

How to Host a Family Tasting Event Without Grant Funding

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Family Tasting Event?

Answer: The first Family Tasting Events were part of a pilot project funded by the Aetna Foundation in three schools in Durham Public Schools in Durham, N.C. The PTAs at those schools held three Family Tasting Events over the last year, inviting families to prepare a recipe with a fruit or vegetable chosen by the students and attend the event to enjoy the recipes they'd all created. At the end of the event, families were given a take-home kit, which included the fruit or vegetable, as well as nutrition information about it. All the PTAs then collaborated with the school nutrition director to integrate the Family Tasting Night recipes into the school nutrition program's menu!

How can I host a Family Tasting Event at my school?

Answer: Hosting a Family Tasting Event at your school entails several different steps. Check out our toolkit at [PTA.org/HealthyLifestyles/Aetna](https://pta.org/HealthyLifestyles/Aetna). Keep in mind that Family Tasting Events may look different from school to school and you should tailor the event to meet the needs of your PTA, your school and your families.

When should we host our Family Tasting Event?

Answer: You may choose to host your Family Tasting Event as a stand-alone event, or to host it in conjunction with another school event. If you decide to host it after another event, keep in mind you'll need to keep it short, as families will be hungry and eager to eat and go home. If you are planning to have your families complete most of the food preparation for the Family Tasting Event instead of your PTA volunteers, you may want to host your Family Tasting Event as its own event, as this will take a longer amount of time. Tasting events as stand-alone events and those held in conjunction with other activities have both been successful!

How can we involve students in our Family Tasting Event?

Answer: One way to involve students in the Family Tasting Event is to allow them to choose the fruit or vegetable to be used at the event. You can do this by surveying students with a paper survey or by talking to them about what they would like to try. Ensure the food item chosen is easily available and accessible to the families, is culturally appropriate, and that it is easy to prepare at home. Involving students in this process is a great way to promote the event to them and their families.

How can we involve families in our Family Tasting Event?

Answer: Family involvement in the Family Tasting Event can vary. Ideally, you want families to know what the food item is and how to prepare it so that they can replicate the recipe at home. To do this, it is best to involve the family in the preparation of the food item. You may choose to have the family prepare the recipe and food items from beginning to end. For example, they can wash, cut and mix the food item for the recipe. Or you may choose to have your volunteers start the recipe before the event (such as washing and beginning to cut the item) and the attending families finish the preparation.

What other organizations from the community should we include in our Family Tasting Event?

Answer: Inviting other school and community partners can really enhance your Family Tasting Event. They may be willing to donate supplies or volunteer at the event. If you choose to include nutrition information about the food item(s) and recipe, you can invite a dietitian to provide this information. If there are other community organizations focused on child and family nutrition (such as your local cooperative extension office or your local health department), you can invite them to attend the event as well and talk a little bit about their work. Local chefs or restaurants may also choose to come to the event and teach the families how to prepare the food item(s) and recipe.

Our PTA does not have funding to host a Family Tasting Event. How can we implement a Family Tasting Event without funding?

Answer: A Family Tasting Event does not have to cost thousands of dollars. Collaborate with your school nutrition director to see if they can donate supplies and staff time. Reach out to local grocery stores, restaurants and community organizations such as co-ops, local farms or even food banks about food donations. Reach out to local businesses for materials and supplies donations such as cutting boards, gloves, safety knives and measuring utensils. Connect with restaurant chefs in your area to see if they'd be willing to volunteer at the Family Tasting Event. Use social media for your marketing efforts and free design services like Canva to create flyers and other graphics to promote the event.

What resources are available for us to host our own Family Tasting Event?

Answer: There are a variety of resources created by National PTA to assist with planning and hosting your Family Tasting Event! You can find all the resources including surveys, how to promote your event, a sample donation solicitation email and more at [PTA.org/Aetna](https://pta.org/Aetna).