

Cook it. Try it. Like it! Leaders Training Series

Cook it. Try it. Like it! is a five week program that promotes healthy eating by providing students with hands-on experiences cooking and trying nutritious tasty foods.

Everything you need to know about running the program is in the [Cook it. Try it. Like it! Guide](#). This video series provides tips from experienced program leaders to help the sessions run smoothly and create the best experience for each child.

VIDEO 1: Understanding the Program and How to Engage Students

Learn about Cook it. Try it. Like it! and how to provide the best experience for each student by creating a positive atmosphere, setting expectations for behaviour and creating opportunities for connection and participation.

VIDEO 2: What to Expect from a Typical Class

Learn how to prepare for your first Cook it. Try it. Like it! class, what a typical class should look like and how to troubleshoot any issues that may come up.

VIDEO 3: Tips for Weekly Lessons

This video provides an introduction to the five weekly lessons and practical advice on how to engage students in the activities. The lessons include the GloGerm kit, food geography, sugar sense, cilantro planting and grocery store nutrition tour.

VIDEO 4: Focus on Local Food

Learn about the benefits of purchasing local foods and how to include local foods in Cook it. Try it. Like it!

VIDEO 5: Trying New Foods

The final video in the Cook it. Try it. Like it! Leaders Training Series offers strategies on how to introduce new foods to children.

VIDEO 1: Understanding the Program and How to Engage Students

- **Cook it. Try it. Like it!**
 - This five week program promotes healthy eating by providing students with hands-on experiences cooking and trying nutritious tasty foods. Students will learn basic cooking skills, how to prepare healthy easy dishes, food safety, nutrition, grocery shopping tips and how food is grown.
 - Everything you need to know about running the program is in the Cook it. Try it. Like it! Guide. This video series provides tips from experienced program leaders to help lessons run smoothly and create the best experience for each child.
- **Create a Positive Atmosphere**
 - It is important to create a friendly, safe environment where children feel safe to try new skills, taste new foods and share their own experiences with food.
 - Encourage creativity and questions.
- **Set Expectations for Good Behaviour:**
 - Talking about expectations for behaviour during the first class can help set students up for a positive experience.
 - At times the children may get excited and will need to be reminded to listen and to follow safety guidelines.
 - With some higher energy groups it can help to have a teacher or other authority figure step in a few times during the class to remind students of behaviour expectations and being respectful of leaders and each other.
- **Connect with Each Student:**
 - Having one or two volunteers helps ensure you have time to connect with each child. Volunteers should be hands-on, interacting with students and reinforcing the concepts you are teaching.
 - Name tags can also be helpful. You can call the students by name to get their attention or praise them for using proper chopping technique.
- **Create Opportunities for Participation:**
 - There are a few things to be aware of while preparing food with the class:
 - Consider the age and skill level of the students. You want to challenge them with cutting and food preparation skills but not overwhelm them or create an unsafe atmosphere.
 - If you're running out of time you can do more of the food prep yourself but ensure students still have something to keep their hands busy.
 - Finally, keep the working groups small so each child gets more time cutting, measuring and blending.
 - Introducing new ingredients can be a great way to engage students!
 - Provide taste testing opportunities of new foods or foods in different form. For example, you may taste herbs in recipe and then taste them on their own.
 - Have a group discussion about new ingredients of interest.

- Ask students what ingredients they would like to use in the next session's recipe. For example, what vegetables would they like to try roasting?
 - Challenge students to make the best tasting smoothie that includes a new ingredient such as chia seeds or kale.
- **Link to food experiences at home:**
 - Encourage students to make a snack for their parents or siblings at home and share the story the following week.
 - Another option is having a homework activity each week that they enjoy and a prize for completion.

VIDEO 2: What to Expect from a Typical Class

This video will help you know how to prepare for your first class and troubleshoot any issues that may come up. You will also have a better understanding of what a typical class should look like.

