



DTA Activities of Daily Living

Food Safety Unit

Welcome to the DTA Activities of Daily Living Skills Program, designed to help students with complex communication needs build the essential skills required for a successful life. The Food Safety Unit will introduce students to important rules for practicing safe handling and consumption of food. Each lesson is crafted to be accessible and meaningful, providing students with opportunities to learn the skills needed to become more independent in their daily lives.



Students will explore relevant vocabulary related to food safety, reinforced by a book that sets the foundation for each skill. Hands-on activities and varied practice opportunities are included to help students learn through repetition in a dynamic, supportive environment.

WHY?

Teaching students about food safety is crucial because it helps **prevent foodborne illnesses, builds lifelong healthy habits, and empowers them to make safe choices when preparing and consuming food.**

WHO?

These lessons and activities are created specifically for **Middle and High School students** with complex communication and learning needs in mind, many of the activities are appropriate for elementary aged students.

WHEN?

Be intentional about finding and scheduling specific **time for students to learn and practice** food safety. Use mealtime and cooking activities to discuss key items.

WHERE?

Learning happens everywhere! Pair the desk activities with hands-on experience to make learning stick! The activities can be used every day to provide **repetition with variety.**

WHAT?

For the Food Safety unit, you will receive the following resources:

- Teacher's Guide (this document)
- One book related to skill area
- Desk activity (e.g., sorting worksheet)
- Vocabulary flashcards
- Communication board
- Mind Map

Food Safety: Sample Goals & Prepare

Sample Goals:

- **Handwashing** - Student will wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food.
- **Safe Food Storage** - Student will place leftovers in the refrigerator within 2 hours of preparation.
- **Cleaning Surfaces** - Student will clean food preparation surfaces with soap and water or sanitizer before and after use.
- **Safe Eating Practices** - Student will identify safe vs. unsafe food scenarios (e.g., eating food left out overnight, washing hands before eating)
- **Expiration Dates** - Student will read and identify expiration dates on food products with 80% accuracy.

Skills-at-a-Glance



Basic Skills	Advanced Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• cleaning/washing hands• sorting basic food types• Rules - clean, chill	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• reading expiration dates• recognizing spoiled foods• Rules - separate, cook

General Preparation:

- Review materials in this guide.
- Determine when food safety instruction will take place.



Tip: Use the Classroom Routine Planner to create your plan!

- For students using AAC devices, make sure the support team is able locate necessary vocabulary for modeling purposes.
- Print one copy of the Food Safety Communication Board for each student. Even students with verbal skills can benefit!
- Print copies of the Separating: Fridge or Pantry worksheet
- Print and laminate the Food Safety Flash Cards.



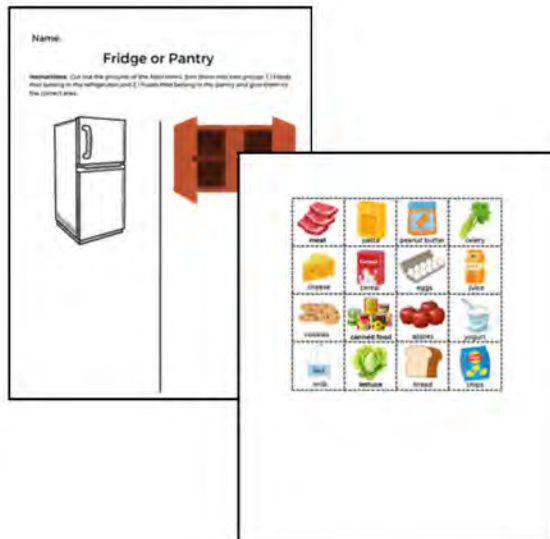
Tip: Print 2 copies and use them for a memory or Go Fish game.

See the Teacher Tips and Schedule-At-A-Glance for ideas on how to use these materials!

