

# Blender Basics!

## *Your basic guide to introducing cooking in the classroom*

By Cheralyn Schmidt

- ◆ Nurture a safe and fun food environment. Inspire students through food exposure. Kids love cooking and tend to eat more variety when have a hand in preparing new foods. Encourage students to sample unfamiliar things but never force a child to eat something. Many adults will not touch certain foods because they were forced as kids to consume them. Our tastes change as we grow- babies are born with almost twice as many taste buds as adults have. Be aware of any food allergens that students may have by communicating with parents.
- ◆ Start by teaching the children proper hand washing technique before learning to cook. If no sink is available in the room, make a hand washing station with a water jug, a bucket to catch wash water, paper towels, hand soap and a trash can.
- ◆ Have children tie back their hair and wash their hands if they are helping to prepare foods. Wear comfortable, close-toed shoes and an apron while cooking. Instruct them to avoid touching hair, face, pockets or doorknobs while cooking.
- ◆ Be sure all equipment is clean before starting- take apart blenders cups and lids when washing to remove all food then allow parts to dry completely before putting back together.
- ◆ Wash all fruits and vegetables using a brush to remove soil and bacteria. Rinse leafy greens and herbs well and spin dry in a salad spinner.
- ◆ Keep students involved in safe tasks like picking or tearing leaves, washing vegetables and dishes, spinning salad greens, stirring, pushing blender or microwave buttons, measuring ingredients. Older students can grate cheeses and vegetables, open and drain cans, use a mango or apple corer or use a plastic lettuce cutter. An adult should handle all tasks that involving sharps- cutting with a knife or removing sharp can lids. Keep these items out of student reach.
- ◆ Keep appliances near their outlets on countertops. If necessary, tape down extension cords to prevent trips or spills.
- ◆ Hold down lids when starting blenders- this prevents contents from flying out and making quite a mess. Never place a utensil or hand into a moving blender. Turn blender off before stirring down ingredients from sides of blender.
- ◆ Have a cooler on hand to transport foods to ensure they stay below 40 degrees. Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold to prevent bacterial growth. Be sure to store food in clean cabinets and refrigerators. Never store foods in the same cabinet as cleaners.
- ◆ Clean countertops and food surfaces with warm soapy water before and after cooking.
- ◆ Blender recipe ideas include smoothies, pesto, hummus, salad dressings, dips, fresh fruit drinks, and apple-sauce. If a hot pan is available, pancake and crepe batters can be made with ease.



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