- **Before Your First Class:**
 - Determine whether afterschool or during school time works best. You may also be providing the program in collaboration with a community partner such as a local youth program or after school care centre. Though the lessons are designed for Grades 4-7 it has been used with other age groups with modifications to be more age-appropriate.
 - In collaboration with the school, determine the best way to promote Cook it. Try it. Like it! and recruit students. You may go into the classroom to promote the program and hand out the registration forms from page 71 in the program leader guide, and then have students return the completed forms to the school office. Even if the program costs are covered by other funders, some schools require a nominal fee, such as \$10, to ensure the students who register plan on attending.
 - Before you show up for the first class, know the school and what the facility and equipment is like. Consider getting a map of the school that shows the closest exit for fire escape and where washrooms are located. Find out where equipment, such as an oven or sink are located. Turn on the oven to make sure it works, look inside for any build-up or other fire hazards, and check that it has oven racks.
 - If the kitchen equipment kit hasn't been used in a while look through it to make sure the spices are full, the contents are clean, and the first aid kit up to date.
 - The kitchen kit should be split into two smaller containers that are easier to lift and transport. You won't need all of the equipment each time so if you're not storing the kit onsite you may only want to bring one container with what you need for that lesson.
 - Arrive 45 minutes early to set up and meet volunteers. Have the volunteers arrive when you do or shortly after to help set up and talk about expectations for class.
- **What Does a Typical Class Look Like?**
 - There are many possible room set ups. You should have tables for students to work and for program leader demonstrations, a stove and fridge, a double sink and tub as a third

sink for sanitizing dishes, plugins for blenders. Some of this equipment may be located in another room. Things to consider:

- Make sure all students can see the demonstration table
- Avoid seating children within reach of the oven door.
- During class use clear statements to transition between activities: ‘Everyone wash your hands and take a seat at your group table, we are about to start.’ ‘Now we are going to use our senses to touch, smell and taste new foods BUT we’re having a group discussion about this so listen to the person sharing and put your hand up if you have something to say.’ ‘It’s time to clean up our work areas. Pick up your plates and utensils and take them over to the sink area. Then come back and have a seat.’
- **How to Balance Cooking and the Lesson:**
 - Try to spend more time cooking and with hands-on activities and less time on a formal lesson; especially if your group is younger.
 - Tie lessons into what you are cooking that day. For example you can name the food groups in the pizza, look at food labels together, and talk about how much sodium or sugar is in products and if there are lower sodium or sugar versions available.

VIDEO 3: Tips for Weekly Lessons

- **Day 1 - GloGerm Kit:**
 - Instead of just demonstrating and discussing the importance of hand washing, the GloGerm kit is an engaging way to make the message stick. Everything is more fun with a black light, and students are often amazed at how many areas they miss when washing their hands. Program leaders often find students have better hand washing throughout the program after using the GloGerm kit.
 - If there’s a time crunch, have one or two students participate while the rest observe. The kit is available from most Health Protection Departments at your local Public Health centre.
- **Day 2 – Food Geography**
 - After this lesson students will understand where their food comes from. A large map is a helpful visual tool.
 - Research interesting foods produced locally and discuss this with the class.
 - Have students bring in a fruit or vegetable to talk about for the food geography lesson. This could be a fruit or vegetable from their culture, their garden or a personal favourite.
 - Use fun trivia based on the lesson to determine privileges such as being the special helper or building their parfait first. Ask trivia questions like: What BC grown fruit is available year round? What country do you think is the largest exporter of fruits/vegetables?
- **Day 3 – Sugar Sense:** (Sugar Sense [Display](#) and [Facilitator’s Guide](#))

- This display increases students' awareness of the amount of sugar in different drinks and the effect of sugar on their health. Students are often shocked by the amount of sugar in their favourite drinks and how much sugar one pop a day adds over a year.
- For more visual impact, purchase common beverages and display them with the corresponding teaspoons of sugar. Try asking students what their favourite drinks are the week before, in order to make the lesson more relevant to them.
- **Day 4 – Cilantro Planting:**
 - Getting children excited about growing their own food is another strategy to promote a healthy lifestyle. While teaching the students to grow cilantro, discuss planting and growing things they are interested in, such as other herbs, carrots or cherry tomatoes. Ask if any of the student's families have a garden and if the student helps with the garden.
 - Lay out newspaper for the students to work on to avoid getting soil on the desks and floor. If it is a nice day, do the activity outside.
 - If you have a tight budget have students bring in their own containers to grow cilantro in, such as a jar, old mug, or bed of a toy truck; encourage them to be creative. Instead of buying soil you can bring some from your own garden or see if the school garden, community garden or a neighbour will donate soil.
- **Day 5 - Grocery Store Nutrition Tour:**
 - **Purpose and Intended Learning Outcomes:**
 - The grocery store nutrition tour helps students learn how to navigate the grocery store, how to read food labels and choose healthy options while shopping. Children like the opportunity to leave the classroom setting and see parts of the grocery store they wouldn't normally see. They also have fun creating a sample meal, using physical foods or even just talking about it.
 - **Planning for the Tour:**
 - Approach the manager of a nearby store weeks ahead to set up the tour. Be sure to contact the store again the week of the tour to confirm.
 - Plan well in advance how you will get to the store. Will you walk, take the bus or use parent drivers? If parents will be driving, contact them at least 2 weeks ahead to plan rides using phone numbers from the permission forms. Ensure all the drivers have more than one million third party liability insurance.
 - **Behaviour Management and Engaging Students:**
 - Talk about behaviour expectations before going into the store such as staying with the group, using inside voices and not touching food unless they are told to.
 - Students will be more engaged if they have a hands on experience and see different parts of the grocery store, such as the receiving area or dairy fridge. Often the stores will provide samples if requested in advance. To support the goal of the program to promote healthy choices, having cut up fruits and vegetables is best. Respectfully decline offers to provide baked goods or other processed foods.

