

Cooking Area



Cooking experiences teach children how food is prepared and cooked and how it contributes to their health and well being. Children enjoy cooking experiences as it is one of the few activities which allow them to do exactly the same thing that adults do.

Cooking can be considered one of the most enjoyable activities on the program. It is also a real hand on experience as children begin to develop skills in other areas. For example, as children melt cheese, they learn about science, as they measure a cup of milk for the cake mix, they learn about measurement and volume. As the children peel carrots, knead dough and stir mixtures they are not only supporting their physical development, the children are also extending their vocabulary.

Benefits of Cooking Activities

Preparing food with the children, teaches them about good nutrition and cultural preferences. Children work together to see a task through to completion and take pride in a group task. Listed below, are some suggested learning objectives that supports a child's overall development.

- Children learn to develop independence (following a recipe by referring to picture signs).
- Encourages children to work co-operatively (sharing and taking turns when using cooking equipment).
- Enables children to develop self help skills (preparing own snacks).
- Helps children to learn about nutrition (preparing a healthy snack).
- Develops fine motor control (chopping vegetables, squeezing lemons, stirring batter).
- Enhances hand / eye co-ordination (cracking an egg).
- Children begin to understand direction (stirring clock wise and anti-clock wise).
- Gain an understanding of maths concepts (such as measuring and sequencing).

Cooking activities are wonderful opportunities for children to have practical firsthand experience of exploring the world of food. Not only do the children learn how food is prepared but they are also able to extend on their vocabulary. It's important to encourage each child's language development through cooking by: talking to a child about how food smells, tastes, looks and feels, explaining how heat changes food, the names of various foods, how many cups or teaspoons of an ingredient you are using. Cooking appeals to children's senses and provides a wealth of learning opportunities.

Linking to the Early Years Learning Framework

- 1.2** – Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter – dependence, resilience and sense of agency.
- 2.1** – Children develop a sense of belongings to groups & communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active communication.
- 3.2** – Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing.
- 4.2** – Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, enquiry, experimentation, hypothesizing, researching and investigating.
- 5.4** – Children begin to understand how symbols and patterns systems work.

QIAS Principle 4.4 – Staff promote each child's problem solving and mathematical abilities.