Cooking with Kids
Cooking with Kids

It’s vital we involve our little ones in the cooking process from early on. Not only are we including them in a central family ritual, we are teaching them about the importance of food and a valuable life skill.

You can start this process from very early on. Once your baby is able to use the highchair they can sit near you as you cook. Talk to them about what you’re doing and show them the equipment and ingredients you’re using in the process.

For toddlers it’s all about being involved in the food preparation itself. Whether they’re mixing or banging, or even handing the ingredients to you, you’re not only helping with their hand eye co-ordination, you’re developing their sense of self worth along the way.

With 3 and 4 year olds, cooking with you can be a learning process as they learn about matter. Watching something melt or get frozen is a great way to teach your little one about forms, and to help them see the ways different ingredients interact with each other.

This eBook tells you all about the things your little one will be able to help you with during the early years. We’ve also included some simple recipes and highlighted in bold where they can help you with the cooking. Lots of them don’t involve an oven or even turning on the stove to make it that bit less stressful for you.

We’ve got a great list of veggies you can plant together that you might find useful when cooking, and some printables to help you with your meal planning and keeping track of your favourite recipes.
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What your little one can do

**Baby-18 months:**
- Once they can sit up they can be strapped in a highchair to watch as you prepare the food.
- You can talk to them about what you’re doing. “Look at this apple, I’m peeling the skin off it and then chopping it up like so.”
- Once bub is on solids, let them taste the foods that you’re mashing, or are suitable for them as a finger food.
- Let them explore how foods have different textures and flavours through tasting and touching them.

**18 months-2 years can:**
- Add ingredients to the bowl.
- Mix the ingredients.
- Bring ingredients from one place to another.
- Be given a soft cloth and encouraged to help wipe tabletops.
- Be given salad ingredients to tear such as lettuce.
- Be involved with utensils like using the rolling pin or meat mallet to flatten things.
- Snap string beans, shell peas, break the heads off broccoli and cauliflower.
- Shape meatballs, dumplings and cookies.

**3-year olds can:**
- Start counting quantities with you. “How many teaspoons of milk are we adding to the flour? Let’s count them together.”
- Wrap potatoes in foil for baking.
- Pour liquids.
- Mix ingredients.
- Shake liquids in covered container.
- Spread soft spreads.
Developing good habits in the kitchen

It’s really important you model good hygiene as well as healthy eating habits to your little one. So remember our top tips for keeping it clean:

• Wash your hands (and those of your little one) before handling food. This should also be done once you’ve finished preparing the meal.
• Teach your little one not to taste food unless you’ve given them permission to do so. That’s important especially with certain raw foods.
• You should use oven gloves when handling anything hot and ensure your little one knows hot areas are strictly out of bounds for them.
• Keep pan handles turned away from the side of work surfaces.
• Clean up anything you spill straight away so you avoid any nasty slips or falls.
• Keep your little one well clear of any electrical or heated appliances at all times.
• Wipe down surfaces and wash up every time you’ve finished cooking.
• Let your little one help you out with sweeping up afterwards and teach them to use a dustpan and brush.
Simple snack recipes

We’ve highlighted in bold where your little one can help you with the cooking process. These recipes are light on using the oven and focus more on your little one helping with the mixing and stirring in of ingredients. Remember to use your judgment and decide how much they are able to help you out. You may also need to chop or mash up these snacks after you’ve made them so they are suitable for your little one to eat.

Caramelised bananas

**Ingredients:**
1. Butter
2. Slice of toast
3. 1 banana
4. ½ tablespoon brown sugar
5. Sprinkle of cinnamon

**Instructions:**
• Preheat grill
• Lightly butter the toast
• Slice up the banana thinly
• Lay the slices of banana on the toast
• Mix the cinnamon and sugar together
• Sprinkle the mix on the toast
• Place in the grill for one to two minutes until sugar mix browns
• Cool a little before serving.

Vegetarian wraps

**Ingredients:**
1. 1 mountain bread or tortilla wrap
2. 1 teaspoon of pesto
3. 1 sliced tomato
4. 50g sliced mozzarella

**Instructions:**
• Spread the pesto gently across the wrap
• Place sliced tomato and mozzarella down the centre of the wrap
• Roll up and serve.
Berry crunch

Ingredients:
1. 200 grams frozen berries
2. 150 mls yoghurt

Instructions:
• Place the berries in a bowl
• Pour over the yoghurt and stir gently
• Allow five minutes to absorb and serve.

Guacamole and vegetable dip

Ingredients:
1. Avocado
2. 1 tablespoon plain yoghurt
3. Juice from ½ a lime
4. Chopped up carrot or tortilla chips

Instructions:
• Mash the avocado
• Pour in lime juice and yoghurt and mix together
• Serve with chopped up carrot or tortilla chips.

Flapjacks

Ingredients:
1. ¾ cup butter
2. ¼ cup caster sugar
3. 1/3 cup golden syrup
4. 2 ¾ cup of rolled oats

Instructions:
• Preheat oven to 180 degrees
• Line a 20cm square cake tin with baking paper
• Mix together butter, sugar and syrup
• Place in a saucepan on low heat until butter has melted
• Add the oats and stir
• Place the mixture in the lined cake tin
• Smooth down the surface of the mix until it is even using a plastic cup to roll it
• Cook for 15-20 minutes in the oven
• Leave to cool before cutting up to serve.
Delicious dinners

These dinners are all quick and easy to make. We’ve highlighted where your little one can help you out, if you think it is appropriate. Remember to serve up all these meals with lots baked veggies or with a salad. Your child can help you shred the lettuce or with prepping the green beans to accompany dinner.

