



Cooking and Preparing Food EYFS Development Matters – Specific Areas

Cooking provides the opportunity for practical experience to develop many essential life skills. Such as following instructions, measuring, learning new words in a meaningful context and observing change. It helps children to develop fine motor skills and hand/eye coordination. To make the learning as meaningful and impactful as possible, it is important to think about your child's individual ability and key learning that can be supported through the activity.

Here are some suggestions of ways you can support your child during your cooking activities.

Literacy Development

Suggested guidance to support you whilst cooking with your child

- Look at recipes together and pictures to understand what your cooking should look like. Use the recipe cards or recipes online if you don't have any cook books, or make your own.
- Look at the packaging of the food you use. What letter shapes or words are familiar to your child? See if your child can find letters from their name, or those of their family in the words on the packaging.
- Encourage your child to look through recipes and choose a menu for the day or week. Leave the recipe cards/books out for your child to look at throughout the day.
- Encouraging your child to read/identify letters on food packaging and on the recipe cards so that they begin to understand that information is shared using printed words.
- Point to the words as you read a recipe cards together, pointing along the sentences and then moving down the page as you read, your child will gradually understand how print 'works'.
- Make posters advertising the food you are making for a particular meal, or a special dish that your child enjoys to encourage them to make marks/draw or write words.
- Before you start to cook, make a list of the ingredients and utensils you need and encourage your child to find them independently, marking them off on a list that you may have created together, one that your child has made or on the recipe card.

Maths Development

Suggested guidance to support you whilst cooking with your child

- Read the recipe together and help your child to identify each number with the instructions and talk about what to do first, second and last of all.
- Encourage your child to say and 'tick off' the numbers as each element of the recipe is completed.
- Have fun counting any of your ingredients that offer the opportunity. From larger items such as, eggs, apples, or bananas to smaller ingredients such as dried fruit or nuts. These will also give you the opportunity for your child

to guess how many there might be, before counting them together to check. Sprinkle a little flour or sugar on your worktop and encourage your child to make marks to represent numbers such as fingerprint dots, tally marks or actual numerals alongside the items they have counted.

- Ask your child to create groups of fruit or vegetables that have exactly the same amounts in them.
- Give your child a bowl of four pieces of fruit. Put them in a straight line and ask your child to count them using their finger to point at each piece of fruit. Then put them in a square shape and ask them to count them again. Then put three together and the fourth close by and ask them to count again. This will help them discover that there are always four no matter how they are arranged.
- Watch the numbers go up on a digital scale or the dial moving on manual scales when weighing ingredients and talk about what is happening.
- Encourage your child to count and count along with them to support them in their early stages of counting, making sure that you touch each item as you say the number. Or encourage counting each spoonful of ingredients added to the mixture.
- Have a go at making a pizza and talk about how you're arranging the toppings or make a fruit kebab and talk about the different shaped pieces of fruit (*See recipe card 3 & 6*)
- Make biscuits of different shapes either using shaped cutters or moulding with your hands. (*See recipe cards 4, 8 and 9*)
- Talk about where you're putting things on a baking tray, or when decorating, for example behind, at the back, in front of, or beside (*See recipe cards 4, 8 and 9*)
- Talk about the shapes you create when cooking, for example when making Fruit scones, or when cutting the fruit for the kebabs. (*See recipe card 3 & 6*)

Understanding the World

Suggested guidance to support you whilst cooking with your child

- As you cook, talk about things you have made previously using the same or similar ingredients or techniques. For example, 'do you remember when we mixed the sugar and eggs?'
- Talk about foods for particular events or celebrations. Prepare a special meal for an event. Plan this beforehand by making lists and invitations or menus for the food that will be served.
- Talk about the different foods you might eat outdoors such as, at a barbeque or a picnic and how these will be cooked/prepared.
- Pretend to be 'chefs' with your child and talk about what a chef might do. Talk about the chef's role from thinking of recipes, to buying ingredients, preparing and presenting the food.
- Do a survey of family and friends to find out their favourite foods. Create menus that you could share with them. They could choose from the recipe cards. Talk about similarities and differences in what family members enjoy or dislike. Cook a different family member's favourite food on each day of the week.
- Remember to talk with your child about the changes that happen to ingredients as they are mixed together and/or cooked. Cooking pancakes is a good recipe for this, watching the mixture go from runny to more solid. (*See recipe card 5*)
- Chat with your child about what is happening as things are cooking but also how some of the utensils work, for example how to use a whisk or a grater (*See recipe card 1 or 5*).
- Explore how food decays over time with your child. Observe what happens to an apple core or other fruits and vegetables when left over time. Experiment what happens when you place carrot tops in a saucer of water.
- Teach your child how to safely use some kitchen equipment. Allow them to press the buttons on a food processor

safely or a hand-held whisk. Teach them how to operate a microwave and/or the dishwasher.

- Support your child to access recipes on an electronic device. Use your phone or tablet to take a photo of your end result of your cooking or make a video clip of your child engaged in the cooking process to share with family members.

Expressive Art and Design

Suggested guidance to support you whilst cooking with your child

- Talk about the texture of ingredients or different mixtures when you are cooking. Have a go at making some biscuits and changing the smooth texture by using a fork, the back of a spoon, a pastry brush or anything that is clean and might make a pattern or texture. *(See recipe cards 1, 8 or 4)*
- When you are cooking talk about the uses of kitchen utensils and their purpose.
- Encourage your child to work alongside you when preparing food or baking. Encourage them to learn by watching and copying what you do. Let them 'act out' some of these things when playing by using some of the utensils available and engage in their play as they serve their pretend food. Extend this play by providing paper and pens/pencils for your child to create menus.