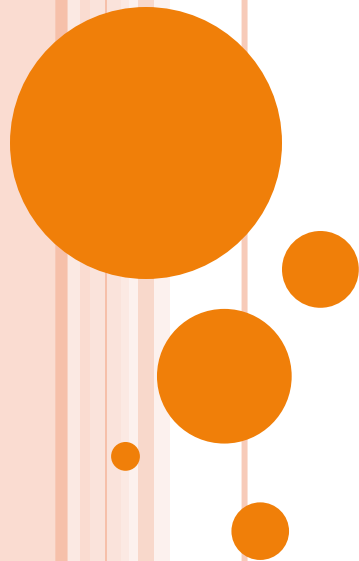


HOW TO TEACH COOKING TO KIDS IN A HEALTHCARE SETTING

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OBJECTIVES

- Understand why cooking classes are an effective way to educate kids and their parents on how to eat better.
- Learn how to conceptualize, develop and execute a kids cooking class in a healthcare setting.
- Discover ways to use cooking classes to help expand educational pediatric programs.



WHY COOK WITH KIDS?

There are many benefits of including children in the meal preparation:

- Exposure to scratch cooking helps kids develop a mature palate and a taste for fresh, wholesome ingredients.
- Kids are much more likely to eat what they make. This is especially important if they are on a specific diet due to a health condition.
- Meals prepared from scratch are usually much healthier than pre-packaged foods and restaurant meals.
- Cooking together provides a natural way to discuss nutrition and ways to deal with any health problems the kids may have.
- The earlier they learn how to cook, the sooner they will learn an essential life skill.
- Spending time in the kitchen gives them confidence. Kids thrive on feeling accomplished. Cooking is an ideal way to boost self-worth and teach responsibility. There is nothing cuter than watching children proudly serving their food to others.
- Preparing meals together means quality time as a family.
- What else do they learn? Science, language, counting, fractions, budgeting, weighing, sequencing, measuring, problem-solving, sharing, fine motor skills, reading, and learning about other cultures – to name just a few important things!



EVALUATING YOUR COOKING CLASS SITE



- It's best to find out as much information as possible before deciding on the class details.
- Determining Space, Budget, Kitchen Equipment, and Staff Support
- Assessing Class Length and Age Groups
- Reviewing Safety Concerns (including Food Allergy Issues)



BEFORE YOU PLAN A CLASS

- TIMING - How long of an event? Time of year?
- SPACE – About the facilities: Kitchen? No Kitchen? Sink? Electricity?
- KITCHEN EQUIPMENT – Oven? Stove? Cooking tools?
- STUDENTS – Ages? Grouping Ages? How many students will fit in the room? How many students will you need for a minimum?
- BUDGET – Find this out before designing class and menu.
- **OTHER CONCERNS: HYGIENE, SAFETY & FOOD ALLERGIES**



DEVELOPING A CLASS & MENU



- There is one more step before deciding on your concepts and menus. It's a good idea to research competitors in your area first. This information will help you figure out:
 - What's already out there that's selling well.
 - What's NOT out there which can give ideas on how to create your own niche by filling a need (or improve on someone else's concept).
 - What price point will work in your community.



DECIDING ON CLASS CONCEPTS

- Focus on a theme for a class such as “Healthy Holiday Meals” in the late fall or “Delicious School Lunch Ideas” at the beginning of the school year.
- Or, offer classes to a particular pediatric population such as kids with diabetes, asthma, inflammatory bowel disease, celiac, food allergies, and other chronic illnesses.
- Make sure that you market the class with a positive outlook to the class – make it sound fun and inviting.



TIPS ON DECIDING ON MENUS

- When deciding recipe(s), make sure you pick something that:
 - Will work in the space that you are using – when in doubt, keep the menu very, very simple.
 - Will be a dish that kids will eat but is not typical kiddie food (finger foods, ethnic dishes, topping with cheese, dips, creamy soups, patties or pancake shaped food, roasted vegetable dishes all work)
 - Can be made in the time allowed.
 - Isn't too spicy – give kids the option to add their own flavors.



TEST YOUR RECIPE(S)

- Test your recipe(s) in advance of class and time it.
- Make notes to determine which equip you'll need.
- Determine how many times you'll need to multiply recipe.
- Modify recipe to be more kid-friendly, if necessary
- Calculate your budget
- Write a detailed timeline for your demo or class



CHOOSING YOUR CLASS TYPE



DEMO – Works well for kick-off events, health fairs, and large pediatric programs with lots of participants.

HANDS-ON COOKING

- **Group cooking** – works well with larger groups of older kids (at least 10 years old, best with teens) when you have very little equipment and a small budget.
- **Individual cooking** – this works best with the really small toddlers and young grade school kids (and older kids too if you have the budget and equipment!). Most kids and teens prefer creating their own dish.
- **Drop-off classes** – refers to kids classes with no parents or adults. I don't recommend this before the age of 4 years old.
- **Adult with child/Family Classes** – These work well in a healthcare setting so that families comply with new dietary instructions for children.
- **One-shot class** –When trying out a new class concept, it's best to start with a one-shot.
- **Series** – It's important to start marketing kid class series in advance.