Book



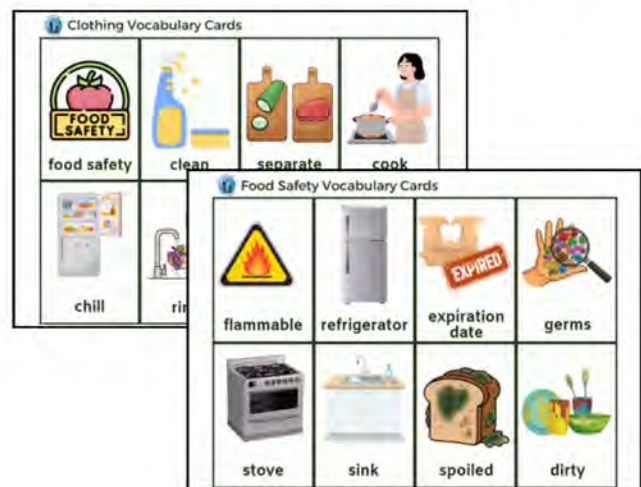
Worksheet



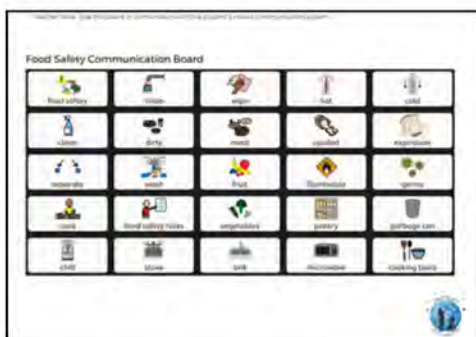
Mind Map



Food Safety Vocabulary Cards



Communication Board

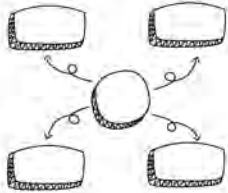


Food Safety Scenarios



Food Safety: Teacher Tips

Ideas to Support Learning



Help students learn new concepts by using the Mind Map to brainstorm before each lesson.



Make learning stick by reading the book every day for a week (or more!) to enhance cognitive functioning and to increase knowledge.



Use the vocabulary cards to provide visual supports during lessons and activities.



Worksheets can be completed as a group activity or as individual desk work. They can also be used to assess student knowledge.

Ideas to Support Communication



Use communication boards to help students actively participate during lessons. Give one to every student to support vocabulary learning.



For students who use AAC devices, make sure to locate related words before starting a lesson.



Provide wait time! Pause for 10 seconds after commenting or asking a question. This gives students time to process and respond.



Point to symbols on communication boards and devices as you talk. This is called modeling.

Food Safety: Schedule At-A-Glance

Use the following daily schedule as a guide and adjust to meet the specific needs of your classroom. The goal should be to provide repetition with variety as students learn food safety skills. This strategy builds confidence and empowers students to succeed and gives students many opportunities to learn and practice new skills.

Day 1: Introduction to Skill

- Build background knowledge - Take a field trip to the classroom cooking area. Explore the Mind Map to activate prior knowledge.
- Read the book. Pause on each page and invite students to engage.
- Use communication board or AAC device to model relevant vocabulary.
- Use flashcards and communication boards for visual support.

Day 2: Vocabulary

- Read the book again. Pause on each page and invite students to engage.
- Focus on the key cleaning concepts (e.g., hands, work surfaces, etc.).
- Project the book using your classroom smart board. Use the questions at the back of the book to lead a discussion.
- Use flashcards and communication boards for visual support.

Day 3: Hands-On Skills

- Read the book again. Pause on each page and invite students to engage.
- Focus on separating food items (e.g., refrigerator, freezer, pantry).
- Use flashcards and communication boards for visual support.
- Help students who use AAC devices find vocabulary on their system.

Day 4: Skill Practice

- Read the book again. Pause on each page and invite students to engage.
- Use the flashcards to play a memory game or Go Fish.
- Use the Safe or Unsafe? scenarios to lead class discussion.
- Using play, real food, or grocery store ads, practice separating things into items that need to be chilled or items that belong in the pantry.

Day 5: More Practice

- Read the book again. Pause on each page and invite students to engage.
- Independent (or small group) desk work - Use the Separating worksheet to assess student knowledge.
- Repeat lessons, as needed.

Food Safety: Scope and Sequence (More ideas!)

Use the progression of skills outlined below as a guide. It's important to recognize that older students may need instruction or practice in foundational skills introduced earlier in the sequence.

Kindergarten – 2nd Grade

- Washing hands before and after eating
- Identifying “clean” vs. “dirty” foods (e.g., dropped food vs. food on a plate)
- Learning to cover food and drinks to keep them safe
- Recognizing safe vs. unsafe food temperatures (hot vs. cold) in simple terms
- Practicing safe snack routines (e.g., opening packages, asking for help with cutting)

3rd – 5th Grade

- Managing personal food items (lunchbox, snacks, water bottle) responsibly
- Understanding the importance of food safety (why germs can make us sick)
- Learning about cross-contamination (e.g., keeping raw and cooked foods separate)
- Recognizing signs of spoiled food (smell, appearance, expiration dates)
- Asking for help when unsure if food is safe to eat

6th – 8th Grade

- Creating a simple food safety routine (wash hands, clean surfaces, store leftovers)
- Understanding body changes and how nutrition and safe food practices support health
- Safely using kitchen tools with supervision (cutting, microwaving, storing food)
- Managing personal food safety independently (packing lunches, storing snacks correctly)
- Recognizing when to seek help if food causes illness or discomfort

9th – 12th Grade

- Creating and maintaining a personal food safety routine (meal prep, storage, cooking)
- Addressing and managing personal food-related health issues (allergies, intolerances, dietary needs)
- Transitioning to adult responsibilities (reading labels, checking expiration dates, safe grocery shopping)
- Self-advocacy in food safety and healthcare (communicating needs to peers, teachers, or healthcare providers)

Food Safety: Extension Ideas and Resources

YouTube Videos

Use videos to support learning. A simple search on YouTube will give you loads of visual and auditory tools to use to support learning. Here are a couple to get you started:

- [Top Food Safety Tips for Kids: Easy Tricks to Avoid Getting Sick](#)
- [Kitchen Safety for Kids - Camp Galileo Anywhere: Chefology](#)
- [LIFE SKILLS AT HOME: Putting Away Groceries](#)

Monarch Reader

[Monarch Reader](#) is an online library of free books for beginning readers of all ages and adapted books for special education. Search for books related to food safety or create your own!



