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BEHIND THE SCENES FOOD

Kids in the kitchen



Zebbie Borland teaches children to cook at Dorothy Lane Market's School of Cooking. CONTRIBUTED

10 ways to get preschoolers cooking for fun.

By Susan Dalzell
Contributing Writer

My 3-year-old constantly wants to join me at the kitchen counter, eager to get his little fingers into whatever dish I might be whipping up. I'm glad to have him there, but it can be a little nerve-racking and frustrating, too.

So, I looked to the experts. Zebbie Borland has been teaching kids to cook at Dorothy Lane Market's School of Cooking in Dayton for 15 years. (Her kid-friendly cooking skills were also sharpened at home, where she raised seven children.) Heather Hotlosz is the owner of the Young Chef's Academy in Mason and a veteran instructor, as well.

Both teachers said it's never too early to foster a love of food and cooking. "Children as young as 2 or 3 can be a help in the kitchen," Hotlosz said. "You can start when they're willing to start."

Here are 10 great ideas for stirring up safe kitchen fun with your own preschoolers:

1. Shop together: Let your child help pick out the ingredients at the store. "They can feel textures, smell fruit and vegetables and see the colors," Borland said.

2. Start a garden: Kids love to grow things. Even if you only raise a few herbs, it helps to make the connection between where food comes from and how it ends up on our plates.

3. Take the time: It may not be practical or wise to try and cook every day with a little one. Instead, set special time aside so you can prepare properly and not be rushed when your child is standing there next to you. "You have to make sure you are patient with them," Hotlosz said.

4. Equip yourself: Get Liam or Emma their very own aprons to wear when cooking. Plastic knives or pizza cut-

KIDS COOKING CLASSES

Local cooking schools are offering summer classes for kids. Check out: **Young Chefs Academy:** 6649 Western Row Road, Mason, 513-549-CHEF (2433), www.youngchefsacademy.com

Dorothy Lane Market's School of Cooking: 6161 Far Hills Ave., Dayton, 937-535-5696, www.dorothylane.com/cooking/soc/

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ters can help introduce them to basic cutting skills while reducing the chance of accidents. Child-sized whisks and spatulas can help add to the fun. Use extra bowls for tougher tasks like cracking eggs or measuring ingredients, so there's less pressure to get it perfect the first time.

5. Get messy: "One thing that is hard for parents is they want to control the mess. If you focus too much on that, you and your child will just end up frustrated," Hotlosz said. She suggested working in a big enough area so that if

you do spill stuff, it's not a big deal. Do keep hands clean, though. Ensure you and your child wash hands before handling food and after any sneaky finger licks happen.

6. Talk and explain: Your kid might understand what you're doing, even if he isn't ready to do himself. "Treat them with respect," Borland recommends. This is also key for safety. Point things out as you go. Tell your child which burners are hot. Caution them to stand back when you open up the oven. Warn them that a knife is sharp and is just for

Daddy.

7. Make it pretty: Slice a strawberry and fan it out. Press cookie cutters down in to sandwiches. Add drops of food coloring to ice cubes or lemonade. Create mini-versions of recipes, so kids can help make tiny cakes or quiches.

8. Ask Grandma: Both of our experts made this suggestion. Family recipes can be a great way to foster a love of cooking. "Have Grandma help you to make your own recipe book," Borland suggested.

9. Go the library: "There are so many great books available on food and recipes for kids," Borland said. Let your own imagination take off. Borland has taught cooking classes based on ingredients mentioned in Eric Carle's *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*.

10. Get adventurous: This one is for the kids. "If they make things, they are more apt to try it themselves," Borland said. Hotlosz has seen

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Engage your kids in cooking

Kids

continued from D1

many a picky eater in her classes try – and like – something new.

Easy kid recipes

Ready to get started in the kitchen?

Try these easy child-friendly recipes, complements of Dorothy Lane Market cooking instructor Zebbie Borland.

FRUITY PARFAITS

Serves 6

- 2 cups granola cereal**
- 2 cups your favorite fruit**
- 2 cups vanilla yogurt or your favorite flavor yogurt**
- 6 strawberries for garnish**

Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Toast granola cereal about five minutes to enhance flavor.

Cut fruit into small chunks and sweeten if necessary.

Put half of granola in bottom of parfait glasses; add half of the fruit and then half of the yogurt.

Repeat layers.

Top with strawberry for garnish.

BUNNY SALAD

Makes 1

- Leaf lettuce leaves**
- Canned pear halves, one per bunny**
- Raisins**
- 4 slivered almonds per bunny**
- Cottage cheese, one small scoop per pear half**
- Cheddar cheese**
- Parsley sprigs**

Drain pears. Place a lettuce leaf on your salad plate.

Add one pear half on top of the lettuce with the pear cut side down.

At the large end of the pear half, place a small scoop of cottage cheese for bunny's tail.

Insert raisins for eyes and nose. Add slivered almonds for the whiskers.

Cut cheddar cheese into a carrot shape and add a sprig of parsley for the carrot greens. Place at your bunny's nose for his lunch.

Contact this contributing writer at susan.dalzell@gmail.com.