



KIDS JUST WANNA HAVE FUN
IN THE KITCHEN AND GARDEN

How to start an after-school program



community food centres
CANADA cfccanada.ca



ABOUT THIS MANUAL

Child and youth programming is vital to creating the next generation of people who eat healthy, care about food justice, and love community. After-school programming allows Community Food Centres and Good Food Organizations to nurture young people's connection to the earth, the kitchen, and each other.

We hope that this manual will inspire program staff and managers who are currently running programs with young people and those who are just starting out. Community Food Centres Canada developed this manual to reflect the diversity of approaches and activities in after-school programs (ASPs) across the CFC landscape. Inside, you'll find stories and best practices from ASPs at Community Food Centres.

There isn't just one way to run after-school programming. This manual contains our educational approach and program outlines as a foundation, with a wealth of lessons and activities that you can adapt for your particular organization and community.



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INTRODUCTION ABOUT THE AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

Engaging young people with after-school programs plays a vital role in Community Food Centres — fostering kids' knowledge of cooking, gardening, and social justice issues in a warm and friendly space. The ASP aims to harness the positive potential of children at a time when they are forming their tastes and attitudes toward food.

After-school programs at Community Food Centres target low-income families, prioritizing those who would benefit most. The ASP is free of charge, aligning with the broader Community Food Centres Canada mandate to improve food access, food skills, and engagement among low-income and marginalized communities.

The after-school program is structured around the following objectives:

- To increase children's knowledge and skills around healthy cooking and growing food
- To encourage healthier eating habits among children and a more open attitude towards eating healthy food
- To increase children's knowledge of poverty and food systems issues in their community

Youth-centred programming at Community Food Centres has evolved over the past several years and the lessons learned are highlighted here. What we are calling “the” after-school program is a collection of best practices and successful ideas — this manual presents a diversity of approaches from ASPs across the country, including The Stop CFC, The Table CFC, The Local CFC, NorWest Co-op CFC, and Dartmouth North CFC.

After-school programming is centred on three themes:

- Healthy nutrition and food preparation
- Sustainable and environmentally friendly food growing practices
- Food systems education

The ASP also focuses on the core values of social justice and anti-oppressive child-centred learning, woven throughout the program. At Community Food Centres, this means facilitators are keenly aware of systemic inequity, and strive to counter it by creating opportunities for the young participants to be leaders and to have a voice.

The ASP's vital stats

2-3

weekly sessions
for 14 weeks
(3 hours each)

For children aged

8-12

3:1

ratio of
children to
supervisors

6-15

children in
a typical
session

Sessions run from **3:30 to 6:00 p.m.** Programs begin **30 minutes** after the school day ends.





VALUING KIDS' EXPERIENCE: OUR EDUCATIONAL APPROACH

At all Community Food Centres, a proven method of teaching food literacy is through action. Instead of lecturing kids about the interconnectedness of our food system, after-school program facilitators encourage participants to experience these concepts through hands-on activities such as cooking the same food that they helped to grow. This immediate and physical connection helps foster a greater understanding of the relationships in our complex food system.

Building skills, confidence, and leadership

In the planning and delivery of after-school programs, facilitators draw out kids' knowledge and value their opinions, rather than taking a top-down teacher-student dynamic. At Dartmouth North CFC, facilitators call this "mentoring in the moment." Eliciting opinions from the kids throughout the program helps tailor lessons to their interests and, more importantly, builds their leadership capacity as they become more invested in the topics and activities.

Anti-oppressive values and practices are ASP's foundational values, woven throughout the core elements of the programming. Given that many young participants face marginalization in their daily lives, be it racial, gender, and/or socioeconomic, ASP facilitators try to ensure that the program is safe and ethical — one that proactively discusses these issues, models inclusivity, and allows kids to set ground rules that make them feel understood and protected.

Everyone in the ASP is both teacher and learner, creating an empowering learning environment that honours each child's experience and cultural knowledge, while cultivating leadership skills. The Stop CFC's ASP actively seeks out ways to highlight diversity in program activities. For example, cooking activities regularly feature foods from different cultures (participants have the opportunity to suggest their own cultural dishes for the group to make), and culturally diverse vegetables are grown as part of the program's gardening components. A conversation about the beauty of biodiversity in the garden is a great way to open up discussions of cultural diversity and gender.

At NorWest Co-op CFC, staff and volunteers have learned from experience that empathy is the most important skill that facilitators need. Successful anti-oppressive programming happens when staff can

truly empathize with where the kids are coming from. Empathy changes people from asking "Why are they acting like this?" to understanding where the intensity is coming from, and that the children are dealing with a lot. As the Director of NorWest Co-op CFC explains, "In our after-school program, there is often a challenge around children following rules and listening to adults. We wrap our heads around why they are challenging authority and what we can do about it. We never want to ban a kid. We want to make it fun but emphasize that there are still rules. Some of that is relationship-building and it takes time."



Activity: Food stories at The Stop Community Food Centre

At The Stop, coordinators have participants share their personal food stories — both verbally and visually through a poster that they make — that represent the role of food in their lives. The stories can convey a range of information, including everyday eating habits, favourite foods, and/or the cultural or religious significance of food. As facilitators, the coordinators always start by sharing their own food stories to model what the process can look like. They draw some foods that they loved and hated when they were kids, then explain what the foods mean to them. The purpose of this activity is to establish a culture of respect and excitement for diverse experiences.



CHILD'S PLAY: ASP PROGRAMMING

Each after-school program session is built around a basic concept, then flavoured with activities that reflect that concept. As children gain experience and master basic skills, lesson plans can incorporate more advanced and complex ideas. Children's confidence is built through repetition and practice of their cooking and growing skills — enabling kids to continue on their journey of making healthy food part of their lives.

The ASP curriculum is divided into the three core themes — cooking, growing, and food systems. Some lessons, such as a knife skills lesson, are best placed in a session early on, while others can be planned toward the end, building up the key messages and learning objectives. Some examples of lesson topics are listed below, and several lesson plans are available for download (see page 11). Of course, there are many ways to achieve the learning objectives — our suggested lessons are just a few among many. By all means adapt the activities or swap them for personal favourites.

Cooking skills

Cultivating cooking skills improves children's food literacy and shifts their perspectives and behaviour around healthy foods. Through the cooking skills they learn, children become empowered, giving them greater choice in their daily lives over what they eat. When children chop, shred, and zest fruits and vegetables with their own hands it awakens their senses and inspires them to develop a personal relationship to food.

The act of cooking also helps children with their cognitive and social development. When they learn how to follow recipes, they have the opportunity to practice their reading and math skills. When kids work in small groups to prepare a delicious and healthy meal, they learn teamwork and communication skills. They also learn the art of improvisation as they learn to make healthy substitutions and creatively incorporate all food groups into a healthy balanced meal. The ASP attempts to strike a balance between following recipe instructions and making room for creative, healthy cooking.

