



A Physical Activity Resource

COOKING WITH KIDS

Teaching children how to cook will help them develop healthy eating habits early in life. Other benefits of parents and kids cooking together include spending more time together and practicing to work as a team. Cooking with kids helps them learn math, science, and reading, as well as learn how to measure, count, and read new symbols. Cooking gives them something to be proud of and is a way for them to build self-confidence.

Cooking skills for kids

Children develop cooking skills at different rates. Introduce them to skills that match their ability level. Be patient as your child learns new skills.

Age 3-6

- Stir ingredients together.
- Wash fruits and vegetables.
- Tear lettuce to make a salad.
- Add ingredients to a bowl.

Ages 6-8

- Measure ingredients.
- Set the table.
- Beat ingredients with a wire whisk.
- Use a butter knife to cut soft foods like bananas.

Ages 8-10

- Use a can opener.
- Use a microwave oven.
- Prepare simple recipes.

Ages 10-12

- Use an oven with supervision.
- Use a sharp knife with supervision.
- Use grater to shred ingredients.

Cooking safely

- Before cooking, have children wash hands, protect clothing, and tie long hair back.
- Read through recipe and get out all ingredients and utensils.
- Use a cutting board, not the kitchen counter, for cutting and slicing.
- Clean up any spills right away with soap and washcloth.
- Use potholders to handle pots, pans, or anything hot from the stove or microwave.
- Turn handles of sauce pans on the stove towards the counter to prevent burns or spills.
- Assist children in using electric or gas appliances.
- Help children use knives. Teach them to always hold the knife with the blade away from themselves and never to play with knives.
- When finished, help children wash all dirty dishes and counter tops, refrigerate food, and return everything to its place.

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EXTENSION

Getting started

- First, break down tasks into steps.
- Show your child how to do the step then let them practice.
- Don't expect perfection.
- Be patient and allow extra time as they learn new skills.

www.foodhero.org



Kid-friendly snack ideas

BUILDING BLOCKS:

Cut **cheese and cooked meat** into cubes or small pieces. Add cucumbers, tomatoes, or other vegetables you have on hand. Have children connect cubes with **toothpicks** to build their own creation.

LOG BUILDING:

Dip **stick pretzels** into **peanut butter** and construct a house or piece of abstract art.

COLD MONKEYS:

Cut **bananas** into bite size pieces. Spear with toothpick and dip in **low-fat yogurt** or spread with **peanut butter**. Roll in whole grain cereal and freeze until hard.

WAFFLE TO GO:

Toast **frozen whole grain waffle** in toaster. Cut in half and spread half with **peanut butter** and **jelly**. Top with second half.

PEANUT BUTTER SWIRLS:

Spread **peanut butter** on a whole wheat tortilla. Place a **banana** in the middle. Roll up and slice.

BANANA "SPLIT":

Make a banana split with **banana**, **low-fat yogurt**, and **whole grain cereal**.



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