Fun things to do at home when cooking and preparing food
EYFS Specific areas of learning (30 – 50 months)

Cooking provides the opportunity for practical experience to develop many essential life skills. Such as following instructions, measuring, learning new words in a meaningful context and observing change. It helps children to develop fine motor skills and hand/eye coordination. To make the learning as meaningful and impactful as possible, it is really important to use what you know about children's stages of development when making suggestions of the key learning that can be supported through the activity. Equally so is taking in account the home circumstance of the family and considering how you can make this accessible as possible.

For children demonstrating learning and development behaviours noted in the left-hand column, here are some suggestions to make to parents/carers of ways they can support their child.

Literacy	**Suggested guidance to support parents/carers when cooking with their child**
Reading	
Shows interest in illustrations and print in books and print in the environment	Look at recipes together and pictures to understand what your cooking should look like. Use the recipe cards or recipes online if you don't have any cook books, or make your own.
Recognises familiar words and signs such as own name and advertising logos Looks at books independently Holds books the correct way up and turns pages Handles books carefully Knows information can be relayed in the form of print Knows that print carries meaning and, in English, is read from left to right and top to bottom	Look at the packaging of the food you use. What letter shapes or words are familiar to your child? See if your child can find letters from their name, or those of their family in the words on the packaging. Encourage your child to look through recipes and choose a menu for the day or week. Leave the recipe cards/books out for your child to look at throughout the day. Encouraging your child to read/identify letters on food packaging and on the recipe cards so that they begin to understand that information is shared using printed words. Point to the words as you read a recipe cards together, pointing along the sentences and then moving down the page as you read, your child will gradually understand how print 'works'.
Writing	
Sometimes gives meaning to marks as they draw and pain Ascribes meanings to marks that they see in different places	Make posters advertising the food you are making for a particular meal, or a special dish that your child enjoys to encourage them to make marks/draw or write words. Before you start to cook, make a list of the ingredients and utensils you need and encourage your child to find them independently, marking them off on a list that you may have created together, one that your child has made or on the recipe card.
Maths	**Suggested guidance to support parents/carers when cooking with their child**
Numbers	
Uses some number names and number language spontaneously Uses some number names accurately in play Recites numbers in order to 10 Knows that numbers identify how many objects are in a set	Read the recipe together and help your child to identify each number with the instructions and talk about what to do first, second and last of all. Encourage your child to say and 'tick off' the numbers as each element of the recipe is completed. Have fun counting any of your ingredients that offer the opportunity. From larger items such as, eggs, apples, or bananas to smaller ingredients such as dried fruit or nuts. These will also give you the opportunity for your child to guess how many there might be, before counting them together to check. Sprinkle a little