Example lesson topics

- Knife skills and kitchen safety
- Healthy versions of junk food
- Super salads (and mini competition)

What's the scoop?

Takeaways from our ASP evaluation

Since completing the ASP...

95% of surveyed parents reported increased trust in their child's ability to cook a meal on their own at home

91% of parents have observed increased confidence in their children in the kitchen

64% of parents report their children are making more healthy snacks at home for themselves

"[My kids are] more willing to help in the kitchen, making healthier eating choices, willing to try more new foods."

— Parent at **The Stop CFC**

Growing food

Kids take unmistakable pride in learning to grow their own food. With this ASP theme, children witness firsthand the wonder of nature and develop a sense of self-sufficiency and agency related to growing food.

When participants begin the ASP, many don't know that the story of their food starts in the ground, amid the worms and the soil. By cultivating, harvesting, cooking, and composting food with their own hands, children become more aware of what it takes for food to reach their plates. Kids feel less squeamish with bugs and dirt after learning about soil, compost, and the vital role of earthworms. As one participant exclaimed, "The Stop helped stop my fear of worms!"

Many adults are intimidated to start growing their own food because they have never had the opportunity to “get their hands dirty.” We believe that enabling children to garden in a fun and supportive environment is the best way to create familiarity, excitement, and appreciation for growing food naturally. Our sessions on Vermicomposting and Companion Planting foster an appreciation of dirt and bugs, and help children from urban settings overcome their reservations. In addition to teaching the “nuts and beets” of successfully growing veggies, we also use gardening to educate participants about different cultural traditions of growing food, often using the participants’ own cultures as a launch pad for discussion and learning.

Example lesson topics:

- Vermicomposting (composting with worms!)
- Companion planting and the Three Sisters
- Garden cycles: sowing seeds, germinating, plant care

Exploring food systems

Understanding the farm-to-plate story is a vital component of food literacy. Kids are often far removed from where their food originates and many have never had the opportunity to garden or to visit a farm. When children think about farms, many imagine the traditional pastoral farms where animals roam freely and happily, and farming families grow a variety of crops. They don't know that most of the food they eat is grown in large monocrop agricultural operations and shipped to their local grocery stores from many hundreds or thousands of kilometres away. They are unaware of the environmentally detrimental ways that most foods are grown and transported in our modern food system.

The food systems activities incorporated into the ASP are designed to engage kids in thinking more broadly about where the food they consume comes from, how it's grown, and how this impacts their personal health and that of the environment. These activities are not meant to present the state of the food system in such a way as to shock, overwhelm, or make the children feel ineffective. Rather, these sessions focus on what personal efforts they can make to support more sustainable practices. From these lessons, the children learn what the labels on their food, such as “organic,” “local,” and “fair trade,” actually mean.

Example lesson topics:

- Tracing local and global food systems
- Understanding nutrition labels
- Write letters to politicians

Addressing Challenges

Working with kids can be finicky business! Here are a few common trouble spots ASP facilitators encounter, and some tried and true strategies that can help you navigate them.



CHALLENGE	STRATEGIES
Kids can be picky eaters or scared to try new foods.	ASPs provide options for picky eaters: a buffet-style salad bar with an array of ingredients is better for encouraging children to eat a salad than just providing a big bowl of pre-made salad.
By the time they come to the ASP, kids have often developed a taste for fast food, which can be hard to wean them off.	Rather than demonizing fatty and sugary foods outright, ASPs try to encourage healthy habits by considering foods within a continuum of “everyday vs. sometimes foods.” However, facilitators always prioritize the use of whole and unprocessed ingredients in snacks and meals.
Giving kids more say in what the group cooks means they sometimes want to cook something that's unhealthy, but close to their heart.	In the same vein as the “everyday vs. sometimes foods” described above, not everything prepared in the ASP needs to be the embodiment of health. And giving kids input into what the group prepares is valuable unto itself, especially if it's a family favourite or of cultural significance. The ASP equips kids with the tools to make recipes healthier if they so choose. By end of program, the kids have developed their own definition of healthy and ethical eating, which makes them more informed and empowered eaters in life.
After school, kids can be super energetic or tired.	Education is important, but not at the expense of having fun. Coordinators need to be able to read the energy levels of the children and be flexible, adapting activities accordingly. Having a few activities at the ready or breaking down an activity into parts requiring different skill or focus levels will help you go with the flow.



A TYPICAL DAY IN THE AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

Here is the flow of a day in the life of an after-school program. Go ahead and adapt it to accommodate your site's unique context and capacities.

Preparation

2:00 to 3:00 p.m.

Although the kids arrive at 3:30 p.m., facilitator prep starts earlier on a typical day, as there's a lot to consider before the program begins. Staff and volunteers brief each other on the day's learning objectives and activities — some ASPs have formal lesson plans while others follow a more flexible agenda. This time can also be used to organize materials for your session.

Children are usually hungry by the end of the school day, so it is important to provide a healthy and delicious snack whenever possible. If your lesson includes cooking, you may not need to provide as big a snack. If you are doing non-cooking activities, prepare a snack ahead of time so the kids won't be hungry and can concentrate.

Snack and play

3:30 to 4:00 p.m.

Kids need some space after a full day at school before jumping into the day's session. After the children have arrived and washed their hands, they have free time to eat a snack, get homework help, do crafts, play games, and relax. At The Local CFC, two or three kids are desig-



Day one!

The first day of the program lays the groundwork for the rest of the program — especially for establishing the tone and behaviour expectations. The first session is also an important time to establish key safety, space usage, and behaviour rules. You may want to collectively design these ground rules as a group process to get buy-in from the kids. Some good starting activities include learning what everyone's favourite foods are, sharing a favourite food that their culture traditionally creates, or asking if anyone has ever cooked something themselves and what it was. Overall, the first session is a good time to set the stage for a welcoming, inclusive, and participatory program where the kids will have a great time.

nated “snack helpers” and they serve and clean up after snack time. Kids have 30 to 60 minutes to pursue their choice of activities, including outdoor games, indoor arts and crafts, greenhouse tasks such as watering plants, harvesting food for the kitchen, or feeding the worms, board games or puzzles, or working on their homework. Children aren't required to do their homework at this time, but they are encouraged to make a habit of getting it done before playing other games.

Free time is an important part of the schedule because it allows for flexibility with children and chaperones arriving at different times. Additionally, it gives the children some downtime from their day at school before the more structured activities.

Activities

4:00 to 5:30 p.m.

After free time, the children are engaged in an educational activity based on one or a combination of ASP objectives. Because hands-on cooking and tasting is the most fun and effective way to persuade kids that healthy food can be delicious, at least one day each week is devoted to a full cooking session, while the program time for the remaining days is split between gardening and food systems.

Eating together

5:30 to 5:50 p.m.

