

Making Food Fun



Debbie Jones, Customer Support Manager – Serco at the Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital

@SercoHealth



Introducing the NNUH and Serco's involvement

- NNUH - an acute hospital, 4 new wards being opened in 2020, taking the bed count to 1,200
- Serco - a provider of public services across a range of sectors
- We provide Facilities Management at the NNUH and have done since 2001, when the newly built hospital first opened
- Serco services include cleaning, portering, security and catering
- We aim to work closely with our clients to continually improve the experience for patients and their families



The starting point

We had a young inpatient and we were unable to accommodate his request

- It got us thinking....
 - How could we meet his needs and those of other children?
 - Was it possible to introduce a play element to food?
 - Could we provide an activity that children could engage with during their stay with us?



Making plans - from an idea to reality

Play has a therapeutic value for children during a hospital stay. It positively contributes to both physical and emotional wellbeing, as well as recovery

Overall aim: *To provide children with some independence, giving them choices over what they ate, and encourage them to play and socialise with each other*

- Had support of senior leaders in both the Trust and Serco
- Consulted patients, parents and staff and concluded there was an opportunity to develop a way to encourage children to “play with food” and allow them to plan and make their own meals
- Created a working group comprising the Serco Catering Team, Housekeepers, Matron, Sister, Staff Nurses, HCA’s and Play Leaders



Making plans

How we went from an idea to reality

Space

- Initial plan to create a small area or separate room for the kitchen proved impossible
- Settled on space near the children's play area on the ward, allowing a group of children to take part and have little parties



Equipment

- Purchased a fridge, a combi microwave and equipment needed to prepare the food
- Sourced "Finding Nemo" aprons and children's chef hats in keeping with sea theme on the children's ward



Procedures

- Essential that we established procedures to make sure there was no risk to patients' health or safety
- Play Leaders trained in Food Safety
- Safe Operating Procedure developed in collaboration with the Trust and signed off by both the Trust and Serco.



Children's Play Kitchen Opens

- The first food to be prepared by children was made in March 2019
- Over 180 children have prepared, eaten and shared different meals and snacks
- A Friday afternoon is put aside for baking and decorating cakes, buns and biscuits, which is very well received
- The children are delighted when they can offer biscuits and cakes they've had a hand in making to their parents and staff
- The kitchen equipment is portable so we can take it to children who are in an isolation room

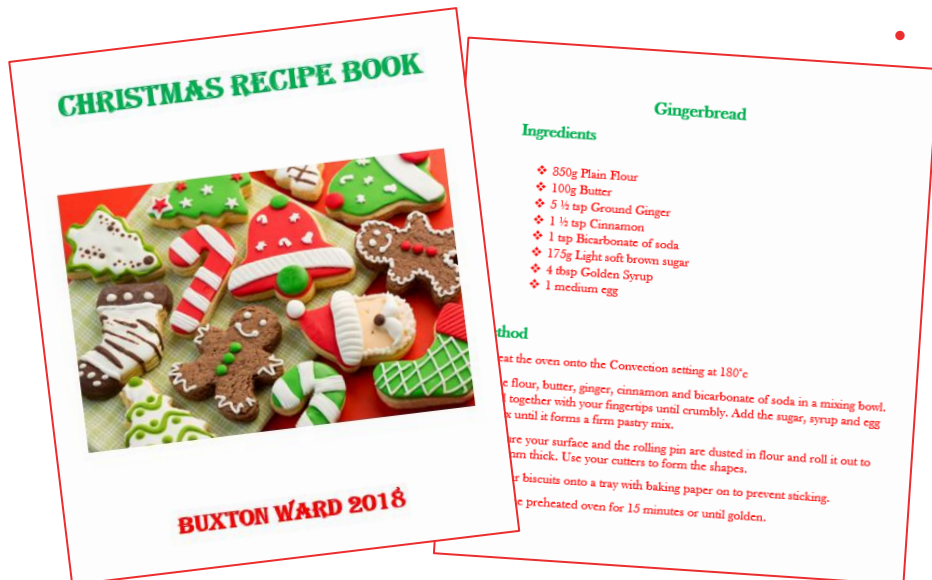


The success of the play kitchen

The contributing factors to the success of the play kitchen

Listening to feedback

- Based on the suggestions from children, we devised a small recipe book (which also highlighted the allergens associated with ingredients)



Ways to expand

- We have already increased our repertoire
- Christmas recipe book with Christmas biscuits/cookies
- Plan to create recipes for Easter, birthday party foods and other theme days

Cost

- Innovative thinking means the kitchen has been set up and runs at no additional cost - either the Trust or Serco
- Our agreement requires us to offer a choice at point of service to every child
- Rather than waste what isn't used we offer any excess meals left at the end of service to parents and carers for a small discretionary donation
- All the money raised is put back into the ward for equipment and requests, often associated with the play kitchen

Benefits and outcomes

- Offers some choice and control around what a child eats - can choose favourites and try new food
- A sociable and fun play opportunity in what is, for some, an unfamiliar environment and during days that can feel long and sometimes boring
- Children with food issues can be encouraged to make things, but with no pressure to eat anything
- Making food fun encourages some not to be frightened of food and they can learn about food through play
- Unanticipated benefits to siblings:
 - meet and play with children from other families
 - reduce anxiety and increase positive associations with hospital visits
- When their children are feeling positive, or less anxious, it contributes to the overall wellbeing of the family unit
- Parents/carers don't have to leave their child and go off the ward to eat if they prefer not to
- Eating together normalises meals, which can encourage a child to eat
- Reduced food waste





Thank you for listening

