

Basic Kitchen Skills

Build Your Own Sandwich

By Jim Fuller

A no heat, no knife lunch lesson for teens, with adult support. Practice one chosen action or the whole routine. Tasting and finishing food are optional.

Suggested time: 20 to 30 minutes, plus breaks. This revised pilot has not yet been tested with families. It is kitchen education, not feeding therapy or a guarantee of independent cooking.

Adult safety checks

- ☐ Stay present and actively supervise preparation and eating. Follow existing allergy, swallowing, medical, and mealtime plans. Use familiar ready to eat foods in the learner's usual safe textures and amounts.
- ☐ Check labels and prevent allergen cross contact through shared tools and surfaces. Peanut butter contains peanuts; dairy cheese contains milk; classic Nutella contains hazelnuts and milk. These examples are not exhaustive. Check every actual package, including jelly, marshmallow creme, and substitutes. [2, 4]
- ☐ Clean the workspace and utensils. Adult opens packages and removes sharp lids. No knives, heat, cooking appliances, raw meat, raw seafood, raw eggs, or raw flour are used.

Wash before touching ready to eat food

Both adult and learner wash with soap and running water for at least 20 seconds BEFORE handling any ready to eat ingredients. Wash again after touching a phone, face or hair, trash, pets, raw food, or anything else that could contaminate hands, and before resuming food handling. Wash before eating. [1]

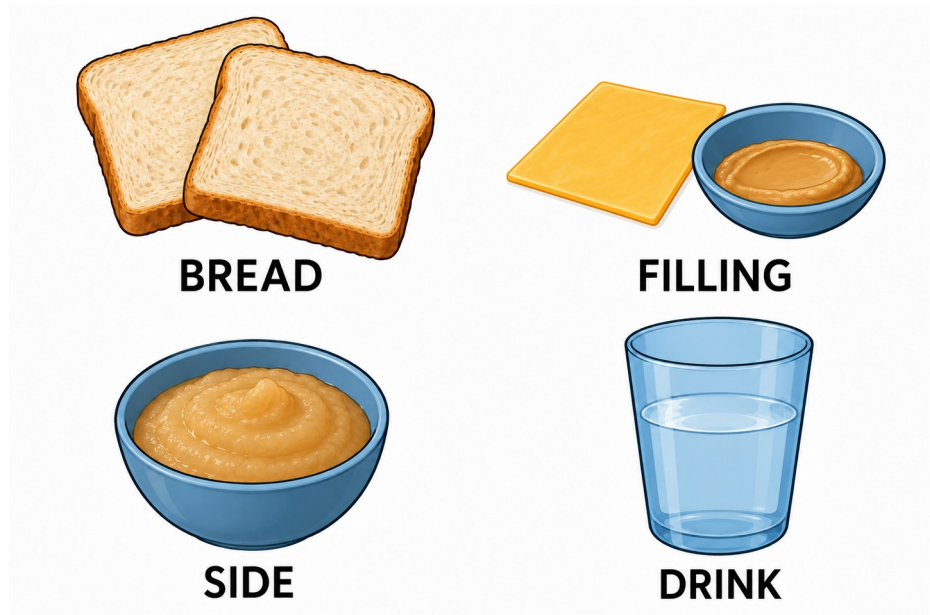
Keep cold food cold

Keep the refrigerator at 40°F or below. Set out only what is needed and return perishables promptly. Adult tracks total time out: discard perishables left out longer than 2 hours, or longer than 1 hour above 90°F. Never taste food to check its safety. [3]

Stop for distress, fatigue, coughing or difficulty swallowing, or safety uncertainty. Follow the existing emergency plan and seek emergency help when needed. Keep prescribed emergency supplies available.

Use pages 2–3 to prepare. Pages 4–7 break the routine into individual actions. Page 8 records repeated practice.

Food for one lunch



Food	Example amount
Familiar soft bread	2 slices
Cheese or a familiar spread	Adult selected amount
Familiar applesauce or prepared side	1/2 cup, adult preportioned
Usual drink	Usual amount, already in the cup

Filling choices: cheese, peanut butter, jelly, Nutella, marshmallow creme, or an approved combination. The learner chooses from options their adult has checked.

Adult preports a familiar cheese slice or enough spread for a thin layer. If combining spreads, keep the total layer thin. Do not use thick lumps or eat spreads by the spoonful. Adapt all foods and amounts to the learner's usual safe meal and existing plan.

