



## In The Kitchen with Kids

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You might ask yourself the following questions when thinking about cooking with your kids:

- What if they make a mess?
- Where do I begin?
- When can they start helping in the kitchen?
- Why should I cook with my kids?
- How do I get my kids to eat what I am serving?



Below are some simple tips to help parents start on the lifelong journey of making cooking a fun family activity. It is so important to talk to kids about the foods they eat, and taking the time to introduce cooking to your kids is a great way to start.

Parents need to remember a few simple rules before inviting their kids into the kitchen:

- Kids learn by example so both the adult and kids should wash their hands often.
- Be patient. If it is the first time your kids are invited into the kitchen, they are going to have a lot of questions. So, pick a time when you are not rushed.
- Kids should help with clean up

When you are in the kitchen, invite your kids to participate in food preparation. Here are some things that you can invite them to do.



### Tasks for two-to-three year olds:

- Stir with a spoon
- Shake ingredients in a plastic container with a tight lid
- Use a butter knife to spread cream cheese, jelly or peanut butter
- Mash boiled fruits and vegetables after they have cooled
- Practice using whisks, spatulas, strainers, wooden spoons, cookie cutters and rolling pins in an empty bowl
- Combine ingredients in a large bowl and mix

### Three-to-four year olds can safely do all of the above plus:

- Use plastic measuring cups and spoons marked to proper amounts
- Cut soft fruits and boiled vegetables with a plastic knife
- Combine wet and dry ingredients using forks, whisks or spoons
- Use non-electric food grinders, choppers, and juicers.

**Four-to-five year olds  
can safely do all of the above plus:**



- Use a heat source placed on a low surface (under adult supervision)
- Use a hand mixer (under adult supervision)
- Cut flat ingredients with a plastic serrated knife (under adult supervision)
- Be taught to use vegetable peelers and scrubbers
- Help set the table

You will soon understand how much kids love to cook and want to help in the kitchen. When they are young they pretend to cook in the kitchen, make mud pies in the sandbox etc. After all, what kid hasn't made bubble cakes in the bath tub?

Kids do cooking activities all the time. So giving them a chance to help you is important. Following are just a few reasons to bring them into the kitchen with you.

Learning to cook helps kids to learn about nutrition and healthy eating. They are growing up with fast food and junk food at their fingertips which is part of the reason why child obesity is on the rise. Teaching kids to cook will help instill skills to last them a lifetime.

Boost their self esteem. If your child needs a boost of self confidence, (and who doesn't!) cooking in the kitchen will do just that. They are accomplishing a task, learning something important and contributing to the family.

Create family time and bonding. Take time to cook with your kids and they will have memories that they, in turn, can pass on to their families. It may take a longer time to get the meal or snack done but the moments with your children will be priceless. (Just remember to have patience. Don't worry about flour on the floor or spilled milk.)



Kids will be more apt to eat what they make. Perhaps it is the enthusiasm of creating something themselves, but they will be more likely to eat whatever they had a hand in making.

It's a great way to learn life skills. This can be especially helpful when kids are on their own and won't have to rely on fast food and junk food to sustain them. Providing this opportunity to your child can be rewarding to both of you. Give it a try!

Information from--<http://nutrition.wsu.edu/ebet/brochures/YoungChildren.pdf>