One part of the cooking process that we prioritize in the program is sitting down and enjoying a meal together, creating the space to reflect on lessons learned and celebrating the hard work that goes into prepping a meal from scratch. When children sit down together with staff at a table set with care to enjoy their freshly prepared meal, the process of eating slows down, allowing children to contemplate all that went into its making and develop a greater appreciation of healthy food. Often, in the broader context of their lives, these instances are the only occasions for some of these children to engage in conversation and express their opinions and ideas. Even if it is only 20 minutes, having some sit-down time around a communal table is vital to fostering awareness, appreciation, and conscientiousness.

Home time

5:50 p.m.

Sending children home with leftovers is an excellent way to support them and their families. Many parents have reported learning new recipes and dishes from the food that their children have brought home from ASPs. Sharing with family and friends empowers kids to teach others what they have learned. And parents always appreciate having a taste!



Managing large groups of kids: Tips from The Local CFC

At the end of a school day, kids tend to have a lot of energy to burn. On a bad day, this can mean kids run riot and have trouble engaging with the day's activities. But with some forethought and careful implementation, the facilitator can hold a space for kids to let off steam without disengaging from the program. Here are some tried and true tips from The Local!

- Create the rules with the kids, and then stick to them. Praise the good behaviour often, and speak silently to the individuals involved in any less-than-optimal activities or behaviours.
- Make sure you've got lots of activities planned so the kids can move between them without getting distracted. Each child in The Local's ASP has a booklet that contains lots of puzzles and word searches so they can be active if there is a lull between activities.
- Give the children responsibilities and provide praise when they are fulfilled. Create a clean-up plan so that each group has a responsibility they must do at the end of the night, and that responsibility changes every week.
- Let kids be kids! Sometimes that's just providing a fun, safe place to let off steam. As long as the space is safe, the kids will be happy for the opportunity, and more responsive to requests to pitch in.

Tips for ASP success

- Be fast moving, and always keep the kids busy with activities or games in the downtime between preparing meals or planting in the garden.
- Developing activities and resources for the same age group is more efficient, and the 8 to 12 age group is old enough to form a deeper understanding of the concepts being introduced.
- Establish safety procedures. Key policies your organization could explore include: a process for screening personnel, a code of conduct, a harassment policy, and a child protection policy.
- Your kitchen may need to be certified by local or provincial health authorities. Proper food handling procedures must be modelled and encouraged by staff. By law in Ontario, for example, one person in the kitchen must have a Food Handler Certification.

Quick tip! Snack lightly

Many ASPs started by giving cheese and crackers as an after school snack but quickly learned it was too filling. Now they stick to cut-up apples and other raw fruits and vegetables, especially on days when the kids are cooking dinner.

Quick tip! Avoid idle hands

While calling it “free time,” NorWest Co-op CFC offers structured activities to engage children and ensure they have an outlet for their energy. Their rule of thumb: “No downtime!” The ever-popular bike-powered smoothies are always a fun go-to.



RELATED RESOURCES



Sample logic model and Child and Youth Evaluation Toolkit (Appendix C, D)

Risk assessment checklist (Appendix B)

Select lessons, activities, and recipes

(Download at www.tinyurl.com/cfccasmanual)





A SENSE OF PLACE: MAKING KID-FRIENDLY SPACES

Whether you're running your after-school program out of a small kitchen or a large community room, your space is where everything comes to life. Here we share some key elements and best practices for making the most of your site.

Kitchen

A complete commercial kitchen is a great asset but not necessary to run an after school cooking program. Most important is having basic equipment and enough space for the whole group to be in the same place at one time to receive instruction. This requirement will depend on the size of the group you are working with. Basic cooking equipment and utensils you'll need include: cutting boards, blenders, food processors, chopping knives, spatulas, whisks, graters, and measuring cups and spoons. If you do not have an oven or stove and want to make recipes that involve a burner or two, hot plates work as a good substitute. If you do not have a complete kitchen to work with, there are many recipes that do not require an oven.

Lack of space in the kitchen can be a real issue when you have more than a dozen children in your session. To create more space in the kitchen, try setting up tables in an adjacent multi-use/classroom space as extra chopping or mixing workstations.

Greenhouse and gardens

A greenhouse and/or outdoor gardens are spaces that provide a unique experience for ASP participants, sometimes year-round. Although there are advantages to having access to a greenhouse on site for growing workshops in the winter, this level of infrastructure is not necessary to demonstrate to children the wonder of growing food. Lots of growing can be done in a sunny, south-facing window or even a moist container where a seed first germinates. If you are growing many different plants, try to have other staff/volunteers help care for the plants when the children are away from the program — i.e. during summer and winter breaks. Useful basic equipment includes pots to start seedlings, popsicle sticks to label them, and trowels for transplanting.

Compost

A composting system can be integral to a sustainable food production cycle. As you'll see in the Vermicomposting workshop, the facilities need not be more than

a recycling bin used as worm composting bin. That said, if your organization hosts a community garden, chances are you'll also have some compost bins on site. Engaging the kids in feeding, turning, and sifting the compost offers a wealth of hands-on fun and learning.

Multi-use space

One great feature for an ASP space is a multi-purpose "classroom" space for homework help, crafts and games, snacks, meals, and workshops. Many ASPs take advantage of an open space that is flexible enough to provide the ability to set things up depending on the needs of particular activities and workshops. For example, being able to close off the kitchen and classroom to create separate spaces, or move the tables outside when weather permits. Also, creating physical linkages between the garden and kitchen helps participants make the corresponding mental connections. Considering staff or volunteer capacity will also help facilitators determine how many distinct spaces can be used simultaneously, ensuring the target child to supervisor ratio of about 3:1 can be maintained.

Coordinating space and schedules

When you're running several programs in one facility, it can be a challenge to schedule all the different groups and activities without any overlap. Although some programs can run concurrently in close proximity without any problems, we believe that it is important the ASP children feel comfortable and that the program space is theirs. This means that, most of the time, there is no overlap with other groups during their program hours. If there is a special event scheduled to take place in the classroom space during the time the ASP normally runs, facilitators plan activities elsewhere whenever possible, such as a doing a theatre workshop or dance workshop with another organization at a studio off-site.

It takes time and repetition to change attitudes and create new habits. For that reason it's ideal to run the after-school program two to three days per week over a three to four month period. Lessons build on each other throughout the session and by the end of the program, children have developed values and knowledge related to healthy food, healthy food systems, and healthy communities, and they can articulate these values and their knowledge more eloquently than many adults.



IT'S ALL ABOUT THE TEAM: VOLUNTEERS, INTERNS, AND STAFF

Dedicated adult support is crucial for the success of the after-school program and the depth of programming it offers. Volunteers and interns or placement students have many roles, ranging from setting up the space to helping with homework, supporting the coordinator when delivering workshops, cleaning up, and planning activities. We expect a lot from volunteers at the ASP and it is important that they be committed, professional, and interact well with children. Program coordinators promise to provide volunteers with well-planned lessons so that they can contribute as effectively as possible. Children aren't the only ones learning and benefiting from the ASP — volunteers and interns also find community, friendships, and purpose from their involvement in the program.

