



Meal Time

Early Learning (Math, Cognitive)

You can also focus on the concepts of "more than" and "less than" by **asking**, "Do we want more broccoli on our pizza than carrots?"

When talking through the steps of food preparation, emphasize the **sequence** and what's coming next. "First, we need to wash the vegetables. Next, we will cut them."

Ask your child if she wants her food cut into two pieces or four. **Count** the pieces as you cut.

Ask your child "How much?" or "How many?" when you are serving her food.

Fine/Gross Motor

Allowing children to **spread** butter with a dull knife, **stir** with a spoon, and **feed themselves** with a utensil helps to build up their fine motor skills.

Language/Literacy

Pretend you are on a cooking show and **describe** what you are doing to your child as you cook or clean.

Introduce new vocabulary by **describing** the colors, textures, and shapes of the foods you cook and taste. You can also use **action words** such as scoop, spread, and cut.

Have your child **request** what she would like to eat, either verbally or by **pointing** to the food or pictures.

At the end of the activity, **ask** your child to **recall** the ingredients you used and then ask, "How did we make our pizza?"

Social/Emotional

Describe how your child is becoming more independent with using utensils, discovering items in the kitchen, or being helpful with cooking or cleaning tasks. This builds her sense of **confidence** in her abilities and **pride** in her accomplishments.

Self-Help

Participating in the **preparation**, **serving**, and **cleaning up** of meals provides many opportunities for children to increase their self-help skills.

Encourage your child to **feed herself** using fingers or a spoon or fork, depending on her developmental level.