Functional Areas of School Nutrition

Being a successful school nutrition assistant requires various skills in several functional areas. Functional areas are categories of tasks that are done on a daily, weekly, or seasonal basis. Here are the six main functional areas of school nutrition and some of their related tasks and skills.

1. **Food Production**
   - Basic food preparation techniques
   - Portion control
   - Production schedules and deadlines
   - Accurate inventory system

2. **Sanitation, Safety, and Security**
   - Good personal hygiene
   - Time-temperature relationship
   - Cross-contamination of foods
   - Accident-prevention and first aid

3. **Customer Service**
   - Appearance of serving line and dining room
   - Taste, smell, texture, and appearance of food
   - Student feedback
   - Positive interactions with customers

4. **Program Regulations and Accountability**
   - Reimbursable meal components
   - Basic nutrition standards
   - Different meal planning methods
   - Customer confidentiality

5. **Equipment Use and Care**
   - Equipment safety
   - Methods for operating equipment
   - Cleaning and maintaining equipment
   - School district policies for repairs

6. **Professional Excellence**
   - Effective communication
   - On-going training to improve skills
   - Professional appearance and positive attitude
   - Organization and time management

**Quick Tip:** Think about your own knowledge and skills. Which of these functional areas do you already feel confident in? Which areas might need more work?
