

Helping in the Kitchen

Involving your young child in kitchen activities is an excellent way to encourage them to explore new foods. Kids take pride in participating in “grown-up” tasks. Assign them small responsibilities and celebrate their contributions. Children are much more inclined to try foods they had a hand in preparing. While the following suggestions are typical, children may develop these skills at different ages. Make sure they wash their hands before helping.

2 years:

- Wipe tables.
- Hand items to adult to put away like groceries
- Place things in trash.
- Tear lettuce or greens.
- Create “faces” using pieces of fruits and vegetables.
- Rinse fruits or vegetables.

3 years - all that a 2-year-old can do, plus:

- Scoop or mash potatoes.
- Squeeze citrus fruits.
- Stir batter.
- Press and knead dough.
- Name and count foods.
- Help assemble a pizza.

4 years - all that a 3-year-old can do, plus:

- Peel eggs and some fruits, such as oranges and bananas.

- Set and clear the table.
- Pour drinks into sturdy glasses.
- Crack eggs (in a separate bowl).
- Help measure dry ingredients.
- Assist in making sandwiches and tossed salads.

5 years - all that a 4-year-old can do, plus:

- Measure liquids.
- Cut soft fruits with a dull knife.
- Use an eggbeater.
- Load the dishwasher.
- Grease or spray baking pans.

Source: Kitchen Helper Activities, USDA’s MyPlate: <https://bit.ly/3mVF8hL>. Article written by Cami Wells, MS, RD at cwells2@unl.edu. For more information check out the Food Fun for Young Children website at: <https://go.unl.edu/food-fun> .

Lemon Velvet Supreme

1 cup low-fat vanilla yogurt

1 ½ Tablespoons instant, lemon pudding mix

4 squares graham crackers, crushed

1 can (15 ounces) mandarin orange slices, drained (or a favorite fresh, canned, or dried fruit)

1. Wash hands with soap and water. Combine vanilla yogurt and pudding mix; gently stir together.
 2. Layer bottom of serving dish with crushed graham crackers, reserving a few tablespoons to sprinkle on top. Pour pudding mixture over cracker crumbs.
 3. Top with mandarin orange slices or your favorite fruit. Sprinkle with remaining crumbs.
- Makes 4 servings. Each serving contains: 110 calories, 1.5g fat, 135mg sodium, 21g carbohydrate, 1g fiber, protein 4g. Recipe adapted from MyPlate Kitchen.

