

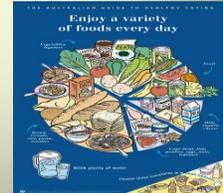
Exploring the effect of cooking classes on parents' provision of food and drink to children under 2 years

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'with honours' project



Presentation overview

- research on young children's nutrition
- the method and findings of research which involved finding out whether attendance at the Salisbury Communities for Children cooking classes helped parents provide more nutritious meals and snacks for their children under the age of 5
- discussion questions



Development of eating behaviours

- Children are born with taste preferences and survival skills
- Before children reach 6 years of age
 - Preferences for certain types of food
 - Dietary habits
- Some habits can continue into adulthood



Children learn through experience:

- To prefer foods they receive more exposure to
- Children develop preferences for foods they are exposed to, such as
 - fruits and vegetables
 - foods high in sugar
 - foods high in fat
- To like food - sometimes children need exposure and tasting of a new food up to 10 times before they like it



Parents and caregivers influences on children's food preferences

- parents nutritional knowledge
- modelling food behaviours
- the family meal structure
- food and socialisation
- types of parenting styles in relation to food such as rewarding and punishing certain food behaviours
- what, how and when food is available for children
- Toddlers do not learn to regulate the amount of food they should eat when parents control: how much, when and what foods toddlers eat



Why nutrition intervention for parents is needed in early childhood

- Nutrition can impact on all areas of children's development
- Parents do not generally receive parenting training in relation to nutrition
- Some parent's believe that they have correct nutrition knowledge yet children's nutrition does not meet nutritional guidelines
- Food development occurs before six years of age
 - Preferences for certain types of food
 - Dietary habits
- Many school interventions do not include families



Research indicates that cooking classes for parents should include:

- Nutrition knowledge
- Children's food development behaviour
- When to introduce foods
- Quick, easy and affordable meals and snacks
- Hands-on cooking skills
- Parenting skills



Salisbury Communities for Children

- Each Community for Children aims for better outcomes for disadvantaged 0-5 year old children and their families
- Parenting Education classes are designed to:
 - improve parenting skills
 - promote trust
 - bring different groups of people together
 - develop networks



Participants

- 10 participants attending a course of cooking classes at Ingle Farm FamilyZone Hub
- 13 children under age of 5
- Children ranged from 5 – 18 months of age
- 6 participants had 8 children over the age of 1
- 2 sets of twins



Materials

- 3 pre-prepared interview sheets for each participant
- Food groups and children's serving sizes
- Sample sizes of food



Interview questions



- the foods and drinks participants said they offered their children in the twenty-four hours before each interview
- the foods and drinks participants say they normally offer their children
- what participants wanted to learn during the cooking classes
- what participants learnt during the cooking classes

Food groups and sample sizes (Eat Well Tasmania)

Meat and meat alternatives (1-2)

- 45 gm (1 thin slice) cooked lean meat or fish or chicken
- 1/3 cup cooked stew or casserole or mince
- 1 thin slice of ham or beef
- 1 fish finger or sausage
- 1 egg
- ½ cup cooked (30gm uncooked) dried beans, peas, lentils, baked beans

Milk and dairy products (6)

- ½ cup full cream milk
- ½ cup calcium fortified soy milk
- ½ cup custard or white sauce
- 100 gm (1/2 cup) yoghurt
- 1 tablespoon milk powder
- 20 gm cheese / 1 slice processed / 1/3 cup grated cheese

Breads and cereals (4+)

- 1 slice of bread or ½ bread roll
- 2 large plain cracker biscuits
- 1 weetbix
- ½ cup breakfast cereal or ¼ cup muesli
- ½ cup cooked rice or pasta
- 3 T (30g) flour in recipes
- 1 small pancake



Food groups and sample sizes (Eat Well Tasmania)

Vegetables (2+)

- 1 cup salad
- 1 small potato or ½ cup mashed potato
- ½ cup cooked or raw vegetables





Fruit (1+)

- 1 banana or apple or orange
- 1 slice melon or 2 small fruits eg. apricots
- 1 cup canned / stewed fruit
- ¼ cup dried fruit
- ½ cup fruit juice – diluted??