Adult washes hands before opening or portioning food. Keep perishables refrigerated until needed. Measuring is optional. These are practice amounts, not a prescribed meal plan.

Tools and a plan



Also set out two small bowls, the learner's eating utensil, soap, a clean hand towel, and adult managed dishwashing supplies. Add a nonslip mat or adapted tools when helpful.

Choose how to take part

I can speak, point, sign, or use my device. I can choose food, arrange the meal, watch a demonstration, share a step, or stop.

My help / pause / all done signals

My filling choice and the one action I want to practice

A simple teaching routine

- 1 Agree on the action and a comfortable response time.
- 2 Show the action if useful.
- 3 Invite the learner to try.
- 4 Wait for the agreed time.
- 5 Offer one agreed cue or another demonstration if needed.

Honor pause or stop signals. Ask before helping; do not impose physical guidance. Keep visual tools and communication supports. Adult safety supervision stays in place even when fewer teaching prompts are needed.

Start the sandwich

My adult stays with me. I can ask for help or pause.

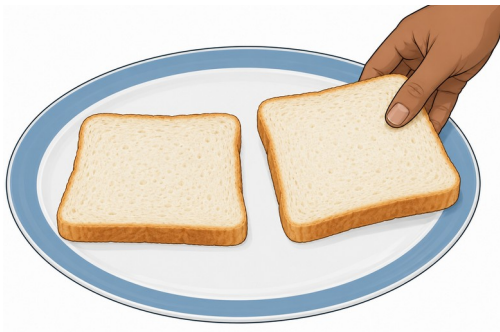
1 Wash your hands



☐ Done ☐ Help ☐ Pause

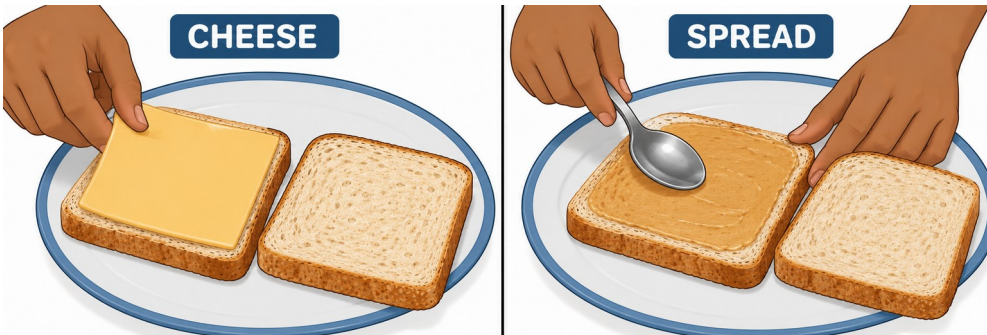
Use soap and water. Scrub for 20 seconds, rinse, and dry before touching food.

2 Put the bread on the plate



☐ Done ☐ Help ☐ Pause

3 Choose one filling action



☐ Done ☐ Help ☐ Pause

Cheese: Place your prepared slice on one bread slice.

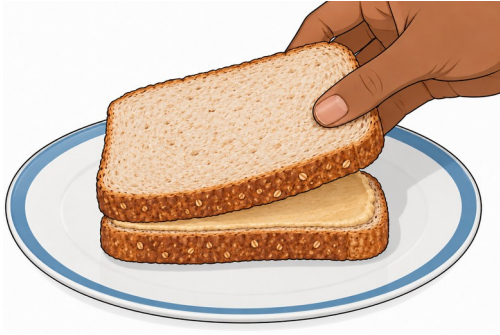
Spread: Spread a thin layer on one bread slice.

Touched your phone, face, hair, trash, or another unclean item? Wash again before touching food.

Finish the lunch

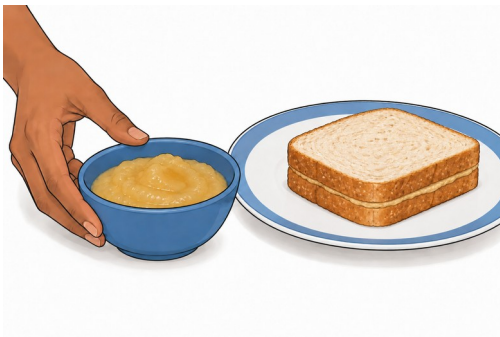
Use only the foods and amounts agreed for you.