Thanks for Learning with us!



For additional books, recipes, AAC and Special Education products, please visit DTAschools.com & AACchicks TPT Store!



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Food Safety



Food safety means keeping food clean and safe to eat. It also means keeping your hands and the cooking area clean, too. This helps prevent spreading germs.



Germ and bacteria can grow on food if it's not handled the right way. These germs are too small to see, but they can cause stomach aches, vomiting, or worse.



Food safety is important at home, at school, and anywhere food is prepared. When you follow food safety rules, you protect yourself and others.



There are four main food safety rules. These rules help you remember what to do when you handle food.

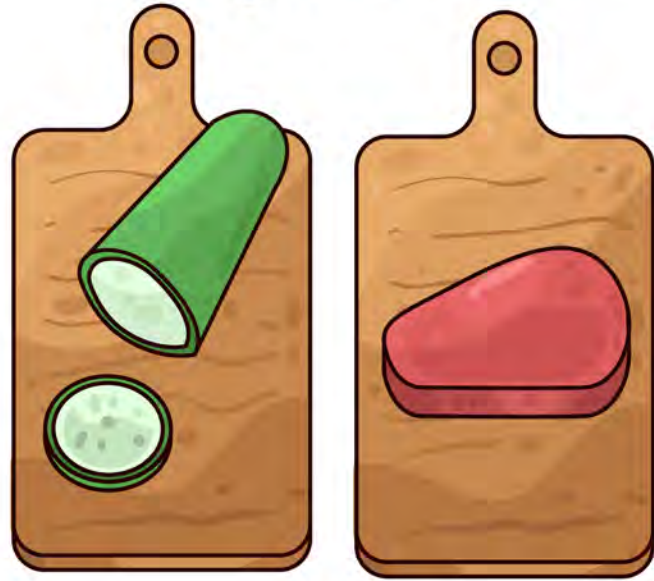
1

Clean



2

Separate



3

Cook



4

Chill



Clean means washing hands, tools, and surfaces before and after touching food. Clean also means to rinse fruits and vegetables.

1

Clean



Wash your hands.



Clean the countertop or table.



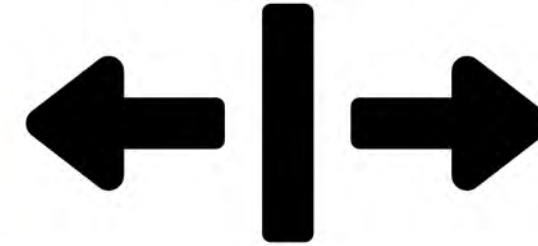
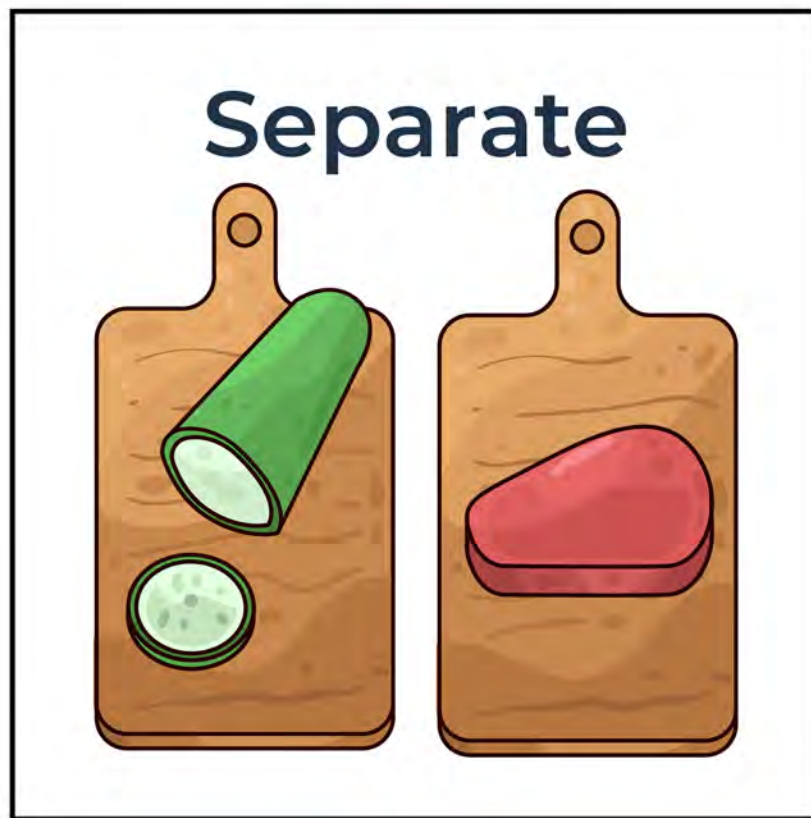
Use clean kitchen tools.



