

## **Kids Eat Food They Grow or Prepare Themselves**

Children are more likely to try food when they are involved in growing or preparing it. Starting between ages two and three, many children are ready to help, both in the garden and in the kitchen.

### **Tasks 2- and 3-year-olds can help with in the garden and kitchen:**

- Dig to prepare gardens for planting or to incorporate compost into the soil
- Plant pea, bean, or nasturtium seeds into holes made by an adult
- Water plants using a small cup or watering can
- Scrub freshly harvested vegetables in a dish bin with water and a scrub brush
- Mash avocados for guacamole, or bananas for fruit-sweetened recipes
- Cut soft-skinned fruits and vegetables with a wooden chopper or wavy chopper
- Help stir ingredients
- Place muffin liners into pans
- Assemble foods, such as placing ingredients on bread for sandwiches, or plating vegetables

### **Tasks 4- through 6-year-olds can help with in the garden and kitchen:**

- Plant various seeds using a seeding tool or direct seeding by hand
- Weed garden beds
- Snap beans and peas
- Peel vegetables with a vegetable peeler
- Chop vegetables with a wavy chopper
- Measure ingredients for recipes
- Whisk batter

**Children 7 and older can perform most tasks in the garden and kitchen with guidance and training.**

### **Encouraging Children to Try New Foods**

- Try using neutral language. Avoid using positive or negative language about the food, but help the child learn about it by describing its characteristics as you taste it and look at it.
- Enjoy the food yourself. Children learn best through imitation.
- Serve new foods in micro portions. A large helping of an unfamiliar food can feel overwhelming to a small child.
- Serve the food many times. It might take quite a few appearances on their plate before a child will try it. They may wish to look at, smell, or even feel the food with their fingers before they will consider eating it.