- **Expect the Unexpected:**
 - Be flexible and understand it may be more difficult to do the tour at certain times of day if the store is really busy.
 - Be prepared that the manager may get called away and be unable to provide a portion of the tour as promised. Have an alternative lesson ready if the tour gets cancelled at the last minute.
- Watch these videos if you want a more in-depth description of what to include in the tour:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLIMQcm6u2kWv3rSERCef2gaJYgeN7uKvQ>

VIDEO 4: Focus on Local Food

Local food is an important component of Cook it. Try it. Like it! but ensure you approach the topic with sensitivity as children have no control over their families' food purchasing practices. The cost of food may have the biggest influence on food choices for some families. Take the approach of exploring your local food system and learning together about the journey from field to plate.

- **Benefits of Purchasing Local Foods:**
 - Local food doesn't travel as far and is better for the environment.
 - Buying local supports local farmers and keeps more money in the local economy.
 - It also has social benefits as people feel more connected to their community when buying food locally. For example the farmers' market provides the opportunity to socialize with local farmers and other people interested in food and their community.
 - Finally Local food is fresher, has increased quality and nutrition content.
- **Purchase Foods in Season:**
 - Phone your grocery store and talk to the produce manager or check out the farmers' market to see what is available for local and seasonal produce at this time of year. Produce will be less expensive if purchased in season. Think about other avenues of getting produce; does the school or neighbourhood have a garden, greenhouse, or microgreens you can use.
- **How to Include Local Foods in Cook it. Try it. Like it!**
 - Use local fruit(s) in fruit parfaits and smoothies or local vegetables in the roasted vegetable recipe or when making pizzas or quesadillas.
 - Use yogurt and milk from your local dairy and purchase honey from a local farm to use in the granola recipe.
 - Showcase local foods when doing the food geography lesson on Day 2 and talk about the benefits of buying local.
 - Even if you have to spend a little extra, showcase one or two unique ingredients from a local farmer and encourage children to have their parents take them to the farmer's market and help shop for their favourite produce or see what exciting new things they can find.

VIDEO 5: Trying New Foods

- Some school age children are adventurous eaters and others are unsure about new foods. This is normal.
- Create an environment where children feel safe and comfortable to try new foods.
- Be a role model. Allow the students to see that you value and enjoy a variety of healthy foods.
- Let them watch their peers trying new things. You may want to offer a new food to an adventurous eater first.
- Instill confidence in students that are hesitant around new foods. Let them know they will eventually learn to like most foods.
 - **Do's:**
 - **Encourage students to touch, smell and taste foods** (in a food safe manner of course!) These are all good things!
 - **Provide options to try new foods**
 - Ask a hesitant student 'Do you want a mushroom on a corner of your pizza?'
 - Provide napkins – if a child doesn't want to swallow a new food they've tasted, teach them to use their napkin to politely get rid of the food.
 - **Teach students to be respectful when cooking, eating and cleaning up.**
 - Words like "gross" and "disgusting" are not appropriate. Teach them to say, "I don't care for that" or "no thank you".
 - When serving themselves, some children may need to be reminded to make sure they leave enough for others; but if everyone has eaten they may be able to have seconds.
 - **Don'ts:**
 - **Coerce, bribe or force students to try foods** (even the one bite rule can cause children to have a negative attitude towards that food)
 - **Force students to finish the food on their plate**