

The Thrill of Skill

Age-Appropriate Kitchen Tasks

Let older children help teach younger ones – everyone benefits!

2 years old:

- Proper hand washing
- Wipe table tops
- Play with safe utensils
- Scrub, wash, tear, snap, break into pieces
- Move pre-measured ingredients from one place to another
- Add ingredients to a bowl

3 years old: All of the above plus...

- Handle dough, begin kneading, simple shaping
- Pour cool liquids into mixture
- Mix dry ingredients with wire whisk or spoon in extra large bowl
- Shake liquids
- Spread soft spreads
- Place things in trash

4 years old: All of the above plus...

- Peel loose skinned oranges; hard cooked eggs
- Form round shapes with dough
- Mash fruits (bananas) or cooked vegetables
- Cut with dull scissors (snip green onions, dried fruits)
- Set table

5 to 6 years old: All of the above plus...

- Help measure dry ingredients (stir, spoon, level)
- Cut with a blunt knife (plastic or tableware)
- Use a hand held egg beater or whisk
- Crush crackers in a bag with a rolling pin
- Sprinkle ingredients on salads, cakes, cookies, casseroles

6 to 8 years old: All of the above plus...

- Clean surfaces before and after
- Wash fruits and/or vegetables
- Gather ingredients and equipment
- Grease or spray baking pans
- Measure dry ingredients
- Measure liquid ingredients
- Add measured dry and liquid ingredients into mixing bowl
- Learn to crack eggs
- Cut fruit, butter or margarine sticks on cutting board (plastic or table knife)
- Push buttons on blenders, processors with adult
- Knead dough
- Preheat oven (adults help load products in hot oven)
- Wash dishes, put away ingredients or utensils

9 to 12 years old: All of the above plus...

- Learn safe knife skills (chopping, dicing, and cutting)
- Handle food equipment safely
- Place oven racks and load oven (while oven is cold)
- Safe operation of electric equipment (mixer, microwave, bread machine food processor, etc.)
- Follow a recipe (measure accurately, prepare a product)
- Read ingredient and food labels
- Safely handle/store ingredients/finished products
- Plan and prepare simple meals, snacks
- Clean up (how and what to wash in dishwasher or by hand)

13 years old and up: All of the above plus...

- Tasks requiring multiple preparation steps or close timing
- Create new flavor combinations, shapes or decoration
- Plan and prepare whole menus for meals or entertaining
- Make shopping lists and shop for ingredients
- Help younger children learn about food and how to prepare
- Enjoy cooking with peers

Ten Tips for Baking Success

1. Allow time for family baking.

- Turn off distractions of television, cell phones and computer.

2. Wash hands and counter tops before starting.

- Wear apron or large T-shirt to protect clothes.
- Long hair should be banded or covered.
- Roll-up long sleeves.

3. Stay safe! See The Thrill of Skill Fact Sheet for age-appropriate baking tasks.

4. Before you start: Read the recipe top to bottom.

5. Gather all the ingredients and equipment.

6. Use the right tools and measure correctly.

- Pour liquids in a clear liquid measuring cup placed on the countertop and read at eye level.
- Use standard dry measures for dry ingredients.
- Use measuring spoons for small amounts less than ¼ cup.

7. Ingredient basics.

- Use butter or hard stick margarine (80% fat), not a spread or reduced-fat product.
- Stir dry ingredients and spoon into dry measuring cups and level with a flat-edged utensil.
- Sift only if the recipe specifies to pre-sift before measuring.
- Avoid measuring ingredients over the mixing bowl.
- Large eggs are the standard used in home baking.

8. Take it one step at a time.

- Gather ingredients.
- Do pre-preps for ingredients and equipment as needed.

9. Oven ins and outs.

- Before preheating, make sure the oven racks are in the right place for the pans and recipe.
- Allow 10 minutes for oven to preheat.
- Place pans in the oven so they do not touch each other or the oven sides. Do not place pans on racks directly below or above another pan.
- Keep clean, dry oven mitts or pads close by.
- Have cooling racks ready.

10. Clean up during preparation and while the product bakes.