Rinse fruits and vegetables.

Separate means keeping raw foods away from ready-to-eat foods. Raw meat, poultry, and seafood can carry harmful germs. If these germs touch other foods, they can spread.

2



Cook means heating food to the right temperature to kill germs.

3

Cook



CAUTION

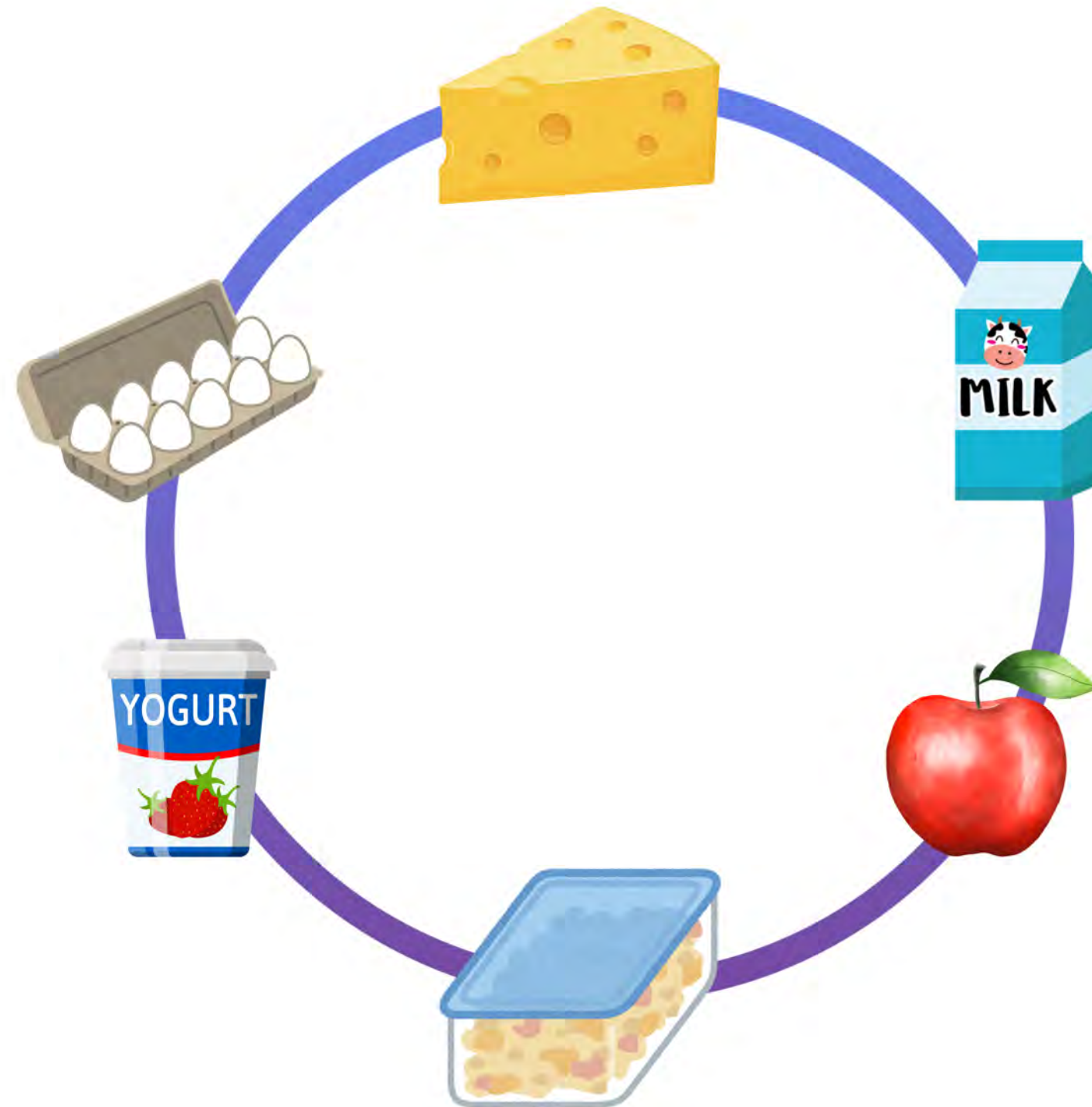
**Be careful
around a
hot stove!**

- Never leave cooking food unattended.
- Keep flammable items (like towels and paper) away from heat.
- Make sure an adult is nearby.

Chill means keeping cold foods cold and storing leftovers quickly. Chilling food slows down germs and keeps it fresh longer.

