

How Children with Special Needs Benefit From Cooking

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For children with special needs, cooking can be an opportunity to increase independence, put basic academic skills to use in a functional way, and an opportunity to learn how to eat healthy. There are many aspects of cooking that can help children improve in different areas of life.

Keep it Simple

Keeping the activities and recipes simple is recommended, for kids with special needs such as [ADHD](#) and Asperger's can feel overwhelmed by complicated recipes, and often find it difficult to focus on preparing complex meals.

[Simple Recipes to cook with kids](#)

Cooking: A sensational experience

Cooking is a multi-sensory experience. Children who have [sensory processing](#) challenges can benefit greatly from the [smells](#), [textures](#) and [tastes](#) involved with the cooking process. When choosing a recipe, try and look for foods that have interesting tastes and textures, for example, the outside and inside of an avocado, banana or cantaloupe. Turning the activity into a [sensory experience](#) is a good way to try and encourage your children to try new foods while having fun.

[How to make cooking a sensory experience](#)

TIP:

Use spices! Some scents will “wake up” the system and others will relax it. Let your child smell the different scents and have them describe it to you.

Activity: Put some ingredients in a box, tell your child to close their eyes and let them feel the different foods. Let them guess which food is what!

Improves Gross Motor Skills

Rolling, mashing and kneading are all activities that are involved with cooking and baking, and may help children stay focused on the task. For children who are defensive to the [sense of touch](#), feeling materials such as wet dough may be difficult. It may be beneficial to bring in

cooking tools so they don't have to touch with their hands; each child is different, so it's important to adapt to their needs!

Other links to explore:

[Picture recipes for young children and non-readers](#)

[Help kids make their own snacks](#)

Share your baking experiences with us! Tag us on Instagram at #weezeeworld and follow us to see our sensory experiences @weezeeworld

References:

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