



THE ART OF COOKING WITH KIDS

Age Chart for Cooking with Kids

Although your children will be excited to get cooking with you in the kitchen, they might not be able to perform certain culinary tasks required to get the job done right. To ensure that you don't put a damper on the fun, check out the following chart for a helpful guide to age-appropriate cooking tasks.

AGE	ABOUT THIS AGE	WHAT THEY CAN DO
4-7	Children in this age range tend to have shorter attention spans. Rather than tackling tasks all on their own, it is best to let them "help" you, which gives them a sense of accomplishment. They should not be using knives or handling anything hot. Making simple recipes with raw ingredients is ideal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow your child to help with activities, like stirring and mixing ingredients, spreading condiments (using a spatula), greasing pans or sprinkling cheese or shredded vegetables. • Teach your child how to measure ingredients – using measuring spoons and cups is easy and fun. • Prepare recipes that inspire creativity, like Bagel Smiles or Veggie Critter Snacks. • Teach your child about kitchen safety: knives are sharp, stoves and pots can be hot, hands should be washed before handling food, appliances should be kept away from water.
7-10	Children in this age range are reading and learning math and systems of measurement. They are also more dexterous and will have been handling all sorts of tools (art supplies, pencils, etc.) outside of the kitchen. They can use most non-sharp kitchen tools, and handle some appliances with parental supervision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow your child to use the veggie peeler. You can team up with your child and slice the vegetables while he or she peels. • Read the recipes with your child and ask them to pick out and help measure the ingredients. • Under your supervision, allow your child to use the microwave to heat recipes, an electric mixer to blend ingredients and a butter knife to cut soft foods. • Ask your child to set the table. They can help serve the meal and pour drinks. • It is not too early to learn about meal planning. Teach your child to read nutrition labels.
10-13	Tweens are at the perfect age to tackle most kitchen activities with gusto. They can handle most kitchen tools and appliances with limited supervision and can use the stove and oven. They should be encouraged to try new and more complex recipes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach your child about kitchen appliance and cooking safety. They should be familiar and comfortable with these tools and aware of possible dangers. • Get your child a cookbook they will enjoy and make it theirs. They can use it to select recipes they would like to prepare for the family. • Encourage your child to make a dish from start to finish. They can read the recipe, measure, cut and prepare the ingredients and then cook it. • For a little mental exercise, allow your child how to double or halve recipes for different quantities.
13-18	Once your kids are teenagers, while you can still enjoy cooking with them they can also prepare meals almost entirely on their own. For the older teenager, it is also a good way to prepare them to leave home.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage your teenager to embrace meal preparation and choose healthy options, measuring and tracking nutrition content. • Ask your teenager to build grocery lists, and for older teens, empower them by asking them to go to the store on their own to prepare family meals. • Let them experiment with their own creations. If they've been cooking since a young age, they will have a feel for the kitchen. This can lead to the development of their own recipes.