

## Parent Workshop Facilitator Guide

Within this packet, you'll find all the materials you need to facilitate The Family Dinner Project's parent workshops.

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## Core Facilitator Skills

In order to have meaningful and creative conversations, a successful facilitator needs to keep in mind several types of supportive interventions. Overall, it's important to maintain an open curious demeanor, cultivating an attitude of inquisitiveness about what you'll learn from this group of parents that could be helpful to others. It's also good to remain flexible, which may mean spending more time on a topic than you had planned and looking for opportunities to connect with parents and/or caregivers.

The following skills can be used by facilitators to help the group succeed:

**Preparing/planning:** Facilitation begins long before a group ever gathers. The way you invite people to a gathering can help prepare them for what they will do together. This may mean being in touch with participants in advance (if possible). Planning also includes securing space, equipment and food. Prepare yourself by creating questions for discussion, and prepare yourself by reviewing the workshop agendas in this guide, generating questions for discussion, and deciding on how long the event will last.

**Presenting purpose:** Part of your job as a facilitator is to briefly present the purposes of the parent workshop and the process you will use to get there.

**Inviting:** Our workshops only work if people participate, which means we need to create a safe, comfortable space for people to speak. Our best tools for inviting conversation are asking the group to establish guidelines for communication during the workshop, asking clear and open-ended questions and listening empathetically.

**Collaborative problem-solving:** When challenges arise, it helps to work side-by-side with the group to find the best outcome. This means being open to suggestions and getting buy-in from the group for changes you make.

**Tracking:** It is important for a facilitator to observe patterns of communication and redirect conversation as necessary (e.g. if there are only two people who repeatedly speak, gently noting that fact and inviting others to contribute).

**Reflecting:** It can be helpful to play back to a speaker and the group what's been said, both the content and feelings behind it.

**Clarifying:** Use questions to help speakers clearly state what they want to express. You can also help clear up some confusion by helping the group ask curious and constructive questions in order to check out their assumptions about what has been said.

**Summarizing:** It is important to keep moving the process forward. This means, at appropriate junctures, noting what the group has said and done, naming what the group has accomplished and checking before moving on.

## Understanding and Responding to Facilitation Challenges

**Anticipate and prevent challenges through planning:** Well-asked questions and a clear process (guidelines for sharing, time limit expectations and establishing confidentiality) will help prevent many challenges that might otherwise come up in groups.

**Separate the behavior from the person:** When someone is being challenging in a group it helps to identify the specific behavior as the problem rather than the person him/herself.

**Understand the roles of context and history:** Every group has a history and a context; it helps to understand this as you navigate challenging moments. Histories of trauma or substance abuse, relationships among group members and community issues are all things that can affect the dynamic of the group and the tone of the conversation.

**Try to understand the function behavior may play for individuals and the group:** Sometimes the individual asking a tough question is really voicing a concern the whole group shares.

**Strategies for a difficult moment (in escalation):** Bypass (basically, ignore), acknowledge and move on (let the person know he's been heard and continue), acknowledge and redirect (let the person know he's been heard and shift the group's focus or activity), acknowledge and address (let the person know he's been heard and speak directly to that point), involve the group (engage the group directly around the concern), take a break (optional: take the person aside for a private conversation), or end the meeting.

## Trauma Informed Practices

Here are some additional suggestions for ensuring that your facilitation is reflective of a trauma-informed approach:

**Have families introduce themselves and their families:** Ask them to share one thing that they like to do with their children.

**Have a mindful communication approach:** Be sure to emphasize choice, collaboration, and empowerment.

- A good starting point for a group leader to reflect this attitude: allow people to pass. (Example: *"Don't feel pressured to have an answer for everything."*)
- Provide examples for "what's going well" to help encourage families to see that the small things they do are "wins" (Example: getting everyone to the table).
- Remind families about the things that they are doing well and find the strength within the challenge (resourcefulness and creativity)
- Be mindful of how you phrase things. Example: Instead of asking people what their challenges to getting around the table are, ask what

their challenges are in getting their kids to talk, given that not all families have a table or traditional living situation.

