

## 1. Daily Living Skills

There are many things our children need to learn in order for their lives (and ours!) to run smoothly. Learning daily living skills - including meal planning, grocery shopping, cooking, dining etiquette, laundry, and home safety - are important to make sure that your children know how a home functions, how to contribute to maintaining a household, and one day be able to run their own home.

### Nutrition

#### 1. Food Pyramid

Find out from your child's school in what grades he/she will learn about the food pyramid. Help children have fun during family meals by talking about where each of the foods they are eating fit into the food pyramid. **Levels: 1 2**

#### 2. Variety For Nutrition

Over dinner, talk with your child about different parts of the meal and why they are important (meat/poultry/beans provide protein, vegetables provide vitamins and minerals, starches provide carbohydrates for energy, dairy foods make our bones strong). **Levels: 1 2**

#### 3. Evaluating A Fast-Food Meal

When eating at a fast-food restaurant, ask your youth to guess the nutritional value of the meal and to name the healthiest parts of the meal. If the restaurant provides nutritional information, look up what you're eating and talk about fat, calories, protein, etc. **Levels: 1 2**

#### 4. Planting A Garden

Have your youth help you plant and tend a vegetable garden. The youth can learn about healthy vegetables and have the fun of eating them! **Levels: 1 2 3**

#### 5. Healthy Snacks

When grocery shopping with your youth, have them choose a variety of healthy snack foods. Talk about what makes a snack healthy. Also, invite youth to make some healthy snacks (celery sticks with peanut butter, tortillas, popcorn, sliced apples). **Levels: 1 2 3**

## Menu Planning

**Tip: Remember The Green Things!!**

When grocery shopping, encourage children to pick out the "green things" that you will eat with your meal that week.

### 1. Making A Favorite Recipe Cookbook

Create a "best recipes cookbook." After making a meal, have the youth determine whether or not to include it in their very own "cookbook" (notebook, binder, card file box). **Level: 2**  
Older youth can be in charge of their own recipe book, and can write down several weeks of menus for when they move out on their own. **Levels: 3 4**

### 2. Meal Planning

Make a list of "main dishes" for a week of evening meals (lasagna, enchiladas, barbecued chicken). Have your youth make suggestions for what side dishes (vegetables, fruit, starches) would go well with each one. **Levels: 1 2**

### 3. Putting It All Together

Let older youth plan the family menu for a week. Encourage them to include a main dish, vegetable and starch for each meal and a dessert for a few of the meals. **Levels: 2 3 4**

## Grocery Shopping

### 1. Keeping A Shopping List

Keep a shopping list on the side of the refrigerator. Ask your child to write down items that they use the last of (like milk) or any other items your family needs. **Level: 1**

### 2. Developing A Shopping List

Ask an older youth to make out the family shopping list for a whole week. Make sure he/she includes the ingredients for the meals they have planned as well as items like paper goods and cleaning products. **Levels: 2 3 4** To give the youth an idea of the cost of the items, invite them along to help you shop and ask them to keep track of the cost by using a calculator. **Levels: 2 3 4**

### 3. Meal Planning, To Shopping List, To Buying

Create a shopping list with your child for a special event like his/her birthday or

Thanksgiving. For younger children, ask what they would like to eat at the meal and have them write that on the list. **Level: 1** For older youth, ask them to identify the ingredients for the meal and add these to the list. **Level: 2** Older youth can be given a set amount of money for the ingredients and allowed to shop on their own. **Levels: 3 4**

#### **4. Grocery Shopping Practice**

When you are at the store, have your child be responsible for finding certain items on the shopping list. **Levels: 1 2**

#### **5. Thrifty Shopping**

Give your child your weekly shopping list and the coupon section of the newspaper. Ask them to find as many coupons as they can for items on your list. To really motivate them, offer to give them the money saved by using coupons (many stores show this amount at the bottom of the receipt). **Levels: 1 2 3**

#### **6. Comparison Shopping In The Supermarket**

When you go to the store, have the youth find the items on your list, compare brands, and determine which is the most economical. Teach your child to read unit pricing labels on products (if the store has these). Talk about the quality vs. cost of a product. The least expensive one is not always the best one to buy. **Levels: 2 3**

#### **7. More Comparison Shopping**

When looking for a specific product, review store ads. Show how two stores with the same product have different prices. Discuss the pros and cons of going to multiple stores in an effort to get the best prices on all the products. Do a "supermarket survey" by shopping at two or more stores for the same items to see which store has the lower prices. **Levels: 1 2 3**

