

## Kids in the Kitchen: A Recipe for Learning

Young children can help in the kitchen. By helping in the kitchen, children learn lifelong skills. Listed here are some appropriate tasks for young children. Remember that children develop at their own rate. Plan tasks that your child is able to do.

**Always remember to wash hands with warm water and soap before and after handling food!**

### 2- and 3-year olds

Wash fruits and vegetables  
Clean table tops with a sponge  
Tear lettuce  
Put bread in the toaster  
Place things in the trash

### 3- and 4-year olds

Open packages  
Knead and shape dough  
Pat refrigerator biscuits into crust  
Pour milk, juice, and water into sturdy glasses  
Make sandwiches  
Toss salads with wooden spoon or clean hands  
Beat eggs with a fork or whisk in a large bowl  
Wrap foil around potatoes for baking  
Mash potatoes

Children learn best when they are busy and interested in what they are doing. When kids have the opportunity to help in the kitchen, they develop a sense of pride. They also learn:

- √ Reading skills – as recipes are read, followed, and prepared
- √ Math skills – through counting, measuring, and following step-by-step directions
- √ Science skills – as food changes during cooking, and they learn about hot and cold, dissolving, melting, and freezing
- √ Thinking skills – as they compare and make relationships in food preparation. For example, they learn about proportion when they double the ingredients in a recipe and get double the cookies!
- √ Social skills – as children work together, take turns, and solve problems. They also learn about other cultures as they prepare foods from various cultural groups.
- √ Health skills – as they see what goes into the food they eat and learn to make better decisions about nutrition

### 5-year olds

Measure and mix ingredients  
Make cakes and cookies using baking mixes  
Use a hand mixer with close supervision  
Grate cheese or carrots  
Set and clear the table  
Load the dishwasher



**Cook together. Eat together. Talk together. Make mealtime a family time.**