

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

**Cooking is a great playgroup activity for all ages! Share recipes from different cultures and family traditions. This is a great way to encourage children to try new flavours and textures.**

### Did you know?

Cooking at playgroup is a great way for children to learn to follow instructions, work together, share, experiment and negotiate. These are all important skills to practice in preparing for school.

### Add language

Following instructions helps children practise their comprehension skills. Children at different stages of development are able to answer different types of questions.

Toddlers may be able to answer simple questions that only need them to name things. As they get older they can answer questions that need them to compare things.

By the time they are ready for school they can answer some questions that need more reasoning.

Asking occasional questions, from simple to more complex, helps engage children at different stages of development i.e. "What is that?" "How are they different?" "What should we use?"



### Other development

Sharing food from their own culture helps build the children's sense of identity and belonging. This is important for their emotional development. Measuring ingredients helps children develop maths concepts. Talking about how things change when they are cooked helps build early science understanding.

### Safety

Cooking is a great time to remind children about safety – being careful when things are hot or sharp. Supervision is needed. It is important to be aware of any food allergies when choosing cooking activities. See the Playgroup Manual (available on the PlaygroupWA website) for more information on allergies at playgroup.

📖 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)