



COMMUNITY
FOOD
INITIATIVES
at Home

**Useful
Resources**

COMMUNITY FOOD INITIATIVES *at Home*

Since 2016, when the **safefood** Community Food Initiative changed to its present format, CFI Leaders in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland have planned, designed and delivered healthy eating projects and community events in their local areas.

Since March 2020, the CFI Leaders have endeavoured to find new ways of delivering the healthy eating message and involving people in their projects. As the transition has been so successful, **safefood** has decided that they would like to invite organisations who are not involved in the Community Food Initiative as CFI Leaders to apply for funding and to deliver their own CFI at Home Project.

In order to help you plan your own CFI at Home project, we would like to provide some feedback from the CFI Leaders and to direct you to where you can find resources that will help you to deliver a successful project.

The CFI Leaders' Projects

The CFI Leaders invited families to take part in a project over a specified number of weeks e.g. 4 – 6 weeks and included all or some of the following elements:

Learning how to prepare & cook a recipe

Each week an ingredient pack with the recipe card is provided which includes the link to a demonstration video. The CFI Leader delivers the ingredients to each family or they arrange for the family to collect the ingredients from a participating supermarket/local shop or community venue.

Attending an online cookery session

This can be a live, online demonstration or the participants can watch a **safefood** video and discuss how the recipe was prepared afterwards. The discussion could include replacing ingredients if you do not have them, freezing leftovers, how to cook a recipe for four when there is six in your family, food hygiene practices, e.g. how to prepare and cook chicken safely.

Online support groups for sharing ideas and tips

This can be part of the cooking demo or a separate session where participants can meet to chat about how they got on with the activity from the previous week and to share tips and hints.

Participants do not have to turn on their videos when they take part in this activity if they do not feel comfortable doing so.

Online interactive talks delivered by a dietitian or registered nutritionist

This gives the project participants the opportunity to receive expert advice and guidance on various healthy eating topics including how to read a label, portion sizes for different age groups, snacking, etc. The participants should have the opportunity to ask the expert questions during or at the end of the session. The participants could be asked in advance to suggest what they would like covered in the session.

Signing up to a private Facebook or WhatsApp group

The main purpose for this is to allow participants to support one another. Participants have found this useful if they are having a problem with an element of the recipe. The other participants can make suggestions on how they overcame a similar situation. The Support Worker should also be a part of this group so that assistance can be offered if needed.

Helpful Hints from CFI Leaders

The CFI Leaders provided feedback after the first 3 months on their experiences while planning and implementing their projects. We hope you will find this useful when planning your own project.

Providing Ingredients

- Developing a strong link with the local supermarket was key when the project involved providing ingredients to the participants.
- There was huge excitement around the time of the delivery and children were waiting at the door in most cases to see what they were getting and what they would be doing that week. This meant that it was important to deliver the ingredients at the same time each week to establish a routine.
- It would be more beneficial to deliver or have the ingredients available for collection earlier in the week, e.g. on a Monday or Tuesday.
- As a means of incorporating exercise into one of the projects, families were encouraged to walk to the local shop to collect the ingredients.

Trying New Things

- The project provided an opportunity to show people how to use equipment and ingredients that they would not have used before.
- It was found that many families do not have small pieces of equipment such as weighing scales or rolling pins so for example they were shown how to use cups for measuring ingredients.
- Because they did not have to buy the ingredients, people tried food that they would not have considered trying before. When people are on a low incomes, they will not risk spending money on food that the family might not eat, e.g. using celery in a stew or soup.
- Tip sheets were provided which included advice on freezing and using leftovers, kitchen hygiene.

- One CFI Leader organised a webinar via zoom where a registered nutritionist gave a presentation on healthy eating for families. Lots of useful information was provided and the attendees had the opportunity to ask questions.
- Many participants were intimidated at the idea of going shopping because they did not know how to read labels. Advice and guidance was provided during the sessions to give participants confidence when they were doing their own shopping.