Energetic, positive, and active interns and placement students can be recruited from community worker and social service diploma programs at local colleges, from child and youth worker programs at colleges and universities, from early childhood education degree programs, and sometimes from education programs at universities. Local community members also make wonderful volunteers who really understand participants' realities. Part of The Stop's anti-oppression practice, for example, involves engaging the parents of ASP participants as volunteers. Parents are also part of the target populations that CFCs are trying to reach, and volunteering gives them a profound connection to the CFC and allows them to share their knowledge and skills.

The role of staff and volunteers is to encourage and model proper techniques (knife skills, safe food handling), help with gardening and recipe reading, foster an openness to trying new foods, and impart a passion for food justice. With many adult hands on deck children can safely engage in more sophisticated activities, such as sowing seeds, transplanting, chopping, measuring, frying, etc.

As much as volunteers, placement students, and interns can provide excellent support to programs, it is also important to resource the ASP with dedicated paid staff. This ensures that there is always at least one main person managing the program, from evaluation and program planning, to coordinating with participants, parents, and volunteer support staff.



A little magic goes a long way at The Local

Coordinators keep a bit of magic up their sleeve when it comes to running the ASP at The Local Community Food Centre. They liken cooking to wizardry — with its use of the four elements to create a transformation in matter. Harry Potter references are actually a running theme. At the program's outset, the kids get sorted into “houses,” like in the book, which are then self-titled. Each house's participation in the ASP is supported by an adult volunteer who stays with the group throughout the program. This technique facilitates classroom management and gives the kids an anchor throughout the sessions. And who doesn't love practicing potion spells while cooking?



The debrief is key

At Dartmouth North Community Food Centre, staff and volunteers spend 10–20 minutes after each session discussing any issues that arose with the kids, and how conflict or questions could be dealt with in the next session. The process leaves everyone feeling supported and ready to tackle this high-energy program again.

RELATED RESOURCES



Sample job description, ASP Coordinator

(Appendix A)

FILLING THE SEATS: TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE OUTREACH

Some after-school programs are always full, while others need to do targeted outreach to engage their priority communities. A first step is being clear about the target audience for the program and then being intentional about how to reach this specific group. Most Community Food Centres prioritize children from low-income families in their catchment areas to ensure that resources are going to those who would benefit most.

Engaging target communities: Lessons from the field

- ASP staff take a sensitive and flexible approach during outreach and intake, not requiring families to present proof of their socioeconomic status but rather to simply self-identify as low-income.
- The Stop CFC puts families who do not self-identify as low-income on a waiting list and if the program does not fill up with those in their target demographic, they are given a spot. In these situations The Stop CFC asks that the family give a donation of whatever amount they can afford to the organization. Families are very understanding and receptive to this approach.
- The Table CFC recruits from schools in lower income areas or near subsidized housing. Coordinators go into classes to run a fun butter churning workshop as a way to pique students' interest. Then they hand out info about the ASP and take people on a first-come, first-served basis.
- At The Local CFC, program coordinators have a good relationship with several teachers at the surrounding schools who can, in turn, approach specific parents discreetly.
- Creating flyers and pamphlets that are in English as well as a prevalent second (or third!) language in the community ensures more people in your target demographic know about the program, and establishes a tone of inclusivity from the start.
- Strategically post flyers around target neighborhoods — in places such as bus stops, laundromats, libraries, churches, and community centres.
- Facilitators also create relationships with community agencies such as newcomer centres, women's shelters, and social services like Big Brothers/Big Sisters and Children's Aid.



TALLYING UP IMPACT: EVALUATION

Wondering if your program is having the impact you intended? And how it can be improved to better meet participant needs? Evaluation can help! With evaluation results, you will know if what you're doing is working, see what can be improved, and have valuable data and stories to share with the public and funders. Below are some of our guiding principles and go-to tools to help you employ strong program evaluations for child and youth programming.

The four F's

Here are some principles that we have found helpful in developing evaluation tools and activities for children and youth.

FAST While evaluation is important, any evaluation tool or activity that takes longer than 10 to 15 minutes tends to detract from the program time and does not hold the attention of young participants.

FUN We try to keep any evaluation tool for kids light and fun. Game-like activities that capture changes in participants in a creative way are a welcome complement to more formal surveys.

FLEXIBLE Not only does the after-school programming need to cater to a range of participant ages and abilities, the evaluation needs to as well. Coordinators need to be creative in the ways they measure each child's experience of the program. We are continually refining or recreating our evaluation tools in order to appropriately demonstrate the real value of the program and capture areas for improvement. Evaluation is continuously a work in progress.

FAMILY When possible, involving parents or caregivers in evaluating program-related changes in young participants helps demonstrate that certain changes are translating in the home environment or "sticking" with the children.

Types of evaluation tools

The following evaluation tools are adaptable to different capacities and contexts.

Program logic models

It is very difficult to evaluate the success of a program unless you are clear on what you are trying to achieve and how you are going to achieve it. A program logic model is a tool to help bring about this clarity. A logic

model explains the target participant population and explains the changes that a program is trying to bring about with participants. It lists program objectives, activities, outputs (i.e. daily numbers that tell you about the level of activity taking place, such as number of meals served), outcomes, outcome indicators (i.e. how you to measure the extent to which outcomes are achieved), and impacts. A logic model is very useful in program planning, communications, and for helping you continually check in with your larger objectives when planning day-to-day activities. See the Appendix C for a sample logic model.

Program tracking forms

Regular tracking of daily numbers or program statistics, also referred to as "outputs" (e.g. number of participants per session, number of recipes taught, volunteer hours) is helpful in monitoring the level of activity in the program and can provide necessary information to funders. This tracking can be done using paper forms in a program binder, which are then inputted directly into Excel, into a form in Google Forms or Survey Monkey, or an online database. What's important is that there is a system for keeping track so that statistics can be compiled and used in program planning and reporting.

Participant interviews

One way to measure outcomes is to have the children participate in a one-on-one interview near the end of the program, conducted by the program coordinator or a volunteer. The purpose of the interview is to capture how the program has increased the children's knowledge and how it has changed their attitudes toward eating, cooking, and growing healthy food. This tool can also capture changes in children's awareness and attitudes toward social justice and food system issues, and measure how the program has impacted their social relationships. Lastly, the evaluation provides an opportunity for the children to give feedback on what parts of the program they did and did not like.

A challenge with the ASP is striking a balance between its focus on education and skill acquisition and its need to be fun, progressive, and informal. Coordinators of the program strive to make the evaluation experience fun and unthreatening. One technique is to start by telling

the children that they are not being graded, but rather are being interviewed because their opinions are of value, and whatever answers they give are okay. Another suggestion is to not jump into challenging questions right off the bat, but instead ease into the evaluation by asking a warm-up question such as: What did you like best about the after-school program? For a sample participant interview guide, see the Child and Youth Evaluation Toolkit (Appendix D).

