

Let's get Cooking Video Discussion Guide - Junior Division

LET'S START A CONVERSATION

Food literacy includes developing mindful eating behaviours. Mindful eating behaviours increase our awareness of our experiences with food. Mindful eating includes:

- focusing on overall eating habits - taking time to eat, and paying attention to how, why, what, when, where, with whom, and how much we eat;
- focusing on the whole food experience by making connections to our feelings, thoughts, emotions and behaviours;
- increasing our awareness of enjoying the taste, smell and texture of food, the social engagement, and the experience of preparing the food;
- trying new foods to expand our food choices; and
- making healthier choices more often by being conscious of our eating habits and decisions.¹

The intent of the video, *Let's get Cooking*, is to help students develop their food literacy by focusing on aspects of healthy eating beyond our attention to food consumption. When students understand the factors that influence their eating habits and food choices, such as the benefits of helping with food shopping or meal preparation at home, and learning to cook and eat with others, they are better equipped to develop healthier eating patterns to support their overall health and wellbeing.

It is important to note that in Canada, 33% of food bank users are children², and one in three children are at risk of going to school on an empty stomach³. Students may come to school hungry and without access to food or control over the actions they might take related to hunger cues. Learning about thirst and hunger cues and feelings of fullness is one concept included in this video as part of learning about mindful eating but it is not the only focus. Several other mindful eating concepts have been included to support students in developing food literacy skills that support their lifelong well-being. Refer to the Themes to Reinforce the Learning section within the guide for points to consider when engaging your students in conversations about food.

1 Adapted from: Health Canada. (2022). [Canada's Food Guide, Be mindful of your eating habits.](#)

2 Food Banks Canada. (2022). [Hungercount.](#)

3 Breakfast Club of Canada. (2020). [Our Purpose.](#)

HOW TO USE THE VIDEO AND GUIDE

Together, watch the video, *Let's get Cooking*, with your students. Use the Conversation Starter Questions (within the video and this guide) and the Themes to Reinforce the Learning (within this guide) to facilitate conversations with your students to support the development of their food literacy.

VIDEO DESCRIPTION

Three friends are invited over to their friend's house for a cooking lesson with their parent who is a chef. They are learning to make easy snacks and meals that they can make and share with others. The friends learn about safe food handling, preparation, and storage, along with how cooking and eating together can be a social event and part of developing healthy eating habits.

CONVERSATION STARTER QUESTIONS

Use the following teacher prompts and student responses to facilitate conversations with your students.

- **Teacher prompt:** "How can helping with food shopping or meal preparation at home help us develop healthy eating patterns as we become more independent?"

Student responses:

- "Learning cooking skills to make meals helps us provide our body with the energy it needs for learning, playing and growing."
- "We learn about shopping based on a budget."
- "We can practice reading food labels to compare ingredients and other helpful information and make economic choices."
- "We learn about food marketing and how it impacts people's choices when shopping."
- "We can enjoy all aspects of our experiences with food."

- **Teacher prompt:** "What do we need to think about when cooking and eating with others?"

Student responses:

- "We need to think about the number of people cooking and eating together."
- "We need to know who has food allergies, sensitivities or dietary needs and restrictions and people's food preferences - likes and dislikes."
- "Whether we want to select recipes that don't require cooking and are easy to make with low-cost ingredients."

CONVERSATION STARTER QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)

Student responses (continued):

- “We need to make a list of ingredients and the amount of each ingredient to buy.”
 - “We have to think about what kitchen equipment is available and the time it takes to prepare the food.”
 - “We need to know about safe practices when cooking and handling food and proper food storage to avoid contamination or illness.”
- **Teacher prompt:** “What do you need to know about food safety when preparing, handling and storing food, and cleanliness?”

Student responses:

- “We must remember to wash our hands before and after touching food to avoid contamination.”
 - “We need to clean counter surfaces before food preparation and clean counters and cooking utensils between the use of different ingredients, especially raw meat to avoid transmission of bacteria.”
 - “We need to know how to use the cooking utensils, so we don’t accidentally hurt ourselves.”
 - “We need to be careful around the stove and other hot appliances, as well as others who are in the kitchen to avoid bumping into each other and causing a spill or a fire.”
 - “We need to make sure meat products are cooked to the proper temperature and food is stored properly so it doesn’t get spoiled.”
- **Teacher prompt:** “What are the factors that influence our eating habits and food choices?”

