

Home on the Range Families and Food Together!

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Cooking Together

- Change in cooking & food preparation skills among children/families
- Increased use of pre-prepared, packaged & convenience foods
- Require fewer/and or different skills than traditional or from “scratch” cooking



Why the Change?

- Increased availability of foods in the market (basic/raw & processed)
- Improved & advanced technology for food storage, preparation and cooking
 - Requires new knowledge/skills to cook
- Time & financial demands/realities related to work
- Shifting family priorities/values
- Decreased opportunities for cooking & food preparation skills at home & school



What are “Food Skills”?

- “At an individual and household level, *food skills* are complex, inter-related, person-centered, set of skills that are necessary to provide and prepare safe, nutritious & culturally acceptable meals for all members of one’s household”
 - Knowledge
 - Planning
 - Conceptualizing food
 - Mechanical techniques
 - Food perception



Common Themes

- Women (teens, young adults, mothers) are primarily the cook at home – have greater self confidence/feel more effective than men
- Mothers are primary role models/teachers of cooking, followed by school-based education
- Those responsible for cooking in the home place value on this activity, even though they need to balance different nutrient needs, food preferences, schedules



Common Themes

- Diet quality improves among teens/young adults if they participate in family meals more often or help out with food preparation
- Self-efficacy with basic food preparation skills increases with age
- Factors influencing food choice/food preparation decisions:
 - Taste, nutritional value, cost, time



Common Themes

- Teens help out with food buying/preparation - but not more than 1-2 X per week; females and those with lower SES help out more
- Young adults help out less, even though they say they have skills/resources
- Those from lower SES groups prepare more meals from “scratch” & use less convenience foods



What does this mean?

- It appears that eating processed, pre-prepared & convenience foods have become “*normalized*” within the eating patterns of families
- There is a lack of transferring basic, traditional or from “scratch” cooking and food preparation skills from mothers



Successful Strategies to Improve Cooking & Food Skills in Children

- Program should have a set of community-relevant assumptions
- Opportunities for hands-on learning
- Involvement of parents
- Community-based programs tailored to age and cultural group



Successful Strategies to Improve Cooking & Food Skills in Children

- Content to assist learners address the barriers to improved food choice/cooking practices
- Supportive learning environment
- Programs that show that healthy, cost-effective foods/meals can be done in limited time
- Programs that are longer in duration



Kids in the Kitchen Lakefront School in Crane River

- Partners: NHFI, Lakefront School, PRHA
- CHN, CHW, parent volunteers, school staff
- 8 sessions: 2 hours monthly: Nov-June
- 10 potential students – grades 5-8
- Breakfast/hot lunch kitchen area
- HTN community
- Frontier School supports NHFI projects



Kids in the Kitchen

- Goal: provide foundation for lifelong healthy eating:
 - Providing opportunities for children to improve food prep skills
 - Teach children healthy nutrition practices in a fun manner
 - Give children an opportunity to learn about foods from different cultures
 - Improve social supports for children
 - Enhance community partnerships for children
 - Encourage food security through promotion of affordable meal & snack ideas
- How-to manual: 21 lesson plans/recipes & 25 nutrition activities



Kids in the Kitchen

- Types of activities:
 - Food & equipment safety
 - Sanitation & hand hygiene
 - Food preparation & cooking
 - Creative use of foods
 - Food tasting
 - Gardening
 - Nutrition games
 - Label reading



Kids in the Kitchen Crane River



Kids in the Kitchen Crane River



Kids in the Kitchen Crane River



Kids in the Kitchen Crane River



Kids in the Kitchen Crane River



Meal Bag Activity Swan Valley Food Bank

- Many Manitobans use food banks, including those living on low income, aboriginal peoples, women, children
- Most items provided are non-perishable – boxes, cans, packages
- Recipients may not know how to use these ingredients or lack cooking skills/equipment
- Meal bag activity was a way to promote healthier, low cost food choices that can be prepared with little equipment or skills