### **Addressing parenting tactics that research states aren't good strategies:**

(Examples: Forcing children to finish food, using food as a reward, silence at the table, manners at the table, etc.)

**Point to the positive aspects of the behavior to validate what the caregiver is doing:** Reframe the challenge in a way that captures the spirit of what they're trying to do.

(Example: *Kids eat better when they are eating foods that they look forward to.*)

**Acknowledge the good intention of the caregiver's behavior:** Let them know that the situation does not need to become an "either or" scenario.

(Example: parents and caregivers can expose their children to new foods without insisting that they eat a particular food.)

**Use research to provide a correction:**

Example: *Research shows that one of the more effective ways to support children who are picky eaters is to provide them with an opportunity to try the food at least 12-15 times.*

**Provide a personal example to connect with the behavior:** Then link the research to the suggested correction.

(Example: *When I was growing up, my parents used to do the same thing. But in my work with TFDP, I learned that children's taste buds aren't fully developed until they're older, so they are more sensitive to taste and texture and need more opportunities to experience a food before deciding whether they like it.*)

**Try not to address the parent/caregiver individually:** Focus your energy on addressing the group to prevent singling out specific families.

(Example: Take suggestions from 1-2 other parents/caregivers before addressing ways to correct the behavior with research or personal experiences.)

**Acknowledge that every family is different:** When families say a “bad” behavior is working for them, it’s important not to cast blame or shame the family. However, it is equally important not to be silent when someone suggests a behavior that is harmful to the child.

**Work with the family to unpack the behavior:** Ask “why/what's your perspective?” to identify the reason for the practice.

### Important things to remember:

- For families that have experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), family dinner is a ritual that can be extremely helpful for overcoming some of the obstacles associated with ACEs.
- Having shared meals is a big deal for many families that have experienced ACEs. The mere thought can be really overwhelming and seem impossible, so it’s critical to stress the small wins and steps towards what the "ideal" family meal is for each family.

### Additional resources:

The Center for the Developing Child has great resources and information on the science behind toxic stress, brain development, and resilience:

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/>

## Sample TFDP Parent Workshop 1 Outline

0:00 **Arrive & Settle**

0:05 **Welcome**

### **The Story of FDP**

*We believe—and research shows—that the frequency and quality of family dinners are significant indicators of the social, physical and cognitive development of children in America. Yet modern families have dwindling time to engage with each other about the things that matter; Americans are having fewer and fewer family dinners together. Our team is committed to helping families have more and better dinners together.*

*What happens at the dinner table is the foundation of the family, and families are the foundation of our communities.*

*We work with schools, community centers, colleges, churches, neighborhoods and individual families. We lead workshops, send volunteers into schools, help communities come together to share meals and ideas. We're working together to build a true grassroots movement that is driven by the experience and insights of participating families.*

### **OPTIONAL: TAILORED INTRO BASED ON AUDIENCE\*\***

*So that's what we are here to do—to begin a conversation. We are going to talk about the opportunities, challenges and resources we have.*

0:15 **Presenter Intro:** How did you get involved with FDP? If you want, tell a story about how bringing attention dinnertime has made a difference for you.

**Group Intro:** Names, kids' ages, (TIME ALLOWING) meaningful food memory. (If the group is too big for everybody to share a memory, ask people to pair up and share with each other and then ask for comments from a few participants).

Comment on themes you hear from the group. Some common themes are:

- Connection to family
- Connection to culture
- Times of celebration
- Memories of holidays
- Seeing people you have not seen in a while
- Expression of love from a parent or caregiver

**0:25 Research around family dinner benefits - refer to handout:**

*It is clear why eating together is so important to each of us as individuals. It is also helpful to see what researchers have been learning about the power of family dinner.*

**0:35 Strengths: Let's talk about what you do well.**

*So, we have given you a lot of information about why we are doing this and what the research says about why this is important. Now let's talk about what you do well with your family dinners—because we always say, start with what you do really well and do more of that. Why do you want to make dinner a priority?*

Go around the room or have folks share in pairs.

