

Why I decreased cooking in 2020

For some, spending more time at home has meant more cooking. At the Reid household, we are still eating home cooked foods, but I have decreased my cooking responsibilities.

I have two teenagers who have more time because of limited activities. Thus, they each have three nights a week that they are responsible for meal preparation. My son's initial comment was "I have to cook three times a week?!"

My reply was quick and authoritative: "Don't you eat everyday?"

Thus, by 6 p.m. each evening, I join one of them in the kitchen as a coach. We've already planned the menu for the week and a favorite family recipe is available. I'm available to answer questions and provide reminders about food safety, timing, preparation tools and tips. Their favorite part is delegating tasks to other family members (and that the head cook doesn't have to wash dishes that night).

Could you do this in your household? I challenge you to engage other family members with new tasks. Maybe it is shopping, laundry, financial tasks, cleaning — you get the idea. And if you have to isolate yourself from other household members, you'll be glad they can do tasks on their own.

As a coach, there should be times when you are on the sidelines with your mouth shut. You will celebrate the "big picture" accomplishments and laugh at teachable moments. "So what?" if your household member uses a different technique. It may take them longer, but they might be open to your time saving suggestion in the future.

As a family and consumer sciences educator, I hope that my children (and others that I teach) will be competent and confident with life skills. Both Reid kids know how to get the smoke detector to stop, how to use the food thermometer and which dish soap works best on greasy dishes. Progress in your household may look different, but let us all take advantage of finding success, joy and laughter in 2020.

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