



Kids in the Kitchen

Children love to help cook. It's a great way for them to learn about food, and for you to teach math, science, and social skills. When children help prepare food, they will be more likely to want to try it. Plan ways the children can help you according to the age of the child.

Two-year-olds can help with activities that use big muscles and arm movements, such as:

- Scrubbing fruits and vegetables
- Wiping tables
- Dipping vegetables and fruits
- Tearing lettuce
- Breaking bread for stuffing
- Snapping fresh beans

Three-year-olds can help with activities that use medium-size muscles and hand control, such as:

- Pouring liquids into a batter
- Mixing muffin batter
- Shaking a drink or pudding mix
- Spreading peanut butter on bread
- Cracking hard-cooked eggs
- Kneading bread dough

Four-year-olds can help with activities that use small muscles and finger control, such as:

- Peeling an orange or hard-cooked egg
- Rolling bananas in cereal for a snack
- Juicing oranges, lemons, and limes

- Cracking large nuts and removing the shells
- Mashing soft fruits and vegetables

Five-year-olds can help with activities that use fine muscle and finger control, such as:

- Measuring dry and liquid ingredients
- Grinding cooked meat for meat spread
- Grating carrots, apples, or cheese
- Beating eggs with an egg beater

Important Points to Remember:

- Good cooks of all ages always wash their hands before cooking.
- Expect spills and messes.
- Children have short attention spans. Give them quick, simple jobs.
- Children get excited and forget. Repeat directions as often as needed.
- Young cooks need constant supervision.
- Give children jobs to help with cleanup.



Try some of the recipes (on the back) for young helping hands.

WALDORF SALAD

- 1 stalk celery
- 1 cup seedless grapes, cut in half
- 1 apple
- 1 banana
- 1 orange
- 1 cup lemon low-fat yogurt

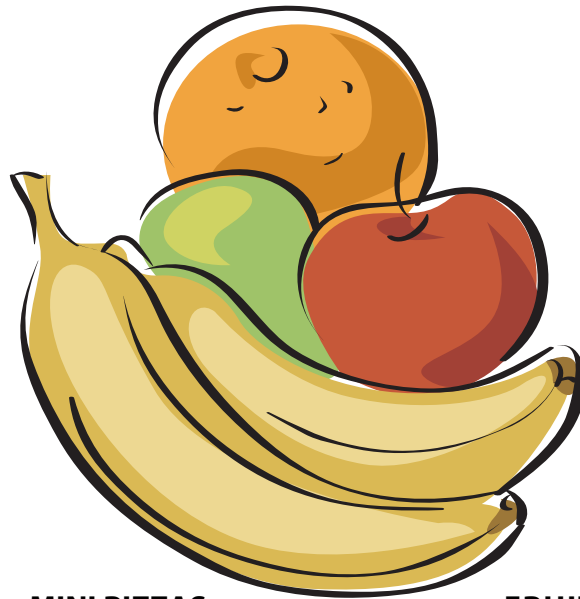
■ All cooks should wash their hands. Have the children wash the celery, apple, and grapes. Children can peel the banana and orange. Older children could use plastic knives and cutting boards to cut the celery and fruit into chunks. Have children place the fruit and celery in a large bowl, then add the yogurt and mix well.

Caution: *Young children can easily choke on nuts, seeds, popcorn, raw fruits and vegetables, peanut butter, meat sticks, and hot dogs. Do not give these foods to infants. Closely watch young children when they eat these foods.*

TUNA PITAS

- 1 (6-oz.) can tuna, drained
- 1 Tbsp. grated apple
- 1 Tbsp. raisins
- 2 Tbsp. low-fat mayonnaise
- 1 Tbsp. grated carrot
- 4 small pita pockets

■ All cooks should wash their hands. An adult should open the can of tuna and drain it. The children can wash the apple and carrots. Older children can do the grating. Let children measure and mix the tuna, apple, raisins, mayonnaise, and carrot in a bowl. Slice an end off each pita. Hold the pita open so each child can place some of the tuna mixture into the pita pocket.



MINI PIZZAS

- English muffins, sliced in half (1/2 per child)
- Pizza sauce
- Mozzarella cheese
- Favorite pizza toppings, such as green pepper, onions, olives, mushrooms, etc.

■ All cooks should wash their hands. The children can help prepare the pizza toppings (washing vegetables, older children can grate cheese, use a plastic knife and cutting board to cut green pepper, slice olives and mushrooms). Have the children put the toppings in bowls.

■ Split the English muffins and give one half to each child. Pass around the bowls for each child to spread pizza sauce on his muffin, then add the toppings he chooses.

■ Each child can put his mini pizza on a cookie sheet. An adult should put the pizzas in the oven to bake at 400° F for 5–10 minutes or until the cheese bubbles. Let pizzas cool a few minutes before you give them to the children to eat.

FRUIT DIP

- Fresh or canned fruit, such as apples, oranges, melon balls, strawberries, bananas, pineapple chunks, peaches, pears, etc.

- 1 (8-oz.) carton plain low-fat yogurt
- 2 Tbsp. orange juice concentrate
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla
- Sprinkle of cinnamon

■ All cooks should wash their hands. Have the children help prepare the fruit by washing fresh fruit, peeling bananas and oranges. Older children can use plastic knives and cutting boards to cut soft fruits, such as bananas, peaches, and pears, into chunks.

■ The children can measure and place the yogurt, orange juice concentrate, and vanilla in a bowl. Mix well. Spoon some dip into a small bowl for each child. Let children sprinkle cinnamon on their dip if desired. Give each child a small plate to hold her fruit choices. Plastic forks or pretzel sticks work well for spearing fruits and dipping.



Pennsylvania Pathways

Professional Development
for Child Caregivers

PENNSYLVANIA



Cooperative Extension
College of Agricultural Sciences

Sources: aboutproduce.com; gingerich.com

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