



## **Kids in the Kitchen - Activity Pack**

Cooking is a wholesome activity to do with your child. It allows you to spend quality time together and make something delicious, all while having fun! It's no secret that getting your kids in the kitchen – even starting as young as 1 or 2 years old – can lead to many benefits such as increased confidence and independence and a more adventurous palate.

Following recipes requires children to plan, prepare, process, and perform. From start to finish, children must follow each step of the recipe. They learn to complete a task from start to finish and enjoy the result of their hard work—the food!

It is no secret that cooking with children can be messier and much more time consuming. I can assure you though – it is totally worth it in the end. It does not need to be an everyday occurrence – cooking with your child just once every week or two will go a long way!

- Take extra time for cooking and plan for the inevitable mess.
- Use simple recipes
- Read the recipe aloud or illustrate with pictures to associate with the written words
- Create your own “special recipe” – allow your child’s creativity to flourish!
- As you are cooking, teach your children about kitchen and food safety, ingredients and their origins and cooking processes and techniques.

*Be sure to supervise your child during all cooking activities.*

### **What Skills Can Children Learn from Cooking?**

**Language skills:** Increased vocabulary for cooking tools, flavours, textures, figurative language related to cooking terms.

**Math skills:** Children learn numbers and counting in order to measure and add ingredients.

**Scientific Understanding:** Children explore containment, volume and capacity. They make predictions and explore the results as they observe the transformation of the ingredients.

**Critical-thinking skills:** Recipes provide opportunities for children to practice following directions, sequencing, and recalling details. They also provide opportunities to experiment and explore transformations.

**Fine-motor skills:** When cooking, children manipulate different ingredients and cooking tools. Getting supplies out of the pantry, mixing ingredients, and placing toppings are some examples.

**Healthy-living skills:** Cooking healthy foods is important for your child’s growth and development. As you cook together, you can teach your child about food groups, nutrition, and the importance of physical activity combined with a healthy diet.

There are activities for every child, even if it's just messing around in the sink washing vegetables and plastic containers while adults and older children chop and cook. Although cooking is a lot of fun (and a required daily activity), getting your child interested in kitchen activities doesn't necessarily always mean you have to cook with them. There are tons of other ways to explore, experiment and create in the kitchen with your child.

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**Click the titles below to follow the circle-time links**

**Good Morning Song**

**The Bread Song - Including Your Child's Name**

**Making Silly Soup**

**Rolly Polly Song**

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### **Introduce the topic with herb snipping!**

**Materials needed:** Child safe scissors, herbs (such as parsley or dill which is easy to snip), playdough, tray.

#### **Activity description:**

1. Stick your herbs into a mound of playdough so they stand up vertically. If you don't have playdough, perhaps you have a vessel which could hold them upright, leaving the tops exposed.
2. Stick the playdough herb tree to your tray.
3. Invite your child to use their scissors to snip and trim the herb tree.



#### **Questions and conversation during this activity:**

- “What do you smell?”
- “How many snips are you making? Let's count them together!”
- “Open them, shut them, open them, shut them. Give a little snip. Open them, shut them, open them, shut them, SNIP, SNIP, SNIP!”

**Keep in mind your child's skill level and make sure to set them up for success while challenging their abilities. Younger children first need to understand how the scissors work before they will be able to operate them. Let your child explore the opening and closing motion using two hands and progress towards putting their thumb and fingers in the holes.**

**Strength, coordination and control are all necessary skills needed to use scissors. The repeated use of scissors will help to further develop fine motor skills in preparation for future success in printing and drawing.**

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### **Kitchen Labels (Literacy and Language)**

**Materials needed:** [Print these labels](#), painters tape

#### **Activity instructions:**

1. [Print and cut these kitchen labels](#).

2. Use painters tape to post the labels around your kitchen with your child. If you prefer not to label your own kitchen, you can label your child’s play area instead.
3. Invite your child to “read” the labels and help to put the dishes away.



Labeling helps expose children to a print-rich environment as well as provides organization so children (and adults) know where everything belongs. You can label specific areas, objects, and containers or cupboards. If you don’t have all of the labels you need in this package, you can make your own with markers or by pairing clipart with written words on a simple word program.