Student responses:

- “Eating with others who have food allergies affects what we choose to eat.”
- “When we prepare food and eat with others, we learn to enjoy the food we eat and the experience.”
- “The cost of food and the budget we have affect our choices.”
- “How much time we have to prepare food or eat impacts our eating habits.”
- “How active we are can influence what and how much food we prepare.”
- “The food available to us impacts our food selection and our habits.”
- “The foods available in our neighbourhood and during different times of the year.”
- “The equipment that is available to make recipes impacts what we can make.”

Consult [Canada's Food Guide](#) for background information to facilitate a discussion with your students about the benefits of cooking to support the development of healthy eating habits.

CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

Consider continuing the discussion with your students after viewing the video using these additional question prompts.

- How does helping with food shopping or cooking help you develop healthy eating habits?
- Why is it beneficial to eat meals with others?
- What is one thing you can do to try to eat more often with your friends or family?
- Enjoying your food means being open to trying new foods, taking time to savour the taste of food, and learning about cultural and food traditions. What is one thing you might try to focus on when enjoying your food?
- If you could give a friend some advice about how to develop healthier eating habits, what advice would you give and why?
- How can you apply what you have learned about helping with food shopping and cooking or eating with others in different situations?
- What might you share with others to promote healthier eating habits in different situations?

THEMES TO REINFORCE THE LEARNING

- Focus on the where, when, why, how and with whom we eat rather than on what we eat.
- Make conversations about food fun. Talk about how it looks, smells, tastes, and feels. Talk about which foods you enjoy when you eat them and why you like them.
- Talk about other elements of food enjoyment such as cooking, baking, celebrating holidays, and food shopping. These are also important ways to learn about food.
- Encourage students to share the connection between their culture and food traditions, including what foods are eaten and why, and the feelings, thoughts, and emotions they experience with food in these experiences.
- Honour and promote diverse perspectives about food and food culture. Families may define 'healthy food' differently and children have different health needs (e.g., food allergies or sensitivities, health conditions).
- Keep messages and views about food positive and avoid negative or fear-based statements. Avoid labelling food as 'good' or 'bad' and 'healthy' or 'unhealthy' (e.g., 'X food isn't healthy'). All foods can align when learning about mindful eating.

THEMES TO REINFORCE THE LEARNING (CONTINUED)

- Address judgmental or negative statements about food or weight or focus on calories or nutrients for every food they eat. This promotes harmful diet culture and obsessive food behaviours.
- Reinforce that bodies are unique and come in all shapes and sizes. They are all beautiful and equal.

For additional information about food literacy, consider consulting [Ophea's Food For Thought - Improving Food Literacy](#) resources.

For more information on Ophea, visit www.ophea.net.

School to Home Connections

This optional task provides your students with an opportunity to consolidate their learning by sharing what they have learned about the benefits of food shopping or meal preparation with others beyond the classroom setting. Students also have the opportunity to extend their learning by engaging in conversations with others about how food shopping or meal preparation and cooking and eating with others helps develop healthy eating patterns.

Review the following instructions with your students to clarify their understanding of the task and help them plan their conversations. Consider having students work in pairs or triads to plan their conversations. **Note:** This is meant to be an oral assignment; however, you may consider providing students with a reflection card to record key ideas about their conversations to share during a follow-up class/small-group discussion.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Select one or two people with whom you would like to share what you have learned about how food shopping or meal preparation and cooking and eating with others helps develop healthy eating patterns.
2. Decide when and where you will engage in a conversation with them (e.g., with a friend while walking home from school, with a caregiver after school, with a friend or other adult at school during a break in our school day).
3. Identify three things you would like to share about what you have learned about food shopping or meal preparation and cooking and how eating with others helps develop healthy eating patterns.
4. What are two questions you want to ask them to learn more about their food shopping or meal preparation habits and how cooking and eating with others helps them develop healthy eating patterns (e.g., what they know, what they want to know more about).

Remember your conversation or write a few notes so you can share it with others the next time we talk about food shopping or meal preparation and cooking and eating with others to help develop healthy eating patterns.