

Top Tips For Cooking With Young Children

1. Plan your cooking activity so you are not in a rush – this will increase the enjoyment level for everyone.
2. Shop for all the ingredients and have everything (ingredients and tools) out ready (especially if this is the first time you have cooked with children). Then when you have done it several times you can take the children with you to help with the shopping.
3. Use a table that is an appropriate height, such as a child's painting table etc. Don't allow children to stand on a chair to help you. Children need to be standing.
4. Teach children the dangers of the kitchen so that they are not afraid to enjoy cooking. However, you should still be in charge of the oven and all things sharp.
5. Involve the children with the choice of recipe.
6. Aprons, clean hands and having hair tied back (if appropriate) are a must!
7. Make a dish that you can share with the rest of the family or can be used as part of the child's next meal.
8. If the children can read let them work at their own pace and only help when they ask for help. If they can't read, read the instruction to them and let them do as much as they can themselves, they will learn that following instructions will help them achieve, let them get creative. Don't expect culinary perfection - let them have fun with the recipe – you never know they may think of a better way to do it!
9. If you are cooking with more than one child, try to keep the recipes separate so they get their own cooking back at the end. This gives them a great sense of achievement.
10. Encourage children to taste what they have made. And encourage others to try the food too as if they see someone else enjoying their recipe it will encourage them to try again another time. If they don't want to or don't like it, don't be put off as most children love to cook and the less fuss we make about not trying things the more likely the children are to try new foods!
11. Even if you have a dishwasher, let the children wash up some of the tools they have used to help develop their skills in washing and drying.
12. Above all have fun, and don't worry about the mess – teaching your children to clear up with you is just as important as the cooking – and of course the eating!!

Prepared by Sally Brown and Kate Morris

August 09

