



Quality ChildCare

For Registered Home-Based Providers

LEARNING TO GROW ★ WINDWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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10 Hallmarks of Quality Child Care

- ★ Build trusting relationships
- ★ Provide consistent care
- ★ **Support children's health**
- ★ Provide a safe environment
- ★ Provide positive guidance
- ★ Provide a language-rich environment
- ★ Foster curiosity and development through play
- ★ Individualize care and learning activities
- ★ Partner with parents
- ★ Pursue personal and professional growth

This Month's Hallmarks of Quality Child Care

Support Children's Health

Kids in the Kitchen

Young children are naturally curious about food...how it tastes, smells, and feels. Family child care providers have a unique opportunity to teach children about the taste, smell and texture of different types of foods as well as new vocabulary words through hands-on cooking activities. These opportunities promote lasting positive nutritional habits.

The Benefits of Cooking with Young Children

Experts agree that children are more likely to try different types of food if they are involved in its preparation. Other benefits include:

- **Social-Emotional Development** – Children who have opportunities to follow recipes and use their creativity while cooking develop confidence in themselves. Being able to contribute to adult tasks helps to build self-confidence.
- **Physical Development** – Mixing, grasping, chopping, and squeezing helps to strengthen fine-motor skills and eye-hand coordination.
- **Cognitive Development** – Cooking offers opportunities to think and problem solve. These hands-on opportunities teach numeracy, sequencing, measurement, and scientific concepts.
- **Literacy Development** – Speaking with children and introducing new words while cooking helps to enhance vocabulary. Following recipes and matching pictures to words supports literacy development.

In this newsletter, tips on how to do cooking activities with children, including safety considerations, will be shared. We will also include some fun recipes to try!



Getting Started

Cooking with children can be a fun and educational experience with the right preparation. It is crucial to select recipes that allow for hands-on and developmentally appropriate participation. Have some examples of ingredients in its raw form for children to see, touch and smell. For example, if a recipe calls for pineapple juice, providing a real pineapple allows children to observe it in its natural state. Lastly, try to prepare recipes with illustrations for children to follow. During the cooking activity, engage the children in conversation and build language skills by describing what the children are doing, asking questions, and modeling curiosity and a positive attitude.

Safety in the Kitchen

Cooking together involves some planning and safety precautions. These guidelines help to make cooking a safe, fun, and educational experience.

1. **Wash hands before you start.** Model proper handwashing steps for the children and support them as they wash their hands.
2. **Create a safe cooking space.** Set up an area where the children can safely reach the cooking materials. If stools are used, check that the children are able to balance themselves. Ensure that all sharp objects are out of reach.
3. **Supervise children at all times.** Never leave a child unattended in the kitchen. If you need to go into another room, take the children with you. Always supervise them closely as they work.



4. **Go over safety rules.** Remind children of the kitchen rules each time you have a cooking activity (e.g. “The stove is hot! No touching the stove.”) Remind children that only adults put pans in the oven and take hot pots and pans off the stove. Always keep handles of pots and pans turned inwards so children do not accidentally tip them.

5. **Offer age appropriate cooking jobs.**

Infants can:

- o Feel various ingredients such as carrots, potatoes, or bananas
- o Listen to you talk about the various ingredients
- o Play with clean, empty containers, e.g., oatmeal

Toddlers can:

- o Scrub and wash vegetables and fruits
- o Mix ingredients together
- o Use fingers to break, tear, knead, spread, pour, and shake ingredients
- o Carry unbreakable items
- o Place things in the trash

Preschoolers can:

- o Measure and mix ingredients
- o Juice or mash soft fruits and vegetables
- o Cut soft foods with a plastic or butter knife
- o Crack and beat eggs
- o Set or wipe the table

Snack or Meal Ideas

Now you are ready to get into the fun of measuring, mixing, and tasting! Start off with simple recipes such as these below.

Toddler Recipes

- *Layered Yogurt Parfait* – Have the children layer plain or vanilla yogurt and fresh fruit for a healthy treat. This teaches patterning in a tasty way! If you stick a popsicle stick in the center and freeze the parfait, you can turn this into a delicious frozen treat.
- *Easy Bread Dough* – Mix 1 cup self-rising flour and 2/3 cup Greek yogurt. Have the children mix, knead, mash, and pinch the dough to work their fine-motor skills. Children can mold it into shapes or use cookie cutters. Have them top it with raisins, sunflower seeds, or oats. Bake at 350° until browned.
- *Pita Bread Pizza* – Fill each section of a muffin pan with different toppings such as olives, grated cheese, and a variety of colorful sliced veggies. Have children spread pizza sauce on pita or naan bread and choose toppings from the muffin pan to place on their pizzas. Bake at 350° for 4–5 minutes.



Preschool Recipes

- *Strawberry Yogurt Bark* – Line a pan with parchment paper and have the children spread a layer of yogurt (approx. 3/4 inch thick). Have the children cut strawberries with a butter knife and sprinkle it over the yogurt. Freeze for at least 4 hours, then remove and peel off the parchment paper. Break it into pieces.
- *Mashed potatoes and home-made butter* – Pre-cook the potatoes and have the children cut and mash them with a butter knife and masher. Make butter using heavy cream in a thick mason jar (salt is optional). Take turns shaking for 7–10 minutes. Drain off the liquid, mix it with the butter with the potatoes and enjoy!
- *Spinach Bread* – Have the children roll out pre-made pizza dough. Use hands to flatten the dough and top with spinach and cheese. Drizzle olive oil and salt and pepper. Roll or fold the dough to hide the ingredients. Bake at 375° for 20–25 minutes.



Citations:

Growing Minds. (n.d.) *Cooking with Preschool Children*. <https://growing-minds.org/documents/cooking-with-children-in-licensed-child-care.pdf>

PBS Parents. (n.d) *Cooking with Kids*. <http://www.pbs.org/parents/food-and-fitness/eat-smart/cooking-with-kids/>

Tomlin, C. In Early Childhood News. (n.d.) http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com/earlychildhood/article_view.aspx?ArticleID=541

United States Department of Agriculture. (2015) *Kitchen Activities*. <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/kitchen-helper-activities>

Reflection Sheet, Award Book, and Training Certificates

- Providers who fill out the caregiver's reflection sheet and return it by the posted deadline to the Learning to Grow Program are *guaranteed* a children's book in return. A postage-paid envelop is provided.
- Providers who thoughtfully complete the reflection sheet **question #5** can be awarded a certificate indicating one hour of training completed. Training hours will align with the topic areas required to meet DHS requirements.
- Reflection sheets do not need to be returned by the due date in order to earn the certificate. However, the supply of award books is limited and after the due date, award books will be sent only as available.
- Indicate on Question #8 if you would like to receive free technical assistance or support related to a child care issue.



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