4 Put the second slice on top



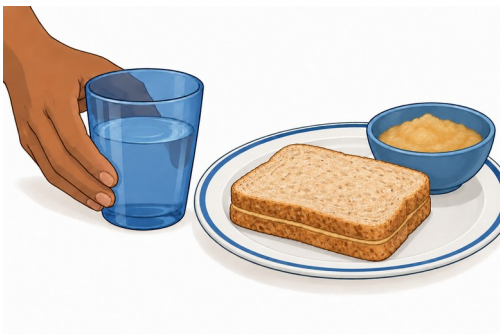
☐ Done ☐ Help ☐ Pause

5 Set the side bowl beside the plate



☐ Done ☐ Help ☐ Pause

6 Set the drink beside the plate



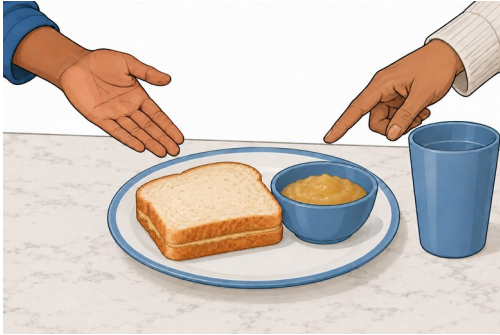
☐ Done ☐ Help ☐ Pause

My drink is already in the cup. My adult can carry anything I want help with.

Check and put food away

My adult checks food safety and stays with me while I eat.

7 Ask your adult to check the lunch



☐ Done ☐ Help ☐ Pause

8 Return unused cold food to the fridge



☐ Done ☐ Help ☐ Pause

Adult closes containers, checks time out, and refrigerates any meal being saved.

9 Put wrappers in the trash



☐ Done ☐ Help ☐ Pause

Adult decides what food to save or discard. Wash again before eating or handling food.

I can eat now with my adult or ask them to save my lunch. I do not have to taste it.

Clean up after the meal

My adult helps with storage, cleaning products, and water temperature.

10 Place used dishes in the sink



☐ Done ☐ Help ☐ Pause

Carry one manageable item at a time. Adult can carry it for you.

11 Wipe the work surface



☐ Done ☐ Help ☐ Pause

Adult prepares the cleaning cloth. Never mix cleaning chemicals.

12 Wash your hands



☐ Done ☐ Help ☐ Pause

Use soap and water. Scrub for 20 seconds, rinse, and dry.

Practice the same action again

Chosen action and what completion looks like

Example: place a prepared cheese slice, or spread a thin layer on one bread slice. Keep the chosen action the same across tries so you can see what help changes. Safety oversight always remains.

Completion: C completed • P partly completed • S paused or declined • N not offered. A choice to stop is not a failure.

Help: 0 no instructional cue • V visual cue • G gesture • W words • D demonstration • A shared adult help. Record more than one when needed.

Date	Result	Help and chosen supports	Safety check or cue	Learner feedback

Write a brief note in each row. Record the action completed and actual help used, not speed or food eaten. Asking for help when needed is a useful outcome.

What to keep or change next time

After repeated comfortable tries, offer fewer instructional prompts if the learner wants. Restore help whenever needed. Keep pictures, adapted tools, communication supports, and adult safety supervision. To try the skill in a new way, change one already approved familiar ingredient while keeping the rest of the routine familiar.

Adult source notes

Safety sources checked October 4, 2026. Teaching sequence and checklist are original pilot materials, not a validated assessment. Illustrations are AI generated instructional artwork, not photographs.

[1] CDC Handwashing in the Kitchen and Preventing Food Poisoning
<https://www.cdc.gov/clean-hands/prevention/about-handwashing-a-healthy-habit-in-the-kitchen.html>
<https://www.cdc.gov/food-safety/prevention/>

[2] FDA Food Allergies
<https://www.fda.gov/food/nutrition-food-labeling-and-critical-foods/food-allergies>

[3] FDA Are You Storing Food Safely
<https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/are-you-storing-food-safely>

[4] Nutella Classic ingredients
<https://www.nutella.com/us/en/products/spread/nutella>

Revised pilot version 0.3 | Keep completed learner records private