



## Best Practices for Collaboration

**Be FLEXIBLE!** There are a lot of moving parts to this collaboration and in working with teens.

**Create a tote!** Depending on the number of sites you are working with, it might make sense to create a tote per site or per lesson.

**Have a plan for dishes!** Often classrooms do not have sinks; you can arrange with the school sites to do the dishes. Although teens might help, it can be challenging with everything else going to expect teens to wash the dishes if there is not a sink.

Please note, with the Teens-as-Teachers model, the teens are meant to be the lead or teacher during the lesson. The adult allies are meant to help coach, support and mentor the teens in their leadership role. This looks different depending on the teens and their needs. Some may need more support and help during a lesson, while others will need very little guidance.

**Leverage your skills, passions, and relationships.** In some counties, the 4-H program representative does all the teen recruitment due to relationships, flexibility in schedule and excitement for recruiting. In other counties, the Nutrition Educator might take a more active role. This is where understanding each other's passions, skills, and capacities is important.

**Leverage equipment and stretch dollars.** Take an inventory of what each program currently has and can share before purchasing new equipment and materials. Another way to stretch dollars is to see if you can get donations such as a grocery store gift card, donations from a local farmer or a local business sponsorship.

**Find ways to save time.** Utilize interns and office volunteers to make copies and laminate. These tasks can be labor intensive and time-consuming. Share the responsibility with someone who has the time and willingness to help. Laminate materials that will be used in future lessons at multiple sites or in future years. There is no point in creating the same signs over and over again.

**Utilize stations.** Depending on the lesson, you can create food preparation stations. Examples include: a veggie washing station, cutting station and mixing station. Stations may help minimize behavior challenges as students will be actively involved and engaged.

**Failure is okay!** It is normal for things to not always workout smoothly. The school site does not know what the "ideal" collaboration or Cooking Academy is supposed to look like. They are just happy you are showing up. Each failure or challenge is an opportunity to grow and improve.

**Embrace a growth mindset.** A growth mindset means that things are not finite, but instead, through effort and embracing challenges, you can improve and grow. Collaborations with other people and programs are the same way. How you show up, put effort into communication and create a space to work through challenges will help you grow as a person and professional. The collaborative behavior we want youth to practice, we have to be willing to model with one another.

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