

## **Kitchen Safety for Kids– Teacher’s Guide**

**Objective:** To teach basic kitchen safety for children.

Share with participants: **“Children can safely help in the kitchen as long as they do age-appropriate tasks.”**

Sample **ANCHOR** questions for participants:

- ***“What do you think could be dangerous to a child in the kitchen?”***
- ***“What things can you do to make the kitchen a safe and fun place for your child?”***

**Background Information** - Choose the appropriate information below to **ADD** to your lesson.

### **Age-Appropriate Tasks for Children in the Kitchen**

**TWO-YEAR-OLDS** USE THEIR HANDS AS IF THEY HAVE MITTENS ON. THEY HAVE VERY SHORT ATTENTION SPANS CAN DO THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:

- Clean vegetables with brushes.
- Clean tables.
- Tear, break, and snap foods.
- Dip foods into dips.

**THREE-YEAR-OLDS** CAN DEVELOP HAND MUSCLES WITH THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:

- Wrap foil around food.
- Wrap dough around meat or vegetable fillings to make many cultural dishes.
- Press dough into baking pan.
- Pour from small plastic pitchers. (Practice at the sink or in the sandbox.)
- Mix with hands or a wooden spoon in a container twice the size of the amount of the mixture.
- Shake small jars of food.
- Spread foods using dull table knives or small spatulas.

**FOUR-YEAR-OLDS** ARE ABLE TO USE FINGERS. THEY CAN DEVELOP FINE MOTOR COORDINATION WITH THESE ACTIVITIES:

- Use fingers to peel eggs, oranges, corn, etc.
- Roll and flatten food.
- Mash foods.

**FIVE-YEAR-OLDS** CAN DEVELOP FINE MOTOR COORDINATION WITH THESE ACTIVITIES:

- Measure ingredients.
- Cut soft foods.

- Teach knife safety: **“Always supervise this activity”**  
Use a cutting board, a knife that fits their hands, and a plastic serrated knife for soft foods. Show how to hold a knife and cut safely.
- Turn a grinder.
- Grate food.
- Beat with an egg beater.

\*Adapted from “Parents and Children Growing Together”, Washington State University, Cooperative Extension.

The kitchen can be the most dangerous room in the house. It is important that children are supervised (watched closely) while in the kitchen and allowed to do tasks that are age suitable for their age.

### **Kitchen Dangers**

- ✓ Keep sharp objects out of the children’s reach.
- ✓ Turn the handles of pots and pans on the stove inward so children can not reach them.
- ✓ Be careful not to leave hot food where children can reach it.
- ✓ Keep the temperature of your hot water below 120 degrees by turning down the temperature of your hot water heater.
- ✓ Avoid using tablecloths. Young children may try pulling on the tablecloth and objects on top could fall down on the child.
- ✓ Store snack foods away from the stove so the children won’t get burned reaching for food.
- ✓ Keep young children away from the oven if the door gets hot during baking.
- ✓ Keep young children in a safe place (high chair, playpen, etc.) while cooking to keep them away from kitchen hazards.
- ✓ Don’t allow appliance cords to dangle or hang over counter tops or table edges to keep children safe from appliances falling on them.
- ✓ Cover electrical outlet with plastic plug-in protectors.
- ✓ Older children tall enough to operate a microwave still need adult supervision.

### **Tips To Make The Kitchen A Safe & Fun Place For Your Child**

1. Kitchens should have a fire extinguisher coded for kitchen fires and a smoke alarm should be located in or near the kitchen. Have a fire exit plan discussed with your family so they know what to do in case a fire occurs.
2. Teach your child the dangers in the kitchen. Explain to them what is sharp, hot, etc. Tell them the kitchen is not place for “rough housing” or “horseplay”. They need to pay close attention to each kitchen task they perform.
3. Demonstrate how all the kitchen equipment works. However, use good judgment when deciding what is safe for your child to do at their particular age. Children

progress at different rates so there are no set rules on when a child can perform a particular task.

4. Have children learn first on non-electrical equipment, like a hand beater, before they progress to electric equipment.
5. Have children use metal or plastic utensils, measuring cups and bowls that won't break if they fall.
6. Allowing a child to use the **stove** is a huge responsibility for the child and you. There are many dangers present when using a stove. Only when a child is tall enough, mature and responsible should they be able to operate/cook on a stove. Adult supervision is always required.

**Stove Dangers:**

- a. Electric burners stay hot long after the burner has been turned off.
  - b. Loose fitting clothes could drape over a burner and catch on fire.
  - c. Cooking produces steam that can burn skin when removing the lid.
  - d. Frying food causes hot fat to spatter and can burn the skin and eyes if the pan is not properly covered using a spatter lid.
  - e. Handles on pots and pans can catch on clothes or get in the way causing the pan to get knocked on the floor so the liquids spill and could cause burns.
7. **Microwave ovens** appear to be safer to use than stoves and regular ovens. However, there are many dangers associated with using a microwave for cooking.
    - a. Some microwaves are dangerous to turn on when empty. Make sure your child understands this.
    - b. Use only microwave-safe cookware. Containers not specifically for microwave cooking can melt in the microwave. It is not safe to eat food that has had its container break down (melt, burn) during the cooking process.
    - c. Food coming out of the microwave can be very hot even if it does not look like it.
    - d. Microwaves cook unevenly so certain areas of the food may be hotter than others. Take care when serving the food so a child does not get burned by a "hot-spot". Stir foods or mix foods well before serving.
  8. A **toaster** may appear to be an easy appliance to teach your child how to use but there are hidden dangers.
    - a. Keep the toaster away from curtains, paper towels or anything that could catch on fire.
    - b. Food can get stuck in a toaster. Always unplug a toaster before trying to remove stuck food to avoid electrical shock. Adults should perform this task. This is not a task for a child.
    - c. Toasters and/or the food inside them can catch on fire. Teach your child to tell an adult immediately if they see a fire in the toaster.

**Activity (APPLY):**

“Kitchen Safety” picture activity

**Handouts (AWAY):**

“Kids in the Kitchen”

“Keep the Kitchen a Safe Place for Children”

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