OTHER WAYS TO IDENTIFY CLASSES

Students and Site

Age Group of Students __4-7 years old__

Amount of Students __Ideally, a maximum of 10__

Kitchen or Classroom _____ Either _____

Budget __~\$30-38 depending on if you have stock items

One-time class or part of series _____ Either _____

Duration of class _____ 1 or 1.25 hrs _____

Check all that apply

Nutrition Activity _____

Cooking Demo _____

Tasting _____

No Cooking _____

“Cold” Cooking (no equip) __X__

Minimal Equipment _____ X _____

Full Kitchen _____ X _____

Family Classes _____



CREATING LESSONS PLANS, BUDGETS, AND LISTS

- The more you plan in advance, the smoother your cooking classes will run.
- Customizing your own Lesson Plan
- Creating Budgets for your Lessons
- Develop Shopping List & Determining Food Amounts per Child
- Check-list for Each Lesson with Prep Plan
- Research Food Safety Concerns



CUSTOMIZING LESSON PLANS

- Everyone has a different method for creating lesson plans for their classes. A basic lesson plan should include a description of the class, the objectives and a list of the necessary tools.
- It's also a good idea to make sure you develop routines for the beginning and ending of each class. Creating structure and being consistent will make it easier for the kids to trust you. The more that they trust you, the more they will open up to your suggestions to try new foods. **Building trust is essential when teaching kids any new skill, but it's especially important when working with food.**



OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER



- **ENDING CLASS**
- Creating a routine for the end of class is just as important as the beginning of class. Sitting down to eat at a table and sharing a discussion may be the only time your students do that all week.

- **HOW TO HANDLE CLEAN UP**
- To determine how involved the kids can be in the Clean-Up will be, you'll have to assess the age group, the amount of time you have and which kitchen equipment you use.

- **CREATING A TIMELINE**
- For beginning teachers, it's best to keep an eye on the clock until you can develop a sense of how to pace each class.

- **DEVELOPING A BUDGET & SHOPPING LIST**
- Make sure you develop your budget and shopping plan in advance.

- **ASSESSING HOW MUCH FOOD TO GIVE TO KIDS**
- It can be hard to figure out how to divide recipes up for classes and/or how many times to double or triple each recipe. It's always a good idea to prepare the recipe in advance and assess appropriate portion sizes for children but here are some very general guidelines.

- **TESTING RECIPES** – Always make sure you test your recipes before teaching them!





PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER

- Plan on Arriving Early and Prepping in Advance
- Make Sure Equipment is Functioning
- Finalizing Lesson Plan and Recipes
- Incorporate Nutrition Education
- Become a Time-Management Master
- Finding Assistants (Volunteer or Paid)
- Creating Recipe Packets and Evaluations
- Collecting Student Info and Creating Mailing List



MANAGING A GROUP OF KIDS

- Make sure you have teachers, parents or other experienced staff to help keep kids under control
- Bring a friend or assistant to help you with food (don't count on site staff)
- Stay on schedule – kids get antsy
- Feed them during the demo while they are cooking – they often eat the most new ingredients while they are preparing the dish.
- Make sure you cushion the class with extra time so that it's not rushed and there is time to relax and eat food at the end.



MARKETING YOUR CLASS

- Make your class sound upbeat, positive and your menu mouthwatering and appealing to your target audience. Keep cultural preferences in mind.
- Make sure you plan enough time before class to market it properly (at least a couple of months).
- Build relationships with other departments who will spread the word.
- Utilize social media, email lists, and other low-cost online marketing options.
- Think outside the box – discover different ways to reach your target audience (online or in person).



HAVE FUN WITH THE KIDS!



- Ask them questions
- Include them as much as possible
- Have them smell, touch, taste a lot
- Share your excitement about food with them!



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Feeding the Whole Family by Cynthia Lair

www.cookusinterruptus.com

The Whole Family Cookbook by Michelle Stern

What's Cooking <http://whatscookingwithkids.com/>

Good cookbooks that have well-written recipes. I also like ethnic recipes – they work well for kids.

Martha Stewart, Mark Bittman, Julia Child, Mollie Katzen, Deborah Madison, Tom Colicchio (I love his older [Think Like a Chef](#) cookbook), Ina Garten, and anything published by [Cooks Illustrated](#). The Classic Italian Cookbook by Marcella Hazan, The Way to Cook by Julia Child, The 60 Minute Gourmet by Pierre Franey, Vegan with a Vengeance and Vegan Cupcakes Take Over the World by Isa Chandra Moskowitz.

Easy Meals to Cook with Kids by Julie Negrin

For more resources, check my website and blog roll at www.julienegrin.com

