

## The Project Approach to Learning at

**RisingOaks**  
Early Learning

| St. Matthew

**Project Name:** Restaurants

**Age Group:** School-age 3 (7 years – 11 years)

**Project Start Date:** November 2022

**Project End Date:** March 2023



**RisingOaks**  
Early Learning

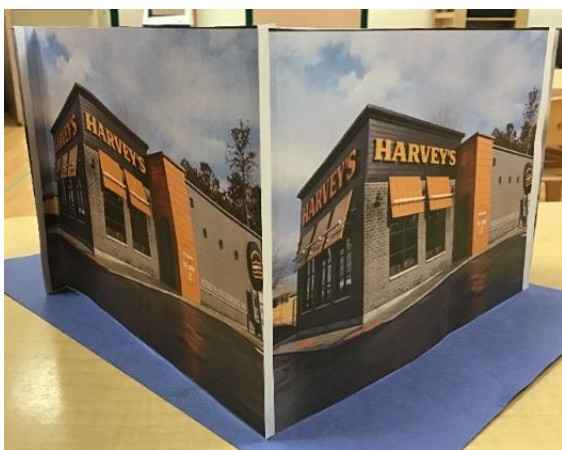
**Growing minds through play**

## Background

The school-age group 3 at RisingOaks St. Matthew started their “Restaurants” project at the beginning of November 2022. This project finished in March of 2023. The ages of the children who were involved in this project ranged from 7 years to 11 years of age. The educators that were involved in this project were Jung Lee (ECF) and Kelsey Woodstock (RECE).

## Phase 1: Beginning the Project

In the beginning of November, various children started to make their own restaurants through conversations and research. The educators wanted to expand on this, which in turn inspired the idea of starting the Restaurant Project. This all started with Michael when he made a Harvey's building by using printed pictures as a blueprint. The other children thought this was a neat idea and decided that they wanted to make their own individual restaurants. The children shared ideas as they made pizzas and hamburgers by using pizza boxes and loose cardboard. Wyatt, Quintin, Charlotte and Theia engaged in a dramatic play experience where they decided to run a pizza place and delivered hamburgers and pizzas to their peers. The educators could hear various comments and conversations throughout the experience such as, "Would you like to have a pizza?" and "What kind of pizza would you like to have?". Some nearby children said "How many pieces would you like to eat?", "How much is it", and even "Here is a tip for your hard work!" The following day, the group decided to expand on this and create coupons for their pizzas as they wished to sell more. Since the children loved role playing this restaurant, the following week, they served pancakes, fruits, and milk to each other from the before school program. Nyah played the role of the customer while Emily and Jaime played the waitress. At the end of the meal, they cleaned the table as restaurant workers. Through the growing of children's interesting, we decided to start our restaurant project.



*Figure 1 Michael made a Harvey's building by using printed pictures*



*Figure 2 Making pizzas & hamburgers by using pizza boxes & cardboard*



The first step was to discuss what we already know about the restaurants, as well as what we wanted to know. We also discussed who we could ask as our expert to get answers of our questions to expand our knowledge on Restaurants.

## **What do you know about restaurant?**

- They serve food and drinks.
- They can be fancy or simple sit down
- Family dinner/meal
- All types of different settings
- Showing the number of calories for food/drink items

## **What do you want to know about restaurant?**

- Who works in a restaurant?
- Where do their supplies come from?
- How do they come up with menu items?
- Types of menus
- What are some different types of restaurants?

## **Who can we ask?**

- Chef: Jeremiah Culberson (Theia's dad)
- Experienced cook: Brenda (RisingOaks staff)
- Skip the Dishes Worker: Adeena

## Phase 2: Developing the Project

### Web

The web below served as a place to capture the children's learning process throughout the entirety of the project. It outlines the learning that took place and highlights the directions that the School-age group took and some of the categories they explored within their Restaurant Project.