Children's Involvement

- Parents were encouraged to involve their children in the preparation of the meal and in some projects to join in on the zoom chats along with their parents.
- Children loved using the **safe food** YouTube videos when cooking.
- Many projects provided hard copies of the 101 Square Meals recipe book and after the project finished, the children wanted to cook other recipes not used during the project.
- An indication of their enthusiasm and sense of achievement - the children wanted certs for taking part!

Support Agencies & Organisations

- Other support organisations and agencies working with the families were delighted to be involved as it helped them to maintain contact with their clients.
- It also provided the opportunity to work with hard to reach families.
- Some CFI Leaders were able to leverage funding for their projects from other sources because the funder could see the value and benefits of the project.

Support for the Families

- Staff were appointed to support the families who phoned and texted or WhatsApped the families regularly. They were also a point of contact by phone or text if a participant ran into difficulty when cooking a meal.
- During one project, the Support Worker cooked the meal while the participants watched on zoom. Some participants cooked their own meal at the same time and found this useful.
- The same participants asked for the project to be extended because they were enjoying the experience and really valued the support. They bought their own ingredients during the final 2 weeks and were able to contact the Support Worker if they were having any difficulties while shopping.
- Texting and WhatsApp was used during the projects as a means of keeping in contact with participants. It also allowed Support Workers to step back and to let the participants support one another. Support Workers were able to text links to videos and other useful resources to participants.
- The use of language was very important especially while promoting the project, e.g. ingredient pack instead of bag/box of food. It was important for participants to feel that they were part of a project and not receiving charity.
- Many CFI Leaders found that they were working with families who never had to ask for help before because they suddenly found themselves out of work. Their involvement in the project concealed from their families the fact that they were receiving assistance.
- A lot of unexpected literacy issues were uncovered. The YouTube videos or providing recipes with step by step pictures were useful in this situation.

- When teenagers were in the family, it was found that the involvement in the project reduced tension in the house. The teenagers were encouraged to cook and the family was sitting down to eat together after making the meal because everyone wanted to discuss their experience of cooking and what they thought of final product.
- One CFI Leader has decided that next time they will give the participants vouchers instead of an ingredient pack so that they have to do the shopping themselves. Support will be provided in advance on how to do this.

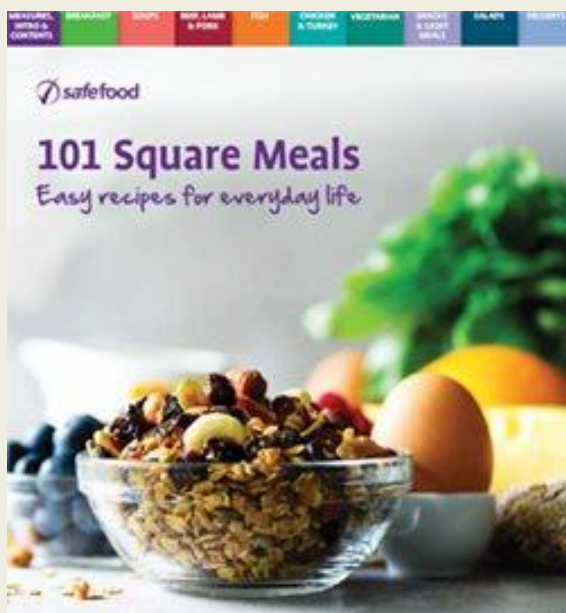
Participant Feedback

- Photos, videos and texts were provided by the participants to show their progress while cooking a meal and to show the finished product. They were also encouraged to report back on what the family thought about the meal and whether they would cook it again after the project finished.
- Families were delighted to be able to replace take-aways with their own home cooked versions.
- There was a definite change in shopping behaviour and less take-aways were bought during and after the project.
- Lots of participants had not used zoom or other video platforms before. It provided the opportunity to show people how to use other online technology also.
- It is important to measure the impact of the project on the participants, e.g. using before and after questionnaires.

safefood Resources

The resources needed to plan and deliver a CFI at Home project can be found on the **safefood** website at www.safefood.eu. To get you started, we have put together a sample of these resources:

