

KIDS IN THE KITCHEN

Course written by Sarah Delcourt



Culinary skills have become scarce among young Americans and are not commonplace in many homes across the country. Possible contributing factors to this modern trend include a societal shift towards non-conventional family structures, employed women, busy schedules, and limited resources. Most family meals take place either outside the home in restaurants and fast-food establishments or are prepared at home and consist of processed, pre-packaged food items that are conveniently pre-made and easy to serve. Many parents lack “the time, resources, skills or inclination to cook with their children”. As a result, parents might not be able or willing to pass on cooking skills to their children who will then be at risk of growing into adults who lack cooking skills. Children who lack cooking skills are at greater risk for making poor dietary choices. So what can be done outside the home to reverse this modern trend among our children and future adults? One option is for caregivers to utilize their unique position to provide children with opportunities to develop their cooking skills and competence in the kitchen.

Benefits of Cooking with Kids

When children are included in meal preparation and exposed to cooking and various methods used to prepare food, their self-efficacy and self-reliance in the kitchen are likely to increase. Self-efficacy can be defined as a person’s belief in their own ability to accomplish a behavior or develop a competency, such as being able to plan, prepare, and cook a meal. Dietary behavior and quality are influenced by the level of a person’s cooking skills and proficiency. As children gain confidence in their cooking abilities and become familiar with various food preparation methods, they are much more likely to have a wider food selection and incorporate more fruits, vegetables and whole grains into their diet. Being involved in the food preparation process is likely to heighten children’s appreciation for food while establishing healthful habits and useful skills for life. Furthermore, preparing food with children encourages cooperation and provides opportunity for creative thinking. Children are also likely to be proud of their cooking accomplishments and eager to eat and share the food they prepared with others.

Cooking is Fun!

Including children in the preparation of snacks and meals may seem like a daunting task at first, especially when the children are very young. However, there are numerous ways to make the experience in the kitchen fun and rewarding for everyone involved.



- Encourage children to help pick out recipes or create menus.
- Allow room for creativity and experimentation when following recipes.
- Enable children to discover new foods by choosing cultural and seasonal recipes.
- Make taste-testing new foods a regular and exciting event.



Create a Kid-Friendly Environment

Before the onset of an exciting cooking adventure with children, be sure to create a kid-friendly environment in the kitchen. The following tips on cooking with children are made with children's needs and the supervisor's sanity in mind.

- ☑ **Assign age-appropriate tasks.** See page 3 of this correspondence course for a detailed list of tasks appropriate for ages 3 and up.
- ☑ **Provide age and skill-appropriate cooking tools and equipment.** Examples of kid-friendly kitchen tools, including cut 'n' roll slicers, vegetable choppers, non-slip mixing bowls, egg slicers, and plastic juicers, can be found at a variety of online stores such as For Small Hands: Resources for Families.
- ☑ **Create work stations** that provide children with adequate work space that is away from the heat and tables and chairs that are at an appropriate height for kids to work safely on their cooking tasks.
- ☑ **Allow for plenty of time** when preparing food with children.
- ☑ **Involve children in keeping the kitchen clean** before, during, and after cooking.
- ☑ **Praise children!** By doing so you will instill a sense of pride and accomplishment in their contribution with food preparation.
- ☑ **Assign non-cooking tasks** such as rinsing fruits and vegetables, setting and clearing the dining table, and washing dishes, to the children who do not want to cook. Any involvement in the kitchen and with food preparation is helpful and important.

With the right tools, space, and instructions, children will be able to successfully contribute to the food preparation process, thereby instilling confidence in their cooking abilities and culinary competence.

For example...

- Go over simple recipes and gather all necessary ingredients
- Show children different cooking tools and equipment and demonstrate how to use them.
- Convey the importance of following recipes and measuring ingredients
- Demonstrate different cooking techniques, like cracking and whisking eggs



Safety Precautions

When children are helping to prepare and cook food a parent or guardian should always be present. Questions about recipes and cooking tools, assistance with opening containers, and occasional accidents are bound to occur and a supervisory figure in the kitchen can help as needed. Preventing foodborne illness is of utmost importance, especially when serving food to at-risk populations, such as children. Before cooking with children, be sure to consult the guide provided by Wildwood Resources called, *Practicing Universal Precautions in The Child Care Setting*, for safety tips concerning food preparation. From the countertops and cookware to the refrigerator and microwave, proper food handling is needed throughout the kitchen. The basics for preventing foodborne illness include the following:

- Wash hands frequently and properly using warm running water and soap – scrub hands, fingernails and wrists for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid coughing and sneezing in the cooking area. Teach children how to sneeze and cough properly using a clean tissue, followed by immediate hand washing.
- Cook food to the proper temperature to kill bacteria. Ensure proper temperatures have been reached by using a food thermometer.
- Use clean and disinfected cooking tools and equipment.
- Use separate knives and cutting boards when preparing meat, poultry, and vegetables.



