



kids therapy made simple

Cooking with Kids

The benefits, fun, and mess of cooking with kids

Cooking with your kids can be a lot of fun. And by fun, I of course, mean messy. But there are so many benefits that your children can gain from learning to cook with you.

From a young toddler helping you mix to a pre-teen helping you actually plan and implement a recipe, you have a unique opportunity to teach a variety of skills and life lessons to your children each time you allow them to join you in cooking.

Here we discuss the various skills that your child can learn from cooking with you, as well as how children of different



Skills Gained Participating in Cooking

Eye-Hand Coordination

- pouring liquid into a bowl
- pouring dry ingredients into a mixing bowl

Bilateral Coordination

- mixing ingredients in a bowl (stabilize bowl with one hand, mix with the other)

Hand Strengthening

- sprinkling cheese onto food (strengthens fingers)
- mixing ingredients together by hand, squeezing out excess liquid

Spatial Perception

- laying out items onto pan - maximizing your space so that you don't have to use too many pans

Planning Skills

- following a recipe - pulling out ingredients you need
- learning to 'clean as you go' and put away items that you no longer need

Safety Skills

- give frequent reminders about what is OK to touch and which items are for adults only
- establish kitchen rules

Cooking Activities by Age



18 months - 3 years	3 year - 5 years	5 years - 7 years	7 years - 12 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • washing vegetables • stirring ingredients • mashing with hands or masher • spooning ingredients into measuring cups • helping remove items from the refrigerator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cutting soft ingredients (like butter) • mixing ingredients • tearing ingredients such as herbs or lettuce • kneading • spreading • making a sandwich • cracking an egg 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cutting herbs with scissors • cutting using a small child-safe knife • grating • measuring and folding • greasing or lining trays/pans • setting the table 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • planning the meal • following a simple recipe • using a peeler • whisking ingredients • opening cans • finding ingredients for the recipe