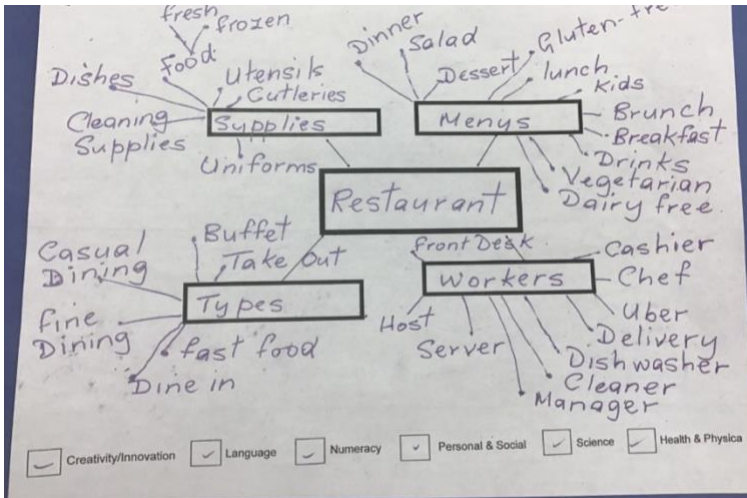


Figure 3 Web

### Restaurant Definition

- Formal Definition
  - A business establishment where meals or refreshments may be purchased (ref: google)
- Informal Definition:
  - Place where you get food and service
  - Eating place

### Vocabulary

Food, Enjoyment, Waitress/Waiter, Chef, Dinner, Drive through, Menu, Fast food, Yummy, Pop, Open & Closed, Franchise, Chain, Commercial, Customers, Orders, Delivery, Vegetarian, Options, Vegan, Variety.

### Survey 1: Would you like to work in a restaurant?

Below highlights a survey that the group came up with. The wanted to survey the group to see who would like to work in a Restaurant.

**YES:** Hubert, Emily, Lauren, Sebi, Jaime, Charlotte, Dylan, Nyah, Hudsyn, Arran, Michael

**NO:** Sophia, Olivia

### Survey 2: What is your favourite restaurant?

The second survey the group did was to see what the popular restaurant choices were of the group. Below highlights the list of Restaurant choices that came out on top.

- East Side Mario's
- Sushi/Korean restaurant
- Montana's
- Italian restaurant
- McDonald's
- Harvey's
- Denny's
- Pizza restaurant
- State and Main
- Mandarin
- Graffiti Market
- Jack's

## Restaurants - Creating our Own

The children started to plan for everything needed to run their restaurant such as concepts, tools, and menus that would be needed to effectively run a successful restaurant. They showed great communication skills as they made decisions, problem solved through issues, and even advertised for their restaurants. They utilized loose parts such as cardboard, cups, recycled cans and made their own utensils. This allowed the children to engage their creative expression by designing the items for their restaurant and repurposing recycled items to create their vision.



*Figure 4 Children made utensils using cardboard and cups from recycled cans*



*Figure 5 Children expressed their creativity*

Below highlights a variety of the Restaurants that were created by the group.



**Kawaii Sushi** is a restaurant with a variety of options on their menu. These include miso soup, stir-fry, maki, sushi, and hand rolls. This restaurant has a grill that displays the food being made to the customers. The children made chopsticks, knives, pans, and grills using cardboard for this restaurant.



*Figure 6 Hailey made miso soup cardboard*



*Figure 7 children made chopsticks, knives, pans, and grills using*

**Sausy Drinks** is a unique restaurant that is only available on the Moon. It serves soups, drinks, smoothies, and sauces to aliens and travelers. It is an environmentally friendly restaurant because all of the cups and containers were made using recycled cans. Sausy Drinks is about the journey as well as the food and drinks. The children made seating plans for their restaurant and each purchase comes with a coupon to use on their next adventure to the moon.



*Figure 8 Environmentally friendly restaurant because all of the cups and containers were made with recycled cans*



Figure 9 Coupons and Sitting plans

**Lily Pads** is a family restaurant that has various kinds of menus including special desserts and candies. This restaurant serves on the water while using Lily Pads as placemats. Lauren designed her restaurant's sign as she showed images of lily and various colors. It gives a creative edge by having guests dining in a pond.