4

Chill

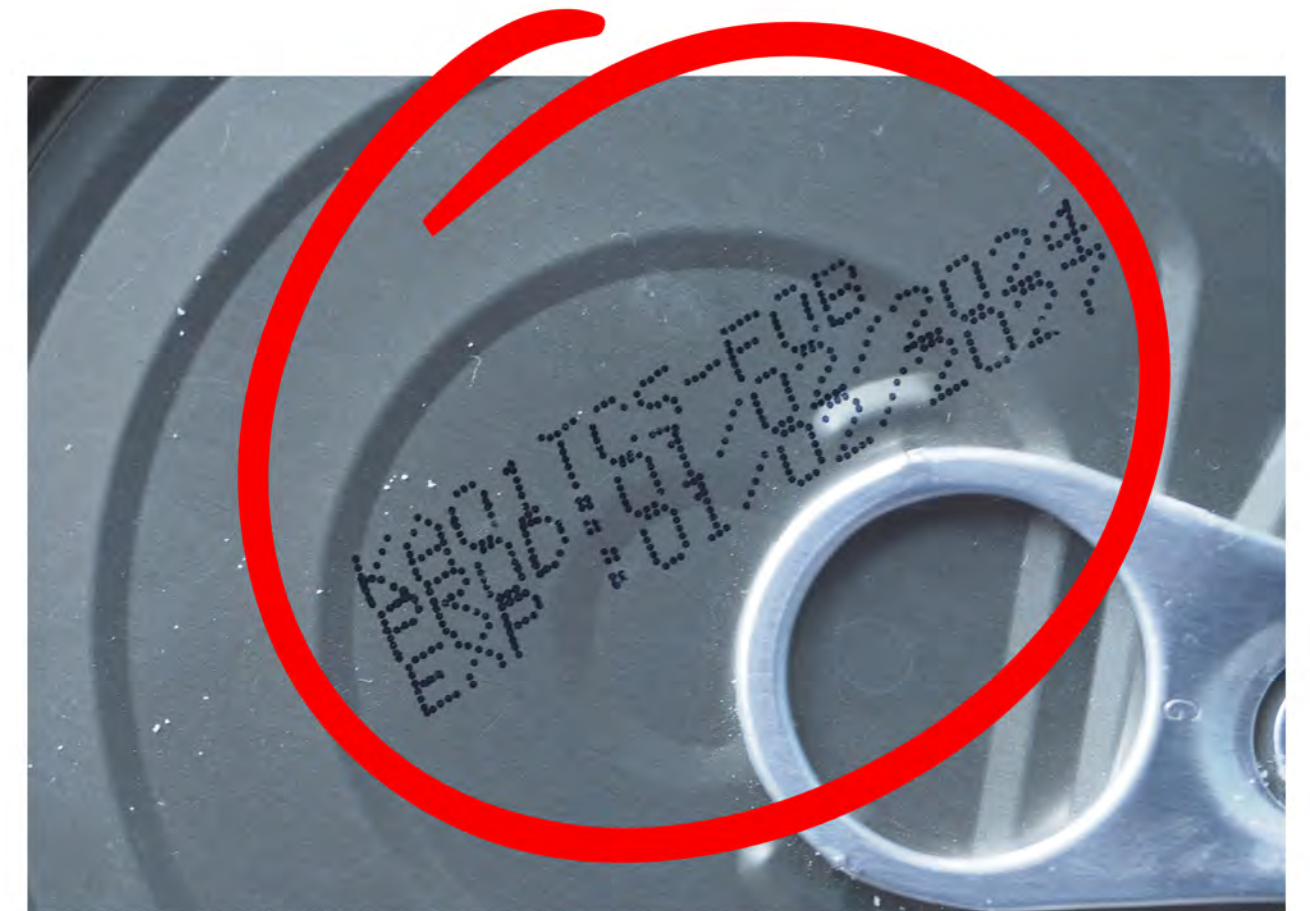


Food safety also means making smart choices every day.
If food smells bad, looks strange, or has mold—don't eat it.
If you're not sure, throw it away.



Other safe habits:

- Keep your lunch cool.
- Don't eat food left out overnight.
- Wash reusable containers and lunch bags often.
- Check expiration dates



Being safe with food helps you
stay healthy and confident.



Conclusions: Think About It!

What do you need to clean before cooking?



hands



cooking surface



kitchen tools

Conclusions: Think About It!

Why is it important to learn about food safety?



Helps us feel confident



Helps us stay healthy



Food safety is a good
life skill

Thanks for reading with us!



