



Extension Connection

For Immediate Release:

June 18, 2018

The mission of K-State Research and Extension Family and Consumer Sciences is to link education with life experiences to help people improve their lives, their families and their communities. Family and Consumer Sciences professionals support essential life skills including Community Development, Healthy Lifestyle Choices, Leadership & Volunteer Development, Relationship Development and Resource Management.

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Kids in the Kitchen

Want your child to be willing and maybe even eager to try new foods? Cooking is a lifelong skill that even the smallest of children can begin learning and kitchen skills go far beyond food! Inviting kids into the kitchen provides a wonderful opportunity for quality time, development of gross and fine motor skills and has them applying math skills to real life. Research also shows that kids who help plan and prepare meals are more likely to try new foods! Most kids are interested in and excited to help out in the kitchen, read on to better understand some age appropriate activities for the kids in your life.

Each child has their own pace for learning and applying a new skill, but most 2-year-olds can:

- Wipe counters & tables
- Help unpack groceries onto the counter or table
- Place waste in the trash
- Rinse or scrub fruits and vegetables

Most 3-year-olds can do additional activities such as

- Adding ingredients together
- Scooping, spreading, squeezing and stirring

Most 4-year-olds can do additional activities such as:

- Peeling eggs & fruits (such as bananas or oranges)
- Helping set the table
- Measuring and combining dry ingredients
- Assembling sandwiches or salads

Most 5-year-olds can do additional activities such as:

- Measuring liquids
- Begin cutting soft foods with a dull knife and close supervision

Most 6 and 7-year-olds will continue to master these basic kitchen skills. Depending on the child and their level of experience in the kitchen, it is possible they will be ready to start using the stove or oven between 8-10 years of age. Often, 10 to 12-year-olds are able to safely and successfully work independently in the kitchen, though it is suggested that an adult is around whenever possible.

As kids get older, they will naturally begin taking on more advanced tasks. Make kitchen safety rules known to kids, including an awareness of hot or sharp objects and food handling safety. The most important thing is to be patient, expect a few spills and have fun!

Wildcat Extension District offers a three-day cooking camp for school-aged kids who have completed 2nd -5th grades over the summer. More information can be obtained by calling 620-232-1930 or you can sign-up online: <http://www.wildcatdistrict.k-state.edu/food-family/kidscancook/index.html>

For additional information, contact the Wildcat Extension District, Crawford County, 620-724-8233, Labette County, 620-784-5337, Montgomery County, 620-331-2690, Pittsburg Office, Expanded Food and Nutrition Education (EFNEP), 620-232-1930 and Wilson County, 620-378-2167. Our website is <http://www.wildcatdistrict.k-state.edu/> or follow us on Facebook: Wildcat Extension District.

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