Tips for Cooking with Kids

Learning to cook is an important skill that children will carry with them for life.
Cooking is a fun activity the whole family can do together.

Raising healthy eaters means getting kids involved in the kitchen. Involving kids in the cooking process not only helps expose them to new foods, but they are more likely to try something that they have helped create.

Age	Activities *Note that age groups can complete all activities in the previous category.* *Adult supervision is always recommended when youth are cooking.*	
Toddler	• Matching silverware. • Tasting foods. • Picking leaves off stems of herbs and lettuces if needed.	• Stirring ingredients together: place a cookie sheet under the bowl to catch drips and spills. • Shaking salad dressing. • Picking out produce at store.
4 to 6 years	• Gathering ingredients. • Using measuring cups and spoons. • Rinsing and drying produce. • Mixing ingredients together. • Tearing apart lettuce leaves. • Using kitchen scissors to cut produce, or give kids their own child's scissors. • Cracking an egg.	• Squeezing a lemon. • Pressing buttons on kitchen tools. • Setting a timer. • Greasing a pan. • Adding toppings/garnishes. • Use a plastic or child-safe knife for softer produce. • Snapping asparagus.
7 to 10 years	• Reading the recipe. • Pouring liquids. • Peeling produce. • Opening cans with a can opener. • Using a food thermometer.	• Assembling ingredients for casserole. • Draining canned vegetables. • Rinsing dishes. • Loading dishwasher.
10 to 12 years	• Grating cheese. • Slicing and chopping vegetables. • Finding a recipe on their own. • Filling a pot with water.	• Boiling water. • Operating simple machinery (microwave, blender, toaster oven, etc.)
13 and up	• Following a basic recipe, step by step. • Operating most types of kitchen equipment.	• Assembling a grocery list. • Making simple dishes such as grilled cheese, omelets, cooking pasta, etc.

5 Tips for Picky Eaters:

1. Try preparing healthy food in different ways. There are many ways fruits and vegetables taste great. Have the child try different fruits and veggies raw, steamed, sautéed, roasted, pureed, and with dips and sauces.
2. Be patient. It can take up to 15 exposures before a child decides to try a new food. You are doing great.
3. Remove distractions at meal time. Television, tablets, phones, and toys are all distractions. It may be difficult for kids to focus on their food/trying new foods if there are distractions at the table.
4. Have kids help in the kitchen. Whether they are helping choose produce at the grocery store, washing, or preparing, these are all opportunities to introduce children to cooking.
5. Be a role model. Trying new foods as a family positions parents as role models for the child. As parents eat more fruits and vegetables, these foods become more normal for kids.

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224 Sunnybrook Rd. Raleigh, NC 27610
866-402-4799 | info@poehealth.org | www.poehealth.org
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