

PRESCHOOL NUTRITION NEWS

UC CalFresh Nutrition Education Program

HOW COOKING CAN HELP PRESCHOOLERS

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
cal  fresh Nutrition Education



Some may think preschool children are too young to help with food preparation. In reality, young children can assist with many cooking tasks and doing so benefits them in many ways.

- **Build basic skills.** Children can acquire basic math skills by doing something as simple as counting eggs or pouring water into a measuring cup. They can learn to sort and put items in order, what comes first, second, and third. Reading a recipe out loud introduces new words to your child's vocabulary and promotes literacy. Following steps in the recipe can work on listening skills.
- **Encourage an adventurous palate.** Preschoolers are notoriously picky eaters. Bringing them into the kitchen to help encourages them to try new things. Children are more likely to eat what they helped prepare.
- **Help young kids explore with their senses.** Kids learn by exploring with their senses and the kitchen is an ideal place to do that. Invite them to listen to the whir of the mixer, pound dough and watch it rise, smell it baking in the oven, and finally taste warm from the oven. If it smells good, looks appealing, and is easy to eat, they may just be willing to try it!
- **Boost confidence.** Preschoolers love to show what they can do and working in the kitchen provides opportunities to gain a sense of accomplishment. If they helped assemble the pizza, let them know that their help was important. Even if the end results are not exactly what you expected, praise their efforts.



Ideal Jobs for Preschoolers in the Kitchen

A few tasks in the kitchen are particularly well-suited to kids ages 3 to 5. The key is to give them "jobs" that meet their skill level and are something they enjoy. So if your child loves to pound, bring out the bread dough and let your preschooler pound away. Here are some other ways kids can help:

- rinsing fruits and vegetables
- stirring ingredients
- tearing lettuce for salad
- adding ingredients

Winter 2017

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More Resources

Visit our website:

<http://ceplacer.ucanr.edu>

You can email a UC CalFresh representative with any questions or information needs. Also, please feel free to share any tips or suggestions you might have with other teachers!

NUTRITION ACTIVITY

YOGURT FRUIT DIP

Have children help prepare this simple dip and then everyone can enjoy it as a snack.

What You Need:

- Sliced apples, bananas, oranges, or berries
- Quart plain yogurt
- Frozen orange juice concentrate (thawed)
- Small containers and spoons for mixing

What to Do:

1. Give each child their own small bowl and a spoon.
2. Help each child to scoop 1/4 cup of yogurt and 1 tablespoon orange juice into their bowl.
3. Have children mix their dip until the ingredients are blended.
4. Give each child some fruit to eat with their yogurt dip.



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

INDOOR WINTER ACTIVITIES

Activity helps children stay healthy and happy. These suggestions are useful during extended rain and snow periods, when outdoor play is not possible.

- ★ Use music for stepping, hopping, or jumping in place.
- ★ Have kids make up dances or share their favorite dance moves.
- ★ Play “keep the balloon up”. Use one balloon per child or one balloon per small group.
- ★ Practice progressive relaxation, tensing each body part and then relaxing it (face, neck, shoulders, right arm, right hand, left arm, left hand, etc.)
- ★ Sitting exercise; do a variety of movements while sitting.
- ★ Play “follow the leader” using locomotor movements.



TIPS FOR COOKING WITH PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

The Teacher or Parents Role

- Engaging children in conversation.
- Verbalizing and describing what children are doing.
- Discussing where foods come from.
- Posing questions to encourage children to articulate what they are doing.
- Making observations.
- Posing questions for children to analyze and solve.
- Modeling positive attitudes and behaviors.



Selecting Recipes for Young Children

- Are the hands-on skills age/developmentally appropriate?
- Do you have access to needed appliances?
- Do you have adequate supervision?
- Does the recipe connect with children's interests or classroom projects?
- Does the recipe promote healthy food choices?
- Does the recipe feature seasonal and local produce children can find in the garden or on a local farm?
- Is the recipe culturally relevant?
- Is the recipe affordable for all families, and does it use familiar ingredients they have at home?

Introducing Recipes to Children

1. Prepare a simple recipe chart with illustrations of each step.
2. Have examples of ingredients in their raw form.
3. Have all necessary equipment and ingredients prepped and available.
4. Read the recipe aloud discussing each step.
5. Discuss rules and/or safety considerations and have children identify these for specific steps.

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Happy Healthy Me...Moving, Munching & Reading Around MyPlate for 4 to 6-Year-Olds
Combines stories and literacy with nutrition education for Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten.

Parent Workshops
Fun, interactive parent workshops are available. Please call for more information.

Go Glow Grow
A preschool curriculum that teaches about healthy foods and what they do for the body.

ROGER INGRAM
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The UC CalFresh Nutrition Education Program targets schools and community programs with large numbers of children from food stamp households. Teachers, youth program leaders, and other extenders at the sites are trained to deliver a nutrition education program targeted to youth audiences. This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program -- SNAP.

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