

Food Basics
Family Fun
Educator's Guide

Lesson Description

In this class participants will discover ideas for bringing the family together to share meal preparation and improve the family's eating habits.

Lesson Plan

Objectives

- Identify how meal time can help shape better eating habits.
- Recognize ways to get the whole family interested and involved in meal planning and preparation.

Materials

- Video/DVD player
- *Food Basics: Family Fun* video or DVD
- Copies of the "Breakfast Meal Planning Guide" and "Kids in the Kitchen" handouts (attached)
- Peppermint candies
- Pens and pencils

Procedures

1. Introduce yourself and ask class participants to introduce themselves and briefly describe their family's favorite meal. Explain that although family favorites may differ, there are ideas any family can use to get all members interested and involved with meal planning and preparation.
2. Ask participants to think about what they like most about family meal times and what they like least. If participants are comfortable sharing, have them describe their most and least favorite experiences. These might include having a chance to share the day's events as a family, relaxing, or arguing about what to eat and having too many things going on at the same time.
3. Introduce the video by explaining, "Today's video is *Family Fun*. It emphasizes the importance of family meal time, getting everyone involved in meal planning and preparation, and trying new recipes." Ask participants to watch the video and think about ways they might make their family meal time more pleasant.

4. After watching the video, use the following questions and suggestions for discussion:

The video emphasized the importance of eating together as a family. Before the video, we talked about good experiences with meal time and some experiences that were not so good.

What can help create better meal times?

- Don't try to be a "short order cook". Catering to everyone's likes and dislikes doesn't shape healthy eating habits. If you are making different meals, at different times, for each family member, decide to make a change. Work together to come up with a plan to eat the same meal with everyone at the table at least three nights a week. Ask everyone to contribute to planning the meals, and make sure there is at least one menu item everyone likes to help smooth out the transition.
- Turn off the TV and ban pets from the eating area.
- It is hard in this busy world, but whenever possible, ask that everyone stay at the table throughout the meal. Studies show when families eat together, kids have less tendency to use drugs and alcohol and they do better in school.

The video suggested getting all the family involved with meal planning. How could you get your family to participate more?

- To begin to get everyone involved in meal planning, start with breakfast, one of the most important meals of the day. Studies show children who eat breakfast have an easier time concentrating at school, work faster, make fewer errors, and score higher, especially on math problems.
- Refer participants to their handout to try out a simple breakfast menu planning guide and plan three days of breakfast menus.
- Once participants are finished writing their menus, remind them that, to ensure they can FOLLOW the menus they created, they will need to write a grocery list. Have them complete a grocery list using the menus they created.

Now let's talk about some ways to get children involved in meal preparation!

- Find age appropriate tasks for working in the kitchen. The handout lists what tasks children at different ages can complete as long as an adult is supervising to ensure kitchen safety.
- Look over the suggestions for the age levels of your children and circle several tasks that you can start with to get your family involved in meal preparation.

Another fun way to get younger kids (up to age 10) interested in foods is to talk about how different foods appeal to the different senses of taste, smell, touch, sight and sound.

- Have fun exploring the different texture and sensations of foods: soft (canned peach), smooth (yogurt), crunchy (carrots), chewy (granola bar), crisp (baked chip), stringy (mozzarella cheese).
- Think about how smell and taste are connected. Let's try a fun experiment. (Give everyone a small peppermint candy) Hold you nose before putting the candy in you mouth. While holding your nose closed, can you tell the taste? Now let go of your nose. Can you taste the difference?)

As a family, begin to work together by being creative with simple recipes.

- Together with your children, try some of the simple recipes on your handout. You can prepare the recipes as a snack or as part of a meal. It is your choice!
- Be creative in very simple ways such as adding a dash of cinnamon to applesauce, or combining applesauce with mandarin oranges for a different taste!
- Keep in mind that when you involve your children in recipe preparation, it provides the added bonuses of time for learning math (counting and measuring) and practice with following directions!

Wrap Up

Ask participants to set a personal goal to plan, prepare, and eat at least one meal together within the next week.

Breakfast Meal Planning Guide



Handout

Get a healthy start to menu planning with three days of breakfast menus! If you are stuck for different menu ideas, try leftovers for breakfast. There is nothing wrong with using leftovers from dinner, if they have been refrigerated well.

Here is a handy guide to get you started. Plan a few menus now, and then get your children involved in planning additional menus. Write menus that work best for your family. For each breakfast, choose healthy combinations from at least three different MyPyramid food groups. Here's an idea to get you started: grated cheese, shredded potatoes, and diced ham on a whole wheat flour tortilla with apple slices.

<u>Grain</u>	<u>Vegetable</u>	<u>Fruit</u>	<u>Milk</u>	<u>Meat/Protein</u>
cereal*	potatoes	banana	milk	ham
bagel*	baby carrots	pear slices	cheese	peanut butter
rice*	tomato slices	apple slices	yogurt	eggs
tortilla*	fresh salsa	orange wedges	cottage cheese	beans

**Remember to make half your grain choices from whole grains.*

Day 1:

Day 2:



Day 3:

Write a grocery list for the breakfast meals you planned:



Handout

Safety First

Letting you children help with family meal preparation can be the start of some wonderful times together, but that doesn't mean the children are ready to become chefs all by themselves. Here are some general safety tips.

- Never leave young children unsupervised in the kitchen while food is being prepared.
- Teach children about food safety before, during, and after food preparation. This mean washing their hands thoroughly in hot, soapy water before they start, and washing them again after handling a food, sneezing, or going to the bathroom. Make sure countertops and other food preparation surfaces are clean too. Put ingredients away when you're finished with them.
- Make sure the handles of pots on the stove are turned so children can't reach or bump into them.
- Don't let children eat raw foods such as meats or dishes made with eggs, and don't let them lick their fingers or put their hands in their mouths if they've been touching uncooked foods.
- Make sure each child's task is appropriate for the child's age and ability.

A Job for Everyone

2-year-olds can wipe table tops, wash salad greens, scrub vegetables, and put bread in the toaster.

3-year-olds can wash fruits and vegetables, spread soft spreads, pour liquids and cereal, and mix ingredients.

4-year-olds can peel an orange or smash banana using a fork, set the table, peel hard-cooked eggs, knead dough, and grease pans.

5-to 6-year olds can measure ingredients, use a blunt knife to cut soft foods such as cheese, and set the table.

7- to 8-year-olds can grate cheeses, make a salad, roll and shape cookies, find ingredients, and help plan the meal.

9- to 12-year-olds can open cans; use appliances such as a blender, food processor, electric mixer, or microwave oven; and prepare simple recipes on their own.

Kid-Friendly Recipes

If you haven't prepared food together as a family, try the following ideas. All of the recipes are appropriate as snacks or as a side dish or condiment for any meal!

Apple Yum! Core and slice an apple. Place slices in a dish that is microwave or oven safe. Sprinkle with cinnamon and 1 crushed graham cracker square. Heat in the microwave or oven until apple slices are soft.

Smooth Bananas Top 1/2 cup low fat pudding with several banana slices and 1 vanilla wafer. Don't forget to sit at the table to eat!

Salsa Your Way Mix together finely chopped tomato (canned or fresh), finely chopped onion, peppers, and chilies (or your choice) with spices to taste. Use 15 baked (fat free) tortilla chips to dip. Note: you can make your own tortilla chips by placing fat free flour tortillas on a baking sheet, spray with vegetable oil spray, cut into wedges, and bake at 400°F for 8-10 minutes until they are crisp.