

FAMILY DINNER: BOREDOM BUSTER, BRAIN BUILDER



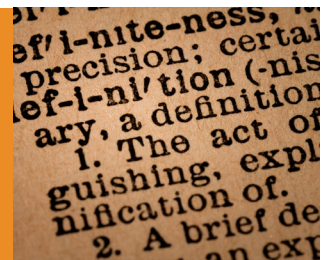
Food

Make the most of summer fruits with a nostalgic dessert recipe from Executive Director Lynn Barendsen.



Fun

Challenge vocabulary skills with a round of Fictionary!



Conversation

Keep kids' social skills sharp during the summer break with a conversation about respecting differences.

RECIPE FOR CONVERSATION

About: Differences

Use conversation starters around your dinner table to explore some ways you're different from your friends? What about if you're different from your parents or siblings?

Have you ever seen someone else treated unfairly or unfairly by someone else? How did it make you feel? How do you make them feel?

Are there other cultures, religions or languages that you would like to learn more about? What interests you about them? Have you ever learned something about another person's culture or religion that surprised you? What was it?

Why has America been referred to as a "melting pot"? What does it mean to you? What do you think are the positive aspects of being in a "melting pot"? Are there any negative aspects?





Ah, summer vacation. Everyone's relaxing and having fun...and then it hits you. That first "I'm bored!" You don't want to start piling on the activities until your summer schedule is as packed as the school year, but you can't help wondering if you're doing enough. And are the kids doing enough? Are they stimulated and challenged? Should they be?

If this sounds familiar, you're not alone! The concerns are only made larger in parents' minds by the notion of the so-called "summer slide." According to some estimates, kids can lose as much as 2 months of attained academic achievement during the summer break from school. Some families feel so much pressure to keep the slide at bay that they hire tutors or schedule mandatory "worksheet time" into the day -- all during the time of year when

kids (and adults) want to be relaxing and having fun.

What should you do? First of all, relax, enjoy the summer and keep having those regular family dinners!

While learning loss is a real concern for some kids, most families can keep the summer slide minimal by keeping everyone happy and well-rested, so they're more ready to learn and retain information when the opportunity arises. There's no need for formal academics -- you can use your family dinner table as a perfect platform to sneak in a little brain power (and avoid total boredom) by trying out a few strategies that will keep everyone happy and healthy in body, mind and spirit.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Research has proven that family dinners have a wealth of benefits, many of which are linked to academics:
- Kids who eat regular family dinners have higher grades
- Regular family meals boost vocabulary and early literacy skills even more than reading aloud
- Family dinners are associated with higher self-esteem and resiliency, as well as better peer relationships (and happy, social kids are likely to be more ready to learn)

- Teens who eat regular family dinners tend to have a lower risk of drug and alcohol use, teen pregnancy, depression, anxiety, eating disorders and violent behaviors

Learn more about the Benefits of Family Dinners

thefamilydinnerproject.org/about-us/benefits-of-family-dinners

MAKE IT LITERARY.

From playing character charades to making meals based on your favorite books, there are dozens of fun and engaging ways to connect reading and eating. Dr. Anne Fishel shares some of her favorites on our blog.

Read: Want Your Kids to be Better Readers? Eat Dinner Together

thefamilydinnerproject.org/food-for-thought/want-your-kids-to-be-better-readers-have-dinner-together/

MAKE IT MATHEMATICAL.

No, family dinner probably won't be a natural skill booster for your high-school calculus student, but cooking has always been well-known as a fun and easy way to build practical math skills. The littlest chefs can count and sort (one of our team members used to ask her preschoolers to make "portion piles" of certain numbers of asparagus spears, cherry tomatoes, and other easily handled vegetables). As they grow, measuring, weighing, time skills, money skills, fractions, con-

versions and mathematical operations like doubling a recipe can all be incorporated into the process of planning, shopping and cooking meals together.