Figure 10 Lauren designed her restaurant's sign as she showed image of lily and colors

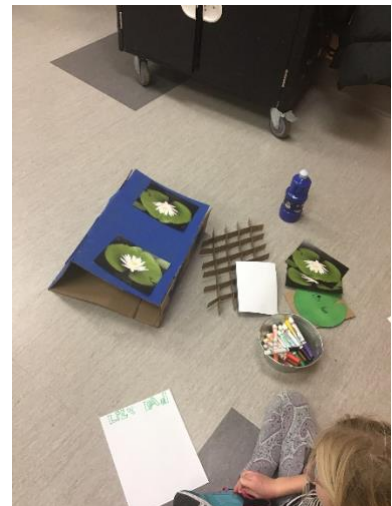


Figure 11 This restaurant serves on the water while using Lily Pads as placemats

**Chips Maneea** has a variety of different flavored chips such as vegetables (carrot, spinach, potato etc.) and fruits (apple, blueberry etc.). Arran and Wyatt mentioned that because Chips Maneea makes health chips, it is great option for the elderly and young children. They represented the chips with

coloured papers and newspapers. Arran wanted to open Chips Maneea in Cambridge because his grandparents live there and they love Chips.



Figure 12 They prepared chips with coloured papers and newspapers.



Figure 13 different flavored chips

**Augie and Zeek's Ramen** is a well-known restaurant for instant noodle Ramens. It serves Neoguri, Black bean noodle, Hot and spicy lemon chicken, Shin ramen and soba style. Most of products come from Korea with a variety of soup bases. This restaurant introduced the Ramens to people who enjoy hot and spicy taste comes from various cultures. In addition, Augie made a cash register with foam from the packaging, which was very innovative. He mentioned "Hey I have a cash register. You can pay cash or card. Now I can make lots of money!" with pride.



Figure 14 The restaurant serves Neoguri, Black bean noodle, Hot and spicy lemon chicken, Shin ramen and soba style.



Figure 15 Augie made a cash register with foam from the packaging.

**Patrick Mahomes** is Hudsyn's special pop-up restaurant from his favorite football player, Patrick Mahomes. From opening this restaurant, he wanted to celebrate 2023 Superball game with friends. It offered your typical food that would see served at various sporting events.



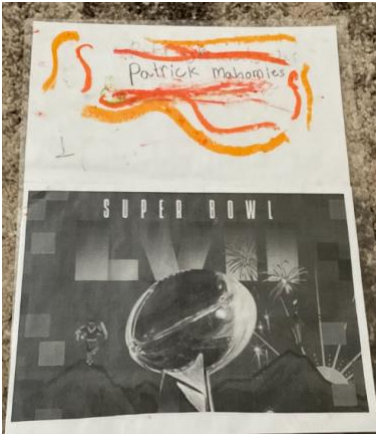


Figure 16 Hudsyn's special pop-up restaurant from his favorite football player, Patrick Mahomes



Figure 17 Restaurant menu

**Burger Burner** is a general fast food restaurant. Wyatt opened his second restaurant, Burger Burner for his growing interest after Chips Maneea. He made a menu which consisted of cartoon pictures of the food items, so everybody can order food easily and it was inclusive to all individuals. Interestingly, Wyatt made forks with plastic straws.