Write strengths on poster board.

**0:45 Challenges: What gets in the way of family dinner?**

*Between the research and our own personal motivations, we have many good reasons to make more family dinners happen. But as we all know, there are lots of things we want to do that don't happen in our everyday lives. What gets in the way of family dinner at your house? What do you find most challenges your ability to get to the table together?*



Go around the room or have folks share in pairs.  
Write challenges on poster board.

(NOTE: Strengths and Challenges can be combined to save time: “Tell us one strength and one challenge that you family faces when it comes to family dinner.”)

**0:55 Resources: The Abundant Community**

*A word about the abundant community: we have resources within this group right here to build a list of ideas to deal with probably every single challenge we have named. We don’t always know the resources are sitting next to us. By sharing our ideas, we begin to see the abundance that is all around us in our community, a resource we should continue to utilize.*

**Look at our challenges—does anyone have any ways to deal with them?**

*So, let’s look at the challenges on the list. If you have found a successful way of dealing with any of these challenges in your own home, share the idea and let’s gather as many good ideas as we can in the next 15 minutes.*

Write ideas on poster board. Try to brainstorm at least one response to each challenge. If you are familiar with resources and ideas that FDP offers, feel free to say, “One thing that we often offer as advice for that challenge is...” Don’t be afraid to acknowledge challenges that don’t get covered or that you don’t have a good solution to. Offer to take those back to “Ask FDP.”

**1:10 Assemble appetizer/dessert for tonight**

*Another trick of the trade is to think of the hunger right before dinner as a perfect place to help you kids get a healthy dose of vegetables. Instead of thinking of it as snack time, which make you think of chips, cereal, and granola bars, think of it as an appetizer which makes you think of veggies and dip, salsa and guacamole etc. We are going to make Veggie Kebabs – see recipe and instructions.*

**1:25 Food, Fun & Conversation: Taking TFDP home**

Walk families through Dinner Tonight and our other online resources, noting where ideas match up with their challenges or questions.

Pass out the sign-up sheet for interested parents.

**1:30 Pre-Assessment Survey & End of Session**

Thank everyone for coming!

Stick around for feedback and questions about the project.

If you've got extra time:

- **Play a game**
- **Try a conversation starter**

## Sample TFDP Parent Workshop 2 Outline

0:00 **Arrive & settle**

0:05 **Welcome**

**Overview of last session** (FDP intro, common challenges & solutions). Did anybody try anything that they had been struggling with that worked that you would like to share with the group and with us so that we can take it back to other families?

0:15 **Why ‘Conversations That Matter’?**

- 1) *Just being together matters. Time spent together as a family is challenged by all that is going on in our lives. It doesn't have to be a huge production, just finding time to be together counts. Often just being present is one way that we teach our children that they are valuable, and that family time is a priority.*
- 2) *The **way** you talk to one another matters. Almost every expert we talk to advocates teaching by example. How do you teach someone to love? You love them. How do you teach someone to listen? You listen to them.*
- 3) *Then there is the content—what you talk about matters. Can we find a way to talk about the values we hold, the way we want to be as a family, the lessons we have learned, and the future we want to create together? Can we help our children think through dilemmas they are facing at school or with friends?*

0:25 **Doors and Windows Role-play** (see page 9)

1) **Initial reaction** (Door Slamming)

*“There are certain kinds of questions that, when asked, leave the person feeling like they’ve been pushed into a small room and the door has been slammed shut. Take a minute to recall an experience you have had being asked that kind of question. Try to remember the*

*question: what was it? What were its effects on you, and on your relationship with the asker?”*

**2) Alternative reaction (Window Opening)**

*“There are other kinds of questions that, when asked, leave the person being asked feeling like a window has been opened, through which they can see things they hadn’t been able to before. Take a minute to recall an experience you have had being asked that kind of question. Try to remember that question. What was it? What were its effects on you, and on your relationship with the asker?”*