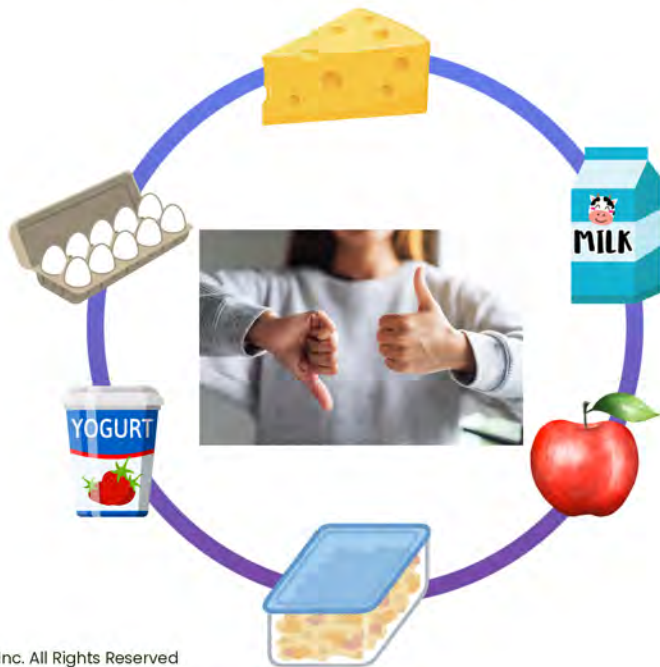
For additional books, recipes, AAC and Special Education products, please visit our website & AACchicks TPT Store!





Food Safety Scenarios

Safe or Unsafe



Listen to each situation and determine if it is safe or unsafe.



Eating food off of the floor.



What do you think?



Eating food that has been left out all night.



What do you think?



Rinsing fruits and vegetables before eating.



What do you think?



Eating meat that has been cooked correctly.



What do you think?



Bread with mold.



What do you think?



Lettuce that has touched raw meat.



What do you think?



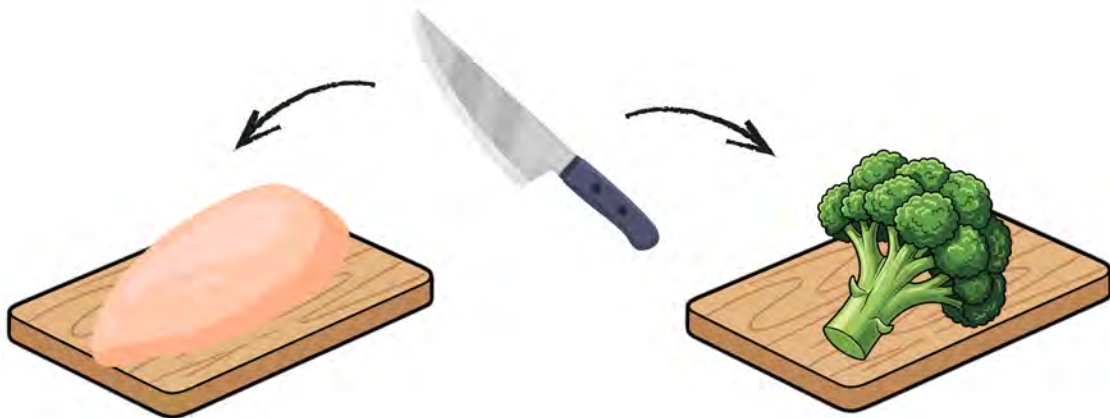
Keeping milk in the refrigerator.



What do you think?



Using the same knife for raw meat and vegetables.



What do you think?



Eating with dirty hands.



What do you think?



Using a clean knife to cut vegetables.



What do you think?



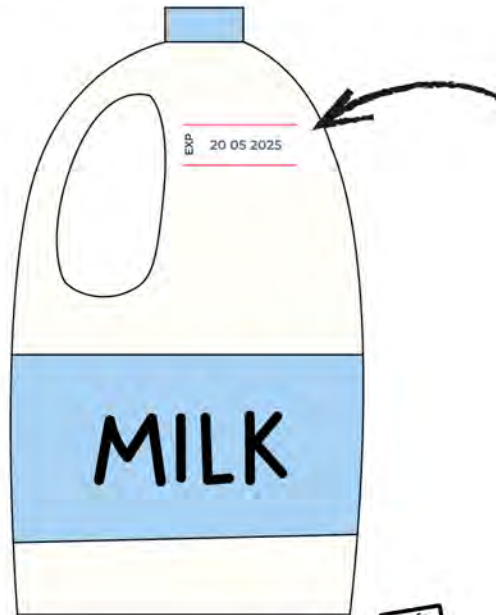
Storing leftovers in the refrigerator.



What do you think?



