

# Mother's Little Helpers

The preschool years are important years. Your child is keen to explore and experience what they see. Preparing meals is a huge part of our daily lives so rather than excluding or distracting them, get them involved !

Just being in the kitchen and having the children with you whether in the highchair or on a stool, turns cooking time into a special time with mum and becomes something they want to do.

Besides being a fun activity, early food experiences can help develop many different skills. It teaches -

- Hygiene - Wash hands with soap and dry well before starting.
- Safety – Be careful with knives and sharp utensils and keep away from hot stoves.
- Physical Skills - They can add pre-measured ingredients into bowls, wash fruit and vegetables and stir mixtures. Allow them to mix with their hands if you don't mind a bit of mess

Let them roll mixtures in to balls – Plastic fun shaped cookie cutters are always a hit too.

Children can prick things with a fork.

Show them how to mash foods and stand well back!

Let them arrange food on the plate

## and not forgetting.....

- Cleaning up skills – washing the dishes, wiping the bench
- Social skills – learning to share, eating food correctly and table manners
- Education – Trying new foods. Children need to eat lots of different foods to stay healthy and grow, also learning which foods are better for us.

Remember that children love to help. They are far more likely to eat something that they have helped to prepare and who knows, you might have created another Jamie Oliver !!

Try this:

### Ants on a log

Small piece of celery, spread peanut butter in the u-shaped part and press raisins gently into the peanut butter, and enjoy your ants on a log.

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## Healthy Nibbles for Tots

Nutrition and Physical Activity Information for Under 5s

For more information visit: [www.cph.co.nz](http://www.cph.co.nz)

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