## Ordering Measuring Cups By Size (Math)

**Materials needed:** Stackable measuring cups (or spoons, bowls, pots, etc.).

**Activity instructions:**

1. Invite your child to use normal kitchen measuring cups for an ordering, stacking or nesting activity.
2. What else do you have in your kitchen that you could stack, order and nest? Perhaps you have a set of mixing bowls or pots.

Stacking and nesting measuring cups will help your child to learn about spatial relationships, develop their fine motor skills, and practice problem solving skills.



## Washing Dishes and Exploring Volume (Sensory)

**Materials needed:** Tupperware, kitchen safe tools such as whisks, spatulas or plastic dishes, dish soap, sensory bin, sponge or cloth.

**Activity instructions:**

1. Invite your child to wash their dishes in the soapy water using their sponge or cloth.
2. Sing your favourite song as you wash the dishes and experiment with the soapy bubbles.

Extend this activity into a science experiment by exploring containment and volume. Pour water from one vessel to another making predictions and exploring the results.

“Will the water fill the new vessel or will it overflow and spill over into the bin? Which vessel is bigger? Which vessel holds more water?”





# Dried Beans or Lentils Bin (Sensory)

**Materials needed:** Sensory bin, spoons, scoops, cups, funnels and jars. You will also need a mixture of dried beans, peas and lentils.

**Activity instructions:**

Children love to explore, investigate and play in an unstructured way and sensory tubs are perfect for this kind of exploration.

1. Place all the materials in and around the sensory bin and invite your child to play!
  - Scoop, sift and pour the bean, pea and lentil mix.
  - Search for different colours and place them into different containers.
  - Layer the different coloured beans, peas and lentils in the jars.

This sensory tub can be re-used several times for future play experiences by storing the bean and peas mixture tub with a lid.

Extend this activity by placing each of the different beans, peas, lentils onto a water soaked paper towel on a plate and watch what happens.



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# Making Goop (Science)

**Materials needed:** Cornstarch, water, tray or sensory bin, spoons, little bowls, toys for playing/scooping/filling, smock or apron is optional - It is a pretty messy activity so have a wet cloth nearby.

**Activity instructions:**

1. Invite your child to scoop the cornstarch spoonful by spoonful into your sensory bin. Focus on the process of measuring and pouring.
2. Once playing with dry corn starch has run its course, add the water.
3. Invite your child to add a little bit at a time, and enjoy the process of mixing it in.

**Ultimately, the cornstarch:water ratio is about 2:1.**

4. Discuss what it feels like in your hands, if it's easy/hard to stir, and what you are doing.

Extend this activity to build on colour concepts by adding a few drops of food coloring. Swirl and mix up the colours.



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# Pom Pom Whisks (Fine motor)

**Materials needed:** Whisks, pom poms, strong tape, styrofoam.

**Activity instructions:**



1. Stick the handle end of your whisks into a block of styrofoam and tape into place.
2. Cover the styrofoam with tape as well to avoid possible ingestion.
3. Tape the styrofoam block to the table and place a few pom poms inside one of the whisks.
4. Invite your child to manipulate their pom poms into and out of the whisk head.



Add a mathematical element by sorting and matching the pom colours or sizes, or count how many poms you can fit inside each whisk.

**Younger children** will likely be more interested in taking them out, so fill up the whisk and have your child take all the poms out one at a time.

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## Playdough Food (Creative):

**Materials needed:** Playdough ([print our simple recipe here](#)).

### Activity Instructions:

1. Get creative and make some healthy food using playdough!
2. Add beans or lentils to the playdough or make a playdough birthday cake and add some candles.
3. Try using a ricer to make playdough spaghetti or use a ziplock as a piping bag.
4. Use some of your kitchen tools (such as a potato masher or spatula) to create and manipulate your playdough food items.

