



Helping in the Kitchen

Having your young child help you in the kitchen is a great way to get your child to try new foods. Kids feel good about doing something “grown-up.” Give them small jobs to do and praise their efforts. Children are much less likely to reject foods they helped prepare. While the following suggestions are typical, children may develop these skills at different ages. Make sure they wash their hands before helping.

At 2 years:

- Wipe tables.
- Hand items to adult to put away (such as after grocery shopping).
- Place things in trash.
- Tear lettuce or greens.
- Make “faces” out of pieces of fruits and vegetables.
- Rinse vegetables or fruits.
- Snap green beans.

At 3 years - all that a 2-year-old can do, plus:

- Scoop or mash potatoes.
- Squeeze citrus fruits.
- Stir batter.
- Press and knead dough.
- Name and count foods.
- Help assemble a pizza.

Lemon Velvet Supreme

- 1 cup low-fat vanilla yogurt
 - 1 ½ Tablespoons instant, lemon pudding mix
 - 4 squares graham crackers, crushed
 - 1 can (15 ounces) mandarin orange slices, drained (or your favorite fresh, canned, or dried fruit)
1. Wash hands with soap and water. Combine vanilla yogurt and pudding mix; gently stir together.
 2. Layer bottom of serving dish with crushed graham crackers, reserving a few tablespoons to sprinkle on top.
 3. Pour pudding mixture over cracker crumbs.
 4. Top with mandarin orange slices or your favorite fruit. Sprinkle with remaining crumbs. Makes 4 servings. Each serving contains: 110 calories, 1.5g fat, 135mg sodium, 21g carbohydrate, 1g fiber, protein 4g.

Recipe adapted slightly from Adapted from MyPlate Kitchen and UMass Extension Nutrition Education Program, CHOICES Steps Toward Health

At 4 years - all that a 3-year-old can do, plus:

- Peel eggs and some fruits, such as oranges and bananas.
- Set and clear the table.
- Pour drinks into sturdy glasses.
- Crack eggs (in a separate bowl).
- Help measure dry ingredients.
- Help make sandwiches and tossed salads.

At 5 years - all that a 4-year-old can do, plus:

- Measure liquids.
- Cut soft fruits with a dull knife.
- Use an eggbeater.
- Load the dishwasher.
- Grease or spray baking pans.

Source: Kitchen Helper Activities, USDA’s MyPlate: <https://bit.ly/3mVF8hL>



Article written by Cami Wells, MS, RD at cwells2@unl.edu. For more information check out the Food Fun for Young Children website at: <https://go.unl.edu/chi>