Other

- Anything that did not fit into other categories eg. Burger rings, cakes, lollies



Procedure

- 3 structured interviews were held with each participant
 - Before cooking classes began
 - Immediately after cooking classes
 - 2 months after cooking classes finished
- I attended the cooking classes to see what nutrition and cooking information the participants were given



Analysis of data





The qualitative data collected from the interviews was categorised post hoc and frequencies for each category were calculated.

Frequencies were also calculated using data about the number of servings of food participants reported offering their children in each food group.

Verbal information given to participants

- Presenting food
- Recipe variations
- How to cook certain foods
- Information was shared between participants



Written information

An information pack containing developmental information and recipes.

2 booklets

- dietary guidelines for Australian Adults
- Healthy family recipes for growing kids




Did you get a chance to read the information pack that you were given during the cooking classes?

Yes (3)

No (5)

Some of it (2)

Recipes made during cooking classes










- potato boats
- cheese and vegemite scrolls
- cheese pies
- sweet carrot and zucchini loaf
- cauliflower and broccoli cheese
- sweet potato soup with chilli
- sausage rolls
- pizza with homemade bases
- savoury scones
- pumpkin wedges
- Quiche
- Pasties
- coconut pumpkin cake
- chicken or tuna patties
- chicken noodle soup
- fruit pancakes

At the end of each session, participants sampled and took the food home. Some participants offered food to their children while they were there.

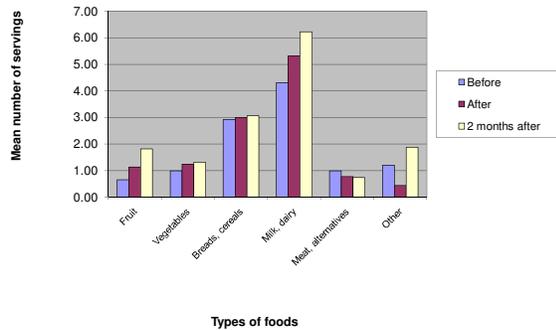
Reported changes to the food and drinks participants offer their children



Foods and drinks offered in 24 hours relating to food types

Types of food and drink	Before		After		2 months after		suggested serving amounts
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Fruit	0.64	0.32	1.13	0.67	1.81	1.54	1+
Vegetables	0.98	0.43	1.23	0.57	1.31	0.88	2+
Breads & cereals	2.92	1.02	2.98	1.52	3.06	1.70	4+
Milk & dairy	4.31	1.30	5.31	2.27	6.23	3.63	6
Meat/meat alternatives	0.98	0.74	0.77	0.78	0.73	0.57	1-2
Other	1.20	1.05	0.44	0.42	1.88	1.43	

Changes to food and drinks offered before, after and 2 months after the cooking classes



Have you made any changes to the foods and drink that you give your preschoolers since attending the cooking classes?

If yes, can you tell me the reasons why you have made changes?

If no, can you tell me the reasons why you have not made any changes?

(Interview #2)



Children's development

Now try to give child foods that parents eat (1)



Nutrition

- do not give jar food anymore (1)
- buy and give lots more vegetables to children (2)
- give children less crap food now (1)
- 1 participant
 - whole outlook has changed
 - she looks at what is healthier
 - gives her children more healthy foods now such as steam vegies, carrot and zucchini slice for snacks, more fruit and they love eating healthier food.
 - she does not let the grandparents give children soft drink anymore
 - Has cut out junk.



Cooking

- cooking more homemade foods and variety (5)
- making recipes cooked during the cooking classes (1)
- giving child more egg in recipes (1)



Other



- to make substitutions and small changes in recipes (1)
- to give children small portions at a time (1)
- No changes – did not feel like it (1)
- No changes (1)

Do you think that you have made any permanent changes to the types of foods and drinks you give to your preschooler since going to the cooking classes?

If yes, can you tell me the reasons why you have made changes?

If no, can you tell me the reasons why you have not made any changes?