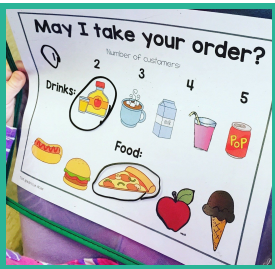


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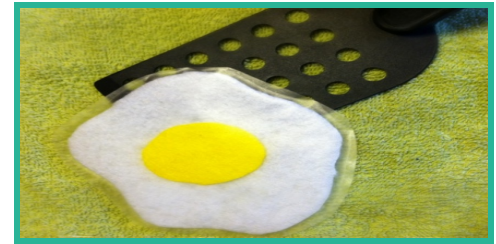
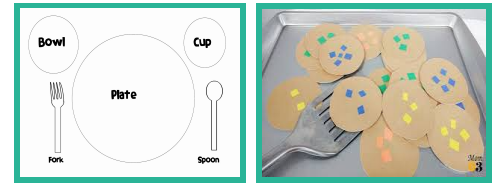
## Bake Shop (Dramatic play)

Set up a Restaurant for your child. There are so many different multicultural foods out there inspiring introductions to new food ideas. This is one dramatic play center that can go on for months. You could plan a Chinese food restaurant theme one week, an Indian food restaurant a few weeks after that, a pizza shop a different week, a Canadian/American restaurant another week, a Spanish style restaurant another week, etc.

- Make sure to incorporate print into your child’s play. Try using open and closed signs, seating signs, an hours of operation sign, order forms and name tags.
- Make a menu together using pictures and words. Cut pictures from flyers or draw your own.
- Make your own play placemats by tracing your table setting onto a piece of paper. Invite your child to match the items to the placemat to set the table.



- Cut pieces of food out of felt (or paper) to make different types of food for your restaurant. If you are using paper, consider laminating your props with some clear shelf liner for prolonged use.
- Re-use some of the props from your bake shop. Gather some recyclables and items from your kitchen. Consider an egg carton, muffin tray, an empty dish soap bottle, a mixing bowl & whisk, an apron, a chef's hat, sunglasses, a wallet or purse, fake money and a cash register, order forms/notepad and a pencil, empty ingredient packages, sealed containers with coloured rice to use as pretend ingredients.
- Whether it's on a kitchen scale or a floor scale, find things from around the house to weigh. It's a fun visual tool to learn about both numbers and measurement. For younger children, try using (or making) your own balancing scale. It's easy to make your own with only a clothes hanger, string and 2 paper cups.

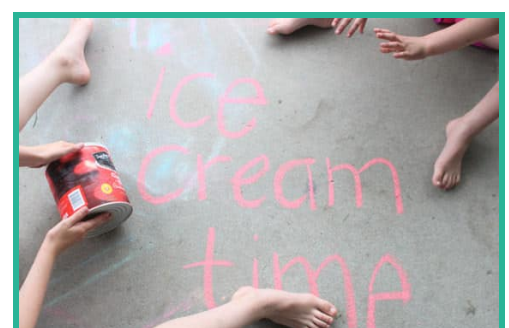
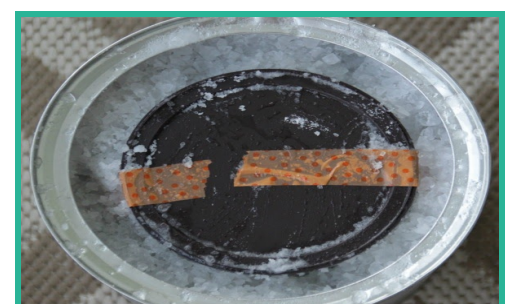


## Making Ice Cream (Movement)

**Materials needed:** 1 small clean coffee can, 1 large clean coffee can, 1 cups of milk or cream, 1/2 cup of sugar, 1/2 tsp vanilla, 1 1/3 cups of rock salt, ice, duct tape.

### Activity instructions:

1. Combine the milk (or cream), sugar and vanilla in the smaller coffee can. Put the top on and secure with duct tape.
2. Place the smaller can inside the larger can and fill around it with crushed ice.
3. Add 2/3-3/4 cup of rock salt depending on how much ice you can fit – 3/4 cup if it's totally full, less if you have trouble getting the ice in.
4. Put the lid on the larger coffee can and tape it seal with duct tape.
5. **Invite some active play and movement by rolling the coffee can back and forth for 10 minutes.**
6. Open up the top and drain out the water and ice. Wipe off the top of the smaller coffee can to make sure none of the salty water gets in. Wash your hands and then use a spoon to scrape the insides of the coffee can where the ice cream has started to solidify. Put the top back on and add more ice and salt.
7. **Roll again for another 5-10 minutes.**
8. Open everything up again and you'll see the ice cream!



