**Pleasing pasta session plan**

**Overview**

The aim of this session is to help children become more familiar with the wide range of different pasta shapes and pasta dishes available. The main activity, *Have a go*, involves children creating a cold pasta salad by preparing and mixing the ingredients together.

**Learning**

The aim of this session is for children to:

* recall that there are many types of pasta and pasta can be used to make different dishes;
* explain that we need to eat a food like pasta (starchy food) with each meal, e.g. potatoes, bread and rice;
* perform simple food skills with a focus on – cutting with scissors, measuring ingredients by spooning and mixing ingredients.

**You will need**

* **Pleasing pasta recipe** and the ingredients and equipment listed on the recipe
* **Setting up a cooking session guide**
* **Pasta meal cards**
* **Get ready to cook cards**
* **Pleasing pasta take home letter**
* Different types of uncooked pasta, e.g. green, wholemeal, spaghetti, fusilli (twists), macaroni (narrow tubes), penne (wide tubes), conchiglie (shells), farfalle (bows), lasagne sheets.

**Before session preparation**

Prepare the ingredients and equipment in advance. What you will need is listed on the **Pleasing pasta recipe**. Gather some different types of uncooked pasta (ideas are listed in the *You will need* section above). You may find it useful to have some packaging from pasta and pasta dishes to aid discussion, e.g. canned ravioli, a lasagne sleeve.

Remember to pre-cook the pasta for the cooking activity just before the session. See the **Setting up a cooking session** **guide** for more information about running cooking activities.

**Listen and respond**

Show the children the different types of pasta. Talk about the shapes and colours. Allow the children to handle some of the pasta and ask them to describe what it is like, e.g. long, thin, short, tube-like, hard. Talk about the similarities and differences.

Ask the children what pasta dishes they have eaten. Establish that lots of food can be made from pasta. You could show the children the **Pasta meal cards** to help with the discussion.

Explain that pasta is a type of ‘starchy food’. We should have a starchy food with every meal - breakfast, lunch and evening meal. Give an example of a starchy food that could be eaten for each meal occasion to help the children understand what is meant by ‘starchy’ food, e.g. toast for breakfast, a baked potato for lunch, pasta as part of an evening meal. Ask the children to give an example of a starchy food they have eaten recently and what else was included in the meal.

Question children to see if they know what main ingredients are used to make pasta (flour, water and sometimes eggs) and where these come from (flour from wheat and eggs from chickens). You could make some pasta to show the children how it is done. Talk about how it is cooked and how it can be made into different dishes.

**Have a go**

Organise the children into groups of four. Each group can take turns to work with an adult to make a cold pasta salad. Make sure the children are ready to cook by using the **Get ready to cook cards** to talk through steps they need to take. Refer to the **Setting up a cooking session guide** for more information about why each step is important.

Before they begin, get the children to compare cooked and uncooked pasta and comment on the difference. How has the pasta changed? Explain that pasta is soft when it is first made, but then it is dried to make it last longer. Drying makes it hard, so we cook it in water to make it soft again. Prepare the pasta dish with the children, following the recipe. Cut the cucumber into sticks so it is easier for the children to chop. Demonstrate how to open and drain the canned sweetcorn, beans and tuna, but explain that this is a job for older children or adults because cans are sharp.

**Consolidate**

Use dried pasta to create a display of different pasta shapes or use craft materials to create a collage of their favourite pasta dish.

**At home**

Make a copy of the **Pleasing pasta take home letter** for each of the children. Explain to the children what the letter says. Check in with the children on another occasion to see what types of pasta they spotted when food shopping.