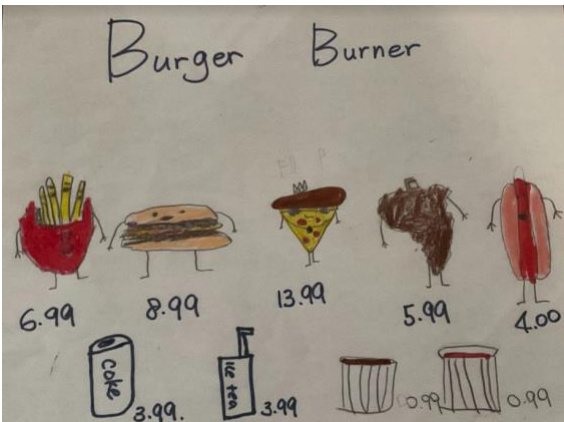


Figure 18 Menu with cartoon pictures

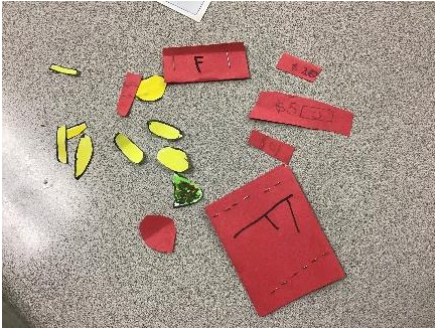


Figure 19 Wyatt made forks with plastic straws

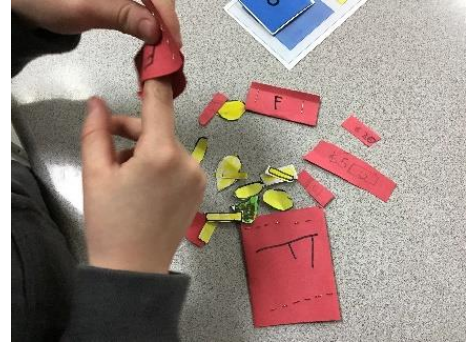
### Fish Fryer

Michael had just started building his restaurant Fish Fryer in February. He worked very hard developing menus, signs and food options. He drew fish fries and lemon on paper and cut them out. He also made a small container with red papers for the fries. One day, he delivered fries to me and said, "Jung! These are 5 dollars. Do you have money?". I told him, "Sorry, I have no money." to which he responded with, "No problem, you can make money now!". He then handed me a piece of paper for me to make a 5-dollar bill.

Later in the day, he asked me to have lemon with fries, which is on his new menu priced for 15 dollars. When I tried to pay with a 15-dollar paper bill, he suddenly became very serious. He looked up at me and said "Hey, Jung, there is no 15-dollar bill. You need to pay the right bill. How about 10- and 5-dollar bills?". So, I made a 20-dollar bill for it and said, "Sorry for that. Here is 20 dollars for the lemon and fries." which Michael took and prepared a 5-dollar change for me.



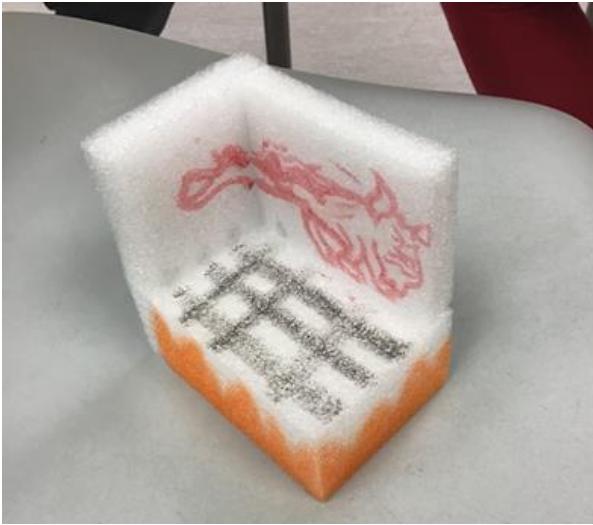
*Figure 20 Making a small container with red papers for the fries.*



*Figure 21 Michael drew fish fries and lemon on paper and cut them out.*

## Plate and Food

When the children designed the plates for their restaurants, they demonstrated their passion and creative expression for the entire process. Wyatt drew food items on his plates for Burger Burner. He said, "Does it look like real food on my plate?" Another child answered "Oh, that looks so yummy!" to which Michael replied with "I want to eat it!". Lauren and Nora decided to design their plates by using their restaurant's logo, lily pads. Lauren and Nora asked each other open ended questions like "How do you like plates that have a lily pad shape?" and "How about the colour green, the same as our restaurant's logos?". Charlotte, Emily, and Theia designed their plates by sprinkling colours as stars, making it look like outer space. Augie and Zeek created their design by drawing a bowl of Ramen and writing letters on the plates. While they worked together, they communicated with one another by saying "Hey Augie, I am going to draw it the opposite way of yours!"



The children created the food and food supplies with cardboard, polymer clay, pipe cleaner and foam from various packaging. They were expressing their creativity as they designed the food items for their restaurants.





