



Extension Nutrition Programs

FSNEP/EFNEP

Combine Cooking Time with Family Time

If you're caught between finding time to prepare meals and spending quality time with your children, try cooking with them.

Children enjoy helping in the kitchen and often are more willing to eat foods they help prepare. Involve your child in planning and preparing some meals and snacks for the family.

When your child is helping you with food preparation, don't forget cleanliness. Wash hands using soap and warm running water before and after handling food or utensils to prepare food.

It is important that you give kitchen tasks appropriate for your child's age. Be patient as your child gains new skills at different ages.

Meal Preparation Activities for Young Children

Children have to be shown and taught how to do these activities. Each child has his or her own pace for learning, so give it time and the skills will come. Expect a few spills. It's a small price to pay for helping your children become comfortable around food.

2 year olds can:

- Bring ingredients from one place to another
- Wipe table tops
- Tear lettuce or greens
- Break cauliflower
- Snap green beans
- Play with utensils

3 year olds can do what 2 year olds do, plus:

- Wrap potatoes in foil for baking
- Knead and shape yeast dough
- Pour liquids
- Mix ingredients
- Shake liquids in covered container
- Spread soft spreads
- Place things in trash

4 year olds can do what 2 and 3 year olds do plus:

- Move hands to form round shapes
- Cut parsley or green onions with dull scissors
- Mash bananas using a fork
- Set the table

5 year olds can do what 2, 3 and 4 year olds do, plus:

- Measure ingredients
- Cut with blunt knife
- Use an egg beater



Chicken Fingers

- 1 pound boneless chicken (2 breasts)
- ¼ cup milk or buttermilk
- 1 cup crushed cereal or bread crumbs
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- Optional: ¼ teaspoon garlic or onion powder or Italian seasoning

Preheat oven to 350°F. Lightly grease cookie sheet. Crush cereal (or bread crumbs) in large plastic bag. If desired, add salt, pepper and other spices. Pour into large plate. Remove skin and bone from chicken breast. Cut each breast into strips. Pour milk into pie plate or shallow dish. Dip chicken strips in milk and then in crushed cereal (or bread crumbs). Place chicken on a lightly greased cookie sheet. Bake at 350°F. for 20 to 25 minutes. Serves four.

Dip ideas: ranch dressing, barbecue sauce, honey mustard, sweet and sour sauce or catsup.



Cooked Carrots

- 2 large carrots

Wash and peel carrots. Cut into rounds. Place ½ cup water in medium sauce pan. Bring to boil. Add carrots and turn heat to medium. Cook until carrots are tender approximately 15 minutes. Serves 4 to 6.

Skinny French Fries

- 4 medium potatoes, cut into strips*
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- Salt and paprika

Preheat oven to 450°F. Spread oil in 9" x 13" pan. Cut potatoes and pat dry on towels. Spread strips in one layer in pan. Distribute oil evenly over potatoes. Bake until golden brown and tender (30 to 40 minutes). Turn frequently. Season to taste. Makes 8 servings.

** Variation: Use 1 or 2 sweet potatoes to add color and variety!*

Chocolate Banana Pudding

- 1 large package instant chocolate pudding
- 3 cups milk
- 1 banana, sliced

Place pudding in large bowl with milk. Blend as directed on package.** Gently fold in banana slices. Spoon into dishes and chill. Makes 6 servings.

** Milk and pudding can be placed in a jar, tighten lid and shake until thick. Fold in banana slices.