

## chapter 1

# SETTING THE FOUNDATION

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In this chapter you'll find two building blocks for successful cooking lessons: **Our Cooking Promise** and **Food Safety Guidelines**.

Additionally, students may watch our YouTube video, [\*Cooking in the Classroom\*](#), before cooking lessons, to give an overview of the cooking promises in action.



## OUR COOKING PROMISE

Our Cooking Promise is a set of rules to review with students before each cooking lesson. It follows the same principals as our Garden Promise: Be Safe, Be Respectful and Be Curious.

# Our Cooking Promise

## Be Safe

- **Clean hands.** Follow food safety guidelines.
- **Open ears.** Listen and follow directions.
- **Mindful movements.** Move slowly and be aware of your body and workspace.

## Be Respectful

- **Share supplies** with other students.
- **Treat the produce and food respectfully.** Do not throw it, play with it, or waste it.  
*Tip: Remind students that someone spent a lot of time and energy to grow this food.*
- **Wait for everyone to be served** before trying the foods.
- **“Don’t YUCK my YUM!”** Your opinions influence the opinions of your friends – keep negative comments about the food to yourself and wait for everyone to have a chance to try the food before you talk about it.

## Be Curious

- **Start small.** Try a tiny bite first. Try more if you like it.
- **Be brave.** You may have never tasted this food before – what’s important is to be brave and try something new.
- **Be open-minded.** There are lots of different ways to prepare fruits and vegetables. If you don’t like it this time, try, try again.

*Fun Fact: It takes your taste buds 10 times before they really know whether you like something.*



## FOOD SAFETY GUIDELINES

Follow these food handling tips to ensure a healthy environment when cooking in the classroom.

- 1. Clean Hands:** Before beginning, always wash hands in warm, soapy water for at least 30 seconds.  
*Tip: Sing Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star!*
- 2. Clean Work Surface:** Clear off your desk or table and wash with a disinfecting spray and washcloth.  
*Tip: Spray and wipe desks before washing hands to give surfaces time to dry.*
- 3. Food Allergies:** Always check to see if any students have food allergies. The “Big 8” food allergies are dairy, eggs, tree nuts, peanuts, soy, shellfish, fish and wheat. Avoid these ingredients in your recipes or offer substitutions.
- 4. Proper Food Storage:** If using any perishable items (such as meat or dairy) store in refrigerator or cooler with ice.
- 5. Use Cutting Boards:** Prepare foods on cutting boards to minimize contact with contaminated surfaces. If cooking with meat or dairy, always use different cutting boards than ones used for fruits and vegetables.  
*Tip: Use different colored cutting boards to designate multiple stations. For example: students with red cutting boards cut onions, green cut broccoli, yellow chop chard and blue chop carrots.*
- 6. Clean Fruits and Vegetables:** Properly wash vegetables and store them in a sanitary area. If food falls on the floor, or is coughed or sneezed on during prep, throw it away.  
*Tip: This also means keeping your hands on your desk or on the cutting board (not on your clothes or face) and not eating while cooking.*
- 7. Kitchen Tool Safety:** Before distributing kitchen tools (knives, juicers, graters, etc.) review how to properly use each tool. Students should stay back at least 2 feet from electric equipment, cords, and heating elements.
- 8. Proper Harvesting:** When harvesting straight from the garden, consider the following to ensure the safety and quality of the produce:
  - Unless compost is Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) certified, wait 90 days before harvesting if the compost was incorporated into the soil or 120 days if the compost was spread on top.
  - Clean coolers or other containers with soap and water before storing produce. Use ice or cooler packs to keep produce from perishing.
  - Clean tools after applying compost or amendments and prior to harvesting to avoid cross-contaminating.



## COMMON FAQ's

Below you'll find answers to common questions that may help you in planning your cooking lessons.

### How much time does a typical lesson take?

A cooking lesson can be as short or as long as you wish depending on the recipe you choose and the amount of advance preparation.

If you're following one of our lessons, found in Chapter 6, they are designed for a 30-minute timeframe for K–2<sup>nd</sup> grade and a 45-minute timeframe for 3<sup>rd</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> grade.

### TO REDUCE THE TIME OF A LESSON:

- Pre-harvest the vegetables.
- Prepare part of the recipe beforehand. For example, if you're making a salad, make the dressing ahead of time. If you're making a stir fry, pre-slice the vegetables.

### TO EXTEND THE TIME OF A LESSON:

- Have students participate in washing the equipment.  
*Tip: Use the three-part wash station found in Chapter 4.*
- See the "Extensions" section of the cooking lessons found in Chapter 6.

### Where should lessons be taught?

Cooking lessons can be taught in many different places, both inside and out. Below, you'll find some key elements to consider when choosing a space.

#### INSIDE

**Water for washing hands, produce, and equipment:** A classroom sink or buckets filled with water inside the classroom work well.

**Demonstration workspace:** This could be any table or group of desks set aside to use as the demonstration area where a hot plate, blender, or set of bowls and ingredients can stay throughout the lesson. When traveling classroom to classroom, a rolling utility cart comes in handy.

**Student workspaces:** Depending on the recipe, it can help to group desks together into pods and assign each pod or table their own task.

**Electricity:** If the recipe requires electricity, ensure access to an outlet and extension cord if needed.



## OUTSIDE

**Water for washing hands, produce, and equipment:** An outdoor sink, wash station, or a hose and buckets all work well.

**Shelter from elements:** Umbrellas over picnic tables or large shade trees provide protection from the sun. If it's raining, pop-up tents and outdoor pavilions are ideal.

**Demonstration workspace:** This could be a picnic table or folding table set aside to use as the demonstration area where a hot plate, blender, or set of bowls and ingredients can stay throughout the lesson.

**Student workspaces:** Depending on the recipe, students may need their own workspaces to slice, grate, or mix ingredients. Picnic tables and folding tables work great.

**Electricity:** If the recipe requires electricity, ensure access to an outlet and extension cord if needed.

**Potential distractions:** If you'll be setting up near a playground, busy road, or noisy air conditioners, consider scheduling around noisy activities or choosing a different location.

*Tip: See Chapter 3 for more on how to set up your cooking classroom.*

### Do I need extra help during the lesson?

Having another adult present can be very helpful. Consider your timeframe, class size, student skill levels, the complexity of the recipe, and your own comfort with cooking with students to determine how many extra sets of hands to recruit.

Parents, grandparents, university students, master gardeners, and other community members all make great helpers.

*Tip: There's a great leadership opportunity here. Older students who have already participated in cooking lessons can partner with younger students and share their knowledge.*