*Figure 22 making sushi, making brownies, making food supplies, plating sushi, a plating all of the food supplies*

## Menus

The entire group had an open communication between their team partners to come up with a name for their menus. Kawaii sushi looked at and compared real sushi menus to develop their very special menu for their restaurant. Nyah even explained to her group, "My dad is Japanese, I can ask him for



our special menus". Augie brought real Instant Ramen for his menus. Other children asked him "Hey Augie, did you buy everything for us?" which he responded with "My sister really likes Ramens, so my mom bought everything for her. I brought them from my home to share with you guys." This provided the group with that overwhelming sense of belonging. All the food items mentioned on the Sausy drinks menus are made with all natural ingredients. Since they are going to serve their food on the moon, they decided to bring canned ingredients. Chips Maneea serves veggies and fruit chips for seniors. Burger Burners menu was presented different compared to others. While all the restaurants had written menus, Wyatt's menu consisted of cartoon pictures of the food items. All kids complimented Wyatt's menu by saying "That's a brilliant idea! Simple is good". Below showcases all of the menus that were created by the children.

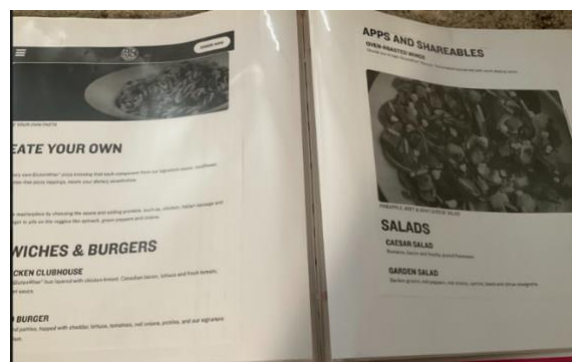
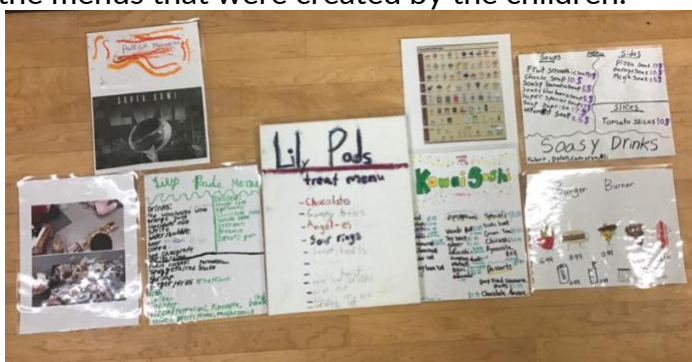