- Work at clean food preparation stations.
- Keep raw meats separate from ready-to-eat foods.
- Keep cold foods cold and hot foods hot. Prevent foods from entering the bacteria-growing danger zone. (40-140°F).

*See *Home Food Safety* activity sheets and inserts on foodborne illness prevention

Look Who's Cooking!

Instill enthusiasm for food and cooking in children by involving them in the food preparation process. Just like any school subject, children's ability to learn new things and undertake harder tasks increases with age and experience. Assigning age-appropriate tasks in the kitchen will help ensure children's success with food preparation and safety for everyone involved. The following are suggestions for age-appropriate tasks when in the kitchen:



- 3-6 years old: stir mixtures (like instant pudding), snap green beans, rinse vegetables, press cookie cutters into dough, pour liquids into bowls
- 7-8 years old: shuck corn, mix and shake ingredients, beat eggs, measure dry ingredients
- 9-10 years old: knead bread dough, stir hot mixtures, blend batters, broil foods in toaster oven, cut foods with a table knife
- 10+ years old: slice or chop fruits and vegetables, boil potatoes, microwave foods (see Microwave Cooking Tips insert), bake foods in the oven, simmer ingredients on the stove top

Get Inspired!



Taste-testing different foods can be fun and exciting for children and adults alike! Hosting taste-testing events on a regular basis gives children something to look forward to and requires minimal planning. Older children may want to get more involved by preparing a dish of choice to try with others. Incorporating themes into the taste-testing experience can be fun, too! For example, assigning color or texture themes to your taste-testing party can bring an added touch of excitement to your foodie event and might help to get children and adults to try an assortment of foods that they might otherwise not have tried. Hosting a breakfast, lunch or dinner party where children prepare and serve a self-made meal for parents or guardians is another great way to showcase what the children have learned and demonstrates how they can help in the kitchen at home.



Using kid-friendly recipes is another great way to inspire children to cook. Look for simple ingredients, age-appropriate cooking methods and minimal required cooking time when picking out recipes. Allowing children to choose recipes can increase their interest in cooking and desire to eat the resulting dish. Try featuring a recipe selected and prepared by a different child each day or week and watch their enthusiasm for cooking and pride in their accomplishments grow!



*See *Kid Friendly Recipe* insert!



The following is a list of cooking books designed with children in mind. All it takes is one recipe or ingredient to get the imagination and creative juices flowing!

- 👍 ***The Cookbook for Kids (Williams-Sonoma): Great Recipes for Kids Who Love to Cook***, by Lisa Atwood. Available at Amazon.com
- 👍 ***Taste of Home Kid-Approved Cookbook: 300+ Family Tested Fun Foods***, by A Taste of Home/Reader's Digest Book. Available at Amazon.com
- 👍 ***The Everything Kids' Cookbook: From mac'n cheese to double chocolate chip cookies – 90 recipes to have some finger-lickin' fun (The Everything® Kids Series)***, by Sandra K. Nissenberg. Available at Amazon.com
- 👍 ***Kids' Fun and Healthy Cookbook***, by Nicola Graimes. Available at Amazon.com

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Frechman, R. (2014). Food safety starts at home. *Kids Eat Right*. Retrieved from: <http://www.eatright.org/kids/article.aspx?id=6442463673>

Home Food Safety (2014). *Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*. Retrieved from: <http://homefoodsafety.org/>

Is It Done Yet?

Food Thermometer Worksheet

When you cook food, make sure it is cooked to a safe temperature to kill bacteria that can make you sick.



