

Get kids in the kitchen with you to help create more family time for all

By Nancy Ludwig, MS, RDN, LD, Head Start Consulting Nutritionist

In my role as a consultant nutritionist to Siletz Tribal Head Start, I offer information for families. The experience of kids in the kitchen has many benefits and is an important key to health. What your children can learn from cooking with you?

Social Benefits

- Dinner conversation can help expand a child's vocabulary.
- Kids feel like they are accomplishing something and contributing to the family.
- Parents get to spend quality time with their kids.
- Kids aren't in front of the TV or computer while they're cooking.
- Learning to cook is a skill your children can use for the rest of their lives.
- They learn to respect their bodies by having an awareness of what they are putting into it.
- Positive cooking experiences can help build self-confidence.
- Eating out less (therefore spending less).
- Involving kids in preparing meals is a stepping-stone to getting them to appreciate family meals. Because of challenging work, school, social and sports schedules, families rarely have time to share mealtimes together.
- Promotes teamwork.
- Experiencing the joys of giving and sharing.

Nutrition Benefits

- Parents serve as role models, letting their children observe them enjoying healthful foods.
- Offering healthier, low-calorie foods as well as less processed food.
- Kids generally aren't eating junk food when they're cooking a meal at home.

- When they are exposed to new tastes and textures early on in life, they are more likely to have a diverse palate as an adult.
- Parents can ensure their kids are getting enough of their daily nutritional needs through cooking at home with them.

Education Benefits

- Encourages a sense of creativity and expression through the "artwork" (food) they are creating, such as arranging ingredients on a pizza
- Learn an appreciation of food, through smells, sounds, textures and tastes, especially if they have been part of making the meal
- Increasing manual dexterity and physical coordination
- Basic mathematics skills like counting and measuring
- Reading skills from reading recipes and directions
- Science skills – observation abilities, understanding of time/temperature



Kitchen skills that can be taught to children of various ages

- Use a blender
- Beat ingredients with a whisk
- Grate cheese and vegetables
- Measure liquid and dry ingredients
- Follow a recipe
- Use a timer

Ways to involve children in healthful food preparation

- Make things fun - theming food around what is going on in children's lives.
- Make regular favorites healthier (i.e., cheesy chicken crunches instead of deep fat fried chicken nuggets).
- Teach children basic kitchen rules (no handling knives, the stove or appliances without adult supervision), wash hands, food hygiene, roll up your sleeves and tie back hair, turn pot handles away from you, etc.
- Have a reward system - at the end of every week they get \$5 to buy their own kitchen utensil (own whisk, rolling pin, etc.) to provide ownership and accountability.
- Laugh when things go wrong. Cooking should be fun family time.
- Teach children the food pyramid and basic food groups, with recommended daily servings.

Resources, recipes that can be used with/for children

familyfun.go.com/recipes/kids
 kids-cooking-activities.com/
 spatulatta.com
 homeandfamilynetwork.com/food/kids.html

Siletz Tribal Head Start offers my time at no cost to you to support family nutrition over the telephone. Please contact me if you have nutrition concerns about your head start child.

Custom-made Bean Dip

Excellent for easy snacks, can be custom-made for each person with just what they like. Choose from the ideas below and create your own dish. In an individual microwave-safe bowl, layer your choice of the following:

½-¾ cups refried beans
 1-4 tablespoons salsa of your choice
 2-4 tablespoons cheddar cheese, shredded or sliced, ½-1 ounce
 To taste: Black olives, sliced; corn, frozen; kidney or black beans; green chilies, diced

Cover bowl and microwave until cheese is melted and bubbly. (Beans can explode sometimes; the cover protects the microwave from mess.)

Top with other cold items if desired: Green onions, sliced, fresh tomatoes; fresh avocados, chopped; sour cream.

Surround with your favorite tortilla chips or, as a grain-free alternative, use sliced cucumbers or jicama.

Applications available for Tribal Head Start

If you have not sent in an application for your child to attend Siletz Tribal Head Start, it's not too late. Call 541-444-2532 or 800-922-1399 to request that an application be sent to you.

Applications also are available on the Tribal website (ctsi.nsn.us) and at the Siletz, Salem and Portland area offices.

NRCS releases native seed manual for Pacific Northwest species

CORVALLIS, Ore. – The USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announces a new, comprehensive manual now available to seed producers (and seed enthusiasts) about native plant species in the Pacific Northwest.

The publication, called the Native Seed Production Manual for the Pacific Northwest, was produced by the NRCS Plant Materials Center in Corvallis.

"This 192-page manual is a compilation of knowledge gained by Plant Materials Center staff who have worked intimately with native plant species for more than two decades, since the early 1990s," said Amy Bartow, one of the manual's primary authors who works at the Corvallis center.

The Native Seed Production Manual for the Pacific Northwest contains detailed, species-specific information for 17 grasses, 60 forbs, and seven sedges and rushes found throughout the Western regions of Oregon and Washington.

It also contains information on all aspects of seed production, from establishment and weed control to harvesting and seed processing. The back section features an equipment overview, which explains the various types of equipment used at the PMC.

The manual, along with many other plant-related publications, is available on the Corvallis PMC publications webpage

at: <http://bit.ly/PMCPubs> (look under the Major Publications category on the list of publication types). To access the manual directly, visit this shortlink: <http://bit.ly/SeedGuide>.

Printed copies are available on request by emailing Amy Bartow at amy.bartow@or.usda.gov.

The Corvallis Plant Materials Center's primary mission is to develop new technology in plant propagation and establishment, seed production, revegetation, and restoration and erosion control; and to develop new plant sources for use in riparian areas, wetlands and uplands.

The Corvallis center provides plant solutions for northwestern California, western Oregon and western Washington. The service area includes the northern Pacific Coast Range, Willamette Valley and Puget Sound, as well as Olympic, Cascade and Siskiyou mountains of western Washington and Oregon.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service provides financial and technical assistance to voluntary farmers, ranchers and forest landowners to implement conservation practices on private lands. By working collectively with partners and stakeholders, NRCS helps maintain healthy and productive working landscapes, benefitting both environmental and agricultural needs.



Siletz Tribal Youth Council Meeting

Date/Time: March 12, Noon – 3 p.m.

Location: Salem Area Office, 3160 Blossom Drive NE, Suite 105, Salem, Ore.

Lunch will be provided

Parents/Guardians are welcome to attend with youth

Transportation: Youth will carpool from area offices. Contact us ASAP if you need help with finding transportation.

Area Office Contact Numbers:
 Portland: Katy Holland, 503-238-1512;
 Salem: 503-390-9494; Eugene: Nora Williams, 541-484-4234; Siletz: Sharla

Robinson, 541-270-3212; or Selene Rilatos 541-444-9618

Youth Council Objective

The objectives of this group shall be to provide a collective voice and represent the Tribal youth in all matters that concern them; to serve as a means of mobilizing and coordinating the actions of youth, other community members and organizations toward positive goals; to promote the development of future Tribal leaders; to help solve problems facing Tribal youth; to coordinate school and community service projects; and provide opportunities for the youth to interact for fun and fellowship.