It has more of an icy-soft consistency than other types of ice cream and melts quickly. If you aren't going to eat it right away stick it in the freezer until you are ready.



Don't let the appearance fool you though—homemade ice cream in a coffee can tastes delicious and is lots of fun to make.

If you don't have any coffee cans handy, you can also easily do this movement cooking experiment using small and large ziplock bags.

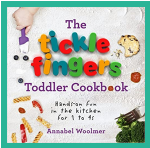


**Book Recommendations:** (Click the titles below to follow the Amazon links)

[The Tickle Fingers Toddler Cookbook - by: Annabel Woolmer](#)

[Stone Soup - by: Jon J Muth](#)

[What's Up Tiger? Food - by: Cocoretto](#)



**BONUS COOKING ACTIVITIES**

**Making Bread In A Bag (Science, Sensory, Math, Language, Motor Skills & More!)**

Materials needed:

- 1 gallon sized resealable plastic bag
- 3 cups flour
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 packet yeast (rapid rise or regular)
- 1 cup warm water
- 1/4 cup butter, melted
- 1 teaspoon salt (this can be to taste)



**Activity Instructions:**

There's nothing in the world like homemade bread. It may not win any awards, but it is guaranteed to be a delicious and memorable experience that is rich in teachable moments.

1. Combine 1 cup flour, sugar, and yeast packet in a bowl. Pour into a resealable (Ziplock style) bag.

*Younger children may have some trouble pouring the ingredients right into the bag. Their hand eye coordination levels typically haven't refined yet. Set them up for success by using a bigger target and pouring the first set of ingredients into a bowl for mixing.*

2. Add warm water. Seal bag, pressing out any air.
3. Begin shaking and mixing the bag with your hands hand
4. Set the bag to rest for 10 minutes (proofing). Waiting is the hardest part! Set a timer and try having a dance party to pass the time.
5. In a bowl, combine 1 cup of flour with salt. Pour into bag along with melted butter.





6. Seal bag again, pressing out air. Shake and mix again.
7. Open the bag and add in the last cup of flour.
8. Seal bag, and mix for final time. Make the passing time fun by counting to 100, sing your favourite song or recite a nursery rhyme. Before you know it – you’ve kneaded long enough!
9. Pull out dough and place on a floured surface.
10. With floured hands, knead dough for 5-10 minutes
11. Place dough in a greased loaf pan and place the dough into it.
12. Lay towel over the loaf pan and set it in a warm spot in your house (I usually use the oven so it stays out of the way). Allow the dough 30-45 minutes to rise
13. Bake at 375 for 25 minutes and ENJOY!



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## Making a Snack or Meal (Creative):

**Materials needed:** Open your fridge and cupboards and see what you have.

### Activity Instructions:

Use different snack items to create fun snacks together with your child. Take turns adding components with your child!

These celery snails are simple to make! Add some peanut (or nonut, almond or cashew) butter to your celery. Add an apple slice for the snails back, and some pretzel sticks and chocolate chips or raisins for the antennae and eyes.

There are millions of amazing healthy recipe ideas out there to keep your little one excited about snacks!



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## Making Chia Pudding - Exploring the Transformation (Science)

**Materials needed:** Mason jar or container with lid and ingredients.

Ingredients:

- 1/3 cup chia seeds
- 5 cups milk (coconut, almond, flax or any other you like)
- 2 tbsp maple syrup, agave or honey
- ½ tsp vanilla



**Activity Instructions:** Make-ahead breakfasts are a kitchen bonus. A truly healthy (and easy!) breakfast for kids. Just place in the fridge overnight and it's ready in the AM to eat.

1. Combine all the ingredients in a Mason jar
2. Cover the jar with the lid and shake it up (kids can be involved in this step, if you watch them)
3. Chill for an hour or two
4. Shake it up again
5. Keep in the fridge overnight
6. Serve cold



Try topping it with their favorite toppings. Add fruit, nuts and seeds in the AM for added nutrients, fiber and texture and to make it fun and personal.

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**We hope you have enjoyed these activities!**  
**Please let us know if you have any comments or suggestions and feel free to share your photos and stories about these activities!**

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**LEARNING THROUGH PLAY WITH**  
***Smart Cookie Club***  
**EVERY DAY!**