Parent surveys

While adults are able to describe changes in their attitudes and behaviours, it's challenging to directly capture "softer" learnings in kids that cover the more subtle objectives. Phone interviews or written surveys with parents are helpful to discover how the program has fostered observable changes in the children's attitudes and behaviours. If a parents are invited to the final session (e.g. a graduation dinner), they can complete the survey in-person. If not, facilitators can send a survey home with the kids at the second last session to be returned the following week. For a sample parent survey, see the Child and Youth Evaluation Toolkit (Appendix D).

Skills checklist

An idea that's been explored in ASPs is a skills checklist where staff and volunteers note whenever key behaviours or skills are demonstrated; for example, when participants have mastered knife skills, washed their hands without being reminded, helped another student in the program, or demonstrated leadership. It is a useful tool to not only measure skills-related progress among participants, but also to identify those who may need a bit more support, instruction, or encouragement in certain areas. See the Evaluation Toolkit for templates you can use!

Creative activities

ASP facilitators have added their own creative twists to the evaluation process, using activity booklets with word searches and sticker exercises; asking kids to draw the most important thing they learned about the program; and having kids take photos during the program that represent what it means to them (a.k.a. Photo Voice). Another option is a hands-on activity such as Yums and Yucks, which measures changes in attitudes toward healthier foods by having participants vote on what they think is yummy or yucky by placing a white or red dried bean in a jar. See page 28 for more information on the Yums and Yucks activity.



RELATED RESOURCES



Sample ASP logic model (Appendix C)

Child and Youth Evaluation Toolkit
(Appendix D)

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SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION, ASP COORDINATOR

SOURCE: THE TABLE COMMUNITY FOOD CENTRE

Job Description: After-school program Coordinator

[Date]

[Blurb about your organization]

Summary of Duties: Using the program logic model, curriculum, and activities as a base, develop, deliver, and evaluate the after-school program [month, year to month, year]. The program will run twice a week for 14 weeks.

Specific Responsibilities

- In conjunction with the Volunteer Coordinator, recruit and manage volunteers to assist with the after-school program.
- Develop and implement outreach and communication activities to promote awareness of and participation in the after-school program with a particular focus on ensuring the program is accessed by children from low-income families.
- Review existing program materials, and update/revise for the current session while maintaining the core focus on food literacy, food skills, and social justice.
- Facilitate enrollment of participants ensuring all necessary paperwork is completed by parents.
- Deliver programs twice a week from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m..
- Ensure safe practices are maintained including school pick-up, and safe and hygienic kitchen practices.
- Coordinate programming and maintain positive relationships with our partners/supporters including local schools and parents.
- Coordinate food purchases and use of gardens to grow food with the Community Chef, and Garden Coordinator, respectively.
- Manage budgets allocated to the program.
- Develop and implement evaluation plans for programs.
- Help with planning, communications, fundraising, events, and other organization-wide activities.

Organization Name:

Location:

Position Type:

Hours:

Supervisor:

Salary:



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RISK ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

SOURCE: COMMUNITY FOOD CENTRES CANADA

This checklist can be used to start discussions within your program team and the larger organization around what safety procedures you want to implement.

Does our organization have...	Yes	No	Do we need it?
A team to lead the development and integration of safety policies, procedures, and systems?			
A screening process for all personnel?			
A code of conduct?			
A harassment policy and procedures to enforce it?			
A child protection policy?			
An understanding of our legal obligations around reporting abuse?			
Ways to establish anti-oppressive practices?			
Physical space adapted to provide safety and prevention strategies – e.g. lighting, communication devices, sanitation facilities?			
A media policy that outlines when to take photos of kids, how photos will be used on social media, and required permissions?			
Information displayed publicly on safe environments, preventing violence, and/or LGBTQ-friendly safe space?			
A list of trusted referrals to support services in our community?			



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SAMPLE ASP LOGIC MODEL

SOURCE: COMMUNITY FOOD CENTRES CANADA

PROGRAM NAME		TARGET POPULATION		PROGRAM GOAL	
After-school program		8 to 12 year-olds and their families		To develop healthy, food-literate, socially conscious, and empowered young citizens.	
PROGRAM OBJECTIVES	INPUTS Resources we invest	ACTIVITIES What we do	OUTPUTS Numbers we count in our program to tell us about the level of activity taking place.	OUTCOMES Short-term changes in learning (knowledge, skills, awareness, etc.) and medium-term changes in action (behaviour, practice, etc.)	INDICATORS How we measure the extent to which outcomes have been achieved
OBJECTIVE 1 To increase children's knowledge and skills around healthy cooking and growing food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After-school program Coordinator Volunteers Participants Kitchen, dining area, healthy food, and cooking supplies Gardening space and supplies Cooking, gardening, and nutrition curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer hands-on educational programming related to cooking, growing, and choosing healthy foods after school (54 days of distinct programming = 3 days/week for 18 weeks, twice per year) Incorporate various knowledge and skill items into lessons based on a curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of program sessions # of unique participants and participant contacts # and types of cooking, gardening, and nutrition sessions provided # and types of cooking and gardening skills taught 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased participant knowledge and skills around cooking, growing, and choosing healthy food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants share most important things they learned around cooking and growing healthy food (participant interview) Participants demonstrate understanding of core curriculum knowledge concepts related to cooking and gardening (participant interview) Participants demonstrate specific new cooking, and gardening skills (staff observation)
OBJECTIVE 2 To encourage healthier eating habits among children and a more open attitude toward eating healthy food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After-school program Coordinator Volunteers Participants Kitchen, dining area, healthy food, and cooking supplies Gardening space and supplies Cooking, gardening, and nutrition curricula 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give participants lots of opportunity to practice the skills that they've learned Model healthy eating in the program and encourage kids to try new foods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of program participants Types of recipes prepared 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive changes in participant attitudes and confidence toward cooking, growing, and choosing healthy food Healthier food choices made by participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents report child's increased confidence in the kitchen (parent survey) Parents report child prepared a healthy meal for their family since joining ASP (parent survey) Parents report child has been making healthier snack choices and requesting healthier meals since joining ASP (parent survey) Parents report child has been more involved in grocery shopping and food purchasing since joining ASP (parent survey)
OBJECTIVE 3 To increase children's knowledge of poverty and food systems issues in their community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After-school program Coordinator Volunteers Participants Classroom space Poverty and food system curricula 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer educational programming in poverty, and food system issues Introduce activities and projects aimed at empowering students to take effective action on wider community and systemic issues (e.g. making videos and writing letters to politicians) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of program participants # and topics of lessons and workshops provided # and types of activities, and projects introduced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased participant knowledge of and interest in poverty and food system issues Increased participant interest in and engagement in wider community and systemic issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants demonstrate knowledge of specific food system concepts (participant interview) Participants recognize that there are people living in poverty in their community, and can identify root causes and ways they can contribute to solutions (participant interview) Parents report child's increased interest in wider issues (parent survey)
ASSUMPTIONS Principles, beliefs, ideas behind how and why the interventions will work in our community. Ages 8 to 12 are a formative time to teach healthy and positive knowledge, skills, and behaviours to youth. Youth are not getting enough exposure to cooking, gardening, and physical activity in other venues. Hands-on activities are effective at teaching knowledge and skills and changing attitudes and behaviours. An intensive intervention (more than once per week) is ideal to lead to desired outcomes.				EXTERNAL CONDITIONS Factors outside the program's control that influence it (e.g. economy, education, culture). Conditions and influences in participants' home, school, and social environment. Sources of cheap food are abundant in our neighbourhood and there is a lack of affordable healthy food outlets (supermarkets, restaurants, cafes) for participants and their families to choose from.	



