



Top Tools for Cooking with Kids

Kids don't need special equipment to cook with you. In fact, they're delighted to use your grown-up tools! Here are some tools and accessories that make family cooking sessions easier and more enjoyable for everyone.

	<p>An apron</p> <p>Cooking's more fun when you don't have to worry about getting goopy. (This goes for adults too. You'll find yourself diving deeper into the cooking experience if you're not concerned about spills and spatters.)</p>
	<p>A safe, stable stool</p> <p>Cooking is safer and more fun when your child's waist is about even with the edge of the counter. A four-legged flat stool is best—never use a folding chair or other tippy, slanted or collapsible surface.</p>
	<p>A jelly roll pan</p> <p>This large, flat pan with raised edges makes the perfect workspace for your junior assistant. When you're done, it's easy to carry the whole (inevitable) mess to the sink.</p>
	<p>Melon baller</p> <p>Watermelon is soft, and making round balls with this not-very-sharp tool is a lot of fun for kids. What else can be cut into balls? Bananas? Potatoes?</p>
	<p>Cookie cutters</p> <p>Don't use them just for cookies! Let kids cut bread into shapes for sandwiches and French toast. Or cook a few eggs into a thin omelet and see how much more quickly it gets eaten in shapes!</p>



	<p>Meat tenderizer</p> <p>Everyone likes to whack things. If you want something whacked, the nearest kid would love to oblige. 'Nuff said.</p>
	<p>Salad spinner</p> <p>Little hands can easily tear up lettuce, wash it, and spin it.</p>
	<p>Safe knives</p> <p>Toddlers can use a butter knife to cut soft foods like bananas; as they get older they can graduate to a plastic serrated picnic knife. As kids approach their tweens, teach them safe knife skills under supervision, with real knives.</p>

Younger children's short attention spans may mean that you'll still be cooking when they've had enough. That's when it's time to move them over to the sink, where they can happily enjoy water play with a few bowls, ladles, funnels and measuring cups. Even when they're not doing exactly what you are, being nearby and enjoying the smells and sights of food helps kids learn a love of cooking and healthy eating.