Watch our friend April Hamilton and TFDP Executive Director Lynn Barendsen get kids into the kitchen in this hands-on cooking demo

www.wvgazettemail.com/life/20160508/counter-intelligence-a-family-dinner-for-mothers-day

MAKE IT HISTORICAL, OR SCIENTIFIC, OR POLITICAL, OR GEOGRAPHIC....

Having meaningful conversation at the dinner table can be its own brain booster, especially if you find ways to delve into questions and topics that fascinate family members. Try bringing a news story, cool new fact or philosophical question with you to the table to spark dialogue. Or you might make dinnertime family game time by setting a stack of trivia cards alongside the plates. One of our team members loves to let her

boys sit down with their Harry Potter trivia questions -- not only does it keep dinnertime fun and engaging, it also usually leads to clearing the dishes to one side and spending more quality time together!

Check out this recent Conversation of the Week for some inspiration to help you talk about politically and historically significant events

thefamilydinnerproject.org/blog/conversation-of-the-week/citizens-of-the-world/

FAMILY OF THE MONTH

This month, we're featuring the Bublitz family from Massachusetts. Andrea and Matthew are figuring out a family dinner routine that works for their young children, 3-year-old William and 2-year-old Hank. Andrea says, "Many times I will make a meal only to have the kids refuse it, which sends me back into the kitchen to make another meal that they will eat. It's exhaust-

ing making two meals every night!" We loved learning more about the Bublitz family and how they're dealing with this very familiar dinnertime challenge.

Read more about the Bublitz family and how they're meeting their family dinner goals

thefamilydinnerproject.org/blog/family-blog/real-family-dinner-projects-bublitz-family/



PEACH MELBA



FDP Executive Director Lynn Barendsen shared this childhood favorite. “I grew up in a 17th century farmhouse in Connecticut,” she recalls. “We had multiple apple trees in our yard and one amazing peach tree that gave us fantastic peaches every summer. The only problem was that they were all ripe at once, and we could never manage to eat them before they went bad. This recipe is one of many options my mom came up with to keep us eating peaches during that annual peach week!”



Instructions:

1. Press the raspberries through a fine mesh sieve, over a small saucepan. Add water to the puree in the saucepan.
2. Stir the sugar and cream of tartar into the raspberry puree in the saucepan.
3. Heat to boiling, stirring occasionally.
4. Boil for 3 minutes, stirring constantly.
5. Allow the sauce to cool before using (it will thicken slightly).
6. Scoop ice cream into bowls and top with peach slices. Pour raspberry sauce over the ice cream and peaches and enjoy.

Ingredients

- Vanilla ice cream
- Peeled, sliced peaches (we recommend about 1/2 peach per person)
- 10 oz fresh or frozen raspberries
- 1/4 cup water
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/4 tsp. cream of tartar



FICTIONARY

This game is great if you have a dictionary handy (or a smart phone). The “Picker” chooses an obscure or strange word from the dictionary and announces (and spells) it to the table. Make sure no one at the table knows the word! Then every player writes down a made up definition for the word, initials it, and hands it to the Picker. The Picker writes down the real definition to the word and puts it in the pile as well. The Picker reads all the definitions aloud and everyone votes for the phrase they believe is the correct definition. The person who wrote the definition that gets the most votes gets a point. If no one guesses the correct definition, the Picker also gets a point.

<http://thefamilydinnerproject.org/fun/fictionary/>



RECIPE FOR CONVERSATION

Talk About: Differences

Use these conversation starters around your table

- What are some ways you're different from your friends? What about ways you're different from your parents or siblings?
- Have you ever seen someone else treated unkindly or unfairly by others because they looked different, spoke a different language, or came from a different culture? How did it make you feel? How do you think it made them feel?
- Are there other cultures, religions or languages that you would be curious to learn more about? What interests you about them? Have you ever learned something about another person's culture or beliefs that surprised you? What was it?
- Historically, America has been referred to as a "melting pot." What does that mean to you? What do you think are the positive aspects of a "melting pot" society? Are there any negative aspects?



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