






## Age-Appropriate Kitchen Jobs




**Babies:** Although babies can't help with the cooking, they enjoy being with their parent or caregiver and experiencing the sights, sounds and smells of the kitchen. Talk to them about what you are doing as you move around the kitchen. Tell them about the foods you're preparing and the utensils you're using.




Leave babies in their high chair or another safe place, even after they begin to crawl. Give them a separate bowl and spoon and let them mix foods that are safe for them to eat.





**Age 2:** Two-year-olds are learning to use the large muscles in their arms and can help with these activities:

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- wiping table tops.
  - moving premeasured ingredients from one place to another.
  - playing with utensils.
  - snapping fresh beans.
  - breaking cauliflower or bread for stuffing.
  - rinsing and tearing lettuce and salad greens.
  - scrubbing and dipping vegetables and fruits.






**Age 3:** This age level is learning to use their hands and can manage all of the above, plus jobs such as:

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- pouring liquids into a batter.
  - mixing ingredients such as muffin batter. (Use an extra large bowl to contain mess.)
  - shaking a milk drink in a covered container.
  - spreading soft spreads, such as peanut butter on firm bread. (This may be messy!)
  - kneading dough and simple shaping.
  - wrapping potatoes in foil for baking.
  - putting trash in the garbage can.



**Ages 4 - 5:** Kids in this age group are learning to control smaller muscles in their fingers, so offer experiences such as:

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- setting the table.
  - mashing soft fruits (bananas) and cooked vegetables with a fork.
  - rolling bananas in cereal for a snack.
  - forming round shapes with hands.
  - measuring dry and liquid ingredients.
  - peeling loose-skinned oranges and hard-cooked eggs.
  - beating eggs with an eggbeater or whisk.
  - cutting parsley, green onions or dried fruits with dull scissors.
  - cutting with a blunt knife (e.g. fruit on a cutting board).





**Ages 6 - 8:** This age level has mastered all of the previous jobs and is ready to learn tasks such as:

- cleaning surfaces before and after use.
- gathering utensils and ingredients.
- greasing or spraying baking pans.
- light chopping.
- peeling onions and garlic.
- grating cheese.
- opening cans.
- washing fruits and vegetables.
- advanced measuring (e.g. measuring liquids and spooning dry ingredients into measuring cup and leveling off).
- kneading dough.
- breaking eggs.
- melting butter.
- crushing crackers in a bag with a rolling pin.
- washing dishes and putting away ingredients and utensils.

**Ages 9 - 12:** Children at this age level still need adult supervision, but they can manage jobs such as:

- planning and preparing simple meals and snacks.
- following a recipe, measuring accurately and preparing a product.
- reading and interpreting ingredient and food labels.
- operating small appliances like blenders, mini-choppers, juicers, and microwave ovens.
- moderate chopping, dicing and cutting.
- sautéing and pan frying.
- steaming, broiling, boiling and baking.
- handling and storing ingredients and finished products safely.
- cleaning up, knowing how and what to hand wash or wash in the dishwasher.

**Teens:** By adolescence, kids are making most of their own decisions about food and are capable of:

- performing tasks that require multiple preparation steps or close timing.
- creating new flavor combinations, shapes or decoration.
- planning and preparing whole menus for meals or entertaining.
- making shopping lists and shopping for ingredients.
- helping younger children learn about food and how to prepare it.
- enjoying cooking with peers.

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