

NEWS RELEASE

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Kitchen Time is Family Time

With all the hustle and bustle of the season, it's easy to lose sight of what's important – spending time with the family. When it's time to prepare holiday meals or create holiday treats and children want attention we often say, "Go play in the other room while I get this done and then we can do something together." Instead, make kitchen time a time to do something together.

- Being able to say, "I helped make the candy cane cookies and cranberry salad" or "I set the table" allows a child to have ownership in a holiday gathering and helps to build self-esteem. Assisting in the kitchen can also help children learn more about food, nutrition, and health. It can also help build basic cooking skills and a better understanding of what it takes to get a meal on the table.
- Working side by side on a cooking task can lead to some great talks with older children. Focusing on chopping the apples can take the pressure off and make it easier for a child to tell a parent what's really on their mind.
- Assign tasks that are age appropriate. A child as young as three years old may be able to fold napkins while setting the table would be a better job for a five year old. Older children can do more food preparation such as mixing, chopping, and measuring.

Don't let the holiday hassles cause you to miss a great opportunity to enjoy your family and start creating special memories.

For more nutrition or program information, please call (530) 889-7350 or visit our website at <http://ucanr.edu/sites/letseathealthy>.

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