

Mastering the Kitchen: The Culinary Quest

Lesson Overview

This lesson transforms a standard daily living task—preparing a meal—into an engaging "Culinary Quest." Designed for Wyatt, this lesson focuses on executive functioning, sensory awareness, and the practical skills needed to move toward independence in the kitchen.

Learning Objectives

- **Objective 1:** Demonstrate proper kitchen safety and hygiene protocols (washing hands, cross-contamination, heat safety).
- **Objective 2:** Successfully follow a visual recipe or checklist to prepare a simple, nutritious meal.
- **Objective 3:** Practice "clean-as-you-go" techniques to manage a workspace effectively.

Materials Needed

- Ingredients for a "Signature Dish" (Example: Build-your-own Tacos or Gourmet Grilled Cheese)
- A printed visual recipe or "Quest Map" (Step-by-step checklist)
- Kitchen timer (digital or visual)
- Color-coded cutting boards (if available)
- Apron and disposable gloves (optional for sensory preferences)
- "The Review Board" (A simple feedback sheet)

1. Introduction: The Hook (10 Minutes)

The Scenario: "Wyatt, imagine you're the lead character in a survival game. To maintain your 'Stamina Bar' and level up your independence, you need to master the Alchemy of the Kitchen. Today, you aren't just making lunch; you're unlocking a Life Skill Achievement: *The Master Chef Badge*."

Discussion: Ask, "If you lived in your own apartment tomorrow, what is the one meal you'd want to be able to make perfectly every time?" Discuss why being able to feed yourself is the ultimate "power-up" for independence.

2. The Body: Instruction & Practice (45-60 Minutes)

Step 1: The "I Do" (Modeling)

The instructor demonstrates the "Safety Zone" setup. Show Wyatt exactly how to:

- Set up a stable workstation (the "wet paper towel under the cutting board" trick).
- Demonstrate the "Claw" and "Bridge" hand positions for safe cutting.
- Explain the "Zone Defense": keeping raw items away from cooked items.
- **Pro-Tip:** Narrate your internal monologue: "I'm checking the stove is off now because that's my safety check."

Step 2: The "We Do" (Guided Practice)

Work together on the "Prep Phase." This is where you support sensory needs and executive function.

- **Mise en Place:** Together, gather every single ingredient and tool before starting. This prevents the "panic search" later.
- **Task Splitting:** Wyatt washes the vegetables while the instructor preps the heat source.
- **Checklist Check-in:** Have Wyatt physically check off the first three items on the Quest Map.

Step 3: The "You Do" (Independent Application)

Wyatt takes the lead on the "Assembly and Heat" phase. The instructor moves to an "Observer" role, only stepping in for safety.

- Wyatt follows the visual recipe to cook the meal.
- **The Clean-As-You-Go Challenge:** Set a timer for 2 minutes mid-cooking. The goal is to clear the "trash" or put away one used item before the timer dings.
- Wyatt plates the food, focusing on presentation (the "Final Boss" aesthetic).

3. Conclusion: Recap & Review (15 Minutes)

The Tasting: Sit down together and eat the meal. This provides immediate, positive reinforcement for the hard work.

Reflective Discussion:

- "What was the trickiest part of the quest?"
- "On a scale of 1-10, how 'Stamina-boosting' is this meal?"
- "What is one thing we could change next time to make it even better?"

Closing: Reinforce that daily living skills are just like gaming skills—they require XP (experience points) and practice to master.

Success Criteria

Wyatt has succeeded if he can:

1. Identify three safety rules used during the lesson.
2. Complete the meal with minimal verbal prompts for the "next step."
3. Leave the kitchen in a "reset" state (counters wiped, dishes in the sink).

Differentiation & Adaptability

- **For Sensory Processing:** Provide food-grade gloves for touching "wet" textures (like raw meat or tomatoes). Use a visual timer to reduce the "startle" of loud buzzers.
- **For Executive Function:** Use a "First/Then" board. (First we chop, then we sizzle).
- **For Advanced Learners (The Expansion Pack):** Have Wyatt calculate the cost per serving of the meal using a grocery receipt.
- **Universal Context:** This can be done in a home kitchen, a school life-skills lab, or even a

community center kitchen.

Assessment Methods

- **Formative (During):** "Check-ins" where Wyatt explains the safety reason behind a specific action (e.g., "Why do we use a different board for the chicken?").
- **Summative (After):** A "Quest Complete" photo of the final meal and the clean kitchen, kept in a "Life Skills Portfolio" to show progress over time.