



Sainsbury's debates future of cooking and targets another £3 million towards school cookery lessons

Today, Sainsbury's hosts a national debate on the future of cooking with leading industry experts including Sainsbury's chief executive Justin King, chef Jamie Oliver and Tim Loughton, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families.

The supermarket also announces an investment of £3 million over the next three years in essential cooking equipment and ingredients for schools, through its Active Kids scheme. It started providing cooking equipment and ingredients through the scheme three years ago and this intention will take the total amount invested by the supermarket to nearly £6 million by 2012. Being "Best for Food and Health" is one of Sainsbury's five key corporate responsibility principles.

The news comes as new research* commissioned by Sainsbury's shows that one of the biggest barriers to cooking in schools is access to ingredients, with a staggering 96% of kids being charged extra for ingredients by their school.

Only 4% of pupils said that their school provided the necessary ingredients and many said they find it difficult to afford basic store cupboard products. The report was commissioned to help identify the obstacles to learning and teaching essential cooking skills.

Around 40% said they have never had a cookery lesson at school and half said they had only cooked twice in the last year. When asked about cooking at home, 37% of kids say they never or rarely cook with their parents.

This is despite there being a positive correlation between cooking at school and cooking at home. Of those asked, 62% of kids said they had cooked the same dish at home after a school cookery lesson, a clear example of how school cooking skills can benefit the family unit as a whole.

The good news is that 75% of kids would like to be able to cook a meal for their family and 83% would like to improve their cooking skills. This is supported by parents with 90% saying they think it's important that children learn how to cook meals.

Justin King, Sainsbury's chief executive said:

"Sainsbury's has led the way in providing fresh, affordable food coupled with inspiring cooking ideas. Being the best for food and health is one of our key values, and our investment of almost £6 million in cooking equipment and ingredients reflects this long-standing commitment.

"Worryingly, despite there being a rise in scratch cooking during the recession, we are faced with a future where the next generation may end up lacking the essential skills needed to prepare nutritious home-cooked meals for themselves and their families. Today's debate brings together leading industry experts to identify the obstacles that are standing in the way of progress and will aim to help shape meaningful solutions to ensure that we don't have a lost generation of cooks."

Held at Sainsbury's head office in central London, the panel will debate the barriers and challenges to cooking, and will look at the issue of whether anyone will still be cooking in 2030.

The six panellists taking part in today's discussion are:

- Justin King, Sainsbury's chief executive
- Jamie Oliver, chef
- Tim Loughton, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families
- Cathy Court, Netmums
- Rosemary Leeke, head teacher
- Chaired by journalist John Humphrys

Ends

Notes to editors:

- *Research was undertaken with 524 children and parents; comprising children aged 12 to 16 years old and parents with children aged between 5 to 16 years old
- Since 2005, the Sainsbury's Active Kids scheme has donated over £86 million worth of equipment and experiences to schools, nurseries, Scouts and Girl guiding UK groups. Schools can also redeem Active Kids vouchers for cooking equipment and ingredients.
- Sainsbury's five key responsibility principles are:
 1. Best for food and health
 2. Sourcing with integrity
 3. Respect for our environment
 4. Making a positive difference to our community
 5. A great place to work

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