Some ingredients need to be chopped or crushed before using, so it might be a good idea to prepare some of your meal ingredients in advance before cooking with your toddler.

It’s important to note that some of these dinners may need to be modified by you so your little one can eat them. You might need to pop them in the blender or cut them finely so that you can all enjoy dinner together.

Cheese and bacon patties

**Ingredients:**
1. 1 cup grated cheddar cheese
2. 130g finely chopped bacon
3. 500g lean beef mince
4. ½ cup BBQ sauce

**Instructions:**
- Preheat oven to 200 degrees
- Place the cheese, bacon, mince and sauce in a large bowl and mix thoroughly
- In medium sized handfuls, roll into a patty shape and place on baking tray
- Place in oven and cook for 20 minutes or until fully cooked
- Turn once after 10 minutes
- Serve warm.
Salmon parcels

Ingredients:
1. Salmon fillet
2. Slice of lemon
3. Sprinkle of dill
4. Olive oil spray

Instructions:
• Preheat oven to 200 degrees
• Place salmon fillet on piece of baking paper on tray
• Spray lightly with olive oil
• Place lemon on top of salmon
• Lightly sprinkle with dill
• Wrap up the salmon in the baking paper into a small parcel
• Bake in oven for 15 minutes
• Serve immediately.

Sticky ribs

(serves 4)

Ingredients:
1. ½ cup BBQ sauce
2. ¼ cup honey
3. 2 crushed cloves garlic
4. 1 tsp balsamic vinegar
5. 900 grams pork ribs

Instructions:
• Pre-heat oven to 180 degrees
• Pour BBQ sauce, balsamic vinegar, honey and garlic into a bowl and mix
• Place pork ribs in bowl and coat with the mix
• Place the ribs in a baking dish
• Cover with foil
• Place in oven and cook for 30 minutes
• Remove baking dish from oven and remove foil, stir the ribs round
• Place back in oven and cook for another 30 minutes.
Chicken escalopes
(serves 4)

Ingredients:
1. 85g breadcrumbs
2. 15g parmesan cheese
3. 1 tsp chopped parsley
4. 2 skinless chicken breasts
5. 1 egg beaten

Instructions:
• Place breadcrumbs, parmesan and parsley in a bowl
• Place beaten egg in a separate bowl
• Cover chicken breast in glad wrap and beat with a mallet until thin
• Coat the chicken in the beaten egg
• Coat chicken in breadcrumb mixture
• Spray frying pan with olive oil and heat
• Fry chicken on medium heat until golden and cooked through.

Desserts

Desserts are usually a sometimes treat, rather than an every day occurrence. We’ve included a couple of great ones that will help with ensuring your little one is getting their fruit allowance though.

Fruit cups

Ingredients:
1. ½ a watermelon
2. 1 rockmelon
3. 2 apples
4. 2 oranges

Instructions:
• Peel and chop fruit into bite size chunks
• Place small amounts of each fruits into small cups, until it has been evenly distributed
• Serve immediately.
Fuss free chocolate balls

Ingredients:
1. Packet crushed 250g packet Marie or Arrowroot biscuits
2. ½ cup desiccated coconut
3. 400 g can of condensed milk
4. 5 tbs cocoa

Instructions:
• In a large bowl mix the crushed biscuits, condensed milk and cocoa together thoroughly
• Place coconut in separate bowl
• Make balls (about the size of a ping pong ball)
• Roll the balls in the coconut
• Place on baking tray
• Place in fridge to chill overnight
• Serve the next day.

Banana bread

Ingredients:
1. ½ cup sugar
2. 2 large ripe bananas
3. 1 cup whole egg mayonnaise
4. 2 cups self raising flour

Instructions:
• Preheat oven to 180 degrees
• Mash the bananas in a large bowl
• Add sugar and stir
• Pour in mayonnaise and flour and mix well
• Place in a lined cake tin
• Cook for 55 minutes
• Cool in tin for 15 minutes and then leave on rack to cool.
Using your own herbs and veggies from the garden

The great thing about growing veggies and herbs with your little one is that they start to understand more about where fruits and veggies come from and see the whole process in action. When gardening with kids – for the first few projects, go with varieties that are easy to grow with a fast turnover, so your kids won’t lose interest in the early days.

Some veggies that are popular with kids are sweet corn, cherry tomatoes, beans straight off the plant (not cooked) and snow peas. Easy-to-grow fruits include strawberries (which can even be grown in a hanging basket), citrus trees of most kinds, especially mandarins, passionfruit, and raspberries in colder climates.

Gardening in pots or containers is a good way to kick-start a child’s interest in gardening. The basics for success are:

- Don’t have too small a container – it will dry out too quickly and need to be watered too often.
- Use a good quality potting mix. Look for the Australian Standards mark on the bag.
- Water with a water-breaker (not a nozzle) attached to the end of a hose.
- Don’t allow the base of the pot to sit in water.
- Potting mixes need more fertiliser than soil. Feed regularly during the growing season with a soluble plant food, such as Thrive or Aquasol, or controlled release pellets.
- Wash hands after handling potting mix.
The best time to grow herbs and veggies

The table below shows the main planting and growing times of herbs and veggies that are fairly easy to grow with your little one, but these may vary slightly from state to state.

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![Image of vegetables]
### Huggies weekly meal planner

Week beginning ___________________________

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## Huggies weekly meal planner

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Favourite family recipe list

Make a list and fill in your key ingredients:

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We really hope you have enjoyed our Huggies® Cooking with kids eBook. You can visit our eBook library at www.huggies.com.au at anytime for many more free pregnancy, baby and parenting eBooks.

The Huggies Team