

## Cooking with Kids of Different Ages

If your kids get cooking now, chances are they will keep up this good habit as they grow older.

### Cooking with 2-3 year olds:

Young children like to explore with their senses of sight, touch, smell, hearing and tasting. Let your kids:

- Wash fruits and vegetables in the sink
- Add items to dishes (like chopped tofu to a casserole)
- Smell food, herbs and spices you are using
- Help find ingredients in the fridge or cupboard
- Put paper cups into muffin tins

### Cooking with 3-4 year olds:

At this age, children may be more interested in talking than eating! Let your kids:

- Remove eggshells from hard-boiled eggs
- Pour from a small pitcher or measuring cup
- Make a simple sandwich or pizza with pre-assembled ingredients
- Describe the colour, taste and shape of food
- Mash sweet potatoes, turnips, carrots or bananas

### Cooking with 4-6 year olds:

At this age, some kids may be more selective with their food. Be patient knowing that cooking is helping them warm up to the idea of trying new foods. Let your kids:

- Assemble foods: make trail mix or their own yogurt smoothie with toppings you've prepared
- Stir ingredients together (like muffins, pancakes, sauces)
- Slice soft-cooked vegetables, soft fruit, cheese or tofu with a plastic knife
- Crack and beat an egg
- Cook with a friend for a fun play date

### Cooking with 6-8 year olds:

At this age, kids can follow simple steps for recipes and are able to share and take turns. Let your kids:

- Use simple equipment e.g. a grater, toaster, blender or can opener after shown how to do it safely
- Make simple cold spring rolls or tortilla wraps
- Toss salad ingredients together with salad dressing
- Invent a fruit salad or smoothie recipe
- Write a list of healthy snacks they like to eat
- Write out a grocery list
- Make a simple breakfast: whole grain cereal with milk or canned fruit over yogurt

### Cooking with 8-11 year olds:

Kids at this age are more coordinated and able to understand how to use appliances safely. Let them:

- Use a knife with easy-to-cut foods (cooked meats, cheese, tofu, breads)
- Make their own school lunch
- Make a fresh fruit platter to go with dinner
- Use the stove, with supervision, to make basic recipes
- Decide what is needed to balance out a meal so it has food from each food group

*Adapted October 2018 from UnlockFood.ca*

