

Keeping Food Safe

Prevent foodborne illness in your child care with these steps.



Practice Good Hygiene

Washing your hands is the best way to prevent the spread of germs.

Wash your hands and children's hands:

- Before, during, and after you prepare food
- Before you eat
- After you use the bathroom, change a diaper, or clean with chemicals
- After touching animals or animal waste
- More often when someone in your home is sick

Wash your hands properly with these steps:

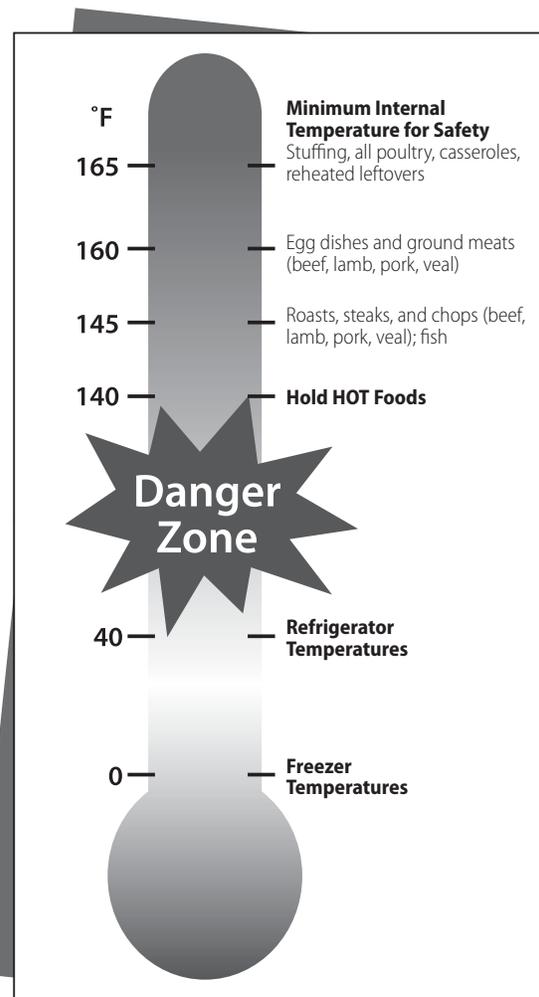
1. Use warm running water and soap.
2. Rub your hands together for at least 20 seconds (the time it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice). Scrub under your fingernails, between fingers, and the backs of your hands.
3. Rinse and dry hands with a disposable towel.

Avoid Cross-Contamination

- Use different cutting boards for raw meats, poultry, and seafood than for other foods.
- Keep counters, cutting boards, and utensils clean. Wash them with hot, soapy water. Then, sanitize them with bleach solution.

Keep Foods Out of the Danger Zone

- Do not let food sit at a danger zone temperature* for more than two hours. If it does, throw it out.
- Use a food thermometer to be sure food is safe to eat.
- Keep freezer temperature at or below 0°F.
- Keep refrigerator temperature at or below 40°F.



*The FDA and some health agencies use 41°F to 135°F as their reference temperatures for the Danger Zone. Check with your local health department to find out which guidelines you must comply with.

Sizing Up Safety

Little mouths and lots of energy put kids at greater risk of choking. Know how to keep kids safe.

Steps to make mealtime safe:

- Have children serve themselves small amounts at a time.
- Stay with children while they are eating. Watch them closely.
- Ask kids in your care to:
 - **Sit up.** Never allow a child to eat while lying down, walking, or running.
 - **Stay calm.** Encourage children to keep calm. No yelling or horseplay while eating.
 - **Eat slowly.** Encourage children to eat one bite at a time.
- Prepare foods in a way that is safe. The chart below tells you how.



Choking Risk	Examples	Safe Solution
Shape Marble-sized or round foods can get stuck in a child's throat.	Hot dogs Hard candy Dried fruit Popcorn	Cut into short strips rather than round pieces.
Smooth and Slippery Smooth foods can slip down a child's throat before they have a chance to chew.	Cherry tomatoes Cooked pasta	Chop into quarters or smaller.
Sticky Sticky foods can "ball up" in the airway and get stuck.	Peanut butter Fruit roll-ups Marshmallows	Spread thinly on crackers or bread. Or, cut into small pieces.
Hard to Chew Foods that take a long time to chew or are hard to break down can get stuck.	Bagels Beef jerky Large pieces of meat	Cut into small pieces.
Hard and Crisp Foods that break into chunks may slip into the throat before they are chewed.	Pretzels Chips Raw carrot sticks Other raw vegetables	Cook until soft enough to pierce with a fork, cut into thin strips, or break into small pieces.

