



Kids In The Kitchen

I'm a big believer in kids helping in the kitchen. You wanna eat? You help.

I love to cook and I love to bake and I love when my kids help. I also love when the kitchen does not look like a volcano erupted on the counters. And all those loves are sometimes hard to reconcile.

I won't give my kids busy work in the kitchen – there are real life-skills here just waiting to be learned. And learn they do. My seven-year-old makes excellent meatballs and my eight-year-old and four-year-old make a delicious (boxed) brownie together. And the little one, I'm pretty sure she almost knows my challah recipe by heart.

We're always trying – and I emphasize *trying*, because mistakes will happen and they're also okay – new recipes. These four were big hits in my house and the kids were able to complete these recipes by themselves, with a little help from a mommy who does not let them near a hot oven. Or a knife.

And the best part? All of these are snacks *and* an indoor activity rolled into one – it doesn't get much better than that, especially when it's January and most likely not sunny and warm outside your kitchen window.

Fruit and Cheese Kabobs

Gather together the following:

A package of wooden skewers

Cubed mozzarella cheese (I cut up string cheese)

Several fruits cut into small cubes (I use canned pineapple, halved grapes and any melon)

Playdough

To start, set the kids up at the table with a bowl of cubed cheese, several bowls of cubed fruit, the skewers and a plate to rest the filled skewers on. And playdough. (Yup.)

Use a good amount of playdough and stick it to your kitchen table. If you're worried about your table, place the mound of playdough into an aluminum pan and tape the bottom of the pan to the table so it doesn't move around.

Take a skewer and skewer that playdough – with the very pointy side down in the playdough so no one gets hurt. The stick should be vertical.

Demonstrate how to push the fruit and cheese pieces onto the skew-



er, adding just enough pieces so there is room left to hold part of the stick as a handle.

Bonus Points: Show the kids how to make a pattern with the fruit and cheese and you have a snack and a math lesson all in one.

Parfaits

These are super fun, super yummy and super hands-off for the mommy, which is always nice.

Gather together the following:

Plastic parfait cups or just regular see-through plastic drinking cups

Vanilla Greek yogurt

A bag of granola

A bowl of sliced strawberries

A cup of chocolate chips

A bunch of spoons

A bunch of napkins

Demonstrate one parfait and then let the kids have their fun their own way.

Spoon some yogurt into the bottom of a cup, add a layer of granola, a layer of yogurt, a layer of strawberries, a layer of yogurt and a few chocolate chips on top. And they're done.

These can also be made by layering pieces of pound cake, chocolate pudding, chocolate chips and the berry of your choice. Or brownie pieces, vanilla pudding, crushed chocolate tea biscuits and whipped cream. Or strawberry yogurt, Chex cereal, chocolate chips and pieces of a banana muffin. So many possibilities.

Did you notice the common denominator? Chocolate. I am firm believer in the power of a small piece of chocolate. Layer anything in a cup, sprinkle some chocolate on top and my kids are game for a snack.

