

In the Kitchen



There's a lot to do with your child in the kitchen, like learn about different foods and fruits, prepare meals and snacks, etc. Every family member can have a job to do! Your children will feel good about their successes as they are given responsibility. Be sure the kitchen is a safe place and remind your children about family rules in the kitchen.

Help your children become aware of differences in foods.



- Talk with your children about the size, taste texture, and color of foods. Help them to recognize the differences between rough and smooth surfaces, salty or sweet tastes, and the odors of certain foods.
- Ask them to talk about changes in foods as you cook them (How did it look when it was raw? When we started to cook it? How does it look now?) Help your children to compare the before and after.
- Talk with your children about any foods that have special meaning to your family.

Look for shapes or colors around the kitchen in and on the cabinets, refrigerator and stove.

- Play the game, "I see something you don't see and the color (or the shape) is..." Your children can name the items or foods that are in the kitchen and that fit the description until they get to the item you have in mind.

Involve your children in meal preparation.

- All family members preparing food need to wash their hands before handling food.
- Measure with cups, tablespoons, and teaspoons. Ask your children to guess how many tablespoons make a cup of water. Then, help them check it out!
- Let your children pour water with spoons, cups, and pitchers.
- Involve your children in making part of a meal or a snack. Talk about opposites big and small, hard and soft.

Sort and name foods after a trip to the grocery store

- Let your children name each food, or ask them to tell you something about each food, as you take it out of the bag.
- As you sort the groceries, ask your children to put together all the foods that are the same: fresh vegetables in one place, boxes in another place.
- Talk with your children about the sizes of cans as you put them away--tall and short, wide and narrow.

Name kitchen appliances and their uses

- Ask your children what the toaster is for, what the oven does. Give safety tips for the use of each appliance, and talk about who can turn them on and off.
- Ask about other ways to toast bread, heat the leftovers. The answers might be very creative!
- Let your children help clean up the kitchen.
- Ask them to sort eating and cooking utensils by type or use.
- Let them wipe the table after meals. Encourage them to wipe the table from left to right and collect all the crumbs in one corner.