Figure 23 Menus from all of the restaurants and Real menu book

## Delivery Service

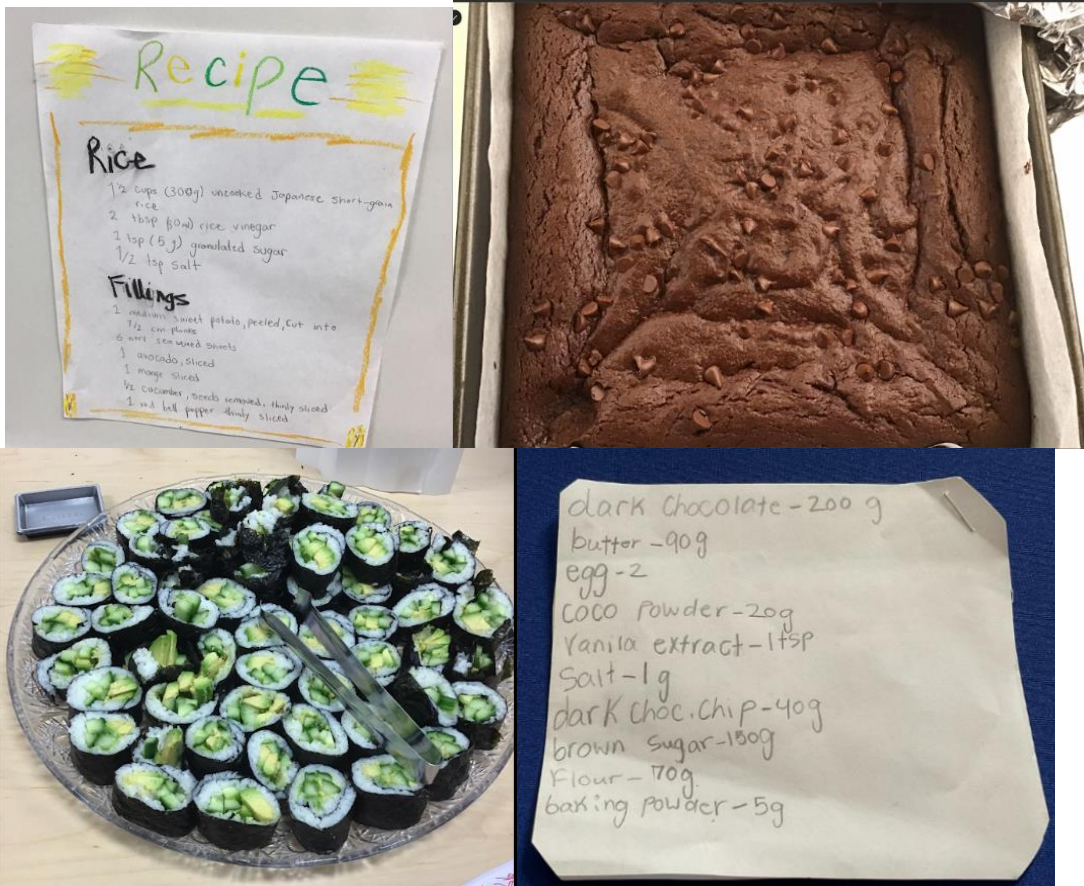
Arran made a delivery service for his Restaurant Chips Maneea where chips are delivered by planes. First, he made paper planes with little pockets that would hold the food items. Unfortunately, that idea didn't work out well as when Arran tried to fly the plane, it only flew for a few seconds. Arran then said, "Oh I have an idea! I can add parachutes to the planes!". He got working on his new idea and made a paper panel that would act as the parachute. But again, his plane did not work well. However, Arran displayed determination and did not give up and kept thinking. He later came up to me and said "Hey, Jung, I could change the paper panel. It looks heavy. I can make a lighter panel!" He quickly created another part by using only one layer of paper. The next day Arran continued with the plane as he made something very special. "Wow Arran, what is that?" Michael asked him. He proudly responded, "It is a remote control for the delivery plane! It needs some more buttons." The following day, Arran continued working with his remote controller as he added a joystick and more buttons. Arran's imagination and vision came to life. He developed innovative skills and critical thinking as he solved the problems that were put out in front of him.



Figure 24 Arran made plane, remote controller, and timer for a delivery service.

## Recipes

Throughout the entirety of the project, the group did various mini research assignments to learn information about recipes that they could use within their restaurants. The recipes and food below are some of the recipes that the children collectively decided to make for their final event in which they welcomed families and other classmates to view their restaurant.





## Advertisement-

Through ongoing conversations throughout the entirety of the project, the children wanted to ensure that they had adequate advertising for their restaurants. They expressed the importance of reaching a vast audience in order to bring in the most traffic to their businesses. Below is some of the advertisements that the groups made.



Figure 25 Restaurant Advertisement

## Mascot

The children took notice through various research that many restaurant establishments have mascots to represent their business. Below highlights some of the mascots that the groups created as well as the main picture for the Lily Pad restaurant.



Figure 26 Nora drew a decoration picture for her restaurant, Lily Pads



## Guest Expert 1: Experienced Cook Brenda

Brenda is an experienced cook at the RisingOaks St. Matthew location. She joined the school age group on Monday, Feb 6th to discuss cooking/baking. She prepared two types of fruit smoothies and one veggie smoothie. She showed the children a chart that included a variety of fruits and vegetables that can be used to make a variety of smoothies. The children learned various nutrient facts that are highlighted with including healthy ingredients. More detail is shown below in Event III "Tasting of Smoothies".