**0:40 \*\*In pairs:** *Make a statement about a dream you have or a belief that you hold—something meaningful to you. It can be as small as wanting to repaint your kitchen or as big as deciding to go back to school or get a new job.*

- 1) One of you will make a statement about something you believe in. Your partner is going to ask questions to challenge that statement and try to dissuade you from that belief. (2 minutes.)
- 2) Switch and do the same in the other direction. (2 minutes)
- 3) Now say the same statement of belief again.
- 4) The partner only asks questions that will help them understand more about what you believe and why you believe it? (2 minutes)
- 5) Then switch. (2 minutes)

**0:50 Group Discussion**

*What do you notice about the difference between the two conversations? What was going on for you as a listener? What was going on for you as a person stating an opinion?*

**1:00 Role Play**

Parent & child OR Parent & partner

*Have the child or partner ask a difficult question (can take ideas from the group and all use the same prompt) and role play in 2 ways: The first using conversation stoppers and the second using conversation deepeners. Discuss the differences in how the conversation goes.*

### 1:10 **Telling Stories at the Table** (see page 11)

*You are the source of so much wisdom and one way to share that is through story-telling. When you tell stories, it models that for your grandchildren. Young children who know how to tell a competent story also have an easier time learning to read, and stories told by adults tend to include a lot of grown-up vocabulary. Research shows that children who know more about their families feel better about themselves, are more resilient. They feel connected to something bigger than themselves. Stories help make sense of our experience, and they are just fun to tell and to hear.*

### 1:30 **Post-Assessment Survey** **End of session**

Optional other activities:

#### 0:15 **Role play:** Parent & Child OR Parent & Partner

*Have them get into pairs. One will play the parent and one the child/partner. Have the “child/partner” choose one of the “triggering” statements discussed and role play in two ways: first, with the parent using the “temptation” responses mentioned above. Then, with the parent using “alternative” responses, have the conversation again.*

#### 0:25 **Large group debrief**

*In the larger group, discuss the differences in how the conversation goes.*

### **Exercise: Doors & Windows**

There are certain kinds of questions that, when asked, leave the person being asked feeling like they’ve been pushed into a small room and the door has been slammed shut. Take a minute to recall an experience you have had being asked that kind of question. Try to remember the question and write it down. What was the question? What were its effects on you, and on your relationship with the asker? We’ll pause for a couple of minutes for you to think and write.

There are other kinds of questions that, when asked, leave the person being asked feeling like a window has been opened, through which they can see things they hadn't been able to before. Take a minute to recall an experience you have had being asked that kind of question. Try to remember the question and write it down. What was the question? What were its effects on you, and on your relationship with the asker? We'll pause for a couple of minutes for you to think and write.

In groups of 5, take 10 min. to share your experiences, briefly. See what comes up about the characteristics of "door-slamming" and "window opening" questions.

**Debrief: what wisdom do you have to share?**

Characteristics of questions

Effects on how you think about yourself

Effects on how you think about asker

Effects on what feels possible/permitted/prohibited to speak

Effects on what's possible to imagine in the future

**Door-slammers:**

**Window-openers:**

**Window-opening Questions expand thinking and feeling by:**

- Staying close to the experience of the person being asked
- Constructive/expansive/forward-moving
- Developing fresh perspectives
  - Time, place, person, values
- Invite fresh distinctions, comparisons
- Exploring language, thinking, meaning-making
- Inviting reflection on choice, purpose, relationship and connection
- Fleshing out the story by inviting complexity
- Invite noticing what has gone unnoticed
- Seek capacity, not deficit

**Exercise (If time): Interviewing with Window-opening questions**

Ask for a volunteer to share a dilemma with the large group.

**Goals:**

- Avoid problem-solving
- Enhance clarity
- Invite exploration
- Invite expansion of thinking and feeling

**Either:** individuals work on creating a type of question or do it in groups.  
(5 min.)

Volunteer tells enough of dilemma to orient audience and signals when s/he is ready for questions. Volunteer is then interviewed with created questions, either by interviewer rotating into chair or speaking from seat. Volunteer responds as they would in the moment.

