IES Institute of Education Sciences

FAMILY AND CAREGIVER ACTIVITY

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Supporting Young English Learners While Making a Meal Together

Regional Educational Laboratories West, Northwest, Northeast & Islands

From the National Center for Education Evaluation at IES

Families and caregivers, you play an important role in your child's language learning. Children can build their vocabulary by learning and practicing new words in everyday tasks such as making a meal. In this activity you will prepare a meal with your child, focusing on the process and new words, and help them write down the recipe.

Keep in mind:

- You and your child can use your home language or English, whichever is strongest for you.
- Learning new words in your home language will also help your child with English.
- Enjoy this time with your child. Learning together is fun!

Why teach words about preparing a meal?

Talking, reading, and writing about new words every day helps children build their vocabulary.

Learning Goal: Children will learn and practice new words

Grades: 2nd–5th grade

Suggested Materials: Ingredients to make a meal; paper, pencils, or crayons

Let's make a meal!

Follow the steps below. See the back for additional language supports.

Step 1: Talk with your child and together, **select something to make.** Examples: *breakfast, lunch, dinner, or their favorite snack or dessert.*



Step 2: Before you start cooking, help your child **write down the ingredients** and the quantity of each. Describe new ingredients your child might not know. You can use the measurement words on the back of the page. Talk about the ingredients and measurements as your child writes them. Example: *A tablespoon of salt would make the cake taste salty. A teaspoon is less and is just right.*

Step 3: Have your child **write down the recipe steps** as you prepare the meal. Use the sequence and action words on the back of the page.

Step 4: Have your child **read the recipe** back to you.

Step 5: Enjoy eating the meal with your child! Talk about the recipe. Use the measurement, sequence, and action words, especially those that are new for your child.



Practice: Make a recipe book with your child! For each recipe have them write down the ingredients, measurements, and cooking process and read each one to you.

Math Challenge: Have your child double the recipe, or cut it in half.

This activity sheet helps families and caregivers carry out recommended practices described in the What Works Clearinghouse educator's practice guide, *Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School.* You can view the full guide here: https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/19

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Family and Caregiver Activity: Supporting Young English Learners While Making a Meal Together

You can help your child build their vocabulary by using the cooking words on this page.

Measurement Words

- Teaspoon/Tablespoon
- Ounces/Grams/Pounds/Kilograms
- Cup/Quart/Liter
- Pinch/Dash



Sequence/Order Words

- First/Second/Third/Last
- Next
- After

Action Words

- Cut/Chop/Mince/Dice
- Soak (dried mushrooms)/Marinate (meat)
- Open (a can or bottle)
- Break/Crack (an egg)
- Add (to the ingredients)/Pour (into the ingredients)
- Stir (in)/Mix (into)/Blend
- Heat/Cook/Sauté/Fry
- Remove (from heat)
- Cover/Uncover (the pan)
- Spread (sauce, butter, peanut butter)

Additional Language Supports

You can use the questions and responses below as you and your child cook and share a meal together.

Family and Caregiver Questions	Child Responses
What is your favorite food? Why?	My favorite food is ____ because _____.
What ingredients do we need for this meal/recipe?	The ingredients we need are ____.
What do we need to do first?	The first thing to do to make this meal is to ____.
What will we do next?	Next we will ____.
What ingredients can you taste when you eat the meal?	I can taste ____ (onions, oregano, cinnamon).
What does the meal (or ingredient) smell like?	The ____ smells [like] ____.
If you could, how would you change the recipe next time?	Next time, I would add more ____ (brown sugar) and less ____ (onions).

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