

Learning background: Cooking and Baking



We do this because it:

<p>Supports the development of hand eye coordination and fine motor control</p>	<p>Holding, handling, preparing, slicing and chopping food gives young children plenty of opportunity to control the smaller muscles (often referred to as fine motor control) in their hands, and the larger muscles (gross motor control) in their arms. You are giving them lots of opportunity to do this when they help to prepare food for cooking and eating. Aprons, safe knives and small chopping boards are the order of the day. Try to let children have a go and ignore the mess and the occasional vegetable flying over the work surface. In order to cut something your hands and eyes have to work together to achieve the task and achieve accuracy. Children need as many opportunities as possible to develop these skills so that they can control the range of tools that they will come across in their lives and as they progress through school – scissors, paint brushes, screw driver, wooden spoons, knives etc. Start with easy to hold and cut vegetables and fruit – banana etc. but move on to shapes and textures that are more difficult to cut, that require more pressure, more control, or that you want cutting into smaller pieces. Creating a challenge and having the opportunity to show your child how to hold, peel, remove the seeds etc. gives them knowledge and refines their skill and control. They learn how to do things safely.</p>
<p>It creates many language opportunities in a reciprocal environment</p>	<p>Working alongside your child while you are cooking, preparing and baking things together, creates an atmosphere when talk takes place naturally. The talk is about the things that you are doing together rather than question and answer type of talk. There are opportunities to introduce new words that make sense to your child because they relate to what you are doing. Words to do with organizing food, quantities of food, action words, mixing, stirring, chopping.</p>
<p>It gives many opportunities for developing early mathematical concepts</p>	<p>Food preparation, baking and cooking with your child, create many opportunities to help you child make sense of math's, number and counting. Explaining recipes, measuring out ingredients, talking about how scales work and looking at the numbers helps children to understand what counting is about. Counting bun cases into patty tins and sharing cake mixture between bun cases requires careful looking and introduces the concept of sharing. Children have to follow a set of instructions and so, begin to understand how a recipe works. They can see how things change, what the inside of an egg is like, how things melt, what happens when cakes go in the oven. It also creates the opportunity to remind children about hygiene, washing hands, safety around equipment and lots of fun washing up.</p>

