

# Everyday Early Intervention: In the Kitchen

Families spend a lot of time in the kitchen, which makes it a great place to work on early intervention outcomes. Help your child become involved in cooking, washing dishes, and cleanup tasks with items that are safe for infants and toddlers to handle. Here's how you can help your child learn and develop new skills during these everyday routines.



## Fine and Gross Motor Skills

Fill a low cupboard or shelf with kitchen items that are safe for your child to explore, such as plastic bowls, a whisk, wooden spoons, plastic containers, and measuring cups. Allow children to explore these items independently and practice grasping, stacking, and emptying their cupboard.

## Cognitive Skills

Practice matching pots and containers with their lids. Engage your child in sorting kitchen items such as cups, plates, and spoons. Allow your toddler to help set the table and put one spoon, cup, or napkin at each place. Ask your child to look at the table and figure out what items are missing for the meal.

## Language Skills

Pretend you are on a cooking show and describe what you are doing to your infant or toddler as you cook or clean. Introduce new vocabulary by describing the colors, textures, and shapes of the foods you cook and taste. Use words that describe the sequence of actions for a recipe.

## Social-Emotional Skills

Describe how your children are learning to feed themselves, discovering items in the kitchen, or being helpful with cooking or cleaning tasks. This builds their sense of confidence in their abilities and pride in their accomplishments.

 For more information, visit the Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse at <https://eiclearinghouse.org>

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