



Cooking with Young Children

If you're caught between finding time to prepare meals and spending quality time with your children, try cooking with them.

Children enjoy helping in the kitchen and often are more willing to eat foods they help prepare. Involve your child in planning and preparing some meals and snacks for the family.

When your child is helping you with food preparation, don't forget cleanliness. Wash hands using soap and warm running water before and after handling food or utensils to prepare food.

It is important that you give kitchen tasks appropriate for your child's age. Be patient as your child gains new skills at different ages.

Meal Preparation Activities for Young Children

Children have to be shown and taught how to do these activities. Each child has his or her own pace for learning, so give it time and the skills will come. Expect a few spills. It's a small price to pay for helping your children become comfortable around food.

2-year olds can:

- Bring ingredients from one place to another
- Wipe table tops
- Tear lettuce or greens
- Break cauliflower
- Snap green beans
- Play with utensils

3-year olds can do what 2-year olds do, plus:

- Wrap potatoes in foil for baking
- Knead and shape yeast dough
- Pour liquids
- Mix ingredients
- Shake liquids in covered container
- Spread soft spreads
- Place things in trash

4-year olds can do what 2- and 3-year olds do, plus:

- Move hands to form round shapes
- Cut parsley or green onions with dull scissors
- Mash bananas using a fork
- Set the table

5-year olds can do what 2-, 3- and 4-year olds do, plus:

- Measure ingredients
- Cut with blunt knife
- Use an egg beater

Family Food Fun

- Making this soup mix can be a fun family activity. The soup is colorful and easy to mix.
- Ask children to help make the soup. Older children can prepare this soup for the whole family. Older children can also help prepare the salad and side dishes.

Palouse Soup Mix

(Makes 10 cups of mix; 1-cup mix makes 4 servings)

2 1/2 cups green split peas (one 16-ounce package)
2 1/2 cups lentils (one 16-ounce package)
2 1/2 cups pearl barley (one 16-ounce package)
2 cups macaroni (one-half 16-ounce package) OR 2 cups rice

Mix all ingredients together. Store in a jar with a tight-fitting lid. Stir before using.

To make soup: In a large pan, combine and mix together: water, meat (if used), vegetables, and flavorings. Bring mixture to a boil. Reduce heat to low, cover pan. Simmer gently for 30 to 45 minutes or until peas, lentils, and barley are tender.

Ingredients	Basic Soup	Vegetable Minestrone Soup
Soup Mix	1 cup	1 cup
Water	4 cups	2.5 cups
Meat	1 cup, cooked	
Vegetables	1 chopped onion 2 chopped carrots	1, 1-oz can tomatoes with liquid 1 chopped onion 2 chopped carrots
Flavorings	2 teaspoons salt 2 teaspoons garlic powder, 1 teaspoon oregano 1 tablespoon chili powder 2 Tablespoons lemon juice (Optional, add just before serving)	2 teaspoon salt 1 bouillon cube 1 teaspoon basil 2 teaspoon garlic powder.

Serve soup with bread and a salad or crunchy, cut-up vegetables like carrot sticks or green pepper sticks. For dessert have an apple or orange.