Reflection: Volunteer stops responding in interview format and speaks to: effects of questions; what messages s/he takes about interviewer's perspective of her/him based on questions asked.

**Exercise: Telling Stories at the Table**

Hand out cards with a different story-telling prompts on each one. Each participant tells a story according to the index card she selects. If she doesn't like the prompt she got, she can take another card. Have participants pair up and share a story inspired by their prompt. If time allows, have a few people share a story just to give an sense of how they might try this at home.

**Story prompts to use (if story cards are unavailable)**

- Tell a story about yourself when you were the age of one of your grandchildren
- Tell a story about how you learned a special recipe
- Tell a love story about someone in your family
- Tell a story about overcoming adversity
- Tell a story about your name or about how your child or grandchild got their name

- Tell a story about someone who taught you something very meaningful
- Tell a funny story about yourself or another family member
- Tell a story about a difficult event that was made easier by the kindness of another person
- Tell a story about someone finding a job, or about something that happened at work.
- Tell a story about you or someone else moving to a new city or country.
- Tell a story about an animal you or someone else in the family has known or owned.



## Appendix A: Activities

### Conversation Starters

Here are some of our tried and true conversation starters. Test out a few and see what works for you. Check out tons more conversation starters on our website!

**Weather Report:** Have each family member describe how the day went—but using weather forecasts as metaphors! For example, a difficult day might be “thunderstorms” and a wonderful day could be “sunny and 80 degrees.”

*Pre-dinner activities are a great way to get kids to help with the meal in creative ways and also keep everyone occupied until you're ready to get the dinner going with an Icebreaker (see page 18). This portion of the event will generally last about 15 minutes.*

### Games

There are so many different table games you can play with your families to make mealtime fun. Here are some of our favorites:

**2 Truths and a Tall Tale:** Ask everyone at the table to say three things about themselves: two true things and one thing that's made up. The rest of the table will guess which the tall tale is. Sometimes this game is easier if everyone gets a chance to write down their three things before sharing.

**Alphabet Game:** As a group, choose a category such as animals, countries, singers or “people our family knows.” One family member starts the game by naming a person/thing from that category that starts with the letter “A.” Then the next person names a person/thing that starts with the letter “B,” the next person finds something for the letter “C,” and so on.

**Story by Sentence:** Tell a story together where each person only gets to contribute one sentence at a time. Take turns adding sentences to the story.

If you need suggestions to get started, brainstorm together before beginning about a few things that should be included in the story: a city, a type of terrain (mountains, seashore, woods), some animals, an event (sports event, historical event, entertainment), a color and/or a food.

**“Guess the Category” Game:** Think of 5 things that “belong” to something. For example, a banana, a pair of shoes, a Harry Potter book, a pile of paperclips and a box of flooring. Then have the rest of the table guess what these things belong to (answer: things in the trunk of my car). With little kids, you can just ask them outright for a list of things in a category (example: name three things in your bed).

**“Would You Rather...?”:** Take turns asking “Would you rather...?” questions. You can make up your own or check out our website for more ideas! Here are a few of our favorites:

- Would you rather be unable to speak or unable to see?
- Would you rather be invisible or be able to fly?
- Would you rather sweat melted cheese or always smell skunk?

**Where in the World:** Imagine everyone at the table has the gift of teleportation, but it only lasts for 24 hours. Where in the world would you go? Would you bring anyone with you? How long would you stay? What would you do there?

**Higglety Pigglety:** One person thinks of a rhyming pair of words, like Funny Bunny. Then the person gives clues that are synonyms for the two words — hilarious furry mammal. Additionally, the person clues everyone in to how many syllables each word is by using the phrases “higglety pigglety” (for 3 syllable words), “higgy piggy” (for 2 syllable words), or “hig pig” (for 1 syllable words). For example, Funny Bunny is a “higgy piggy,” but Old Mold is a “hig pig.” Everyone tries to guess. Whoever gets it first thinks of the next one.

