

## Eat, Play, Grow: Creative Cooking with Kids

Developed by: Stacey Faith, MS  
HHS Extension Educator – Vigo County  
Area: V

275 Ohio St., Terre Haute, IN 47807  
Email: [sfaith@purdue.edu](mailto:sfaith@purdue.edu)  
Phone: 812-462-3371

**Lesson Overview:** It is common to see kids' behaviors as a reflection of those around them. They see their parents, grandparents, or siblings eating (or not eating) certain foods, and they may base their decisions on what they see. We want to introduce positive, healthy food choices to our youth, so why not start in the kitchen! This lesson will provide some tips and suggestions for raising healthy eaters by getting them in the kitchen and helping them to prepare some delicious recipes everyone will love!

### **Start with the basics – Eat the rainbow; Go, Slow, Whoa foods**

Getting started with the basics is always key, especially with kids! We want to encourage them to make those healthy choices, whether they are at home, at a sporting event, or during school lunches. As they grow older, they begin to make these choices on their own, and we want them to gear toward foods that will benefit their health and overall well-being. One way to teach how to make healthy food choices is the “Go”, “Slow” and “Whoa” technique. Take a look at *Table 1* as a guide to help you and your family make these smart food choices.

***“Go” Foods – Eat almost anytime***

***“Slow” Foods – Sometimes foods***

***“Whoa” Foods – Once in a while or on special occasions***

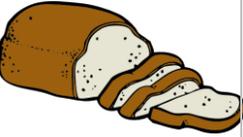
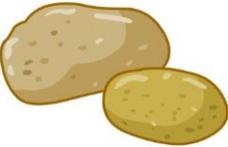
**Table 1**

<b>Food Group</b>	<b>“Go”</b>	<b>“Slow”</b>	<b>“Whoa”</b>
<b>Vegetables</b>	Fresh, frozen and canned vegetables with no added fat and sauces	All vegetables with added fat & sauces; oven-baked French fries; avocado	Fried potatoes (French fries or hash browns); other deep-fried vegetables
<b>Fruits</b>	All fresh, frozen and canned in its own juice	100% fruit juice; fruits canned in light syrup; dried fruits	Fruits canned in heavy syrups
<b>Grains</b>	Whole-grain breads & pastas; brown rice; unsweetened whole-grain breakfast cereals	White refined flour breads, rice & pastas; French toast; taco shells; cornbread; biscuits; granola; waffles & pancakes	Croissants; muffins; doughnuts; sweet rolls; crackers made with <i>trans</i> fats; sweetened breakfast cereals
<b>Protein</b>	Extra lean ground beef; chicken & turkey (without skin); canned tuna in water; beans, peas, lentils; egg whites	Lean ground beef, broiled hamburgers; ham, Canadian bacon; chicken & turkey with skin; low-fat hot dogs; tuna canned in oil; peanut butter; nuts; whole eggs cooked without fat	Untrimmed beef or pork; regular ground beef; fried hamburgers; ribs; bacon; fried chicken, chicken nuggets; hot dogs; lunch meats; pepperoni, sausage; fried fish; whole eggs cooked with fat
<b>Dairy</b>	Fat-free or 1% milk; fat-free or low-fat yogurt (Greek for extra protein!); part-skim, reduced fat & fat-free cheese; low-fat or fat-free cottage cheese	2% milk; processed cheese spread	Whole milk; full-fat American, cheddar, Colby, Swiss & cream cheese; whole-milk yogurt

Source: <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/wecan/>

## Take it to the Store!

Every great recipe begins with a trip to the grocery store. It can be a challenge trying to gather everything on your long grocery list when you have an unhappy child with you. Make grocery shopping a fun trip for kids by having them play *Market Bingo*. Not only will they get the opportunity to search for the healthy foods during the shopping trip, but it is a new way to keep kids occupied during those (what can be) chaotic shopping trips. Simply attach the bingo sheet to a clip board with a crayon or marker, and shop away! This allows children to become engaged in the shopping experience and explore the grocery store in a different way. Once a bingo is completed, they may continue to get bingos, or, depending on how competitive the game gets, you may have an ultimate winner. The winners may either choose a fun activity, such as going to the park to play, or pick out their favorite fruit or vegetable to take home with them.

