

Cooking Skills to encourage with 5 - 7 year olds



- Washing fruit and vegetables
- Breading and flouring - you can set up three stations with flour, beaten egg and breadcrumbs for fish fingers
- Mixing - using either a spoon or hands to mix together ingredients
- Kneading - light kneading can be fun but you'll need to step in to complete the task.
- Rolling, shaping and cutting dough - choose plastic cutters and a small rolling pin
- Spreading - buttering bread and spreading icing
- Cutting using a small knife - children should learn how to form their hand into a claw to keep fingertips out of danger. Start with cutting soft ingredients like butter, banana, mushrooms, and strawberries using a strong plastic knife. As they master this skill move on to a paring knife and harder textured foods.
- Cutting with scissors - if you can get smaller scissors or children's scissors, use them to snip herbs
- Grating - fingers can easily be grated so keep watch and make sure they don't get too close to the end of whatever they're grating.
- Measuring - even the very youngest children can do this but as children learn to read and do basic math, this is a great opportunity for them to do this with less supervision
- Rubbing in - rubbing in flour and butter with fingertips is called for in many recipes
- Beating and folding - show children how to beat cake mixture with a wooden spoon or fold in egg whites without knocking out too much air
- Greasing and lining a cake tin or tray
- Peel oranges or hard-boiled eggs – use eggs that have been chilled or refrigerated
- Setting the table - encourage them to cherish the ritual of family meals

Cooking Skills for 8-11 year olds



Along with the all of the skills suggested for 5 - 7 year olds, when children reach 8 +, they can start to get involved with planning and undertake activities with a bit more independence. Supervision is still key due to the number of hazards in the kitchen but take a hands off approach where possible.

Activities to try with 8 - 11 year olds

- Planning the family meal
- Following a simple recipe
- Finding ingredients in the cupboards and fridge
- Using a peeler
- Whisking, using a balloon whisk or handheld mixer
- Using heat on an oven and microwave- taking out of oven using pot holders
- Making salads
- Opening cans

Gradually introduce your children to these skills and make sure they are aware of the dangers involved. If you feel they are not ready, hold off for a while. Cuts and burns are common in the kitchen so always keep an eye on them. However capable they may be, it's easy to get distracted or try to rush an activity.

