



## MAKING RECIPES WORK FOR YOU: YOUR FAMILY, YOUR CHOICE *60-minute lesson*

### GOAL

Encourage caregivers to adjust recipes to maximize their food resources and meet their family's needs.

### OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Practice using recipe frameworks.
- ✓ Discuss how to substitute ingredients in recipes.
- ✓ Share meal ideas that allow each family member to choose the toppings or ingredients that they enjoy.

### KEY MESSAGES

- ✓ Make small changes to recipes to make them work better your family and your budget. If a recipe calls for a food that is too pricey, too hard to find, or that you simply don't care for, just sub in another.
- ✓ It's ok to start with just a concept or an idea instead of an exact recipe.
- ✓ Don't worry – and keep practicing. As you develop your cooking confidence, you'll get better at making simple recipe adjustments.
- ✓ Try simple meals that allow kids or other picky eaters to choose their own toppings or ingredients.

### MATERIALS

Flip chart or white board • Markers/pens • Name tags • Ingredients and equipment for your chosen recipes • Materials for the kids' activities (if using – optional)

### KIDS' ACTIVITY OPTIONS

**We have provided a booklet of activities that can be used with kids.** The following are suggestions for specific activities that may be complementary to what caregivers are learning in this lesson. **You are not limited to this list** – feel free to use whatever activities are most appropriate for your situation.

Note that some activities are written for the whole family, but can be easily modified for an activity with only kids.

- For younger kids:
  - Imaginary Cooking, page 14
  - Exploring Tables Around the World, page 20
  - Food Origins Game, page 35
  - Any of the coloring sheets on pages 21-32
- For older kids:
  - Serve a Healthy Plate, page 48
  - Filling Up MyPlate, page 53

## CAREGIVER HANDOUTS

We have provided a comprehensive set of handouts for each lesson that can be 1) used as references for the instructor to prepare for class 2) referenced verbally and/or visually during class to guide discussion 3) provided as take-homes for caregivers to reinforce what they learned in class and encourage further learning. **You are NOT required to provide all of these handouts as take-homes** (though you may if you wish). Feel free to pick and choose which you feel are most helpful and appropriate. However, we ask that **at a minimum you provide a printed copy of the recipe(s) you prepared in class, as well as the Making It Work at Home handout.**

Check off the handouts you plan to reference during class

- Cooking Terms
- Measure Up
- Making Recipes Work for You
- Sub It In
- Lighten Up
- Make Your Own Baby Food
- Step-by-Step Pasta Dinner
- Super Salads
- Step-by-Step Stir-Fries
- Make Your Own Muffins
- Soups Made Simple
- Casseroles: An Easy, Make-Ahead Meal
- Making It Work at Home**

## RECIPE OPTIONS

Choose **at least 1 snack and at least 1 meal or side dish** (or as many as time allows) for the hands-on cooking. The following chart provides some ideas. You may use other recipes if you wish – see [CookingMatters.org/recipes](http://CookingMatters.org/recipes) for more ideas. If you are not using a Cooking Matters recipe, please be sure it contains only ingredients that are affordable and accessible for low-income caregivers, does not require fancy cooking tools, and follows healthy eating guidelines. If of interest and appropriate for your group, make your own homemade baby food in place of the snack.

Snack Ideas			
Recipe Ideas	Prep and Cook Time	Time Saving Tips	Talking Points
<a href="#">Yogurt Parfait</a>	Prep Time: 10 minutes Cook Time: 0 minutes	If using homemade granola, make in advance.	“Use any high-fiber cereal you like instead of granola.”  “To save money, use fresh fruits that are in season. When seasonal fruits are hard to find, use thawed frozen fruit.”
<a href="#">Peanut Butter and Banana Pockets</a>	Prep time: 10 minutes Cook time: 15 minutes	No advanced prep needed.	“Substitute bananas with apple slices, dates, peaches or another favorite fruit.”  “If you’re in a peanut-free environment, try another nut butter like sun butter.”

Recipe Ideas	Prep and Cook Time	Time Saving Tips	Talking Points
<a href="#">Spicy White Bean Dip</a>	Prep time: 15 minutes Cook time: 0 minutes	Prepare cut vegetables in advance for serving with dip.	<p>"To save time or money, use ½ teaspoon garlic powder in place of minced fresh garlic cloves and 2 teaspoons dried parsley in place of chopped fresh parsley. Try other beans instead of cannellini if you like."</p> <p>"Kids don't like garlic? Season with other spices you might have on hand, like dill, rosemary or basil."</p>
<a href="#">Make Your Own Baby Food handout</a>	Prep Time: 10 minutes Cook Time: 10 minutes	Prepare a batch in advance to ensure the recipe has cooled for tasting.	<p>"Fruits and vegetables are a great first food for baby. Start with mild- tasting fruits and vegetables, such as bananas, avocados, sweet and white potatoes, peas, and winter squash."</p> <p>"Making your own helps cut down on family food costs."</p>

