



HEALTHY FOOD PROJECTS CHECKLIST

Much can be shared and learned from food demonstrations, food shows, food contests and other food projects. Healthy food projects can be learning experiences that explore the connections between food sources, production, culture, consumption, and health. Food learning projects can be fun as well as educational... they are opportunities to build healthy food skills and model our commitment to wellness.

Take “vegetable stir-frys” and “fruit and/or vegetable sandwiches” and the many variations possible for food learning projects... use them as examples and consider the following:

➤ **Addresses the Dietary Guidelines**

Does the food learning project address at least two Dietary Guidelines principles? The ABC's of the Dietary Guidelines are:

A – Aim for fitness by aiming for a healthy weight and being physically active each day.

B – Build a healthy base by letting the Pyramid guide your food choices, choosing a variety of grains daily, especially whole grains, choosing a variety of fruits and vegetables daily and keeping food safe to eat.

C – Choose sensibly by choosing a diet that is low in saturated fat and cholesterol and moderate in total fat, choosing beverages and foods to moderate your intake of sugars, choosing and preparing foods with less salt and if you drink alcoholic beverages, do so in moderation.

Resources: Food Education – Dietary Guidelines

➤ **Represents the Food Guide Pyramid**

Does the food learning project represent, at a minimum, the Food Guide Pyramid's basic guidelines of variety and proportion?

The Food Guide Pyramid is a nutrition education tool that translates the Dietary Guideline's nutrition recommendation into the kinds of foods to eat each day. It is not a rigid prescription but a general guide that helps you choose foods to eat.

“Build from the Bottom” with the Food Guide Pyramid:

Variety: Get the nutrients your body needs to be healthy by eating many different kinds of foods. Also, drink water, the liquid your body needs.

Proportion: Stay healthy by eating more foods from the bottom two levels of the pyramid – grains, fruits and vegetables --- and fewer foods from the top level – fats, sugars, and salt.

Moderation: Reduce your risk of chronic diseases by limiting the amount of foods you eat that are high in fats, sugars, and salt.

Whole Foods: Choose foods in their natural, unprocessed form whenever possible. For example, fresh apples are the “whole” form nature gave us. Applesauce and apple juice are more processed. Flavored apple products may contain no real apples.

Resources: Food Education – Food Guide Pyramid

➤ **Demonstrates basic food preparation techniques**

Does the food learning project clearly demonstrate at least three basic food preparation techniques with clear instructions for each step of combining and cooking the ingredients? Being able to cook and having basic food preparation skills is a significant key to healthy eating.

Resources: Food Education – Food Skills Cookbook

➤ **Includes a food science principle**

Does the food learning project include at least one food science principle? Food science evolved from chemistry, microbiology, and medicine and has since added a whole bunch of things including biochemistry, nutrition, toxicology, mathematics, physics, engineering, business, psychology, environment, genetics, biotechnology, economics, and law.

Resources: Food Education – Food and the Nutrition Gateways

➤ **Considers the cultural heritages of the people of Hawaii**

Does the food learning project reflect one of the many diverse cultural heritages of the people of Hawaii? Human beings throughout the world eat an incredible diversity of foods... our own eating patterns are determined by a combination of personal, cultural, and societal influences. Hawaii has cultural influences from many places... this is most often reflected in food. Sharing and learning about each others' food ways can be a rich and rewarding human experience.

Resources: Local cookbooks, cultural/historical references, our elders, etc.

➤ **Practices safe food handling**

Does the food learning project practice safe food handling? Clean is the key; wash hands and surfaces often. Serve safely and keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. Keep vermin out of foods... flies, ants, roaches, and other critters.

Resources: Food Safety – Safe Food Handling Checklist for food fundraisers, food shows and food demonstrations... and to food education

➤ **Uses local fruits and vegetables representing Hawaii's agriculture**

Fruits and vegetables are excellent choices for food learning projects. Consider using locally grown produce. Visit a local farmer, talk with the supermarket produce manager, read stickers of fruits and vegetables, etc. Produce will be fresher and you will be supporting our local economy.

➤ **Is simple, flexible, adaptable, and can be prepared by others**

The food part of the food learning project is the practical application of the nutrition and health message... it is the recipe. Is the food simple to prepare, are the ingredients readily available, does it use basic equipment and appliances, are clear instructions used for every step of combining and cooking the ingredients, and is it flexible so that the same basic recipe can be used with different food varieties? Is preparation time and convenience addressed? Can it be easily prepared by the food learning project target audience?

➤ **Lists nutrition content**

Does the food include nutrient content information? Nutrient information can be in a format similar to the nutrition label found on food products. At a minimum, list the total calories, fat, sodium and sugar content for a stated serving size.

References: Food Education – Food and Nutrition Gateways – Tufts Nutrition Navigator – search words “food composition”

➤ **Give background including food source, ethnic origins, historical facts, and geographical information**

Does the food learning project give information regarding food sources (not the supermarket), ethnic origin (where did the papaya come from), historical and current uses (medicinal cure and fruit salad), where is it now grown, etc.?

➤ **Is appropriate for the time allowed, equipment available and the audiences' skills**

Is the food learning project appropriate for the target audience skills and for the time allowed and equipment available? Can most if not all of the food preparation be done in front of the audience? Is it age and developmentally appropriate?



Use the “checklist” below for planning your next food demonstration, food show, food contest or other food learning projects.



HEALTHY FOOD PROJECTS CHECKLIST

- When planning food demonstrations, food shows, food contests and other food learning projects, the project:
- Addresses the Dietary Guidelines
- Represents the Food Guide Pyramid
- Demonstrates basic food preparation techniques
- Includes a food science principle
- Considers the cultural heritages of the people of Hawaii
- Practices safe food handling
- Uses local fruits and vegetables representing Hawaii's agriculture
- Is simple, flexible, adaptable, and can be prepared by others
- Lists nutrient content
- Gives background including food source, ethnic origins, historical facts, and geographical information
- Is appropriate for the time allowed, equipment available, and the audiences' skills