© 2020 Herts for Learning Ltd

Beginning to represent numbers using fingers, marks on paper or pictures. Sometimes matches numeral and quantity correctly Compares two groups of objects, saying when they have the same number Shows an interest in number problems Separates a group of three or four objects in different ways, beginning to recognise that the total is still the same Shows an interest in representing numbers Realises not only objects, but anything can be counted	flour or sugar on your worktop and encourage your child to make marks to represent numbers such as fingerprint dots, tally marks or actual numerals alongside the items they have counted. Ask your child to create groups of fruit or vegetables that have exactly the same amounts in them. Give your child a bowl of four pieces of fruit. Put them in a straight line and ask your child to count them using their finger to point at each piece of fruit. Then put them in a square shape and ask them to count them again. Then put three together and the fourth close by and ask them to count again. This will help them discover that there are always four no matter how they are arranged. Watch the numbers go up on a digital scale or the dial moving on manual scales when weighing ingredients and talk about what is happening. Encourage your child to count and count along with them to support them in their early stages of counting, making sure that you touch each item as you say the number. Or encourage counting each spoonful of ingredients added to the mixture.
Shape, space and measure Shows an interest in shape and space by playing with shapes or making arrangements with objects Shows awareness of similarities of shapes in the environment Uses positional language Beginning to talk about the shapes of everyday objects, for example, '*round*' and '*tall*'	Have a go at making a pizza and talk about how you're arranging the toppings or make a fruit kebab and talk about the different shaped pieces of fruit *(See recipe card 3 & 6)* Make biscuits of different shapes either using shaped cutters or moulding with your hands. *(See recipe cards 4, 8 and 9))* Talk about where you're putting things on a baking tray, or when decorating, for example behind, at the back, in front of, or beside *(See recipe cards 4, 8 and 9)* Talk about the shapes you create when cooking, for example when making Fruit scones, or when cutting the fruit for the kebabs. *(See recipe card 3 & 6)*
Understanding the World	**Suggested guidance to support parents/carers when cooking with their child**
People and communities Remembers and talks about significant events in their own experience Recognises and describes special times or events for family or friends Shows interest in different occupations and ways of life Knows some of the things that make them unique, and can talk about some of the similarities and differences in relation to friends or family ***The world*** Can talk about some of the things they have observed Talks about why things happen and how things work	As you cook, talk about things you have made previously using the same or similar ingredients or techniques. For example, 'do you remember when we mixed the sugar and eggs?' Talk about foods for particular events or celebrations. Prepare a special meal for an event. Plan this beforehand by making lists and invitations or menus for the food that will be served. Talk about the different foods you might eat outdoors such as, at a barbeque or a picnic and how these will be cooked/prepared. Pretend to be 'chefs' with your child and talk about what a chef might do. Talk about the chef's role from thinking of recipes, to buying ingredients, preparing and presenting the food. Do a survey of family and friends to find out their favourite foods. Create menus that you could share with them. They could choose from the recipe cards. Talk about similarities and differences in what family members enjoy or dislike. Cook a different family member's favourite food on each day of the week. Remember to talk with your child about the changes that happen to ingredients as they are mixed together and/or cooked. Cooking pancakes is a good recipe for this, watching the mixture go from runny to more solid. *(See recipe card 5)* Chat with your child about what is happening as things are cooking but also how some of the utensils work, for example how to use a whisk or a grater *(See recipe card 1 or 5).*

© 2020 Herts for Learning Ltd

Developing an understanding of growth, decay and changes over time ***Technology*** Knows how to operate simple equipment Shows an interest in technological toys with knobs or pulleys, or real objects. Shows skill in making toys work by pressing parts or lifting flaps to achieve effects such as sound, movements or new images.	Explore how food decays over time with your child. Observe what happens to an apple core or other fruits and vegetables when left over time. Experiment what happens when you place carrot tops in a saucer of water. Teach your child how to safely use some kitchen equipment. Allow them to press the buttons on a food processor safely or a hand held whisk. Teach them how to operate a microwave and/or the dishwasher. Support your child to access recipes on an electronic device. Use your phone or tablet to take a photo of your end result of your cooking or make a video clip of your child engaged in the cooking process to share with family members.
Expressive Art and Design	**Suggested guidance to support parents/carers when cooking with their child**
Exploring and using media and materials Beginning to be interested in and describe the texture of things Realises tools can be used for a purpose ***Being imaginative*** Notices what adults do, imitating what is observed and then doing it spontaneously when the adult is not there Engages in imaginative role-play based on own first-hand experiences	Talk about the texture of ingredients or different mixtures when you are cooking. Have a go at making some biscuits and changing the smooth texture by using a fork, the back of a spoon, a pastry brush or anything that is clean and might make a pattern or texture. *(See recipe cards 1, 8 or 4)* When you are cooking talk about the uses of kitchen utensils and their purpose. Encourage your child to work alongside you when preparing food or baking. Encourage them to learn by watching and copying what you do. Let them 'act out' some of these things when playing by using some of the utensils available and engage in their play as they serve their pretend food. Extend this play by providing paper and pens/pencils for your child to create menus.

© 2020 Herts for Learning Ltd