

Practicing Preschool Math in the Kitchen

All of these ideas teach preschool math concepts *and* involve preschool-age children in the food preparation process. Looking at this list might be overwhelming. It's a long list. But take heart, you don't need to do everything on it. Read through the entire list and pick out a few ideas that seem appropriate for your child (or children). It may also help to have a recipe in mind, as this helps narrow down applicable steps. You may find you are already doing some of these things. You may find that one activity holds your child's interest more than others. You may feel one activity is more helpful than others. Reading through the list may spark other ideas of how to involve kids in the kitchen. Don't try to include all the suggestions in one cooking session, just the ones that are a good fit for that session.

My hope is that this list of ideas provides a place to start making cooking an enjoyable family time of learning and making memories.

If this still seems too overwhelming, try [this meal plan](#) that has ideas for each recipe included, or [request a custom meal and learning plan](#).

Recognizing numbers/numerals

- Read the numbers in a recipe
- Name the numbers on measuring cups/spoons
- Find numbers on packages

Counting and Numbers

- Count produce items into a bag at the grocery store
- Count scoops of ingredients
- Count out the ingredients needed (e. g. 4 carrots and 2 potatoes)
- Count number of stirs (especially helpful for taking turns)
- Count the number of containers
- Guess the number of items in a small pile of grapes/crackers/chocolate chips, etc., then count them to check the answer

Geometry Stuff

- Name the shapes of containers, vegetables, or fruits
- Compare the shapes of whole ingredients to chopped ingredients
- Order potatoes or other ingredients from small to big

Addition

- Set out a number of items (let's say chocolate chips because we're in the kitchen) in two groups
- Count each group separately ("1, 2"; "1, 2, 3")



- State the groups (“we have a group of 2 and a group of 3”)
- Put the groups together (“now put 2 and 3 together, how many do we have now?”)
- Count the new large group (“1, 2, 3, 4, 5”)
- Re-state “2 and 3 together/ $2+3$ is 5”

You can also use this strategy to illustrate and reinforce the equations on flash cards

Subtraction

- Set out a group of crackers (or other small food items)
- Count them
- Count out a certain number of crackers and eat them (or just set them aside)
- Count the crackers that are left
- “4 crackers. Take away 2 crackers. We have 2 crackers left”

Like addition, use this same strategy to reinforce the equations on a flash card.

Logic and Reasoning

- Demonstrate reading and following directions in order
- Have them describe the steps of a simple process in order (e. g. how do you make honey yogurt? First: put the yogurt in a bowl, second: add honey, third: stir, fourth: eat!)
- Sort vegetables, fruits, candies, or containers by size, shape, color, texture, or taste

For a meal plan with built-in learning written for your family’s needs, go to nutritionforrealhumans.com/learning/

Standards and concepts from

https://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/cpp/download/standards/prek_math_in_high_quality_settings.pdf and <https://www.themeasuredmom.com/need-know-preschool-kindergarten-math-standards/>.