

Cooking With Kids

Real recipes they can actually help with

STILL DAD

LEVEL 1: LITTLE HELPERS

Ages 3–6: stir, pour, wash, tear

Give them a job that matters. Let them crack eggs (with you ready to fish out shell pieces). Let them pour premeasured ingredients. Narrate everything you're doing.

- Stir batter or pancake mix
- Pour measured ingredients into the bowl
- Wash fruits and vegetables
- Tear lettuce or fresh herbs
- Spread butter or jam on toast
- Crinkle cookie dough into balls

LEVEL 2: REAL HELPERS

Ages 7–11: measure, chop soft things, assemble

They can follow steps if you walk through them first. Give them real responsibility. Let mistakes happen: they're learning.

- Measure and add dry ingredients
- Chop soft things: bananas, mushrooms, strawberries, cooked pasta
- Assemble sandwiches, tacos, or pizzas
- Scramble eggs with you nearby
- Stir things on the stove (low heat, you supervise)
- Read recipe steps aloud and tell you what comes next

LEVEL 3: ALMOST INDEPENDENT

Ages 12+: follow a recipe with guidance

Give them ownership of the whole dish. Let them pick the recipe. You're the consultant, not the chef. They're building real skills.

- Follow a complete recipe with you available for questions
- Chop onions, carrots, peppers with a sharp knife and proper technique
- Manage the stove independently for simple dishes
- Season to taste and adjust as they go
- Plan and shop for a meal they want to make

THREE RECIPES WORTH MAKING TOGETHER

Homemade Pancakes

INGREDIENTS

- 1.5 cups flour
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1 tbsp sugar, pinch of salt
- 1 egg, 1.25 cups milk, 3 tbsp melted butter

STEPS

- Mix dry ingredients in one bowl
- Mix wet ingredients in another
- Combine: lumps are fine
- Cook on medium heat, flip when bubbles form

KID'S JOB

Pour and stir the batter. Watch for bubbles and say when to flip.

Build-Your-Own Tacos

INGREDIENTS

- Ground beef or chicken
- Taco seasoning packet
- Shells or tortillas
- Cheese, salsa, sour cream, lettuce

STEPS

- Brown the meat, drain fat
- Add seasoning and a splash of water, simmer 3 min
- Set out toppings in small bowls
- Everyone builds their own

KID'S JOB

Set up the topping station and build their own taco from scratch.

Sheet Pan Eggs in Bread

INGREDIENTS

- Thick-cut bread slices
- Eggs (one per person)
- Butter, salt, pepper
- Cheese if they want it

STEPS

- Cut a hole in the center of each bread slice
- Butter both sides, place on sheet pan
- Crack egg into the hole
- Bake at 375°F for 12–15 min

KID'S JOB

Cut the hole with a cookie cutter. Crack the egg. Watch it cook through the oven window.

The point isn't the food: it's that they're next to you, doing something real, and they made it. Even bad pancakes are a good memory.