

# Cooking with Kids

**Why it matters** - a growing body of research says kids benefit from cooking with their caregivers in the following ways:

- Better eating habits
- Increased willingness to try new foods
- Stronger cognitive and executive functioning skills
- Greater confidence and independence
- Builds family bonding and teamwork
- Long-term health behaviors

## Ground Rules:

1. Wash your hands before you start.
2. Sneeze or cough into your elbow.
3. Wash your hands again, if you touch your face or body.
4. Don't touch items that are hot or sharp (caregiver point these things out at the start).
5. Ask first and keep your listening ears on.

## Tools of the trade:

- Kitchen helper is the single most important item to have. It prevents falls and accidents from happening.
- Kids cooking kit - wavy cutter, nylon knife, peeler, cookie cutters, cut glove, etc.



Click image links to find on

**amazon**

## Tips for Success:

### Two most important things:

1. Review the RULES before you start each time!
2. STOP for the day when it's no longer fun.

### Get organized:

- Clear off enough counter space to prevent them from grabbing everything.
- Go step by step - pull out all the ingredients and tools as you review the recipe or plan.
- Honor **your** skill level - cooking with a child is another level of multi-tasking. It's okay to keep things really simple because getting overwhelmed can happen easily. Having fun around food is all that really matters.

### Find a good recipe!

Here are my favorite recipe spots:

- Yummy Toddler Food
- Chop Chop Family Substack
- Budget Bytes

### Start small:

- Give them simple tasks: stirring, mashing, separating, etc.
- Have them watch you cook as you narrate what you're doing.
- "Help" with the dishes - fill bins of soapy water and clean water.
- Allow them to pretend cook long side you with extra spices, bowls, and spatulas.
- Allow them to chop extra produce with a nylon safety knife.

### Expectations:

Don't expect them to eat what you make. You can ask that they try it alongside you but don't push them too hard. Focus on the 5 senses as a way to explore new foods. Kids are cautious eaters and pressuring them to eat things will likely have negative consequences.

Check out **Kid Food Explorers** for resources on trying new foods.

