



# Before you Begin

## Program Goals

1. Basic food skills development – including, but not limited to basic knife safety, chopping, slicing, dicing, reading recipes, and principles of kitchen and food safety.
2. Confidence, desire and skills to participate in basic food preparation activities such as:
  - basic cooking and food-handling skills
  - reading and interpreting recipes
  - using basic food preparation equipment
  - taking an active role in food preparation
  - preparing nutritious recipes that include vegetables and fruit and balanced meals and snacks



*Figure 1 Yogurt Parfait*



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## Program Values

### A word about weight

- It is important that weight or any personal perspectives on diets not be a topic of discussion.
- Everyone has their own perspective on healthy eating. The goal of this program is to offer opportunities to learn about food and encourage food skill development.
- If participants have specific questions related to healthy eating, they should talk to their healthcare provider or contact Health Connect Ontario.
  - Registered Dietitians are available 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.
  - Call 811, TTY 1-866-797-0007 or start an [online chat](#).

### A word about food allergies

- **The Let's Get Cookin' Program cannot guarantee an allergen-free** environment. It is recommended that youth with anaphylactic allergies to foods used in the sessions, do not participate in the program.
- In the event that a child has an anaphylactic or other allergic reaction, it is important to know how to handle it. All facilitators should be aware of any [Anaphylaxis Emergency Plans](#) in place for students with anaphylactic allergies.

### A word about tasting

#### *Enjoy the food that is prepared*

- Leave it up to the participants if they wish to try the food or not and how much they have.
- Youth will have different opinions about the recipes. Focus on the positive aspects of the recipes and the cooking experience.
- Discuss possible vegetable and fruit substitutions in the recipes to add variety when making at home.
- Encourage youth to make the recipes at home before the next session.



### *The Tasting Technique*

- Ensure hand washing prior to trying the recipes.
- Cutlery that has entered the mouth should not be placed back in the food.
- Utensils should not be shared.
- If utensils are limited, a two-spoon method can be used for tasting:
  - One spoon is designated as a sampling spoon and is used to secure a sample of food from the container.
  - The second spoon is the tasting spoon and comes into contact with the mouth.
  - The sampling spoon and tasting spoon must never come into contact with one another. This way, food is sampled in the safest manner.



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## Introduction

### 1. Collect consent forms

This form should be filled out and returned before the participant enters the kitchen. (Parents must sign consent form for student to take part).

### 2. Attendance

Copy attendance form and complete weekly.

### 3. Review goals and overview of the program with students:

- Seven (7) sessions in total. The first class is an orientation. All classes include food preparation and taste testing.
- Learn basic food skills and food preparation e.g., basic knife safety; chopping; slicing; dicing; reading recipes; and principles of kitchen and food safety etc.
- Gain confidence so they feel comfortable enough to take an active role in food preparation.
- To taste healthy and delicious foods they have prepared. All recipes will have vegetables and fruits and no meat. Practice preparing satisfying, balanced meals and snacks.

### 4. Ground Rules

Record suggestions from participants for ground rules i.e. there should be no cell phones, take turns, no tasting food until done, wash your hands before touching food.  
Post ground rules at each session.

### 5. Safety Information Review:

- Safe food handling and kitchen safety should be discussed throughout every session. Additional resources are provided, such as links to demonstration videos.
- Before You Begin: Safety – Cleaning and Sanitizing
- Before You Begin: Safety – Food Allergies and Anaphylaxis
- Before You Begin: Safety – Handling Injuries
- Participant Orientation: General Kitchen and Knife Safety (demonstrate knife safety)
- Participant Orientation: Cleaning and Sanitizing
- Participant Orientation: Principles of Safe Food Handling & Cross-Contamination
- Participant Orientation: Proper Handwashing Technique



6. Hands On Recipe Activity

Practice basic knife skills and food preparation by trying one of the Orientation Recipes.