



**FIELD
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Advice on preparing food with children

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Preparing food with children

Involving children in food preparation can be done in many ways.

These guidelines should be considered a source of inspiration and good issues to consider, rather than a full 'how-to' guide.





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The following information is based upon advice from the coordinator and home economics teacher in Nymarksskolen, a LOMA (local food) school.

You can find out more about LOMA in the Danish case study section of this website.

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Who can prepare food?

The answer is everyone! Even children of a very young age can get involved with cooking a meal for a larger group.

However, you do need to remember that the younger the children, the more adult input it requires, both in preparation and support during cooking.





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How do I organise the group?

At Nymarkskolen in Denmark, they have lots of experience in organising food preparation in workshops.

They do this by dividing the whole menu into smaller tasks that can be done by small groups of pupils. This is more manageable for the both children and the adults.





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How do I organise the group?

If younger children are involved it might be a good idea to prepare all of the ingredients and cooking utensils in advance.

Older children can do this themselves as part of the session.





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What to cook?

The best advice is to allow the children to be part of menu planning process in order to ensure ownership of the session. You can set some guidelines, e.g. in relation to nutrition, sustainability or economics.

Discussing these guidelines in relation to the meal proposals can be good for learning.





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What to cook?

Remember that there is a huge difference between making food for small and large groups, so preparing pizza for 300 pupils might be too much!

Therefore, for larger groups, it is good to avoid menus that involve too many stages. As a general rule of thumb, the more items on the plate, the more complicated the preparation.





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What about safety and hygiene?

It is important that you teach children about hygiene before involving them in food preparation for others. Depending on the age, this can be done very simply by memorising the most important rules, such as washing hands before and after touching food, and making sure that meat and vegetables are kept apart.

For older children, this can be expanded to teaching about bacteria and micro organisms.





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Other advice

Remember that, as well as the preparation, the actual meal provides learning opportunities as well.

The advice from Nymarkskolen is that teachers should participate in the meal alongside the children. Eat with the children and use this as an opportunity to discuss healthy eating and other related matters.

