

Safely Working with Kids in the Kitchen

Let kids know you are here to help! After demonstrating a skill, tell them you will come around and offer suggestions or lend a hand when needed. Use these tips to help kids safely build their skills.

Chopping

- Use sharp knives only when working with kids who have the motor skills to use them safely (typically fourth grade and up). Plastic knives, table knives, or pizza cutters can be used by younger kids to cut a wide range of foods.
- The first few times you help kids chop foods, stand behind them and guide their hands with yours.

Grating

- Help kids by placing one of your hands against the grater and your other hand over their hand holding the food.
- Watch their fingers carefully so that they don't get cut or scraped.

Stirring and Mixing Ingredients

- Help kids stir thicker mixtures by placing your hand over their hand that's holding the spoon. Hold the bowl with your other hand.

Cracking Eggs

- Many kids will need assistance cracking eggs, until they get the hang of it. Show them how to gently tap the shell to crack the surface and use their thumbs to pull apart the shell.
- Have kids crack each egg into a separate bowl. Help them check for shell pieces before adding each one to a larger bowl.

Rinsing Fresh Produce

- Rinsing is a great task for all ages, but you may need to help with extra-dirty greens or heavier items.

Measuring

- Introduce kids to measuring by showing them how to pour out ingredients you've already measured.
- Let them build confidence by measuring small amounts of dry ingredients before moving to wet ingredients.

Peeling

- Show older kids how to safely angle a peeler downward to remove the skins from fruits or vegetables.
- With foods like oranges and onions, get kids started by lifting a piece of the skin so they can easily peel off the top layer by hand.

Squeezing Citrus

- Cut citrus fruits into wedges and remove seeds, so that kids can help squeeze out the juice. To make citrus fruit easier to juice, heat in the microwave for 15-20 seconds or roll the fruit on a counter or cutting board for 15 seconds before slicing.

! Before you begin your activity, review basic hand washing rules with kids (e.g., use warm, soapy water; wash for 20 seconds; re-wash hands if you touch hair or skin, use the bathroom, etc.). Have them wash hands before introducing them to any foods. Be sure they are supervised by an adult.