



Cooking with Children

Cooking with children can be both fun and exhausting. Spending time together in the kitchen can be meaningful. Cooking with children has many benefits. Through cooking, children learn about math, reading, following directions, cultures, language, basic chemistry, and nutrition. Not to mention, a life skill, how to cook! Cooking is an activity that stimulates all five senses, infants and children learn through their senses.

How do you go about cooking with children? Some strategies include: plan, allow plenty of time, use children-friendly recipes, have patience, have a sense of adventure, and always practice handwashing before beginning to cook. Keep in mind that it's the whole process of cooking, making memories, and having fun, not just the end product. Here are some simple cooking activities you and your child may want to try:

Edible Face Cakes:

- Ingredients to prepare in advance:
 - » Large rice cake (at least one per child)
 - » Peanut butter put in a small container (at least one container per child)
 - » Table knife for spreading (one per child)
 - » A variety of toppings such as banana, strawberry, apple, or kiwi slices, cereals (any round or square cereal will work), raisins, cran raisins, chocolate chips, chocolate candies, shredded cheese, shredded carrots, or coconut
- Have your child spread the peanut butter on the rice cake. Then use whatever toppings your child wants to create the face. Bon appétit.



Personal Pizzas:

- Give your child a half of English muffin or bagel and about a 1/8 cup of pizza sauce. Allow your child to spread the pizza sauce over the muffin. Let your child sprinkle cheese and put desired toppings on their pizza. Bake in a 425-degree oven for about 8 minutes or until cheese is melted.



S'more in a Bag:

- What You Need:
 - » Three bowls
 - » Two measuring cups—1 cup, 1/4 cup
 - » One tablespoon
 - » A honey graham cereal
 - » Mini marshmallows
 - » Chocolate chips
 - » Small plastic sealable bags
- What To Do: Put 1 cup of cereal into 1 bowl, put 1/4 cup mini marshmallows into another bowl, and put a tablespoon of chocolate chips into another bowl. Have your child dip 1 scoop of each ingredient into a plastic sealable bag. This is a great snack to make and share with others.

References: RLargeman-Roth, Frances, RDN. *11 Easy Ways to Get Kids Cooking*. Parents. <https://www.parents.com/recipes/scoop-on-food/easy-ways-to-get-kids-cooking/>; Lindquist, Shannon. (2013, January 8). *Cooking with Kids*. Michigan State University Extension. https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/cooking_with_kids; Olivero, Simone. (2020, March 10). *5 DIY dinners kids can help make*. Today's Parent. <https://www.todayparent.com/recipes/diy-dinners-kids-can-help-make/>; General Mills. *S'mores Chocolate Granola Snack Mix*. <https://www.generalmills.com/recipes/smares-chocolate-granola-snack-mix/ad120ffa-9faa-4ad1-ad8b-9898564e008d>