## Guest Expert 2: Skip the Dishes Worker Adeena

Adeena was the second guest expert to visit our program. Adeena is not only a RisingOaks staff, but also works as Skip the Dishes driver as a side job. The children were very excited to ask interesting questions to her. The questions and answers are highlighted below.

- Q: Have you had people you take orders to get mad?
- A: yes, I have, but I don't make a big deal of it. It takes a lot to drive to someone's home to deliver stuff, especially if I'm going a far distance.
  
- Q: How much do you make?
- A: I make money based off the distance I go and how much the people tip me.
  
- Q: What's something you have picked up the most when doing skip?
- A: McDonald's is very popular
  
- Q: What's something you have picked up the least?
- A: Probably Tim Hortons. Not many people order Tim's as they can go out to get it with their cars or make coffee at home.
  
- Q: Why do you work for skip?
- A: I have an extra job just to make some extra cash on the side for the things I want. Like haircuts, getting my nails done etc.
  
- Q: How long have you been working for skip.
- A: I've been working for skip for about 6 months.

When all of the questions were answered, the group had an opportunity to have a look at Skip the Dishes delivery bag. The children learned the delivery bag has insulating layer inside, which maintains food temperature. The children realized how they could enjoy hot delivery pizza at home.



### Guest Expert 3: Chef Jeremiah

As the School-Age 3 group began to wrap up their project, they wanted to invite a special guest into the program to expand the group in another learning opportunity. We invited Jeremiah, a school age parent, to come into the program one afternoon and talk about the restaurant business with the group. As Jeremiah is a regional chef for Waterloo Region, he manages many different restaurants and makes sure they run smoothly and properly. The children asked various questions such as why fast food is so fast and what was involved. Jeremiah mentioned this occurs as the type of grill these restaurants use cooks faster than a normal grill. Jeremiah mentioned how he has been working in the restaurant industry since he was 15 years old, and loves the environment. After all the questions, Jeremiah and the group began to make dessert waffles. He brought in many ingredients for the waffles such as pancake/waffle mix, fruit, ice cream, chocolate/Carmel sauce, and whip cream. Some of the children helped prepare the toppings by cutting the fruit and also even helping with the scoping of the ice cream. Collectively, they worked together to set up the environment so it was a little bit like a restaurant. They set up the tables and the supplies they needed to serve. They were ecstatic when they got the chance to create their own dessert waffle and top it with whatever they would like. They all thoroughly enjoyed their dessert waffles with a huge smile on their face. The group will work to wrap up our project the end of March by having our grand opening of their restaurants they created and have been working on throughout the project. We cannot wait to welcome in our families!



## Event 1: Tasting of Augie's and Zeek's Ramen

Augie's and Zeek's Ramen had a tasting event as Augie brought many kinds of Ramens from his home for the whole group. For the tasting, we selected two Ramens with seafood base soup and beef flavored. Augie and Zeek measured water into a pot and Jung boiled the water on the stove at St. Matthews kitchen. Jung put soup base powder to the boiling water and noodle together as Augie and Zeek stayed out of kitchen and read the instructions for cooking. After 3 minutes of boiling, they put the cooked noodles into 14 small dishes each for tasting. The children really enjoyed both even they were very spicy for them. One child mentioned "I don't eat red meat, but I love to eat seafood one." Some other children mentioned, "I can eat every day, it is spicy, but yummy." A handful of children couldn't handle the hot and spicy, so they drank lots of water while displaying red faces. The entire group congratulated Augie and Zeek on their successful restaurant.



## Event 2: Celebrate "Seollal" (Lunar New Year)

For the Lunar New Year celebration, Koreans eat Mandu soup (dumplings) for breakfast on the first day of the new year. Historically, this is to wish for a good harvest and well-being for the rest of the year. The Korean Lunar New Year, called Seollal, fell on January 22nd this year. As a Korean educator, Jung decided to celebrate this holiday together with the school age group 3 children.

In an experience that involved both cooking skills and cultural learning, group 3 made dumplings from scratch. The children combined all-purpose flour, salt, and warm water to create the dough, one commenting "It feels like play dough" while they kneaded it. For the best taste and texture, the dough must be kneaded for ten minutes, which made the children very tired and sweaty! The next day, the dough was ready to be used for wrapping fillings made with cooked meat and vegetables.