(Interview #3)



Children's development

- Recipes from the cooking classes will be used when child gets older (1)
- No changes because "besides the recipes given, not much other information was given" – would have liked more development information (1)
- Yes, because child has gotten older and now eats more types and varieties of food (3)



Nutrition

- no longer buying jar foods (2)
- eating healthier food (3)
- buying more fruits and vegetables (3)
- giving child water instead of juice (1)
- No changes because "besides the recipes given, not much other information was given" – would have liked more nutritional theory and food information (1)
- No changes because already giving children the types of food that were cooked during the cooking classes (2)



Cooking

- cook more now (2)
- more confident in the kitchen (2)
- more creative and making food more interesting for children to eat (1)
- trying different recipes for children (1)
- only changes were to cook recipes made at the classes (1)
- will make changes by making the recipes when child gets older (1)



 Other 

- I am more organised with food (1)
- try not to stress as much about food (1)
- it is cheaper to cook your own foods (1)
- “I did not make changes because I did not learn a lot from the cooking classes” (1)
- changes are not really from what I learnt at the cooking classes (2)

Implications of small studies

- What are the implications of this research?
- What are the problems in evaluating small programs?



Importance and benefits of evaluating small programs

- To ask vital questions
 - Is the program effective?
 - Can we improve the program?
 - What happens to the participants of the program?
 - Should we continue or expand the program?

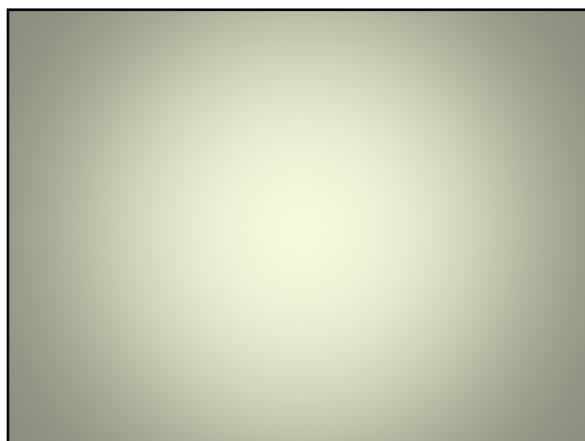
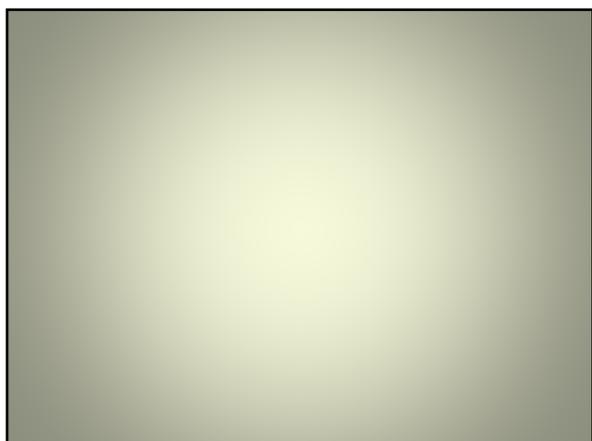
Without asking these questions, how do we know that the program we are spending our time and money on is worth it?

Robson (2002)

Please email me on:

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if you have any further questions or would like more information about my study



Importance of good nutrition

- All areas of children's development are linked. Children's nutrition affects all areas of their development including: physical, social, emotional and cognitive.
- Healthy foods are needed for children's muscles, bones and intellect to reach their full potential
- Healthy eating can:
 - Improve children's concentration and behaviour
 - Lower health problem risks such as constipation, anemia, and tooth decay
 - Prevent diseases such as some cancers, diabetes and heart disease



important that young children have good nutrition

- For development in all areas
- When children do not have a healthy diet it can cause problems such as:
 - over-weight
 - obesity
 - diabetes
 - heart disease
 - food security issues

Children are born:

- preferring the taste of sweet and salty foods and more likely to reject sour, bitter foods. These are modified through experience.
- with an innate survival skill, called neophobia, meaning children need to find out whether a food will make them sick or not before they accept it (Birch, Johnson & Fisher 1999, p. 199).
- with reflexive faces that cause very young children to display different faces when tasting different foods (Birch, Johnson & Fisher 1999, p. 197).



Written information cont..