Here are the correct cooking temperatures for a few types of food:

- ✓ Hamburgers should be cooked to **160°F**
- ✓ Chicken should be cooked to **165°F**
- ✓ Heat leftovers to **165°F**
- ✓ Pork should be cooked to **145°F**
- ✓ Well-done beef should be cooked to **170°F**
- ✓ Fish should be cooked to **145°F**

ACTIVITY:

Fill in the blanks with the food that matches the correct cooking temperatures on the thermometers. (Not all of the foods listed will be used.)

Hamburger

Chicken

Leftovers

Pork

Well-done Beef

Fish



1. _____
2. _____



1. _____
2. _____

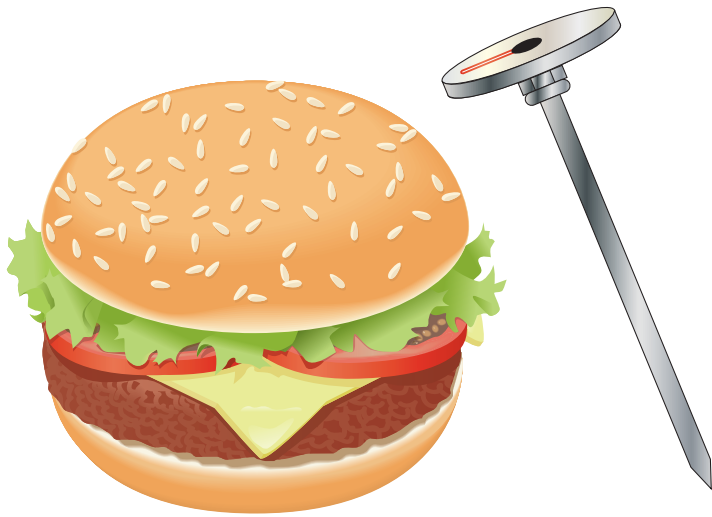


Using a Food Thermometer

Does that burger look done?

One out of every four hamburgers turns brown before it's been cooked to a safe minimum internal temperature. So don't rely upon color or texture alone to determine if meat, poultry or egg dishes are safe to eat.

A food thermometer is the only way to determine if foods are fully cooked.



- ✓ When you think your food is cooked, place the food thermometer in the thickest part of the food, making sure the tip does not touch bone, fat or gristle.
- ✓ Wait the amount of time recommended for your type of thermometer. See manufacturer's instructions.
- ✓ Compare your thermometer temperature to the safe internal temperatures listed on the free [Is My Food Safe? app](#) or the [Safe Grilling Guide](#) on [HomeFoodSafety.org](#).
- ✓ Some foods, including fresh beef, veal, lamb, pork and raw ham, need three minutes of rest time after cooking to make sure harmful germs are destroyed.
- ✓ Clean your food thermometer with hot, soapy water after each use.

For more tips, visit www.HomeFoodSafety.org and download the free [Is My Food Safe? app](#).



Microwave Cooking Keep Kids Safe



Home Food Safety™

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The microwave oven is an indispensable appliance in today's kitchen. Microwave ovens are found in 90 percent of American households. It's quick, clean and has no open flame or hot coils to burn little fingers. However, caution must be used as 5 percent of all microwave oven-related injuries in 2009 were scald burns occurring in children under 5 years of age*. That's why parents need to decide when a child is old enough to use the microwave oven.

A frequent rule of thumb is that a child can use a microwave when he or she is old enough to read and understand food preparation instructions and the microwave oven keypad. Parents must set rules and teach children the guidelines for safe microwave use to prevent accidents.

Microwave Safety Tips for Parents

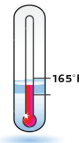


- ✓ Set a good example for your children by practicing good microwave safety habits yourself. Make sure you carefully read the safety section of your microwave owner's manual.
- ✓ Never remove hot foods from the microwave when small children are underfoot.
- ✓ Don't leave the kitchen while you are cooking.
- ✓ If you want to ensure that your child will not use the microwave oven when you're not around, unplug it or store it out of reach.



* www.nfpa.org Home Fires Involving Cooking Equipment, National Fire Protection Agency, Fire Analysis and Research, 11/27/09

- ✓ Explain that microwave ovens are not toys.
- ✓ Discuss safety rules and operating instructions.
- ✓ Supervise your child until you are confident he or she can perform all the steps and can react appropriately to situations like food boiling over or spills.
- ✓ Instruct youngsters to never put anything into a microwave oven without an adult's permission.
- ✓ When you do allow your child to use the microwave, make sure the oven is placed low enough to be used easily.