**Meal or Side Ideas**

Recipe Ideas	Prep and Cook Time	Time Saving Tips	Talking Points
<a href="#">Step-by-Step Pasta Dinner</a>	Prep Time: 15 minutes Cook Time: 15 - 20 minutes	Review the handout and choose appropriate pasta, protein, veggies, sauce and seasoning for timeframe.	<p>"Pasta dishes are great for throwing in leftover veggies, thawed frozen veggies, canned veggies – whatever you've got."</p> <p>"These are perfect recipes to double and serve leftovers for lunch or dinner later in the week."</p>
<a href="#">Step-by-Step Stir-Fries</a>	Prep Time: 15 minutes Cook Time: 15 - 20 minutes	Review the handout and choose appropriate veggies, protein, optional flavoring, sauce and grain for timeframe.	"Stir-fries are a great way to get a colorful variety of fresh, frozen and canned vegetables into a single meal. Use leftover veggies, or throw in veggies that may go bad soon."

Recipe Ideas	Prep and Cook Time	Time Saving Tips	Talking Points
<a href="#">Turkey Tacos</a>	Prep time: 20 minutes Cook time: 25 minutes	Prepare vegetables in advance.  Drain and rinse beans in advance.  Grate cheese in advance.  Focus lesson on cooking and assembling recipe.	"Tacos offer lots of flexibility to accommodate family members' different tastes and preferences. Create a "taco bar" with all fixings on the counter, and let eaters can assemble their tacos according to their preferences." "Use any type of cooked beans you like and/or have on hand in the pantry." "Got a vegetarian in the family? Brown the meat separately, and then combine half of the veggie filling with the meat. Leave the remaining half without meat."
<a href="#">Hearty Egg Burritos</a>	Prep time: 20 minutes Cook time: 20 minutes	Prepare vegetables in advance.  Drain and rinse beans in advance.  Focus lesson on cooking and assembling burritos.	"This recipe can be adapted in so many ways to suit different tastes. Keep it simple for picky eaters: just eggs, cheese, and beans, perhaps with a simple veggie they enjoy on the side. For those who like more flavor, add color and flavor with a fresh salsa, try different cheeses like Monterey Jack or Colby cheese, throw in leftover cooked veggies, etc."
<a href="#">The Works</a> <a href="#">Pizza</a> or <a href="#">Mini Pizzas</a>	Prep time: 30 minutes Cook time: 25 minutes	Prepare vegetables in advance.  Preheat oven.	"Pizza offers endless ways to offer a variety through a 'pizza buffet." "Top with vegetables that are on sale or in season for a budget-friendly meal." "Do your kids fuss about veggies on pizza? Make half the pizza with vegetables for adults; put kids in charge of topping the other half with their favorites. Serve their favorite veggie on the side if they don't like it on the pizza."

## CLASS TIME

### PAPERWORK (5 MINUTES):

As caregivers arrive, have them complete the demographics portion of the participant survey and sign a waiver.

### MAIN COURSE: LESSON TOPIC (50 MINUTES):

#### INTRODUCTION: (5 MINUTES)

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1. **Welcome caregivers.** Introduce instructors and any other volunteers or helpers.
2. **Set expectations.** Explain caregivers will learn how to save money on food and meet their family's needs by using recipes as frameworks, substituting recipe ingredients, and serving meals that allow family members to customize their plates.
3. **Get acquainted.**



*"Show of hands — Who has infants? Toddlers and preschoolers? School-aged children? Teenagers?"* Make note of this information so you can focus on sharing tips that are most relevant for the age groups represented.



*"What are you looking forward to learning in this session?"* Write their responses on flip-chart paper and make an effort to cover as many of their questions as possible.

#### HANDS-ON COOKING AND DISCUSSION (45 MINUTES)

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1. **Begin by having kids and caregivers prepare and eat the snack together.**

- Have kids and caregivers wash hands using proper technique.
- As caregivers and kids prepare the snack:



*"Have you ever seen a recipe that you thought looked enticing, then came across one ingredient or one recipe step that made you skip it? What was it about the ingredient or directions that made you want to disregard the recipe entirely?"*

- Point out that recipes are simply cooking guides, not necessarily meant to be followed exactly. Introduce the idea that making small changes to recipes lets you save time and money and meet your family's needs. If your recipe calls for a food that is too pricey, too hard to find, or that you simply don't care for, try subbing in another.