- If yes, did you find it useful and what was useful for you?
 - Development
 - Did not read developmental information (2)
 - Useful – toddler information about guidelines and ages (1)
 - Useful – developmental information about starting solids (1)
 - Cooking
 - Recipes were useful (2)
 - Tried some of the recipes (2)
 - Nutrition
 - Useful – ideas and guidelines about when to feed what foods to children (1)
- Is there any information that you want to see included in the information pack?
 - Development
 - How to get children to eat certain foods (1)
 - Cooking
 - Cooking with kids – what children can do when cooking with adults (1)
 - No (3)

Children's development

- Please tell me why you have enrolled in the cooking classes (Interview #1).
 - children transitioning from smooth to solid food (2)
 - what and when to introduce foods (2), including finger foods (2)
 - the fussy child (1)
- What did you learn at the cooking classes? (Interview #2)
 - “that kids like bland food, mine don't” (1)
- What were the most important things that you learnt at the cooking classes? (Interview #3)
 - easy meals that child eats (1).
- Nutrition information participants wanted to learn at the cooking classes that they did not learn
 - how to deal with fussy eaters (1)
 - more ideas that child would eat at their age (3)
 - recipes for different aged children (2)
 - when and how to introduce a variety of foods to young children (2).

Nutrition

- Please tell me why you have enrolled in the cooking classes (Interview #1).
 - healthy choices (4)
 - food and nutrition ideas for iron (1) and milk (1)
 - nutritionally balanced food choices (1)
 - what and when to introduce healthy foods and habits (2).
- What did you learn at the cooking classes? (Interview #2)
 - “that I am on the right track” with feeding my children (1)
 - to add carrots and zucchini to sausage rolls (1)
- What were the most important things that you learnt at the cooking classes? (Interview #3)
 - “mixing different foods together is OK - even sweet and savoury food” (2)
 - to be and eat healthy (1)
 - to make healthy meals with nutritional value (1)
- Nutrition information participants wanted to learn at the cooking classes that they did not learn
 - more food and nutrition knowledge (1)
 - more foods containing iron (1) or milk and dairy (1)
 - healthier finger foods and nutritious snacks (3)
 - fat alternatives such as replacing butter with apple sauce or cream cheese instead of butter in icing (1)

Cooking

- Please tell me why you have enrolled in the cooking classes (Interview #1).
 - more food ideas and recipes (8)
 - what types of food to put together (1)
 - to make more creative and interesting food (2)
 - to learn to cook different foods (3)
- What did you learn at the cooking classes? (Interview #2)
 - different recipes and snack ideas (6)
 - to adapt and vary recipes (1)
 - new techniques such as making pastry (1)
 - learning to read and follow recipes (1)
 - to be more confident in cooking (2)
 - to cook more homemade food (2)
 - how to cook cheap and easy foods (1)
 - practice makes perfect (1)
 - being more motivated to cook regularly (1)

Cooking cont...

- What were the most important things that you learnt at the cooking classes? (Interview #3)
 - learning new recipes and varieties of foods (4)
 - learning to read and follow recipes (2)
 - different snack ideas (2)
 - adapting recipes made in the classes (1)
 - how to cook (1)
 - to be able to balance getting meals ready and served (1)
- Nutrition information participants wanted to learn at the cooking classes that they did not learn
 - recipes for younger children (3)
- Comments about the cooking classes
 - a baking with children session should be included (1)
 - we were taught the cooking basics (1)
 - enjoyed cooking out of comfort zone (1)
 - I learnt to cook healthily (1)
 - the party food ideas were useful because they are cheaper to make than buy



Other

- Please tell me why you have enrolled in the cooking classes (Interview #1).
 - Part of requirements for another parenting course
- What did you learn at the cooking classes? (Interview #2)
 - To be tolerant of other participants in the class (1)
 - "my child likes omelettes" (1)
- What were the most important things you learnt at the cooking classes? (Interview #3)
 - Mix with different people (1)
 - To try any foods with children (1)
 - How to shop cheap (1)
 - I can't remember much because I only attended two classes (1)

Other cont..

- Suggestions and comments about the cooking classes (Interview #3)
 - enjoyed the classes (7)
 - have enrolled in the next cooking classes (3)
 - "can I do them again" (1)
 - would have liked more structure (2)
 - the cooking classes were well organised (1)
 - more funding is needed (1)
 - craft recipes such as playdough and paint would be good (1)
 - I liked getting ideas from other participants (1)
 - there was nothing else I wanted to learn (4)