Market Bingo				
Fruit	Vegetables	Dairy	Grains	Protein
				
				
		<b>FREE!</b>		
				
				

## Getting into the Kitchen

A great way to get children interested in healthy eating is to help them prepare the foods they will be eating. Take your favorite recipes, and find tasks they can easily help out with from setup to cleanup! Just remember, they may need to be shown how to do certain tasks, so allow time to demonstrate so they understand. Before beginning to prepare and cook anything, be sure to do the following to ensure a fun, but productive, time in the kitchen:

- ❖ Supervise everything that is being done
- ❖ Provide sturdy chairs or stools for children who may need them
- ❖ Give tasks that are not too difficult
- ❖ Demonstrate the task, if needed, before continuing
- ❖ Have cleanup time at the end of each task

### **Have fun, but be safe!**

Ensuring kitchen safety is the first step when working in the kitchen. Make sure these rules are being followed when preparing healthy recipes with the Mini-Chefs!

- Always begin with washing hands thoroughly with soap and water
- Make sure hair is pulled back
- Aprons are great for keeping clothes clean
- Gather all utensils and ingredients before beginning a recipe
- Never steer from the recipe directions
- Keep prep area clean of any spills
- Use small-sized kitchen shears for young children to cut foods (i.e. fresh herbs or dried fruits)
- Use wooden spoons to stir foods – the handles will not get hot!
- Always use oven mitts or potholders when moving hot pans from the oven or stovetop
- Face all pot handles inward to prevent them from getting bumped
- Use color-coated cutting boards (red for meats, green for fresh produce) – this will ensure prevention of cross contamination
- Clean all surfaces and utensils used when everything is finished – let items air dry
- Place any leftovers in the refrigerator or freezer to enjoy for later



## Who could do what?

There are a variety of tasks all ages of children can do to help in the kitchen. By simply teaching and demonstrating these tasks, children can help safely prepare delicious recipes!

### ➤ Ages 2-3 years

- ✓ Wipe the countertop and table
- ✓ Place items in the trash
- ✓ Unload the dishwasher with help
- ✓ Place bread slices in the toaster
- ✓ Wash the produce
- ✓ Clear their own place setting
- ✓ Place condiments on the table

### ➤ Ages 3-4 years

- ✓ Crack eggs into a bowl
- ✓ Open packages
- ✓ Measure out ingredients
- ✓ Beat eggs with a whisk
- ✓ Spread peanut butter and/or jelly on toast
- ✓ Knead dough
- ✓ Make PBJ's or simple sandwiches
- ✓ Stir and mix ingredients together with help
- ✓ Pour cereal and milk into a bowl
- ✓ Rinse excess food off utensils before being placed in the dishwasher

### ➤ Ages 5-6 years

- ✓ Peel potatoes or carrots with a peeler
- ✓ Use a blender or mixer with close supervision
- ✓ Set and clear the table
- ✓ Load the dishwasher



*Source: Kansas State University Research and Extension Family Nutrition Program*

## Let's get to cooking!

### **Peanut Butter Popovers**

Makes 10 servings

#### Ingredients

- 1 can (10) refrigerated buttermilk biscuits
- 10 teaspoons peanut butter
- 10 teaspoons fruit preserves

#### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 425°F
2. Lay biscuits on a cookie sheet
3. Flatten slightly with hands
4. Put 1 teaspoon of peanut butter and 1 teaspoon of fruit preserves in the middle of each biscuit; pinch ends together tightly to seal in the filling
5. Baked for 10-12 minutes, until golden-brown in color

### **Roasted Broccoli and Red Peppers**

Makes 6 servings

#### Ingredients

- 5 cups fresh broccoli florets (~1 large bunch)
- 1 red bell pepper, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 2 teaspoons olive or vegetable oil
- ½ teaspoon lemon pepper
- 1 clove garlic, minced

#### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400°F
2. Add broccoli, pepper, oil, lemon pepper, and garlic to a self-sealing plastic bag; shake until ingredients are combined (or mix together in a bowl)
3. Spread mixture out in an oven layer on a baking sheet
4. Bake until vegetables are tender enough to pierce with a fork, ~15-20 minutes.

### **Easy Black Bean & Cheese Quesadillas**

Makes 4 servings

#### Ingredients

- 1 Tablespoon oil
- ½ small onion, diced
- 1 cup black beans, undrained
- ¼ teaspoon seasoned salt
- ½ cup Monterey Jack Cheese, shredded
- 4 (8-inch) whole wheat tortillas

#### Directions

1. Heat skillet over medium heat; add oil and sauté' onions and seasoning salt until tender
2. Add beans and heat through, ~ 2-3 minutes; transfer mixture to clean bowl
3. To make quesadilla, spray non-stick spray in a skillet; add one tortilla; spread with ½ cup bean mixture then ¼ cup cheese
4. Top with second tortilla; when cheese is melted and bottom of tortilla is golden, flip to other side; brown for 1-2 minutes.
5. Remove to cutting board or plate; cut into wedges and enjoy!

*Recipes from University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
Extension*