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CHILD AND YOUTH EVALUATION TOOLKIT: OUTCOMES, INDICATORS, QUESTIONS, AND TOOLS

SOURCE: COMMUNITY FOOD CENTRES CANADA

Indicators are key pieces of information gathered through evaluation to measure program outcomes, or the short- to medium-term changes among participants (e.g. in awareness, attitudes, knowledge, confidence, and behaviour) resulting from the program. Here are some examples of common outcomes in an ASP along with corresponding indicators, sample evaluation questions, and possible tools.

Outcome (The change we hope to see)	Indicator (What we measure)	Sample evaluation questions	How you might collect the data
Increased social inclusion	# of people who report making new friends in the program	Did you make any new friends in the after-school program? (Yes/No)	Participant interview
Improved ability to identify healthy food choices	# of participants who can more accurately identify healthy food choices at the end of the program	Which one of these pictures (A, B, or C) is the healthiest, most balanced meal? Follow-up: What do you think makes it the healthiest?	Pre-Post Workbook Activity (e.g. circling picture of healthiest meal option out of a series of pictures)
More open attitudes toward trying new healthy foods	# of participants who try a new healthy food in the ASP	Who has tried a new healthy food since coming to the ASP? If yes: What was it?	Participant Interview Blindfold Hands-Up Observation
	# of participants who demonstrate an increased willingness to try new healthy foods at home	Since your child has been in the ASP, have they been more willing to try new healthy foods at home? (Yes/No)	Parent Survey
Increased healthy food choices (e.g. vegetables, grains, healthier fats, snacks)	# of participants requesting/preparing healthier meals and/or snacks at home	Has your child made healthier meal and/or snack requests since being in the ASP? (Yes/No)	Parent Survey
		Has your child prepared healthier snacks since being in the ASP? (Yes/No)	
Improved food handling and safety practices (safer food handling practice and better hygiene around preparing and eating food; knife handling skills)	Increase in # of participants who wash their hands without being reminded before preparing a meal or snack	N/A	Observation/Skills Checklist (noticing changes in the program)
	Increase in # of people who know how to cut vegetables safely	N/A	Observation/Skills Checklist (noticing changes in the program)
Greater understanding of issues related to food systems and poverty	# of participants who can correctly define local food and explain a benefit of eating locally at program end (e.g. supporting local farmers, reduced food miles, fresher food)	Can you tell me what local food is? Follow up, If an accurate definition is provided: Do you think it is important to eat local food? If yes: Why do you think it is important?	Participant Interview
	# of participants who demonstrate an understanding of the connection between poverty and lack of access to healthy food at program end	Do you think that there are people in this community who do not have enough money to buy healthy food? If yes: What is one reason why you think that these people do not have enough money to buy healthy food?	Participant Interview
Increased interest in issues related to food systems and poverty	# of participants who demonstrate an increased interest in issues related to food systems and poverty at home	Do you feel your child has an increased interest in wider issues (e.g. community, food, poverty) since participating in the ASP? If yes: Please provide an example.	Parent Survey
Improved knowledge of healthy cooking	# of participants who have increased their knowledge of healthy cooking	What is the most important thing you learned about cooking healthy food in the ASP?	Participant Interview
Improved knowledge of growing food	# of participants who have increased their knowledge of growing food	What is the most important thing you learned about taking care of a vegetable garden in the ASP?	Participant Interview
Increased confidence in the kitchen preparing meals and snacks	# of participants who have prepared a meal for their family during the program	Have you cooked a meal for your family at home since you started the ASP? If yes: What did you make?	Participant Interview
		Has your child prepared a healthy meal for you and/or your family since being in the ASP? (Yes/Not Yet) If yes: Please provide an example of what your child prepared.	Parent Survey
	# of participants exhibiting increased confidence in the kitchen at home	Has your child's confidence in the kitchen changed because of their participation in the ASP?	Parent Survey



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CHILD AND YOUTH EVALUATION TOOLKIT: EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

Here are a few examples of evaluation activities that facilitators can use in programming that are hands-on and fun for kids. They allow for information to be gathered about how programs made a difference for participants and to gather program feedback without feeling like an intimidating test. We suggest pairing these activities with more formal evaluation tools like parent surveys and participant interviews, which provide results that are easier to report to funders and other program supporters.

Workbook activity:

What it is: This is a pre-post activity completed by participants in a workbook to capture changes in outcomes from the beginning to the end of the program. The results from the individual workbooks are later translated onto butcher paper to display responses to the group. The results from the first butcher paper can be directly compared to the post-program activity results to share with the children how their attitudes and knowledge have changed over the course of the program.

How to do it: On ten pieces of butcher paper you will have ten questions for participants. You will provide students with a workbook with ten pages, each with different question and response spots. You will also need ten pieces of butcher or flip chart paper (numbered the same as the workbook questions so kids know which question it is referring to). Participants will be given a pen/pencil and sticky dots. Some questions will be answered by placing a sticky dot on certain pictures/answers in their activity book (later to be transposed to the butcher paper) and some will be written answers. Hang the papers around the room or on tables and have the students rotate around the papers individually or in pairs. At the end of the program add two extra papers for graffiti — and ask the students to write their answers with markers: “What new food did you try in the ASP?” and “Write a word that you would use to describe the ASP to a friend.”