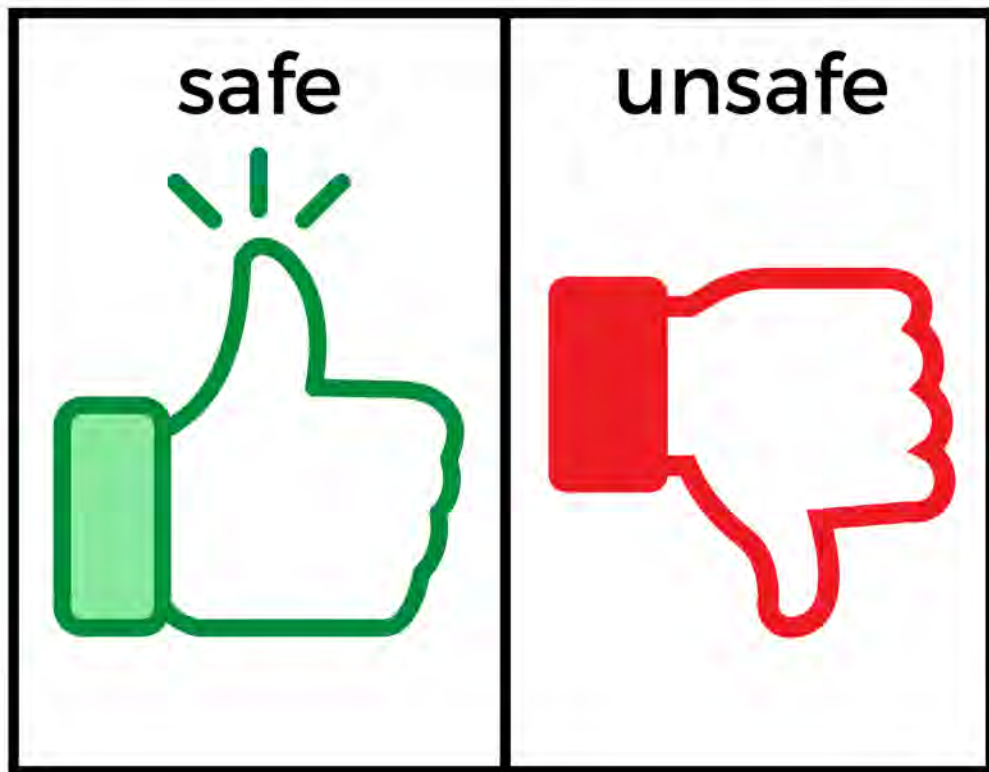
Checking for expiration dates.



What do you think?



Print one “safe” and “unsafe” card for each student to use during the activity.



