



Maximize Your Mealtimes!

Simple Ways to Involve Your Child in the Kitchen

Presented by Action for Children's Triple P and Child Care Information and Referral Teams



DID YOU KNOW?

Cooking together turns everyday routines into hands-on learning! Children practice measuring, counting, and problem-solving while building fine motor skills, confidence, and healthy habits. Check out these strategies by age to get the whole family involved in your next meal!

Ages 0-2

- Include your little one by seating them near the family during meals and talking with them. As they begin eating solids, encourage them to try new foods, use a spoon, or pick up small bites. Simple tools or toys to scoop and stack can help build fine motor skills while keeping them engaged.

Ages 6-10

- Invite children to help in the kitchen by setting the table, making a salad, or unloading the dishwasher. Encourage new skills with supervision, like flipping pancakes or frying an egg. Let them help plan meals, make the grocery list, or check off items at the store.

Ages 3-5

- Create a daily mealtime routine—wash hands, sit together, and help clean up. Turn off screens and encourage family conversation. Practice manners and celebrate positive behavior with family time like a game or story.

Ages 10+

- Ask older kids to help track grocery needs by adding items to a list. They can also prepare a simple meal each week and help pack lunches or snacks for school and activities.



Pro Tip: Incorporate everyday kitchen items kids can safely use!

You don't always need special tools—many regular kitchen items work well for children, including: mixing bowls, measuring cups and spoons, silicone utensils, whisks, cookie cutters, plastic cutting boards and rolling pins.

From infants sitting at the table and exploring new foods, to preschoolers practicing routines and manners, to school-age children helping with meal prep and planning, each age has opportunities to build skills, confidence, and independence!