- 101 Square Meals Recipe Book
 - How to involve kids in the kitchen
 - **safefood** START campaign
 - Family Meal Plans for 3 Weeks
 - Healthy Snack Ideas
 - Screen Time Limits
 - Old-school Active Play
- Setting up a Home Routine
 - Food Pyramid and The Eatwell Guide
 - Handwashing
 - Food Safety
 - Family Budgeting
 - **safefood** Social Media



Food affects health and well-being and budget plays an important role in the kind of food that is bought and prepared. This recipe book is designed to take this into consideration and provides easy-to-prepare, low-budget, tasty, yet highly nutritious meals.

The sections contain useful tips on shopping, home freezing and food safety. It also includes helpful information on healthy eating and various breakfast, lunch and dinner recipes.

The recipes offer variety for every age and circumstance, resulting in healthier, more balanced diets for individuals and families within a realistic budget.

Click here for your copy: [101 Square Meals Recipe Book](#)

How to involve kids in the kitchen ...

People often ask when a child should start to cook. There is no exact age for starting but generally children should be encouraged to become involved with basic food preparation skills as soon as they show an interest.

Follow this link for some tips: [Kids in the Kitchen](#) and lots of recipe ideas here: [Recipes](#)



The purpose of the *safefood* START campaign is to encourage families to take the first step towards a healthier lifestyle for their children by supporting them to achieve one daily win, and to persist with the changes, no matter how difficult they become.

To find out more about the START campaign and ways to make a healthy, positive start visit www.makeastart.org.

Family Meal Plans for 3 Weeks

Children require three regular meals - breakfast, lunch and dinner - and two snacks every day. Here's some ideas for meals and snacks from the **safefood** nutritionists to help plan the week: [Meal Planning](#)

Healthy Snack Ideas

Lots of advice and guidance around how to deal with snacking and how-to recipe videos: [Healthy Snack Ideas](#)

Screen Time Limits

Keeping kids off screens is a challenge at the best of times and much harder when they are stuck at home. Lots of advice and guidance and how-to videos on how to negotiate screen time limits: [Screen-Time: 6 Healthy Habits](#)

Old-school Active Play

20 active play and game ideas for all ages that you can play indoors and outside: [Games for Indoors and Outdoors](#)

Setting up a Home Routine

Everyone's situation is different but setting up a home routine will help put structure on the day. Set times around meals, breaks, snacks, getting outdoors, time for schoolwork, managing workload and so on.

There is no perfect solution but here is some advice that might help everyone keep healthy in mind and body. And remember, we can only do our best! [Ten Ways to Keep Active & Healthy at Home](#)

Food Pyramid and The Eatwell Guide

People need to consume a balanced diet which combines several different types of food from each of the main food groups. A balanced diet should contain the correct amounts of all the nutrients a person needs to maintain a healthy weight.

In the Republic of Ireland [the Food Pyramid](#) is used and in Northern Ireland [the Eatwell Guide](#) is used to help make healthier eating easier.

Handwashing

Lots of resources here for adults and children around handwashing: [Steps to Handwashing](#)

Food Safety

Follow the link for lots of guidance on [Food Safety](#)

Family Budgeting

Family Budgeting is one of the themes of the CFI and CFI Leaders are encouraged to incorporate this topic into their sessions if possible. These links might be useful if you want to include budgeting in your sessions.

Northern Ireland

Find out how a personal budget will help people to make the most of their money and avoid over-commitment: [NI Direct Government Services Budgeting Guidance](#)

Get a free Budget Planner to help people take control of their household spending: [Money Advice Service Budget Planner](#)

Republic of Ireland

In this section of the MABS website, online tools are available that are designed to help people assess their situation, analyse their income and outgoings and make a budget: [MABS Budgeting Tools](#)

The new [MABS Household Budget Sheet](#) is helpful for budget planning.

safefood Social Media

Keep up to date by following **safefood** on social media



Support with Your Application

If you need any assistance with the application form or would like to discuss your project, please contact

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