EVALUATION ACTIVITIES CONT'D

Ten questions	Materials needed	Student directions
I have tried these vegetables...	Stickers and butcher paper; pictures of ten vegetables (at least five of which you will be introducing in the program): e.g. carrot, potato, corn, peas, lettuce, zucchini, eggplant, tomato, cabbage, sweet potato/ yam, kale, beets (or it could be made broader with "tried these foods": tofu, quinoa...)	Student will put a sticker beside each vegetable they have tried in their activity book
I have used these cooking tools...	Stickers and butcher paper; pictures of measuring spoons, measuring cup, paring knife, chopping knife, recipe, food scale, slotted spoon, colander, frying pan, baking sheet, muffin tin, apron	Student will put a sticker beside each cooking tool they have used in their activity book
These are things you can put in a worm composter...(or backyard composter, depending on what is taught in the program)	Stickers and butcher paper; Pictures of meat, dog poop, bones, eggshells, coffee grinds, vegetable/ fruit peels, tea bags, newspaper, milk carton, bread A square that reads, I don't know what vermicomposting is (yet)!	Student will put a sticker beside each thing they think is good to use for vermi-composting or beside "I don't know what vermi-composting is (yet)!" in their activity book
This is an example of a processed food...	Marker and butcher paper	Student will write down an example of a processed food in their activity book
This is an example of a whole food...	Marker and butcher paper	Student will write down an example of a whole food in their activity book
My favourite meal to cook is...	Marker and butcher paper. Square that reads, "I don't know how to cook (yet)!"	Student will write down an example of a food they like to cook or place a sticker in the square on the butcher paper
My favourite healthy snack to prepare is...	Marker and butcher paper. Square that reads, "I don't know how to make snacks (yet)!"	Student will write down an example of a snack they like to prepare or place a sticker in the square on the butcher paper
This food is a healthy source of protein...	Stickers and butcher paper Pictures of fish, peanut butter, plain yogurt, chicken, steak, lentils, beans, quinoa, salad, apple, cola, tofu, water, candy, spaghetti, eggs	Students will put a sticker on pictures of foods that are a healthy source of protein in their activity book



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EVALUATION ACTIVITIES CONT'D

Blindfold hands-up activity:

What it is: This is an activity where you can ask a variety of types of questions (e.g. Yes/No, How many?, Choose A, B, or C) quickly to the entire group and they don't know what anyone else is saying to influence their answers.

How to do it: Come up with five or six questions you want to ask the program participants at the beginning and end of the program. Have the students use their aprons or bandanas as blindfolds. Ask the students to raise their hand for “yes,” “agree,” “A, B, or C,” or to indicate “how many” have done/know something. Have a volunteer record the numbers of hands up and hands down for each question. If you used a question like “Which one of these pictures shows the healthiest and most balanced meal?” and you had three pictures labelled A, B, or C of meals varying in healthiness and balance — ask the students to study them, pick their choice, and then put on their blindfolds to answer the questions. You can share the results right away with participants and have a discussion to probe about reasons for answers that might reveal changes in attitude, awareness, and knowledge. For example: “Who chose plate A? And why did you think this was the healthiest, most balanced meal?” You can also use this activity as a post-only evaluation tool — for example, who learned something new about healthy food in the ASP? What new things did you learn?

Yums and Yucks activity:

What it is: The Yums and Yucks activity is a way to measure changing attitudes about healthier foods. It introduces participants to the idea of “voting” and avoids copying answers among participants. You can also share the results with participants right away after votes have been counted and have a discussion about the results.

How to do it: Have one jar/container that is either opaque or covered with paper — set it up in a private place such as behind a screen/board or where other participants can't see how the person just voted. Have two bowls — one with white beans and one with red beans. If you are introducing a new food or healthier alternative to a traditional restaurant/processed food in the program, ask the participants to place a white bean in the jar if they think it's “yuck” and a red bean in the jar if they think it's “yum” before you cook/prepare the food. Then after they have tasted it, ask them to vote again — count the number of each colour of bean to see if any “yucks” have shifted to “yums” by tallying up the red and white bean counts.

Arts and crafts in evaluation:

What it is: A fun and creative way for participants to share something they liked or learned about in the ASP. It can be a great visual way to share something from the program with parents/caregivers, other CFC members, the greater community, and on social media. Don't be surprised if you see lots of pictures of knives!

How to do it: Ask the students to draw a picture (or make something out of clay, write a poem...) that shows “the best thing about the ASP” or “something they learned in the ASP” or “a new food they tried in the ASP” or “favourite meal or snack they made.” Make a display out of the creative works of art to share with your community members (and take a photo/copies of pictures to share more broadly through social media or with funders and other program supporters!).

ASP participants at The Local CFC were asked which pizza they thought would taste better — a regular pizza with tomato sauce and cheese or a “potato” pizza. Before they made the two different kinds of pizzas, the kids voted that the regular pizza would be better. After they tasted them, the kids voted again and the potato pizza won! You could try the same with French fries and baked sweet potato fries, or store-bought salad dressing or pasta sauce and homemade versions.

EVALUATION ACTIVITIES CONT'D

Skills checklist

One evaluation tool that has been successful in after-school programs is a “skills checklist” that staff and volunteers can use to keep track of whether participants learned key skills taught during the session. It is a useful tool to not only measure skills-related progress among participants, but also to identify those who may need a bit more support, instruction or encouragement in certain areas. For this reason the checklist is designed to be used throughout the program so that you can help participants further develop skills they have not yet mastered.

Below is a list of possible skills to include on your checklist. Depending on your curriculum, some of these skills may or may not apply. Feel free to adapt this tool to include the skills you teach.

Participant name	Session	
Skill	Date skill was observed	Notes
Washed hands without being reminded		
Safely used a knife		
Tasted food as they were preparing it		
Planned a meal		
Followed a recipe		
Measured ingredients		
Washed produce		
Stirred properly		
Cracked an egg		
Cleaned the kitchen		
Used a timer		

SAMPLE LESSON: KNIFE SKILLS AND KITCHEN SAFETY

SOURCE: COMMUNITY FOOD CENTRES CANADA

Proper knife handling is probably the most important lesson the children will learn in the kitchen throughout the ASP — and is arguably the most popular. In this essential cooking lesson, children learn how to manoeuvre safely through the kitchen and how to cook carefully and with skill. This lesson lays the groundwork for future cooking sessions and usually takes place within the first few sessions of the ASP.

Running the lesson

1. To prepare: disperse ingredients among the chopping stations. Place the knives along the top edge of the cutting boards with the blade facing away from the child — the “resting position”.
2. Assign participants to the different chopping stations. Now teach the first skill: how to safely manoeuvre around the kitchen with knives. Emphasize that whenever kids are not immediately using their knife, it should be in resting position. Explain that knives should never be used for pointing at items, for shooing people away, for scratching oneself, etc. and that whenever one is not using the knife it should be put back into “resting position.”
3. Demonstrate how to safely take a participant’s knife from their workstation to the sink for cleaning when they are done using it:
 - Kids should take the knife firmly into one hand, with the point of the knife facing down to the floor and the blade facing to the back
 - They then turn their body so that the arm holding the knife is furthest from their workstation and from other people. Say, clearly and loudly, “knife behind” while keeping space between themselves and others as they pass from their workstation to the sink. They practice going around the kitchen safely holding their knife and passing others.
4. Now the children are ready to learn how to properly hold a knife. Instruct them to hold the handle firmly with all fingers wrapped around the handle, as if they were holding a hammer. Correct common habits such as placing the index finger on the dull side of the knife, or holding the knife loosely with the fingers. A firmer grip is safer than handling the knife with hesitation. Make sure all children are pointing their knife away from other children.