Avoiding Food Allergens

Consult with the parents of food-allergic children to manage day-to-day feeding.

You should know:

- A food allergy is a reaction that occurs when the body's immune system mistakes a food for something harmful.
- Most food-allergy symptoms are just uncomfortable, but some people have severe, life-threatening reactions.
- Food allergies may occur at birth or develop at any age.
- Children who are allergic to the same food may react very differently.

What you should do:

- Check with your state agency to find out which allergy records you must keep on file. Have parents fill out these forms. Ask for doctor's notes outlining what to do in an emergency and a complete list of foods to avoid.
- Read food labels carefully to look for hidden allergens. Learn more about reading labels for allergens at www.foodallergy.org.
- Try to plan meals that everyone can eat together. When separate foods are needed, make meals that are just as healthy for food-allergic children.

Food allergies can be related to any food, but most reactions are caused by these 8 foods:

- Milk
- Eggs
- Fish
- Shellfish
- Soy
- Wheat
- Peanuts
- Tree nuts

Where can I get more information?

American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (AAAAI)

www.aaaai.org

Food Allergy Research & Education

www.foodallergy.org

Making Recipes Work for You

Learn to adjust recipes to meet your needs.

Make changes to recipes based on:

- Foods you have on hand, including leftovers
- What's in season
- Tastes of the kids in your care
- Ingredients on sale
- The amount of time you have free to cook
- Healthier cooking methods



Use the following ideas to combine foods and flavors in a way that appeals to the kids in your care.

Type of Recipe	What It Is	Example from Your Book	Make It Work for You
Soup/stew	Meat and/or vegetables cooked slowly in a broth with seasonings	Chicken Soup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mix it up with different meats, vegetables, or beans. • Season 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	Casserole framework (page 17)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	Southwestern Black-Eyed Pea Salad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use different grains, veggies, nuts, or dried fruits.
Wrap	Mix of hot or cold foods inside a sandwich wrap	Veggie Wraps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use different beans, vegetables, cheeses, or herbs. • Make heartier by adding leftover rice or cooked meats.

Soups Made Simple

Soup makes an easy lunch or dinner.

Leftovers can be frozen for another day.

Use the chart below to choose ingredients from each column. Follow the chef's tips and step-by-step directions below to make your soup.

Protein 1 pound (diced meat)	+	Vegetables 2 cups, chopped	+	Liquid 4 cups	+	Whole Grains 1½ cups, cooked
Beef (shoulder, round or brisket)		Onions		Water		Brown rice
Chicken/Turkey (leg or thigh; boneless, skinless)		Greens (spinach, kale, collards, chard, etc.)		Low-sodium stock/broth		Whole wheat pasta
Pork (shoulder/butt)		Celery				Barley
Beans or lentils (cooked, or drained and rinsed from a can)		Zucchini				Quinoa
		Tomatoes				
		Carrots				
		Mushrooms				
		Broccoli				

If using meat as your protein:

1. Heat 1 Tablespoon canola oil in a soup pot over medium-high heat. Sauté meat until lightly browned, about 5 minutes.
2. Add the vegetables. Reduce heat to medium and sauté for 5 minutes. If using canned vegetables or thawed frozen vegetables, skip this step and add vegetables during step 4.
3. Add liquid and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 25-30 minutes or until meat is cooked through. Stir occasionally to keep ingredients from sticking to the bottom of the pot.
4. Add cooked grains during the last 5-7 minutes of cooking time, to warm through.

If using beans or lentils as your protein:

- Skip step 1 above. Follow the remaining steps, adding beans to the liquid in step 3. Shorten the total cooking time to 15 minutes.



Chef's Tips:

- **Vegetables:** Softer vegetables like spinach or zucchini will cook faster. Add during the last 5-7 minutes of cooking time.
- **Whole Grains:** Cook grains according to package instructions ahead of time. Refrigerate and add to soups you make that week.
- **Seasonings:** In addition to salt and pepper, try adding herbs and spices such as dried thyme, parsley, or ground cumin. Or, kick up the flavor by adding some minced garlic, hot peppers, ginger, or citrus zest. When using fresh herbs, add them at the end of cooking to keep the flavor fresh.
- This recipe framework should provide approximately 6 servings for 3-5 year olds in CACFP and fulfill one meat, one vegetable, and one grain component for lunch or supper. Different meats and vegetables cook differently so measure each component to be sure before serving.

Snacks in a Snap

Let kids help you make tasty snacks* that will power them through the day.