**Thanks for
learning with us!**



**If you like this activity, visit our
BOOM or TPT stores for additional
books, activities and printables!**





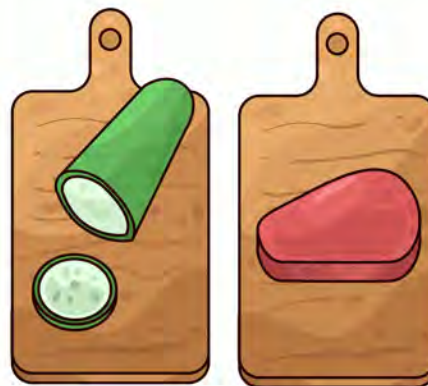
Food Safety Vocabulary Cards



food safety



clean



separate



cook



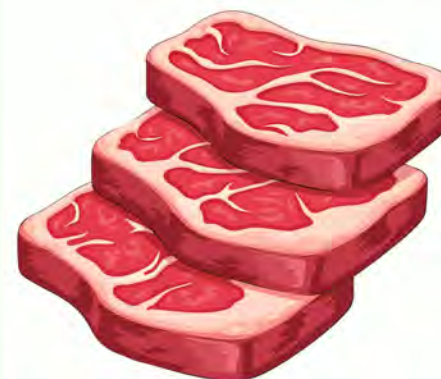
chill



rinse



wash hands



meat



Food Safety Vocabulary Cards



flammable



refrigerator



**expiration
date**



germs



stove



sink



spoiled



dirty



Food Safety Vocabulary Cards



fruit



vegetables



**cooking
tools**



wipe



microwave



hot



cold

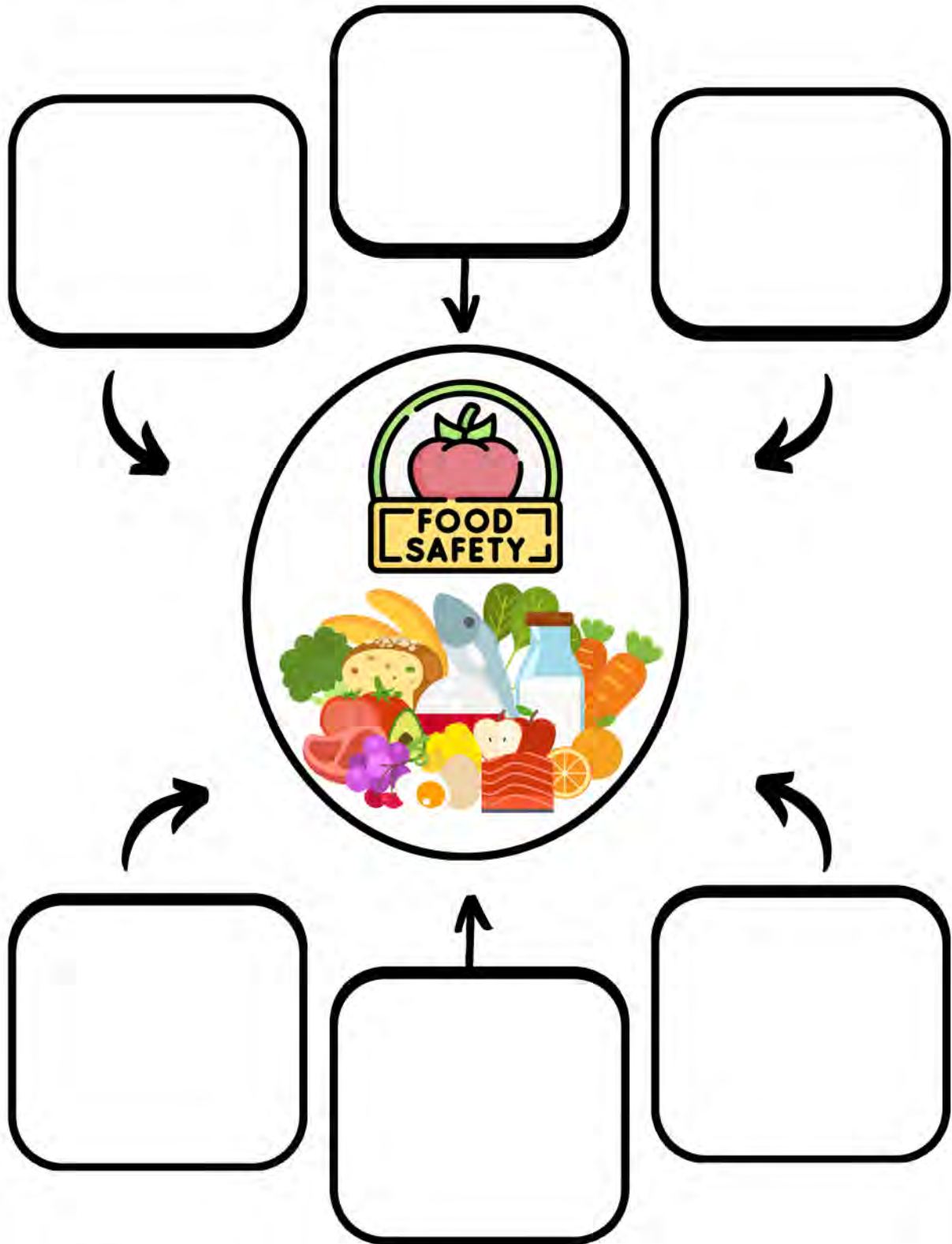


garbage



Food Safety Mind Map

Instructions: In the boxes below, write down everything you know about food safety or cut out the ideas below and glue to the mind map.

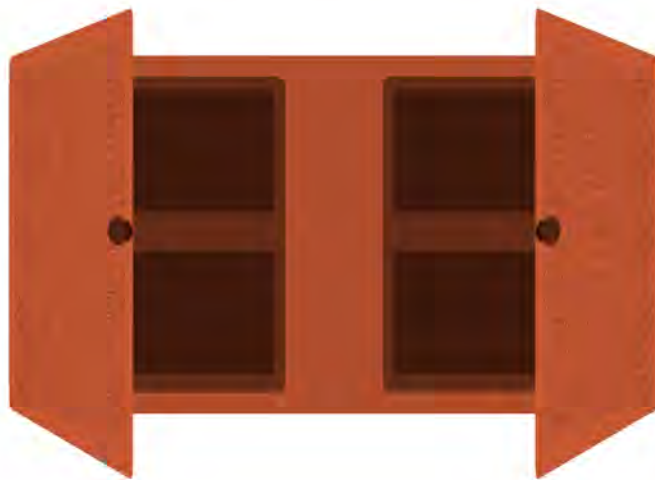
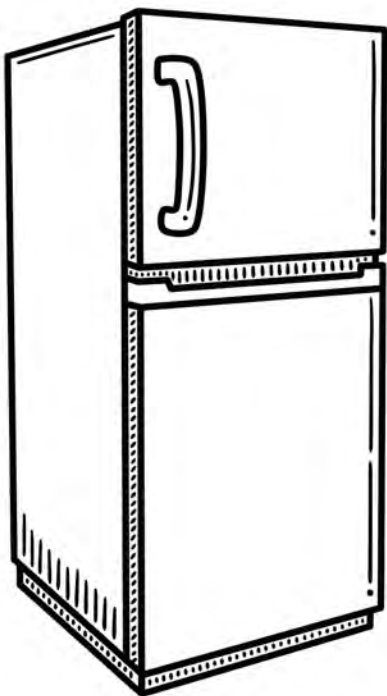


 <p>Wash fruits & veggies</p>	 <p>Wash hands</p>	 <p>Don't eat spoiled food</p>
 <p>Safety first!</p>	 <p>Cold food in fridge</p>	 <p>Keep kitchen clean</p>
 <p>Handle raw meat carefully</p>	 <p>Put leftovers in the fridge</p>	 <p>Read expiration date</p>

Name: _____

Fridge or Pantry

Instructions: Cut out the pictures of the food items. Sort them into two groups: 1.) Foods that belong in the refrigerator and 2.) Foods that belong in the pantry and glue them to the correct area.





meat



pasta



peanut butter



celery



cheese



cereal



eggs



juice



cookies



canned food



apples



yogurt



milk



lettuce



bread



chips

Food Safety Communication Board

