



Kids can help organize family meals

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Even Prince William helps with the cooking! (Shown here with New Zealand Prime Minister John Key.)
AP Photo/Rob Kitchen, Pool

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Got kids at home? Ever heard them say "What's for dinner?" or "We're having *what* again?" If you've grown tired of trying to plan and prepare nutritious meals your children will actually eat (and perhaps enjoy), put *them* to work on family meals. From age five or so, they are old enough to contribute to meal planning and preparation.

So, once a week, perhaps on Saturday morning, have each member of the family - adults and children - choose a night that suits her/his schedule of activities. For that night, the assigned meal planner creates a dinner menu, then adds the required ingredients to the week's grocery list. You may want to retain shopping duties for efficiency's sake.

Establish ground rules for the effort:

- Each night's menu will be different.
- Only one pasta meal each week.
- Everyone's food allergies or picky preferences should be addressed.
- Everyone takes turns cooking, assisting the cook, setting the table, and cleaning up.
- Each menu must be healthy (you define together what this means).

This example uses weekday dinners, but consider drafting your kids to help with school and work lunch planning and packing, breakfasts, and weekend meals as well.

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