

Play is the key way children learn about themselves, others and the world they live in. It is essential to their learning, development, health, and physical, mental and social well-being – and it's FUN! Play provides the building blocks to be ready for school.



## Food Play and Cooking

**Making food together can be fun. It builds special bonds between children and their families. These often become memories treasured for life.**

### Did you know?

Children are learning maths and science concepts while cooking. They are learning about measurements, size and order. They learn how things change when mixed together and when heated or chilled. They are experimenting and testing.

### Add language

Making food together is chance to have a conversation. Make comments e.g. "Let's check the recipe", "that smells delicious", "Uh oh I've made a mess". Ask occasional questions that require more thinking and reasoning skills e.g. "What should we do first?" "What will happen if..." "What else could we use?".

### Other development

Using a recipe lets you show that reading has a useful purpose. Your child will learn you have to read carefully and follow the order given in the instructions. This is important for more formal learning later. In school children have to follow set instructions. Children develop independence,



social and emotional skills through doing things for themselves. Giving your child some responsibility when you are cooking promotes feelings of pride and self-esteem. As children get older they may take on more responsibility. They may enjoy setting the table, serving food and helping to clean up. This is more likely to happen if it is encouraged playfully!

Being involved in the planning, cooking, and cleaning process helps your child learn the basic order or steps in preparing food. These are important life skills.

### Safety

Cooking is the perfect time for helping your child learn about safety in the kitchen – being extra careful with hot things and sharp utensils. Supervision in the kitchen is essential.

📌 Playgroup WA has a treasure trove of play activities for babies, toddlers and 3-5 year olds, for home and playgroup. These play activities cover a balanced diet of play across sensory, movement, language and thinking skill areas.

You can find them at [www.playgroupwa.com.au/playideas](http://www.playgroupwa.com.au/playideas) or visit [www.facebook.com/playgroupwa](https://www.facebook.com/playgroupwa)

