

## *Helping Children Prepare Healthy Snacks*

Don't forget that children love to help cook. They learn by touching, tasting, feeling, smelling, and listening. They love to help prepare food and cook because they can use all their senses. Children like to eat the foods they make. Plan ways the children in your care can help you. Be sure to consider the age of the child.

**Two-year-olds** are learning to use the large muscles in their arms. They will enjoy activities such as

- scrubbing vegetables and fruits
- wiping tables
- dipping vegetables and fruits
- tearing lettuce and salad greens
- breaking bread for stuffing
- snapping fresh beans

**Three-year-olds** are learning to use their hands. Try activities such as:

- pouring liquids into a batter
- mixing muffin batter
- shaking a milk drink
- spreading peanut butter on firm bread (This may be messy!)
- kneading bread dough

**Four-and five-year-olds** are learning to control smaller muscles in their fingers. Offer them experiences such as:

- rolling bananas in cereal for a snack
- juicing oranges, lemons, and limes
- mashing soft fruits and vegetables
- measuring dry and liquid ingredients
- grinding cooked meat for a meat spread
- beating eggs with an eggbeater

### **IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER**

1. Good cooks of all ages always wash their hands before cooking.
2. Tell children to wait until the dish is done before sampling it. This will help prevent illness.
3. Expect spills and messes.
4. Children have short attention spans. Give them quick, simple jobs, and give instructions one at a time.
5. Children get excited and forget. Repeat directions as often as needed.
6. Young cooks need constant supervision.
7. Give children jobs to help with cleanup.
8. Good cooks of all ages always wash their hands before cooking.
9. Tell children to wait until the dish is done before sampling it. This will help prevent illness.
10. Expect spills and messes.
11. Children have short attention spans. Give them quick, simple jobs, and give instructions one at a

- time.
12. Children get excited and forget. Repeat directions as often as needed.
  13. Young cooks need constant supervision.
  14. Give children jobs to help with cleanup.

Visit our web site at: <http://www.uaex.edu/miller/>

University of Arkansas, United States Department of Agriculture and County Governments Cooperating.

The Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, marital or veteran status, or any other legally protected status, and is an Equal Opportunity Employer.