

# Food activities for children

## Gardening

Plant tomatoes, carrots, snow peas, bean sprouts, herbs etc. If you don't have much space or time, try planting in pots, or milk containers with holes in the base.



## Meal planning

Sit down with a few cookbooks and get the children to choose some meals and snacks that they'd like to try.

## Shopping

If your children are old enough get them to help write the shopping list and find the foods in the shop. Young children may like to draw the items that you want to buy.

Have a healthy snack or meal before you go and try to avoid giving in to nagging for **sometimes** foods.

## Food Preparation and cooking

Start with simple tasks like:

- picking herbs
- scrubbing vegetables
- tearing lettuce
- shelling peas
- breaking cauliflower and broccoli

Add tasks as your child's skills increase. For example:

- wrapping vegetables in foil
- pouring liquids
- mixing
- mashing
- cracking eggs
- rolling dough
- spreading bread.

You can introduce trickier tasks such as handling hot foods and chopping with a sharp knife once they have mastered other food skills. Be sure to closely supervise!

## Home-grown recipe books

Make a simple recipe book with your children using your favourite family foods. Use photographs or children's drawings to illustrate it.

## Theme days

Have a theme day. Try foods from different cultures (e.g. Mexican or Turkish) or use other themes like colour. This can be a fun way to introduce new foods.

## Food activities for children

### Make family meals fun!

Get your children to make some place mats (even just drawing on paper will do), decorate the table or set out the cutlery.

### Eat somewhere different

Have a home picnic in the garden, cubby house or on the lounge room floor.

### Tell stories

Children love to hear stories about food. You can make up your own or look in the library.

### Watch cooking programs together

They can be fun and also get children interested in trying new foods.

### Eat with other families

Get each family to bring a dish or have a cook-up and share the food. It's amazing what children will eat when there are other children eating it.

### Make your own fast food

Get children to help make their own hamburgers or pizza using foods set up on the table so that they can create their own mix.

### Visit local producers at the farm gate, farmers market or food factory

'Pick your own' farms are a great activity for children.



Getting children to help with food activities teaches independence and is good for self-esteem.

Passing on food skills to children, from an early age, will set them up with great food skills for life.