



Easy Ways to Teach Your Kids About Cooking

It's never too early to start teaching your kids about healthy eating. Cooking with your kids is an excellent way to help them learn about healthy foods and teach them skills to last a lifetime. Lorna Shaw-Hoepfner, a Registered Dietitian and a Breakfast for Learning volunteer, shares her tips on how you can engage your kids in the kitchen:

- **Squelching the Picky Eater:** Take the 'picky' out of your 'picky eater' by helping him/her to learn about food. Research shows kids are more likely to try new foods and choose healthier foods when they help select and prepare the food.
- **Building lifelong skills:** Letting children watch you cook is excellent role modelling, but there is no better way to learn a skill than through hands-on experience. Help children learn to cook by letting them cook! You can also share information about the benefits of certain foods while you are cooking.
- **Quality time together:** Cooking together is a great way to reconnect with your kids after a busy day. It is also a wonderful way to pass on family traditions and recipes.
- **No job (or child) too small:** Be certain to keep jobs age appropriate in order to keep kids safe. As children get older their coordination and fine motor skills improve and they will be able to take on more responsibility. Be sure to teach them about kitchen and food safety.

Younger children can:

- Wash fruits and vegetables
- Tear lettuce for salad
- Help stir batter and toss salads
- Mash potatoes
- Add ingredients to recipes
- Help with grocery shopping
- Watch and learn while you cook

As children get older try adding in more jobs such as:

- Stirring ingredients
- Setting the table
- Making a sandwich
- Following a simple recipe
- Using basic kitchen tools and appliances
- Helping with meal planning

About Breakfast for Learning

Breakfast for Learning is committed to ensuring students attend school well nourished and ready to learn. In the 2013/14 school year, Breakfast for Learning funded 2,402 breakfast, lunch and snack programs, served 251,531 children and youth and provided over 40 million nourishing meals and snacks. Since 1992, Breakfast for Learning has helped serve over 510 million meals to children and youth across Canada. For more information, please visit breakfastforlearning.ca.