- Point out the various ways making small changes to recipes lets you stretch your food resources. Discuss how caregivers can start with a recipe and adjust the ingredients based on:
  - Foods you have on hand, including leftovers (time-saver!)
  - Your family's tastes (kid-pleaser!)
  - What's in season (money-saver!)
  - Ingredients on sale (money-saver!)
  - The amount of time you have free to cook (time-saver!)
  - Healthier cooking methods (health-pleaser!)
- Mention that recipe substitutions are also a great way to introduce new foods to kids or make favorite family recipes healthier. Start with one small change. You probably won't be able to taste the difference. Slowly try making other changes, one at a time. Offer examples from the chart below:

SUBSTITUTIONS TO MAKE RECIPES HEALTHIER
❖ Choose low-fat or nonfat versions of mayonnaise and dairy products like milk, cheese, sour cream, and yogurt.
❖ Choose whole wheat pasta or whole grain pasta blends instead of white pasta.
❖ Season with herbs and spices instead of salt.
❖ Skip the white rice. Serve recipes over brown rice, barley, quinoa, whole wheat couscous, bulgur, or polenta instead.
❖ In recipes like tacos and chili, swap half the meat for beans. You'll add fiber and reduce unhealthy fats...and save money by using less meat, which is more expensive.
❖ Use canola oil in place of half the butter when you bake.
❖ Bake, broil, or grill instead of frying.



*"I'd like to hear from the kids. What did you like about today's snack? What might you change to help you like it better (e.g., using a different fruit)?"*

- Point out easy swaps caregivers can make to suit their children's tastes. Remind them that hearty snacks like Peanut Butter and Banana Wraps can be made as a simple dinner meal too!

## 2. Next, have caregivers prepare a meal or side dish.

- Have caregivers and kids wash hands again before handling the ingredients.

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***NOTE:** If you have a helper to lead children, this is a good time to pull kids into a separate activity of your choosing while caregivers continue the discussion. If not, identify a specific cooking task for kids or give them a designated area for independent play.*

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- Introduce the recipes you have chosen and show caregivers the ingredients you'll use. Identify any ingredients in the recipe you are substituting due to cost, convenience, or other reasons.
- Delegate different recipe steps as needed. While caregivers are working, discuss the idea of starting with an idea for a dish you want to serve rather than having a specific recipe. Offer the following examples of recipe ideas:

RECIPE IDEA TYPES: EXAMPLES		
Recipe Idea	What It Is	Making it Work for You
Soup/stew	Meat and/or vegetables cooked slowly in a broth with seasonings	Mix it up with different meats, vegetables, or beans. Season to your tastes with different herbs or spices. Go meatless.
Casserole	One-pot dish cooked slowly in the oven. Often contains rice or pasta, vegetables, beans, and/or meats.	Use different types of cheese or different shapes of pasta. Add chopped vegetables, meat, or tuna. Season with different spices.
Salad	Mix of grains, fruits, and/or cold veggies with a dressing	Use different veggies, nuts, or dried fruits.
Wrap	Mix of hot or cold foods inside a sandwich wrap	Use different beans, vegetables, cheeses, or herbs. Replace the eggs with tofu. Make heartier by adding leftover rice or cooked meats.

- Next, introduce the concept of "recipe frameworks." Refer to the "Casseroles: An Easy, Make-Ahead Meal" handout or any other recipe framework from our collection to guide the discussion.
- Point out that any recipe can be used as a framework when you identify the different categories of ingredients listed in the recipe, as it's already done in the recipe frameworks, e.g., protein, vegetables, sauce, whole grains, toppings.
- Review the recipe being used for the hands-on cooking to demonstrate how to call out categories of ingredients to create a recipe framework on their own.



“What concerns do you have with using and adjusting recipes in this way?”

- Let other caregivers share ideas. Remind caregivers not to stress about altering recipes, and that as they develop confidence in cooking, their ability to make simple recipe adjustments will improve. The internet is a handy tool for recipe substitutions – a simple search can give you lots of great ideas for ways to make a recipe work better for you.
- Have caregivers share some more of their favorite or most creative substitutions – particularly those that have saved them lots of time or money, or have gotten them a big win with their kids!

### 3. If kids and caregivers have been separated, bring them back together for eating time.

- As kids join for eating, model the way a single meal can be served to allow family members with different needs or tastes to modify at the table, such as:
  - Serve sauces and other toppings on the side.
  - Create an “assembly line” for wraps, tacos, or other meals.
  - Create individual servings – for example, divide pizza dough into individual portions and have kids decorate their own pizzas before they are cooked. It’s the same amount of dough and cooking time!
  - Place spice blends on the table to allow eaters to spice their meal according to tastes.
  - Make sure there’s at least one thing everyone at the table will like. Getting kids involved with the meal planning can help with this!

### CLOSING (5 MINUTES):

- **ENCOURAGE:** Encourage caregivers to choose one thing they learned today that they will commit to trying at home this week. Have them share aloud if they are willing.
- **ASK:** Model mealtime conversation starters between families by asking kids to share with their caregivers their favorite part of today’s session, the best food they tried, and/or something they want to try helping with at home.
- **TAKE:** Share handouts for caregivers to take home, as well as any incentive items you are providing. **Caregivers must complete the participant survey questions and return the forms to you before receiving their take-home items.**

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