

Mister Larry, The Daycare Chef

Larry Richardson

When I was a little boy, I watched my grandmother cook. The food tasted so good that it made me want to become a cook. So when I was about 19, I started working in small restaurants as a busboy, then a line cook, and a finally a chef. My grandmother is why I became a chef; I love good cooking—especially cooking for other people.

Nutritious Food for Children

Currently I work as the chef for a daycare center. One of the most important ways to express my care for the children is to feed them healthy and

I believe that what God created we must take care of, especially the children.

nourishing food. Nutritious food supports children's brains and bodies. When I cook for the children in the daycare center, it makes me feel good about myself because I know that I am doing something good for them; this is why I love my job

at the daycare center. I believe that what God created we must take care of, especially the children.

Teaching about Healthy Food

Being part of this program gives me a chance to help the parents with their children's health. One of my greatest joys is when I go upstairs and teach

the children about nutrition. The teachers and I eat meals with them. The children see me eating foods they might not want to try. I tell them how I made it and how it will make them strong and smart.

I talk to them about the foods we are serving. I show them pictures of how it looks before I cook it. I teach them how to measure ingredients, how to pick out healthy colors of vegetables, and how to cook in the most nutritious way. Kids need to learn early to eat healthy foods so they will do this their whole life.

This is a good job. It is not just any job. But it is not valued. Day care workers should get higher pay, sick days, personal days, job security, and paid vacations. I am feeding the children so they can grow up to be what they desire to be in the healthiest body possible. It is important work!



Larry Richardson is a student at the Adult Learning Center Mid-Manhattan: #5 in New York City. Larry was born in Dillon, SC at home by the fireplace with the care of a midwife. He came to NYC at the age of two. His goal is to earn his GED and become a head chef by continuing to upgrade his culinary skills.

Share and Discuss

Larry's grandmother was his mentor. Share a story about someone who mentored you.

According to the author, taking care of children is important, but undervalued, work. Do you agree? Why or why not? State one thing a society should do to take care of its children.

Who is the end-user of the work you do or hope to do? (For Larry, it is the children at his daycare who eat his cooking.) How does the end-user affect how you feel about your work?