Avocado Crunch

Let children mash 1 ripe avocado in a bowl. Add juice from half a lemon, 2 teaspoons of sunflower seeds, and a pinch of salt. Spread over Cucumber Sammies (right), or serve with vegetable slices or whole wheat crackers.

Cucumber Sammies

Cut cucumbers into 1/8-inch slices. Help children top with egg salad, tuna salad, Avocado Crunch (left), or turkey and cheese. Cover with another cucumber slice.

Baked Apples

Core apples and place in a microwave safe dish. Each child can fill their apple with about 1/2 teaspoon of butter, brown sugar, and cinnamon. Add a few raisins, if desired. Cook for about 6 minutes in the microwave. Allow to cool before serving with toasted whole wheat pita wedges dusted with cinnamon.

Kabobs

Cube different cheeses and slice a mixture of fruits. Invite children to make snack kabobs on coffee stirrer "skewers" or pretzel sticks.

Seasonal Fruit Salad

Let children help you wash and peel fruits that are in season. Cut into bite-size pieces. Combine in a large bowl. Squeeze the juice from half a lime over the fruit. Drizzle with a Tablespoon of honey if you like. Serve family-style with graham crackers.

Banana Crunch

Ask for help mashing one large, very ripe banana in a bowl. Add 1/4 to 1/3 cup of low-sugar granola, a dash of cinnamon, and mix. Spread onto thin wafers or graham crackers.

Roasted Vegetables

Preheat oven to 375°. Wash and cut several types of root veggies (beets, carrots, parsnips, sweet potatoes, turnips, etc.) lengthwise, into "fingers." Toss in a large bowl with 2 Tablespoons of canola oil, 1/2 teaspoon of salt, and 1/2 teaspoon of pepper. Place in a single layer on a baking sheet in preheated oven. Roast for 35-45 minutes, until tender. Serve over brown rice.

Smoothie

Have children help add ingredients to a blender. Use 6 ounces low-fat milk, 2/3 cup of frozen fruit, and 1/2 teaspoon of honey, if you like. Little fingers can press buttons to be sure everything is blended well. Pour and serve with whole oat granola bars.

*Snacks are for kids aged 2 and older. Adjust the ingredients as needed so that each child receives the age-appropriate amount to meet CACFP requirements.

Imaginary Cooking

Kids Will Learn:

- Which kitchen tasks they can do on their own or with adult supervision.
- Which kitchen tasks can be done only by an adult.

Materials:

- Pictures or drawings of easy-to-prepare foods, such as toast with jam, scrambled eggs, steamed vegetables like peas or broccoli, boiled pasta, rice, etc.

With Kids

1. Hold up a picture of one easy-to-prepare food.
2. Ask the children to name what they see and to describe the steps to make it. At each step ask whether they can do it themselves or whether they should ask an adult for help. For instance, the steps they describe for making a piece of toast may include:
 - a. Wash my hands properly.
 - b. Open the bread bag and pull out a slice.
 - c. Plug the toaster into the wall socket.
 - d. Place the slice of bread in the toaster and push down the lever.
 - e. Wait for the toast to pop up, indicating that it's done.
 - f. Pull the piece of hot bread from the toaster with wooden tongs or a potholder and place it on a plate.
 - g. Spread jam on the toast.
 - h. Take a bite and enjoy!
3. When each step has been named and the roles decided, role-play the whole process together.
4. Repeat this activity with other easy-to-prepare foods as time permits.
5. Try moving to the kitchen. Allow kids to help you prepare some of these simple foods following the roles you just discussed.

TIP:

- Have kids draw pictures of the foods or tear them out of magazines prior to this activity. You may also try downloading and printing free food pictures online (see page 94).
- Depending on the skill level of your group, try drawing each of the steps to make the food on individual cards. Ask kids to tell you what order they go in.

Set Goals: Safe Cooking with Confidence

Key Messages

- Wash your hands and children's hands before, during, and after cooking.
- Keep raw meats, poultry, and seafood separate from other foods.
- Cook and store foods at safe temperatures.
- Make small changes to recipes to make them work for you and for the kids in your care.

Challenge Yourself

My goal is to...

Practice a food safety lesson I learned in class.

Which of the food safety lessons learned in class would I like to try this week? _____

Why is this food safety lesson important? _____

Will I need any special tools or materials (bleach, a food thermometer)? If so, when and where will I get them?

Make a recipe from class for the kids in my care.

Which recipe will I make this week for the kids with my take-home groceries? _____

What changes can I make to the recipe to make it work for me and for the kids? _____

Which tip from class can I use to save time when making this meal? _____