#### **8. Choosing Good Produce**

When at the grocery store, show your children how you can tell if a fruit or vegetable is fresh. Ask the produce manager for tips, if you're not sure. **Level: 1** Have older youth be responsible for picking out the fruits and vegetables on your list. **Levels: 2 3**

#### **9. Shopping Alone**

Pull together everything an older youth has learned about meal planning and shopping by letting them plan a week's worth of meals, develop the shopping list, and then purchase everything with a set amount of money. **Levels: 3 4**

## Meal Preparation

### 1. Hands-On Practice

To get your children involved in cooking, start by having them help prepare one item. For example, younger ones could help prepare the salad or grate cheese. **Level: 1** Older youth can help with more difficult items like rice, pasta, tortillas or browning meat, etc.

**Levels: 2 3**

### 2. Practice With Recipes

Although we don't use recipes every time we cook, it is good to know how. When your child would like to fix something special, have them choose a recipe from a cookbook. You can supervise them reading and following the recipe. **Levels: 1 2** Older youth can be unsupervised and all can enjoy their creations. **Level: 3**

### 3. Cooking Without A Recipe

Have your child join you in the kitchen when you make a traditional family dish that doesn't use a recipe. Explain to them what ingredients you are using and how you are preparing the dish. If they want to learn how to make it, have them write down what you tell them so they can keep it in their Best Recipes Cookbook. **Levels: 1 2 3**

### 4. Foods From Around the World

Have your youth help you choose and prepare a meal from a different cultural background. Talk about the different elements, spices, eating utensils, etc. **Levels: 2 3**

### 5. Show What You've Learned

Ask your youth to help you prepare dinner once a week. Let them read recipes (if used) and participate in the actual cooking. Later on, let them prepare a favorite meal by themselves.

**Levels: 2 3** When ready, have them prepare family dinners for one week. **Levels: 3 4**

#### Teachable Moment

Whenever you're in the kitchen cooking and your children come in to see what smells so good, ask them to help you stir, mix, taste, measure, or help in some way. Use their natural interest to build skills!

## Dining Etiquette

### 1. Setting The Table

Have your youth take turns setting the table for dinner. **Level: 1** If you have a formal dinner, show youth how to set the table for this (use china/special dishes if you have them), then let them try setting the table by themselves. **Level: 2**

### 2. International Etiquette

Plan a potluck meal with friends from a cultural background different than your own. Have

youth ask the guests about the utensils, manners, food, and dining customs that are a part of their culture. **Levels: 1 2 3 4**

**Tip**

Tell youth that they can always watch what others at their tables are doing if they don't know which fork to use at a fancy dinner!

**3. Formal Dining**

Have a "dress up" night where youth have the opportunity to practice using all the utensils they would see at a fancy restaurant. Explain the placement of different utensils and how to use them. **Levels: 2 3**

**4. Dining Out**

When eating at a restaurant, encourage your youth to order for themselves, help you calculate the tip, and check the bill for accuracy. **Levels: 2 3 4**

**5. Using Good Manners**

Offer a prize to the child who is able to use good manners and talk about appropriate things at the table or in a restaurant. Talk beforehand about what good manners are. **Levels: 1 2**

**Kitchen Clean-Up and Food Storage**

**1. Putting Food Away**

After the meal is finished, have each child be responsible for putting away one leftover item. If children take lunch to school, ask if they want to take any leftovers. If they are given lunch money, let them keep the money they don't spend by eating leftovers. **Levels: 1 2**

**Teachable Moment**

When you clean out the refrigerator, have your children join you. They can "scientifically" examine food in the refrigerator and use their senses to see if food has gone bad. They can read the expiration dates, look at the food, smell the food, and then taste the food (unless it's unsafe).

**2. Cleaning Up After Meals**

Have your family take turns cleaning up after a meal. Younger children can help to clear the table. **Level: 1** Older youth can wash and dry dishes, fill the dishwasher, and clean the stove/counters, sweep, etc. **Levels: 2 3** Older youth can independently clean the entire kitchen at least once weekly, which could be tied to an increased allowance. **Levels: 3 4**

**3. An Experiment In Food Storage**

Do an experiment! Place a small amount of raw food and cooked food in the refrigerator. Have youth guess which will spoil first. After about a week, check your experiment. **Levels:**

**1 2** Talk with youth about how soon food items should be eaten, or if anything can be frozen to make it last longer. **Levels: 1 2 3**

**Tip**

Put on the youth's favorite music to motivate them during kitchen clean up.