



## Life Skills: Cooking

Name \_\_\_\_\_

*Keep this form in the student portfolio for each child. It may take a few years before every item is checked.*

**Define:** Develop safe, sanitary, and practical skills for basic food preparation using a variety of foods.

**Discovery:** The following information will help you be safe and efficient as you work in the kitchen:

- A utility knife can be used for many small cutting operations. Always cut on a cutting board.
- Kitchen shears are very useful for cutting poultry and snipping vegetables. Wash thoroughly after each use.
- A vegetable peeler provides a quick means of paring potatoes, carrots and other vegetables. Use long strokes directed away from the body.
- Graters come in a variety of designs and dimensions. Be sure to keep the finger back from the surface of the food being grated.
- Hot pads should always be available for instant use in the kitchen.
- Pans should always have something in them when heated on a range. Empty pans will become dangerously hot very quickly and will warp and cause a fire hazard.
- A wooden spoon is a useful utensil for stirring foods while they are cooking.
- Before heating an oven, position the oven rack in the correct position and while extended, press down to be sure the rack is locked properly into its slides.
- Accurate measurements are important. Use proper equipment and techniques when measuring liquid and dry ingredients. (Liquid measuring cups and dry measuring cups have different features.)
- The following measurements are helpful to know when cooking:
  - 1 tablespoon = 3 teaspoons
  - 4 tablespoons =  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup
  - 2 tablespoons = 1 fluid ounce
  - 1 quart = 2 pints
  - 1 gallon = 4 quarts
  - 16 ounces = 1 pound

- The boiling point of water is 212°F at sea level. If you are at higher elevations, the boiling point will be lower. This will influence the outcome of your recipes. Check with your local county extension to find out the boiling point of water in your area.
- Green vegetables may change color during cooking. This is especially true if they are overcooked or have been at a high heat for a long period of time.
- Fresh fruits and vegetables should be washed before eating to clean them from the pesticides and herbicides that have been sprayed on them. One method of cleaning is to place fresh fruits and vegetables into a sink full of water with ½ teaspoon hydrogen peroxide. Soak for 10 minutes. Drain water and soak again in cold water with nothing else added. Drain vegetables and allow them to dry.
- Cereals are cooked to make them easier to eat.
- Starches are used to thicken sauces, gravies, and soups.
- Dairy products will curdle when heated to a high temperature for a long period of time. Ingredients such as milk and cheese should be added at the end of cooking to prevent this curdling.
- Meats may be cooked using dry heat or moist heat. Dry heat, such as roasting and broiling are well-suited for preparing moist cuts of meat, but moist heat methods are preferred for less tender cuts or meats with very mild flavors.
- Eggs may be cooked with different methods: Fried, baked, poached, scrambled, and boiled in the shell.
- Egg whites may be used to create an egg white foam and can be added to recipes to create a light, airy texture. The egg white foam will not form properly if there is any trace of egg yolk in the mixture.
- Egg white foams are folded gently into a mixture to prevent losing the air bubbles in the foam.
- Quick breads use baking soda or baking powder to help them rise in the oven. Quick breads are usually prepared by mixing the dry ingredients together. The liquid ingredients are mixed together but kept separate from the dry ingredients. The liquid and dry ingredients are combined with just enough stirring to moisten all the dry ingredients.
- Shortened cakes and cookies are made by creaming the sugar and fat together using a vigorous setting on the mixer. This incorporates air into the batter. The next step is to add the remaining liquid ingredients alternately with the dry ingredients.
- Gelatin products are made by dissolving the powder into boiling water before stirring any cold water in the mixture.

## Skill Practice:

With the supervision of an adult, practice the following cooking skills. Ask a parent or mentor to initial the task when you can successfully cook the food items without outside help.

\_\_\_\_\_ Accurately measure liquid ingredients using a liquid measuring cup and measuring spoons. Demonstrate your ability to measure  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup,  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup,  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup, and 1 teaspoon, 1 tablespoon and 4 tablespoons (Show how you can use the conversion chart to measure the equivalent of 4 tablespoons with liquid measuring cup.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Accurately measure dry ingredients such as flour and sugar. Demonstrate your ability to measure flour, sugar, brown sugar, and salt using dry measuring cups and measuring spoons.

\_\_\_\_\_ Peel a potato and a carrot using a vegetable peeler. Use a grater and a knife to demonstrate your ability to cut the potato and carrot into different shapes.

\_\_\_\_\_ Wash a variety of fresh vegetables to prepare them for use before eating or storing.

\_\_\_\_\_ Wash a variety of fresh fruits to prepare them for use before eating or storing.

\_\_\_\_\_ Create a simple salad using a variety of fresh vegetables.

\_\_\_\_\_ Prepare a snack using fruits that have been peeled and sliced and made ready to eat.

