

# Early Learning Cooking



## 12 SIMPLE RECIPES



## for COOKING WITH KIDS



Why does **UNICORN** Nursery get children involved in food preparation and cooking, what does this involve and how can parents and carers help?

Try these at home at: [www.children101.com](http://www.children101.com)



**Traditionally, children learnt how to cook from watching and then helping in the kitchen at home. This is an activity that is being shared less as our lives are getting busier, so at Unicorn we involve children in preparing food. We encourage you to do the same with your child whenever you have the time.**

The benefits of cooking with children are so wide-ranging that it is possible to link most of the Early Years curriculum to this activity. These include:

- 😊 **Numeracy:** as children count out spoonfuls, weigh ingredients, calculate how many rolls to make, or measure out baking trays.
- 😊 **Early Science:** as they observe the consistency of mixtures change, colours merge and ingredients be transformed by heat or cold.
- 😊 **Health:** as your child is introduced to new flavours and tastes. Children are more likely to try something new if they have helped to make it.
- 😊 **Physical skills:** such as strengthening their grip and practising hand-eye co-ordination, as they handle kitchen implements while helping to peel carrots, chop apples, whisk eggs, sift flour or stir cake mixture.
- 😊 **Language development:** as they chat about what they are seeing, such as dough rising, egg mixture fluffing up or soup simmering.
- 😊 **Understanding the world:** as they discuss where ingredients come from, such as how vegetables are grown, or their country of origin. It also gives children the opportunity to talk about traditional dishes from different cultures.
- 😊 **Emotional development:** as they gain confidence from helping with tasks they associate with adults, such as preparing a salad or baking bread. It is also a good way for an adult and a child to bond.



### **How we introduce cookery at Unicorn**

Practitioners will always take account of your child's age and skill level before starting to cook with them. They will also keep group sizes as small as possible, so that children can be involved properly, be kept safe and hear instructions easily.

There are lots of tasks that even very young children can do, such as washing fruit, ripping lettuce leaves or laying the table.

Of course, there are also more challenging jobs that involve heat or sharp implements. Practitioners will gradually introduce tools, such as peelers and small knives, and ensure that children know how to handle and use them properly under supervision.

We always cook a range of foods with children, rather than just sweet food. This gives a healthy-eating message and introduces a range of preparation and cooking methods.

At Unicorn we have activities available for children to access when they wish, rather than as an organized activity. This will often involve children following simple instructions using sequenced photographs, with staff nearby to help if needed. We also provide playdough tables where children can make dough to use in their play.

### **What you can do at home**

Let your child feel the ingredients and, if appropriate, taste them. Discuss what you are cooking with, what stages you need to do and why. Let it be fun and don't worry if your child loses interest; does it matter if they end up playing with the water in the washing-up bowl while you complete the recipe.

**Then sit down and enjoy eating the food together!**

