

Kids Cooking in Kitchen Tips



By Diana K. Rice, RD from the The Kids Cook Monday staff dietitian says , To ease into the Kids Cooking Habit, try these simple tips:

- **Set a date:** You don't necessarily need to hold a cooking lesson each time you put together a meal. Designate a time once a week for family cooking. By planning in advance, you'll be less frantic when the time comes and the kids will have a fun event to look forward to. Any day can work, but research shows that [Monday is an especially great day for it!](#)
- **Set up a designated area:** You're rightfully wary of perching your child anywhere near a hot stove and your chef's knives. Set up a "cooking station" in a safe area like the kitchen table with only the tools your child will need for the task at hand. Not only will this make for a less chaotic cooking experience, but it will also help your child focus on the task.
- **Have the right tools:** Certain cooking instruments, like knives and vegetable peelers, aren't always appropriate for little hands. Consider investing in child-safe versions of such tools. Not only will these tools allow your child to practice essential cooking skills, but they'll also help give your child a sense of ownership over the activity.
- **Teach one skill at a time:** Be careful not to overwhelm your child with too many tasks at once. For kids new to cooking, start with mixing, then in later weeks, move on to measuring, chopping, etc. Designate the skill of the day as your child's "job" for the family meal and be sure to congratulate him or her on a job well done to boost their kitchen confidence!
- **Be mindful of age-appropriate tasks:** If you're just starting to get your kids involved in the kitchen, it helps to now which tasks are suited for each age range:
 - **2–3-year-olds:** This group needs the most supervision, so give them simple tasks at times when you can keep a close eye on them. Start with tasks like washing produce, tearing herbs and lettuce or shaking salad dressing in a jar.
 - **4–5-year-olds:** At this age, kids can practice chopping soft fruits and vegetables with a plastic knife, mixing and measuring.
 - **6–7-year-olds:** By this age, kids have the fine motor skills to practice tasks like grating, peeling, chopping semi-hard vegetables and shaping dough.
 - **8-year-olds and up:** Kids in this range can likely practice using a can opener and chopping firm vegetables. Use your discretion; depending on their maturity, they may also be able to add items to a hot pan on the stove and take dishes out of the oven using pot holders.