AGE: 8-12, flexible

TIME: 30-45 min. plus 30 minutes for recipe preparation

MATERIALS:

- A variety of vegetables (bell peppers, cucumbers, etc.)
- At least one knife per child, of varying sizes and style including a larger chef’s knife and a paring knife
- One cutting board per child and/or enough space for each child to work
- Images or prepared examples of food cuts: chopped, finely diced, minced, sliced, etc.
- Recipes calling for a variety of chopped vegetables or fruits (e.g. a salad bar, fruit salad, veggie quesadilla, or the following recipes)



What to cook?

The knife skills lesson is great because it flexibly pairs well with so many recipes. Kids can show off their new knowledge of slicing and dicing with the recipes that follow (**rainbow noodle salad** and **party wraps**). Discuss which cut would work best for each ingredient to showcase the taste and crunch factor. Do kids prefer giant pieces of onion or a fine dice? Do they want slices of red pepper or chunks? As kitchen ninjas, they get to choose.

To promote making connections between this task and the art of cooking, you may want to ask the children during the lesson why they would chop different ingredients to different sizes versus just chopping everything to the same size. Explain that for some recipes it is better to have the flavours blend together, and that is why you would dice or mince ingredients. For other recipes you may want the flavour of certain ingredients to stand out, and thus would chop or slice them into bigger pieces.

SAMPLE LESSON: KNIFE SKILLS AND KITCHEN SAFETY CONT'D

5. Demonstrate the proper motion of cutting: keeping the tip of the knife on the cutting board as much as possible, and gliding the knife in a circular motion as they chop (like the wheels of a locomotive train!). Get kids to practice this motion on their boards without chopping anything just yet.
6. With their non-chopping hand, have the kids mimic a claw: their fingers are rounded and fingertips are curled inwards. Have them place their “claw” on the item they are chopping. This protects their fingertips from the blade of the knife and keeps the ingredient in place on the cutting board. Start by just having them pin down the food with their “claw.”
7. Once kids understand the concept of the claw, they can slowly begin chopping for the recipes. Adults will have to pay close attention to each child, helping them with specific techniques for the foods they’re chopping. Finally, use the chopped ingredients to make a fantastic meal!

Kitchen safety

It’s extremely important that all adults model safe behaviours in the kitchen at all times. Children are very perceptive and will be quick to call out adults who are not following the rules. A fun way to cover this topic is to have an adult volunteer dress or behave inappropriately and get the kids to point out what they’re doing wrong.

ASPs begin their first day by taking children on a tour of the kitchen area, showing where everything is, and pointing out special places to take care, i.e. around the oven and stove. Kids see how to use the dishwashing station and where cleaning supplies are kept.

1. Emphasize the importance of appropriate attire in the kitchen — closed toed shoes, shirts with sleeves, no large dangling jewellery — as well as the requirement to safely tie back loose hair.
2. Show kids where the clean aprons are located and show them how to put them on properly — children can be notorious for letting their apron strings come loose, creating a tripping hazard!
3. Show how to properly wash their hands and in a humorous manner show how not to contaminate their hands once they are washed: by scratching their skin or their hair, wiping their nose or their eyes, or licking their fingers/eating while cooking.

Cut to the chase: Tips from The Local CFC on working with kids and knives

- A board that is sliding is not safe. Here at The Local, we put a non-slip surface under our cutting boards. Carpet underlay cut into small squares works well. Damp cloths also do the trick.
- Round foods are dangerous. Slice a flat “bottom” to the food to stabilize it.
- We recommend participants get comfortable pulling or pushing the whole length of the knife through the food when cutting. This method means that less pressure needs to be put on the knife, meaning less strain on the hand and less chance of the knife getting stuck.
- For total beginners, start by using soft foods like bananas or mushrooms and cut with butter knives or a plastic lettuce knife.



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Rainbow noodle salad

SOURCE: COMMUNITY FOOD CENTRES CANADA

MAKES: 8 SERVINGS

Ingredients

For the sauce

3 tbsp sugar
6 tbsp lime juice
3 tbsp Thai/Vietnamese fish sauce
2 tbsp sesame oil

For the salad

600g rice noodles — vermicelli or spaghetti
2 red peppers, julienned
2 large or 3 medium carrots, julienned
3 green onions, sliced diagonally
½ head red cabbage, diced
½ bunch cilantro and/or mint, washed and roughly chopped
1 inch ginger, minced (1 tbsp)
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 handfuls peanuts, roughly chopped
1-2 red Thai chilis, seeded and diced (by an adult wearing gloves) (optional)

Directions

1. Mix all sauce ingredients together in a medium bowl. Set aside.
2. Bring a pot of water to a boil and cook noodles according to package directions. Rinse cooked noodles under cool water. Drain and transfer to a large bowl.
3. Add remaining salad ingredients to the noodles.
4. Add sauce, toss well, and slurp away!



Party wraps

SOURCE: COMMUNITY FOOD CENTRES CANADA

MAKES: 6 SERVINGS

Ingredients

For the wraps

- 1 medium yellow onion, sliced
- 1 cup mushrooms, sliced
- 1 bunch spinach, finely chopped
- 1 red, 1 orange, and 1 yellow pepper, sliced
- ¼ cup radishes, thinly sliced
- 1 avocado, sliced
- 1 cup cheese (cheddar and/or Havarti), grated
- 250g sliced turkey or chicken (optional)
- 12 small or 6 large whole wheat tortillas

For the spread

- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ bunch parsely, chopped
- 1 tsp paprika
- 1 cup mayonnaise

Method

1. In a frying pan on medium-high heat, sauté onion and mushrooms for about six minutes or until mushrooms have browned. Add spinach and quickly sauté until wilted. Remove pan from heat.
2. Assemble all chopped vegetables, cheese, and meat (if using) into separate bowls and lay them out like a buffet.
3. Mix all ingredients for spread together in a bowl. Transfer to a squeeze bottle, if you have one.
4. Stack tortillas at front of the line.
5. To assemble, spread or squeeze about a half tablespoon of mayonnaise mixture on each tortilla. Fill wraps with all the colours. Then fold and roll up wraps before chowing down!

KIDS JUST WANNA HAVE FUN IN THE KITCHEN AND GARDEN:

HOW TO START AN AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

is produced by Community Food Centres Canada with the help of The Stop, The Table, The Local, NorWest Co-op, and Dartmouth North Community Food Centres

The manual was developed for use by staff at Community Food Centres and Good Food Organizations



www.goodfoodorganizations.ca

Community Food Centres Canada provides resources and a proven approach to partner organizations across Canada to create Community Food Centres that bring people together to grow, cook, share, and advocate for good food. CFCC also works with the broader food movement to build greater capacity for impact and to empower communities to work toward a healthy and fair food system.



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