



FOOD AND NUTRITION PROJECT AREA



This project area will help you discover the science behind food and how it fuels our bodies. Challenge yourself to prepare flavor-filled recipes with a balanced diet while learning how ingredients work together through cooking methods and to prepare foods safely.

Ideas for Project Area Learning

- Use “My Plate” from the USDA to make healthy food choices.
- Understand the principles of nutrition related to helping physical fitness.
- Learn how to prepare and store foods safely.
- Understand how the body breaks down and absorbs the nutrients in foods.
- Acquire and demonstrate skills in planning, purchasing, preparing, and serving tasty and nutritious meals.
- Learn how to read and convert a recipe.
- Learn how to use measuring equipment.
- Research healthy snacks and create a recipe based on your findings.
- Make homemade pizza.
- Make breakfast food.
- Compare the cost of purchased and homemade food.
- Learn how water and other liquids boil.
- Learn how to keep your kitchen germ free.
- Learn how to use kitchen equipment safely.
- Prepare a grocery list and go grocery shopping.
- Learn safety skills in the kitchen.
- Explore low-fat alternatives.
- Review “Spend Smart. Eat Smart.” and identify recipes you want to prepare.
- Explore healthy fast food alternatives.
- Prepare easy meals.
- Gain skill in evaluating nutrition information from the Nutrition Facts Label.
- Understand the connection between eating and emotions.
- Learn how to preserve and dry foods.
- Learn to purchase foods on a limited budget.

APPLY WHAT YOU’VE LEARNED

Communication

- Teach friends how to make healthy snacks.
- Tell your family about the importance of eating a variety of foods from all the food groups.
- Design a poster about kitchen safety.

Civic Engagement

- Bake with the elderly at a care center.
- Volunteer in a food pantry.
- Offer locally grown food samples at a farmer’s market.

Leadership

- Take responsibility for preparing one family meal each week.
- Plan to help prepare food for a special family event.
- Create a club fundraiser around food.
- Volunteer to be your club’s Wellness Officer.

Entrepreneurship

- Sell homemade meals or dishes with nutritional information.
- Design and create a cookbook with original recipes and nutritional information for all dishes.
- Review kitchen gadgets or recipes on a food blog.



Goal Setting and Record Keeping

Goal setting is an ongoing process that guides your project area learning. Having goals is like having a road map to show you how to get you to where you want to go. Record keeping is also an ongoing process and another important life skill. In 4-H, you are encouraged to select from a variety of record keeping formats to meet your own personal needs and your preferred learning style. Keeping records of your learning experiences helps you determine how well you met your goals. Goal setting and record keeping improve your skills in organization, communication, planning, and evaluating.

Iowa 4-H Event Opportunities

- Participate in **county and state fair** exhibit classes.
- Check with your local county 4-H youth development staff to see if there are special events or **workshops in your county** that you want to attend to learn more about your project areas.
- Iowa 4-H members in grades 9–12 can apply for **State Project Area Awards** at State Recognition Day. Applications are open December through January.
- Meet young people from around the state who have completed grades 8–12, and share your interests at the **Iowa 4-H Youth Conference** held at Iowa State University in late June.
- Each March, hundreds of student researchers in grades 6–12 meet with professionals to discuss their findings and compete for scholarships during the **State Science and Technology Fair of Iowa**.
- Iowa 4-H club members are encouraged to take part in the **Healthy Living Club Challenge** “Race Across Iowa” each November-May. Work together to make healthy choices.
- As a **4-H club wellness officer** you can encourage healthy habits and incorporate physical activity into your club’s meetings.
- Meet high school students from around the nation and develop your skills to address today’s issues like nutrition education, wellness, and emotional wellbeing at the **National Healthy Living Summit**.

Share Your Learning With an Exhibit

- Experiment with altering recipes and share your results.
- Compare the cost of purchased vs. homemade foods.
- Research sports drinks vs. water. Share your results on a poster.

CAREER CONNECTIONS

- **Chefs** direct food preparation, design menus, and keep records of food production.
- **Dietitians** provide dietary guidance, create nutritional programs, and design school menus.
- The **USDA** provides resources to promote balanced diets, improve food labeling, and ensure agricultural product safety.
- **Food bank directors** help keep communities healthy by providing nutritional food options to those in need.
- **Food service personnel** work in schools and hospitals to prepare healthy meal options.

EDUCATION CONNECTIONS

- If you’re interested in improving food quality, safety, and nutrition, then **food science** may be the perfect fit for you!
- Students who attend **culinary school** learn more about necessary kitchen skills, hospitality, culinary arts, and professional cooking.
- Study **nutrition science** or **dietetics** if you’re interested in preventing and managing chronic illnesses and educating the public about healthy lifestyle choices.

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