**Celebrity:** This is a game of naming people in the public eye. The trick is: the first letter of the celebrity's last name dictates what the first letter of the next person's first name must be. For example, if the first person names "George Washington," the next person might say "Walt Disney," or another celebrity whose name begins with W. Keep going until someone gets stumped. Special challenge: if you can name someone whose first *and* last name starts with the same letter — like "Walt Whitman," — then the direction you're going around the table in reverses. This game also works with geography — simply use the last letter of the place named as the first letter of the next place. For example, "Kentucky" could lead to "Yemen."

**Different Drummers:** Pick one person to be the leader. The Leader begins tapping a beat on the table (or clapping). The others around the table begin tapping or clapping along with the Leader. The Leader can change the beat whenever they choose, and everyone else must follow suit. Then, without warning, the Leader stops drumming. The last person to stop drumming is out.

**Family Tree:** Take out a piece of paper and map your family's tree. Grandparents can start with their parents, and other family members can fill in the blanks from there. Kids can even decorate the tree with leaves and bark!

**Theme Night:** Come to the table dressed as your favorite book character, superhero, cartoon. Dress up to represent your favorite holiday or just pick a random theme. (Spaghetti Western? Zombie movie? Anything works!)

**Salad Bowl Game:** Before dinner each family member writes down the names of five people they admire, on five separate pieces of paper. These people can be fictional characters, historical figures, people you know personally, or people you have never met. Mix up all the pieces of paper in a bowl and place this bowl on the table during dinner. Each family member takes a turn drawing a name from the bowl and describes this person to the rest of the family. The only rule is that the "describer" cannot say the person's name or any part of the name. Once the person is

identified, try to guess who put this name in the bowl, and then talk about why the person plucked from the salad bowl is admirable.

**Iron Chef, family edition:** One family member selects two or three ingredients, and someone else devises a menu around them. Sample ingredients: pasta, a vegetable and an herb. Or, for a more challenging version: Choose a single ingredient and try to devise a whole meal around it. Some suggestions: a fruit (apples, berries), a spice (cinnamon, pepper), something that adds flavor without dominating (lemon, shallot).

## Appendix B: Research Handout



### Why Family Dinner?

What if there was one change you could make to improve your kids' vocabulary, resilience and self-esteem, while decreasing their likelihood of eating disorders, teen pregnancy and substance abuse? What if just one change could boost their physical, social-emotional and academic development?

### **Children who regularly eat dinner with their families show:**

#### Physical benefits

- Greater consumption of vital nutrients from fruits and vegetables and less soda consumption
- Lower rates of obesity
- Greater likelihood of eating healthier diets when they're on their own as young adults

#### Social-emotional benefits

- Higher self-esteem, resilience and a more positive outlook on the future
- Lower rates of substance abuse, teen pregnancy and depression
- Better body image
  - Having 5 or more family meals per week lowered girls' risk of developing an eating disorder by 30%.

- A survey of almost 5,000 ethnically diverse adolescents found that teens who had regular family dinner had less disordered eating, particularly related to dieting and binge eating

### Academic benefits

- Better grades
  - A Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) study found that adolescents who ate dinner with their families (3 to 5 times per week) were twice as likely to get As in school compared to classmates who rarely ate dinner with family.
- Ability to have complex conversations
- Stronger vocabularies and higher reading scores

### But in spite of all these benefits, families are eating together less and less

- There was a 33% drop in family dinners between 1981 and 1997
- An average of 70% of meals are eaten out of the home
- 9 in 10 Americans surveyed by Barilla's "Share the Table" project agree that their busy schedules make it harder to find time to connect in person
- 69% of Americans report that some other activity is competing with the typical family dinner, particularly watching television and 58% of Americans report some type of technology or entertainment-related distraction

## Appendix C: Appetizer and Dessert Activities



### Antipasto Kebabs



#### Set-up

- 24 Lollipop sticks (available online or at craft stores -- much safer than skewers!)
- 6-8 Small plates
- 1 bowl of cherry tomatoes
- 1 bowl of mozzarella cheese cubes or balls
- 1 plate of fresh basil or spinach leaves
- 1 bowl or plate of chopped bell peppers
- 1 plate of seasonings: 1 tsp. Minced garlic, 1 spoonful each of salt and pepper
- 2 empty small bowls
- 1 small bowl each of olive oil and either balsamic or red wine vinegar

