

Involving Children in Preparing Festive Meals: A Simple Way to Encourage Healthy Habits

Festive meals hold an important place in family life: they are moments of sharing, joy, and celebration. But they also offer a wonderful opportunity to involve children in the kitchen and to pass on healthy eating habits from an early age.

Preschool-aged children love helping with cooking, and as a result, they are more willing to eat foods they have helped prepare.

Of course, this approach takes more time than when parents cook alone, but the effort is not wasted—it is an investment in our children's health for the future.

Why Involve Children in Cooking?

- **Strengthen Family Bonds**
Preparing a festive meal becomes a true moment of togetherness. Children love to feel useful, and they are proud to contribute to an important family event.
- **Encourage a Varied Diet**
Children are much more likely to try a dish when they have taken part in its preparation.
- **Develop Autonomy and Confidence**
Giving small responsibilities helps build self-esteem.
- **Learn in a Fun Way**
Cooking is an excellent way to learn: counting, measuring, following steps...



Adapting Tasks to the Child's Age

For younger children, washing fruits and vegetables, stirring with a spoon, and decorating a dish will make them proud to have helped.

Older children can take part by measuring ingredients, cutting soft foods, and reading simple steps from recipe books. To create a positive environment, value each child's efforts, encourage without forcing, and lead by example.

Children can also help set and clean the table before and after the meal, according to their age and abilities.



Let's make

Rainbow Fruit Salad

Ingrédients (6 to 8 servings):

- 1 cup (250 ml) sliced strawberries or raspberries
- 1 orange, sliced and chopped
- 1 cup (250 ml) mango pieces, fresh or frozen
- 1 cup (250 ml) pineapple chunks
- 1 banana, sliced or diced.
- 1 cup (250 ml) green grapes
- 1 apple, or 2 kiwis, chopped
- 1 cup (250 ml) blueberries
- 1 cup (250 ml) blackberries or red grapes
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) frozen dragon fruit pieces

For the dressing:

- Juice and zest of two limes
- 1 tablespoon (30 ml) honey
- A few chopped mint leaves (optional)



Join the band

A Simple Indoor Game During the Holidays

How to Play:

- With the children, experiment with the instruments to find out the different sounds they can make. Play loudly, softly, quickly, slowly.
- Encourage the children to play along in time to rhythmic clapping or recorded music, moving all around the space. Stop the music or clapping every now and then and change instruments. Vary the rhythm and encourage the children to try to keep the beat.



Simple Homemade Tambourines

(PEP manual, page 137)

Materials:

- Two paper plates per tambourine
- Rice, dried beans, or lentils
- A stapler and tape
- Decorations

Instructions:

1. Staple the paper plates together, leaving a small opening. You can also use tape to join the plates.
2. Fill the inside with rice, dried beans, or lentils.
3. After filling, seal the opening with staples or tape.
4. Decorate and shake.

Références

- <https://ingenium.ca/agriculture/en/recipes/rainbow-fruit-salad/>
- <https://healthystartkids.ca/tool/leap-food-flair-manual/>
- <https://healthystartkids.ca/tool/leap-hop/>