- ✓ Show children how to open hot containers. Foods prepared in the microwave contain steam. Open lids so that the steam escapes away from the face.
- ✓ Teach your child how to stir and mix the heated food before tasting. Foods heat unevenly and stirring helps distribute the heat throughout the foods and avoids hot spots.
- ✓ If children are old enough to reheat foods, teach them to use a food thermometer to check for safety. Heat the food to 165°F.
- ✓ Parents know their children best and should decide when a child can use the microwave safely based on the guidelines above.

The wattage of your microwave oven influences cooking times. The higher the wattage of a microwave oven, the faster food will cook. The output wattage of your microwave oven may be found in the instruction manual of your unit, on a sticker or label inside the oven door, or by checking for your brand's www.microwavetips.com



Microwave Cooking Keep Kids Safe



Safety Overview

In order to use a microwave safely, it is important to understand that foods react differently when heated in a microwave oven than when heated in a conventional oven.

Here are some things you should know and share with your children as you use the microwave oven:

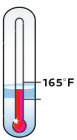
- ✓ Use microwave-safe cookware; keep these containers within your child's reach.
- ✓ Read and follow microwave instructions on the package. Frequently, the cooking instructions will include:



- ✓ **Stir step:** Stirring food in the middle of cooking eliminates possible cold spots and promotes even cooking.



- ✓ **Stand step:** Allowing food to “rest” or “stand” completes the cooking process. During the “rest time,” the temperature of the food item can rise several degrees.



- ✓ **Take the temperature:** The temperature should measure at least 165°F. Signs such as steam and bubbling liquids are indications that the temperature may be getting close to 165°F.



- ✓ Use potholders to remove foods from the microwave oven. Keep potholders near the microwave.

Kids in the Kitchen

Kids love feeling helpful! So involve them in kitchen activities that they can handle safely. The first step in working in the kitchen is to wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water.

Kids can:



- ✓ Clean vegetables with vegetable scrub brushes.



- ✓ Wrap foil around food.
- ✓ Measure out dry ingredients with measuring cups and spoons.



- ✓ Fold napkins.
- ✓ Set the table and clear the table.
- ✓ Use the microwave oven if supervised by an adult.

A final note: Don't forget to let grandparents, babysitters and other caregivers know about your in-home safety rules, including tips on using the microwave oven.





Baked Sweet Potato Wedges

Recipe by Sarah Delcourt

PREP : 10 mins

COOK: 20-25 mins

TOTAL: 30-35 mins



Try sweet potato wedges as a savory side dish or satisfying snack. They are great with saucy condiments or by themselves!

Ingredients:

3 large sweet potatoes, cut into thin wedges

1 tsp. salt (optional)

1 tsp. pepper

3 tbsp. olive oil

1 tbsp. dried thyme (optional)

Instructions:

1. Combine all the ingredients in a bowl and combine thoroughly.
2. Place the seasoned sweet potato wedges on a baking sheet, spread them out in a single layer.
3. Set them in a preheated oven of 350° F for 20-25 minutes or until they are crispy

Crediting information: Makes 6 servings. Each serving is creditable for 1 vegetable requirement during breakfast, snack, or dinner for 3-5 year old children.

WORD SEARCH



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- ✓ CLEAN
- ✓ COOK
- ✓ DEFROST
- ✓ FREEZE
- ✓ MICROWAVE
- ✓ REFRIGERATE
- ✓ SEPARATE
- ✓ SOAP
- ✓ THERMOMETER
- ✓ WASH
- ✓ WATER

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Hand Washing Maze



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START

It's dinner time! Mike and Lily have been playing outside and are hungry. Help them get to dinner by washing their hands first!

Step #1

Wet your hands with warm water, then add soap.

Step #2

Rub your hands together for 20 seconds, the length of two choruses of the Happy Birthday song!

Step #3

Rinse your hands clean with warm water.

Step #4

Dry with a clean towel. Now you're ready to eat!

FINISH





When you have completed this course,
click [HERE](#) to take the test.

(or you can type this address into your browser: <http://tinyurl.com/KIKonline2014>)

Be sure to read each field carefully to ensure that
you receive an accurate certificate.

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