\_\_\_\_\_ Bake a potato and show that it has reached the proper state of doneness.

\_\_\_\_\_ Steam or boil a vegetable or group of vegetables of your choice. Serve with your favorite seasonings.

\_\_\_\_\_ Soak and cook one pot of dried beans (pinto beans, black beans, navy beans). Add the seasonings of your choice or serve on top of a salad.

\_\_\_\_\_ Cook dry spaghetti noodles according to package directions.

\_\_\_\_\_ Cook dry macaroni noodles according to package directions.

\_\_\_\_\_ Boil one cup of rice according to recipe or directions.

\_\_\_\_\_ Cook a variety of cereals to the correct stage of doneness (oatmeal, cream of wheat, cracked wheat, corn meal).

\_\_\_\_\_ Make a white sauce using butter, flour, salt and milk.

\_\_\_\_\_ Cook a piece of meat using a dry heat method (hamburger patty, steak, chicken breast).

\_\_\_\_\_ Cook a piece of meat using a moist heat method (roast, chicken, turkey).

\_\_\_\_\_ Demonstrate your ability to cook an egg with the following methods: boiled in the shell, fried, and scrambled.

\_\_\_\_\_ Prepare a batch of muffins using your favorite recipe.

\_\_\_\_\_ Prepare a batch of cookies using your favorite recipe.

\_\_\_\_\_ Mix and prepare pancakes using your favorite recipe.

\_\_\_\_\_ Prepare a food item using gelatin.

\_\_\_\_\_ Prepare a grilled cheese sandwich.

\_\_\_\_\_ Prepare French Toast using your favorite recipe.

## Evaluation:

Evaluate each food item you make. Did it turn out the way you hoped? Do you need to do something different? Ask a parent or teacher to help you achieve a satisfactory result.

Your technique while mixing, chopping, and heating foods make a big difference in the final product. Here are some terms you will commonly see in recipes. As you prepare your food items, ask yourself if you are following the proper techniques.

- **Baste:** To keep foods moist during cooking by pouring a liquid over them.
- **Braise:** To first brown meat quickly in fat and then cook it in a covered pan on top of the stove or in the oven.
- **Broil:** Placing food on a rack that is situated directly under the source of heat. The food must be watched closely because it will burn easily as the broiler heats up.
- **Poach:** to simmer slowly in hot liquid. This method is used when a gentle cooking process is needed to help the food retain its shape.
- **Sauté:** This is a cooking process that quickly cooks food in melted butter. It also means to cook until tender.
- **Scald:** This process is generally called for with milk. It means to heat just below the boiling point. Stirring constantly will keep it from burning.
- **Steam:** This term literally means that steam is the source of heat used to cook an item.
- **Bread:** To coat a raw food item with bread crumbs.
- **Chill:** An item is cooled when it reaches room temperature.
- **Grate:** This almost always requires a kitchen tool called a grater. It means to cut food into fine particles.
- **Marinate:** This is a process to make foods more flavorful. The food is generally completely covered by the marinade and then refrigerated for the specified amount of time.
- **Chop:** To cut food into pieces about the size of small peas.
- **Dice:** To cut food item small cubes of the same size and shape.
- **Mince:** To chop food into very fine pieces.
- **Puree:** Using a blender, process a cooked fruit or vegetable until smooth and uniform throughout.
- **Beat:** Unlike mixing, beating is a vigorous, brisk motion that fills the beaten item with air. It is used to make a mixture creamy and smooth.
- **Blend:** This is the process of stirring two or more ingredients together until they are smooth.
- **Cut in:** Using a knife, fork or pastry cutter to blend a fat into dry ingredients. This process is complete when you have uniform, bead sized pieces or any other consistency as directed in the recipe.
- **Fold in:** This mixing process requires a gentle hand. Vigorous or even normal beating or stirring will cause the batter or other mixture to fall or create an undesirable effect. Folding means to gently add a new ingredient to an already beaten mixture.

- Soft Peaks: Usually a term used when beating egg whites or cream. It means that when a spoon is lifted out of the beaten ingredients, a slightly drooping peak forms.
- Stiff Peaks: Like the soft peaks already described, this process is exactly the same, only the beating continues until the peaks that form stand up straight without drooping.
- Stir: This is a mixing term that means “Don’t use the mixer!”
- Toss: This is most commonly achieved by using two spoons, one in the left hand and the other in the right. Place them in the bowl and pull up, tossing ingredients up and allowing them to mix together while falling.
- Whip: This is a mixing term used when you want to incorporate air into the mixture or batter. It means to beat food rapidly so that air is added to it.

**Create and Share:**

Using the food mixing and cooking techniques you have learned, prepare at least three meals and one dessert for your family.

\_\_\_\_\_ Breakfast

\_\_\_\_\_ Lunch

\_\_\_\_\_ Dinner

\_\_\_\_\_ Dessert