Meal Bag Activity Swan Valley Food Bank

- Partners: Swan Valley Food Bank, PRHA, HTN
- Diabetes Dietitian – provided presentation on diabetes & healthy eating to recipients on a food bank intake day
- Review: nutrients in recipe foods, optional ingredients, budget tips
- Meal Bag recipes: *Healthy Start for Mom & Me*
 - Tomato Bean Soup
 - Vegetarian Chili
 - Minestrone Soup
 - Spaghetti with Tomato Lentil Sauce
 - Basic Pancakes



Meal Bag Activity Swan Valley Food Bank

- Meal bag concept:
 - Recipe for a nutritious meal for 4-8
 - Includes non-perishable & measured ingredients, like spices
 - Low cost & healthy; use common ingredients
 - Made using minimum kitchen gear – pot, spoon, can opener, stove
 - Use basic cooking skills – mix, stir, cook on stove/burner
 - Can be kept on hand and saved for a “rainy” day



Meal Bag Activity Swan Valley Food Bank

- Cooking demonstration with a meal bag
- Recipients chose a meal bag to take home
- Recipes were provided



Eating Together

- Children/teens who eat dinner with the family:
- Better Nutrition
 - Eat more veg/fruit, grains, calcium-rich foods
 - Get more fiber, calcium, folate, iron, vitamins B6, B12, C & E
 - Drink less pop
 - Get less saturated/trans fat
 - Role modeling by parents promote better eating habits if healthy choices are made



Eating Together

- Better Mental Health:
 - They are more emotionally fit
 - The more they eat together, the more they feel connected, communicate & support each other
 - Teens who eat with their families 5 times per week are less likely to attempt suicide
 - Teens who eat with the family are less likely to get in serious fights



Eating Together

- **Better Health:**
 - Children and teens who eat family meals are less likely to be overweight/obese
 - Teens who eat with their family are less prone to eating disorders
 - Teens who eat with their family more often are less likely to be sexually active by age 16



Eating Together

- **Better School Performance:**
 - Preschoolers who eat with their family have increased vocabulary
 - Students who eat dinner with their families 4 X per week or more score higher on achievement tests and have better grades
- **Less Substance Abuse:**
 - Teens who eat with their family 5 X per week or more:
 - Are less likely to smoke
 - Are less likely to use or try marijuana



Getting Started Plan

- **Choose a Goal:**
 - Have a meal together ____ per week
 - Determine which meal – B, D, S
- **Develop action steps:**
 - Plan meals together
 - Shop together
 - Cook together
 - Eat together
 - Clean together



Getting Started Plan

- **Plan Together:**
 - Include kids in planning meals for week
 - Take turns picking meals
 - Keep it simple! It does not matter what cooking skills are – make sandwiches
- **Shop Together:**
 - Include kids in making shopping list
 - Take kids to the store
 - Ask kids to read the grocery list & find items



Getting Started Plan

- **Cook Together:**
 - Share the kitchen with kids – be prepared for some messes
 - Start on a weekend
 - Work as a team
 - Be patient and relax
 - Set up kitchen safety rules
 - Have an adult with young children all the time
 - Introduce new food items with familiar ones
 - Assemble ingredients and equipment
 - Review recipe with kids



Getting Started Plan

- **Eat Together:**
 - Parents decide *WHAT, WHEN, WHERE* food is served; Children decide *WHETHER, HOW MUCH* to eat
 - Set up regular times for meals/snacks
 - Serve food family-style
 - Wait until everyone is seated before starting to eat
 - Turn off TV, computers, & phones



Getting Started Plan

- **Eat Together:**
 - Keep experience pleasant – talk about fun topics
 - Don't force kids to taste new foods – need 8-10 times
 - Do not force kids to clean their plates
 - Treat all foods equally
 - Keep something handy to clean up spills
- **Clean Together:**
 - Divide tasks & responsibilities by age



October is National *Eat Better, Eat Together* Month

- Post information on family meals
- Develop a community cookbook of favorite family meals
- Host a community event
- Sponsor a family food, & fun night
- Develop displays or booths
- Report a family's experience eating together
- Incorporate the theme into existing programs



Home on the Range Families and Food *Together!*

- Carol Schnittjer RD
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 - 629-3002
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- Handouts:
 - Websites
 - Resources
 - Meal bag recipes

