

A Book Review:

C is for Cooking: Recipes from the Street

Book authored by: Susan McQuillan, RD

The first thing you will notice about this book is that, simply put, it is *ADORABLE!* It is so colorful and appealing that an adult will even have trouble putting it down! My 2-year-old nephew was very drawn to this book! Let me tell you how our experience with this cookbook went . . .

I loved the section in the beginning of the book where the author describes what kinds of kitchen help to reasonably expect out of the 2 to 5-year-old crowd, broken down year-by-year! This was very helpful for me in planning which parts of the recipe my nephew would be capable of assisting with! Also, there is a “kids” icon next to each recipe step where it is considered by the author most appropriate to let a child help out! We decided to try “Zoe’s Cool Pink Strawberry Soup” from the snacks section. My nephew added the strawberries and helped with the yogurt, plus we added a banana (his favorite fruit). His favorite part, besides pushing the buttons on the blender and watching it whirl around, was actually tasting it. He really liked it and the experience made for some cute, messy photos! We will be trying out these recipes next time I visit: “Cowboy Elmo’s Fastest Mac n Cheese in the West” and “Cookie Monsters Me-Stuffed Potatoes”!

Applications for use with parents & teachers in the classroom:

- Reinforcing the importance of hand washing with food preparation and consumption
- Younger children will gain experience with using kitchen utensils, stirring, pouring, kneading, helping to set the table, and other skills which encourage gaining dexterity, fine motor skills, and hand-eye coordination; all resulting in a sense of accomplishment
- Older children will gain practice with math skills, including: measuring, counting, understanding fractions (for example: $\frac{1}{2}$ cup, $\frac{1}{4}$ of a squash), and learning several units of measure (cups, ounces, tablespoons, teaspoons, pounds, degrees Fahrenheit, minutes); Kids could even be equipped with a ruler and use it to find the correct size pan for a recipe
- Exposing children to foods which they don’t see everyday, and also increasing cultural awareness through many of the dishes in this book (for instance: “African-Style Peanut Butter Soup” and “Egg Drop Soup”)
- Children could be asked to describe how they are using all 5 senses (taste, touch, smell, see, hear) while they are following a recipe

- Asking a child to read through the recipe will encourage literacy, in addition to teaching a child to follow sequential directions
- Building science skills for older students, such as: observation, making predictions, experimentation, and evaluation
- Building nutrition lessons into the cooking session by teaching younger children which MyPyramid food groups the ingredients fit into, and what each group does for the health of our bodies:
 - Grains - Gives us energy
 - Vegetables - Good for our eyes
 - Fruits - Good for our skin
 - Milk - Good for our bones
 - Meat & Beans - Good for our muscles
- For older children, the adult could ask the child to locate certain items on the Nutrition Facts Label of an ingredient used in the recipe (for example: “Find how much sugar is in this food”)

Happy Cooking!

Reviewed by Kristin, Dietitian, BJC School Outreach and Youth Development