



# KidFood

Healthy Eating for Today's Kids

Nutrition Matters

April 2014

## Kids in the Kitchen

It may seem easier to prepare meals without your child, but there are many benefits to letting your child help in the kitchen. Your child will be learning skills that will last his lifetime.

- ☺ **They will learn to be independent.** Your child will feel comfortable in the kitchen. He will be more willing to cook when he is older.
- ☺ **They will learn basic cooking skills.** Small children learn by watching how you cook. He may be too small to do some things, but he can learn how to stir, pour foods into a bowl, and spread peanut butter or hummus.
- ☺ **They can learn colors and numbers.** Talk about what color the food is - broccoli, soup, bread, crackers, meat, carrots, or apples. Count food whenever you can. How many noodles are on your plate? How many carrots are we going to put in the soup?
- ☺ **They will taste new foods.** A child is more willing to taste foods that he helps to cook. When he learns to eat a variety of foods, he is less likely to be a fussy eater later.
- ☺ **They will feel confident.** Feeling more confident will help him succeed in school and life.



### What Can My Small Child Do in the Kitchen?

- **Wash fruits and vegetables.** Bring a chair over to the sink. Ask them to help wash the fruits and vegetables with a brush or washcloth. Children love to play in water.
- **Set the table.** Let your child put the plates, napkins, silverware, and plastic glasses on the table.
- **Help you cook.** Small children can help measure foods in cups, pour foods into bowls or pans. They can also stir, shake, or spread foods.

## Pizza Calzones

*Make these fun sandwiches with your child!  
Freeze and heat later in oven for an easy meal.*

- 1 (16 ounce) loaf frozen bread dough, thawed
- 1 (12 ounce) jar pizza sauce
- 6 ounces shredded mozzarella cheese
- 8 ounces chopped ham or smoked turkey
- 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup olives (optional)
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped spinach (optional)
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped mushrooms (optional)



1. Divide bread dough into 6 equal pieces. Roll each piece of dough into a 6 inch circle. Let dough rest while you stir the filling together.
2. Combine pizza sauce, mozzarella cheese, ham or smoked turkey, and Parmesan cheese together in bowl. Stir in olives, spinach, and mushrooms as desired.
3. Divide filling among the 6 dough circles. Spread filling over  $\frac{1}{2}$  of each circle, spreading to within  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch of edge. Fold each circle in half, pressing edges together with a fork. Prick tops with a fork.
4. Lightly spray baking sheet with nonstick cooking spray. Place calzones on baking sheet. Bake in 375°F oven for 20 minutes.

**To freeze calzones:** Cool calzones after baking. Place in freezer bag and freeze for up to 1 month.

**To reheat calzones:** Unwrap calzones and bake on baking sheet in 350°F oven for 10 minutes or until warm.

**Praise your child!  
Tell him that he did a great job  
and you are proud of him!**

## Comfort with Love, Not Food

Small children will become upset or scared at times.  
Do not be tempted to comfort your small child with food. Comfort with love!

If your child does become upset or scared, be calm.  
Your child is learning from you how to calm himself.

It is important for your child to learn how to comfort himself without food:

- ♥ **Give your child a hug and smile.** Let your child sit on your lap.
- ♥ **Talk calmly to your child.** Explain what is happening. If something might hurt, tell the truth to your child.
- ♥ **Comfort your child with a toy, blanket or favorite stuffed animal.**
- ♥ **Talk to your child in a funny voice.** Sing a song to your child.
- ♥ **If your child can not calm down, move away to a quiet area.** You will be helping your child learn how to cope. You will feel better and so will your child.



### Why is comforting with food a problem?

If you offer food to comfort your child, he may learn to eat when he is upset or scared.

This can lead to emotional eating later in life.

Help your child learn ways to comfort himself without food.



### What Can You Do?

- Let my child help me in the kitchen while preparing meals.
- Make Pizza Calzones for my family.
- Calm my child with love and patience.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_



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