#### Recipe/Activity Directions

1. Direct each group to wash hands first!
2. Demonstrate how to thread vegetables, cheese, and basil or spinach leaves onto lollipop sticks to make colorful skewers.
3. Instruct each group to make the dipping sauce in their 2 empty bowls: Add 1 spoonful of vinegar for every 2 spoonfuls of olive oil, the mix in garlic, salt and pepper to taste.
4. Enjoy making, dipping and eating antipasto kebabs!





## Guacamole



### Set-up

- 2 bowls
- 6-8 spoons
- 2 forks
- 1 small plate of seasonings: 1 spoonful of salt, 2 teaspoons minced garlic, 2 halved limes or 1 halved lemon
- 2 avocados
- 1 paring knife\*
- Optional: 1 small bowl each of chopped tomatoes and diced red onion
- 1 large bowl or basket of tortilla chips

*\* If preferred, you can have participants bring their avocados to an organizer to be cut open.*

### Tip:

Build guacamole “kits”. Instead of putting all the utensils on the table, prepare each tables’ avocado, garlic and lemon beforehand and place them in containers on each of the tables. Just remember to keep the pit in the avocado - it keeps it from turning brown!

### Recipe/Activity Directions

1. Direct each group to wash hands first!
2. Either direct participants to bring avocados to an organizer to be cut open, or demonstrate for adult guests how to properly cut open an avocado (lengthwise, around the pit). *Omit this step if you’ve put together guacamole kits.*
3. Show groups how to scoop out the avocado into the two bowls on their tables, discarding the pits and skins.
4. Demonstrate how to mash the avocado with forks.
5. Advise groups to add lime or lemon juice, salt and garlic carefully, stirring well and tasting until they have a mixture they like.
6. If using, instruct groups to add chopped onion and tomato to their guacamole as preferred.
7. Enjoy the guacamole as a dip for chips!





## Whipped Cream Activity



## Fruit Kebabs



### Set-up

- Several small (tightly-lidded -- screw caps are best!) plastic containers OR plastic/metal shakers with agitator balls (or marbles) -- about one for every 2-3 kids
- Bag of confectioner's sugar
- Plastic spoons
- Bottle of vanilla extract
- Pints of heavy whipping cream -- 1 pint per every 8-10 guests should be plenty

### Recipe/Activity Directions

1. Pour whipping cream into each container or shaker.

### Set-up

- Lollipop sticks (available online or from craft stores -- much safer than skewers!)
- Small plates or bowls and spoons
- Cut-up fruit (berries, banana chunks, grapes, chunks of melon)
- Whipped cream

### Recipe/Activity Directions

1. Show the children how to carefully thread fruit onto the lollipop sticks to make colorful kebabs.
2. Have them make 2-3 kebabs per person.
3. Place the kebabs in individual bowls or plates, then garnish the plates with whipped cream.



## Banana Boats



### Set-up

- Small plates
- Spoons
- One banana per guest, split in half lengthwise (like a banana split)
- Several bowls of assorted toppings:
  - Mini-marshmallows
  - Chocolate chips
  - Chocolate and caramel syrups
  - Raisins
  - Chopped nuts
  - Whipped cream (optional)

### Recipe/Activity Directions

1. Show the children how to fill their split bananas with toppings.
2. Allow them to fill the bananas and top with whipped cream!



## Build-Your-Own Fruit Sundaes



### Set-up

- Small bowls and spoons
- Several bowls of cut-up fruit (bananas, berries, diced apples)
- Several bowls of assorted toppings:
  - Chocolate and caramel syrups
  - Small candies or sprinkles
  - Chopped nuts
  - Whipped cream

### Recipe/Activity Directions

1. Help the children fill the small bowls with the fruit of their choice.
2. Allow them to pile on the toppings to make “sundaes” without the ice cream!