out.
 - We will discuss the ideas later.

If you are not leading a brainstorm, go to step 11.
9. Move into the brainstorming questions:
 - What cooking task does your child help with?
 - What mealtime task does your child help with?
 - What kitchen clean-up task does your child help with?

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Activity 3: Cooking with Children

Preparation Time: 5 min

Activity Time: 15 min

10. Record participant responses to brainstorming questions on the easel pad.
11. If you are facilitating a group discussion instead of a brainstorm or need to move the brainstorm along, rephrase the question and ask what tasks your child could help with and share the suggestion prompts below.
 - **Cooking tasks:**
 - Scrub fresh vegetables.
 - Tear lettuce leaves.
 - Mix tossed salad ingredients together.
 - Snap green beans.
 - Dip berries or grapes into water to wash them.
 - Shake liquids together to mix (make a salad dressing).
 - Bring ingredients from one place to another.
 - Spread sandwich filling on bread.
 - Beat eggs with a fork or whisk.
 - Pour liquid ingredients into a bowl.
 - Dump dry ingredients into a bowl.
 - Stir batter with a spoon.
 - Roll a lemon or orange and squeeze out the juice.
 - Cut soft items (bananas or strawberries) with a butter knife.
 - Peel an orange or hard cooked egg.
 - Mash bananas.
 - Cut parsley with dull scissors.
 - **Mealtime tasks:**
 - Clear table for meal.
 - Wash the table.
 - Set the table.
 - Put rolls or bread on a plate or in a basket.
 - Bring items to the table.
 - Pour milk or water from a small pitcher.
 - **Kitchen clean-up tasks:**
 - Bring their dish, utensils and cup to the kitchen.
 - Return other items to the kitchen.
 - Clear table after eating.
 - Wash the table.
12. Use open-ended questions that will enable your participants to share how they have included their children in cooking, mealtime or kitchen clean-up tasks in the past or how they might try to do so in the future.

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Activity 3: Cooking with Children

Preparation Time: 5 min

Activity Time: 15 min

13. Do not call on participants, but allow an adequate amount of time for them to volunteer answers.
14. Affirm all responses.
15. Review and expand upon the information shared in the brainstorm or group discussion in a way that will summarize and motivate.
16. Ask the parents to name one new way to include their children in a cooking, mealtime or kitchen clean-up task this week.
17. Help them feel good about themselves, and remind them that they are powerful as each small action they take can make a positive difference in the lives of their children.

Additional Discussion During the Activity

Discuss the Food Stamp Program:

- Benefits of participation.
- How to find out if they are eligible for this benefit and receive assistance completing the application.
- Contact information for the local Nutrition Outreach and Education Program (NOEP) agency.

PARENT PAGES

Cooking with Children



Tips for Safe Cooking with Children

1. Keep your child safe by watching them carefully.
2. Make sure your child washes their hands before helping.
3. Food safety:
 - o Keep raw and cooked foods apart.
 - o Keep cold food cold in the refrigerator.
 - o Cook food until done, and keep hot food hot.
4. Let your child help you clean up.
5. Praise and thank your child for helping.

Today at child care parents and children did a cooking project together. Cook together. Make meals and memories together. It's a lesson they'll use for life. Your child will have fun helping you in the kitchen and will want to taste the foods that you cook together! Let your child help you prepare the recipe below.

Chicken Tenders

Yield: 5 cups

Serves: 8 adults

Ingredients

- 1/2 medium chopped onion (1/2 cup)
- 1 small chopped red pepper (1/2 cup) (optional)
- 1 1/2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken
- 1/2 cup seasoned bread crumbs
- 2 teaspoons vegetable oil
- 10 3/4-ounce can low-fat cream of chicken soup
- 1 cup low-fat (1% or less) milk
- 1 cup frozen or canned peas.

Steps

1. Cut ends off onion half. Peel onion and **throw away ends and skin**. Chop onions into small pieces.
2. **Wash red pepper**. Cut pepper open, and remove stem and seeds. **Throw away stem and seeds**. Chop pepper into small pieces.
3. Rinse chicken under running water. Then slice chicken into 1/2-inch strips.
4. **Add bread crumbs to a plastic bag**. Add chicken strips to the bag, and **shake to coat chicken with the crumbs**.
5. Heat oil in a large frying pan on medium heat. Add chopped onion and pepper and cook for 2 minutes.
6. Add chicken to the frying pan. Cook for 3 to 5 minutes to brown chicken.
7. Add cream of chicken soup and low-fat milk to the frying pan, and stir well.
8. Add peas to the frying pan. Cover and cook on low heat for 10 minutes to finish cooking the chicken.
9. Serve over cooked rice or noodles. **Enjoy!**

Have your child help you do the bold steps.

Let's Cook Together!



2 Years	3 Years All that a 2-year-old can do plus:	4-5 Years All that a 3-year-old can do plus:
Rinse and scrub vegetables or fruits	Add ingredients	Crack eggs
Tear lettuce or greens	Name and count foods	Peel hard cooked eggs
Snap green beans	Stir	Peel and mash bananas
Break cauliflower	Spread peanut butter and other soft spreads	Cut soft fruit with a plastic knife (Only adults should use sharp knives)
Make "faces" out of pieces of fruits and vegetables	Pour liquids (not hot)	Measure liquids with help
	Knead and shape dough	Help measure dry ingredients
	Add toppings to a pizza	Set the table

As preschoolers grow, they are able to help out with different tasks in the kitchen. While the following suggestions are typical, children may develop these skills at different ages.

Directions: Put a check (✓) in the box beside each task that your child already does. And use the additional ideas to encourage your child to try a new task.

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