A few children took turns using a rolling pin to stretch and flatten the dough while discussing the process, sharing observations such as "it's soft" and "I love the smell." One child remarked, "This is my first-time making dumplings in my life." Another told the group, "I'm going to make a fancy dumpling." He seemed to take a lot of pride in making a king-sized dumpling that was shaped like a half moon with frills.



All of the children made and enjoyed Mandu to wish them, their friends and their families health and happiness. Through this experience, the children were confident and involved learners. I observed them cooperating with each other, communicating with enthusiasm and eagerness to learn unfamiliar food and cultures. The activity also tied in with our ongoing restaurant project which continues to develop through the children's wonders and interests.



### Event 3: Tasting of "Smoothies"

Brenda, who is an experienced cook at RisingOaks St. Matthews was with us for smoothie tasting event. She brought us all of ingredients and two blenders. She explained how can we make a healthy smoothie as she shared the veggie and fruits smoothie recipes. The children had two kinds of fruit smoothies and veggie one. Sausy drinks' workers, Hubert, Dylan and Cameron served the group as the restaurant staff after Brenda blended it. Most of the children liked fruits smoothie more than veggie. But Lauren said " Would I be able to have more of the veggie smoothie? Fruit Smoothies have better taste but I know that veggie one is good for my health."



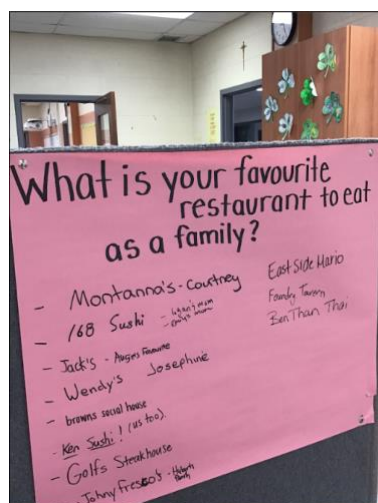
### Phase 3: Concluding the Project



## Final Event:

As our project was preparing to come to an end, the educators and group thought the best way to celebrate and wrap up would be to invite parents, other school age groups, along with the preschool program for our grand opening event of their finalized restaurants. For months, our after-school program has been focused and showing passion and dedication for their very own restaurant businesses. We had a variety of different restaurants where parents and the other groups had the chance to come see as they walked around the classroom. We set up throughout the program and had the restaurant owners set up at their own table. Some groups got even more creative with it and wore chef hats as well! Some groups had music playing to help bring in customers, some had merchandise available, and some even had food samples of an item or drink from their very own restaurant menu. We had a survey out for families to write down where they go to eat as a family that's their favourite to go to. The educators had posted a variety of pictures throughout the class of the process of each project and how it all came together.

Collectively, we knew this was a great way to wrap up our restaurant project and time to end it with a gathering and display of their restaurants with food alongside. Throughout the last few months, Kelsey and Jung, alongside the children have been engaging in co-learning as they explored the processes together. We are so proud of how well everyone contributed to the final event and we're so thrilled to share this with the group. Bringing everyone together was a wonderful way to conclude our restaurant project and recognize the sense of pride the School-Age 3 group felt. Lauren even mentioned "I am so happy of our turn out with parents and the other groups." What a great experience and how this project has showed real life experiences being a great way for them to learn the restaurant business process.





## Teacher Reflections

During this project, the school age group 3 children were able to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills as they planned for everything needed to run a successful restaurant. They had the ability to demonstrate creativity and innovation through their designs and constructions as they implemented repurposed recycled items in order to create the vision. Through these processes, I could see that children's cooperation and social skills were enhanced as the children worked collaboratively to create materials, plans, and the overall processes for their restaurants. My sense of pride for the learning and innovation this group displayed continues to expand as we reflect on the processes that we completed. We also would not have been able to encompass the finale of this project without the support all of our special guests, Adeena, Brenda, and chef Jeremiah for their support in this project. - Jung Lee