



Fun with Food

These kitchen activity ideas can be lots of fun for you and your children, and serve as learning experiences too. Pick your favorites to encourage eye-hand coordination, fine motor skills, oral and tactile exploration, language skills and creativity. Note: Some of these ideas involve the use of small items and should only be used with children who no longer mouth objects.

- Begin by washing hands with lots of soap and water. Have your child rub hands together to create lots of suds and bubbles.
- Butter toast or spread cream cheese on a bagel. Have your child hold the bagel in one hand and use a dull knife to spread with the other. Hint: Warm the cream cheese a bit in the microwave to make it easier to spread.
- Hold a pot handle with one hand and stir with the other hand. Try making pudding or mashed potatoes from potato buds.
- Use fruits and vegetables to make kabobs and edible sculptures. Anchor them together using toothpicks and straws. Add mini-marshmallows for even more fun. Make animal and snowman sculptures to add some drama!
- String Cheerios on thin licorice ropes to make necklaces.
- Thread big marshmallows on straws to make magic wands.
- Use a dull knife and practice cutting anything! Slices of cheese, bananas, and cooked pasta strands are good for a start.
- Messy play without the mess! Place a gooey mixture such as pudding or marshmallow fluff in a resealable plastic bag. You can make your own goop by combining cornstarch and water (2:1). Add food coloring to color. Keep in the bag and you are ready to play!
- Let your child make a snack mix. Provide small bowls of raisins, cereals, pretzels, and other small foods. Have your child slowly pour the contents of each bowl one by one in a large mixing bowl. Stir with a wooden spoon or use two hands to toss and mix.
- Make a log cabin by using a cardboard box, self-hardening frosting and a variety of pretzels and crackers.
- Cover a plate with peanut butter, whipped cream, or pudding. Use a pretzel rod to draw pictures, letters and designs.
- Finger paint with pudding using different flavors as different colored paints.



Fun with Food...(continued)

- Put a glob of peanut butter on the end of a pretzel rod and have your child pick up goldfish crackers from a bowl. Make a whipped cream mustache above your child's lip and have her or him lick it off while watching in the mirror. Or dip the child's fingertips in peanut butter, yogurt, or pudding and have the child lick it off.
- Use fruits and vegetables to make printing stamps. Cut shapes or letters into flat sides. Let your child dip them in tempera paints and stamp onto paper to make prints.
- Experiment with foods that have different textures. For example, the root of a green onion can be used as a brush to create a fuzzy effect.
- Make your own butter or milkshake by shaking the ingredients in a jar. For butter: Place two tablespoons of heavy whipping cream in a baby food jar and shake until thick. Salt to taste and serve on crackers. For a banana milkshake: Mash a small banana and place it in a jar with two tablespoons of milk. Shake until thick.
- Take turns tossing popcorn into each other's wide open mouths.
- Play guessing games. Have your child close his or her eyes and guess what food you place in his or her mouth. This encourages your child to use three senses: taste, touch, and smell. Make Peanut Butter Play dough. Stir together: 1 cup of peanut butter, 2 to 3 tablespoons of honey, and 1/2 to 3/4 cup of dried milk. Refrigerate for two hours. Roll the mixture into balls. Mold it into favorite shapes. Eat and enjoy!