

Maths Activities in the Kitchen

Young children learn best through real experiences and this is especially true when they are learning maths. Here are some great ideas for fun activities you can do together to teach important concepts without them even realising! For more information on children's mathematical development and how you can support this, have a look at the [Parents' Guide to Children's Maths Development](#) and Parents' Guide to Practical Maths Activities.

Fruit Salad

Chop fruit, such as bananas and apples, into equal-sized portions or find fruit that is easily divided into smaller portions, such as satsumas, grapes or berries. Ask your child to share the fruit between you. This teaches early concepts of sharing (division).

Give your child a bowl of fruit and invite them to take (say) 10 grapes or 5 strawberries. They will need to be able to count out the correct number of fruits accurately by touching and moving the fruit and saying the correct number names in sequence.

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Knife Skills

Introduce the concept of fractions by asking your child to help you cut vegetables or fruit into halves or quarters. Choose soft fruit or vegetables such as bananas, strawberries or mushrooms so that they can safely cut them with a blunt knife.

Ask your child to cut up a vegetable or piece of fruit and count the pieces, or to cut enough pieces for everyone in the family to have a piece. This teaches counting and sequencing skills and 'one-to-one matching' – children need to understand that four people will need four pieces of banana, for instance.

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Plan a Meal

Look in a recipe book to choose a meal to cook. Help your child to look in the contents page and recognise the number of the page they need to find.

Look through the recipe together and talk about the measurements you may need to do – weight and volume.

Shop for the ingredients and talk about the different prices. At the till, if possible, pay in cash and talk about the coins and notes you are using.

When making the meal, weigh and measure ingredients together, using words such as heavy, light, full, empty.

If the food requires cooking in the oven, talk about temperature, hot and cold, and how we measure this.

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Bake a Cake

Look in a recipe book to choose a cake to bake. Help your child to look in the contents page and recognise the number of the page they need to find.

Look through the recipe together and talk about the measurements you may need to do – weight and volume.

Shop for the ingredients and talk about the different prices. If possible, pay in cash and talk about the coins and notes you are using.

When making the cake, weigh and measure ingredients together, using words such as heavy, light, full, empty. If anything needs counting out (e.g. eggs), help your child to do this.

Talk about the temperature the cake bakes at, and how long it will take to cook. Introduce the idea of measuring temperature and time.

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Decorate Biscuits

Bake or buy some plain biscuits and decorate them with icing, sprinkles and other cake decorating items.

Challenge your child to make a pattern on each biscuit, e.g. 'red, blue, red, blue' or 'circle, star, circle, star'.

Use icing to make different 2D shapes on the biscuits.

Put different numbers of decorations on each biscuit, e.g. 'Can you put 5 flowers on this one and 8 stars on this one?'

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Make Pastry (Or Buy It!)

Let your child play with the pastry, rolling it out, squishing, marking and making shapes.

See if you can make different 2D and 3D shapes.

Roll spheres or sausages and talk about 'long, short, wide, narrow, thin'. Make a series of different lengths and see if your child can order them, shortest to longest.

If your child knows their numbers, challenge them to mould actual numbers out of the pastry.

At the end, bake your pastry treats and enjoy!

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Do the Washing-Up

Let your child play with different containers in warm soapy water.

Encourage them to pour water from one container to another and talk about containers that hold a lot and those that hold less.

Use language such as full, half-full, empty to describe the containers.

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Cupboard Audit

Tell your child you need to find out what is in your cupboards.

Challenge them to count how many of each type of object you have, e.g. how many tins, how many packets of pasta, how many jars.

Alternatively, clean out the cutlery drawer and ask your child to count how many forks, spoons and so on. If you have teaspoons, dessert spoons and tablespoons, they could also order spoons from smallest to largest.

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