



Cooking with Kids!

Why Cook With Your Kids?

There are so many ways your children can benefit from cooking in the kitchen with you!

1. Kids are more likely to eat what they make. Cook a new food or recipe with your children and they will be more likely to taste it!
2. Kids are more likely to eat what their parents eat. If you cook and enjoy a new food or recipe with your children, they will be more likely to enjoy the taste of it, too!
3. Cooking with your kids is a fun and productive way to spend time together.
4. Cooking with your kids helps develop their language and vocabulary skills. It also teaches them how to count, measure, and follow directions.
5. Cooking with your kids provides opportunities to discuss how healthy foods create healthy bodies!



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Having Fun at the Grocery Store

Grocery shopping with your child can be a fun learning experience!

Your child can learn to make healthy choices as you shop together. You can give your child a short list of items to look for in the store.

Try to get your child talking about what he/she sees in the store. State the names of fruits, vegetables and other foods your child sees. Talk about their colors, shapes, what they taste like, and how to eat them.

This will get your child interested in these new foods and

excited to try them at home!

It will also increase your child's language capacity and his/her knowledge of colors, shapes, and sizes.

Back at home, your child can help put away the groceries you bought together.

“Sometime” Foods and “Anytime” Foods

“**Sometime**” foods are high in sugar, fat, and/or salt. This is why we should only eat them once in awhile! They are foods such as cookies, candy, chips and sodas.

“Sometimes” foods are a yellow light!



“**Anytime**” foods are what we can and should try to eat every day. They include fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, and lowfat yogurt. We should try to drink water or lowfat milk . We give “anytime” foods the green light!

When unpacking groceries with your child, have him/her try to identify the “anytime” foods and “sometime” foods you bought.

This is a great way to teach your child about healthy foods.



Important Food Safety Tips

Wash hands! Help your children use warm water and soap to scrub their hands well to prevent spreading germs. Have them practice avoiding touching their mouths and faces during the cooking process.

Prevent cross-contamination! Whenever you work with meat, poultry, or fish, make sure to WASH the cutting board or knife before cutting fruits and vegetables. Remember to always wash your hands and your counter top after working with meat, poultry, fish, or eggs.

Wash all fruits and vegetables before preparing your meal! Dirt or pesticides used to help grow the fruits and vegetables could still be on them.



Preparing Your Cooking and Working Stations

Have your child help you wipe down counter tops and tables where you will be preparing your food.

Gather stools or chairs that your child can stand or sit on while working along with you.

Your child can help you set out and organize the ingredients you will be using to cook your meal or snack.

Your child can also help you set out the cooking utensils and supplies you will be using.

Lastly, discuss with your child that kitchens can be dangerous places. Instruct your child not to reach for sharp knives, hot pans on the stove, or hot dishes right out of the oven. Safety first!

Cooking Activities for Two-year-olds:

A 2 year-old can:

- Help “read” the cookbook by turning the pages
- Learn to identify basic ingredients and hand them to you
- Wipe down the counter
- Help rinse fruits and vegetables in the sink
- Snap peas/beans and tear lettuce leaves
- Stir ingredients in mixing bowl



Cooking Activities for Three-year-olds

A 3 year-old can do everything a 2 year-old can do, PLUS:



- Add ingredients to mixing bowl
- Knead and shape dough
- Pour liquids with your assistance
- Name and count foods
- Mash potatoes
- Scoop dry ingredients

Talk with your children about the activities you are doing together. Encourage them to name foods and their colors!

Cooking Activities for Four and Five-year-olds

4 and 5 year-olds can do everything 2 and 3 year-olds can do, PLUS:

- Count and do simple measurements
- Crack open eggs
- Cut foods with a plastic or butter knife
- Roll out dough
- Use kitchen scissors with your help
- Set the table
- Press cookie cutters
- Clear table after meal
- Pour liquids into mixing bowl



Getting Your Child to Try New Foods

This process can be difficult! Make the new food or meal as exciting as possible. Finger foods, interesting shapes and fun colors often make a child more interested in trying a new food.

Your child may ask you to try it first. They are more likely to enjoy this new food if you do, too. Try it with a smile! Express that you are happy you tried it and encourage your child to do the same. Applaud your child's adventurous eating.

Don't give up! Many kids will not try a food until it has been offered several times. Keep trying! After a few attempts, a new food may seem more familiar. You can also pair a new food with a more familiar one. Try putting a new side dish with your child's favorite main dish!

Fun and Playful Snacks Your Child Will Like

Half an apple, some grapes, and a few chocolate chips make this Octopus a fun snack fun to eat!



Bears for breakfast! All you need is a few slices of whole grain bread, peanut butter, blue berries and a sliced banana.



Cucumbers, a sandwich on whole grain bread, pretzels and a cheese nose make for a balanced meal!



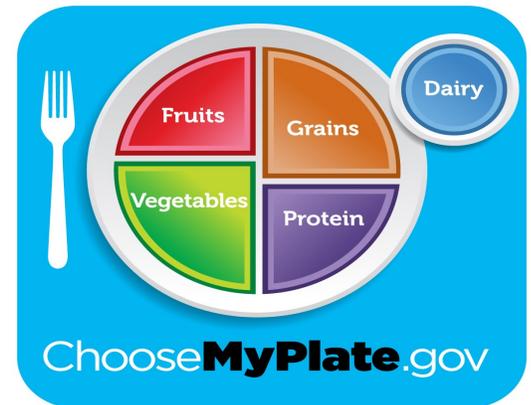
Make a snack or meal that includes fruits, vegetables, and other foods of the same color. Eat your way through the rainbow!



Resources for Buying and Cooking Healthy Foods

Check out these websites for recipes, more information on cooking with your child, and how to purchase healthy foods on a budget:

- <http://nkfm.org/kids-teens/early-childhood-elementary-education-programs>
- <http://cookingmatters.org>
- <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/preeschoolers.html>
- <http://snap.nal.usda.gov>
- <http://www.letsmove.gov/eat-healthy>
- <http://www.sesamestreet.org/parents/topicsandactivities>



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National Kidney Foundation of Michigan



The mission of the National Kidney Foundation of Michigan is to prevent kidney disease and improve quality of life for those living with it. The prevention of kidney disease (and its risk factors that include obesity, diabetes, and high blood pressure) can start in early childhood! Our Programs for EARly Childhood Health (PEACH) educate and empower families, childcare providers, teachers and children to make healthy choices and lifestyle changes through sound nutritional and physical education.

